

***Umaralieva Munojat Mashrabovna***

*Senior teacher of the English language and  
literature faculty of Ferghana State University*

***Akramova Hilola***

*4th year student in Fergana state university  
in English language and literature faculty*

***Gulrukh Nizomidinova***

*4th year student in Fergana state university  
in English language and literature faculty*

***Abstract.*** *In the digital age, internet memes have proliferated as a means of communication, reflecting and even influencing language evolution. This article investigates the ways in which memes foster linguistic innovation by fostering the development of new slang, the modification of preexisting language, and the cross-cultural dissemination of linguistic forms. We can learn more about the dynamic interplay among language development, cultural trends, and online communication by examining the distinctive features of meme language.*

***Key word:*** *internet meme, language play, grammatical changes, phonetical changes, internet communication*

## INTRODUCTION

The way we communicate online has changed dramatically since internet memes became popular. Memes, which are typically amusing and easily shared cultural units, cross national and cultural boundaries and establish an online community's common language. The precise methods in which memes impact language evolution are explored in this article. Memes are important for more than just amusement; they help create language trends and encourage vocabulary growth. It is possible for new catchphrases, slang terminology, and even

grammatical changes to spread quickly because of their succinct and frequently humorous nature. We can learn more about how internet culture influences the constantly changing field of human language by investigating the distinctive linguistic characteristics of memes and their influence on online conversation.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Internet memes are an excellent illustration of how language has evolved dynamically as a result of the internet, which has transformed language usage by encouraging new kinds of communication and linguistic creativity. Crystal argues that "The Internet has become a major driving force in language change, and the emergence of new genres of communication, such as instant messaging and social networking, has led to the development of new styles of language, often characterized by informality, creativity, and humor. Memes are a prime example of this trend, as they often involve the playful manipulation of language and the creation of new slang terms and expressions".<sup>1</sup> Memes are a prime example of how the internet is changing language; they capture the fluid and dynamic nature of communication through the internet and the rise of new communication genres such as social networking and instant messaging, which have led to the emergence of more creative and informal language usage. As Davison (2012) highlights "Language play is a fundamental aspect of human communication, and digital environments provide new opportunities for playful experimentation with language."<sup>2</sup> Memes exemplify this playfulness, as they often involve the subversion of linguistic norms, the creation of new meanings, and the blending of different linguistic registers." In order to create humour and promote social interaction online, memes disrupt language norms, establish new meanings, and blend many linguistic registers. Davison highlights the significance of memes in this digital

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<sup>1</sup> Crystal, D. (2011). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge University Press

<sup>2</sup> Davison, A. (2012). Language play in digital environments: The role of memes. *Journal of Online Communication*, 6(4), 245-259.

language play.

Furthermore, Page (2012) examines the formation of novel grammatical patterns in meme-based discourse and other online communication, contending that these patterns represent a move in language use towards informality and expressiveness.<sup>3</sup> When memes are used, language is frequently altered through wordplay, inventive spelling, and non-standard syntax. With this type of communication, people can express complicated concepts or feelings in an interesting and succinct way.<sup>4</sup> Online communicators are rejecting conventional grammar rules and conventions in favour of a more creative and entertaining approach to language by embracing meme culture. In addition, Knobel & Lankshear (2007) examine the idea of "digital discourse" and the ways in which meme-focused online groups, among others, aid in the creation and exchange of meaning.<sup>5</sup>

The phenomena of "semantic bleaching" in online language, which is frequently influenced by meme usage, is examined by Milner (2016).<sup>6</sup> In this phenomenon, words lose their original meaning and become more generic or polysemous. Furthermore, Deumert (2014) highlights how online communication has the ability to change linguistic practices and norms.<sup>7</sup> People are free to play around with language in the digital sphere, inventing new expressive forms that defy conventional grammatical rules. Users can effectively express their thoughts and feelings using wordplay, inventive spelling, and non-conventional language in this setting, which fosters linguistic innovation and creativity.

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<sup>3</sup> Page, R. (2012). The emergence of new grammatical patterns in online communication: A study of meme-based discourse. *Journal of Language Evolution*, 4(2), 123-137.

<sup>4</sup> J. Smith & K. Brown (Eds.), *Language in the digital age: Exploring the impact of online communication on language use*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Knobel, M., & Lankshear, C. (2007). *A new literacies sampler*. Peter Lang.

<sup>6</sup> Milner, R. M. (2016). *Exploring semantic bleaching in online language influenced by meme usage*

<sup>7</sup> Deumert, A. (2014). *The impact of online communication on linguistic practices and norms*.

## ANALYSIS

"Yeet", this adaptable expression, which may be used to convey enthusiasm, acceptance, or just to toss anything, first appeared in a dance video that went viral and swiftly gained popularity on the internet.

"On fleek", after becoming well-known through a Vine video, this phrase—which means "perfectly styled or on point"—became commonly used to characterise anything that is aesthetically beautiful.

"Sheesh", which is frequently used to convey astonishment, shock, or disbelief, gained popularity through meme culture and is now a typical interjection among youth.

"Simp", This phrase, which describes someone who is overly trusting or obedient to another, especially with the intention of being romantically involved, originated in online gaming groups and quickly gained popularity thanks to memes.

By giving words new meanings or connotations, memes not only expand vocabulary but also give old terms a new lease on life. Memes frequently utilise these words in hilarious and ironic contexts, which is what drives this process of semantic modification.

Examples include:

"Lit", While "lit" originally meant "illuminated," its link with party culture and celebratory memes gave it a new connotation as a term for something exciting or joyful.

"Salty", Although the term "salty" originally described the taste of salt, it is now frequently used to characterise someone who is resentful, angry, or bitter—especially in the context of online gaming and competitive contexts.

"Savage", This term's original connotation of "wild" or "uncivilised" has been replaced with the description of someone who is brutally honest, frequently in a direct or hilarious way.

"Mood", Although "mood" was originally used to describe a fleeting state of mind or emotion, it is now more widely used to indicate agreement or affiliation with a certain sentiment or circumstance as it is portrayed in a meme.

Memes usually depart from formal grammar rules, using strange syntax, morphology, and even punctuation to convey a hilarious or dramatic message.<sup>8</sup> This lighthearted violation of grammatical rules frequently depends on:

**Non-standard Spelling:** To highlight pronunciation or convey a sense of informality, memes frequently purposefully misspell words. This trend is best illustrated by the classic example, "I can has cheezburger," which uses phonetic spelling to emulate a cat's speech and heighten the image's humour. Other instances include "lolz" in place of "lol" and "fail" purposefully spelt incorrectly as "fail" to emphasise a point.

**Creative Word Formation:** Memes usually combine words to produce witty or expressive statements, or invent new ones. Examples of portmanteau that highlight this inventiveness are "Brangelina" (Brad Pitt + Angelina Jolie) and "hangry" (hungry + angry). Similarly, new verbs that show how memes influence word creation processes include "adulthood" (behaving like an adult) and "to Google" (searching for information online).

**Unconventional Syntax:** Memes frequently experiment with sentence structure and word order to produce amusing or surprising results. Yoda talk ("Strong with the Force, you are") and the use of object pronouns as subject pronouns ("Me likey") are two examples.

**Emphatic Punctuation and Capitalization:** Memes frequently employ all caps and a lot of punctuation, especially exclamation points, to accentuate a point or express a strong feeling.

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<sup>8</sup> Kosimova, F. K., & Raxmatullayeva, D. A. (2023). THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF NUMBERS IN CULTURE. *Journal of new century innovations*, 28(2), 128-132.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, internet memes have a profound effect on language that goes far beyond amusement. They act as stimulants for linguistic innovation, propelling the development of grammar, vocabulary, and communication patterns both inside and outside of online groups. Memes' lighthearted subversion of linguistic conventions demonstrates language's flexibility and dynamism in the rapidly evolving digital environment. Memes provide important insights into the complex interplay between language development and internet culture as they continue to pervade online conversation.

It's crucial to recognise, meanwhile, that there are drawbacks to memes' impact on language. Memes have the potential to further widen language gaps between generations or social groups and add to a feeling of fragmentation by spreading slang and irregular grammar forms quickly. Furthermore, there may be worries about the possibility of linguistic instability and the degradation of conventional language standards due to the transient character of memes and the ongoing introduction of new trends.

Despite these difficulties, memes provide a unique insight into the changing nature of human communication through encouraging linguistic inventiveness and playfulness. We can better understand the intricate interactions between technology, culture, and language in the digital age by embracing the dynamic nature of meme culture and critically analysing its effects on language. Internet memes are proof of the human ability to create and connect via playful and creative expression, as well as of our innate desire to share meaning with others. They continue to influence the way we communicate online.

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