

Linguistic Characteristics Of Internet Slang Across Different Language Systems: A Comparative Study

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Abstract: This article explores the linguistic characteristics of internet slang across different language systems, focusing on English, Japanese, and Uzbek digital communication as primary comparative examples. Internet slang represents a rapidly evolving linguistic phenomenon shaped by technological innovation, online communities, and cultural values. By analyzing phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features of slang expressions, the study illustrates how digital users creatively manipulate language to achieve social bonding, identity construction, humor, and communicative efficiency. The article further highlights cross-linguistic similarities—such as abbreviation patterns, borrowing, and multimodal integration—and differences resulting from typological constraints, writing systems, orthography, and cultural norms.

Keywords: Internet slang; comparative linguistics; digital discourse; language systems; pragmatics; morphology; multimodality; sociolects.

Introduction: The rise of the internet has accelerated linguistic innovation on an unprecedented scale. Digital communication platforms create environments where language evolves rapidly and dynamically, influenced by technological affordances and online community practices. Internet slang has emerged as a central component of these changes, serving simultaneously as an efficient mode of communication and a marker of social identity.

This article examines the linguistic characteristics of internet slang across three languages - English, Russian, and Uzbek - to identify shared tendencies and language-specific innovations shaped by writing systems, typological structures, and cultural norms.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Internet slang refers to unconventional, rapidly evolving lexical, phonological, and orthographic forms used primarily in digital communication. These expressions often deviate from standard grammar but follow emergent conventions shared within online communities. Socially, slang functions as a marker of identity, group rapport, humor, solidarity, and communicative efficiency, allowing speakers to signal in-group membership and construct distinct digital personas.

LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH INTERNET SLANG (EXPANDED).

English internet slang displays a wide range of creative linguistic strategies that are made possible by the flexibility of the Roman alphabet and the relatively simple morphological structure of English. These strategies reflect both communicative efficiency and the global influence of English-speaking digital culture.

Abbreviation and Initialism.

Shortened forms such as LOL (laughing out loud), BRB (be right back), IDK (I don't know), and TBH (to be honest) are among the most iconic features of English internet slang. These forms serve to reduce typing effort and are easily recognizable due to their widespread diffusion in global internet culture. Over time, many initialisms have undergone semantic broadening; for example, LOL no longer strictly expresses laughter but may function as an indicator of friendliness or reduced seriousness.

English users frequently shorten existing words—info for “information,” legit for “legitimate,” and sus for “suspicious.” These forms arise from spoken colloquial usage but gain additional prominence in online discourse due to typing economy. Shortened forms also acquire specialized meanings within online

subcultures; for instance, *sus* is strongly associated with gaming communities and viral meme culture.

Spelling innovations such as *u* (you), *r* (are), and *cuz/cos* (because) demonstrate how users mimic informal speech patterns through phonetic representation. These substitutions highlight the oralization of digital writing—an increasing trend where written text imitates conversational speech. Such forms also reflect the non-standardized nature of internet discourse, where creativity and convenience outweigh normative orthography.

Semantic Innovation and Metaphorization

The internet is a fertile ground for semantic shifts. Terms like *ghosting* (suddenly cutting contact), *viral* (spreading quickly), *cancel* (socially ostracize), and *simp* (an overly attentive or submissive admirer) illustrate how new meanings develop rapidly. Many of these terms emerge from specific contexts—dating culture, social media politics, or gaming communities—before entering mainstream usage.

Multimodal Integration: Emojis, Memes, GIFs

English digital communication often incorporates images, reaction memes, GIFs, and emojis directly into text, creating a hybrid semiotic system. These multimodal elements function as paralinguistic cues, expressing emotions, humor, sarcasm, or stance that would otherwise require lengthy text descriptions. The integration of multimodality is a defining feature of English digital discourse and reinforces its global influence. These patterns reflect English's morphological simplicity, its global prestige in technology, and the early dominance of English-speaking users on major internet platforms. As a result, English internet slang is often the source of innovations later borrowed into other languages.

LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RUSSIAN INTERNET SLANG (EXPANDED)

Russian internet slang (русский интернет-сленг) has a rich linguistic landscape shaped by Cyrillic script, complex morphology, and a longstanding tradition of youth slang and subcultural argot. Its features arise from both linguistic structure and the unique cultural dynamics of the Russian-speaking internet (Рунет).

Russian users frequently combine Cyrillic and Latin letters—*kek*, *kringe*, *lol*, *xexe*—creating hybrid orthographic forms. This mixing reflects cross-cultural influence from English gaming communities and early internet forums. It also serves stylistic functions, signaling playfulness, irony, or affiliation with global digital culture.

A hallmark of Russian slang is its extensive use of expressive suffixes. Diminutive and augmentative

forms such as *крашик* (“cute crush”), *видосик* (“little video”), or *постик* (“small post”) convey emotional stance and interpersonal nuance. At the same time, productive slang-specific suffixes such as *-нуть*, *-нуться*, or *-ить* (e.g., *байтить*, *загрузиться*, *улетануть*) demonstrate how Russian speakers create verbs from English nouns or modify Russian stems to express dynamic, humorous, or exaggerated meanings.

Common reductions include *щас* for *сейчас*, *чё* for *что*, *пж* for *пожалуйста*, and *спс* for *спасибо*. These shortened forms represent colloquial pronunciation and are widely used in fast-paced messaging. They also function as markers of informality and youth identity.

Russian internet slang heavily incorporates English gaming and tech terminology: *скилл* (skill), *рандом* (randomness), *фейл* (failure), *байтить* (to bait). These borrowings often undergo phonological and morphological adaptation to fit Russian grammar, illustrating high degrees of linguistic integration.

Early RuNet culture popularized humorous misspellings—*превед*, *медвед*, *красавчег*—which became iconic within Russian digital culture. Such stylization reflects a community-driven tradition of playful linguistic subversion, often tied to specific memes, forums, and political satire.

Russian internet slang is strongly shaped by niche communities such as gaming groups, anime fandoms, political forums, and meme subcultures (e.g., “ВКонтакте” publics, imageboards). This results in significant sociolinguistic variation and rapid change.

LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF UZBEK INTERNET SLANG (EXPANDED)

Uzbek internet slang is characterized by multilingualism, hybrid forms, and flexible orthographic practices. Uzbekistan's complex linguistic environment—where users commonly navigate Uzbek, Russian, English, and sometimes Turkish—produces a distinctive digital sociolect.

Frequent shortenings include *zo'r*, *gap yo'q*, *tinchmi* → *tnm*, *bo'пти* → *bopt*. These shortenings reflect casual speech forms and the preference for typing speed on mobile devices. Many clipped forms circulate widely across social networks, especially among young users.

Uzbek frequently integrates English and Russian lexical elements, producing hybrid expressions such as *ok boraman*, like *qildim*, *norm*, *okrug*, *prosta gap*. This mixture is motivated by historical bilingualism (Uzbek–Russian), the rise of English in digital communication, and patterns of language prestige.

Agglutinative morphology enables highly productive slang formations:

like-*chi* (“someone who likes”),

skrin-la ("to screenshot"),
save-lab qo'y,
blokla-dim,
delete-qil.

These forms demonstrate the ease with which Uzbek attaches derivational or inflectional suffixes to foreign stems, integrating borrowed words into the language's morphological system.

Uzbek users often switch between Latin and Cyrillic scripts for emphasis, aesthetic effect, humor, or social signaling. Script-switching serves as a symbolic marker of identity—Latin for modernity and global orientation, Cyrillic for nostalgia or informal play.

Common borrowings include *krash*, *tema*, *prikol*, *screenshot*, *admin*, *follower*, *content*. Many of these words enter through social media and gaming platforms, reflecting global digital influence and Uzbekistan's historically multilingual environment.

Uzbek internet slang is shaped by the social reality of linguistic diversity, frequent code-switching, and hybrid digital practices.

CROSS-LINGUISTIC COMPARISON (EXPANDED)

A comparison of English, Russian, and Uzbek digital slang reveals both universal digital-era tendencies and distinct language-specific pathways shaped by structural and cultural factors.

Typing speed and platform constraints motivate all three languages to shorten words. English uses initialisms; Russian uses contractions; Uzbek uses abbreviated phonetic forms. English is a global donor language, while Russian and Uzbek integrate English-origin terms extensively. Uzbek additionally borrows from Russian due to historical bilingualism. All languages use phonetic or intentionally nonstandard spelling to imitate speech, indicate informality, or express humor. Emojis, GIFs, reaction images, and memes complement text, functioning as visual extensions of written communication across all three linguistic communities.

CONCLUSION

Internet slang is a dynamic, complex phenomenon reflecting both universal communicative tendencies and language-specific patterns. Comparative research highlights how writing systems and culture shape digital linguistic innovation.

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