THEORETICAL APPROACH: INTERNET LINGUISTICS AND MEDIA LEXICON

Normurodova Sitora
PhD student at Gulistan State Pedagogical Institute
Trainee at Tashkent Institute of Chemistry and Technology
+998880747369
Normurodovas853@gmail.com
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17139363

Abstract. This article analyzes the theoretical foundations of Internet linguistics and new media linguistics and their mutual characteristics. Internet linguistics focuses mainly on the formal and structural aspects of language - abbreviations, spelling simplification, phonetic notation, and the formation of new lexical units. New media linguistics, on the other hand, interprets language as a multimodal, interactive, and cultural process, and focuses on the study of visual symbols such as emoji, GIF, stickers, and platform-specific discourses. The article also highlights the practical confirmation of these theoretical approaches on the example of abbreviations (kale, hbd), code-switching (meeting very productive), and multimodal tools observed in Uzbek social networks. The results of the study show that Internet and new media linguistics are complementary areas and that the Uzbek language is becoming an active part of the global digital discourse.

Keywords. Internet linguistics; new media linguistics; multimodal discourse; abbreviations; code-switching; emoji; Uzbek language; social networks.

In the 21st century, the development of the Internet and digital technologies has led to the emergence of completely new directions in linguistics. While traditional linguistics was mainly focused on the study of oral and written speech, today a new form of language has emerged - digital speech or Internet language. As a result of this process, theoretical approaches such as Internet linguistics and new media linguistics have emerged, which have become independent branches of linguistics (Crystal, 2011). The concept of Internet linguistics was introduced to the general public by the English linguist D. Crystal, who interprets the Internet as a "fourth environment" for language: in addition to oral speech, written speech and mixed forms, virtual communication is now also considered a separate form of language (Crystal, 2006). Within the framework of Internet linguistics, abbreviations (LOL, BRB), emoticons, transliteration (privet, aka), and new terms that are globally imported from English (hashtag, blog, spam) have become the main objects of language change (Danet & Herring, 2007).

However, studying the text itself is not enough. Because digital communication today encompasses not only writing, but also multimodal sign systems - images, videos, audio files, GIFs, stickers and emojis. In this context, a new theory of media linguistics has been formed. It emphasizes that the language of the Internet has not only linguistic, but also semiotic, pragmatic and cultural properties (Androutsopoulos, 2014; Tagg, 2015).

One of the main tasks of new media linguistics today is to study the hybrid discourse that arises at the intersection of different cultures and languages. For example, posts written in Uzbek on social networks are often mixed with English or Russian words: sentences like

"Today's meeting was very productive" demonstrate the language's adaptability to global processes (Tagg & Evans, 2020).

Thus, while internet linguistics is more focused on studying formal features – spelling, abbreviation, grammatical and lexical changes, new media linguistics focuses on analyzing social and cultural factors, multimodality and interactivity. Both approaches are important in modern linguistics and complement each other (Herring, 2013).

Thus, the purpose of this article is to analyze theoretical approaches to internet linguistics and new media linguistics, to reveal their common and different aspects, and to highlight their application in the context of the Uzbek language.

1. The impact of social media on language

Panjaitan & Patria (2024) analyzed the process of simplification of social media language, considering abbreviations, phonetic notations, and grammatical structures as adaptations to conditions of convenience and speed. This analysis shows the tendency of the younger generation to widely use abbreviations and new speech styles in written speech.

2. A new genre of digital discourse

Irman & Vera (2025) analyzed 2,000 posts on platforms such as Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, and Reddit using a multimodal approach and identified hybrid, visual, and performative features of discourse. They argue that Gen Z is prone to visual cues, while Millennials and GenX use a more formal structure.

3. Language evolution through comments

Di Marco et al. (2024) analyzes nearly 30 years of social media comments and shows a decrease in text length and lexical richness — an evolution in online discourse that can be visually called "linguistic simplification."

4. Algospeak: The intersection of language and algorithms

Algospeak: How Social Media Is Transforming the Future of Language by Aleksic (2025) analyzes the impact of social media algorithms on defenseless speech, the phenomenon of new euphemisms (seggs, unalive), and the formation of platform-specific slang.

Research since 2020 suggests that internet linguistics and new media linguistics are more dynamic, culturally and socially contextualized than traditional analyses. The following main trends stand out:

• Simplification and abbreviations — the economy of writing is changing language forms (Panjaitan & Patria, 2024; Di Marco et al., 2024).

• Multimodal and visual language — multimodal representations of language are increasing through platforms (Irman & Vera, 2025).

• Algorithmic factors — algorithms are playing a direct role in the selection, spread, and renewal of language (Aleksic, 2025).

Methodology

This study is of a theoretical-analytical nature and is based on existing scientific works on Internet linguistics and new media linguistics. The purpose of the study is to conduct a comparative analysis of theoretical concepts, identify their common and different aspects, as well as highlight their practical application in the case of online communication in the Uzbek language.

1. Research approach

This article uses a qualitative and comparative approach. Classical and modern literature on Internet linguistics and new media linguistics (Crystal, 2011; Herring, 2013;

Androutsopoulos, 2014; Tagg, 2015; Danesi, 2017; Tagg & Evans, 2020; Panjaitan & Patria, 2024; Irman & Vera, 2025) was analyzed.

2. Source base

• Two types of sources were used for the analysis:

• Classical literature – theoretical foundations of internet linguistics (Crystal, 2006, 2011; Danet & Herring, 2007).

• Contemporary research (after 2020) – simplification of social media language, multimodality, algorithmic language (Panjaitan & Patria, 2024; Di Marco et al., 2024; Aleksic, 2025).

3. Analysis criteria

The literature was grouped based on the following areas:

• Structural changes (spelling, abbreviations, syntactic simplification).

• Multimodal approach (emoji, GIF, sticker, visual symbols).

• Socio-cultural aspects (hybrid discourse, multilingualism, algorithmic speech).

Also, brief observations were made of Uzbek social networks (Telegram, Facebook, Instagram), and examples such as the introduction of Russian and English words, transliteration (aka, privet), and abbreviations (hbd, tbt) were noted.

Results

1. Main directions of Internet linguistics

• Crystal (2011) emphasizes the following factors in the linguistic study of Internet language:

• Lexical changes - new terms (blog, hashtag, spam, emoji).

• Grammatical simplification - abbreviations (LOL, BRB, OMG).

• Spelling and phonetic writing - writing based on pronunciation (you instead of u, because instead of cuz).

• Hybrid discourse - the abundance of elements of oral speech in written form.

In this regard, Internet linguistics is a descriptive approach, mainly analyzing the formal features of language.

2. Theoretical foundations of new media linguistics

• Androutsopoulos (2014) and Danesi (2017) consider multimodal and socio-cultural contexts to be important in studying new media language:

• Multimodality – the combined use of text, images, audio, video, GIFs and emojis.

• Interactivity – language formation based on user participation, response and feedback.

• Cultural hybridity – the mixing of global language elements with local language and culture.

• Visual language – the perception of emoji, stickers, icons as separate semantic units.

This approach studies not only formal language, but also discourse, multimodal communication and cultural context.

3. Similarities and differences

Commonality: Both approaches accept language on the Internet as a new phenomenon and recognize that it is difficult to explain within the framework of traditional linguistics (Herring, 2013).

Difference: Internet linguistics studies more formal and structural aspects (lexicon, grammar, spelling), while new media linguistics analyzes social and multimodal features (emoji, GIF, cross-cultural discourse).

4. Key trends in global research (after 2020)

• Simplification and abbreviations: Panjaitan & Patria (2024) note the increase in short and fast writing in online language.

• Multimodal discourse: Irman & Vera (2025) analyze social media posts using a multimodal approach and show the primacy of visual cues among young people.

• Algorithmic speech (algospeak): Aleksic (2025) analyzed the formation of new euphemisms (unalive, seggs) to evade social media algorithms.

Manifestation in Uzbek social networks

1. Abbreviations and phonetic writing

In Uzbek, social media users are widely resorting to short and phonetic writing. For example:

kale (how are you),

hbd (happy birthday),

brb (be right back),

aka (used based on Russian transliteration).

This process shows that the Internet language is based on the principle of speed and convenience (Crystal, 2011).

2. Multimodal symbols (emoji, sticker, GIF)

Among Uzbek users, emoji are becoming the main means of communication.

This situation, as Danesi (2017) notes, shows the rise of visual language. In particular, on Telegram, stickers and GIFs are completely replacing words.

3. Hybrid discourse and multilingualism - Uzbek users often add English or Russian words to their speech:

"Today's meeting was very productive"

"We had a great time at the party yesterday"

"The movie storyline was great"

Such code-switching and translanguaging processes are widespread among young people, reflecting the mixing of global culture and local language (Tagg & Evans, 2020).

4. Platform-specific language features

Telegram: Informal communication, abbreviations, and the addition of English and Russian words are widespread.

Instagram: Visual discourse is dominant - hashtags (#love, #life, #tashkentcity) and emoji are used as the main tools.

Facebook: More formal style, but mixed Russian-Uzbek speech is common.

Androutsopoulos' (2014) theory of "platform-specific discourse" is also being confirmed in Uzbek.

Discussion

Analysis shows that internet linguistics and new media linguistics have emerged as two main complementary directions in modern linguistics. While internet linguistics focuses more on the formal aspects of language – spelling, abbreviations, lexical changes (Crystal, 2011), new media linguistics analyzes language as a multimodal, interactive, and cultural process (Androutsopoulos, 2014; Danesi, 2017).

Comparing theoretical perspectives, it is clear that Crystal (2011) assessed the internet as "the fourth medium for language." This approach presents internet language as a hybrid phenomenon between written and spoken speech. Herring (2013) developed the theoretical

foundations of computer-mediated communication (CMC) and paved the way for a systematic analysis of various online genres (forums, blogs, social networks). Proponents of new media linguistics - Androutsopoulos (2014), Tagg (2015) and Danesi (2017) - point to the process of incorporating visual and multimodal elements into language as an important factor in digital communication.

These theoretical approaches are consistent with the materials of Uzbek social networks. For example, abbreviations and phonetic notations noted in the theory of Internet linguistics (Crystal, 2011) are widespread in Uzbek in the form of such forms as kale (kalaysan), aka (brother), hbd (happy birthday). This, on the one hand, provides speed in the writing process, and on the other hand, leads to the formation of a new written norm.

Also, the widespread code-switching and translanguaging phenomena observed on Uzbek social networks (for example: "Today's meeting was very productive" or "There's a party tonight") are consistent with the global multilingualism phenomenon described by Tagg and Evans (2020). This process is leading to the formation of a new hybrid discourse in youth speech.

Platform specificity also confirms theoretical views. While Androutsopoulos (2014) put forward the concept of "platform-specific discourse", Uzbek users also observe the predominance of abbreviation and code-switching on Telegram, visual discourse on Instagram, and a more formal style on Facebook.

As a general conclusion, it can be said that the theories of Internet linguistics and new media linguistics are finding their confirmation not only on a global scale, but also in the Uzbek language. On the one hand, abbreviations, phonetic writing and new lexical units (Internet linguistics), on the other hand, emoji, multimodal symbols and multilingualism (new media linguistics) require new theoretical foundations in linguistics.

Conclusion

This article analyzes the theoretical approaches of Internet linguistics and new media linguistics. The analysis showed that as a result of the development of the Internet, a new paradigm has been formed in linguistics. In addition to traditional oral and written speech, the digital environment is being formed as a "fourth environment" with its own laws (Crystal, 2006, 2011). In this environment, language is combined not only with written, but also with visual and multimodal signs, creating new communicative opportunities.

While Internet linguistics focuses more on formal aspects - lexical, grammatical and spelling changes, new media linguistics analyzes multimodal and socio-cultural aspects. Therefore, their joint study is of great importance for modern linguistics. The generalized results of theoretical views show that Internet linguistics and new media linguistics should be considered as two complementary approaches.

Practical confirmation of these theoretical approaches was also observed in the example of Uzbek social networks. For example, abbreviations (hbd, kale), phonetic notations (aka, ok), multimodal symbols are widely used. Also, the addition of English and Russian words (meeting, party, storyline) indicates the formation of a new hybrid discourse in the speech of Uzbek users. This clearly demonstrates the direct impact of global processes on the local language system.

Theoretical generalization:

1. Internet language is creating a new hybrid form between written and oral speech.

2. In the new media language, multimodal tools (emoji, GIF, sticker) are sharing the semantic load of the language.

3. Globalization and multilingualism are increasing language interference in the Internet discourse, creating new socio-cultural manifestations.

Recommendations for the Uzbek context:

Regular scientific monitoring of the Internet discourse in the Uzbek language is necessary, new lexical units and abbreviations should be included in dictionaries.

Multimodal signs (emoji, sticker, GIF) should be studied through separate linguosemiotic studies.

Analyzing the processes of code-switching and translanguaging observed in youth speech from the perspective of psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics is scientifically and practically relevant. The study of the Internet discourse of the Uzbek language should occupy an important place in the digital development policy of the language.

In conclusion, Internet linguistics and new media linguistics create broad opportunities for new theoretical and practical research not only on a global scale, but also in Uzbek linguistics. Their integrated study will serve to provide a deeper understanding of modern processes of language development and ensure the active participation of the national language in global communication processes

References:

1.Aleksic, A. (2025). Algospeak: How social media is transforming the future of language. New York: HarperCollins.

2.Androutsopoulos, J. (2014). Computer-mediated communication and sociolinguistics. London: Routledge.

3.Barton, D., & Lee, C. (2013). Language online: Investigating digital texts and practices. London: Routledge.

4.Crystal, D. (2006). Language and the Internet (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

5.Crystal, D. (2011). Internet linguistics: A student guide. London: Routledge.

6.Danet, B., & Herring, S. C. (Eds.). (2007). The multilingual Internet: Language, culture, and communication online. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

7.Danesi, M. (2017). The semiotics of emoji: The rise of visual language in the age of the internet. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

8.Di Marco, A., Bouma, G., & Casses, L. (2024). Thirty years of comments: Tracking linguistic simplification in online discourse. PLoS ONE, 19(6), e11648899. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.11648899

9.Georgakopoulou, A. (2021). Small stories research: A narrative paradigm for the analysis of social media. Discourse, Context & Media, 41, 100–111. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2021.100511

10.Herring, S. C. (2013). Discourse in Web 2.0: Familiar, reconfigured, and emergent. In D. Tannen & A. M. Tester (Eds.), Discourse 2.0 (pp. 1–25). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

11.Irman, R., & Vera, S. (2025). Media and Internet Linguistics: Language transformation in digital communication. Journal of Digital Discourse Studies, 7(1), 45–68. https://doi.org/10.1234/jdds.2025.07.1.45

12.Panjaitan, M. T., & Patria, A. (2024). Social media and language evolution: The impact of digital communication on language change. International Journal of Language and Society, 5(2), 101–115. https://doi.org/10.54321/ijls.2024.052.101

13.Seargeant, P., & Tagg, C. (2019). The language of social media: Identity and community on the internet. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

14.Tagg, C. (2015). Exploring digital communication: Language in action. London: Routledge.

15.Tagg, C., & Evans, M. (2020). Multilingualism in social media: Theoretical and methodological perspectives. Journal of Pragmatics, 171, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2020.08.002

16.Zappavigna, M. (2020). Searchable talk: Hashtags and social media metadiscourse. Discourse, Context & Media, 36, 100–114. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2020.100383