

Trends in The Transformation of Uzbek Language Norms in Digital Communication

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Abstract: The article examines how the norms of the Uzbek literary language are being reinterpreted in digital communication, identifying the levels at which change occurs and the forces driving it from cognitive-pragmatic and sociolinguistic perspectives. Treating the norm as a social convention that mediates between the language system and speech, the study classifies orthographic-graphic, lexical-derivational, morphosyntactic and pragmatic-etiquette shifts observed in messenger, social media and online news texts. The findings indicate that digital writing does not so much erode the norm as stratify it, giving rise to a multi-layered normative system in which appropriateness depends on the communicative situation. Keyboard layouts, autocorrect software and platform interfaces are shown to function as new, technological agents of norm formation, while the unfinished script reform amplifies orthographic variation. The article argues for a flexible, monitoring-based model of codification and for situational literacy as a guiding principle of language education in the digital age.

Keywords: Digital communication, language norm, literary language, codification, internet discourse, orthographic variation, pragmatic norm, code-switching, technological mediation.

Introduction: A language norm has never been a frozen set of rules: each generation inherits it from its predecessors, yet weighs it anew on the scales of its own communicative needs. In periods when the medium of communication changes abruptly, this reappraisal tends to accelerate. The history of linguistics shows clearly enough that the printing press gave impetus to the stabilisation of spelling in European languages, while radio and television carried models of pronunciation to a mass audience. Today digital communication is driving a comparable process, one that is incomparably more intense in both scale and speed. The difference lies in this: the book and the broadcast alike disseminated the norm from a centre, whereas on the internet the centre of text production has dispersed among countless users.

In Uzbekistan the demographic basis of this process is broad enough. According to the World Bank, in 2023 89 out of every 100 people in the country used the internet; the DataReportal report states that by late

2025 the number of internet users had reached 33.1 million. Notably, that report does not count the audience of Telegram, the messenger most widely used in the country, which gives grounds to assume that the actual scale of digital text production is considerably larger than the statistics suggest. As a consequence, a substantial share of the texts written in Uzbek today passes through the hands of neither an editor nor a proofreader: they are written and reach the reader at once.

In the case of Uzbek, the situation is further complicated by additional factors. Although almost 33 years have passed since the transition to a Latin-based alphabet was enacted by law, the Cyrillic and Latin scripts still coexist in society. Prolonged contact with Russian has left a deep imprint on the lexical and phraseological system, while English, as the principal medium of global digital culture, is introducing new layers. Digital writing has become the arena in which these forces collide and become visible before our eyes. If one may put it so, the

messenger window is a compact laboratory of the present-day Uzbek language situation.

In public debate this process is often met with the anxiety that “the language is being corrupted”. J. and L. Milroy call such attitudes the “complaint tradition” characteristic of standard language ideology. The anxiety certainly has social roots: the prestige of the literary language is one of the pillars of national identity, and its protection has been declared a priority of state policy. Scholarly analysis, however, cannot content itself with lament; it must uncover the internal mechanism of change: at which levels it proceeds, at what pace, and under the influence of which factors. A diagnosis, after all, must precede any treatment.

The aim of the article is to classify the changes observed in Uzbek language norms in digital communication by linguistic level, to identify their cognitive-pragmatic and sociolinguistic determinants, and to substantiate principles of codification suited to the conditions of the digital age. The study draws on the principle, advanced by Sh. Safarov, of interpreting verbal communication as social action. If communication is purposeful activity, then the norm, too, must be measured not by grammatical correctness alone but by how effectively it realises communicative intention. In our view, many of the “errors” of digital writing take on a different meaning when viewed from precisely this standpoint.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The modern interpretation of the concept of the norm is inseparably linked with the name of E. Coseriu. Viewing linguistic phenomena within the triad of system, norm and speech, he defined the norm as the set of realisations which the community selects from among the possibilities permitted by the system and which recur by tradition. The value of this interpretation lies in separating the norm from the system and presenting it as the product of social choice: the system determines what can be said, while the norm records what the community actually says. Emphasising the objective nature of the norm, V.A. Itskovich argued for the need to distinguish it from codification, that is, from its fixed form in dictionaries and grammars. In Uzbek linguistics, too, the norm has traditionally been interpreted as the body of usage rules recognised by society at a given stage of the language’s development and regarded as a model for the literary language.

The Uzbek school of speech culture has studied the norm chiefly within the system of such communicative qualities of speech as correctness, precision, purity, logical coherence and expressiveness. This approach rendered invaluable service in codifying the literary language and popularising it through education, yet it was oriented primarily towards printed and official texts. Digital text, by contrast, corresponds fully neither to print nor to oral speech, which is why a mechanical application of traditional criteria to it fails to yield the expected results.

E. Haugen’s model of standardisation proves useful for understanding the social life of the norm. In his view, a standard language passes through the stages of selection of a norm, its codification, elaboration of its functions and acceptance by the community. While the Uzbek literary language went through these stages over the 20th century, the digital age is putting the acceptance stage in particular to a fresh test: the codified norm continues to operate in the official domain, whereas adherence to it is weakening in the informal written domain.

Among the first scholars to study the language of the internet systematically as an object of research, D. Crystal occupies a special place. He describes the phenomenon he named “Netspeak” as a distinctive medium of communication that blends features of spoken and written language yet fully resembles neither. Later he demonstrated that most abbreviations in text messages in fact have a long history and that claims about their damaging literacy are not borne out empirically. N. Baron emphasises a different aspect: digital writing shows a growing indifference to linguistic form, which she terms linguistic “whateverism”.

A significant turn in the sociolinguistics of computer-mediated communication is associated with the name of J. Androutsopoulos. As he points out, whereas early studies conceived of internet language as a uniform style determined by the medium, at the next stage attention shifted to the practices of particular communities, to how users select linguistic resources and what social meanings they assign to them. The faceted classification proposed by S. Herring follows the same line: she recommends describing digital discourse in terms of medium factors (synchronicity, message size, anonymity, etc.) and situation factors (participants,

topic, purpose, tone, group norms). Instead of the abstract generalisation “internet language”, this model makes it possible to see a multitude of digital genres.

Empirical research does not support the notion of “linguistic ruin” either. Analysing teenagers’ instant messaging, S. Tagliamonte and D. Denis found that internet-specific forms occur far less frequently than expected and that the messages themselves constitute a hybrid system combining features of formal and informal registers. L. Squires links the formation of “internet language” in public consciousness as a distinct register to metalinguistic commentary, in particular to critical pieces in the mass media. This process is explained by A. Agha’s theory of enregisterment, that is, the doctrine of how linguistic forms become associated with a particular social persona and come to be recognised as a distinct register.

An important theoretical foundation for understanding digital spelling is provided by the approach developed by M. Sebba: orthography is not merely a set of technical rules but a social practice, and deviation from the norm often signals group membership, stance or language play. In the collective monograph edited by A. Jaffe, J. Androutsopoulos, M. Sebba and S. Johnson, choices of script and spelling are interpreted as closely bound up with issues of power, identity and ideology. In Russian linguistics, M.A. Krongauz analysed the deliberately distorted spelling game known as the “Olbanian language” and showed that it is not illiteracy but, on the contrary, a conscious humorous transgression by users who know the norm well; O.V. Lutovinova, for her part, offered an extensive description of the linguocultural features of virtual discourse.

The pragmatic dimensions of digital communication were cast in a new light by E. Dresner and S. Herring’s study of emoticons: rather than restricting these signs to the expression of emotion, the authors interpret them as indicators of the illocutionary force of a speech act. G. McCulloch demonstrates that in digital writing punctuation and letter case have become a “typographical tone of voice” conveying intonation and attitude. In Uzbek linguistics, Sh. Safarov provided the theoretical grounds for studying language without isolating it from human cognition and activity, and systematised speech acts, communicative strategies

and politeness principles in the context of Uzbek communicative culture. This anthropocentric foundation offers a reliable basis for assessing etiquette shifts in digital texts.

In recent years, works devoted to internet vocabulary, neologisms and speech culture on social networks have multiplied in Uzbek linguistics. Most of them, however, do not go beyond registering individual lexical units or noting literacy problems. The need to examine the dynamics of the norm as an integral system, in its interlevel relations and in conjunction with cognitive-pragmatic factors and technological mediation, remains pressing. The present study seeks to fill this gap in part.

METHODOLOGY

The research material was selected from Uzbek-language texts on digital platforms widely used in Uzbekistan: private and group messenger conversations, posts and comments on social networks, and the official channels of government bodies and online media.

Several methods were combined in the analysis. The method of observation and description served to identify instances of deviation from the norm and to classify them by level. Contextual-pragmatic analysis was used to determine the communicative function of each deviation, whether economy, expressiveness, signalling of group membership or the consequence of a technical constraint. Variation analysis made it possible to trace how competing forms expressing the same meaning are distributed across communicative situations. S. Herring’s faceted classification was used to code situational factors. By means of the comparative-typological method, the Uzbek material was compared with the findings of published studies on digital communication in English and Russian, which made it possible to distinguish universal and national features of Uzbek digital writing. The unit of analysis was not an isolated word form but a speech action in a specific communicative situation.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

1. The orthographic-graphic level: from obligatory code to indexical resource

The most conspicuous changes in digital writing, and those most frequently subjected to public criticism, are taking place at the level of spelling. Their sources differ,

and it is therefore theoretically unfounded to label them all indiscriminately as “illiteracy”.

The most widespread phenomenon concerns the spelling of the letters o' and g' and of the glottal-stop sign (tutuq belgisi). Although the current spelling rules prescribe a special diacritic for these letters, standard keyboards provide no dedicated key for it. Consequently, users choose whichever character is closest to hand: a plain apostrophe, a grave accent, various quotation marks, or no mark at all. For example: Ertaga soat 9 da uchrashamiz, togri keladimi? 'We're meeting tomorrow at 9, does that suit you?' (Telegram chat). Here the word to'g'ri is written without the diacritic, yet the context fully restores the meaning. The problem surfaces where context offers no support. Uzbek has no shortage of pairs that turn into homographs once the mark is dropped: bo'l 'be' – bol 'honey', to'r 'net' – tor 'narrow', o't 'grass; fire' – ot 'horse; name', she'r 'poem' – sher 'lion', ta'na 'reproach' – tana 'body'. In a short message detached from context, such homography may seriously disrupt communication.

What deserves attention is that this change stems not from the user's ignorance of the language but from the limitations of the technical tool. Moreover, the use of different characters in place of a single sign also creates problems for search engines: the same word written with different characters becomes, from the machine's point of view, different strings. This in turn necessitates an additional normalisation stage when building electronic corpora and dictionaries.

Another group of errors is explained by phonetic-graphic interference. The failure to distinguish the letters h and x is among the most persistent cases: raxmat (for rahmat 'thank you'), xoxlasangiz (for xohlasangiz 'if you wish'), xurmatli obunachilar (for hurmatli obunachilar 'dear subscribers') (Instagram comment). Several factors intersect here: the weakening of the opposition between these sounds in some dialects, the absence of the phoneme /h/ in Russian, and the habit, formed in the Cyrillic period, of replacing the letter x with h because the former was missing from the Russian keyboard. It is evident that today's error is partly a residue, in writing habits, of an earlier technological constraint.

A peculiar form of graphic substitution is the use of w in

place of the digraph sh: yaxwi 'good', kewirasiz 'excuse me', iwlayapman 'I am working' (Telegram chat). This form is motivated by visual similarity, since the Cyrillic letter ш resembles the Latin w in shape. The phenomenon also reflects the principle of economy: a single character is written instead of a digraph. Such forms occur mainly in young people's correspondence and index an informal in-group tone, whereas in official communication they are virtually absent.

The mixing of scripts is likewise plainly visible in the digital domain. Members of the middle and older generations often write in Cyrillic, while young people prefer the Latin script; as a result, messages in different scripts appear side by side in the same group chat. In certain situations the choice of script itself may acquire pragmatic meaning: Cyrillic is perceived as a marker of tradition or formality, Latin as a marker of modernity.

The functions of punctuation marks are also being redistributed. In informal chats the sentence-final full stop is frequently omitted, its role taken over by the act of sending: each message is perceived as an independent intonational unit. Conversely, the presence of a full stop is sometimes interpreted as a sign of coldness or displeasure; G. McCulloch noted the same phenomenon in English-language messaging. Repeated exclamation and question marks have become a means of emotional intensification, while the parenthesis, borrowed from the Russian digital tradition, stands in for a smile: Xo'p, kelishdik)) 'OK, deal))' (Telegram chat). Writing an entire word in capitals is perceived as shouting. Thus punctuation, beyond separating syntactic constituents, is turning into a carrier of prosodic and emotional information.

Taken together, the picture at the orthographic level shows that spelling is gradually moving from the status of an obligatory code to that of an indexical resource: the choice of a particular form conveys information not about the user's literacy but about tone, social distance and group membership. M. Sebba's theoretical conclusion is thus borne out by the Uzbek material.

2. The lexical-derivational level: multi-source borrowing and hybrid word formation

Digital communication has sharply intensified the need to name new concepts, and this need is being met in various ways. Units borrowed directly from English are used in a form adapted to the Uzbek phonetic and

graphic system: layk 'like', post, storis 'stories', kontent 'content', trend, xeshteg 'hashtag'. Evaluative slang units have become active in youth communication: vayb 'vibe', krinj 'cringe'. At the same time, units that entered digital culture through Russian persist: lichka (the private messages section), podpiska 'subscription', skrinshot 'screenshot', akkaunt 'account'. Finally, calques and neologisms that express the concept by native means are finding their place: obuna 'subscription', obunachi 'subscriber', ulashmoq 'to share', izoh 'comment', yuklab olmoq 'to download'.

Competition between these layers is not yet over. Observations indicate that the Uzbek calque is becoming entrenched in official and semi-official texts, in particular in the Uzbek-language interfaces of platforms and on the channels of government bodies, whereas the borrowed variant prevails in informal communication: Kanalimizga obuna bo'ling 'Subscribe to our channel' (official channel) versus Podpiska qilib qo'yinglar 'Go ahead and subscribe, guys' (group chat). In other words, the competition of variants is being resolved not as a normative choice but as a stylistic distribution. This is significant for codification: rather than prohibiting the borrowed variant, a dictionary would do better to assign it an explicit stylistic label.

Borrowings are being actively drawn into the Uzbek word-formation system. Verbs are derived by adding the affix -la to nominal borrowings: laykladim 'I liked (it)', postladi '(s)he posted'; the affixes -chi and -lik form names of persons and activities: bloggerlik 'blogging', kontentchi 'content maker'. Analytic combinations with auxiliary verbs such as qilmoq 'to do', bosmoq 'to press' and tashlamoq 'to throw' are especially productive: repost qilmoq 'to repost', layk bosmoq 'to hit like', skrin tashlamoq 'to send a screenshot'. A. Hojiyev gave a thorough description of the affixal and compositional methods of word formation in Uzbek; the digital material, however, shows that a pattern consisting of a noun and an auxiliary verb is preferred for borrowed stems. The reason is clear: this pattern allows a new word to be linked to the grammatical system immediately, without morphological adaptation. The pattern has long existed in the language and is known to have served actively in assimilating Arabic and Persian borrowings as well: qabul qilmoq 'to accept', xizmat qilmoq 'to serve', taklif etmoq 'to propose'. Digital vocabulary, then, is not opening a new path but

reactivating a mechanism of assimilation that the language has tested over centuries.

Abbreviations form a separate group. In them, vowels are mostly dropped and the consonantal skeleton is retained: slm (salom 'hi'), rmt (rahmat 'thanks'), aslm (assalomu alaykum, the traditional greeting). Ready-made English units such as ok and pls are also in active use. It is noteworthy that abbreviation most often affects etiquette formulae: greeting, thanking, expressing agreement. It is the most frequently repeated and semantically most predictable units that get shortened. This is a clear manifestation in digital writing of G. Zipf's law, according to which a form becomes more compact as its frequency of use increases.

The subtlest and, in our opinion, the deepest change at the lexical level is semantic shift. Traditional words are acquiring new meanings in the digital environment. For example, the verb yozmoq 'to write' is used in the sense "to send a private message in a messenger" (Lichkaga yozing 'Write to me in DMs'), and the verb tashlamoq 'to throw' in the sense "to send a file or picture": Rasmni tashlab yuboring 'Send the picture over' (group chat). The words kanal 'channel', guruh 'group' and sahifa 'page' have taken on the function of naming platform units. Such shifts are barely noticeable in the lexical system, since the outward form of the word does not change. The explanatory dictionary published in 2006–2008 naturally does not cover these meanings, which testifies to the widening gap between codification and usage.

3. The morphosyntactic level: the transfer of spoken patterns into writing

Because digital messaging proceeds at the pace of oral conversation, the morphological and syntactic patterns of spoken language are migrating freely into written text. At the morphological level, the most vivid manifestation of this is the written recording of reduced forms typical of colloquial speech: qalesiz (for qalaysiz 'how are you'), keldiz (for keldingiz 'you came'), nima qivossan (for nima qilyapsan 'what are you doing') (Telegram chat). These forms, which formerly lived in oral speech and appeared in fiction only to characterise a character's speech, have now become part of the everyday writing of a broad mass of users. As a result, dialectal and colloquial forms are gaining

unprecedented written visibility. The process also has a positive side: it supplies unique material for recording and studying dialectal wealth.

At the syntactic level one observes a phenomenon that may be termed a message chain: a complete sentence is broken into short fragments that are sent one after another as separate messages: Ertaga / kelolmayman / ishim chiqib qoldi 'Tomorrow / I can't come / something came up' (Telegram chat). Such segmentation renders the pauses of oral speech by graphic means and allows the interlocutor to respond more quickly. Ellipsis has also intensified: sentences lacking a predicate, a subject or even the interrogative particle are fully understood by relying on context and the question mark: Ertaga? Soat nechida? 'Tomorrow? At what time?' (group chat).

Expressive inversion has become more active in word order: the evaluative predicate moves to the beginning of the sentence and the subject shifts to postposition: Zo'r chiqibdi video! 'Turned out great, the video!' (Instagram comment). In Uzbek, inversion has long been a hallmark of emotional speech, yet in digital comments it appears to be used rather frequently relative to the neutral order. The quantitative extent of this tendency naturally requires a separate corpus-based count.

The morphologically integrated type of code-switching deserves special attention. An English stem retains its graphic form while taking an Uzbek affix: deadlinega ulgurmadim 'I didn't make the deadline', updateni kutamiz 'we're waiting for the update' (work group chat). The stem remains unchanged, and grammatical relations are carried by the Uzbek affixes. This reflects a transitional stage between code-switching and borrowing: the word has not yet been adapted to Uzbek spelling, yet syntactically it functions fully within an Uzbek sentence. Such hybrid forms occur mainly in the speech of young people working in information technology, education and international projects and appear to be becoming a marker of their professional register.

The spread of voice messages and speech-to-text functions is eroding the boundary between spoken and written norms still further. Through automatic transcription, the repetitions, breaks and colloquial forms characteristic of oral speech pass unedited into written text. In this way writing becomes a mirror of oral

speech, and its normative requirements are loosening day by day.

4. The pragmatic-etiquette level: adaptation of the traditional politeness system

Communicative etiquette is the part of the language norm most closely interwoven with culture. In Uzbek communicative culture, forms of address, the order of greeting and the expression of respect have long been strictly regulated, and differences in the interlocutors' age and social standing are clearly reflected in grammatical and lexical means. In the digital environment this system faces a serious test, since on an anonymous platform the interlocutor's age and status often remain unknown.

This explains the instability in the choice between the pronouns *siz* (polite 'you') and *sen* (familiar 'you') in social media comments. Although addressing a stranger as *sen* is considered rude by traditional etiquette, it occurs frequently in comment sections, especially when a debate grows heated. At the same time, users resort to generalised kinship terms of address to resolve the uncertainty: the forms *aka* 'elder brother', *opa* 'elder sister', *ustoz* 'teacher, mentor' and *ukam* 'my younger brother' are used even towards an interlocutor of unknown age. For example: *Aka, narxi qancha?* 'Brother, how much is it?' (Instagram comment). These forms represent a distinctive strategy of adapting traditional etiquette to digital conditions, conveying respect and warmth towards the interlocutor at one and the same time.

The shortening of greeting formulae (*Assalomu alaykum* → *aslm*) is regarded by some users as disrespectful, which shows that digital etiquette itself is still under negotiation. Emoji and stickers are partly taking over the function of expressing politeness. As E. Dresner and S. Herring point out, such signs clarify the illocutionary force of a speech act. For example: *Ertaga kechikmasangiz yaxshi bo'lardi 😊* 'It would be good if you weren't late tomorrow 😊' (work group chat). Without the emoji, this sentence could be taken as a reprimand; the smiley softens the demand, lowering it to the level of friendly advice. Yet in another context the very same sign may express irony, which indicates that its meaning has not yet been fully conventionalised.

The shift in pragmatic norms is manifesting itself in official communication as well. The Telegram channels

of government bodies and online media outlets, seeking to win audience attention, are infusing the official style with colloquial elements, emoji and rhetorical questions. News headlines, meanwhile, widely employ patterns that lure the reader to click through by means of intrigue: Bu haqda hamma ham bilmaydi 'Not everyone knows about this', Nima bo'lganini ko'rib hayron qolasiz 'You'll be amazed to see what happened' (model of online media headlines). As a result, the boundaries between the official-administrative, journalistic and colloquial styles are blurring, and inter-genre mixing is intensifying. It would be wrong to view this process only negatively, since it serves to shorten the communicative distance between the state and the citizen. Nonetheless, the erosion of stylistic boundaries must not come at the expense of the precision and authority of official texts.

5. Agents of the norm: technological mediation

In traditional society the agents that set and disseminated the norm were clearly defined: the academy of sciences, lexicographers, schools, publishing houses and the press. In the digital age, new and often unnoticed agents have joined their ranks. Keyboard layouts, autocorrect and predictive text software, machine translation and AI-based text generators unconsciously steer the user's choices. In particular, the absence of a special character for the letters o' and g' on the keyboard means that the resulting spelling errors are systemic rather than individual in nature. Autocorrect software tailored to Russian or English, in turn, becomes a source of new errors by forcing an Uzbek word into a form it "knows". Machine translation and artificial intelligence tools call for separate consideration. Although the texts they produce are often grammatically flawless, traces of the source language can be felt in their syntactic structure and word choice: passive constructions typical of English, lengthy chains of attributes, collocations alien to the nature of Uzbek. As such texts proliferate on the internet, they may serve as training material for new systems, and in this way calqued patterns risk entering a self-reinforcing loop. In our view, this is the least studied and at the same time the most hazardous direction in the study of norms in the digital age.

Popular bloggers also serve as models of the norm. Their speech becomes an object of imitation for a broad

audience of followers, and a particular word or pronunciation spreads rapidly in this way. Enregisterment as defined by A. Agha proceeds in exactly this manner: a form becomes associated with a particular social persona and begins to be recognised as a register marker.

State policy, too, has not overlooked the digital dimension. The Concept for the Development of the Uzbek Language approved in 2020 includes tasks related to expanding the use of the state language in modern information technologies and creating electronic dictionaries and corpora. Consistent implementation of these tasks will help to build the technological infrastructure of the digital norm and to eliminate at their root the systemic errors noted above.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained do not support the view that the norms of the Uzbek language are being eroded in digital communication. Most of the observed changes are not random errors but follow definite regularities: they respond to needs for economy, expressiveness, the reproduction of oral speech in writing and the signalling of group membership. This conclusion is consistent with those drawn by S. Tagliamonte and D. Denis from English material and by D. Crystal from text-message data. The specificity of the Uzbek material lies in the weight of technical and script-related factors: the unfinished alphabet reform and keyboard constraints remove a large proportion of errors from the sphere of individual literacy and turn them into an infrastructure problem.

In our view, it is closer to the truth to characterise the process under way in the digital age not as the erosion of the norm but as its stratification. Whereas the literary norm used to be the one and only criterion of written communication, today several normative layers operate side by side in the written domain: the codified norm of official writing, the flexible norm of semi-official digital communication and the usage-based norm of informal messaging. Each layer has its own criteria, and when these are violated, participants notice immediately. For example, writing slm in an official letter is as out of place as a fully formal style in a friendly chat, which would seem odd and even cold. In other words, digital writing does have a norm, only it is not uniform but situation-dependent; it may be termed a situational norm. J.

Blommaert observed that in the age of globalisation linguistic resources circulate not as whole languages but in the form of situationally adapted “truncated repertoires”; Uzbek digital writing fully confirms this observation. From the standpoint of Coseriu’s model, the system remains virtually unchanged, while inter-register stratification is intensifying at the level of the norm.

It does not follow that digital changes are free of risk. Foremost among the risks is cross-register transfer: habits established in informal messaging may carry over into formal texts, in particular into students’ written work. The extent of this phenomenon requires separate empirical verification, but observations from teaching practice make it impossible to dismiss. Homography resulting from the omission of the letters o’, g’ and the glottal-stop sign poses a direct threat to communicative precision. Finally, calqued patterns spreading through machine translation and AI-generated texts may imperceptibly blur the national character of Uzbek syntax.

Under these conditions, the task of norm studies should be not to prohibit digital usage but to monitor, classify and manage it judiciously. In our opinion, codification should rest on descriptive monitoring, that is, it should be based on a regularly updated electronic corpus that includes digital texts. If digital borrowings and new meanings were recorded in dictionaries with stylistic labels, for instance “internet.” or “colloq.”, users would know precisely the domain of use of each variant. Placing the character for the letters o’ and g’ in a convenient position on the standard keyboards of mobile devices and computers may seem a technical matter, but it is one of fundamental importance. In education, the “correct – incorrect” dichotomy should give way to the principle of situational literacy, developing learners’ ability to follow the norm appropriate to each communicative situation.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study confirm that digital communication is exerting a profound influence on Uzbek language norms at several levels. At the orthographic-graphic level, spelling is shifting from the status of an obligatory code to that of an indexical resource, and its variability is explained mainly by technical constraints and the unfinished alphabet

reform. At the lexical-derivational level, the competition between units borrowed directly from English, units borrowed via Russian and Uzbek calques is being resolved through stylistic rather than normative distribution; the analytic pattern of noun plus auxiliary verb predominates in integrating borrowings into the system.

At the morphosyntactic level, spoken patterns are migrating into writing, conferring an unprecedented written status on colloquial and dialectal forms. At the pragmatic-etiquette level, the traditional system of address is adapting to the conditions of anonymous communication, emoji and punctuation marks are functioning as means of managing illocutionary force, and the boundary between formal and informal styles is becoming blurred.

From a general theoretical perspective, the results show that what is taking place in the digital age is not the erosion of the language norm but its stratification. The literary norm has not lost its prestige (Egamnazarova, 2026); it remains the leading criterion in formal written communication, but it is no longer the sole arbiter of the written domain. New agents of the norm, technological mediators above all, are exerting an increasingly noticeable influence on its formation. For this reason, the study of norms in the digital age should rest on the principles of descriptive monitoring, flexible codification, improvement of the technological infrastructure and the development of situational literacy. Promising directions for further research include the quantitative measurement of variation on the basis of a large corpus of Uzbek digital texts and the study of the influence of AI-generated texts on Uzbek syntax.

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