LANGUAGE TRANSFORMATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA: THE PHENOMENON OF INTERNET LANGUAGE

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MAQOLA TARIXI: *Received: 23.10.2024* *Revised: 24.10.2024* *Accepted: 25.10.2024* **KALIT SO'ZLAR:** *Internet language, digital communication, new vocabulary, abbreviations, emojis, English borrowings, speech culture, digital culture*	This article analyzes the linguistic changes caused by the rapid development of digital technologies and the Internet. The phenomenon of Internet language is examined as a new form of communication that has created a distinct linguistic layer in modern society. The study explores key features of Internet language such as abbreviations, emojis, and English borrowings, and discusses their impact on literary language norms and speech culture.

Introduction.

Over the past few decades, digital technologies have profoundly influenced every aspect of human life, creating a new communicative environment. The rapid development of the Internet, social networks, messengers, blogs, and artificial intelligence systems has fundamentally changed the way people interact. These changes have inevitably affected language, giving rise to a new phenomenon often referred to as "Internet language" or "digital communication language."

Language is not static — it evolves alongside society. As an essential social tool, it reflects all cultural, technological, and behavioral transformations occurring within a community. In the digital age, language change has accelerated dramatically. New words, abbreviations, emojis, and English-based expressions have become integral to online communication.

This article aims to examine the nature of Internet language, its main lexical and stylistic features, and its influence on the culture of communication and national

language identity. Particular attention is given to how Internet language manifests in Uzbek digital discourse.

<u>The Concept and Formation of Internet Language</u>

Main body. Internet language refers to the linguistic system that has developed within digital platforms such as social media, blogs, forums, and online games. It differs from traditional written or spoken forms of communication by its brevity, speed, emotional expressiveness, and informality.

According to D. Crystal (2001), Internet language is "a new form of language shaped by the constraints and opportunities of electronic communication." In essence, it is not a completely new language but a modified version of existing linguistic structures adapted to a digital context. Internet language evolves dynamically. Online communities — gamers, bloggers, influencers, or young users — constantly create new words, abbreviations, and expressions, making the digital lexicon highly flexible and ever-changing.

<u>Abbreviations as a Tool for Efficiency</u>

One of the most distinctive features of Internet language is the frequent use of abbreviations. In fast-paced communication, users tend to shorten words and phrases to save time and space, as seen in examples such as:

> **"ok" (okay), "pls" (please), "btw" (by the way), "thx" (thanks).**

Uzbek users also adopt similar patterns:

> **k.k (kerak - need), "qalesan" (how are you), b.n (bilan– with).**

These forms demonstrate the tendency toward phonetic spelling and simplified grammar. The focus is no longer on linguistic accuracy but on speed and comprehension. Moreover, online abbreviations function as social markers — knowing them signifies belonging to a specific digital community.

<u>Emojis and Visual Expression</u>

Because digital text lacks tone, facial expression, and gesture, Internet users have developed a system of visual symbols — emojis — to convey emotions and attitudes. Emojis such as □□❤□□ have become universal tools for expressing mood, irony, or emphasis. For instance, the difference between "**Great**!" and "**Great** □" lies not in meaning but in emotional intensity. In this sense, emojis serve as paralinguistic elements, performing the function of digital mimicry. They enrich text-based interaction, making online conversations more expressive and human-like.

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The Influence of English and New Vocabulary

As English is the dominant language of the Internet, many English words have been borrowed into other languages. The Uzbek digital space is no exception, with frequent usage of terms such as:

> **"blog," "post," "like," "comment," "hashtag," "stream," "followers," "subscribe."**

These borrowings often undergo morphological adaptation:

> **"post qildim"** (I posted), **"like bosdim"** (I liked), "**streamni tomosha qilaylik**" (let's watch the stream).

Such processes are natural for a living language. However, excessive borrowing may threaten linguistic purity and national identity. Therefore, creating local equivalents — such as "**yozuv**" for "**post**" or "**obunachi**" for "**follower**" — is crucial for preserving linguistic authenticity.

Internet Language and Speech Culture

While Internet language offers efficiency and expressiveness, it sometimes leads to a decline in linguistic and cultural standards. Grammatical simplification, lack of punctuation, and code-switching between languages are common phenomena. This shift raises concerns about the erosion of literary norms. Consequently, modern linguistics faces the task of balancing digital freedom of expression with linguistic discipline. It also highlights the growing importance of digital literacy as part of cultural competence.

Internet Language as a Reflection of Digital Culture

Internet language is not only a linguistic but also a cultural phenomenon. It mirrors how people think, interact, and perceive reality in the digital age. Memes, hashtags, and viral phrases embody the values, humor, and creativity of online communities. In this sense, the Internet has become both a linguistic laboratory and a cultural stage. Thus, Internet language reflects the evolution of human communication itself — a blend of technology, creativity, and culture.

Conclusion. The transformation of language in the digital era is a natural and irreversible process. Internet language has revolutionized human communication by making it faster, more accessible, and emotionally expressive. However, it has also introduced challenges such as linguistic hybridization, grammatical erosion, and the decline of formal language use. For linguists and educators, the main challenge lies in promoting balanced digital communication — encouraging creativity and efficiency while safeguarding linguistic and cultural values. In conclusion, Internet language represents a new stage in the relationship between language and culture. It

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demonstrates the adaptability and vitality of human language — a living system that continues to evolve alongside technology and society.

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