

The Impact of Digital Communication on the Grammar and Lexicon of the Russian Language

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Abstract. *The rapid development of digital communication has significantly altered linguistic norms across global languages, including Russian. In contemporary Russian, the proliferation of social networks, messengers, and blogging platforms has led to widespread integration of English loanwords, stylistic informality, and syntactic simplifications. While prior studies have noted these trends, comprehensive analyses combining corpus linguistics, grammar, and lexical change within digital Russian communication remain underexplored. This study investigates the impact of digital interaction on the grammatical and lexical dimensions of the Russian language, focusing on how digital discourse influences structural norms and introduces new communicative practices. Through corpus analysis of over 10,000 messages, the study identifies the dominance of anglicisms, frequent abbreviation use, grammatical simplification, and emoji-based emotional substitution in youth-oriented digital exchanges. These shifts not only alter word formation and syntax but also reshape written Russian into a hybrid expressive medium. The research provides a data-driven evaluation of linguistic transformation in real-time digital environments, highlighting the creative adaptation of foreign elements and informal grammar as emerging features of Russian digital discourse. These findings necessitate educational and linguistic policy interventions to balance innovation with preservation of literary standards, while suggesting further research on long-term impacts of digital language evolution on formal education, cultural identity, and intergenerational communication.*

Key words: *digital communication, Russian language, lexical changes, grammatical transformations, English loanwords, internet language.*

Introduction

In recent decades, the rapid development of information technologies has had a direct impact on the field of linguistics. Particularly noticeable changes have occurred in vocabulary, grammatical structures, and speech styles under the influence of everyday digital communication through the internet and mobile devices. This process is clearly observable in the Russian language as well. In both written and spoken communication on social networks (such as Telegram, VKontakte, TikTok), blogging platforms (YouTube, Zen), and messaging apps (WhatsApp, Viber), new lexical units have emerged, and established grammatical norms are often simplified or violated. This situation has sparked discussion among linguists and educators: on one hand, it is seen as a natural evolution of language; on the other, it is viewed as a threat to the norms of the literary language [1].

The present article aims to conduct an in-depth study of the influence of digital communication on the lexicon and grammar of the Russian language, drawing on scholarly sources, analysis of real-life written communication examples, and corpus data. The study pays particular attention to the

adaptation of English loanwords, grammatical transformations, and the increasing use of emotional expression tools [2].

Literature Review

In modern linguistics, the question of the impact of digital means of communication on language is becoming increasingly relevant. This is particularly true for the Russian language, which is being studied by many scholars from various perspectives. L. P. Krysin, in his research on English-derived words, notes that the number of anglicisms in the Russian language has tripled compared to the 1990s. According to his estimates, by 2020, the number of actively used English words in Russian exceeded 3,000. Krysin links this process to the natural evolution of language and socio-economic transformations¹ [3].

A. I. Baranov, in turn, explains the trend toward simplification in digital speech, particularly the use of abbreviations and emojis, through the concept of "cognitive economy," that is, the tendency to convey information quickly and efficiently. According to his analysis, among users of VKontakte and Telegram, the usage rate of English abbreviations such as "lol," "ok," "np," and "thx" exceeds 75%. Russian linguist M. N. Lebedeva, having analyzed the language of internet users aged 16 to 25, found that on average, 8 to 12 English elements or emojis appear in every 100 messages². She attributes this figure to the active participation of the younger generation in the global information space [4].

Furthermore, a corpus analysis of Russian-language comments on the YouTube platform conducted by Popova and Ivanova revealed that out of the 1,000 most frequently used words, 137 are borrowings from English or transcribed phonetically according to English pronunciation (e.g., "флексить" [to flex], "стримить" [to stream], "фейк" [fake], "хейтить" [to hate]). This indicates a shift in word formation patterns as well³ [5].

I. A. Sternin warns of a weakening of grammatical norms as a result of digital communication. In his study of 10,000 VKontakte messages, he found that one in every three sentences contained inconsistencies between parts of speech or syntactic errors. This underscores the need to reinforce literary language norms within the educational system. The foreign scholar David Crystal, in his well-known work *Language and the Internet*, refers to internet language as "a new form of written communication" and analyzes its impact on linguistic culture using English as a case study. His methodological approach is widely adopted by Russian language researchers as well [6].

The findings suggest that digital communication not only introduces new words into the language but also stimulates a range of significant processes, including the simplification of grammar and the growth of emotional expression tools (such as emojis and mixed Cyrillic-Latin writing). These phenomena lead to dynamic changes in the language and call for new methodological approaches in linguistics [7].

Methodology

This study employed several modern methodological approaches to conduct an in-depth analysis of the impact of digital communication on the grammar and lexicon of the Russian language. The primary methods used included corpus analysis, survey methodology, and content analysis. Each of these approaches contributed to obtaining accurate answers to the research aims and questions [8].

The principal direction of the study was based on the method of corpus linguistics. Through this approach, more than 10,000 written texts—messages and user comments—were analyzed. These texts were collected throughout 2024 from popular digital platforms such as VKontakte, Telegram,

¹Krysin, L. P. (2010). *The Russian language at the turn of the millennium: linguistic consciousness, language norms, and linguistic personality*. Moscow: Flinta, Nauka.

² Baranov, A. I. (2016). Cognitive economy and transformations of language behavior in the context of internet communication. *Bulletin of Moscow University. Series 10: Journalism*, (4), 56–67.

³ Lebedeva, M. N. (2019). Youth language in the context of digital communication: trends and features. *RUDN Journal of Language Studies, Semiotics and Semantics*, 23(2), 345–359. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-9182-2019-23-2-345-359>

and YouTube. The collected data were processed using modern software tools, particularly Sketch Engine, which enabled both morphological and syntactic parsing of the texts. As a result, the study examined lexical innovations (especially English loanwords), word formation changes, and deviations from grammatical norms. The findings showed that on average, lexical units of English origin were present in 27 out of every 100 texts, while grammatical violations were found in 12 out of 100 [9].









Платформа	Жанр	Пользователи (оценка)	Тип данных
 Telegram	Групповые чаты		Письменное неформальное общение
 VKontakte	Посты и комментарии	 500 миллион+	Письменное неформальное общение
 YouTube	Комментарии	 90 миллионов (Россия)	Письменное эмоциональное общение
 TikTok	Комментарии к видео	 50 миллионов+	Короткое письменное общение

Photo 1. "Statistical platform and users"

Results:

In recent years, dramatic changes in the form of written communication in Russian have occurred under the influence of digital communication - personal, through social networks, messengers and other Internet platforms. These changes are characterized by the simplification of lexical and grammatical norms, the expansion of means of emotional expression, as well as the mass spread of hobbies from English language words [10].

Anglicisms and their frequency. One of the most common lexical phenomena in the digital environment are words borrowed from the English language (anglicisms). Thus, based on corpus studies, when studying posts on platforms such as Telegram, VKontakte and TikTok, the frequency of use of the following Russian-language words of English origin was revealed:

Word	Original	Form of writing (in Russian)	Frequency of use (per 1000 posts)
лайк	like	лайкать, лайкнул	623
фейк	fake	фейковый, фейк	412
стрим	stream	стримить, стримы	375
баг	bug	баг, баговать	261
контент	content	контентный, контент	740
хейт	hate	хейтить, хейт	309

Most of these words are used with adaptation to the phonetic and morphological system of the Russian language. For example, in the word "like" the English verb "like" is combined with the Russian word-formation suffix -at, resulting in a new Russian verb. This phenomenon in Russian is called productive affixation and is considered in linguistics as a manifestation of innovative semantics. Grammatical transformations. Due to the fact that digital communication requires speed,

users tend to deviate from grammatical norms. Analysis shows that the following grammatical transformations are often found in written speech:

- Abbreviations and specialized signs: "спс" (thank you), "ок" (okay), "прбле" (problem). These abbreviations increase the time savings of users, but violate the official style of presentation [11].
- Omission of prepositions: For example, instead of "иту в медво" they write "иту медво". This is a violation of syntactic norms [12].
- Simplification of tenses: Instead of "I did," they write "did" or "already did." This leads to abbreviation of speech [13].
- Expression of grammatical load with emoji: – an increase in the use of these signs enhances the emotional expression of the text, but leads to a violation of the syntactic structure. Such grammatical changes are often observed among young users. According to a 2023 survey conducted by the Center for Digital Culture, 73% of users aged 18–30 admitted that they intentionally shorten prepositions in texts [14].
- Emotional expression and stylistic means. New means of emotional expression are formed in digital messages. Among the most common styles, the following can be distinguished:
- Strengthening emotions with the help of multiple letters: For example, "Handsome!" or "Nooo!" – this method helps to imitate the intonation of words.
- Internet slang: Expressions like "lol", "zbs", "ahah" are typical for dialogic speech and make it informal.
- Capital letters: Phrases like "I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!" express a high tone and strong emotions [15].

Research shows that in digital communication, emojis and stylistic devices take the place of grammatical constructions. This leads to a simplification of the language structure and the transformation of communication into a semi-verbal form [16].

The impact of digital communication on the Russian language is leading to profound and systemic changes. This is especially true for borrowed lexical units from English, simplified grammatical constructions, and styles of emotional expression that have become the modern face of Russian written communication. This situation is of great importance both for analytical material for linguists and for the need for regulation within the framework of language policy [17].

Discussion

An analysis of the influence of digital communication on the Russian language shows that the culture of communication formed on the basis of modern technologies leads not only to a change in lexical wealth, but also to a change in grammatical norms. This phenomenon is especially evident in the language of young people and active Internet users. In particular, new words (Anglicisms) borrowed from English update the vocabulary of the Russian language, but in some cases contradict its internal laws [18].

- L.P. Krysin in his research assesses such lexical changes as "the result of language globalization". In his opinion, terms, phrases and emojis entering the language through new technologies should be considered an important factor influencing the development of the language. However, it is also noted that this contradicts the norms of the literary language.
- In addition, A.I. Baranov, studying the phenomenon of Internet language, evaluates the use of abbreviations, transliteration, omitting prepositions and emoticons as an "economical, fast and emotional" way of communication. For example, replacing "idu v metro" with "idu metro", "spasibo" with "tsp" or "thx" is becoming the norm in everyday correspondence. Such examples are often found in written communication on TikTok and Telegram. Research shows that these phenomena are especially common in the language of users aged 15–25. This can be

seen in the following examples: phrases like "lol", "ahah", "zbs", "rip", "OMG" have become commonplace.

Emojis perform grammatical functions. indicates agreement, expresses surprise, and signals disagreement.

Numerous exclamations, such as "Krasaaaaavchik!" not only convey emotion but also emphasize the emotional intensity of fixed expressions.

However, these linguistic phenomena also have threatening aspects. For example, spelling words based on their pronunciation in students' written work, such as "patamushta" (instead of "potomu chto" – because), "shas" (instead of "seychas" – now), or "shto" (instead of "chto" – what)—can lead to a detachment from the literary language, which in turn may negatively affect language culture in school and higher education.

Moreover, stylistic shifts occurring on social media—such as improper use of capital letters ("I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!") or disregard for punctuation norms—may result in a crisis of written culture [19].

In this context, S.G. Ter-Minasova also emphasizes that language culture begins to dissolve under the influence of digital mass culture. The overall conclusion of the discussion section is as follows: the Russian language is significantly changing not only through digital communication in general but also through its internal genres—social networks, forums, and messengers. These changes, on one hand, can be seen as a natural evolution of language, but on the other hand, they call for new approaches to preserving linguistic culture. The education system, especially native language and literature classes, must interpret this process correctly and respond appropriately [20].

Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate that digital communication has become one of the key drivers of the modern development of the Russian language. Interaction through social networks, messengers, and online forums has led to the emergence of new lexical and grammatical forms and styles. In particular, the active infiltration of English-derived words (anglicisms), grammatical simplifications, abbreviations, and the expanded use of emotional expression tools has accelerated this transformation. Moreover, the analysis indicates that such changes occur primarily among younger audiences. Due to the dynamic and unrestricted nature of internet language, deviations from the norms of the literary language frequently arise. Therefore, it is essential to approach this phenomenon not only from a technological standpoint but also with careful attention to the preservation of linguistic culture.

In the future, the field of digital linguistics should aim at systematically studying these changes, evaluating both their positive and negative aspects, and developing appropriate educational strategies. This will ensure that the evolution of the language proceeds within a controlled, cultural, and literary framework.

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