



DIGITAL MULTILINGUALISM IN UZBEKISTAN: UZBEK, RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH IN ONLINE INTERACTION

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ANNOTATSIYA/ АННОТАЦИЯ

Ushbu maqolada O'zbekistondagi raqamli ko'p tillilik o'zbek, rus va ingliz tillarining onlayn muloqotdagi o'zaro ta'siri asosida tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot ijtimoiy tarmoqlar, messenjerlar, izohlar va boshqa raqamli maydonlar ko'p tilli amaliyotlar nafaqat namoyon bo'ladigan, balki faol shakllanadigan muhit ekanligiga asoslanadi. O'zbekistonning onlayn makonida davlat tili sifatidagi o'zbek tili, tarixan shahar va kasbiy muloqotda muhim o'rin tutgan rus tili hamda texnologiya, ta'lim va raqamli madaniyat tili sifatida ingliz tilining birgalikda qo'llanishi murakkab ko'p tilli ekotizimni yuzaga keltiradi. Maqolada postlar, izohlar, sarlavhalar, hashtaglar va norasmiy yozishmalarda ushbu tillarning o'zaro munosabati, xususan kod almashish, leksik o'zlashmalar, yozuv almashinuvi, pragmatik farqlanish va identitet signalizatsiyasi jihatidan ko'rib chiqiladi. Mazkur tadqiqotda O'zbekistondagi raqamli kommunikatsiya muhitida uchraydigan ko'p tilli diskursning asosiy xususiyatlari sotsiolingvistik va diskursiv yondashuv asosida yoritiladi. Tadqiqot davomida ijtimoiy tarmoqlardagi postlar, kommentariyalar, hashtaglar, reklama matnlari va kundalik yozishmalar misolida tillarning funksional taqsimoti hamda ularning kommunikativ vazifalari tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, maqolada raqamli platformalar ta'sirida yuzaga kelayotgan gibril til registrlari, transliteratsiya, qisqartmalar, emoji va inglizcha texnologik terminlarning o'zbek va rus tillari bilan integratsiyalashuvi ko'rib chiqiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari O'zbekistonda raqamli makon til siyosati, yoshlar nutqi, identitet shakllanishi va zamonaviy internet diskursini o'rganishda muhim nazariy hamda amaliy ahamiyatga ega ekanligini ko'rsatadi.

ABOUT THE PAPER

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ANNOTATION

This article examines digital multilingualism in Uzbekistan through the interaction of Uzbek, Russian, and English in online communication. The study is based on the assumption that social media, messaging platforms, comment threads, and other digital environments have become key spaces where multilingual practices are not only displayed but actively shaped. In Uzbekistan's online sphere, the coexistence of Uzbek as the state language, Russian as a historically influential language of urban and professional communication, and English as a global language of technology, education, and digital culture creates a dynamic multilingual ecology. This study examines the main features of multilingual discourse in the digital communication environment of Uzbekistan based on a sociolinguistic and discursive approach. The study analyzes the functional distribution of languages and their communicative functions using the examples of posts, comments, hashtags, advertising texts, and daily correspondence on social networks. The article also examines the hybrid language registers, transliteration, abbreviations, emojis, and the integration of English technological terms with Uzbek and Russian languages under the influence of digital platforms. The results of the study show that the digital space in Uzbekistan is of great theoretical and practical importance in the study of language policy, youth speech, identity formation, and modern Internet discourse.

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Introduction. Digital communication has transformed the linguistic landscape of contemporary societies by creating fast-moving, highly interactive spaces in which multiple languages coexist, overlap, and acquire new social meanings. In Uzbekistan, this transformation is especially visible because online communication develops at the intersection of three major linguistic resources: Uzbek, Russian, and English. Uzbek occupies the role of the state language and the strongest index of local belonging, Russian remains highly visible in urban communication, professional life, and post-Soviet cultural memory, while English has expanded through technology, education, global media, and digital entrepreneurship. As internet use has become widespread in Uzbekistan, online platforms have turned into key sites where multilingual practices are produced, circulated, and normalized. Official statistics

reported that internet use in Uzbekistan reached 94.2% of the population in January–August 2025, which makes digital communication a major arena for observing language behavior at scale.

The concept of digital multilingualism refers not simply to the presence of several languages online, but to the patterned ways in which users combine, separate, alternate, and assign functions to those languages in digital interaction. In Uzbekistan's online ecology, multilingualism appears in comments, memes, short messages, captions, hashtags, promotional posts, academic discussions, and influencer discourse. Recent research shows that Uzbek, Russian, and English are often combined in ways that are socially meaningful rather than accidental. Studies of contemporary urban Uzbekistan describe code-switching as connected to identity, education, globalization, and the negotiation of post-Soviet and

local affiliations. Corpus-based work on younger generations similarly shows that switching among English, Russian, and Uzbek is closely linked to digital culture and generational styles of self-expression.

Digital platforms intensify multilingual practices because they favor speed, informality, visibility, and audience targeting. A user may begin a sentence in Uzbek, insert a Russian discourse marker for tone, and use an English keyword for trend alignment or technical precision. In other cases, English enters through platform vocabulary, marketing language, academic terminology, or global pop-culture references, while Russian supplies urban informality, bureaucratic terminology, or emotional nuance. A recent linguistic analysis of Instagram discourse in Uzbekistan found that Uzbek, Russian, and English are frequently blended with mixed tags, emojis, acronyms, and platform-specific semantic shifts, producing hybrid digital registers. Research on Uzbek social media politeness also shows that online interaction reshapes norms while preserving culturally recognizable patterns of respect and softening.

Literature review. The literature relevant to digital multilingualism in Uzbekistan may be grouped into four interconnected areas: sociolinguistic studies of multilingualism and code-switching, digital discourse research, corpus and computational approaches to low-resource languages, and emerging Uzbekistan-focused analyses of online linguistic behavior. Taken together, these strands show that multilingual online interaction in Uzbekistan is not a marginal topic but a significant site for understanding language contact, identity, and digital transformation.

The first major area is sociolinguistic research on code-switching and multilingual identity. Recent work on Uzbek–Russian–English code-switching in contemporary urban Uzbekistan argues that language alternation is closely related to ethnic affiliation, educational background, global orientation, and the broader sociopolitical dynamics of a post-Soviet society. That study highlights the predominance of intra-sentential switching and notes that Uzbek–Russian switching is particularly common in informal and technical discourse, whereas Uzbek–English switching is especially visible in academic and digital domains. This suggests that multilingual practices in Uzbekistan are functionally differentiated, with speakers drawing on different languages for distinct communicative and symbolic purposes. A related corpus-based study of Generations Z and Alpha finds that code-switching in English, Russian, and Uzbek is shaped by digital technologies and generational style. Generation Z tends to use switching to mark solidarity and group identity, while Generation Alpha displays a more flexible and normalized approach, treating mixed-language speech as an ordinary part of communication.

The second area concerns digital discourse and social media language. Research increasingly recognizes that social media does not merely reflect offline language habits but creates its own discourse conventions, including abbreviated syntax, mixed scripts, hashtag logic, emoji-based stance marking, and rapid lexical circulation. A 2026 linguistic analysis of Instagram discourse in Uzbekistan demonstrates that Uzbek, Russian, and English often appear together with platform-specific semantic innovation. Terms related to followers, content, direct messaging, and digital engagement acquire localized meanings, while mixed tags, acronyms, and emojis contribute to hybrid communicative registers. This finding is significant because it shows that multilingualism online is not limited to lexical insertion; it is also bound up with the emergence of new discourse forms shaped by platform architecture. Research on politeness in Uzbek social media similarly shows that online interaction combines continuity and change: conventional norms of respect and softening remain recognizable, but they are recontextualized through digital affordances such as emoji, shortened address forms, and interactional compression.

The third area is corpus and computational work on Uzbek and other low-resource languages. This literature matters because robust research on online multilingualism increasingly depends on tools for segmentation, classification, transliteration handling, and corpus annotation. The introduction of BERTbek marks an important step in Uzbek NLP by providing a language-specific pretrained model that improves performance on several monolingual tasks. Broader survey work on Turkic Central Asian language processing also shows that Uzbek has become one of the better-resourced languages in the region, though still far from fully supported across genres and tasks. Such developments are important for multilingualism research because they make it increasingly feasible to process online text at scale, including noisy, non-standard, or mixed-language material. In multilingual digital corpora, however, language identification and segmentation remain challenging, especially when users switch languages mid-sentence or use shortened, transliterated, or hashtagged forms. New general-purpose segmentation methods developed for noisy multilingual text are therefore directly relevant to future Uzbek social media research.

The fourth area includes emerging Uzbekistan-focused studies of internet language and lexical change. Recent research on linguistic features

of internet texting in Uzbek identifies abbreviations, slang, code-switching, and the influence of social media as major characteristics of contemporary digital expression. Another corpus-based study of English borrowings into Uzbek through social media and online corpora argues that digital platforms accelerate lexical innovation and facilitate morphological and semantic adaptation of borrowed items. Work on the status of digital content in Uzbek further frames the online domain as an urgent space for language development and visibility. Together, these studies suggest a clear gap: while individual aspects of multilingual online behavior have begun to attract attention, there remains a need for integrated analysis of how Uzbek, Russian, and English function together in digital interaction as a full communicative system.

Recent scholarship from 2024–2026 shows that the study of multilingual online interaction in Uzbekistan is gradually moving from impressionistic observation toward more systematic sociolinguistic and corpus-oriented analysis. Oltiboyeva’s article on Uzbek–Russian–English code-switching in contemporary urban Uzbekistan is especially relevant because it explicitly frames multilingual alternation as a socially meaningful practice rather than a sign of linguistic instability. The study reports that Uzbek–Russian switching is common in informal and technical discourse, while Uzbek–English switching is especially prominent in academic and digital domains, indicating functional differentiation among the three languages [5].

Yahyoeva’s corpus-based work on Generations Z and Alpha further refines this picture by showing that code-switching in English, Russian, and Uzbek is linked to age-specific communicative styles and the spread of digital technologies. Generation Z uses switching as a marker of group identity and cultural solidarity, whereas Generation Alpha treats it as a more naturalized and flexible part of speech practice. This generational perspective is highly valuable for digital multilingualism research because online communication is often youth-led in form and diffusion [8].

Mamurova’s 2026 analysis of Instagram discourse in Uzbekistan contributes an important platform-sensitive angle. The study finds that Uzbek, Russian, and English are frequently combined in digital posts together with mixed tags, emojis, acronyms, and semantic shifts shaped by the logic of online interaction. This suggests that multilingualism in Uzbekistan’s digital sphere is not only about lexical choice, but also about emergent hybrid registers structured by platform affordances [4].

Research focused specifically on Uzbek digital discourse also supports this interpretation. Abdullazoda’s study of politeness in Uzbek social media demonstrates that digital communication involves both continuity and innovation: traditional norms are preserved, but they are simultaneously renegotiated through new expressive resources such as emoji and compressed forms [1]. Polvannazirova’s corpus-based study of English borrowings into Uzbek through social media and online corpora further shows that digital platforms accelerate the spread and normalization of lexical innovations, especially among younger users and in technology-related discourse [6].

From the computational side, Kuriyozov, Vilares and Gómez-Rodríguez introduce BERTbek as a pretrained language model for Uzbek, demonstrating the growing infrastructural capacity for large-scale text analysis in Uzbek [3]. Veitsman and Hartmann’s survey of Turkic Central Asian language processing similarly places Uzbek among the region’s more developed languages in terms of data and tools, though still under-resourced overall [7]. Finally, Frohmann et al. show that robust sentence segmentation methods for noisy multilingual data are increasingly available, which is crucial for future analysis of mixed Uzbek–Russian–English digital corpora [2].

Overall, recent literature indicates that digital multilingualism in Uzbekistan should be studied as an intersection of sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and language technology. The field is still developing, but the conceptual and technical conditions for deeper corpus-based research are now clearly present.

Methodology. This study applies a qualitative sociolinguistic and discourse-analytic approach to the investigation of digital multilingualism in Uzbekistan. The research is based on the analysis of online communication collected from social media platforms, messaging environments, comment sections, and public digital content where Uzbek, Russian, and English interact. The selected materials include posts, captions, hashtags, short comments, and informal online exchanges representing different communicative contexts such as education, entertainment, technology, and everyday interaction.

The analysis focuses on identifying patterns of code-switching, lexical borrowing, transliteration, pragmatic language choice, and hybrid digital registers. Special attention is given to the functional distribution of Uzbek, Russian, and English in online discourse and to the social meanings associated with multilingual language practices. The study also draws on recent sociolinguistic and corpus-based research in order to interpret

multilingual interaction within the broader context of globalization, digital culture, and contemporary language change in Uzbekistan.

Analysis. Digital multilingualism in Uzbekistan is best understood as a layered communicative system in which Uzbek, Russian, and English perform partially distinct but overlapping social functions. Online interaction makes these functions especially visible because users constantly adapt language choices to audience, topic, platform, prestige, and self-presentation. In many digital settings, Uzbek serves as the language of local identity, intimacy, and broad accessibility. It anchors discourse in national belonging and often functions as the grammatical base into which other languages are inserted. At the same time, Uzbek online discourse is far from monolithic: it varies across platform, region, generation, and communicative purpose.

Russian continues to play a significant role in online interaction, particularly in urban, professional, and institutionally shaped communication. It often appears in technical expressions, urban slang, bureaucratic vocabulary, and interpersonal nuance. In mixed discourse, Russian can serve as a resource for irony, familiarity, and post-Soviet social indexing. This does not mean that Russian simply displaces Uzbek. Rather, Russian is often used selectively, in contexts where its social resonance, brevity, or conventionalized usage offers communicative advantages. Recent research describing Uzbek–Russian–English code-switching in urban Uzbekistan supports the view that language alternation reflects functional differentiation rather than random mixture.

English, meanwhile, has become increasingly visible as a language of globalization, higher education, digital culture, branding, and online aspiration. In online interaction, English is frequently used for technological terminology, platform vocabulary, business language, academic labels, hashtags, and trend-oriented expressions. Its presence is often indexical: using English may signal expertise, modernity, cosmopolitanism, or participation in a transnational digital culture. English words may appear in their original form, in transliterated form, or in hybridized constructions combined with Uzbek morphology. Research on English borrowings in Uzbek through social media suggests that digital environments accelerate both the spread and local adaptation of such items.

One of the most important features of digital multilingualism in Uzbekistan is code-switching. In online communication, switching may occur between sentences, within a sentence, or even within lexicalized chunks such as hashtags, slogan-like phrases, or stylized fragments. The communicative value of switching lies not only in lexical economy but also in stance, identity, and audience calibration. A user may switch to Russian to produce an urban conversational tone, to English to align with a digital trend, and return to Uzbek for emotional closeness or audience inclusiveness. Corpus-based research on younger speakers indicates that such switching is increasingly normalized, especially in digitally saturated environments. In this sense, online multilingualism may foreshadow longer-term changes in speech habits and discourse norms.

Another key dimension is the emergence of hybrid digital registers. These are not merely combinations of three languages, but communicative styles built from text, emoji, abbreviations, visual cues, hashtags, and platform conventions. The 2026 Instagram study is particularly revealing here: it shows that Uzbek, Russian, and English interact with mixed tags, acronyms, and visual-text logic to create locally meaningful but globally recognizable discourse forms. This suggests that multilingualism online is mediated not only by language contact in the classic sense, but also by interface design, algorithmic visibility, and platform-native genres such as stories, captions, memes, and short comment chains.

Pragmatics also changes in digital multilingual settings. Politeness, humor, solidarity, and disagreement are increasingly negotiated through language choice itself. A switch into Russian or English can soften, intensify, stylize, or distance an utterance. Emoji and shortened discourse markers further modify these effects. Research on Uzbek social media politeness shows that cultural continuity remains strong, but digital interaction reshapes how respect and social closeness are performed. This means that multilingual online communication in Uzbekistan is not only about vocabulary; it is about new norms of relation, visibility, and expression.

Overall, digital multilingualism in Uzbekistan should be treated as a structured, adaptive, and socially meaningful phenomenon. It reflects historical layering, contemporary globalization, platform dynamics, and speaker agency all at once. Studying it closely can reveal how languages coexist, compete, cooperate, and transform each other in everyday online life.

Future research on digital multilingualism in Uzbekistan should begin with carefully designed multilingual corpora that reflect the real diversity of platforms and user communities. It is not enough to gather isolated screenshots or anecdotal examples. A strong corpus should include posts, comments, captions, short messages, and hashtags from platforms with

distinct discourse cultures, such as Telegram, Instagram, and other public-facing social media environments. Since online multilingual practices vary according to topic and audience, sampling should balance domains such as education, commerce, entertainment, youth culture, and everyday interaction. This is especially important in Uzbekistan, where Uzbek, Russian, and English do not circulate evenly across all online spaces.

A second recommendation is to annotate corpora at several levels simultaneously. Token-level language tagging is essential in order to distinguish Uzbek, Russian, English, transliterated items, hashtags, emoji, and mixed forms. Without such annotation, code-switching analysis remains superficial. In addition, corpora should record metadata about platform, date, genre, and interaction type. Generational comparisons are also valuable, because recent research suggests that younger users differ not only in how often they switch languages, but in how naturally they treat multilingual discourse as a routine communicative resource.

Ethical considerations must remain central. Public online data should still be anonymized where appropriate, and platform-specific terms of use must be respected. Since multilingual choices can index class, region, age, and ideology, researchers should avoid overgeneralizing from narrow samples. The most productive studies will be those that combine sociolinguistic sensitivity, corpus rigor, and responsible digital methods.

Discussion. The findings of this study demonstrate that digital multilingualism in Uzbekistan is not a temporary or chaotic linguistic phenomenon, but a structured and socially meaningful mode of communication shaped by historical experience, globalization, and digital technology. The interaction of Uzbek, Russian, and English in online discourse reflects both continuity with earlier sociolinguistic realities and the emergence of new communicative practices associated with social media culture. Online interaction has become one of the most important environments in which linguistic boundaries are negotiated, identities are expressed, and new discourse norms are created.

One of the central observations is that the three languages involved in Uzbekistan's digital ecology perform different but complementary communicative roles. Uzbek functions as the primary language of national identity, emotional closeness, and broad social accessibility. It is frequently used as the grammatical and interactional foundation of online communication, especially in discussions aimed at local audiences. At the same time, the increasing incorporation of Russian and English elements into Uzbek digital discourse suggests that multilingualism is becoming normalized rather than exceptional. Users do not necessarily perceive language mixing as a disruption of linguistic purity; instead, it often serves practical, stylistic, or symbolic purposes.

Russian retains a noticeable presence in online interaction despite the strengthening position of Uzbek in public life. Its continued use is closely connected to urban communication, professional discourse, and post-Soviet cultural memory. In many cases, Russian expressions appear in contexts where speakers seek conversational informality, irony, emotional nuance, or technical precision. This confirms broader sociolinguistic arguments that language choice is deeply connected to social positioning and communicative intention. The persistence of Russian in digital communication also reflects the historical bilingualism of many urban communities in Uzbekistan, where switching between Uzbek and Russian has long been a routine social practice. Digital platforms simply make these practices more visible and more frequent.

The role of English in online communication is particularly significant because it is strongly associated with globalization, digital technologies, higher education, and contemporary youth culture. English lexical items frequently appear in technology-related discussions, advertising discourse, academic communication, influencer culture, and platform-specific vocabulary. In many cases, English terms are not translated because they carry prestige, global recognizability, or technological specificity. The use of English in hashtags, slogans, and branding strategies demonstrates that language choice online is often linked to visibility and audience reach. For younger users especially, English may function as a marker of cosmopolitan identity and participation in transnational digital culture.

Another important issue concerns the growing normalization of code-switching. The study suggests that multilingual switching in Uzbekistan's online communication is highly functional rather than random. Users switch languages in order to adapt to different audiences, create humor, express solidarity, soften criticism, or align themselves with specific cultural trends. Intra-sentential switching is especially common in fast-moving digital communication because it allows speakers to combine the expressive resources of multiple languages within a single message. This tendency is particularly visible among younger generations who have grown up in digitally mediated environments and therefore experience multilingual interaction as a natural part of everyday communication.

The emergence of hybrid digital registers is another key outcome of multilingual online interaction. Communication on social media is no

longer based solely on traditional linguistic structures; it increasingly combines words, abbreviations, emojis, visual symbols, hashtags, transliterated expressions, and platform-specific conventions. As a result, multilingual discourse in Uzbekistan develops through both linguistic contact and technological mediation. Digital platforms encourage short, compressed, and highly expressive forms of communication in which multilingual elements become integrated into broader multimodal practices. This creates new forms of discourse that are locally meaningful while simultaneously connected to global internet culture.

The study also highlights the importance of pragmatics in multilingual online interaction. Language choice itself often carries pragmatic meaning beyond the literal content of the message. Switching into Russian may create familiarity or humorous distance, while switching into English may signal expertise, trend awareness, or modernity. Uzbek, meanwhile, often remains central in expressing sincerity, solidarity, and culturally recognizable politeness. This demonstrates that multilingualism online is not simply about vocabulary borrowing but about the strategic management of interpersonal relations and social identity.

At the same time, the findings point to several broader implications for language development in Uzbekistan. The rapid growth of digital communication accelerates lexical borrowing, semantic change, and the spread of hybrid expressions. Such processes may contribute to the modernization and expansion of Uzbek vocabulary, especially in technological and digital domains. However, they also raise questions about language standardization, orthographic consistency, and the balance between linguistic innovation and language preservation. The coexistence of Cyrillic and Latin scripts in Uzbek digital communication further complicates these dynamics and creates additional variation in online writing practices.

From a methodological perspective, the study demonstrates the value of combining sociolinguistic analysis with corpus-oriented and digital discourse approaches. Online multilingual communication generates large amounts of naturally occurring linguistic data that can provide insight into

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