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Social Media and Changing Trends in Everyday Languages

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Abstract:

The emergence of the internet along with the consequential array of social media networks have, undoubtedly, resulted in an exponential increase in new types of language: blogs, tweets, Facebook posts and LinkedIn profiles are just a few to mention. There's no denying that social media has had a drastic impact on the sheer volume of people we are now able to communicate with, it's also had an impact on the frequency with which we are able to communicate with them. This has led us being exposed to a myriad of different personalities, perspectives, and approaches when we use social media to communicate. People who use the same social network build their own community with common interests, activities, and topics for discussions. With its global reach social media has also resulted in faster communication. The need for speed and easy understanding has thus altered the common used words and phrases. Some of the more popular social media sites limit the number of characters one can use in a post. Twitter, limits the "Tweet" to 280 characters, thus pushing its users to become more adept at saying what they want or need to say with fewer words resulting new trending terms. It has even introduced new terms in English. This paper tries to highlight the changes in language and communication pattern with the introduction of social media in everyday life. The acceptances as well as the impact of the new vocabulary are also the areas where this paper has tried to focus. For this purpose, the main objective of this paper is to understand the changes introduced in English Language with the advent of social media, to analyse the acceptance of the new words in modern vocabulary as well as to analyse the impact that social media has brought in our everyday terms.

Keyword: Social Media, New Vocabulary, Faster Communication, Global User

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Introduction

There can be no denying that social media has a significant impact on the ways that we communicate. Its ever-evolving nature leaves our language in a continuous state of alteration and regeneration. Facebook, for example, as one of the leading social media platforms in the world, has made itself a near necessity for connecting with loved ones, friends, colleagues and acquaintances around the globe. With over 829 million daily users, according to Facebook's newsroom, it has transformed our ability to stay in touch with those who would otherwise be out of reach, and it has allowed its users to have a closer tie with a growing number of people who share common interests and backgrounds, thus producing a social network far beyond anything we could have ever imagined.

The influence of these social media sites and platforms on our language, then, is a true phenomenon. It has managed to alter our vocabulary, increase the number of communications we have every day and the speed at which we have them, and leave us feeling a newfound responsibility to remain connected with the world at large. From unfriend to selfie, social media is clearly having an impact on language. As someone who writes about social media I'm aware of not only how fast these online platforms change, but also of how they influence the language in which I write. The words that surround us every day influence the words we use. Since so much of the written language we see is now on the screens of our computers, tablets, and smartphones, language now evolves partly through our interaction with technology. And because the language we use to communicate with each other tends to be more malleable than formal writing, the combination of informal, personal communication and the mass audience afforded by social media

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is a recipe for rapid change. From the introduction of new words to new meanings for old words to changes in the way we communicate, social media is making its presence felt.

The research paper [1-9] highlight the impact of social media on English Language. The articles [10-16] enlighten on the effects of digital media and the way it has modified our communication skills both reading and writing. New vocabulary has been focused by the researchers [17-20] where it has been discussed that these social media platforms are bringing in our everyday English. The articles [21-25] subject how the new trends in our everyday English has both positive and negative aspects in the process of communication. This research paper is an attempt of exploratory research, based on the secondary data secured from journals, articles, magazines, newspapers and media reports.

Objective

The main objective of this study is to understand the impact of social media on English language and to examine the changes that it has brought. It has been summarized through several opinions regarding the comparison between the changes that English language has faced for social media. Moreover, this paper aims to find the significant impact of social media bringing the changes in our everyday language as well as we will focus on findings of the new possibilities of this latest changes in the way how we speak.

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Research Methodology

The research is Descriptive in nature. In order to fulfill such objective two types of data collection methods have been used in this study, primary data collection method and secondary data collection method. For collecting sample through primary data, random sample survey method has been used. A survey was conducted among 50 college students who are very much used to different platforms of social media like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, Pinterest and WhatsApp. In this paper a questionnaire has been used to collect data from the students. In the questionnaire, closed-ended questions were asked to the target population. Qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods have been adopted for analyzing the data. The secondary data was collected through books, periodicals, journals, published material and internet based scholarly articles related to this topic for the study.

Respondent Profile:

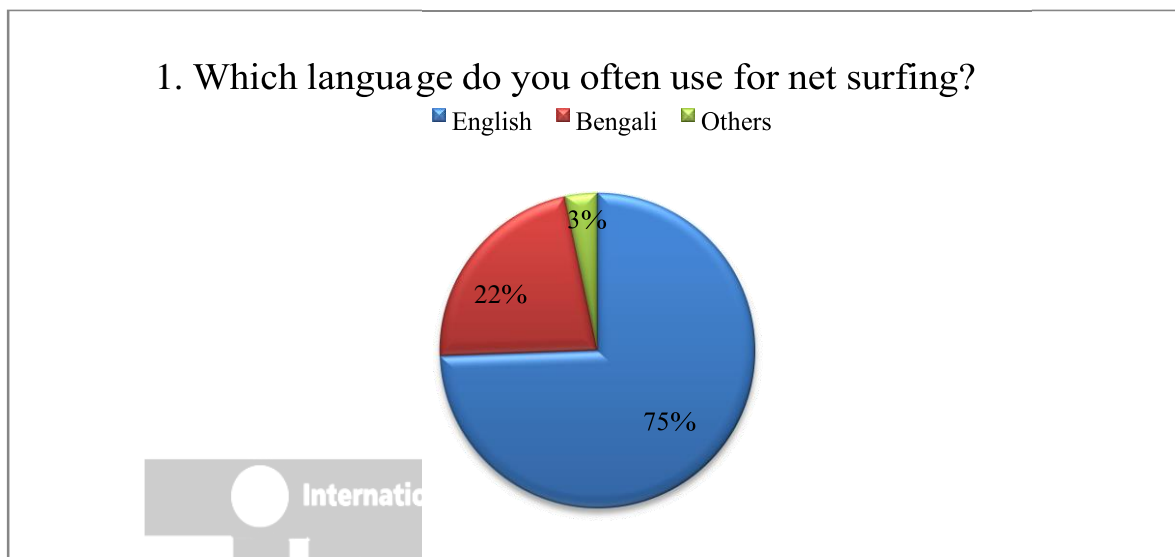
Age (Under 20)

Gender (Male, Female)

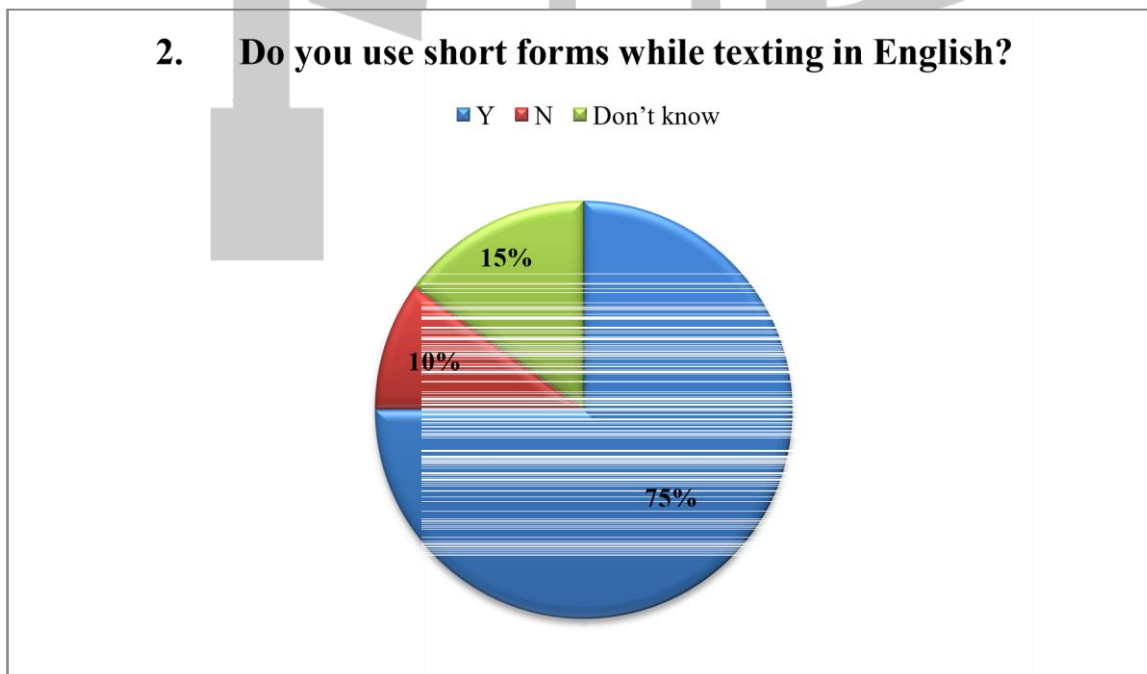
Qualification (Under Graduate)

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(Yes=Y, No =N, Don't Know)

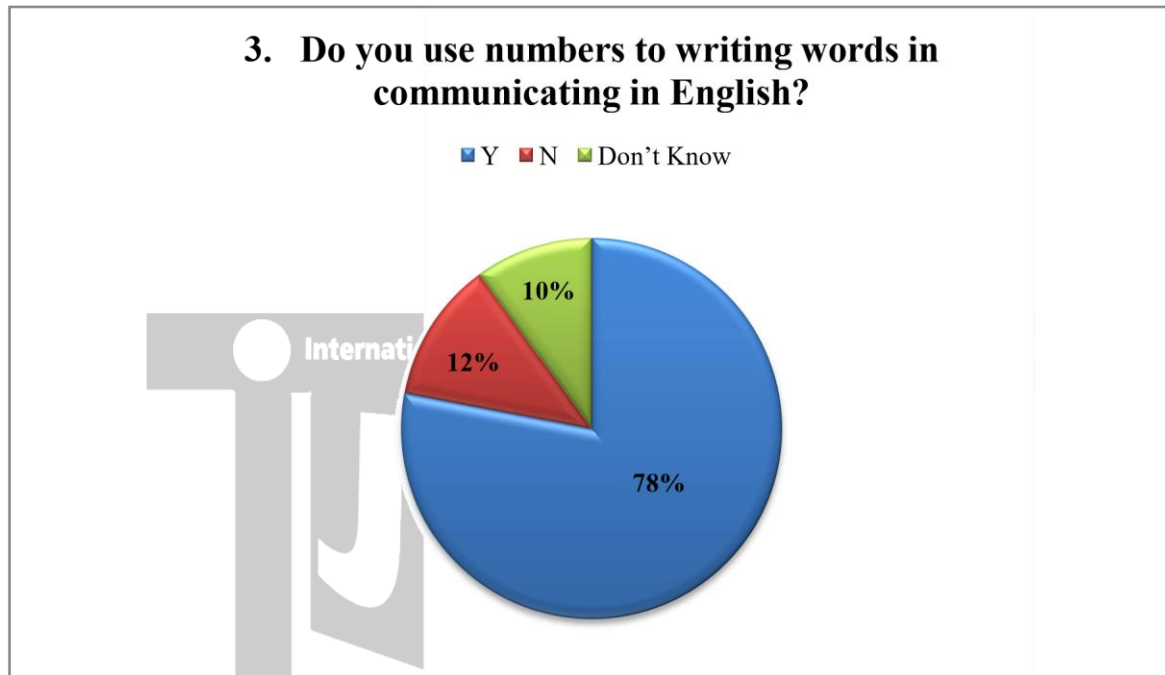


Analysis- Most of the students have agreed that English has been the most used language for net surfing.



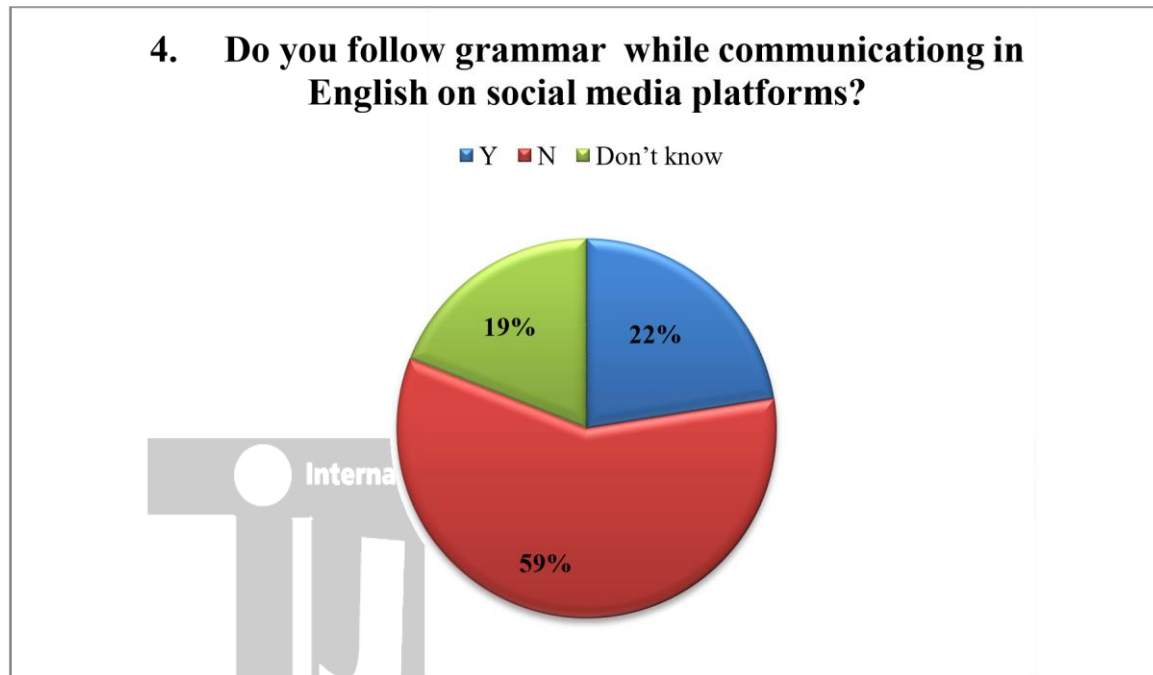
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Analysis- Most of the students (75%) have answered that they use abbreviated forms to communicate in English on social media platforms.



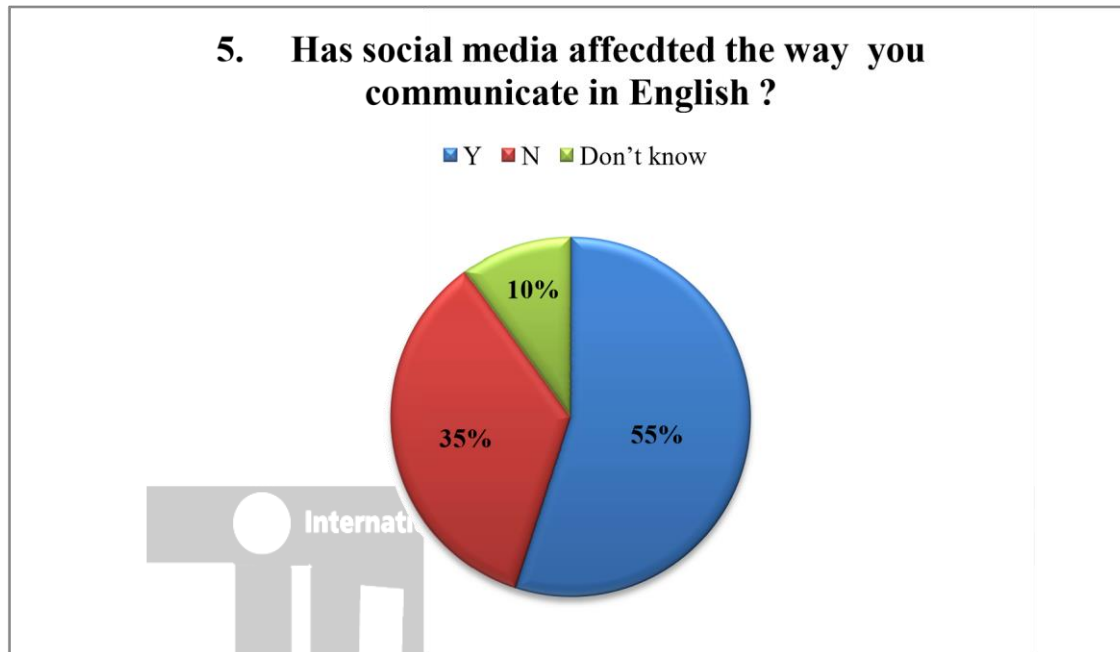
Analysis- This question clearly explains that young generation tends to use modified language to express themselves while communicating.

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Analysis- According to this answer 59% students are very reluctant about grammar while communicating in English on social media platforms while 22% agreed to follow grammar while communicating.

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Analysis- From this question we get the answer that 55% students have agreed that social media has definitely affected the way they communicate in English.

So to discuss the impact of social media on English language first we need to know about social media and the platforms that it offers to its users.

What is SOCIAL MEDIA?

Social media basically means any human communication or sharing information on internet that occurs through the medium of computer, tablet or mobile. There are numerous websites and apps that make it possible. Social media is now becoming one of the largest means of communication and is gaining popularity rapidly. Social media enables you to share ideas, content, information and news etc. at a much faster speed. In last few years social media has grown tremendously at an unexpectedly fast rate and has captured millions of users around the world. We live in a time and

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age where information is just a button press away. We are swayed by information all around us. We millennial want to know, read, understand and then speak our minds about it. That is where social media comes into play. Social media is one of the biggest elements that we live with and cannot ignore it. Social media is collection of websites, applications and other platforms that enable us to share or create content and also helps us to participate in social networking. Social media is not limited to blogging and sharing pictures, there are also many of strong tools that social media provides us with. That is because that the impact of social media is very high and far reaching. It can make or break images.

But social media is a topic of controversy today, many feel it's a boon but there is a majority who feels that it is a curse. Mostly people feel that social media has destroyed human interaction with a rapid rate and has modified modern human relationships. But there are others who feel that it is a blessing that has connected us to every part of the world, we can meet our loved ones that are far, we can spread awareness through it, we can send security warnings etc. There is a lot that social media can do. But it is an unarguable fact the presence of social media has made our lives convenient, easier and much faster. It has been playing an undeniable role in communication and the impact is clearly visible.

The impact of Social Media on English Language:

The emergence of the internet and the consequential array of social media networks have, without doubt, resulted in an exponential increase in new types of written language: blogs, tweets, Facebook posts and LinkedIn profiles to mention just a few. But with English being the most dominant language on the internet, how has social media changed the English language? There's

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no denying that social media has had a drastic impact on the sheer volume of people we are now able to communicate with, it's also had an impact on the frequency with which we are able to communicate with them. This has led us being exposed to a myriad of different personalities, perspectives, and approaches when we use social media to communicate. With the exception of social media professionals and academic journalists, the majority of what is written by the general public on social media is not edited, supervised or checked to ensure that proper use of the English language is taken into consideration. Let's take a look at a few of these trends below.

Appropriating existing vocabulary

One of the most notable ways that social media has influenced the English language, is through the appropriation of existing vocabulary. Words that had existing meanings have now been given other meanings in an online context. Years ago, if somebody said the word "wall" to you, you might think of the ones in your house, or the ones outside in the street; however, in a social media context the word "wall" refers to the homepage of your social media profile, where you can share aspects of your life/work in a public forum. A few other words which have been repurposed for social media include:

- Tablet, which is used to refer to portable screens.
- Troll, which is a term used to describe an internet user who seeks attention by making outrageous or unreasonable comments about something or someone.
- Stream(ing), which is the transmission of data as a steady continuous flow.
- Catfish, which is a term used to refer to an internet user who poses as someone other than themselves online.

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Introducing new vocabulary

The internet has become one of the influences of the English language in recent times, and along with appropriating existing vocabulary, it has given life to a plethora of new words and phrases. A few years ago, nobody had heard of the terms “unfriend”, “selfie” “fleek” or “emoji” however these words have trickled down from social media, and into our day to day conversations. Some of these terms have even made it into the Oxford Dictionary; ones that have, include: YOLO (You Only Live Once) along with compound words such as “Craptacular” and “Amazeballs”, not to mention the recent social media trend of identifying high-profile couples by combining their first names to form a blend word e.g. Brangelina. Alongside these words are a vast array of social media specific acronyms, ranging from the almost universally known “LOL” celebrating its 28th birthday this year (Laughing Out Loud), “DM”, (Direct Message) and “FOMO” (Fear of Missing Out) and “TBT” (Throwback Thursday). The speed at which new vocabulary is introduced online, used, quickly over-used and then discarded is phenomenal and has never been so rapid. An example of terms that would now be considered ‘antique’ text speak on social media are: OMG, TXT, GR8, M8 and L8R.

The kind of new English being written by twitter and what’s app users, particularly young people is however sometimes frightening and lamentable, because it is beginning to creep into regular writing. Texting and tweeting is producing a generation of users of English, (it is worse that they are using English as a second language), who cannot write grammatically successful sentences.

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It is often seen that this new group of English users does not know the difference between a comma and a colon. They have no regard for punctuation. They mix up pronouns, cannibalize verbs and adverbs, ignore punctuation. They seem to rely more on sound rather than formal meaning. To an older generation who had to go through the rigour of being told to write proper English, and getting punished severely for speaking pidgin or vernacular or for making careless mistakes of grammar and punctuation, the kind of meta-English now being written by young people can be utterly confusing. The irony is that it makes sense to the young ones, and they can conduct long conversations in this strange version of the English language.

One may have come across the meta-English that is being described. It is English in sound, but in appearance it has been subjected to the punishment of excessive abbreviation, compression and modification. Hence, in place of the word “for”, one is likely to see “4”, and so the word “forget” becomes “4get”, or “4git”, “fortune” is written as “4tune”, “forever” as “4eva”. The word “see” has been pruned down to a single alphabet “C”, same with “you” now rendered as “u”. In effect, one is likely to read such strange things as “cu” or “cya” meaning “see you.”

Some other words have suffered similar fate: “straight” is now written as “Str8”, “first” as “fess”; “will” as “wee” (I can’t figure out why), “house” is now “haus”; “help” has been reduced to “epp”; (“who have you epped?”) instead of the phrase “kind of”, what you get is “kinda”, “money” is simply “moni.”, the computer sign “@” has effectively replaced the word “at”; “come” is now “cum”, the conjunction “and” is represented with an “n” or the sign &, “that” is now “dat”, “temporary” is likely to be written as “temp”, “are” as “r”, “your” as “ur” “to” as “2”, “take” as “tk.”

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By the time these new words get combined in what is supposed to be a sentence, one'd have a hard time looking for the sense beyond the sound.

Oftentimes, this special prose arrives amidst a number of other confusing symbols, emoticons, memes, acronyms and abbreviations, looking like a photographic combination of English and hieroglyphics. Some of the more popular abbreviations include Lmao (“laughing my ass off”) lol (“laughing out loud”), lwkmd (“laughter wan kill man die”), stfu (“shut the fuck up”), omg (“Oh my God”), rofl (“Rolling on the floor with laughter”), uwc (“you are welcome”), smh (“shaking my head”) brb (“be right back”), #tbt (“throw-back Thursday”).

Many of the youngsters who have become socialized into this new mode of communication are not always able to differentiate between correct and incorrect English, and this is why parents and teachers must be concerned.

The ability to write clearly strengthens a person's ability to think clearly and to communicate effectively. It should not be surprising that many young persons these days seem more at home in the world of gadgets and electronic appliances. They are forever texting or playing computer games and trapped in the electronic, virtual, space. They live both online and offline, spending a better part of their day on websites, thus, their emotional development is tied to this reality. Most parents lack the knowledge of what happens in the social media, and while some parents are trying to learn very fast, a knowledge gap still exists between them and their more digitally savvy children. But this should not result in the abdication of responsibility. The abuse of the English language, and the inability to write well, is certainly not the only risk that an obsession with social media poses for young people. Parents also need to worry about addictiveness, exposure to

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inappropriate content and liaisons: all kinds of paedophiles and sexual predators operate online looking for innocent victims and luring them with sweet lingo. There are bullies too, harassing and stalking their targets. Under ordinary circumstances, parents have a duty to teach their children basic etiquette: this is even more required as they relate with others and navigate both online and offline spaces.

Back to the issue of language, our despair is slightly moderated by the fact that the interface between man and technology through the social media has also resulted in much useful creativity. New words have been invented through the social media, which are now gradually finding their way into mainstream English and in the dictionary. In 2013, the word “selfie”- referring to a photograph taken by oneself with a smartphone, or Ipad- was declared the Oxford Dictionary Word of The Year.

Similarly, such words as textspeak, texting, sexting, twitter troll, tweeps and emoticons, are becoming common words in regular, daily communication. Words like “friend”, “timeline”, “block” and “like” have also assumed new meanings and recognition, the same with such other words as: “unfriend”, “unlook” “twitter status”, “profile”, “trending”, “timeline”, “twitterati”, “blogging”, “bloggers”, “tweet”, “retweet”, “hashtag”: all of which have caught the attention of lexicographers as clear evidence of the living and evolving nature of the English language.

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The future of these changing trends in English language

The recently listed research studies have proven that social media plays an important role in the communication of the 21th century. There is a substantial likelihood that people will continue using it in the next few decades as it is able to provide the four essential factors younger generations really need in communication:

- Send a message in a much faster way that does not take much time
- Freely construct sentences without paying attention to grammar
- Communicate with friends around the world without paying high rates □ Ability to do multiple activities at once

Billions of people have already been using text speak on different levels during their everyday communication. It is likely that one day textspeak will dominate many forms of writing. It will be acceptable in official arenas as it has been gaining popularity with time.

The next generation is growing up in a world ruled by technology. They encounter technological inventions much sooner than one might suppose and start to use them at a very young age. It can be observed in many families that younger kids can more easily comprehend how the smart TV or its remote control works than those adults who buy them. It is mainly because they are not afraid of technology but instead are greatly fascinated by the new phenomenon it brings. They develop their curiosity by exploring and using up all the possibilities offered by this modern equipment. In some cases children encounter the internet and social media sites at such an early time period when they hardly know how to read and write properly. In school, the child slowly learns and improves their writing by standardized grammar books or readings from classical novels. But once he or she

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has left school, it is mainly social media sites where the person practises what was learnt, the writing and reading. Their literacy is greatly influenced by social media, and it is likely that children of the next generation will hardly distinguish between the standard and non-standard writing. These incorrect forms and irregularities of textspeak will be incorporated into their everyday life. Though, in order to leave behind the textism phenomena and move on to the next or a completely different form of communication, new technological advancements will be required in the future that will offer more possibilities.

Conclusion

English has been the global *lingua franca* for the last four centuries. English owes its popularity to being the native tongue of two nations that had the biggest economies. It is used in business, entertainment and leisure, as a preferred means to maintain communicational exchanges. With the arrival of social media, the possibilities of interaction between people of different backgrounds have increased to an unforeseen extent. Despite being the most widespread language in the world, with the advent of social media, English has reached its peak of dissemination-thanks to the use of trendy terms by its global users. The users' desire for a simple and efficient means to convey their thoughts has converted English into the mainstream language for textual and verbal communication on the world-wide web. Additionally, the constant growth and dissemination of the use of social media is likely to contribute exponentially to a growth in the number of speakers of English that originate from different countries and, therefore, have different native languages. The ease of interactions that social media allows is one of the many features that make it so

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appealing to individual, that with the ability to find entertain, gather information and even seek education are what allows social media to be so prominent in modern times. It is thanks to this adaptability of social media is that supports its' staying power. Allowing the users to customize their experiences in accordance with their desires leads to it appeal, that in turn leads to more people that will start using these types of services.

However, the consequences of this widespread use of English are unpredictable in terms of the evolution of the language itself and of the effect that its pervasive influence may exert on other languages. These are just examples of concerns that scholars have when it comes to this increase of non-native users. It must be said that these worries are not without foundation, but the concern is more about the rate that slang, loan words and acronyms are introducing to the language. This introduction rate has risen greatly because of the ease that information is able to spread through social media. And as a result, trends and language quirks tend to acquire stronger footholds in language faster. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the use of ELF in the context of social media in our globalized world will constitute another fascinating chapter in the long history of the English language.

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