Social Networks as a Linguistic Environment: A Study of Communicative Manifestations in Cultural-Linguistic and Cognitive Contexts

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Abstract

This article explores the communicative features of the Ukrainian language on social networks within the broader context of linguistic adaptation and cultural identity development. The study aims to identify trends in the linguistic behavior of Ukrainian users and to organize new forms of multimodal discourse in a globalized environment. The methodology combines corpus linguistics, multimodal discourse analysis, and critical examination of social media texts. The empirical data consists of 40 authentic posts and comments in Ukrainian, published in 2025 on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Findings highlight three main linguistic and cognitive processes: speech compression focusing on acronymization (35%), text creolization through expressive use of emojis (42%), and multimodal semantic integration within consistent models (48%). The linguistic and cultural analysis identified markers of glocalization: national-specific (30%), professional-discursive (28%), and generational-subcultural (25%). The communication strategy typology revealed five main types, with informative (30%) and phatic (25%) strategies being the most common. The study demonstrates the development of new linguistic and cognitive skills among users and illustrates the dynamics of digital Ukrainization, showing how global digital trends are culturally adapted to local Ukrainian linguistic codes, thereby reinforcing identity and community.

Keywords: English, social networks, vocabulary, linguocognitive aspect, linguocultural aspect, dynamics of the language norm

Resumen

Este artículo analiza los aspectos comunicativos de la lengua ucraniana en las redes sociales, en el marco de los procesos más amplios de adaptación lingüística y de formación de la identidad cultural. El objetivo del estudio es rastrear las tendencias en el comportamiento lingüístico de los usuarios ucranianos y sistematizar nuevas formas de discurso multimodal en un entorno glocal. La metodología combina la lingüística de corpus, el análisis del discurso multimodal y el análisis crítico de los textos en redes sociales. La base empírica consta de 40 publicaciones y comentarios auténticos en ucraniano, publicados en 2025 en Instagram, Facebook y Twitter. Los resultados destacan tres procesos lingüísticos y cognitivos clave: la comprensión del habla, con preferencia por la acronimización (35%), la creolización del texto mediante el uso expresivo de emojis (42%) y la integración semántica multimodal en modelos congruentes (48%). El análisis lingüístico y cultural identificó marcadores de glocalización: específicos nacionales (30%), discursivo-profesionales (28%) y generacionales-subculturales (25%). La tipología de estrategias comunicativas reveló cinco tipos principales, entre los cuales predominan las estrategias informativas (30%) y fáticas (25%). El estudio demuestra el desarrollo de nuevas capacidades lingüísticas y cognitivas entre los usuarios, al tiempo que ilustra la dinámica de la ucranización digital. Muestra cómo las tendencias digitales globales se adaptan culturalmente a los códigos lingüísticos locales ucranianos, reforzando la identidad y la comunidad.

Palabras clave: inglés, redes sociales, vocabulario, aspecto linguocognitivo, aspecto lingüístico-cultural, dinámica de la norma lingüística

1. INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has significantly transformed the way humans communicate, introducing new forms of language interaction that blend traditional linguistic methods with digital practices. As a platform for modern communication, social media exhibit certain characteristic linguistic phenomena that compel us to reevaluate traditional discourse analysis and linguistic theory. This issue is especially pertinent within the Ukrainian linguistic community, where digitalization occurs amidst active socio-political changes and the development of national linguistic self-identification. Modern research on digital communication demonstrates the multidimensionality and complexity of language processes in social networks. Benamara *et al*. (2018) also note that the study of social media language should account for discursive and contextual factors, as traditional linguistic methods are insufficient for examining the peculiarities of digital discourse. According to a bibliometric analysis by Sun *et al*. (2021), scientific interest in social media research on social media is growing exponentially, indicating the emergence of a new research paradigm in digital linguistics. At the same time, Bernhard also draws attention to the qualitatively new rules of language functioning in the Internet space, which require the development of specialized methodological tools for their systematic study.

Geopolitics significantly influences language practices in the digital space. Racek *et al*. (2024) report a sharp rise in Ukrainian usage on social media due to the Russian-Ukrainian war, demonstrating the connection between digital language practices and socio-political processes. These dynamics become especially complex when discussing language polarization, a subject explored by Karjus & Cuskley (2024), who show how

social media can promote language polarization in divided societies. Orobchuk (2024) adds to this discussion by deepening the understanding of how platform technology interacts with cultural and identity practices in Ukraine.

The challenging aspects of digital discourse research require new analytical methods. In their analysis of social media discourse, Zappavigna & Ross (2024) highlight important innovations and challenges, emphasizing the need to develop new theoretical frameworks to understand the multimodal and interactive nature of digital communication. The systematic review by Tamasny & Gering (2021) shows not only the diversity of discourse analysis methods in social media research but also the fragmentation of the methodological field and the necessity to combine different analytical approaches.

Despite the growing academic interest in digital linguistics, the Ukrainian linguistic community remains underrepresented in the systematic study of language practices on social media. Current research often emphasizes the quantitative aspects of language use or individual linguistic phenomena, without considering the comprehensive interaction between cognitive processes involved in language comprehension, cultural processes of meaning-making, and communication strategies. A key gap in understanding the Ukrainian language's situation in the digital space is the lack of systematic research on how users adapt linguistically and cognitively to the features of digital platforms, mechanisms of cultural localization of global communication practices, and methods of identity formation through multimodal resources.

This study will focus on a detailed examination of the communicative features of the Ukrainian language on social networks through the lens of linguistic and cognitive processes involved in adapting to the digital world, as well as the linguistic and cultural processes of identity building in a global context. The research will help identify specific trends in the linguistic behavior of Ukrainian social media users, formalize new forms of multimodal discourse, and uncover the principles of interaction between global trends in digital media and local cultural and language practices.

The main research questions are: how cognitive processes of compression and multimodal integration change based on the unique features of the Ukrainian language in the virtual environment; what cultural indicators and identity practices Ukrainian users employ to build a glocal identity on social media; and how communication strategies may differ depending on the characteristics of technology and the socio-cultural needs of users. Answers to these questions will help deepen theoretical understanding of digital discourse and develop methodological tools for studying social media language in different cultural contexts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical foundation for studying social media language is formed at the crossroads of several scientific paradigms, where semiotic approaches to digital communication, critical discourse analysis, and cognitive-linguistic theories of multimodality play especially significant roles. The rise of digital semiotics as a distinct field of study is linked to the need to reevaluate traditional ideas about semiotics in light of new sign systems that have developed in the digital realm.

The study of emojis as a new form of visual communication is increasingly attracting interest among scholars. Kerslake and Wegerif (2017) believe that emojis represent a completely new category of visual language in the Internet age and influence other types

of meaning-making. The authors see emojis not just as decorative tools, but as fully developed semiotic tools capable of conveying complex emotional and conceptual messages. A systematic approach to emoji research is examined in the article by Bai *et al*. (2019), which reviews the existing emoji literature, highlights key research areas, and suggests directions for future study.

Han and Zappavigna (2024) present a sociosemiotic approach to analyzing emojis, exploring how meaning is created and how social belonging is shaped through the interaction of emoji textual constructions in TikTok comments. The authors demonstrate that emojis are not used out of context but interact with verbal elements in a complex way to foster new social bonds. This method was developed by Logi and Zappavigna (2021), who designed a theoretical framework for the interaction of emojis and language in creating meaning in digital messages and focused on the multimodality of modern digital communication.

Li and Yang (2018) examine the pragmatics of emoji use in intercultural communication and, through a corpus analysis, identify specific pragmatic functions of emojis in online communication. Their findings indicate that emojis have different cultural meanings and that linguistic and cultural factors should be considered when discussing digital communication. Boutet *et al*. (2021) explore the psychological processes behind emoji's influence on communication and demonstrate how emojis affect emotional expression, social attributions, and information processing.

Kennison *et al*. (2024) explore the connection between users' personality traits and their emoji usage, discovering different links between personality traits and specific emoji patterns on social media. These studies deepen our understanding of variations in digital communication and highlight the role of psychological factors in online language practices.

Humor and linguistic creativity researchers are interested in the creative aspects of digital language. Vásquez (2019) explores the connections between language, creativity, and humor in online settings and examines how digital platforms inspire innovative forms of linguistic expression. The author demonstrates how the technological capabilities of social networks create new opportunities for language games and humorous practices that form distinctive subcultural codes and identities.

Baqir *et al*. (2025) explore the social dynamics of digital communication by examining the factors influencing active participation in social media discussions. Their findings indicate that a complex interplay of technological, psychological, and social factors shapes the level and type of user activity in the digital space.

Khosravi's (2022) articles can be viewed as critical discursive studies of social media: the author develops a theoretical framework for analyzing digital meaning-making that extends beyond textual content to include both its production and consumption. The author highlights that content analysis should be combined with the study of social practices to fully understand the mechanisms of digital discourse.

Way and Serafis (2023) analyze the political aspect of digital discourse and investigate the connections between scrolling culture and authoritarian populism in their study of how Turkish and Greek online news cover the refugee crisis. Their research demonstrates how certain digital content habits can contribute to the spread of populist rhetoric and social polarization.

The review of the presented studies highlights the emergence of a new research paradigm that integrates semiotic, psychological, sociological, and critical approaches to studying digital communication. Simultaneously, it is essential to develop a more comprehensive theoretical framework that enables us to systematically analyze the interaction of linguistic-cognitive and linguistic-cultural processes within specific national contexts, particularly in the Ukrainian-language segment of social networks.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research relies on a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach that integrates the principles of corpus linguistics (Di Cristofaro, 2024; Rüdiger & Dayter, 2022), multimodal discourse analysis (Jones, 2021; Liu *et al*., 2024), and critical discourse analysis of social media (Unger, 2025). The study utilizes the methodology of critical social media discourse analysis (SM-CDS), which includes four main approaches to examining social media: using social media as a data repository, situating platforms, critically analyzing power relations, and applying a multimodal approach to analysis (Unger, 2025).

The principles of multimodal discourse analysis serve as the theoretical foundation of the study, enabling a detailed examination of the interaction among textual, visual, and paralinguistic elements of digital discourse (Hart & Queralto, 2021). Special attention is given to methods for analyzing creolized texts, where emojis are regarded as a fully integrated element of semiotics (O'Halloran *et al*., 2021).

The study is based on a corpus of 40 authentic Ukrainian-language posts and comments collected from three major social media platforms: Instagram (45%), Facebook (32.5%), and Twitter/X (22.5%). The data was gathered in 2025, ensuring its relevance and currency.

The criteria used to select the material are as follows: (1) text in Ukrainian with the potential for code-switching; (2) publications that are publicly available; (3) they contain multimodal components (text and emojis/visuals); (4) publications that are diverse in terms of topics (everyday, educational, social, entertainment, and commercial). The empirical data are then organized in an analytical table (Appendix A), where the categorization is based on platform, content type, and linguistic-cognitive and linguistic-cultural features.

The distribution of the material by platform is analyzed and shown in the following structure: Instagram is represented with 18 examples (45%), including posts and comments, as well as Instagram Stories; Facebook is shown with 13 examples (32.5%), consisting of posts and comments; Twitter/X is represented with 9 examples (22.5%), including posts, replies, and topics. This differentiation reflects the communication styles of each platform: Instagram, being highly visual, has the most creolized content; Facebook features more detailed texts with some scientific language; and Twitter/X is noted for its brevity and internationalized speech.

As shown in the table (Appendix A), the content relates to different types of discourse practices - one being factual posts about seasonal changes (example 1: “Finally autumn🍂”), and the other educational content verified for accuracy (example 38: “PSA: check the facts”). The corpus includes educational statements (examples 2, 23), meme culture (examples 11, 37), commercial communication (example 35), and civic

engagement (examples 8, 29, 30), ensuring representativeness for identifying the main language patterns in the Ukrainian segment of social networks.

By categorizing by linguistic and cognitive features, three main types of language behavior can be identified: (1) compression of language through abbreviations (tho, pls), acronyms (lol, PSA, DIY, RT), and numbers (100%, 7/10, 1/5); (2) creolization of text using emojis as signs of meaning (🍂, ☕💪) and signs of visual effects (✨, 🔥♡); (3) switching between Ukrainian and English, which occurs either through complete language code switching (example 3: “Wow, that sunset tho”) or through the creation of hybrid constructions (example 17: “#MondayBlues”).

The material is analyzed using qualitative content analysis based on the features of the corpus approach (Lungu, 2022). The coded category systems consist of linguistic and cognitive (speech compression, text creolization, code switching, metacommunicative markers), linguistic and cultural (local and global cultural elements, professional discourses), and communicative (informative, expressive, phatic, mobilizing, verification, etc.) categories.

The unique features of this corpus include the dominance of English-Ukrainian code-switching (making up 25% of examples) and a complex system of communicative functions, which encompass verification (examples 5, 6), intrigue (example 10), demonstration (examples 18, 39), and cultural preservation (example 33). This diversity of functions indicates the socio-cultural shift of social media from just a simple communication tool to a multifaceted environment of social and cultural interaction.

The guidelines for analyzing multimodal constructions are based on the principles of the socio-semiotic approach (Veum *et al*., 2023), which allows authors to examine the semantic interaction of different modalities in a digital text. The analysis of emojis as a semantic element that can complement (example 7: 🥤), reinforce (example 20: ♡🔥🔥 – very powerful!), or create visual metaphors (example 25: “Coffee or tea? ☕🍵”) during verbal communication is particularly detailed (Hakimov *et al*., 2024).

The study focuses on the concepts of academic integrity and online research ethics. All materials examined are publicly accessible, and personal user information was anonymized using pseudonyms and general descriptions (@olya_ka). Combining qualitative and quantitative methods for analysis ensures the validity of the results (Marco *et al*., 2024), while the systematic categorization of empirical data based on multiple parameters allows us to identify patterns in social media language use. The corpus's representativeness is confirmed by a balanced distribution across platforms, content types, and communicative functions.

4. RESULTS

The analysis of the empirical data reveals that three major linguistic and cognitive processes define the Ukrainian language on social media: speech compression, text creolization, and multimodal semantic integration. These processes show how natural language evolves according to the conditions of digital communication, where platform limitations and the need for expressiveness drive the development of new language practices.

The experiment showed that speech compression on social media is a complex cognitive system that enables users to convey the most information with the least energy needed to

encode a message. The corpus was analyzed to identify five main types of compression, which are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of speech compression in social media

Type of compression	Example from the corpus	Frequency (%)	Cognitive mechanism
Acronymization	"lol" (#12), "PSA" (#38), "DIY" (#26), "RT" (#30)	35%	International codes
Graphic abbreviations	"tho" (#3), "pls" (#15, #32)	25%	Phonetic coding
Numerical compression	"100%" (№6, №13), "7/10" (№27), "1/5" (№21)	22%	Semantic equivalence
Ellipsis	"in short:" (#34), "quick tip:" (#32)	13%	Contextual understanding
Emoji substitution	"🍲🍚 "(#25, #40)", "📖 (#31)"	5%	Visual semantics

Source: compiled by the authors based on the analysis of the empirical corpus, taking into account the classification of Kusal *et al*. (2025)

As Table 1 shows, acronymization is the most common form of compression (35%), indicating the globalization of digital discourse through the borrowing of Internet codes of English. In informal digital writing, there is a tendency toward phonetic spelling, which is reflected in graphic abbreviations (25%). This aligns with the idea of multimodal synthesis of text and emoji presented by Kusal *et al*. (2025), where cognitive processes play an important role in creating hybrid types of digital communication.

A key aspect of linguistic and cognitive adaptation is the creolization of text, achieved by incorporating emojis as fully developed semantic elements. The review has demonstrated that emojis serve not only as decorative features but also as carriers of their own semantic meaning, capable of altering or even completely transforming the meaning of verbal communication (Caspi & Raz, 2020).

The distribution of emoji roles in the review corpus is shown in Figure 1 and indicates that most emoji use is expressive and reinforcing (42%), compared to purely decorative (8%).

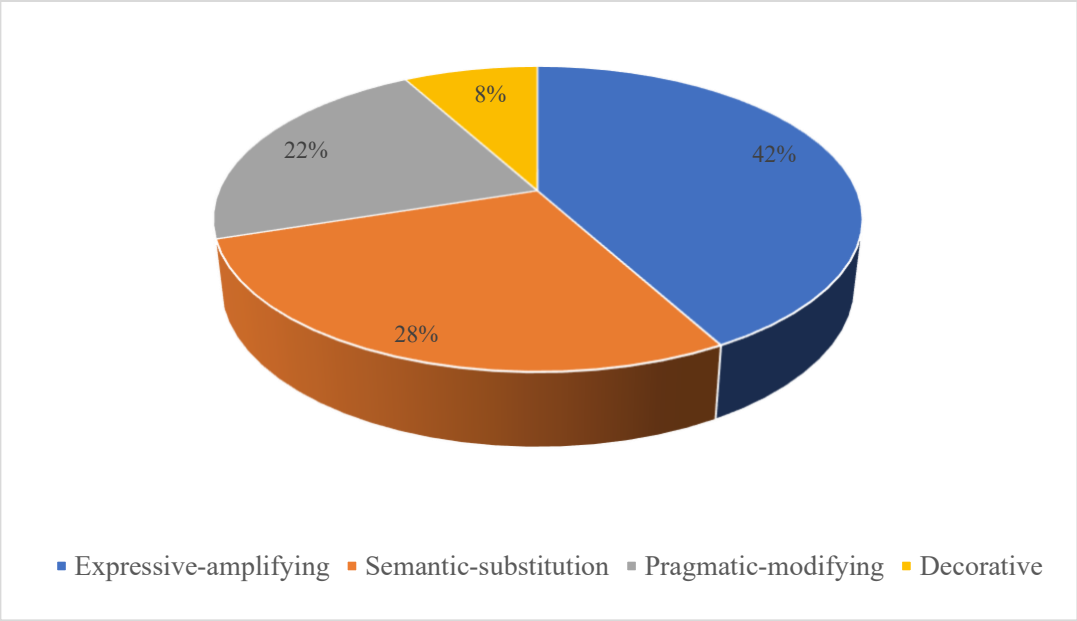


Figure 1. Functional distribution of emojis in Ukrainian social media
Source: developed by the authors based on the functional classification of emojis (Caspi & Raz, 2020)

The semantic substitution role of emojis (28%) is especially clear in constructions such as "smoothie🥤" (#7), "coffee☕" (#17), and "books📚" (#31), where emojis completely replace or mirror verbal equivalents, creating new forms of creolized text. The pragmatic-modifying role (22%) appears in sentences like the one where the author describes how "I'm preparing a surprise😊" (#10) or "powerful!♡🔥🔥🔥" (#20), where emojis alter the pragmatic meaning of the message. This trend aligns with cognitive economy, as a visual symbol often conveys complex concepts more efficiently than words.

Multimodal semantic integration, where the meaning of a message is formed through the interaction of textual and visual elements, is the most complex cognitive process. It has been shown that there are three main models of this type of integration, as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Models of multimodal semantic integration

Integration model	Example from the corpus	Semantic effect	Frequency
Congruent	"autumn🍂" (#1), "jogging🏃 🫁" (#22)	Amplification of meaning	48%
Contrastive	"chaos, but we hold on💪" (#24), "nightmare😵" (#36)	Emotional rethinking	32%

Ambivalent	"preparing a surprise😊" (#10), "sincerely♡" (#16)	Emotional nuance	20%

Source: developed by the authors using the semantic integration model by Caspi & Raz (2020)

In the corresponding model (48%), the text and the graphic are semantically consistent, which strengthens the main message. The opposite model (32%) involves a more complex cognitive process where the emoji creates semantic tension with the text or elicits an emotional response to an otherwise neutral message. This aligns with a study by Caspi & Raz (2020), which showed that dissonant associations between emoji and text are often used to convey complex interpersonal sentiments.

The analysis results show that specialized cognitive processes have developed to interpret creolized texts on social media. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of cognitive mechanisms involved in decoding multimodal messages.

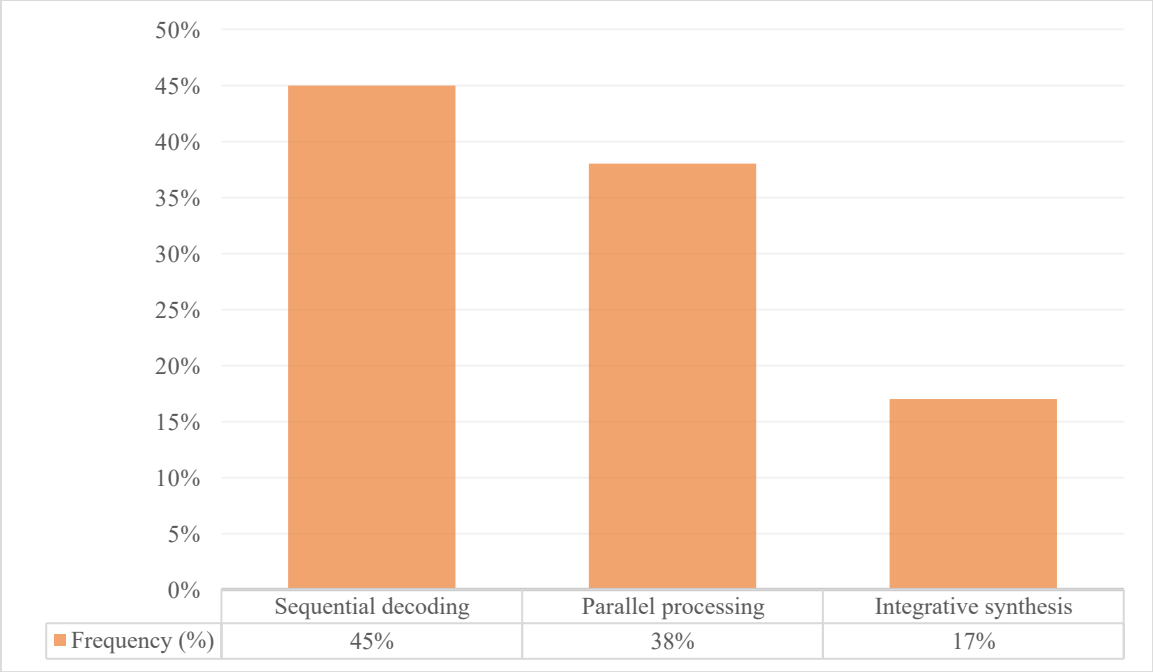


Figure 2. Cognitive strategies for decoding multimodal messages
Source: developed by the authors using the cognitive model of multimodal information processing (Kusal *et al*., 2025)

Sequential decoding (45%) involves the step-by-step processing of the first textual and second visual elements, which is especially common for complex structures, such as the thread "How the language of social networks has changed in 5 years - a brief analysis (1/5)" (#21). Parallel processing (38%) means all semiotic resources are processed at the same time, as in the example "like because it's sincere♡" (#16). The most complex mechanism is integrative synthesis (17%), where a new meaning is clearly created through creative interaction of different modalities, for example, in the construction "behind the scenes – preparing a surprise😊" (#10).

One of the unique features of the Ukrainian segment of the social network is the active use of hybrid constructions that combine Cyrillic and Latin alphabets with universal

visual symbols. The linguistic and cognitive adaptation to the glo-cal digital environment in such constructions as "Wow, that sunset tho😍" (#3), "#MondayBlues – need coffee☕" (#17) or "behind the scenes – preparing surprise😊" (#10) demonstrate the complex processes of adapting a foreign language and cognitive functions to the digital world.

Of particular interest is the phenomenon of "emoji localization," that is, when users adapt universal emojis to specific Ukrainian cultural norms. To illustrate, emojis within traditional culture, such as "portraits of grandmothers in my village - traditions that have remained" (#33), create a conceptual link between the digital world and cultural values.

The hypothesis that social media users develop new language and cognitive skills is supported by the study's findings. These skills include quickly interpreting multimodal constructions, short texts, and creatively using limited semiotic resources to maximize expressiveness. These adaptations highlight the flexibility of human language abilities and their capacity to innovate in response to the technological demands of the digital age.

A linguistic and cultural analysis of Ukrainian social media has uncovered complex glocalization processes in which global digital practices are adapted to local cultural codes and identities. The article shows that social media can be viewed as a space of hybridization, where traditional Ukrainian cultural indicators are influenced by transnational digital trends, shaping linguistic and cultural practices (Mialkovska et al., 2024).

The level of cultural specificity involved made it easy to categorize the types of cultural markers in the analyzed corpus. Wu (2023) highlights the importance of examining the cultural context when performing critical research on social media, since digital technologies both homogenize and customize cultural practices. Table 3 presents the analysis results.

Table 3. Stratification of cultural markers in Ukrainian social networks

Level of cultural specificity	Types of markers	Examples from the corpus	Frequency (%)
Nationally specific	Symbols, realities, traditions	"traditions that have remained" (#33), "in Lviv" (#14)	30%
Professional and discursive	Academic, IT, fitness cultures	"educational discourse" (#2), "#endurance" (#22), "apps" (#34)	28%
Generational and subcultural	Youth, student culture	"meme of the day" (#11), "student culture" (#37), "aesthetic goals"	25%
Transnational	Global trends, anglicisms	"#Breaking" (#9), "lol" (#12), "quick tip" (#32)	17%

Source: compiled by the authors on the basis of the Garnes-Tarazona cultural discourse model (2025)

As Table 3 shows, national-specific markers remain significant at 30%, indicating active digital Ukrainization. However, the percentage of professionally discursive markers is also high at 28%, due to the formation of a new digital community centered around professional and cultural practices, including IT culture (example #34: "app"), fitness culture (#22: "#endurance"), and academic culture of critical thinking (#5).

The study of meme culture has revealed that it is the primary system of cultural hybridization in Ukrainian social networks. Meme practices are localized, combining global forms with local cultures to develop hybrid cultural expressions. Table 4 presents a typology of meme strategies for cultural adaptation.

Table 4. Cultural adaptation strategies in meme practices

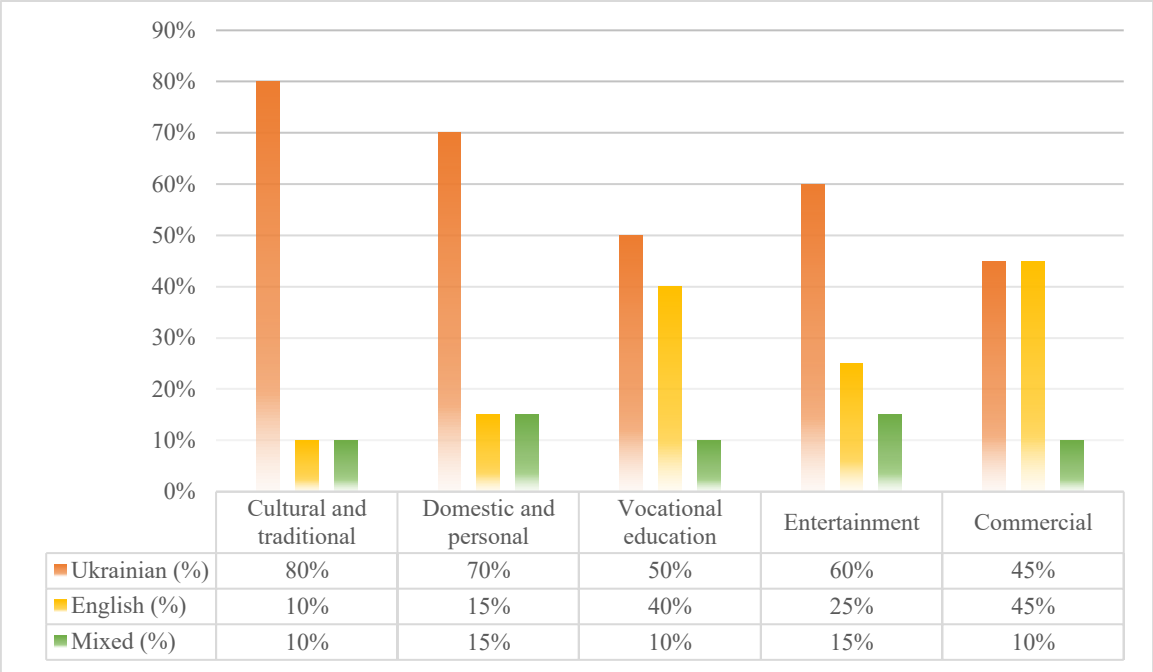
Adaptation strategy	Mechanism	Example from the corpus	Cultural effect
Localization of a global format	Adaptation of international genres	"Meme: when the curator says 'no marks'" (#37)	Student solidarity
Creolization of language codes	Hybrid constructions	"Behind the scenes – preparing a surprise" (#10)	Blogger's authenticity
Professional identification	Specialized discourses	"PSA: check the facts" (#38), "thread" (#21)	Expert culture
Local rootedness	Geographical markers	"in Lviv" (#14), "in my village" (#33)	Territorial identity

Source: developed by the authors using the methodology of critical multimodal analysis (Garnes-Tarazona, 2025)

The processes of localizing global formats showcase the creativity of Ukrainian users in adapting international communication practices. For example, the English-language form of "behind the scenes" combined with Ukrainian text (No. 10) creates a hybrid identity that aligns with international trends in blogging culture while maintaining the uniqueness of the Ukrainian language (Mialkovska et al., 2023).

The analysis shows that powerful processes of digital Ukrainization are driven by spontaneous user practices. Yusanto & Nugroho (2024) highlight the importance of digital influencers in shaping cultural trends and language use. In the Ukrainian context, authors observe the development of a multilingual space where Ukrainian dominates in culturally significant situations.

Figure 3 displays the distribution of language practices in the corpus under study, showing how language codes interact in a complex way across different types of content.



	Cultural and traditional	Domestic and personal	Vocational education	Entertainment	Commercial
Ukrainian (%)	80%	70%	50%	60%	45%
English (%)	10%	15%	40%	25%	45%
Mixed (%)	10%	15%	10%	15%	10%

Figure 3. Language practices by content type in Ukrainian social media
Source: developed by the authors on the basis of linguistic and discourse analysis of the corpus (Yusanto & Nugroho, 2024)

The analysis of hashtags has shown that they are used to shape cultural identity at different levels. Culturally significant hashtags establish a hierarchy between global (#nofilter, #3; #community, #30) and local (#autumn, #1; #sale, #35).

Particularly interesting is the use of hybrid hashtags, such as "#MondayBlues" (#17) or "#endurance" (#22), which demonstrates how English-language cultural constructs are incorporated into the Ukrainian context. These practices suggest the development of a glocal identity, where users simultaneously identify with both global and local cultural communities.

The analysis revealed the creation of different types of digital folklore that adapt traditional Ukrainian cultural stories to the digital space. Example #33 ("portraits of grandmothers in my village – traditions that have remained") demonstrates how traditional culture is documented and preserved through digital practices.

The phenomenon of "neomythology" appears in the development of new cultural stories related to digital characters and events. Meme culture (#11, #37) is also used as a system for creating shared cultural references that form a new version of collective memory for the digital generation.

The comparison revealed a significant difference in how various demographic groups express their culture. Women's aesthetic discourse (#4: "@olya_ka beautiful! What filter did you use?") is characterized by a focus on visual culture and aesthetic practices, while educational discourse (#2, #5) emphasizes verification and critical thinking.

Differences between generations are reflected in different types of cultural references: traditional culture is maintained through documentary practices (#33), while youth culture is shown through meme formats (#37) and interactive practices (#25, #31).

Critical and reflective discourse is a key feature of the linguistic and cultural landscape. Critical attitudes toward social issues and media literacy are evident in Examples #36 ("tiny rant: public transport at 8am is a nightmare") and #38 ("PSA: check the facts").

Cultural trolling as a phenomenon manifests through ironic behavior and sarcastic remarks as forms of cultural resistance and critical engagement with mainstream discourses. This supports the thesis of Garnes-Tarazona (2025) about the ambivalence of social media as a space for both constructing and deconstructing cultural identities.

The study's findings reveal that linguistic and cultural dynamics on Ukrainian social media are complex and multifaceted, shaped by the ongoing interaction between global and local cultural signals, traditional and modern forms of expression, as well as official and alternative narratives on cultural identity.

The study of communication strategies, based on the analysis of this corpus, demonstrated a complex system of discursive practices with a high degree of adaptability to contextual factors and target audiences. Kopf (2024) emphasizes the role of communication strategies as a key aspect of critical social media studies, as they reflect both linguistic and socio-political processes in the digital environment.

The systematization of communication strategies enabled us to identify five main types, which differ in their functional purpose and discursive mechanisms of implementation. According to Lehmann (2024), it is important to understand a multimodal construction as a holistic communicative unit that consists of multiple semiotic resources and creates a specific pragmatic effect. Table 5 presents the results of the typology.

Table 5. Typology of communication strategies in Ukrainian social networks

Type of strategy	Mechanism of implementation	Example from the corpus	Frequency (%)	Target effect
Informative	Data transfer	"#Breaking: new transportation rules" (#9), "article of the day" (#2)	30%	Dissemination of information
Fatigue	Establishing contact	"Finally fall🍂 (#1)", "Who's with me?"	25%	Creating a community
Expressive	Emotional expression	"Wow, that sunset tho😍"(#3), "powerful!🔥🔥🔥" (#20)	20%	Emotional impact
Mobilizing	Call to action	"We are going to clean up" (#29), "RT if you support" (#30)	15%	Encouragement to be active

Verification	Verification of information	"The sources are weak. Can you provide a link?" (#5), "PSA: check the facts" (#38)	10%	Critical thinking

Source: developed by the authors using the critical discourse model (Kopf, 2024)

The predominance of the informative strategy (30%) can be explained by social media's role as a valuable source of information, especially regarding media pluralism. The factual strategy (25%) highlights the uniqueness of social networks as a means of social interaction. The verification strategy (10%) reflects the growth of critical thinking and media literacy culture.

The study of multimodal communicative constructions has revealed that they act as complex semiotic systems where meaning is generated through combining different modalities. According to Wang and Wang (2024), strategic communication on social media is a crucial research area as a form of digital performance that employs both verbal and non-verbal elements to effectively impact the audience.

Table 6 systematizes the types of multimodal structures and communication functions.

Table 6. Multimodal communication structures and their functions

Type of construction	Components	Communicative function	Example from the case	Effectiveness
Text + emoji amplifier	Verbal text + emotional emoji	Emotional amplitude	"beautiful! ✨" (#4), "powerful!♡🔥🔥🔥" (#20)	High
Hybrid construction	Text + emoji + hashtag	Multifunctional	"#MondayBlues – need coffee☕"(#17)	Maximum
Creolized narrative	Text + visual metaphor	Complex expression	"Smoothie: banana + spinach + ginger🫚" (#7)	High
Text + emoji modifier	Main text + meaningful emoji	Semantic modification	"vote!🗳️🗳️" (#25), "a set of books📚" (#31)	Medium
Minimalistic	Emoji dominant	Compressed transmission	"like because it's sincere♡"(#16)	Variable

Source: compiled by the authors based on the theory of multimodal constructions (Lehmann, 2024)

The highest communicative effectiveness occurs in hybrid constructions because of the synergistic effect of using different semiotic resources. The message "#MondayBlues – need coffee☕"(#17) combines emotional mood, cultural allusion, and uses a visual metaphor to boost the pragmatic impact. An important aspect of communication strategies is having mechanisms to verify and delegitimize information. Igwebuike and Chimuanya (2020) evaluate methods of legitimizing fake data on social media and emphasize the importance of discursive strategies in building trust or distrust in a message.

In the studied corpus, specific verification strategies can be identified: the academic culture of criticality ("Sources are weak. Can you provide links?" #5), public warnings ("PSA: check the facts" #38), and the use of meta-comments ("Spoiler-free review" #27). These strategies reflect the development of alternative methods for verifying information and a culture of media literacy.

The analysis of politically significant content reveals how traditional rhetorical strategies have been adapted to suit the unique characteristics of the digital space. Wang and Wang's (2024) article shows how the nature of political communication is evolving through digital platforms.

The corpus, which combines official rhetoric and informal communication practices, includes strategies for mobilizing the public ("we are going to clean the park" #29, "RT if you support local initiatives" #30). The involvement of citizens in the use of digital tools is reflected in the use of platform abbreviations in politics.

The comparison showed a clear difference in communication methods related to the specifics of each platform.

- Instagram promotes visual and aesthetic solutions with a strong focus on appealing to emotions: "Beautiful! What filter did you use? ✨" (No. 4), "Collection of autumn looks – 5 bows, 5 minutes" (No. 18). The platform encourages showcasing functionality and aesthetic communication.

- Facebook encourages the development of broad discussion practices that include some aspects of argumentation: "Article of the day: how our memory works - share the link in the comments" (#2), "Poll: what format of lecture is more convenient for you" (#23). The platform facilitates research conversations and consultations.

- Twitter/X should be as short and clear as possible: "in short: new feature in the app" (#34), "short poll: tea or coffee? answer T/C" (#40). The site promotes brevity and interactive formats.

Collective communication practices involve coordinating the actions of multiple users to achieve shared goals. These practices are reflected in phenomena such as campaigns using hashtags (#community #30), interactive formats like polls (#25) and contests (#31), and cultural projects (#33: "portraits of grandmothers").

Examples #29-30 show a sequence of organizational communication ("going to clean up") leading to mobilization ("RT if you support") as an example of coordinated civic engagement tactics.

Ethical problems identified during the analysis included emotional manipulation and commercial strategies. In example #35 ("Advertising: 30% discounts"), commercial

communication suggests transparency, while some strategies use emotional appeals without explicitly stating commercial intentions.

Verification strategies (#5, #38) serve as an ethical check and balance mechanism that promote critical thinking and media literacy.

The study's findings demonstrate the multidimensionality and complexity of communication strategies in Ukrainian social media, characterized by high adaptability, multimodality, and sensitivity to context. These strategies not only showcase the language of innovation but also reflect deeper socio-cultural shifts in the digital communication era.

5. DISCUSSION

The study's results confirm the complexity and multidimensionality of language processes in Ukrainian social media, which is explained by the combination of global trends in the digital environment and local cultural and linguistic practices. The data gathered allows us to view the language of social networks as a unique linguistic phenomenon, blending adaptive cognitive processes, glocalization cultural practices, and strategic communication strategies.

The linguistic and cognitive processes of speech compression and multimodal semantic integration identified in the study align with linguistic and cognitive simplification systems present worldwide, according to Marco *et al*. 2024, who observed similar patterns of linguistic simplification on social media over time. However, our findings also reveal specific features of the Ukrainian language, notably the dominance of acronymization (35%) over other forms of compression, such as graphical methods (25%), contrasting with the English-speaking environment where acronymization and numerical substitutions are more common.

Of particular interest is the fact that authors have identified a tendency toward what can be called “emoji localization,” i.e., the establishment of a universal visual symbol with a culturally specific meaning in the context of Ukraine. This refutes the hypothesis of the universality of emoji as a “global language” and confirms the thesis that even the most abstract semiotic resources are culturally conditioned. These findings are based on the work of other researchers studying multimodal discourse in different countries (Liu *et al*., 2024), who highlight the importance of considering local cultural codes when analyzing digital communication.

The complexity of thinking patterns in digital communication is reflected in the pattern of contrastive semantic integration (32% of cases) that authors observed, where emojis provoke an ironic reconsideration of the textual component. This aligns with the theoretical positions of Zappavigna & Ross (2024) on the need to develop innovative methodological strategies to study new types of digital discourse that cannot be analyzed using traditional linguistic theory.

The results of the linguistic and cultural analysis reveal deep processes of digital Ukrainization linked to Racek *et al*. (2024)'s findings on the increased use of the Ukrainian language on social media influenced by geopolitical factors. However, our analysis goes beyond a quantitative study of language choice and highlights qualitative processes of cultural hybridization and identity formation.

The significance of national-specific cultural markers (30%), even when combined with professional discourse markers (28%), highlights active digital nation-building processes that occur not through formal language policies but through spontaneous user practices. This somewhat challenges the trend of cultural homogenization in the global digital environment and demonstrates that local culture can preserve its uniqueness even amid worldwide digitalization.

The phenomenon of meme localization, as observed in our study, demonstrates innovative ways of adapting global cultural formats within local semantic systems. These practices do not reflect a passive reception of global content but involve active cultural effort to reinterpret or appropriate it, which aligns well with critical approaches to analyzing digital media.

The typology of communication strategies that authors have developed in our study reveals both the general features of digital communication and the specifics of the Ukrainian context. The dominance of the informative strategy (30%) and the significance of the phatic strategy (25%) confirm the overall trend of social networks to maintain social connections. However, the mechanisms of its application can also be seen as part of the cultural peculiarities of the Ukrainian communication ethos.

The chosen methods of information verification, based on mutual confirmation and trust networks, align with international research on post-truth and disinformation. They also show specific adaptations to the Ukrainian information environment, which is influenced by hybrid warfare and media polarization.

According to Khosravi (2022), analyzing digital meaning-making as a process that extends beyond just text is a process involving both production and consumption practices. Our findings support this idea and show that communication styles on Ukrainian social media are influenced not only by the technological features of the platforms but also by the socio-political environment and culture.

By combining linguistic-cognitive, linguistic-cultural, and communicative-strategic methods of analysis, our study advances a methodology for analyzing digital discourse. The classification system we developed for multimodal texts enables a systematic examination of the complex interactions among various semiotic resources, which is particularly important given the increasing multimodality in digital communication.

Zappavigna and Ross (2024) highlight that new methodological tools need to be developed to analyze innovative digital discourse forms. Systematizing empirical analysis of the corpus with multiple parameters, followed by comprehensive analysis, is a potential direction for such methodological development, especially for studying non-English-speaking digital communities.

A comparison of the results with international studies reveals both similarities and differences. The polarized evolutionary linguistic divergence in social media, documented by Karjus and Cuskley (2024), aligns somewhat with our findings regarding the development of alternative discourses and oppositional cultural practices in the Ukrainian digital space.

However, the peculiarity of the Ukrainian situation is that the processes of internal consolidation—such as the active use of the Ukrainian language—are paired with a diverse range of communication practices and cultural expressions. This ambivalence is

not a simple polarization, as presented in the English-language literature, but requires a more nuanced theoretical understanding.

The research makes a significant scientific contribution to the study of digital discourse. It is the first systematic examination of the linguistic-cognitive, linguistic-cultural, and communicative-strategic features of the Ukrainian language in social media, filling an important gap in Slavic digital linguistics. The developed methodology for multimodal corpus analysis can be applied to other language communities and cultural contexts, aiding comparative studies of digital discourse. The identified patterns of cultural localization of global digital practices add to theoretical discussions about glocalization and hybridization of cultures in the digital age and reveal specific mechanisms of these processes at the linguistic and discourse levels.

The results of the study suggest some potential directions for future development in the field. First, conducting a long-term study on the dynamics of language change on social media is necessary to identify patterns of temporal influence and forecast future changes. Liu *et al*. (2024) also emphasize the importance of adopting a temporal perspective on multimodal discourse development.

A comparative study of Ukrainian digital practices and those of other post-socialist countries to identify general and specific characteristics of changes in language practices under the influence of digitalization and democratization is also an important area of research.

The generational and gender aspects of digital communication are a promising area for further research, as our study has only outlined the issue. A more detailed exploration of subcultural and demographic differences in digital language use could also uncover additional mechanisms of social stratification in the digital space.

Last but not least, we need to expand the methodological toolkit to include machine learning and artificial intelligence for analyzing large corpora of digital discourse, which will enable us to pursue large-scale quantitative and qualitative research instead of relying solely on qualitative analysis.

Overall, this article demonstrates that language processes in the digital realm are complex and evolving. It emphasizes the importance of a culturally sensitive approach to analyzing digital communication and outlines potential directions for future theoretical and empirical research in this rapidly changing field of linguistics.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The study of social media language in the Ukrainian context has revealed a complex network of linguistic, cognitive, and cultural processes that shape new forms of digital communication. Analyzing a natural corpus of 40 genuine Ukrainian samples from three major platforms allowed us to identify the main trends in how the Ukrainian language functions online.

At the linguistic and cognitive levels, three main mechanisms of how language adapts to the digital space were identified: speech compression, text creolization, and multimodal semantic integration. Speech compression primarily occurs through acronym formation (35% of cases), graphic reduction (25%), and numerical compression (22%), illustrating the communication trends in the digital environment overall and highlighting the particularities of the Ukrainian language. The functional roles of emojis are quite

complex: 42% serve an expressive-amplifying function, 28% function as semantic substitutions, and 22% as pragmatic modifiers. There are three types of multimodal semantic integration: congruent (48%), contrastive (32%), and ambivalent (20%), indicating that users possess a specific set of cognitive skills.

Linguistic and cultural analysis has revealed how glocalization works, where national-specific cultural markers (30%) blend with professional-discursive content (28%) and generational subcultural elements (25%). It is noted that emoji localization is a phenomenon where universally recognized visual symbols start to take on culturally specific meanings in Ukraine. The main process of cultural hybridization is meme culture, which replaces global formats with local systems of meaning.

The typology of communication strategies has identified five primary types: informative (30%), phatic (25%), expressive (20%), mobilizing (15%), and verification (10%). The latter reflects how the culture of critical thinking and media literacy is developing within the Ukrainian digital space. It has been observed that strategies vary based on platform features: Instagram emphasizes visual and aesthetic practices, Facebook encourages discussion formats, and Twitter/X demands maximum brevity.

The practical importance of the results lies in their potential to develop a media literacy program, improve digital communication strategies, and establish culturally sensitive digital education approaches. The theoretical contribution of the research is the development of a multimodal approach to analyzing digital discourse and the standardization of cultural adaptation processes for universal digital practices.

The disadvantages of this study are that the corpus is relatively small and that only three main platforms were analyzed, which does not provide a full picture of digital practices. Promising areas for future research include long-term studies on the nature of language change, comparisons across different language communities, and the application of machine learning to analyze large amounts of digital discourse.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Table A.1. Empirical material of the study

№	Platform	Type of content	Example (anonymized)	Linguistic and cognitive features	Linguocultural features
1	Instagram	Post.	"Finally fall🍂 – time for warm sweaters and hot drinks"	Creolization of the text, emoji as a semantic component	Seasonal cultural markers
2	Facebook	Post.	"Article of the day: how our memory works – share the link in the comments"	Structuring information, interactivity	Educational discourse
3	Twitter	Post.	"Wow, that sunset tho😍 #nofilter"	Code-switching, compression (tho), hashtagging	English-Ukrainian switching
4	Instagram	Comment.	"@olya_ka is beautiful! What filter did you use? ✨"	Addressing (@), emoji amplifier	Women's aesthetic discourse
5	Facebook	Comment.	"I agree – the sources are weak. Can you provide a link?"	Argumentation, request for verification	Academic culture of criticality
6	Twitter	Response.	"agree 100% – this needs fact-checking"	English language compression,	Global information culture

				numerical expression	
7	Instagram	Post.	"My morning smoothie recipe: banana + spinach + ginger"🥤	Listing, a visual metaphor	Healthy lifestyle as a cultural trend
8	Facebook	Post.	"Today there is a charity fair in the city. Those who come, meet at the stage at 12:00"	Time and space markers, organization	Public activity
9	Twitter	Post.	"#Breaking: new rules of transport from October 1"	News marker (#Breaking), shortness	Civic awareness
10	Instagram	Stories	"Behind the scenes – preparing a surprise😉 (GIF)"	Bilingualism, intrigue, multimodality	Blogging culture of mystery
11	Facebook	Comment.	"Haha, this is definitely☝ meme of the day"	Online laughter, visual gesture, meme	Humorous Internet culture
12	Twitter	Reply to.	"lol can't stop laughing"🤣	Acronym (lol), hyperbole, emoji	Global laughing culture
13	Instagram	Post.	"Photos from childhood: "remember where you came from" – 100% nostalgia"	Quotability, numerical metaphor	Culture of memory and identity
14	Facebook	Post.	"Friends, please recommend a good orthopedist in Lviv – urgently"	Appeal to the community, localization	Mutual aid as a cultural norm

15	Twitter	Post.	"anyone else listening to #indie today? recommendations pls"🎧	English-language query, abbreviation (pls), music hashtag	Global music culture
16	Instagram	Comment.	"like because sincerely"♡	Platform vocabulary, causality	Culture of sincerity
17	Twitter	Post.	"Feeling #MondayBlues – need coffee"☕	English-Ukrainian hybrid, emotional state	Work culture and rituals
18	Instagram	Post.	"Collection of autumn looks – 5 bows, 5 minutes. Carousel"←	Numerical structure, meta-orientations	Fashion as a cultural practice
19	Facebook	Post.	"Official statement: we are terminating the project. Thank you all"	Official style, gratitude	Culture of professional ethics
20	Instagram	Comment	"♡🔥🔥🔥 is very powerful!"	Emoji gradation, amplification	Youth expressive culture
21	Twitter	Thread.	"thread How the language of social networks has changed in 5 years - a brief analysis (1/5)"	Meta-genre, numbering of parts	Analytical Internet culture
22	Instagram	Post.	"Morning 5km run - feeling the #endurance effect🚴‍♂️🎗"	Sports terminology, visual metaphor	Fitness culture
23	Facebook	Post.	"Poll: which lecture format is more convenient for you – online or offline?"	Interactive format, dichotomy	Educational digitalization

24	Twitter	Post.	"It's chaos at work, but we're holding on"💪	Spoken expression, visual support	Labor solidarity
25	Instagram	Stories Poll	"Coffee or tea?☕🍵 – vote!"	Interactive format, visual options	Culture of choice
26	Instagram	Post.	"DIY: how to make a macrame plant hanging"	DIY acronym, instructiveness	Handmade culture
27	Twitter	Post.	"Spoiler-free review: very atmospheric, but slow. 7/10"	English-Ukrainian hybridity, rating	Film criticism culture
28	Instagram	Post.	"Quote of the day: "Dreams have deadlines" – who agrees? ✨"	Quote format, rhetorical question	Motivational culture
29	Facebook	Post.	"Public post: we are going to clean the park this weekend"	Meta-marker, public initiative	Environmental awareness
30	Twitter	Post.	"RT if you support local initiatives. #community"	Platform abbreviation (RT), hashtag cohesion	Public activity
31	Instagram	Post.	"Contest! Tag a friend in the comments and win a set of books"📚	Interactive format, visual symbol	Reading culture
32	Twitter	Post.	"quick tip: write to-do lists before bed - clears your head"	English-language practicality, metaphor	Productive culture
33	Instagram	Post.	"Photo project: portraits of grandmothers in my village - traditions that have remained"	Documentation, preservation of memory	Traditional culture

34	Twitter	Post.	“In brief: a new feature in the app makes life easier”	A marker of brevity, technology	IT culture
35	Instagram	Post.	“Advertising: 30% off the entire range until the end of the week. #sale”	Commercial transparency, numerical data	Consumer culture
36	Twitter	Post.	“tiny rant: public transport at 8am is a nightmare”😵	Genre marker (rant), hyperbole	Urban culture of complaints
37	Instagram	Post.	“Meme: when the curator says “no marks” and you've already prepared a presentation”😂	Meme format, relatability	Student culture
38	Twitter	Post.	“PSA: check the facts before sharing the news. #factcheck”	Public service announcement (PSA), fact-checking	Media literacy
39	Instagram	Post.	“Photo dump: 10 shots from the trip - the caption is unique for each photo’	Genre marker, meta description	Visual culture of travel
40	Twitter	Post.	“short poll: tea or coffee? reply T/C”☕🍮	Compressed format, coding of answers	Culture of quick polls