HOW TECHNOLOGY HAS CHANGED THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Tuxtashev Samandar Sadulla ogli
First-year Master's student
Almalyk Branch of National University
of Science and Technology MISIS
Sinjapova Rusana Ruslanovna
Associate professor, doctor of philosophy
in philological sciences (PhD)
Almalyk Branch of National University
of Science and Technology MISIS
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Annotation: This paper examines how technology influences English through slang, memes, GIFs, emojis, and artificial intelligence (AI). Using published studies and illustrative messages, it distinguishes changes in vocabulary from changes in tone and interpretation. The findings suggest that online communication expands expressive possibilities but makes context and appropriate language style increasingly important.
Key words: English language, technology, slang, memes, GIFs, emojis, artificial intelligence.

Technology changes how English is written and understood. Social platforms spread expressions quickly and combine words with images. Crystal [1] and McCulloch [2] show that online communication has its own conventions rather than simply ignoring formal grammar. Using published studies and illustrative messages, this paper compares changes in vocabulary with changes in tone.

1. Internet slang and new words

Abbreviations such as "IDK" ("I don't know") and "BRB" ("be right back") save time. Yet "LOL" can also soften criticism: "That was strange lol" may sound more playful than "That was strange". Technology spreads terms such as "ghosting" (ending contact without explanation) and "DM" (direct message). "Selfie" and "unfriend" show how online activities enter everyday vocabulary [4].

2. Memes and shared meaning

Memes combine short phrases with recognisable images. For example, "Me trying to study at 2 a.m." becomes humorous beside a picture of an exhausted student. Shifman [3] explains that memes spread through imitation and variation. Their meaning depends on shared cultural knowledge: a reader may understand the English words but miss the joke.

3. GIFs and emotional reactions

A reaction GIF can change how a message is understood. "I'm fine" accompanied by an eye-rolling GIF may suggest frustration rather than reassurance. Dainas [6] identifies reaction and humorous functions of GIFs, while Sasamoto [7] discusses how they convey emotion. Such images change the interpretation of English without changing its grammar.

4. Emojis and tone

Emojis can express warmth, irony, or emphasis. A smile after "Thank you" may make it sound friendlier, while a laughing emoji may suggest sarcasm. Their interpretation depends on context [7]. In

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2015, Oxford University Press chose the "face with tears of joy" emoji as its Word of the Year, reflecting the importance of visual symbols in communication [4].

5. Artificial intelligence and English

AI influences English vocabulary and writing practices. A "prompt" can mean an instruction to an AI system; "hallucinate" gained an AI-related meaning, recognised by Cambridge Dictionary in 2023 [5]. Chatbots can explain idioms, suggest vocabulary, and revise emails, but fluent answers may contain mistakes. UNESCO [8] recommends a human-centred approach: learners should check AI suggestions instead of accepting them without question.

The examples reveal two main changes. Slang and AI add words or new meanings, while memes, GIFs, and emojis affect how familiar words are interpreted. Thus, successful online communication requires knowledge of cultural context as well as vocabulary. Informal expressions may be useful in chats but unsuitable for academic writing.

Technology has expanded both English vocabulary and ways of expressing emotion. Images and symbols can change the meaning of an otherwise ordinary sentence. Learners therefore benefit from recognising online conventions while maintaining clear, appropriate language in formal situations.

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