**UNIVERSITATEA BABEȘ-BOLYAI**

**FACULTATEA DE LITERE**

**SPECIALIZAREA ENGLEZA-NORVEGIANA**

**LUCRARE DE LICENȚĂ**

**Online Communication: Innovation**

**During the Pandemic**

**COORDONATOR ȘTIINȚIFIC:**

**Asist. univ. dr. Oltean-Cîmpean Alina**

**STUDENT:**

**Balica Ioana- Maria**

**Cluj-Napoca**

**2023**

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**Cuprins**

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### **Introduction**

The internet's introduction and subsequent expansion of online communication platforms ushered in a digital revolution that has revolutionized the way people connect, communicate, and interact with one another. As the globe grows more interconnected, the internet has evolved into a powerful instrument that shapes our social relationships, influences our behaviour, and drives linguistic evolution. The purpose of this thesis is to delve into the various facets of online communication, the internet's impact on human behaviour, the emergence of social media platforms, and the changes of language in the digital age. I hope to acquire a better grasp of the tremendous societal changes brought about by the digital era by analysing these interconnected topics, especially considering the COVID-19 pandemic.

The thesis will investigate the growth of online communication, beginning with the advent of the internet and progressing through the emergence of messaging applications, email, and chat rooms. I will look at how online communication has transformed interpersonal connections by crossing geographical borders and allowing for instantaneous engagement. I will also investigate the impact of online communication on social interactions, workplace dynamics, and the establishment of virtual communities. Furthermore, the study will look at how language usage has changed because of the expansion of the internet and the effect of social media platforms. I'll look at how the online environment has spawned new linguistic patterns, abbreviations, and emoticons, resulting in a separate digital language known as "internet slang." In addition, I will investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on language evolution, examining the emergence of new terminology and phrases that represent the specific circumstances and challenges brought about by the worldwide disaster.

In an era of extraordinary connection and technology developments, it is vital to critically assess the enormous societal shifts and their repercussions. This thesis intends to contribute to a better understanding of the digital era and its enormous impact on our lives by unravelling the complexity of online communication, internet usage, social media platforms, and language evolution.

I chose this topic because I think it's fascinating how the way people communicate has changed during a period. The internet and social media have given us new ways to connect with people and express ourselves, and the pandemic has only accelerated this trend. I'm particularly interested in how the pandemic has affected the way people use language, and how it has highlighted the importance of clear and accurate communication. I think this topic is important because it helps us understand how communication is evolving, and how individuals can use these new tools to stay connected and informed in a rapidly changing world.

I also find it interesting how online communication has its own unique language and features, such as emojis and gifs, that have become an integral part of how individuals express themselves online. These tools have allowed us to convey emotions and reactions in ways that were not possible before and have given us new ways to connect with people across different cultures and languages.

Another reason why I chose this topic is because I believe that understanding how one communicates online is important for building stronger relationships and communities. By understanding the nuances of online communication, one can avoid misunderstandings and miscommunications, and build deeper connections with the people around us. I'm excited to explore this topic further and learn more about how our language and communication is changing in the digital age.

### **CHAPTER 1: Online communication**

Chapter 1 is a brief presentation about online communication, what it represents and what role it has. Also, how the language changed over time and the effects of the Internet and how language is used. One of the key points I make in this chapter is that the internet has given us new tools and platforms for communication that were not possible before. Social media, for example, has become an integral part of how people communicate with each other, and has given us new ways to express ourselves and connect with people from different cultures and backgrounds. The second part of the chapter will attempt to comprehend the impact of emoji on people's real lives, emoticons, slangs, acronyms, and abbreviations.

According to Hitesh Bhasin, who is the Chief Executive Officer at Key Elements Marketing, online communication is the use of technology to communicate and connect with people to send, access, or receive information. There were only two types of communication that existed before the advent of technological media: verbal and nonverbal. However, with the advent of the internet, individuals now have an endless number of ways to communicate with one another, as Hitesh Bhasin claims. According to the same source today's understanding of online interactions refers to how individuals and their computers communicate through the internet. Online communication with the help of technology has a significant role in people's lives, because it can help communicate with friends and family, and it can also create opportunities for online businesses. Online communication can bring people closer together and help them form bonds. The only problem is that communication on the Internet can lead to a disconnect from face-to-face communication, so that people forget how to communicate and manage certain situations, according to StudyCorgi. People communicate more and more on social networks, whether through messages, phone calls, or social media. Online communication has become as important as face-to-face communication. People use the Internet more to communicate, so the presence of the people in social media increases every day. Nowadays, online communication is the most efficient way to communicate and stay connected with other people.

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#### **What is the Internet?**

“The Internet, sometimes called simply “the Net,” is a worldwide system of computer networks -- a network of networks in which users at any one computer can, if they have permission, get information from any other computer (and sometimes talk directly to users at other computers).” (Definition from WhatIs.com). Overall, the Internet can be utilized to interact over either short or long distances, share information and quickly access data and responses regarding anything, according to the same source. The internet, a huge network of interconnected computers, was created in the 1960s to facilitate information flow between military and academic institutions. The World Wide Web, a mechanism for organizing and accessing information on the internet, was not introduced to the public until the 1990s. This watershed moment signalled the start of a digital revolution that would permanently change the way one interacts (TechTarget Contributor). In the 1970s, scientists Robert Kahn and Vinton Cerf developed the Transmission Control Protocol and the Internet Protocol, according to Evan Andrews. The Internet is very developed and is used by more people every day. It is in continuous growth when it comes to users because it offers one the opportunity to stay connected with people or to find information very easily and quickly. There is nothing one cannot find on the Internet. It is a source from which one can extract any kind of information, whether it is academic or scientific. Shopping has also moved online since one can find almost every store in the virtual environment. One can find anything from series to movies and children`s programs or advertising sites and daily news. Any activity can be online: vacation planning, dating, learning, shopping, and other things. Writing on paper has been left behind since online communication appeared, but it is still used. Over time, there have been more applications appearing on the Internet. Without realizing it, the Internet has changed the way people talk through social media platforms or through messages.

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#### **Social media platforms**

From online communication, the transition is made to social media platforms where the language is used in different ways. The internet is the place through which people connect and communicate, so over time many applications have appeared, through which people can get to know each other and communicate very easily and quickly. “Some of the most popular social media websites as of January 2021 include Facebook (2.74 billion users); YouTube (2.29 billion users), WhatsApp (2 billion users), Instagram (1.22 billion users), TikTok (689 million users), QQ (617 million users), Douyin (600 million users) and Sino Weibo (511 million users),” according to Tafadzwa Dzinamarira. “With about 2.8 billion active users monthly worldwide as of April 2019” Facebook is the first social media application and it is also the one that seems to be the most popular, according to Karisa Hamdi. Twitter is, on the other hand, a quick, concise, and simple way to connect with one’s audience. YouTube is the platform where one can post videos, so that any individual can access what they post. Lastly, Instagram is the platform that requires all posts to be image or video based and it is especially popular among users aged 18-29 (Social Media Platforms).

Certainly, social media is the place where it is quite easy to create new words, juggle with them and be creative, because on the Internet people are not pressured by grammatical rules, so they have the freedom to use any words, in any context. People do everything in a hurry these days, so due to lack of time, they end up shortening words or using emojis to express what they are doing or what they are thinking. The language was, is and will be constantly changing, so people need to adapt to current trends, according to Al-Jarrah et al.

In fact, on the Internet, the language is used more in writing than spoken form, but I consider that videos, podcasts, or songs have made a noticeable presence online. So that, through them, speaking will be present more with the development of technology. Over time, there have been more applications appearing on the Internet. As devices became increasingly accessible toward the end of the 20th century, digital written interaction enabled people to communicate across time and space, according to Nicole L. Bliss-Carroll. Furthermore, as the internet became more accessible and user-friendly, online communication platforms arose. Email, blogging, vlogging, instant messages, and chatgroups enabled people to communicate immediately and across geographical borders. Long-distance communication was no longer restricted to costly phone calls or physical mail. The internet brought the world at our fingertips, allowing us to communicate with people from other cultures, backgrounds, and opinions.

Chatgroups, also known as group chats or group messaging, are a common type of online communication in which numerous people can take part in the same topic. Chatgroups enhance communication and real-time engagement among a designated group of people who share common interests, goals, or connections. They have become an essential component of a wide range of internet platforms, including chat apps, social networking platforms, and collaborative tools (Macmillan Dictionary).

Blogging is a web application used by many creative people who often post their personal life in the form of a diary. The owner posts blogs about different topics, which can be interactive or not. What is interesting about blogging is that the message appears on the page exactly as it was written, unlike a news story that passes through the hands of several people to be corrected and sent in its best form for publication. The Internet is constantly changing, and its users can experiment and express themselves as they wish.

Vlogging, short for video blogging, is a form of online content creation where individuals or vloggers record and share their experiences, thoughts, opinions, and daily activities through video. Vlogging has gained immense popularity with the rise of platforms like YouTube, where vloggers can upload and share their videos with a wide audience. Moreover, vlogging has changed the way people communicate and share their tales and it has developed a dynamic and interactive medium that allows people to engage, inspire, and entertain others all over the world by leveraging the power of video and the reach of online platforms (Collins Dictionary). According to, Shreeya Deshpande, vlogging is a concept that has been around for a long time. It can be traced back to the 1980s, when Nelson Sullivan, a New York artist, used to film vlogs along the town in the hopes of turning the recordings into a personal show on television. When the internet was invented, it did not take long for other people to begin sharing recordings of their lives online, sharing their adventures or everyday activities. Vlogging took off after the appearance of YouTube in 2005, and it quickly became one of the most popular methods of creating content.

Language is constantly changing, so all people can do is accept it and be prepared to keep up, because it is very difficult to predict how it will look in the future. The difference between talking face-to-face and talking on the Internet is quite significant. Online one cannot have simultaneous answers, which can lead to misunderstandings. Furthermore, when talking via messages, there are these waiting moments when one does not know what the person one is communicating with is going to write, so that the person waiting for the message cannot have instant reactions. In face-to-face communication, these reactions, or gestures play an important role, because they help one realize whether their message was understood correctly or not. In a face-to-face conversation people can get instant feedback, which is especially important when one is having a discussion with someone. The one who listens can offer some reactions on the spot, can laugh, or have gestures that give one an idea of what the person in question is thinking.

Another problem that occurs when communication is done online is the rate at which messages are sent and received. It can take from a few seconds to a few minutes or even months until a message is sent and received. Also, the delay represents the period in which the two people who communicate are waiting for feedback. These lags that appear can create frustration and discomfort for both people who take part in the conversation.

Over time, people introduced emojis to express their feelings, or other virtual words to convey their emotions. Moreover, visual and sound effects were also introduced, such as emojis, which can have different meanings in certain situations. They can represent a person`s happiness or sadness, but they can also be used in a pragmatic way. Emoticons are used very often by young people in messages or in online posts, but, on the other hand, they are rarely found in emails.

#### **Features of online communication**

***Emojis***

According to Encyclopædia Britannica, “**Emoji**,[are] digital pictograms used widely throughout [social media](https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-media), [texting](https://www.britannica.com/technology/text-messaging), [e-mail](https://www.britannica.com/technology/e-mail), and other [computer](https://www.britannica.com/technology/computer)-mediated communications.” Emojis are used to express a range of objects and ideas, including human emotions, animals, geography, foods, and flags. The term emojiwas born from two Japanese words: e, meaning “picture,” and moji, meaning “written character.”

As Shatha Ali A Hakami states, emoji are the latest version of emoticons available on smartphones and tablets that users incorporate into their social media. The terms emoticons and emoji are frequently used together, even though they differ from one another in creation, and function. The same source states that emoticons are a group of written characters (punctuation or symbols) that are used to linguistically represent an action or facial reaction. Meanwhile, emojis are icons that show up on the keyboard and may be utilized in online interactions such as texting. The exact same emoji can appear differently on different platforms (Shatha Ali A Hakami) Overall, emoji in online interactions helps portray human gestures, sounds of speech, and facial expressions that people make when interacting verbally, whether over the phone or in person, according to the same source. Nicole L. Bliss states that “[i]nvented in Japan in 1998 by Shigetaka Kurita on behalf of a Japanese mobile phone operator, the word “emoji” essentially means “pictograph.””. Emojis create elements of both spoken and expressive communication that are common in direct interactions in online circumstances, and these features explain why they have been quickly accepted, according to the same source.

#### **Abbreviations**

“An abbreviation is a shortened form of a written word or phrase [...] [and they] may be used to save space and time, to avoid repetition of long words and phrases, or simply to conform to conventional usage”, according to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary. With the use of social networks, abbreviations appeared to save time and communicate as quickly as possible. There are many abbreviations that are used online every day, both by teenagers and older people who have managed to keep up with everything that is happening on the Internet.

There are several types of abbreviations: “some abbreviations are formed by omitting all but the first few letters of a word, such as (Oct. for October, univ. for university)”, “other abbreviations are formed by omitting letters from the middle of the word and usually also end in a period”, such as (Dr. for Doctor), and “abbreviations for the names of states in the U.S. are two capitalized letters, e.g. AR for Arkansas,” according to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary. Moreover, some sentences have been replaced by abbreviations such as: “CID [`consider it done`], CIO [Check it out`], GTG [`Got to go`], WDYS [`What did you say`], PLS [`please`], THX [`thanks`]” and so on. There are four different types of abbreviations: initialisms, acronyms, shortenings, and contractions.

**Punctuation**

As stated by the [Editage Insights](https://www.editage.com/insights/editage-insights) “Punctuation refers to the tools used in writing to separate sentences, phrases, and clauses so that their intended meaning is clear.” The standard punctuation is: period, comma, apostrophe, quotation, question, exclamation, brackets, braces, parenthesis, dash, hyphen, ellipsis, colon, semicolon.

According to research leader, Celia Kiln, who isProfessor at the Department of Psychology at the Binghamton University, punctuation also changed a little with the use of the Internet by people. People use it excessively, both when needed and when not, and others don`t use it at all. The lack of punctuation can be caused by the speed with which people type messages, but the lack of it can lead to misunderstandings. As a result, it stands to reason that texters rely on what they have at their disposal: emoticons, misspellings that mimic speech sounds, and punctuation, as Celia Kiln claims.

One thing is certain, the vocabulary of the English language has developed with the appearance of the Internet. Language is the basis of the Internet, because without language, the Internet could not exist and communication on the Internet is possible because of the languages that people speak. As social networking becomes an increasingly significant application domain for interpreting natural language, one strategy to handle with inappropriate speech is to make it good by “normalizing” social networking sites or messages sent via SMS to adapt to the type of language that our modern society expects (Meena Singhal). However, if one criticizes the normalization process for not going sufficiently deep, one also must wonder if it goes too far. According to the same source, normalization logic assumes that the “norm” can be recognized categorically and that there is a clear connection between unusual words and the components of this conventional set. Language is formed by an uninterrupted dealing between processes that promote evolution and variety in languages as well as those that establish current standards. Language technology applied to social media has the potential to be transformative, applying the understanding and viewpoints of countless people. Given that the Internet is utilized in a variety of industries and domains, there is no doubt that it has enormous potential for learning purposes, particularly second and additional language instruction. Meena Singhal claims that the Internet is the most recent advancement in technology in foreign language academic achievement. Aside from its communication advantages, the World Wide Web may also be utilized to find and acquire data. The internet is, thus, a virtual collection of books at individual’s hands, it is a world of data which is readily accessible to those who are learning a language.

### **CHAPTER 2: The pandemic**

The Covid-19 pandemic is certainly one of our generation's defining things, affecting almost each aspect of human existence at an international level. The pandemic that resulted from a new coronavirus spread rapidly after it first appeared in late 2019, posing challenges to healthcare systems, economies, and social systems globally. Because of the pandemic, novel precautions such as lockdowns, travel restrictions, and the implementation of new health and safety protocols were implemented. It also highlighted flaws in the healthcare infrastructure and drew focus on problems related to inequalities and availability of healthcare. The Covid-19 pandemic compelled people to change, develop, and face many obstacles, fundamentally altering their lives and encouraging them to reconsider their methods for health care and for handling emergencies.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on global health. There have been over 300 million confirmed cases and over 5 million deaths worldwide as of June 2023 (Challenges to global health). The virus is highly contagious and has rapidly spread around the world, prompting widespread lockdowns and travel restrictions between 2020 and 2022.

Additionally, the pandemic also drew attention to current gaps in mental health care, with those who are marginalized frequently facing further obstacles to care. The economic impact of the pandemic has also been significant. The pandemic resulted in widespread layoffs, business closures, and economic insecurity. Although several industries were able to adapt to the pandemic through work from home and other measures, others, particularly those in the service and hospitality sectors, were severely impacted (Shihui Xiang). The pandemic has also highlighted the need for social security networks and government assistance in times of disaster.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a public health emergency of international concern on 30 January 2020, and began referring to it as a pandemic on 11 March 2020” (COVID-19 pandemic). The pandemic has affected our lives, health, the economy of each country, and the way people perceive the reality. The pandemic made people pay more attention to their health. It also made people tenser when it comes to being very close to a sick person and helped them understand that it is important to always be aware of what is happening around them. Many words that emerged after the appearance of Covid-19 and the pandemic now have a different meaning. Every day, individuals come across terms that they are unfamiliar with.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an important effect on everyday language. It has changed the way people speak and the terms that have become more prominent in many ways. The addition of new terms and the transformation of existing vocabulary reflect how people have responded to the pandemic's challenges and changes. As people continue dealing with the ongoing crisis, the linguistic changes brought about by Covid-19 demonstrate language's versatility and development as it responds to major events in society.

The worldwide epidemic generated a flood of new terms and vocabulary associated with the virus, its symptoms, and measures to prevent it. Words like “coronavirus,” “Covid-19,” “pandemic,” “social distancing,” “lockdown,” and “quarantine” became commonplace. Moreover, many medical terms rose to prominence during the Covid-19 pandemic, becoming commonplace in our everyday conversations. The terms coronavirus,” “Covid-19,” “pandemic,” “asymptomatic,” and “symptomatic” became widely recognized and utilized when referring to various aspects of the virus and the illness that it causes. Additionally, for diagnosing and monitoring the expansion of the virus, terms associated with testing, such as “RT-PCR” and “antigen test,” were used. As people and medical personnel looked for ways of safeguarding themselves against infection, the term “Personal Protective Equipment” (PPE) became common. “Herd immunity” gained popularity as a notion connected with the community's immunity.

According to Sokolowski the word pandemic “has roots in Greek and Latin and dates to the mid-1600s, used broadly for “universal” and more specific to disease in medical text in the 1660s”. According to the source (A Guide to Coronavirus) to self-quarantine is “to refrain from any contact with other individuals for a period of time (such as two weeks) during the outbreak of a contagious disease usually by remaining in one's home and limiting contact with family members.” The verb is recent, showing evidence of use only within the past 20 years or so. The noun has been in occasional use prior to this in the 20th century.

“Coronavirus” is derived from the Latin word “corona,” which means “crown” or “halo” (Novel Coronavirus). The virus was given this name due to its unique appearance under a microscope because it has a crown-like form on its surface. Morphologically, the word is a compound formed from two nouns (“corona” +” virus”), while semantically, on a lexical level, “corona” has two meanings. The first one means “a circle of light that can sometimes be seen around the moon at night, or around the sun during an eclipse or the outer atmosphere of a star”as defined by Cambridge Dictionary in terms of environment. On the other hand, the second one means “the top rounded part of a body part, such as a tooth or the skull” in terms of anatomy.

The term social “distancing” entered common parlance to describe the practice of keeping physical distance from others to prevent the spread of the virus. The term “lockdown” was previously associated with security measures, but it took on a new significance during the pandemic when it started being used to refer to the period of rigorous limitations and orders to remain inside imposed to control the virus's spread ([Aditi Madan](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=Madan%20A%5BAuthor%5D)). Previously, “quarantine” meant isolating people who were known to be infected with a contagious disease. Throughout the pandemic, however, it was more commonly used to refer to the isolation period for people who had been possibly exposed to the virus. According to [Auni Aslah Mat Daud](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=Mat%20Daud%20AA%5BAuthor%5D), who is *a*senior Lecturer, the phrase “flatten the curve” became popular to encourage people to take preventative actions to slow the spread of the virus to keep healthcare systems from becoming overburdened.

Also, the pandemic has demonstrated the value of straightforward and efficient communication. Having so much confusion and misinformation related to the virus, it has become critical for health officials to communicate details with the public in an understandable and efficient way. As a result, there has been a greater emphasis on the significance of straightforward language and efficient methods of communication.

Moreover, the pandemic has influenced how people interact with one another. People depended more on technology to communicate with one another because of several individuals working from home and social distancing measures that were in place. All of this resulted in a rise in the use of virtual meetings like Zoom, along with tools for communication like email and social media.

#### **The role of social media during the pandemic**

During the Covid-19 pandemic, social media was a critical source of information, communication, and support for people all over the world. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube allowed the quick spread of medical authorities' information and updates, allowing people to remain updated about the changing circumstances. Social media has also enabled people to communicate and express their own stories, encouraging a sense of solidarity and belonging during the virus's isolation, and has allowed people to stay connected to one another and contribute to joint efforts to combat the virus.

In many ways, the pandemic accelerated the use of online platforms by people and companies alike and permanently changed how individuals move around the world. As Jaffar Abbas states, during COVID-19, it could be difficult to find reliable sources of information, especially on social media. With so much uncertainty, people sought out as much information as they could and thus became more vulnerable to false and sometimes dangerous claims, which they spread to others. Social media was critical in the spread of new phrases and words. Moreover, as the global disease spread, so did vocabulary and new words. The pandemic did not just place an added burden on health-care systems, it also emphasized changes in the language and the spread of new terms around the world, according to the same source.

Moreover, according to Khoros, COVID-19 put many people in difficult situations, particularly the elderly, people with disabilities, working parents who lost childcare, and people who lost their jobs. During the pandemic, communities banded together by sharing events with huge audiences on the internet, according to this source. Khoros states that COVID-19 is the first pandemic to be linked to social media. People are only now beginning to understand the role of social media in how individuals encounter and react to large-scale outbreaks. According to reports, social media is being considered as an innovative means for interaction that could alleviate all of the negative aspects of isolation by assisting people in escaping negative feelings, conveying their personalities as they want, and creating the illusion of regaining some control (Social media and mental health). During the first wave of the pandemic, one of the advantages of social media was that it allowed useful information to be quickly shared with a large audience.

Indeed, internet platforms have made it simple to find health-related data, empowering people to assess health risks and manage worldwide health issues. The social networking platforms offer social assistance content to people searching for medical knowledge. People suffering from health anxieties can benefit greatly from accurate information that is provided by social media (Dr. Jaffar Abbas).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, social media platforms like Twitter became overloaded with virus-related memes. With physical barriers in place, digital communication channels have emerged as our major method of remaining connected. As a result, online language has changed to adapt to the changing environment. Emojis and GIFs have grown in popularity, enabling more subtle emotional expression in text-based communication. During difficult times, memes and viral phrases about the pandemic provided a source of amusement and common understanding.

O imagine care conține persoană, Chip de om, îmbrăcăminte, zâmbet

Descriere generată automat

The “Distracted Boyfriend” meme, which features a stock photo of a man turning away from his girlfriend to look at another woman, was one of the most popular. The man in the COVID-19 meme has been designated “me,” the girlfriend is labelled “my plans,” and the other woman is labelled “coronavirus.” The meme ironically captures many people's anger and disappointment as their plans have been disrupted by the pandemic. There have been a number of images in which people wear masks or pictures with jokes about how people should use disinfectant and how to keep distance from each other. The purpose of these memes was to amuse people and remind them that there are good things in the world, besides this pandemic that brought with it isolation and distance between people.

Other COVID-19 memes that went viral included jokes about stockpiling toilet paper, working from home, and the difficulties of social distancing. While some people thought the memes were a fun way to deal with the anxiety and unpredictability of the global epidemic, other people thought they were making light of something that was serious. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous effect on the internet as well as digital cultural backgrounds, with memes and other different kinds of online irony playing a key role in the way individuals process and deal with the pandemic's challenges. People were aware that the coronavirus was not a joke and that everything had to be treated very seriously, but despite all this, the multitude of memes brought people out of that difficult period.

### 

### **CHAPTER 3: Analysis of the words that appeared during the pandemic**

The pandemic was the moment when people began to use the Internet a lot in the desire to find useful information about the things that were happening at that time and how they had to behave to stay safe. I will analyse the language used on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Throughout the pandemic, Twitter was flooded with coronavirus-related posts, memes, hashtags, pictures, and various messages expressing how people felt or how they spent their days. Many people were tweeting or Instagramming about their experiences with self-isolation with the intention of motivating other people who were experiencing boredom in a tiny apartment (7 slang words). Moreover, this chapter will include an analysis of features of communication, of language used online during the pandemic and of the compound words, hashtags and emojis present in that period. It will also include a brief analysis of the words that were used throughout the pandemic, how they appeared and for what purpose they were used.

Throughout the pandemic, many compound words that had been used in different contexts and with different meanings emerged and they were shared on social media platforms. Because people were not well informed during the coronavirus, they searched for sources and information online about everything that was happening in the world, so the new words that appeared, which referred to the pandemic, spread quickly. During the pandemic, the language on social networks changed dramatically because people began to use pandemic-related words, which entered everyone’s vocabulary. Some of the words used were already in the dictionary but were known only to specific fields and then people adopted them and used them daily.

#### 

#### **3.1. Shortenings**

**Compounding**

The combination of two distinct words to produce a single form is known as compounding (Yule, 2006a, p. 54). Compounding is the most common method of word formation in English. It is also a composition, and it derives from the Latin word for “putting together.” “An [open compound word](https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/compound-words/#open)is written with spaces between the words (e.g., “high school”)”. They are typically new terms that are only used in specialized situations. As they become increasingly popular, they tend to develop into shortened and closed compounds (Compound Words). ”A [hyphenated compound word](https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/compound-words/#hyphenated)is written with hyphens between the words (e.g. “sister-in-law”)” (Compound Words) and they are usually noun phrases that are used as adjectives or verbs, or verb phrases that are used as nouns or adjectives. Compound nouns were once frequently hyphenated, but they are no longer. “A [closed compound word](https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/compound-words/#closed)is written with no spaces or punctuation (e.g., “cheesecake”)” (Compound Words). Furthermore, closed compounds, according to the same source, can function as nouns, pronouns, prepositions, adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions, or verbs in a number of settings, so they frequently begin as open compounds but gradually close as they become more recognizable.

The following table shows a number of such words that appeared during the pandemic:

Table 1.

O imagine care conține text, Font, captură de ecran, număr

Descriere generată automat

(Tira Nur Fitria)

##### 

***Social distancing***

According to Liz Potter, the adjective “social” and the noun “distancing”, which is derived from the verb “to distance”, combine to form the compound noun “social distancing”, which first appeared in the 1950s. Social distancing has become a crucial public health practice, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and also, this word was very common, both in social media and on TV and in everyday life.

##### 

***Lockdown***

“Lockdown” is non-idiomatic a compound, derived from the combination of the noun “lock” and the adverb “down”. Lasisi states that in this coronavirus framework, the word 'lockdown' is used as a noun in many cases such as: “The lockdown in South Africa is total,” “The lockdown period was tough for many companies”. Lockdown refers to “an emergency in which people are not allowed to freely enter, leave, or move around in a building or area because of danger” according to the source (lockdown, Cambridge Dictionary). The Collins Dictionary has named "lockdown" the word of the year 2020, the year in which all major governments around the world attempted to control the coronavirus pandemic (Lockdown named word of the year).

##### 

***Self-Quarantine***

To self-quarantine is “to refrain from any contact with other individuals for a period of time (such as two weeks) during the outbreak of a contagious disease usually by remaining in one's home and limiting contact with family members” (A Guide to Coronavirus-Related Words). The verb is recent, showing evidence of use only within the past 20 years or so.

“Self-quarantine” is a compound verb. While the word "self" refers to "oneself", the word "quarantine" means to separate from other individuals, and their meaning together is to separate oneself (A Guide to Coronavirus-Related Words). Being quarantined entails watching for symptoms in people who may have recently been exposed to the virus. The people suspected will remain in their houses to avoid spreading the disease to others if it does evolve (What is the meaning of self-quarantine).

##### 

***Self-isolation***

For many years, the concept of self-isolation has been used to prevent the transmission of contagious diseases. The word has been around for a while, but it acquired popularity and usage during the COVID-19 epidemic, which began in late 2019 (WHO). In contrast to the use of the term in the context of today’s health crisis, this first known use of the term seems to refer to being unaware of the events of the world around us:

Few, indeed, are they whose relations with actual life are compatible with a complete self-isolation from the interests and the passions fluctuating around them, and who can so effectually detach themselves from the tumultuous current of events which every day swells in its rapid course to the silent gulf of the past time (Sadaqat Academy).

The word self-isolationis a non-idiomatic compound and is used to describe an act of separation of people suffering from this disease. It is a combination of two nouns (“self” and “isolation”) and it is different from self-quarantine because the specific guidelines for both may vary depending on the disease.

***Zoombombing***

“Zoombombing” has been used since everything moved online, meetings, classes at school or college, office jobs and many others. The term itself refers to an intrusion into a video conference, namely when an unknown individual joins a Zoom meeting (Gunnell). Since they showed people rudely entering zoom calls and distracting students and teachers from class, zoombombing videos went viral.

**Blending**

“Definitions of blends in the morphological literature differ a great deal, but most treatments converge on a definition of blends as words that combine two (rarely three or more) words into one, deleting material from one or both of the source words.” (Laurie Bauer)

Table 2. Blends

O imagine care conține text, captură de ecran, Font, număr

Descriere generată automat

(Tira Nur Fitria)

##### 

***Covidiot***

“Covididiot” is a combination of the words “Covid” and “idiot.” This blend is typically accomplished through the back-clipping of the word “idiot,” which is shortened to “iot.” “Covidiot” is a slang term for someone who ignores safety precautions or declines healthcare guidance during a global epidemic (Jain, 2020).

##### 

***Covidivorce***

The term “covidivorce” is derived from the words “covid” and “divorce.” The first word “covid" is shorted into “covid” or “covi” in this blend. While the second word “divorce” is shortened as “ivorce” or “divorce”. The term “covidivorce” refers to divorces that happened because of COVID-19 (Howard).

##### 

***Coronacation***

The term “coronacation” is derived from the words “corona” and “vacation.” This blend is typically accomplished through the back-clipping of the word “coronavirus” and the clipping of “vacation”. The word “coronacation” alludes to a lengthy vacation for other people induced by the COVID-19 epidemic. (Howard).

##### 

***Quarantini***

“Quarantini” is a drink, any kind of drink, which can help one get through this period. This word appeared, because of the hard times that people went through, times when they stayed at home and wanted to enjoy a drink to pass the time easier. The term "quarantine" is a blend derived from the words "quarantine" and "martini" through back-clipping ("quarant") and fore-clipping ("tini").

#### **3.2. Acronyms**

“A word (such as NATO, radar, or laser) formed from the initial letter or letters of each of the successive parts or major parts of a compound term” (Dictionary.com). Acronyms and initialisms are both types of abbreviations, but they differ in terms of pronunciation and how they are formed. An acronym it is formed by merging the first letters of a phrase or a series of words to construct a new word that may be pronounced as a whole (grammarbook.com).

Table 3.

O imagine care conține text, Font, captură de ecran, număr

Descriere generată automat

(Tira Nur Fitria)

***WFO***

“Work from Office” is an initialism for “Work from Office.” In this case, the initialism “Work from Office” (WFO) is abbreviated. It is the typical method of working from an office area. WFO has been the dominant work style for many years, but it acquired prominence as a counterweight to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic, when employers began to return to office-based labour.

***WFH***

WFH is an initialism for “Work from Home,” which is currently the standard in various nations (Jain, 2020). The notion of “Work from Home” (WFH) or remote work has been around for a long time, but it has attracted a lot of attention and appeal in recent years, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

***SARS***

“SARS (“severe acute respiratory syndrome”) and MERS (“Middle East respiratory syndrome”) were already dictionary entries as was the acronyms for coronavirus, CoV, but the more technical designations SARS-CoV, SARS-CoV-2, and MERS-CoV were added.

#### **3.3. Clipping**

“Clippings appear as a rather mixed bag of forms abbreviated from larger words, which, however, share a common function, namely, to express familiarity with the denotation of the derivative” (Laurie Bauer). For example, Vax: “Clipped from "vaccine." It is an informal term used to refer to the COVID-19 vaccine”.

#### **3.4. Multiple Processes**

It happens when multiple types of word-formation processes are involved in the formation of an entirely novel word. Below is a table of numerous processes for word formation:

O imagine care conține text, captură de ecran, Font, număr

Descriere generată automat

(Tira Nur Fitria)

***Covideoparties.***

The term “covideoparties” is derived from three morphemes: “covid + video + party.” This is a blend between 3 words => it might have been formed as follows covid = back-clipping, video = fore-clipping + party. After that, the process of derivation takes place by using *-es* to form the plural noun in the word “parties”. As a result, the term “covideoparties” is made up of two processes.

***Handwashing***

Handwashing refers to “the act or activity of washing one’s hands” (dictionary.com). The term “handwashing” refers to a noun and the term is derived from the words “hand” and “washing”, through composition. Furthermore, “washing” is made up of the verb “wash” and the noun forming suffix -ing. Therefore, the term “handwashing” is formed through derivation and then compounding.

***Coronababies***

There are multiple morphemes in the word “coronababies.” The first is the free morpheme “corona”, the second is the free morpheme "babies”, and the final is the restricted morpheme -es, which corresponds to a plural noun. Therefore, the word “coronababies” is formed by the words “corona”, which is a clipped word + baby + -es,” with the suffix -es referring to the plural noun. As a result, the expression “coronababies” is formed through derivation and composition. Also, the term “coronababies” refers to the speakers' curiosity on how “coronababies” are the babies born or conceived during the global pandemic.

#### **3.5. Memes**

According to Alexis Benveniste, memes did not originate with the internet. Humans have been using memes for communication for ages. Memes are well-known for being intermediaries for discussions about culture and a way for people to engage in technological developments. Furthermore, “[h]umans have used memes to communicate for as long as they have used any symbolic system” (Conrod). In what follows I will analyse some of the memes that appeared during the pandemic and that popularised some new words.

***Covidiot***

O imagine care conține text, captură de ecran, Pagină web, Site web

Descriere generată automat

(7 slang words Gen Zers)

A “covidiot” is “[s]omeone who behaves in a stupid way that risks spreading the infectious disease Covid-19” and who “doesn’t take COVID-19 and the risks of the virus seriously, despite what government and health officials say” (Cambridge Dictionary). This term first appeared during the coronavirus and was generally used to emphasize the fact that some people misbehaved and did not follow the rules and laws imposed during the pandemic. Although used in different contexts, this term had broadly similar connotations.

***Corona Bae***

O imagine care conține text, Font, linie, număr

Descriere generată automat

(7 slang words Gen Zers)

“Bae is a slang term for one’s significant other or an object of affection, often used to address them, e.g., I love you, bae!” (dictionary.com). It could be the partner you're quarantining, or it may be utilized as well to describe someone you're dating while adhering to rules regarding social distancing.

***Boomer Remover***

O imagine care conține text, îmbrăcăminte, încălțăminte, captură de ecran

Descriere generată automat

(7 slang words Gen Zers)

Boomer Remover is a contentious term for Covid-19, primarily used by millennials and Gen-Z. Furthermore, this refers to their belief that the coronavirus would kill or seriously harm only the elderly.

***Phizer Papi and Moderna Mami***

O imagine care conține text, captură de ecran, Font

Descriere generată automat

(Slang That Only Makes Sense In 2021)

The Pfizer and Moderna shots were the two most popular vaccines available. It didn't take long for people to start making fun of the vaccine names. As a result, tweets and memes about these vaccines began to appear. Also, the title of the meme is a combination between English and Spanish.

***Miss Rona***

O imagine care conține text, captură de ecran, Chip de om, software

Descriere generată automat

**(**7 slang words Gen Zers)

Miss Rona / The Rona is a clipping from coronavirus. Some have dubbed it “Miss Rona, with the “Miss” denoting personality and “sass” to the disease. Other people just refer to it as “the Rona,” a direct allusion to its full name, according to Insider.

***Quarantine***

O imagine care conține text, captură de ecran, Font

Descriere generată automat

(Quarantine Memes)

This is an example of a meme that appeared when the quarantine period started in almost everywhere in the world. People reacted with a lot of insecurity and upset to these rules that were necessary. Unfortunately, not all people understood these rules and many of them started insulting the government all over the Internet.

#### **3.6. Hashtags**

The hashtag was first brought to Twitter on August 23, 2007, by Chris Messina (Cooper) and it “is a metadata tag that is prefaced by the hash symbol, ***#***. On social media, hashtags are used on micro-blogging and photo-sharing services such as Twitter or Tumblr as a form of user-generated tagging that enables cross-referencing of content by topic or theme” (Hashtag). Thanks to hashtags, people’s posts are no longer limited to their followers. Since, by using a certain hashtag, the posts will be visible to anyone who searches for that hashtag and is interested in the same topics as them.”

O imagine care conține text, captură de ecran, Font

Descriere generată automat

(Belle Beth Cooper, The History of Hashtags)

Messina intended to discover ways to include hashtags into his own Twitter usage, and he looked as well to Flickr tags for ideas when attempting to boost Twitter usage of the newly introduced hashtag convention, according to the same source. Even though hashtags are now a standard part of Twitter, not everyone was eager to get into the hashtag build at first. Although hashtags are essential to tweets, Chris intended for them to function as a tweet's meta data. This is to provide additional information about a tweet, such as news about an event people are referring to or current events (Cooper). People are clearly familiar with hashtags that appear on our calendars or via Twitter's search feature. People can join a hashtag chat by selecting one to see other people's tweets or by selecting another hashtag to add their own.

Officially known as “Octothorpe,” the phone's numeric keypad is in the upper right corner of the keyboard and is used to identify hashtags on social media platforms. The symbol, also known as a hash or a letter L, dates to late antiquity, to the 14th century (Ferro). Many different emotions as well as desires regarding their unexpected time in their homes were being shared by people from across all walks of life using the coronavirus hashtag glossary, including: “#Covid19/#Covid-19/#Coronavirus, #StayHomeStaySafe, #StayHome, #QuarantineandChill, #LockdownNow, #Covidiots, #MyPandemicSurvivalPlan, #FlattenTheCurve” (Jose Eric M Lacsa). All hashtags were used with the intention of informing and assisting people with coronavirus information since it is far more convenient to access all the posts by clicking on the hashtag and being directed to all the posts that contain that hashtag.

O imagine care conține text, captură de ecran, Sistem de operare, proiectare

Descriere generată automat

Nearly every day, everyone encounters words and phrases related to COVID-19 and other medical terms. The meme above is an ad meant to persuade viewers to stay in the comfortable surroundings of their own homes. Hashtags were widely used during the coronavirus and played a significant role during the pandemic.

O imagine care conține text, captură de ecran, Font, Pagină web

Descriere generată automat

(Twitter)

Individuals were interested in finding out what was happening with the pandemic, and one of the quickest ways to do so was through social media. Because social media is instant, many people chose to use it to get quick updates rather than using Google to look up news.

***#StaySafeStayHome***

The message of this hashtag, which has been trending around the world, is simple: Remain at home. There were numerous posts advising others not to leave their homes because many people were worried about the virus spreading. Furthermore, many people were using the hashtag #StaySafeStayHome when tweeting about their activities while the area was under lockdown to motivate those who might have wanted to leave. There were many hashtags that were trending on Twitter including this one.

***#lockdown***

O imagine care conține text, captură de ecran, Font, număr

Descriere generată automat

(Twitter)

On all social media platforms, the hashtag #Lockdown became popular, and numerous individuals were using it to talk about their newly adopted way of life. For example, the hashtag had 4.7 million posts on Instagram (on April 20, 2020). Individuals began using it to talk about a variety of lockdown-related topics, and many individuals came up with new hashtags to further the conversation. On the platform, for instance, memes related to lockdown were posted using the hashtag #lockdownmemes. Given that everyone was at home at the time, it is not surprising that it was a hot topic on social media. People wanted to talk about the things they did during self-isolation, offer provocations, and keep up with events that occurred during #Lockdown2020 (Ashleigh Stewart). Many of these hashtags gained popularity throughout the day and were used implicitly for anything related to pandemics. There are many other hashtags, such as #coronaviruspandemic and #coronavirusupdate, as well, but these were the most popular (Trending Hashtags).

#### **3.7. Emojis**

Emojis were developed after emoticons, which were graphically represented “facial expressions formed by various combinations of keyboard characters and used in electronic communications to convey the writer's feelings or intended tone,” according to OxfordDictionaries.com (The nature of emojis). The use of emojis in computer-mediated communication spaces is growing rapidly, requiring many to recognize the role they play in digital written interactions, which appears to be unavoidable.

Moreover, emojis are used as digital communication intermediaries by individuals as well as communities to emphasize personal qualities and deepen connections across time and space. The same source claims that emoji use has vastly outpaced that of the most widely spoken language in the world, demonstrating both their universal usability and purpose. The concrete nature of language in online environments is brought to the foreground by the availability of emojis via more widespread smartphone use and access. The user knows the intended meaning without having to consider the cartoon's symbolism, and language in general including acronyms like “lol” for “laugh out loud” is no longer necessary. “lol” might be taken as less exciting when the “Face with Tears of Joy” emoji serves as a possible answer to a funny message. Compared to a visual representation of a facial reaction, which the brain more instantly associates with an image that is three-dimensional and, consequently, a personal reality, the unchanging indicator “lol” is much more abstract in theory (Nicole L. Bliss-Carroll).

The emojis that are most frequently associated with words like “coronavirus” or “COVID-19” are the face wearing a mask 😷 and the microbe 🦠. Nevertheless, the prevalence of laughing emojis in conversations about coronaviruses may suggest that people are specifically making jokes about the highly transmissible virus to lift their spirits in the wake of the worldwide pandemic (Arfa Javaid).

O imagine care conține text, captură de ecran, diagramă, siglă

Descriere generată automat

(Coronavirus Emojis)

The fundamental concept is to represent an abstract idea with a picture of something concrete whose name sounds the same to the abstract idea. Additionally, a few platforms have even developed their own customized COVID-19 emojis. For example, individuals on Twitter can incorporate the hashtag #SafeHandsChallenge to share a personalized hand-washing emoji. Emoji use in online communication can reveal a lot about how we have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Vyvyan Evans. Emoji density (the average number of emojis per tweet) and the corresponding popularity ranking of different emojis have fluctuated, even though usage of emojis hasn't changed significantly (i.e., the popular emojis mostly stayed the same). This might suggest that there aren't enough emojis to adequately express the emotions brought on by the pandemic (Anwesha Das).

O imagine care conține text, captură de ecran, Font, proiectare

Descriere generată automat

(Twitter)

### 

### **Conclusions**

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about significant changes in the way people communicate online and has given rise to a new form of language that is characterized by its focus on health and safety. As individuals continue to rely on online communication tools to stay connected during the pandemic, it is likely that these changes will continue to shape the way people communicate in the future. Additionally, the pandemic has shown us the power of technology to bring us together in times of crisis and has reminded us of the importance of clear and effective communication in navigating the challenges of the modern world. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift towards online communication, with people around the world relying on digital tools to stay connected with friends, family, and colleagues. As a result, people have seen a surge in the use of video conferencing, messaging apps, and social media platforms, as people look for ways to maintain social connections while observing social distancing guidelines.

This shift towards online communication has also had a significant impact on language, with the pandemic giving rise to new words and phrases that reflect the realities of life during a pandemic. From “social distancing” and “flatten the curve” to “quarantine pods” and Zoom “fatigue”, these new terms reflect the challenges and complexities of navigating life during a pandemic and have become an integral part of our everyday language. At the same time, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of the internet as a tool for social connection. With many schools and universities shifting to online learning, and public health officials relying on digital tools to track and contain the spread of the virus, the internet has become an essential resource for people around the world. However, the pandemic has also exposed the digital divide, with many people lacking access to the resources they need to stay connected and informed. As people continue to navigate the challenges of the pandemic, online communication and the internet will continue to play a critical role in people`s lives. However, it is also important to ensure that everyone has access to the resources they need to stay connected and informed, and to continue to invest in digital infrastructure to support the needs of communities around the world. Online communication and social media have brought about a profound transformation in the way people connect and communicate. The internet has bridged distances and fostered global connections, while social media has empowered individuals to share their stories and opinions on an unprecedented scale. However, as people navigate this digital landscape, it is crucial to be mindful of the potential risks and implications, striving to harness the power of online communication for the betterment of society.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 epidemic has influenced the terminology people use online. As people got more isolated in their houses and physical connections became more limited, internet communication became the major means of engaging with others. New terminology and terms arose to describe the pandemic's specific circumstances and challenges. Words like “lockdown,” “social distancing,” and “remote work” became ubiquitous, reflecting people's new realities and experiences across the world.

Overall, online communication has influenced the language people use and introduced new linguistic patterns. The internet and social media have created a distinct online language that has influenced our writing style and communication patterns. Furthermore, the COVID-19 epidemic has hastened these changes, resulting in new terminology and phrases that reflect the worldwide crisis's unique circumstances. As people navigate the digital landscape, it is critical that people adapt to these developments while also keeping in mind the possible impact on language and the necessity for ethical online communication.

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