
Academia Open



By Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo

Table Of Contents

Journal Cover	1
Author[s] Statement	3
Editorial Team	4
Article information	5
Check this article update (crossmark)	5
Check this article impact	5
Cite this article	5
Title page	6
Article Title	6
Author information	6
Abstract	6
Article content	7

Originality Statement

The author[s] declare that this article is their own work and to the best of their knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been accepted for the published of any other published materials, except where due acknowledgement is made in the article. Any contribution made to the research by others, with whom author[s] have work, is explicitly acknowledged in the article.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author[s] declare that this article was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Copyright Statement

Copyright © Author(s). This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) licence. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this licence may be seen at <http://creativecommons.org/licences/by/4.0/legalcode>

Academia Open

Vol. 11 No. 2 (2026): December
DOI: 10.21070/acopen.11.2026.15091

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor in Chief

Mochammad Tanzil Multazam, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

Managing Editor

Bobur Sobirov, Samarkand Institute of Economics and Service, Uzbekistan

Editors

Fika Megawati, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

Mahardika Darmawan Kusuma Wardana, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

Wiwit Wahyu Wijayanti, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

Farkhod Abdurakhmonov, Silk Road International Tourism University, Uzbekistan

Dr. Hindarto, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

Evi Rinata, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

M Faisal Amir, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

Dr. Hana Catur Wahyuni, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

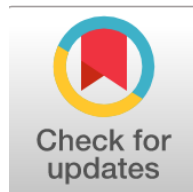
Complete list of editorial team ([link](#))

Complete list of indexing services for this journal ([link](#))

How to submit to this journal ([link](#))

Article information

Check this article update (crossmark)



Check this article impact ^(*)



Save this article to Mendeley



^(*) Time for indexing process is various, depends on indexing database platform

Semantic Shifts of Arabic Lexical Items on Social Media: An Analytical Linguistic Study

Ghadah Meften Hashim, alie85552@gmail.com (*)

General Directorate of Education of Dhi Qar Governorat, Iraq

(*) Corresponding author

Abstract

General Background The global expansion of digital communication platforms has fundamentally altered contemporary linguistic interaction patterns. **Specific Background** Within modern Arabic digital discourse, social media usage accelerates modifications in word meanings across online environments. **Knowledge Gap** Existing literature lacks a comprehensive linguistic framework examining rapid semantic shifts across multiple social networking platforms. **Aims** This study analyzes the mechanisms, patterns, and contextual determinants of semantic transformations in contemporary Arabic vocabulary. **Results** Utilizing a descriptive-analytical methodology comparing traditional dictionary definitions with digital expressions, the analysis demonstrates widespread semantic broadening in items like follow and share, along with distinct processes of narrowing, transfer, amelioration, and pejoration driven by multimodal interactions. **Novelty** The findings establish that digital environments act as primary catalysts for accelerated linguistic adaptation rather than gradual historical change. **Implications** These insights necessitate updating modern Arabic lexicography and developing specialized digital corpora for computational linguistics applications.

Keywords: Arabic Language, Digital Linguistics, Semantic Shifts, Social Media, Online Discourse

Key Findings Highlights

Digital communication environments significantly accelerate the speed of semantic changes in contemporary Arabic vocabulary.

Semantic broadening represents the most predominant pattern of meaning transformation across social media platforms.

Platform mechanics and multimodal elements directly influence modern lexical reinterpretation and value shifts.

Published date: 2026-07-20

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In the last twenty years, the world has undergone a digital revolution unparalleled in human history, which has changed the nature of human communication and the production and exchange of discourse. Social media platforms are vast sites of language, where millions of texts are sent out every day, which have created linguistic patterns that are very different from what we find in writing or in speech. As a communication medium, digital communication is no longer exclusively transmitting something. It has developed into an independent language that has its lexis. Existing lexemes have been interpreted in new contexts, while the meaning often diverges from the dictionary.

Semantic change is one of the most noticeable linguistic phenomena that comes with the digitization. The meaning of languages continues to change with society, culture, and technology. However, it remains decided by their users. The growing use of social media platforms has led to the speeding up of semantic change due to the intensive use of language, distribution of digital content, and interaction of users. Consequently, many words have got newly arising meanings and many of the older words have gotten reinscribed in view of the contemporary realities of the digital world.

Linguists recognize semantic change as a natural occurrence that occurs in languages over time. The Arabic language is undergoing semantic transformations archetypes uniqueness the speed of dissemination, geographical spread, and the strength of influence from a global digital culture. This continuous contact of the recently developed dialects with the MSA, other regional dialects and with foreign languages. Due to these features; the semantic change in electronic communication has become an essential area of research in Arabic linguistics. It helps us to understand the ongoing evolution of Arabic.

The present study seeks to fuse semantics, sociolinguistics and digital discourse analysis to present a fully analytical study of the semantic shifts in Arabic lexicon on the platforms of social media. The reasons, categories and linguistic effects of modern Arabic changes have been given and will be discussed extensively.

1.2 Research Problem

On a daily basis, language is produced and consumed through social media in one of the most prominent spaces. These platforms no longer just distribute information and views. They have evolved into vibrant linguistic spaces that impact the meanings of Arabic words on a direct level. This setting has helped to produce new styles of speech featuring abbreviation, lexical compression, quick interaction, and use of existing words in completely different contexts from the original ones. Because of this, the occurrence of semantic shifts has taken place at an unprecedented rate. However, this phenomenon has not attracted the scholarly interest it warrants in Arabic research. Indeed, scholars have tended to focus their attention on stylistic and pragmatic factors more extensively than semantic change.

Accordingly, the linguistic phenomenon of which we are speaking has not yet been given a comprehensive analysis sufficiently capable of explaining the nature of these semantic transformations and the extent to which they are offered. Their pattern and cause, in turn, do not compare the lexical meaning of Arabic words in the traditional sense with the meaning which has been given to them in the shade of communication and digital communication. In addition, previous studies have looked at semantic change as slow and historic, however, the evidence says that social media is now one of the main catapults for fast semantic change and new meanings in a small span of time. Such development challenges the theoretical and methodological prospects of studying semantic change in the Arabic language.

In this light, the present study aims to investigate the semantic shifts affecting a chosen set of popular Arabic lexical items on social media platforms. In addition, it seeks to identify the linguistic, social, cultural and technological factors behind these shifts. These semantic developments also review their impact on Arabic nowadays.

1.3 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the most important semantic shifts of Arabic lexical items used on social media?
2. Which types of semantic change are most prominent in Arabic digital discourse?
3. What social, cultural and technological factors helped produce these semantic changes?
4. How has the digital environment transformed the correspondence between words and their meanings?
5. How much do the digital meanings of Arabic lexical items differ from the dictionary meanings?
6. What impact do these shifts in meaning have on contemporary Arabic language development?

1.4 Research Objectives

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To shed light on the semantic change in view of modern linguistic theories.
2. To determine the most popular Arabic words that have changed meaning due to social media use.
3. We classify the semantic shifts into their broad types like semantic broadening, semantic narrowing, semantic transfer, semantic amelioration and semantic pejoration.

4. To look at the different aspects that cause semantic change in digital settings.
5. To study the relationship between technological development and semantic change in Arabic language.
6. To contribute to the enrichment of Arabic scholarship in digital linguistics and semantics..

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significantly important in both theoretical and practical terms.

The study presents their theoretical linguistic analysis of meaning change with reference to digital linguistics. It connects old semantic theories with modern linguistic practices and will extend research on the development of Arabic in new communication settings.

In practical terms, the study presents an analytical framework that can be useful for researchers in linguistics, discourse analysis, modern Arabic lexicography, and Arabic Natural Language Processing (NLP). Moreover, the findings may support the construction of digital Arabic corpora, and improve our understanding of language and communication on digital platforms.

1.6 Research Methodology

Because of the topic, the research takes a descriptive-analytical approach. One explanation of this approach describes the phenomena as they happen in real language use. The phenomena are also analyzed within contemporary semantic theories and concepts. Dataset of linguistic expressions and vocabulary used in social media has been selected that the researchers analyzed with respect to their dictionary meaning. The semantic transformations undergone by these lexica and the historic factors that caused their meaning changes were then analyzed.

The research further employs a comparative approach that compares the variances in traditional lexical meanings from digital meanings. The results are interpreted in relation to earlier studies and other relevant linguistic theories.

1.7 Scope of the Study

Research focuses on linguistic shift of Arabic words used on social media. It especially focuses on X, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok as these are the most popular platforms being used across the Arab world.

Moreover, this study only pays attention to semantic change in modern Arabic. Aside from where phonological, morphological, or syntactic changes contribute to explaining semantic changes, it does not deal with them. This analysis employs linguistic data which have recently been published and represent the contemporary phase of the Arabic digital discourse.

2. Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies

2.1 The Concept of Semantic Change in Linguistic Studies

Semantic change is one of the main phenomena explored in the field of semantics. Change in meaning of a lexical item over a period of time due to linguistic, social, cultural, civilizational factors. This is considered a natural process in language, as the meanings of words are not immutable; they change, with the aid of analogy, in the environments in which they are used and with the communicative needs of the users. Language is a living social system that changes with society's technological, intellectual, and cultural transformations as noticed in its vocabulary, structures, and patterns.

Before the advent of the modern conception of semantic change, classical Arab linguists had identified the phenomenon of change of meaning. The talk assessing metaphor, polysemy, lexical transfer and change in usages, dealt with issues that are closely related to semantic development. Arab linguists, jurists, and rhetoricians showed their awareness of meaning. Then they noticed how meaning formed not simply only by lexical form. But also context, use of language and linguistic convention (Abu Krouz & Al-Aqili, 2023).

Today, meaning change has already developed into an autonomous discipline of semantics. In semantic change, linguists study why, how and to which extent meaning changes over time. Also, whether social development triggers language change. According to modern linguists, semantic change does not induce random processes that cannot be analyzed and that adhere to linguistic and social principles which can be anticipated.

The notion of semantic change has acquired a new meaning in the digital world. It is common for social media users to produce new meanings through intense interaction, rapid dissemination, and creativity of social media users that have powerful effects on digital texts. So, a single word may acquire an entirely new meaning in a short span of time and become widespread amongst millions of users till it becomes part of language usage.

Those developments suggest the investigation into semantic change is no longer limited to the historical development of language. The rapid semantic modifications caused by digital communication are now part of the study of semantics. Therefore, semantics has become more relevant in our understanding of language in today's world.

2.2 Types of Semantic Change

According to semanticists, the main semantic change patterns are quite a number, and it reflects better on the discourse on social media. In electronic communication, the meanings of lexical features change due to the nature of the electronic environment and the culture of the users.

First: Semantic Broadening

Semantic broadening refers to a term that extends beyond a more specific sense to a more general sense. This means that over time, words can come to also denote things composed of more general characteristics than before. According to Alaoui et al (2023), this is one of the most recurrent forms of semantic change in contemporary Arabic especially in rapidly changing digital environments.

For example, Arabic word *manṣṣah* meaning “platform” used to refer to a raised physical structure; nowadays, many people use it to refer to digital platforms, online applications, and other internet-based services. Furthermore, the term *mutābi‘* (follower) has expanded to cover any user who subscribes to another user’s social media account.

This type of semantic change shows how languages can create new meanings for expressions to refer to new concepts instead of creating new words altogether.

Second: Semantic Narrowing

Words often experience what linguists call narrowing, which is a loss of meaning and end up with a narrower meaning than the original word.

A more recent example is the trend of borrowed words, which originally referred to any tendency or general direction, and is now mostly used in digital discussions to refer to the most talked-about topic on social media. Likewise, the Arabic word *muḥṭawā* (“content”), initially applicable to all kinds of content, is now largely used for online published materials.

A process whereby an expression becomes more specific in meaning, often as a result of technological advances. (Oglu & Al-Aqtash, 2021).

Third: Semantic Transfer

Semantic transfer refers to the shifting or extension of a lexical item (or an entire expression) from one semantic domain to another, due to a kind of similarity, association or perceived conceptual relationship between the meanings. It is one of the most common types of meaning change in social media.

Take the Arabic word *harm* which means ‘burning’ and is commonly used to refer to when a person reveals to another an important event in a film or television series before they are able to see it (i.e. spoil it). This meaning has come to be quite widely used although this word originally refers to when you burn something with fire.

It is equally common to use the word *ṭār* “flew away” to refer to something that has vanished momentarily. Similarly, *filter* has expanded from a more technical term to referring to people who hide imperfections or over beautify themselves (Al-Ai, 2024).

This type of semantic change shows how metaphor is key to creating new meanings in digital discourse.

Fourth: Semantic Amelioration

Semantic amelioration is when a word develops a better or more socially acceptable meaning than what it used to have.

Content creator is now a recognized job title; used to just describe someone who creates media content. By the same token, terms like influencer and entrepreneur have gained beneficial associations with success, innovation, and digital leadership.

Semantic amelioration indicates transformations in either the social meaning and use of a word or its status. (Bakadi, 2014).

Fifth: Semantic Pejoration

Semantic pejoration happens when a word that once had a positive or neutral meaning acquires a negative one due to social changes in its usage.

For instance, the Arabic word *dhubāb*, which means “flies,” refers to fake accounts or groups that spread misinformation. Similarly, the term *troll* is commonly used to refer to someone who aggravates or insults others (Al-Duraibi, 2020).

The social and cultural changes, which generate patterns of collective uses of the language, often result in the weakening of the positive value of words.

2.3 The Arabic Language in the Digital Environment

In recent decades, as technology became widely used, the Arabic language witnessed a major change. Social media

platforms are becoming one of the main places where new language use patterns are established. As a result of this change, we can see that Arabic is no longer merely a language of formal speech or writing. Rather it is also a language of the rapid, immediate, short, and constantly changing speech of the digital space. Language users today aren't just consumers like before. They are producers as well, who not only create but also reinvent terms to suit the communicative needs of the digital space.

The digital space is naturally open to social and cultural groups. Due to the continuous interference of the MSA with regional dialects, and foreign languages, especially English. The interaction has given rise to hybrid linguistic forms that incorporate Arabic lexicon with borrowed expressions, symbols, abbreviations, and multilingual elements. These developments have fundamentally impacted semantics as many Arabic lexical items have developed new meanings due to their use in contexts that weren't previously available.

One of the most salient aspects of electronic communication is the penchant for the use of linguistic abbreviations, hashtags, emojis, and animated images as additional meanings. As a result, meaning in digital communication emerges no longer merely from words but from the relationship between words, images, symbols and context. As stated by Al-Humaid (2020), this has expanded the meaning to encompass the non-verbal elements that directly affect the meaning of words.

In addition, digital communication has removed many restrictions from lexical dissemination through media. These days, new words and expressions can spread within very little time. A term used by a restricted category of users can be lifted up to the level of common knowledge throughout the Arab world within days or a month, particularly with something political, social or cultural.

Justifications for social media evolving from a mere vehicle of language to a living entity has been provided by these characteristics. It has grown into a significant force behind language development, with a constant coinage of new meanings and an open linguistic laboratory. Therefore, studying Arabic in the digital environment is critical to its understanding in a modern context.

2.4 Characteristics of Social Media Language

Unlike that of academic, journalistic, and literary writings, the language of social media has several distinct characteristics.

The characteristics have accelerated semantic change in Arabic Lexical items (Al-Furaidi, Al-Azouri, & Al-Sulami, 2026).

First: Brevity and Compression

People who use social media are often keen on putting across their thoughts in as few words as possible. Consequently, there is frequent abbreviation of words, omission of letters and the use of an inordinately compressed lexical expression. The meanings of words created through this communication either become broader or narrower, depending on the context of the communication. (Al-Asmari & Al-Thaqafi, 2020).

Second: Rapid Lexical Dissemination

New words are spreading quickly on different digital platforms among people. Words can go from limited communities to greater usage increasingly quickly which speeds up the establishing and stabilizing of new meanings in everyday communication. (Fallaha, 2025).

Third: Interaction Between Standard Arabic and Dialects

Social media language isn't restricted to Arabic Standard Dialect. To the contrary, the ongoing interplay of regional dialects allows lots of colloquialisms to enter the Arabic lexicon, acquiring meanings beyond their original local focus. (Azarbyad et al., 2017).

Fourth: Influence of Foreign Languages

Foreign languages, particularly English, had a significant impact on Digital Arabic through borrowing, translation, and Arabization. As a result of these processes, hybrid lexical forms emerge and the reinterpretation of existing Arabic words to refer to modern technological concepts takes place.

Fifth: Multimodal Communication

Text is not the only thing that creates meaning anymore. Visuals, emojis, stickers, videos and hashtags are semantic resources that help in message interpretation and may even modify intended meanings of the accompanying words.

Sixth: Instant Interaction

A key feature of social media is the instant interaction among users.

This allows their use of words to grow all the time and gives newly created meanings the opportunity to spread much faster than usual. (Harianto et al., 2025).

Seventh: Creation of New Terminology

The different processes by means of which new lexemes are produced on social media include derivation, borrowing, blending, Arabization and transfer. These procedures are exemplars of how Arabic is able to adapt to continuous evolution from the technological and cultural sphere. (Noble et al, 2021)

When taken together, they show that the digital language has become a full-fledged communicative system that has its own norms. The changes that Arabic lexical items underwent were not random but rather the consequence of the nature of this new system. Indeed, this could be possible.

2.5 Previous Studies

Recent social media communication and discourse production have led to semantic change. There is more focus on it in today's linguistic studies. These days, the meanings of many words are changing due to the digital environments. This encourages researchers in the fields of semantics, digital linguistics and discourse analysis to investigate this from different angles. The research previous studies could be classified into Arabic and international studies as follows.

2.5.1 Arabic Studies

The researcher Abusaa (2025) studied semantic change to Arabic lexical items in his work titled as, "Semantic Change in Selected Arabic Lexical Items on Social Media: Facebook as a Case Study". The study examined the effect of digital use on change of lexical meaning and context of online relatedness and meaning of language. Through the descriptive-analytical approach, the researcher reviewed the linguistic samples from posts. According to the findings, many Arabic lexical items acquire new meanings through their frequent use on the Internet and that Facebook is a live laboratory of great interest for observing semantic change. The present study utilizes these findings to account for the relationship between digital context and semantic change while extending the analysis to more social media platforms and providing a systematic classification of the type of semantic shift (Abusaa, 2025).

Barakat (2023) researched communication between Facebook users from a pragmatic perspective in the paper titled "An Interactive Pragmatic Study of Social Discourse on Social Media: A Case Study on Facebook". The focus of this study is to demonstrate the influence of communicative context on meaning construction and to show the importance of pragmatic context. Using a descriptive and analytical approach, the findings of the research indicate that the understanding of online discourse relies not only on the dictionary meaning but also on contextual factors, communicative intentions and audience interpretation. According to Barakat (2023), these findings emphasize how shifts in the digital context direct shifts in meaning of Arabic lexicons.

In a study titled, "The Language of Contemporary Youth on Social Media and the Search for Linguistic Identity," similarly, Ben Azzouz (2023) attempted to study social media influence on youth language. The study deals with the characteristics of the digital language such as abbreviation, interaction between standard Arabic and the colloquial dialects, and the phenomenon of lexical borrowing and linguistic innovation. While the study does not focus on semantic change directly, it gives proof of the social and cultural environment that accompanies semantic change. This is because it is the young users that create and disseminate new vocabularies. (Ben Azzouz, 2023).

2.5.2 International Studies

The Study Semantic Shift in Social Networks by Noble, Sayeed, Fernandez and Larsson (2021) was presented at the SEM conference of the Association for Computational Linguistics. The study employed distributional semantic models and social network analysis to study semantic shifts in online communities. The results show that the characteristics of digital communities and the intensity of user interaction are closely related to meaning change; that is, words can change their meaning with relative rapidity. According to the study, social media serves a central function in accelerating semantic change (Noble et al., 2021).

The investigation of semantic change in political and media discourse using word embedding models, words are malleable; computing semantic shifts in political and media discourse was carried out by Azarbonyad and others (2017). As temporal shifts are likely to impact meanings, differences among social groups, ideological contexts, and media settings are also influential. Their findings show this. Repeated major public events continuously reshape the meanings of words.

According to the findings, researchers showed how different digital context assisted the change of meaning in current study (Azarbonyad et al., 2017).

In a recent study, Harianto et al. (2025) have published Meaning Shift in Arabic Social Media: A Cultural-Semantic Perspective which examines the semantic changes in the language of Arabic social media, based on D. Alan Cruse semantic theory Using a descriptive-analytical method did study show that the most dominant types of semantic change were i.e. semantic broadening, and others. For instance, the Arabic term for "follower" underwent a transition from a general definition to a specialized one referring specifically to digital account followers. Based on the aforementioned, the present study aims to study the patterns of semantic change in Arabic digital discourse. (Harianto et al., 2025).

2.5.3 Research Gap

Recent literature states that most Arabic studies either focus on the description or pragmatic analysis of social media language but international studies are increasingly using computational linguistic methods to measure semantic change. In addition, only a few studies have undertaken a comprehensive linguistic analysis of Arabic lexical items across social media. Existing research mostly studied a single framework or only one type of semantic change (Hassan, 2024).

This gap is addressed by the present study through a linguistic analysis of the semantic shifts of Arabic items on various social media sites. It looks at the principal patterns of semantic change and the linguistic, social, cultural and technological factors involved in them using linguistic data gathered from various digital platforms and compares their dictionary meaning and digital meaning.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The methodology of this study is descriptive-analytical because it best suits the study of modern linguistic events, namely the semantic shifts of Arabic words in social media. This methodology consists of describing it, as it occurs in actual language use and interpreting it through further linguistic analysis so as to identify which linguistic causes and effects are involved and how they work.

The means of semantic analysis was used on the Arabic lexicon to describe a shift in meaning which happens when these lexemes move into the digital world. The meanings of words found in traditional dictionaries were compared systematically with those found in the online discourse, and in turn, the relationship was interpreted within the framework of linguistic and social context (Mohammed, 2018).

To find out what specific type of semantic change takes place with the entry of a lexical item into the digital world the study also carries out a comparative study of the distinctions between original lexical meanings and newly developed digital meanings..

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study is the discourse in the Arabic language published within social media platforms, notably the written texts produced by users on X, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

These two platforms have been chosen for their most active environment in creating new vocabulary and redefining existing Arabic vocabulary. They also allow for the speedy circulation of new linguistic elements among users across the Arab world.

3.3 Sample of the Study

The researchers choose Arabic lexical items that exhibit a clear case of semantic shift due to communicating through digital medium. The team chose the lexical items according to many criteria. For instance, they chose items that had a high frequency of use, clear semantic change, and the presence on more than one social media platform, among others. Moreover, several items were selected because they could be interpreted in contemporary semantic theory.

The words like follow, post, share, story, live stream, interaction, verification, account, page, influencer and content were the principal lexical item.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

In this research, the qualitative content analysis technique was mainly employed. This was supported by official Arabic dictionaries such as Lisān al-‘Arab, Tāj al-‘Arūs, and Al-Mu‘jam Al-Wasīṭ, as well as recent books on the semantic and digital linguistic levels. These materials were instrumental in determining the original lexical meanings of the words chosen and contrasting those with contemporary meanings associated with the digital domain.

3.5 Criteria for Lexical Selection

The lexical items included in this study were selected according to the following criteria:

1. They are used by most people on social media.
2. There is an easily identifiable shift in meaning.
3. A direct link between the semantic change and the context of digital communication.
4. They denote the common categories of semantic change.

3.6 Linguistic Analysis Procedure

The analysis involved the process of identifying each lexical item, finding their respective dictionary meaning, examining their function in social media posting, comparing their literal and cyber meaning, noting the semantic change involved, and interpreting the change in the light of its linguistic, social, cultural and technological context. The findings were interpreted with previous results and theories including those in semantics and digital linguistics.

4. Results, Analysis, and Discussion

4.1 Semantic Broadening

The results revealed that the most popular type of semantic change amongst the chosen lexical items was semantic broadening. Words such as follow, post, share, story, and live have widened from their dictionary meanings to different digital meanings belonging to digital media with reference to social media but still retaining essential part of its original meaning. The pattern shows the capability of Arabic language to adopt technological advancements by expanding the meaning of existing words.

Table 1. Lexical Items Demonstrating Semantic Broadening

Lexical Item	Digital Meaning
Follow	Following social media accounts
Post	Publishing digital content
Share	Republishing or sharing digital content
Story	Temporary social media post
Live	Live streaming or real-time broadcasting

Table 1.

4.2 Semantic Narrowing

The results also show that most of these lexical items have undergone semantic narrowing, e.g. verification, account, notification, page. The meanings of these words have become more technical and specialized as they have been used in very exact contexts on digital platforms and are used there only now.

Table 2. Lexical Items Demonstrating Semantic Narrowing

Lexical Item	Digital Meaning
Verification	Account verification or authentication
Account	Online user account
Notification	Electronic notification or alert
Page	Digital page or profile

Table 2.

4.3 Semantic Transfer

The examination indicates that functional similarity was the primary means of semantic transfer. Lexical terms like window, network, wall and hashtag have moved from their traditional concepts to one in the digital domain but still maintain a clear connection with their original meanings.

Table 3. Lexical Items Demonstrating Semantic Transfer

Lexical Item	Digital Meaning
Window	Software or application window
Network	Internet network
Wall	Social media timeline or profile page
Hashtag	Content classification tag

Table 3.

4.4 Semantic Amelioration and Semantic Pejoration

The results show that various lexical items have gained new social values in digital discourse. In recent years, the terms influencer and content have undergone the process of semantic amelioration. This entails their association with known professions. Moreover, they are now used alongside more hallowed occupational terms such as artist and journalist. On the other hand, negativity have been associated with other words such as argument and fame due to the kind of discourse common in different online platforms.

Table 4. Semantic Amelioration and Semantic Pejoration

Lexical Item	Type of Semantic Change
Influencer	Semantic amelioration
Content	Semantic amelioration
Argument	Semantic pejoration
Fame	Semantic pejoration

Table 4.

4.5 The Impact of Digital Context and Contributing Factors

The meanings of the analyzed lexical items are not determined only by their dictionary definitions and the digital environment. They also have specific meanings which determine their usage in the digital environment. Features and hashtags of the platform, emojis, forms of multimedia communication, and patterns of interactivity can be very significant in

shaping meaning. The results show that a number of social, cultural, technological and media factors have played a cooperative role in making, diffusing and stabilizing the semantic changes in Arabic.

4.6 Discussion of the Findings in Relation to Previous Studies

The results of this study are similar to those from the study of Abusaa (2025) and Harianto et al (2025) which found that semantic broadening is the most prevalent type of semantic change in Arabic digital discourse. The findings also corroborate Barakat's (2023) findings highlighting the essential nature of the context of means in meaning construction. Similarly, the results coincide with Azarbonyad et al.'s (2017) findings wherein the change in meaning is closely associated with change in use of language in context. The present research, however, goes beyond previous studies by focusing on a collection of Arabic lexical items garnered from different social media platforms rather than one. Moreover, it compares the dictionary and contemporary meaning of these words and identifies their semantic shifts systematically, thereby providing a linguistic analysis of semantic change in Arabic for the digital age.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Findings

The study reached the following conclusions:

1. Social media platforms have greatly impacted the meaning of many Arabic words due to the changing nature of communication.
2. The most common type of semantic change identified was broadening which is evident in lexical items equal to follow, post, share, story and live.
3. Semantic narrowing was observed in words such as verification, account, notification, page and so on, which underwent a change from general meaning to specific technical meaning.
4. The digital meanings of items like window, network, wall, hashtag, etc. were coined mainly through functional similarity with the words that are related in some way to their original meaning.
5. Lexical items like influencer and content were instances of semantic amelioration, while argument and fame had pejorative connotations in certain digital uses, thus pejoration.
6. The digital context the platform itself, hashtags, the way people interact has become an important part of how we mean.
7. The results prove that Arabic is compatible with many new digital concepts through the development of meaning and retaining the original structure of the Arabic language.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study proposes the following recommendations:

1. Set up a broad Arabic digital bank for ongoing monitoring of semantic change.
2. Revise Arabic dictionaries to include meanings in digital Arabic that are becoming part of usage.
3. Promoting interdisciplinary research of semantics, ADL and Arabic NLP.
4. Use results of semantic studies to improve AI applications and computing processes for the Arabic language.
5. Bolster cooperation between linguistic institutions and universities to keep track of semantic changes in Arabic digital discourse..

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

The study recommends that future research should address the following topics:

1. Meaning change in Arabic dialects on social media platforms.
2. Effects of Generative Machine Intelligence Applications on the Semantic Development of Arabic Lexical Items
3. Changes in Arabic digital speech or language.
4. Studies of the semantic change of Arabic and other languages in digital communication settings.
5. A thorough digital dictionary of Arabic which uses corpora linguistics of modern Arabic to document changes in meaning.

References

1. A. M. Abusaa, "Semantic change in selected Arabic lexical items on social media: Facebook as a case study," Journal of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, University of Sabratha, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 101-122, 2025.
2. H. Abu Krouz and H. M. Al-Aqili, "English loanwords in Iraqi Arabic," Kufa Journal of Arts, 2023.
3. A. N. Al-Ai, "Ancient Arabic in Northern Arabia between inscriptions and the semantics of Classical Arabic," Ibn Khaldun Journal for Studies and Research, 2024.
4. M. I. Alaoui, M. H. Ibrahim, and S. A. Al Aslaa, "Social media and major transformations in individuals and societies," At-Tajdid: Intellectual Refereed Journal, 2023.
5. A. M. Al-Asmari and A. M. Al-Thaqafi, "Critical discourse analysis of media discourse (The Khashoggi case between appearance and concealment as a model): A descriptive analytical study," 2020.

6. D. B. Al-Duraibi, "The use of social networking sites by media faculty members in Saudi universities," 2020.
7. A. A. Al-Furaiddi, F. A. Al-Azouri, and D. Al-Sulami, "The impact of social media use on enhancing quality of life: A field study of youth in the Qassim region," *Middle East Journal of Humanities and Cultural Sciences*, 2026.
8. S. A. Al-Humaid, "The dialectics of symbol, imagination, and interpretation in the writings of Ibn Arabi: The course of semantic transformations of existential lexical items," 2020.
9. H. Azarbonyad, M. Dehghani, K. Beelen, A. Arkut, M. Marx, and J. Kamps, "Words are malleable: Computing semantic shifts in political and media discourse," *arXiv*, 2017.
10. M. B. Bakadi, "The impact of Islamic Sufism on semantic transformations in Arabic Sufi poetry," 2014.
11. M. Barakat, "An interactive pragmatic study of social discourse on social media: Facebook as a case study," *Journal of Linguistic and Literary Studies*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 95-118, 2023.
12. N. Ben Azzouz, "The language of contemporary youth on social media and the search for linguistic identity," *Journal of Linguistic and Literary Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 55-78, 2023.
13. M. Fallaha, "Linguistic borrowing and semantic development in Arabic dictionaries: An analytical study of Arabized models," *Tasavvur / Tekirdağ İlahiyat Dergisi*, 2025.
14. N. Harianto, R. Afria, J. Izar, D. Defrianti, and S. Hasani, "Meaning shift in Arabic social media: A cultural-semantic perspective," *Arabiyatuna: Journal of Arabic Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 109-126, 2025.
15. R. A. H. S. A. Hassan, "The effect of using podcasting on developing achievement and attention among students of the Physics Department in the College of Education," *Artseduca*, vol. 38, pp. 269-278, 2024.
16. F. M. Mohammed, "The Arabic language and identity through television programs directed at children: A theoretical introduction and a field study," *Educational Journal*, 2018.
17. B. Noble, A. Sayeed, R. Fernández, and A. Larsson, "Semantic shift in social networks," in *Proceedings of the 10th Joint Conference on Lexical and Computational Semantics (SEM 2021)*, 2021, pp. 20-31.
18. S. K. Oglu and A. A. Al-Aqtash, "Phonological and morphological transformations of Arabic lexical items in the modern Arabic lexicon: Religious terminology as a model," *Journal of the Islamic University for Humanities Research*, 2021.