IQRO JURNALI , IQRO JOURNAL, ИКРО ЖУРНАЛИ
ISSN:2181-4341| wordlyknowledge.uz/index.php/iqro
Volume 23 Issue 01 AVGUST 2026

THE CULTURAL ROLE OF ENGLISH SLANGS AND NEOLOGISMS IN SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION

Komilova Oygul Vokhidjon kizi
Student of the University of Exact and Social Sciences
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21929986

Abstract. This paper examines the cultural role of English slang and neologisms in social media communication. In the digital age, platforms such as Twitter (X), Instagram, TikTok, and online forums have become primary spaces where language evolves rapidly. English slang and newly coined words (neologisms) serve not only as tools for efficient and expressive interaction but also as markers of identity, group belonging, creativity, and cultural influence.

The study analyzes how these linguistic forms facilitate informal, playful, and emotionally charged communication, help users construct online personas, and spread global youth and internet culture. At the same time, the widespread use of English slang contributes to linguistic hybridization, code-switching, and the global diffusion of Anglo-American cultural norms. The paper highlights both the democratizing and homogenizing effects of this phenomenon, showing how slang and neologisms shape social relationships, reflect generational values, and influence offline language practices.

Keywords: English slang, neologisms, social media communication, digital culture, linguistic innovation, identity construction, global English, internet language, cultural influence, code-switching.

Introduction.

In the contemporary digital era, social media platforms such as X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, and various messaging applications have become central arenas of everyday communication. Within these spaces, language evolves at an unprecedented speed. New words, expressions, and meanings emerge almost daily, and English slang together with neologisms occupies a particularly prominent position. Terms such as *FOMO*, *ghosting*, *simp*, *rizz*, *delulu*, *ate*, *slay*, and countless others circulate widely among young people and internet users, functioning not merely as tools of mutual understanding but also as cultural markers [1].

English slang and neologisms are far more than linguistic innovations. They play a significant cultural role by enabling users to construct personal and group identities, express emotions efficiently, signal belonging to specific online communities, and participate in global youth culture. At the same time, the rapid spread of these forms contributes to linguistic hybridization, frequent code-switching, and the worldwide diffusion of Anglo-American cultural norms and values [2].

This paper explores the cultural significance of English slang and neologisms in social media communication. It examines how these linguistic phenomena shape online interaction, influence identity formation, reflect generational attitudes, and affect broader patterns of language use both online and offline. By analyzing their functions and consequences, the study aims to highlight both the creative and democratizing potential of digital language innovation and the homogenizing effects associated with the global dominance of English internet culture [3].

Analysis of Specific Slang Examples.

English slang and neologisms circulating on social media are not random linguistic innovations; each carries distinct cultural meanings and functions. Below is an analysis of

several widely used examples, focusing on their origins, typical usage, and cultural roles in digital communication [4].

1. *Rizz*

- **Meaning**: Short for "charisma." It refers to someone's ability to attract or charm others, especially romantically.
- **Usage**: Common on TikTok and Instagram ("He has mad rizz," "rizz up the girl"). Often used playfully or ironically.
- **Cultural role**: *Rizz* reflects the gamification of social and romantic interaction in digital culture. It turns interpersonal skills into a measurable "skill" that can be performed, evaluated, and displayed online. The term helps users construct confident or humorous self-images and signals belonging to Gen Z internet culture. Its rapid global spread also shows how English slang becomes a shared cultural currency among young people worldwide.

2. *Delulu*

- **Meaning**: Shortened form of "delusional." Used to describe someone who holds unrealistic or overly optimistic beliefs, especially about relationships or personal success.
- **Usage**: Frequently appears in captions and comments ("I'm delulu for thinking he'll text back," "delulu is the solulu").
- **Cultural role**: *Delulu* captures a specifically digital form of hopeful self-deception. It allows users to acknowledge irrational optimism while framing it as a humorous or even empowering attitude ("delulu is the solulu" = delusion is the solution). Culturally, it reflects the tension between curated online personas and real-life disappointment, offering a light-hearted way to manage emotional vulnerability in public digital spaces [5].

3. *Ghosting*

- **Meaning**: Suddenly cutting off all communication with someone without explanation.
- **Usage**: Widely used across dating apps, Instagram, and X ("He ghosted me after three dates").
- **Cultural role**: *Ghosting* names a behavior made possible and normalized by digital communication. It highlights the ease of disappearing in online interactions and the resulting emotional impact. Culturally, the term serves as both a critique of modern dating norms and a shared vocabulary for discussing digital abandonment, helping users process and communalize experiences of rejection [6].

4. *FOMO* (Fear Of Missing Out)

- **Meaning**: Anxiety that others are having rewarding experiences from which one is absent.
- **Usage**: Common in captions about parties, events, or trends ("FOMO is real tonight").
- **Cultural role**: *FOMO* articulates a distinctly social-media-driven emotion. Constant exposure to others' highlight reels intensifies the feeling of exclusion. The term itself has become a cultural diagnosis of digital life, allowing users to name and share a collective psychological experience shaped by platforms designed to maximize engagement [7].

5. *Simp*

- **Meaning**: Someone (usually a man) who is overly attentive or submissive toward someone they like, often without reciprocation.
- **Usage**: Used both critically and self-mockingly ("Stop simping," "I'm such a simp for her").
- **Cultural role**: *Simp* polices and comments on gendered behavior in online spaces. It reflects evolving attitudes toward romantic effort, masculinity, and emotional labor. While often used humorously, it also participates in broader cultural debates about relationships, consent, and digital courtship norms [8].

Comparative Analysis

A comparative examination of English slang and neologisms on social media reveals both shared cultural functions and significant differences in meaning, emotional tone, and social impact. By contrasting selected examples, it becomes possible to identify broader patterns in how digital language shapes identity, emotion, and community [9].

1. Identity Performance vs. Emotional Naming

Some terms primarily serve **identity construction**, while others mainly **name emotional experiences**.

- *Rizz*, *slay*, and *ate* function as performance-oriented slang. They allow users to present themselves as charismatic, stylish, or successful. These terms are often used in a celebratory or self-enhancing way and contribute to the construction of desirable online personas.
- In contrast, *FOMO*, *ghosting*, and *delulu* primarily name emotional or relational states. *FOMO* articulates anxiety, *ghosting* names digital abandonment, and *delulu* describes a form of hopeful self-deception. These terms help users process and share feelings rather than display status [10].

Comparison: Identity-focused slang tends to be more affirmative and performative, while emotion-focused slang is more reflective and diagnostic. Both, however, create shared cultural vocabulary that strengthens group belonging.

2. Positive vs. Critical/Negative Valence

Slang terms also differ in evaluative tone:

Term	Dominant Tone	Cultural Function	Typical Context
Slay Ate	Strongly positive	Celebration of excellence and style	Fashion, performance, appearance
Rizz	Mostly positive / playful	Display of social/romantic skill	Flirting, self-presentation
Delulu	Ambivalent (humorous + self-critical)	Managing unrealistic hope	Relationships, personal goals
Ghosting	Negative	Critiquing abrupt disconnection	Dating and friendships
Simp	Predominantly negative / mocking	Policing excessive romantic effort	Gendered romantic behavior
FOMO	Negative / anxious	Naming digital-age anxiety	Social comparison, events

Insight: Positive terms (*slay*, *rizz*) tend to reinforce aspirational digital culture, while negative or critical terms (*ghosting*, *simp*, *FOMO*) function as tools of social commentary and emotional regulation. Ambivalent terms such as *delulu* occupy a middle ground, allowing users to laugh at their own irrationality while still participating in it.

3. Older vs. Newer Neologisms

A temporal comparison also proves revealing:

- **Earlier terms** (*FOMO* – mid-2000s, *ghosting* – popularized in the 2010s) entered mainstream awareness relatively slowly and were often discussed in journalistic or psychological contexts before becoming everyday slang.
- **Newer terms** (*rizz*, *delulu*, *ate*) spread with extreme speed via TikTok and short-form video culture. Their rise is closely tied to algorithmic amplification and meme-driven circulation.

Comparison: Older terms often diagnose structural features of digital life (constant connectivity, easy disappearance). Newer terms more frequently celebrate or playfully exaggerate individual performance and attitude. This shift reflects a broader cultural movement

from diagnosing the problems of social media toward performing within its aesthetic and competitive logic.

4. Global Reach and Local Adaptation

While all these terms originate in English-speaking digital spaces, their cultural roles differ between native and non-native contexts:

- Among native English-speaking youth, the terms often function as markers of generational identity and in-group solidarity.
- In non-English-speaking communities (including Central Asia, East Asia, and parts of Europe), the same slang frequently signals cosmopolitanism, digital literacy, and participation in global youth culture. At the same time, local speakers often blend these English forms with their own languages, producing hybrid expressions.

Comparative observation: The cultural role of English slang is therefore dual. On the one hand, it creates a shared transnational youth language; on the other, it can reinforce the soft power of English and Anglo-American digital culture.

Summary of Comparative Findings

Across the examples, three main cultural roles emerge:

1. **Performative** – enabling users to display desirable traits (*rizz*, *slay*).
2. **Diagnostic** – helping users name and process digital-age emotions and behaviors (*FOMO*, *ghosting*, *delulu*).
3. **Regulatory** – commenting on or policing social and romantic conduct (*simp*).

These functions are not mutually exclusive; many terms combine more than one role. What unites them is their capacity to turn fleeting online experiences into shared cultural knowledge, thereby shaping how users understand themselves and others in the digital public sphere [12].

Scientific Novelty / Research Contribution

The present study offers several original contributions to the understanding of English slang and neologisms in social media communication:

1. **Integrated Cultural Perspective** While previous research has examined internet slang mainly from linguistic, sociolinguistic, or media studies angles, this work combines these approaches and places the cultural dimension at the center. It systematically analyzes how English slang and neologisms function not only as linguistic innovations but as cultural tools that shape identity, emotion, social norms, and global youth culture.
2. **Comparative Typology of Digital Slang** The study develops a comparative framework that distinguishes different cultural roles of slang (performative, diagnostic, and regulatory). By contrasting terms such as *rizz*, *slay*, *delulu*, *ghosting*, *FOMO*, and *simp*, it reveals patterns that have not been clearly systematized in earlier research.
3. **Focus on Recent Neologisms and Platform Dynamics** Special attention is given to rapidly emerging terms associated with TikTok and short-form video culture (*rizz*, *delulu*, *ate*). The analysis highlights how algorithmic platforms accelerate the creation, spread, and transformation of slang, offering insights into the changing nature of linguistic innovation in the 2020s.
4. **Global and Cross-Cultural Dimension** The research emphasizes the dual role of English digital slang: as a shared transnational youth language and as a vehicle of Anglo-American cultural influence. This perspective is particularly relevant for non-English-speaking contexts, where such slang often signals digital literacy and cosmopolitan identity while contributing to linguistic hybridization.
5. **Bridging Online Language and Broader Cultural Processes** The study demonstrates that social media slang does more than reflect digital communication practices — it actively

participates in the construction of contemporary cultural values, emotional norms, and generational identities. This connection between micro-level linguistic forms and macro-level cultural change constitutes one of the central original contributions of the work.

In summary, the novelty of the research lies in its culturally oriented, comparative, and platform-sensitive analysis of English slang and neologisms, which advances current understanding of how digital language both shapes and is shaped by contemporary social life [11].

Conclusion.

The analysis presented in this study demonstrates that English slang and neologisms play a significant cultural role in contemporary social media communication. Far from being mere linguistic curiosities or temporary trends, terms such as *rizz*, *delulu*, *ghosting*, *FOMO*, *slay*, *ate*, and *simp* function as powerful cultural tools. They enable users to construct and perform identities, name and manage digital-age emotions, regulate social and romantic behavior, and participate in a shared global youth culture.

The comparative examination of these expressions reveals three primary cultural functions: performative (displaying desirable traits and skills), diagnostic (articulating new emotional and relational experiences), and regulatory (commenting on and policing social norms). Moreover, the rapid circulation of recent neologisms through algorithm-driven platforms illustrates how digital environments accelerate linguistic innovation and cultural diffusion. At the same time, the global spread of English slang contributes both to the creation of a transnational communicative repertoire and to the reinforcement of Anglo-American cultural influence, often leading to linguistic hybridization in non-English-speaking communities.

Ultimately, English slang and neologisms on social media are not simply reflections of digital life; they actively shape the ways in which individuals understand themselves, relate to others, and negotiate belonging in an increasingly mediated world.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. **For researchers** Future studies should conduct more extensive cross-cultural and multilingual investigations into how English digital slang is adapted, resisted, or hybridized in different linguistic communities. Longitudinal research tracking the life cycle of specific neologisms would also deepen understanding of platform-driven language change.
2. **For educators and language teachers** English language curricula, particularly at secondary and tertiary levels, should incorporate critical discussions of internet slang and neologisms. This would help students develop both communicative competence in digital environments and critical awareness of the cultural values embedded in these linguistic forms.
3. **For media and digital literacy programs** Educational initiatives aimed at young people should address the emotional and social implications of terms such as *FOMO*, *ghosting*, and *delulu*. Raising awareness of how slang shapes perceptions of relationships, self-worth, and social comparison can contribute to healthier digital practices.
4. **For content creators and platform designers** Greater attention should be paid to the cultural and psychological effects of rapidly circulating slang. Platforms and influencers have the capacity to either amplify superficial or harmful norms or to promote more reflective and inclusive uses of digital language.
5. **For policymakers and cultural institutions** In non-English-speaking countries, strategies for preserving linguistic diversity should take into account the growing influence of English internet slang. Supporting the development of local digital creative content can help balance global linguistic flows with the vitality of national languages and cultures

References.

1. Androutsopoulos, J. (2014). Mediatization and sociolinguistic change: Key concepts, research traditions, open issues. In J. Androutsopoulos (Ed.), *Mediatization and sociolinguistic change* (pp. 3–48). De Gruyter.
2. Crystal, D. (2001). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge University Press.
3. Karimbayeva, A. Sh. (2025). Lexical innovation in digital discourse: A corpus-based study of neologisms on social media platforms. *Zenodo*. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15192175
4. Mattiello, E. (2008). *An introduction to English slang: A description of its morphology, semantics and sociology*. Polimetrica.
5. Naveed, M. (2025). Linguistics hybrids and cross-cultural neologisms: A multilingual study of Gen Z expression in visual social media (Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter) ecosystem. *Dialogue Social Science Review (DSSR)*.
6. Sieras, S. G. (2026). Beyond hashtags: A morphosyntactic inquiry into English neologisms across social media platforms. *International Journal of Linguistics Studies, 6*(1). https://doi.org/10.32996/ijls.2026.6.1.2
7. Tagliamonte, S. A. (2016). So sick or so cool? The language of youth on the Internet. *Language in Society, 45*(1), 1–32. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404515000780
8. Würschinger, Q. (2022). *Lexical innovation on the web and social media: Emergence, diffusion, and social variation in the use of English neologisms* (Doctoral dissertation). Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. https://doi.org/10.5282/edoc.32672
9. Yule, G. (2020). *The study of language* (7th ed.). Cambridge University Press.