



ENGLISH TRANSFORMATION UNDER DIGITAL COMMUNICATION: PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS IN UZBEK YOUTH ONLINE DISCOURSE

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Abstract. Digital communication presents English units in the everyday interaction of Uzbek youth not merely as borrowings, but as devices for producing social meaning. The central problem is that their contribution to social consciousness, group belonging, and interpersonal positioning has not been sufficiently systematized. This study aims to identify the pragmatic functions of English units in online discourse and connect them with language transformation shaped by digital communication. The material was examined through Conversation Analysis and Mayring's Qualitative Content Analysis; deductive and inductive coding were combined to construct a category matrix of pragmatic meanings. The analysis identified five recurrent functions: strengthening group solidarity, displaying modernity and digital competence, expressing emotional stance economically, marking thematic or professional identity, and creating irony or distance. The same English unit was found to acquire different pragmatic weight depending on the situation, audience, and relationships among conversational participants. The findings show that English elements in youth communication have moved beyond lexical addition and operate as indices of changing social consciousness. The study's scientific contribution is a category matrix that interprets English units in digital discourse as pragmatic resources for managing social relations rather than only as instances of language mixing. The conclusion recommends teaching pragmatic differentiation alongside language proficiency in media-literacy programmes and examining how the identified functions develop across platforms over time. This perspective links observable online language practices with broader processes of social identification, boundary formation, and changing communicative norms among young users.

Keywords: digital communication, English units, pragmatic meanings, qualitative



content analysis, sociolinguistic transformation, Uzbekistan, youth speech

Annotatsiya. Raqamli kommunikatsiya O'zbekiston yoshlarining kundalik muloqotida inglizcha birliklarni oddiy o'zlashmalar emas, balki ijtimoiy ma'no ishlab chiqaruvchi vositalar sifatida namoyon qilmoqda. Muammo shundaki, bunday birliklarning ijtimoiy ong, guruhviy mansublik va muloqotdagi munosabatlarni ifodalashga qo'shadigan hissasi yetarlicha tizimlashtirilmagan. Tadqiqotning maqsadi onlayn diskursda ishlatiladigan inglizcha birliklarning pragmatik funksiyalarini aniqlash va ularni raqamli muloqot ta'sirida yuz berayotgan til transformatsiyasi bilan bog'lashdan iborat. Material suhbat tahlili (Conversation Analysis) hamda Mayringning sifatiy kontent-tahlili (Qualitative Content Analysis) usullari asosida o'rganildi; deduktiv va induktiv kodlash birlashtirilib, pragmatik ma'nolar uchun kategoriya matritsasi tuzildi. Tahlil beshta takrorlanuvchi funktsiyani aniqladi: guruhviy birdamlikni kuchaytirish, zamonaviylik va raqamli kompetensiyani namoyish etish, hissiy munosabatni ixcham ifodalash, mavzuli yoki professional identifikatsiyani belgilash hamda kinoya va masofalanishni yaratish. Bir xil inglizcha birlik turli suhbatlarda vaziyat, auditoriya va ishtirokchilar o'rtasidagi munosabatga qarab boshqa pragmatik yuklama olishi aniqlandi. Natijalar inglizcha elementlar yoshlar nutqida leksik qo'shimcha bo'lib qolmay, ijtimoiy ongning o'zgarishini ko'rsatuvchi indekslarga aylanishini ko'rsatadi. Tadqiqotning ilmiy hissasi raqamli diskursdagi inglizcha birliklarni til aralashuvi emas, balki ijtimoiy munosabatlarni boshqaruvchi pragmatik resurs sifatida izohlovchi kategoriya matritsasini taklif etishdir. Xulosa sifatida media savodxonligi dasturlarida ingliz tili bilimlari bilan birga pragmatik farqlash ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish, kelgusida esa funksiyalarning turli platformalarda vaqt davomida o'zgarishini tekshirish tavsiya etiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: Inglizcha birliklar, pragmatik ma'nolar, raqamli muloqot, sifatiy kontent-tahlil, sotsiolingvistik o'zgarish, yoshlar nutqi, O'zbekiston

INTRODUCTION

Digital communication has made English units visible in Uzbek youth online discourse, where language practices increasingly signal changing social consciousness [1]. Crystal identifies Internet interaction as a setting for accelerated language transformation [2], while Androutsopoulos links networked multilingualism with audience-oriented identity work [3]. Research object — Uzbek



youth's online discourse. Research subject — pragmatic functions of English units within digital communication. The study aimed to explain this transformation by: 1) identifying English-unit patterns; 2) classifying identity, solidarity, emphasis, humour, and status functions; 3) relating usage to digital-engagement indicators; 4) interpreting language practices as social-consciousness markers. The hypothesis predicted that greater digital engagement would increase frequent, functionally differentiated English-unit use. Conversation Analysis and Qualitative Content Analysis (Mayring) were applied to online discourse, establishing a basis for sociological interpretation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The preceding methodological emphasis on conversation analysis and qualitative content analysis requires a broader sociological interpretation of English units as markers of social consciousness. Crystal theoretically substantiated digital communication as a site where written and spoken conventions converge [2], whereas Androutsopoulos empirically linked networked multilingualism to audience-sensitive language choice [3]. Tagg and Seargeant associated translocal community formation with deliberate linguistic positioning [4], but Georgakopoulou's small-stories approach shifts attention toward situated identity performances [5]. These perspectives distinguish English language transformation from simple lexical borrowing: English units acquire pragmatic functions through solidarity, humour, emphasis, identity construction, and status signalling. Herring and Androutsopoulos further demonstrated that computer-mediated discourse is shaped by platform affordances and interactional norms [6]. Uzbek scholarship theoretically substantiated language–society interdependence [7], while Qosimova documented pragmatic variability in Internet communication [8]. Russian-language scholarship described computer-mediated communication as a discursive formation with norms of its own [9; 10] and traced the orthographic and lexical innovations that accompany it [11], while mediatization research situated such change within wider shifts in language ideology [12]. Yet existing studies rarely integrate longitudinal youth-oriented media-use indicators with interviews and discourse evidence, leaving Uzbek youth's functionally differentiated English units insufficiently specified. This gap necessitates a mixed sociological design linking digital communication intensity to online discourse practices.



METHODOLOGY

The literature review identified a gap between lexical borrowing and socially situated pragmatic functions; this study therefore used a qualitative-dominant Conversation Analysis case design of Uzbek youth online discourse. Publicly accessible posts and comment sequences were purposively selected for Jefferson transcription, turn-taking, sequential placement, and repair-sequence analysis, while semi-structured interviews clarified participants' interpretations of identity, solidarity, humour, emphasis, and status signalling [6]. Survey recruitment followed stratification by age, gender, education, and urban or rural residence; Cochran's specification determined the required questionnaire base [13].

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 p(1-p)}{e^2} \quad (1)$$

where n_0 — initial sample size; Z — confidence coefficient; p — expected proportion; e — sampling error.

With $Z = 1.96$, $p = 0.5$ and $e = 0.05$ the formula returned $n_0 \approx 384$, and 384 valid questionnaires were retained after data cleaning. The structured questionnaire measured digital communication intensity, platform use, English-unit frequency, and perceived pragmatic functions through a demographic profile form. Interview prompts and the coding scheme were aligned with Mayring's category matrix [14], combining deductive categories from the research question with inductive categories emerging from online discourse [8]. Coding proceeded through summarizing, category revision, and coder-agreement checking, preserving the distinction between participants' metalinguistic explanations and observable interactional practices. Table 1 sets out the correspondence between each instrument, its analytical object and the output it produced.

Table 1 — Instrument alignment

Instrument	Analytical object	Output
Questionnaire	Media-use indicators	Frequency profile
Interview guide	Meaning attribution	Interpretive themes
Discourse corpus	English units	Pragmatic categories

Source: compiled by the author

The framework linked digital communication exposure to English language transformation through English units and pragmatic functions, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 — Conceptual framework of the study

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable
Digital communication intensity	English language transformation in online discourse
platform use	
Mediator: Pragmatic functions of English units	
Moderator: Age, gender, education, residence	

Source: compiled by the author

H1: Greater digital communication engagement differentiates pragmatic use of English units.

Ethical approval, voluntary consent, anonymization, and exclusion of private messages protected participants and public-discourse authors. The resulting corpus enabled the Results section to compare interactional patterns with reported language practices.

RESULTS

The category matrix produced through deductive and inductive coding identified five recurrent pragmatic functions of English units in Uzbek youth online discourse; 642 discourse segments were coded in total, alongside 384 valid questionnaire responses. Identity marking appeared in profile descriptions and



captions, while emphasis occurred through forms such as “really,” “best,” and “no way”; humour and group solidarity were concentrated in peer exchanges, whereas technological terminology remained tied to platform practices. These categories operationalize English language transformation as socially situated usage rather than simple lexical borrowing [8].

Table 3 — Respondent profile by social-position categories

Category	Frequency (n)	Share (%)
Age 18–21	212	55.2
Age 22–25	172	44.8
Female	199	51.8
Male	185	48.2
Urban residence	236	61.5
Rural residence	148	38.5

Source: compiled by the author

Table 3 presents the respondent-profile distribution by age, gender and urban or rural residence, enabling comparison of English-unit practices across social positions. Respondents aged 18–21 formed the larger group (212; 55.2%) against those aged 22–25 (172; 44.8%), the gender split was close to even (199 women, 51.8%; 185 men, 48.2%), and urban residents predominated (236; 61.5%) over rural residents (148; 38.5%). The largest contrast concerned communicative intensity: younger participants reported more frequent platform interaction, while older participants described English units as context-dependent resources. Gender differences were weaker than residence differences, and education shaped the distinction between technological terminology and identity-oriented expressions.



Table 4 — Frequency distribution of English-unit use

Indicator	Frequency (n)	Share (%)
Daily use	168	43.8
Several times weekly	121	31.5
Occasional use	68	17.7
Rare use	27	7.0
Total	384	100.0

Source: compiled by the author

Table 4 records the frequency of English-unit use without reducing pragmatic meaning to lexical counts: 168 respondents (43.8%) reported daily use and 121 (31.5%) use several times a week, while occasional (68; 17.7%) and rare use (27; 7.0%) together accounted for less than a quarter of the sample. Conversation analysis showed that repeated forms acquired different interactional values according to addressee, topic, and sequential position; “sorry,” “wow,” and “mood” marked stance, repair, and affiliation respectively [6]. Publicly available posts similarly connected English units with platform affordances, especially hashtags, gaming vocabulary, and abbreviated evaluations [2].

Table 5 — Pragmatic functions identified through content analysis

Function	Frequency (n)	Share (%)
Identity marking	158	24.6
Emphasis	147	22.9
Humour	129	20.1



Function	Frequency (n)	Share (%)
Group solidarity	118	18.4
Technological reference	90	14.0
Total coded segments	642	100.0

Source: compiled by the author

Table 5 reports the distribution of the five pragmatic functions across the 642 coded segments: identity marking (158; 24.6%) and emphasis (147; 22.9%) were the most frequent, followed by humour (129; 20.1%), group solidarity (118; 18.4%) and technological reference (90; 14.0%). Thematic coding therefore confirmed the hypothesis qualitatively: greater digital communication engagement corresponded to broader functional differentiation, not merely higher borrowing. Coding agreement was checked across the category matrix, and discrepant cases were resolved through contextual rereading. The pattern accords with networked multilingualism, where language choice indexes audience and translocal belonging [3], while Uzbek social meanings remain anchored in local interactional expectations [7]. These findings provide the empirical basis for interpreting English units as indicators of changing social consciousness in the discussion.

DISCUSSION

The category matrix indicates that digital communication transforms English units into pragmatic resources for identity, solidarity, emphasis, humour, and status signalling. This interpretation accords with Androutsopoulos's account of networked multilingualism [3] and Seargeant and Tagg's analysis of online identity [15], while extending both through Uzbek social consciousness. Crystal associated internet language with accelerated innovation [2]; the present discourse instead reveals culturally regulated innovation, not unrestricted borrowing. Tagg, Seargeant and Brown showed that the same resources are read as offensive once audience expectations diverge [17], which is why the ironic function identified here remains socially risky. Habermas's communicative-action perspective [18] explains why English units coordinate belonging within peer interaction, whereas Abduazizov linked language practices to social functions [16]. Interpretation remains bounded



by purposive online texts, self-reported questionnaire responses, and context-dependent coding. Media-literacy programmes should therefore teach pragmatic awareness alongside English proficiency, enabling youth to distinguish solidarity from exclusion in digital communication.

CONCLUSION

Conversation analysis and qualitative content analysis established that digital communication transforms English units into socially meaningful pragmatic resources within Uzbek youth online discourse, rather than merely borrowed vocabulary. This sociological account connects English language transformation with identity, solidarity, emphasis, humour, and status signalling.

Language education should teach digital discourse interpretation and pragmatic awareness, while youth-oriented media-literacy guidance should frame productive multilingual communication as socially situated practice. The next study should examine how these functions change across platforms and longitudinally.

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