Impact of Social Media on English Language – A Critical Analysis

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Abstract: Social media is gaining a lot of momentum now-a-days. It has become an application dependent and computer aided surfing tool to spread information, opinions, and suggestions and even to spread the marketing orientation among the vast number of users. The average time spent by the users over social media everyday is increasing drastically and the number is still gigantic. As per a statistics published by Sanika Diwanji on 11th February, 2019, the number of social media users in India stood about *326.1 million in 2018* and it is expected to be around *448 million in 2023* when in *2017* the number was *293.8 million*. This large number of people not only spends time on social sites taking it just as a search engine but also they interact, react and respond to other users. The language they opt for while communicating among the user-pool is obviously English. This English may not be pure and grammatically correct but it is quite obvious that the ways they use English language through their activities is definitely changing the basic fabric of English language to a great extent.

Key words: social media, users, communicate, language, fabric, English.

Introduction

Social media has brought a real life solution to interact and be connected with the friends, relatives, professionals and even unknown web-page intruders through common platforms of social sites called Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Linkdin etc are trying to establish contacts with other users and engage in need-based communication. Out of busy schedule of professionals, businessmen and even the students, it hardly takes a minute to check and send the response to the desired person or a group. This interaction is friendly, spontaneous and operating on a global scale. Apart from this, these social networking sites are now leaving a huge impact on the ways people around the world live and speak. As a consequence, English language is facing tough challenges to deal with huge changes occurring due to the influence of social media. Even English dictionaries are experiencing either new word originated from social sites or pathetic change in meaning.

User-Statistics

The blessing of internet has made the distance closer and the advent of social media has brought the relationships closer as well as makes it alive.

As per a report published in a Blog on Social Media Statistics in India by Pragati, it is seen that-

- ✓ On 7th October, 2018, India's current population strength is 1.36 billion which stands second in the world and out that 230 million or 70% are active social media users.
- ✓ Indian users spend on an average 2.4hrs/day on social media which is just a bit below than global usage 2.5 hrs/day (Source: The Hindu).
- ✓ 97.2 million users are having an account on Facebook and the average age-group is between 18-24 yrs.
- ✓ 52% Indians search and depend on the information published on Facebook.
- ✓ India is having 7.75 million users on Twitter and 18% users use Twitter as a source of information.
- ✓ 69 million people in India use Instagram as of November 2019 and the number is growing @ 5.6 %/quarter.

Speedy-Communication

Social media helps users to communicate quickly, effectively and efficiently. It allows writing message concisely and the same information can be shared to many users at a time which is an add-on benefit of social sites. On Twitter, a user is bound to write message within 280 characters only. So, it is indirectly forcing a user to make the statement brief which minimizes time required to make an effective communication. Character limitation is also applicable on Facebook and Instagram as well.

Impact on English Vocabulary

The most important part of social media on English language is it has appropriated the existing vocabulary of the language. Each words in English is carrying a definite and unique meaning since its origin and now the meaning of such words are gradually changing due to the influence of social media. Here is given a brief list of words that has lost its honour and identity in social media.

Example:

Sl. No.	English words	Original meaning	Changed meaning in social media
1	**WALL**	Boundary	Homepage of a user-profile where one can easily share thoughts/opinions/information on social forum.
2	**TABLET**	a small, flat piece of medicine	A portable electronic device
3	**TROLL**	giant or demon	Someone who makes outrageous comment about someone to draw

			attention on social media.
4	**CATFISH**	a particular genre of fish	A user who hides own profile and creates a false online identity
5	**BUMP**	Encounter a sudden hindrance	Pushing any post at the top of the profile page so that it becomes easily visible.
6	**BLOCK**	To create a barrier in front of something	To prevent someone from viewing anyone's profile.
7	**CANOE**	A particular kind of boat with paddle	A kind of Twitter conversation.
8	**CLOUD**	Condensed vapour generated from water floating in the atmosphere.	A particular section of internet which helps to store and process mass data.
9	**FRIEND**	Someone with whom a mutual respect, esteem, affection is found.	A person who is in the contact list of a user-profile.
10	**FOLLOW**	To come after someone or something proceeding ahead.	To subscribe continuous updates of a user-profile.
11	**FOOTPRIENT**	A visible mark of a foot.	A separate set of features and actions that help to identify the source.
12	**FIREHOSE**	A large hose which used to put out fire.	A large pool of data.
13	**HANDEL**	A part of something that can be held by hand.	The name one uses on social media.
14	**LIKE**	Having the same characteristics or similarity.	To exhibit the liking of the user.
15	**MEME**	An idea, style, opinion, information and even ritual that are obeyed and passed on from one person to another under a particular culture.	Video, image etc of a particular culture that are changed for the purpose of humour and spread over internet.
16	**PING**	A kind of sharp sound.	To contact someone by sending an electronic message.
17	**PROFILE**	A short biographical sketch.	Personal details of an individual who is using social account using a user-name.
18	**SWIPE**	A swing in a person's hand.	To draw and drag fingers on the touch screen.
19	**SANDBOX**	A box filled with sand that children can play with.	An environment where the developers can create new content.
20	**TAG**	To attach something	To link to a user-profile in social

		additionally.	media.
21	**TEXT**	A book or written material which is read.	A message in social media.
22	**TIMELINE**	A chart listing important happenings in a historical period.	Posts and updates that appear at the profile page of a user in a social site.
23	**TWEET**	Chirping of birds.	A short message that is sent on Twitter.
24	**UNPLUG**	To disconnect any electrical device from plug.	Not to use the digital and electronic gadgets for a particular time frame.
25	**VIRAL**	Caused by the spread of a virus.	Become very popular in social media and spread rapidly.
26	**SPAM**	A tinned meat-product.	Unsolicited message or email sent via internet.
27	**PLUS ONE**	An extra person one carries with in a party or event.	An initiative that allows one to publicly search google and endorse web-result.
28	**CHECK-IN**	The way one reports one's presence officially.	To share information of your vivid presence in multiple locations in a single day.
29	**GOOGLE**	The name of an internet search technology company.	To search any information in the internet.
30	**BANDWIDTH**	Data-transmission rate.	The capability of a person to deal with different tasks or issues.
31	**STUMBLE**	Walking unsteadily.	Used as personal recommendation engine to recommend any video, photo in internet.
32	**AT**	Used as preposition	To direct an online communication towards a person.
33	**MENTION**	To draw a reference	To refer to a particular brand of choice in social media though marketing platform.
34	**AVATAR**	A divine teacher.	Graphical representation of video of an individual.
35	**UNFRIEND**	Defriend	To remove someone from the contact list of a user.

Impact on Acronyms

Acronyms are the newly formed words that are created by taking the first letters of different words present in a phrase. In most of the cases, this newly formed word takes up a completely new meaning deviating from its original one. Use of acronyms can make the communication shortened. In social media the use of acronym has become wide spread and the users are also very much familiar and comfortable in using

acronyms in their everyday communication since it has a great impact to make the communication process speedier.

Here is given a few examples of acronyms that has been formed and excessively used in social media communication.

✓ *Social media Acronyms:*

- FB - Facebook
- IG - Instagram
- LI – Linkdin
- G+ - Google+
- YT - Youtube
- TW – Twitter

✓ *Business Specific Acronyms:*

- B2B: Business to business
- B2C: Business to consumer
- CMGR: Community manager
- CMS: Content management system
- CPC: Cost per click
- CR: Conversion rate
- CRO: Conversion rate optimization
- CTA: Call to action
- CTR: Click through rate
- ROI: Return on investment
- SMP: Social media platform
- SMM: Social media marketing
- SRP: Social relationship platform
- TOS: Terms of service
- UGC: User-generated content

✓ *Communicational acronym*

- BRB – Be right back
- BTS – Behind the scenes.
- BTW – By the way
- AFAIK – As far as I know
- AMA – Ask me anything.
- DYK – Did you know…?
- FBO – Facebook official.
- FYI – For your information
- G2G or GTG – Got to go
- GG – Good game
- HBD – Happy birthday
- HTH – Happy to help
- IDC – I don't care
- IDK – I don't know
- IKR – I know, right?
- ILY – I love you
- IMO – In my opinion
- IRL – In real life
- TMI – Too much information
- WBU – What about you?
- WFH – Work from home
- TBH – To be honest
- PPL – People
- SFW – Safe for work
- NVM – Never mind
- NBD – No big deal
- NM – Not much
- OMW – On my way
- JK – Just kidding
- LMK – Let me know
- LOL – Laughing out loud
- LMS – Like my status.

Social media Slang

- Click bait: When a person is using provocative comments.
- Cray: When a person goes mad for something.
- Crush it: When a person is doing exceptionally well.
- Face palm: When a person acts as unbelievably stupid.
- Fam: It is the short of family.
- Fire: When a person is at the peak form or doing something exceptionally good.
- I can't even: It is used to make emotional statement to express one's inability to do, express o r think something.
- It me: When one can relate someone.
- On fleek: On point
- Savage: When a person is feeling extremely bad or ruined due to condemnation.
- Slay: It is used to express a good feeling when a person is doing really good on any aspect.
- Squad goals: A term to describe a desire to be attached to a group or to make a group as desired one.
- Thirsty: To show a person is highly desperate to achieve something.
- Throwing shade: To show disrespect to someone publicly.
- Trend jacking: When a person considers a trending topic with irrelevant content.
- Yaas: An enthusiastic form to tell 'yes'.

Use of abbreviation in social media

- 4Eva: Forever
- SD : Sweet dreams
- Gn : Good night
- N : And
- kk : ok
- Kl : Cool
- w8 : Wait
- BF: Boy Friend
- GF: Girlfriend
- OH: Overheard
- B/w:Between
- Zzz: Sleeping
- WU? : What's up?
- Abt. : About
- Y : Why or Yes

SWOT Analysis

The influence of social media is gone to such an extent that use of English in social media is indeed standing at the verge of transitional stage. If a SWOT analysis is done on the impact of social media on English language a bunch of valuable information may spring out:

STRENGTH	OPPORTUNITY
- Faster communication - Effective communication - Efficient medium of knowledge sharing - Better socialization - Knowledge enhancement - Multiple sources of information for knowledge-gain.	- A vast platform to interact among profile - Entertaining - Generate intrinsic motivation to communicate - Learning through enjoyment - Interaction between varied groups and people. - Easily accessible - User friendly - Cost effective way to learn
WEAKNESS	**THREAT**
- Shortened sentence - Poor use of grammar - Reappropriation of words. - Excessive use of acronyms and abbreviations - Use of slang during conversation - Colloquial English. - Response may not be immediate.	- Reappropriation of meaning - Slang and unauthorized words are creeping into the language. - Use of improper English intentionally in some cases. - Improper communication. - Feedback/reply is not compulsory. - Fails to build up command on English - Fails to generate love and passion for English - The essence of a language is missing.

Conclusion

This is a high time to be cautious and to save the glory of English writing. Social media is used as a medium of entertainment first and communication through proper form has become of secondary importance. If communication is meant just to transmit information from one person to another, it is nothing to do with English language but if communication is meant something more than that we need to think for a second as it is also our own responsibility to use and protect one cherished language like English from being polluted.

Social media is used by all types of people irrespective of their age distribution, gender differences and professional engagements across our country. As English is treated as second language, the efficacy on this language is not satisfactory to many of us. Almost everyone starting from a doctoral candidate as to simple layman play an active role in social media and obviously the level of communication will not be same in

both of the instances. Thus it differs and up to this it is quite acceptable but crisis moment is that the outlook towards an international language is changing in our country. This is being a sharp difference between the patterns of writing in social media and of course use of the language in other context. We can let the thing be like the way it is ongoing or we can at least try to use of the language in proper way and then write spontaneously because any language comes from heart. Language gives birth literature and literature enriches a civilization. This small intention to read correct and write flawless can do wonder to save English vocabulary and the language as a whole.