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Morphological Processes of Social Media Neologisms

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Abstract: Morphology is a study of word formation and coinage. This research investigated the morphological processes used in wide usage and development of neologisms through selected social media platforms namely, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. This study is a textual based analysis through qualitative approach. The samples were collected by random sampling of selecting social media influencers within the computer-mediated communication as the neologisms analysed evolved in a wide platform due to online social media. The aspect of morphological process and word classes of the neologisms were analysed by using lexical semantics analysis. The results indicate that acronym was the most common used of new word formation and most new words were formed in noun class through social media in this era. New word formation was found in this study as the sequence formation of words was undefined and it is named as reposition. The result demonstrated that language is evolving occasionally and it is significant to language researchers and users to increase awareness to the language changes usage on social media platforms in terms of morphological structures and neologisms.

Keywords: Morphology; neologisms; social media; computer-mediated communication; lexical semantics analysis

1. Introduction

The rapid pace of technology advancements and online social networking is having an impact on language. Through the use of new words in which also known as neologisms, the evolution of the language being adapted in social media platforms has transformed the way individuals communicate. The word 'Neologism' comes from the combination of a French word Neo which means 'New' and a Greek word logo, which mean 'word'. It generally refers to a newly coined word that may be in the process of entering common use but has not yet been accepted into mainstream language. According to Peterson and Ray (2013), "A neologism is a recently invented word or phrase that is just emerging into

the mainstream use". Neologisms can be invented by a specific individual and attributed to them, or they can be the product of a publication, era, or event.

Some social media users develop a neologism by following a particular process. In the study of linguistics, this process of coining new words is known as the morphological process. The focus of this study is primarily on the construction or development of a neologism. Therefore, some studies on the morphological processes were adapted in this study to analyze the word formation process used to create the neologisms. The studies were developed by Murray (1995), Kemmer (2003), and Plag (2003). This study has selected English language as the source of data of the neologisms through social media. To support why English language is chosen is according to Sitsanis (2021), English has dominated the Internet platform for many years until present.

The study of words (semantics) is concerned with the study of lexical (content) word meaning, as opposed to the meanings of grammatical (or function) words. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are the three most popular social media applications chosen as a statistic presented from a survey by the Global Web Index (2019). Other than that, this study has applied computer - mediated communication (CMC) as the neologisms collected evolved in a huge communication platform. As derived by Lee (2020), CMC is defined as the centre of various mediums of human communication through networked computers that can be synchronous or asynchronous which includes exchange of texts, audio or video messages. Lutkevich (2020) once stated that social media is a collective term that is used to indicate websites or applications which focus on communication, interaction and collaboration with others. Social media, hence, is part of the CMC framework that focuses on the process of communication in digital platforms.

The main research objectives were first to analyze the meanings, formation processes and word classes of the social media neologisms in English language by using lexical semantics analysis, second was to investigate the most frequently used morphological processes in the social media neologisms found. There was a growing concern on the neologisms used and created through social media that were emerging into the mainstream used that lead to misleading information or even misconception to the connotations created from the neologisms especially amongst the new learners of any language. Therefore, this study would help in recording the new word formation processes as well as the new words created.

1.1 Lexical semantics analysis

In the field of linguistics, lexical semantics is defined as the study of meaning. According to Murphy (2016), a number of methods were used to investigate the meaning of a word, including introspection, fieldwork, dictionaries, corpora, and (where appropriate) psycholinguistic experimentation. This study, nevertheless, only adopted the introspection and dictionaries approaches. Introspection is a classic linguistic approach of asking oneself how one uses language, and it is employed throughout a lexical semantics purpose (Murphy, 2016). The use of a dictionary in determining the meaning of a word is referred to as dictionaries. The Oxford Dictionary 6th Edition (2017) and NetLingo.com, an Internet language dictionary, were both utilised in this research. Introspection analysis is a type of analysis that uses morphological processes theories to examine the meaning of a word. Every neologism found was also examined using dictionaries to see if it existed and if there were any discrepancies in meaning.

2. Materials and Methods

The neologisms created on three social media platforms, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, were analysed in this study. The primary objective was to figure out what morphological processes, or word formation processes, were used in the production of new words on social media platforms. People who have earned recognition and popularity as a result of their knowledge and experience on specific issues were referred to as social media influencers (Geyser, 2021). According to Geyser (2021), social media

influencers could also be celebrities, but these groups have less influence on their followers due to their lack of experience. Their accounts were chosen for micro groups of social media influencers based on accessibility (public), number of followers (minimum 1000), and other criteria (Geyser, 2021). Social media influencers were selected randomly to be followed from November 2019 until March 2020. Mix of languages or code switching in the postings containing neologisms was acceptable. Social media influencers were chosen to be the sources of where the data were collected as they influenced the social media users for their knowledge and experience on specific contents. In order to deliver contents, language is used as the medium. They, therefore, have a wider tendency to influence the other users of social media platforms in terms of the language usage that includes neologisms.

The meaning of each word collected in was analysed by using lexical semantics analysis to study the meaning, word formation (morphological processes) and word classes. Those two methods were introspection and vocabulary. Introspection was a classic way in defining a word by asking oneself with justification, which this study adopted the morphological processes from Murray (1995), Kemmer (2003), and Plag (2003). The neologisms were then analysed for their existing meanings to be analysed if there were differences of meanings for the new connotations applied on the neologisms. There were two dictionaries used, Oxford Dictionary 6th edition (2017) and NetLingo which is an online Internet dictionary for Internet vocabulary. The morphological processes of the neologisms found were examined and the most frequently used word formation was identified. The word classes of the neologisms were further classified and identified as the most frequently used class.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

From the data collection process, 93 neologisms were managed to be collected throughout this research to be analysed. Those neologisms were analysed and tabulated to identify which is the most frequently used morphological process, word class and the historical background of some neologisms. The first research objective of this study was to study social media neologisms in English language in terms of the meanings, formation processes and word class. The second research objective was to investigate what is the most frequently used word formation used in social media neologisms found. The findings were compiled using a qualitative approach through textual analysis throughout this research study (lexical semantics analysis). In order to discover the meaning, morphological processes, and word classes of neologisms commonly used by social media influencers in three social media platforms, the findings were analysed by referring to and applying two lexical semantics analysis approaches, introspection and vocabulary. The list of 93 neologisms found can be accessed in Appendix A.

3.2 Analysis of morphological processes of neologisms

Morphological process was the main objective to be observed in this neologisms research. As there are diverse types of morphological processes, this study was based on Murray's (1995), Kemmer's (2003), Stekauer's (2016) and Plag's (2018) list of word formation processes. The list of word formations selected was as follows: compounding, reduplication, borrowing, affixation, conversion, abbreviations, acronym, clipping, blending, onomatopoeia, and antonomasia. Table 1 shows the analysis of the recurrence of morphological processes on neologisms collected through the selected social media platforms namely Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Table 1: Analysis of the recurrence of the morphological processes

Morphological processes	Frequency of usage	Percentage (%)
1. Acronym	31	33.3
2. Blending	26	28.0
3. Compounding	13	14.0
4. Borrowing	7	7.5
5. Onomatopoeia	6	6.5
6. Abbreviation	6	6.5
7. Clipping	5	5.4
8. Antonomasia	4	4.3
9. Conversion	4	4.3
10. Affixation	0	0
11. Reduplication	0	0

Table 1 reported the analysis of morphological processes. From the 93 neologisms collected through social platforms selected, it can be inferred that acronym has the largest proportion of usage with 33.3 percent, which encompasses 31 neologisms. Blending and compounding with 28.0 percent and 14.0 percent, respectively. Antonomasia and conversion had the fewest occurrences, accounting for only 4.3 percent of the total, or four neologisms. Throughout this data collection, however, there were no instances of affixation or reduplication.

The process of simplifying some morphemes or words to their initial letters is known as acronym (Murray, 1995). According to Alawad (2018), an acronym is a word made up of the beginning letters of many vocabularies and is known as initialism (alphabetism). In the word creation of an acronym, a few free morphemes are used. Aside from that, acronyms are also written as single words, such as NASA and AIDS (Pujiyanti et al, 2021). NASA stands for National Aeronautics and Space Administration which is a formal noun for an independent agency of the United States federal government which conducts aeronautics and space research based. The analysis from the data collection shows that there were 31 neologisms found in this morphological process out of 93 neologisms found. Acronym covers 33.7% from the data collection among the eleven processes selected. Figures and Table 2 shows the descriptions of some of the neologisms found in the acronym process.

Table 2: Acronym neologisms descriptions and analysis

No.	Neologisms	Morphological Process	Oxford / Netlingo
1.	BMF	BMF = Buy + Muslim + First	NetLingo defined BMF as one of curses word.
		BMF stands for 'Buy Muslim First' which is a controversial campaign among Malays and Muslims in Malaysia. BMF campaign urges their committee to buy Muslims' and Malays' products only which basically Halal certified instead of buying products made from non-Malays or non-Muslims.	BMF = Bad + Mother + F***ker It is a short text that usually used in texting and in social media platform. (NetLingo.com)

2.	GB	GB = Get + Back	GB = Gigabytes / Good + Bridge
		GB stands for 'Get back' which is often used for lover couples with their previous partners.	It refers to being down by one trick. (NetLingo.com) (Oxford Dictionary 6th Edition, 2017) GB = Great Britain (Oxford Dictionary 6th Edition, 2017)
	X	X has various usages with different definitions. However, X symbol has been widely used in social media as a sign for collaboration. Celebrities use this X symbol often when they post collaborations with a brand. For example, YunaXChristyNg which stands for Yuna who is a singer collaborating with a brand namely ChristyNg.	It means "times" (as in multiplication) or "times as big as." For example, "We're going to be 3X Amazon.com if we ever get this idea off the ground." (NetLingo.com) X = Ten in Roman. (Oxford Dictionary 6th Edition, 2017)

Table 2 reported some examples of neologisms found as acronyms. It can be seen that although the neologisms were recorded in the dictionaries used in this study, the connotation of meaning and interpretation were different. For example, the neologism 'X' was defined as 'times' as in multiplication (Netlingo,2020) and 'ten' in Roman language (Oxford Dictionary 6th Edition, 2017), but the neologism found was mostly used to indicate a collaboration. For instance, a brand collaborating with a well-known name such as celebrities would use 'X' to show that they are collaborating with this name: 'YunaXChristyNg' is an example of how 'X' was used. Yuna was a popular singer, while Christy Ng was a brand name in fashion industry. Therefore, this particular neologism might influence second language learners understanding English language and might lead to misconception of English words and terms.

The following Table 3 depicts shows the descriptions of all the neologisms collected in blending process. According to Murray (1995), blending is a word formation process that involves eliminating syllables from a word and joining the chosen syllable with the other syllables from the other words. To form words through the blending process must be by combining two separate words with different meanings to form a new one (Baliaeva, 2019). When a free morpheme is shortened or removed from some sections and joined with the other subtracted free morpheme, this is known as blending. This resulted in a complicated morpheme, which contains more than one free morpheme. To produce words through the blending process, two separate words with different meanings must be combined to form a new one (Nordquist, 2020).

Table 3: Blending neologisms analysis and descriptions

No.	Neologisms	Morphological processes	Oxford / netlingo
1.	aboat	aboat = about + boat Aboat is a combination of two words, about and boat. It was used to indicate telling something about boats.	
2.	Appre-sea-ate	Appre-sea-ate = Appreciate + sea Appre-sea-ate is a combination of two words, appreciate and sea. It was used to deliver a message to appreciate the sea.	No result found
3.	Berrylicious	Berrylicious = Berry + Delicious Berrylicious is a combination of two words 'Berry' and 'Delicious' to indicate that Berry flavour is delicious.	No result found

As illustrated in Table 3, the preponderance of the neologisms discovered through this morphological process (blending) were not yet registered in Netlingo or the Oxford Dictionary 6th Edition (2017). People nowadays on social media always had this behaviour of creating new words by subtracting some syllables from a word and combining with other words to create a new word, as blending is a word formation process that combines two or more morphemes into a word by subtracting syllables from a word and joining the chosen syllable with the other syllable from the other words (Plag, 2018). With 28.8% of the neologisms collected, this trend exhibited a significant number of popularities following acronym.

An undefined neologism was found in this study in terms of its definition. This neologism was used as a compound word but with the original meaning. Table 4 reported an example of the neologisms found for this undefined morphology.

Table 4: Neologisms description and analysis in newly found formation: reposition

No.	Neologism	Morphological processes	Oxford/ netlingo
1.	Batday birthman	Batday birthman is generally formed through compounding process. However, the meaning produced does not relate to the compounded word but the original phrase, *birthday batman.* The original phrase is birthday batman. There is a trend of people change a compound word into different word by taking one meaningful morpheme out of the word. This is one of the examples. *Birthday batman* into '*batday birthman*'.	No result found

In a summary, this process involves changing the formation of existing syllables in a word to another word and modifying the arrangement of words in an existing standard grammatical term in

English, all with the purpose of maintaining the original meaning of the words or phrases that have been changed. In social media, this is a completely new trend or word development process in the English language. This new model was named 'reposition' formation based on the data analysis. This terminology referred to a social media process in which some neologisms employed conventional morphological processes like as compounding, while others used alternative processes such as shifting the locations of words in a phrase.

4. Conclusion

The practice of analysing morphological processes of neologisms in digital literacy was highlighted and focused on in this study, which was accomplished through selected social media platforms. As a result, this research contributes to long-term records of language usage in light of technological advancements in social networking. As a result, this study is important because it examines the variations in word formation and their impact on the growth of English vocabulary in social media. Emerging innovations or applications are invented on a continuous basis. As a result, this research should be carried out in order to examine the pattern of word construction used in the creation of neologisms. In addition, this research leads to the discovery of new neologisms, which may aid in the growth of English vocabulary or the development of new grammatical ways of using the English language over time. After conducting the analysis, the answers to the research questions of this study were obliged to comply with the research questions.

Research questions	Answer
1. What are the meanings, word formation and word classes of the social media neologisms collected?	The definition, formation and word class of each neologism were analysed in the qualitative analysis with illustrations and justifications by using lexical semantics analysis methods adopted; introspection and vocabularies.
2. What are the most frequently used morphological processes from the social media neologisms found?	Acronym

The first objective of this study was to identify the meanings, word formation, and word class of social media neologisms collected, was discussed and analysed in the findings with an adequate justification provided by using the lexical semantics analysis approach adopted from Murphy (2016); introspection and vocabulary (The Oxford Dictionary 6th Edition and the Netlingo.com). This analysis was also referred to as the derivation of morphological processes by Murray (1995), Kemmer (2003) and Plag (2003).

The second objective was to identify the most common morphological processes in coining the social media neologisms found. From the analysis, it can be seen that acronyms have taken the first place with the highest number of neologisms found in this category. As people were becoming more prone to using social media as a medium of interaction and expression, there seemed to be a modification on the formation of new words. This might happen for some reasons as well as the technical requirements opposed by some social media platforms. For example, most social media platforms have set limitations on words to be posted at a time. Twitter started its operation with limitation of words up to 140 characters per post. However, the tweet limit grew the maximum length of each post to 280 characters which was still considered as short but more expressions were enabled

(Twitter Developer, 2021). This, as a result, leads neologisms to being utilised and created by the users, especially shortening of word processes such as acronym and abbreviation.

Additionally, a significant discovery was made in this study during the research procedure, namely that the morphological process consequence is unknown. However, this method of word formation has been given a new name: reposition. It was given the name 'reposition' since the defined words in a sentence were shifted around in order to express the actual text. This new method identifies whether there has been a change of syllables in a word (more than one) or a change of grammatically correct words in a phrase. For example, according to the findings, the phrase "felt delete might cute later" was a popular remark on social media. That phrase was intended to express meaning as 'felt cute, might delete later'. This type of formation might lead to a confusion of even misconception especially to the new learners and second language learners of English.

In conclusion, this study will contribute significantly to expanding the resources available to students, instructors, researchers, and translators who are interested in related topics. It will help readers comprehend what social media neologisms mean, how they were used, and how much such employment benefits to English vocabulary growth. Additionally, although some neologisms were created from pre-existing linguistic qualities, this study enriches language users by increasing their understanding and awareness of conventional formal English language usage as well as productivity of existing words in the English vocabulary. As a result, future study in this field should be pursued in order to benefit a substantial group of users.

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Appendix A

Table 5 listed the neologisms found in this study.

Table 5: List of neologisms found

No.	Neologisms	Morphological processes
1.	Aboat	Blending
2.	Amirite	Compounding
3.	Appre-sea-ate	Blending
4.	Asmr	Acronym
5.	Batday birthman	Undefined (compounding)
6.	Berrylicious	Blending
7.	Bingsu	Borrowing
8.	Bitmoji	Blending
9.	Bmf	Acronym
10.	Boba	Borrowing
11.	Boomboclat	Borrowing
12.	Boomerang	Borrowing + conversion
13.	Cashback	Compounding
14.	Cat-astrophe	Blending
15.	Caturday	Blending
16.	Covid-19	Clipping + blending
17.	Covidiot	Blending + compounding
18.	Def	Clipping
19.	Dm	Acronym

20.	E-cig	Acronym + clipping
21.	Exporiance	Blending
22.	Fambam	Blending
23.	Filter	Conversion
24.	Flan-tas-tic	Blending
25.	Fml	Acronym
26.	Fomo	Acronym
27.	Foodpanda	Compounding + antonomasia
28.	Ftw	Acronym
29.	Furget	Blending
30.	Fwa	Acronym
31.	G2g	Acronym
32.	Gb	Acronym
33.	Grab	Conversion
34.	Gvf	Acronym
35.	H8	Abbreviation
36.	Haloo	Onomatopoeia + antonomasia
37.	Hangry	Blending
38.	Ice cream	Conversion
39.	Igtv	Acronym
40.	Instafamous	Blending
41.	Instagrammable	Compounding
42.	Kudos	Borrowing
43.	Libertards	Blending
44.	Liddat	Blending
45.	Loml	Acronym
46.	M	Acronym
47.	Mamazon	Blending
48.	Mco	Acronym
49.	Meekend	Blending
50.	Mewd	Onomatopoeia
51.	Mof	Acronym
52.	Monyay	Blending
53.	Moodboard	Compounding
54.	Motd	Acronym
55.	Msme	Acronym
56.	Mukbang	Borrowing
57.	Mycybersale	Compounding
58.	Nanostix	Compounding
59.	Ncov	Acronym
60.	Ngl	Acronym
61.	Ootd	Acronym
62.	Pawfect	Blending
63.	Pda	Acronym
64.	Photobomb	Compounding
65.	Potd	Acronym
66.	Qrpay	Acronym
67.	Qtpie	Abbreviation
68.	Rmo	Acronym
69.	Rn	Acronym
70.	Sail-abrate	Blending
71.	Saturdate	Blending
72.	Sco pa tu mana	Borrowing

73.	Sesh	Clipping
74.	Shookt	Onomatopoeia
75.	Shopathon	Blending
76.	Shopback	Compounding
77.	Snapchat	Compounding + antonomasia
78.	Sportuation	Blending
79.	Sry	Abbreviation
80.	Tb	Abbreviation
81.	Throwback	Compounding
82.	Tiktok	Onomatopoeia + antonomasia
83.	Vlog/ vlogger	Blending
84.	Wa	Abbreviation
85.	Wakanda	Blending
86.	Wcgw	Acronym
87.	Wfh	Acronym
88.	Wfhm	Acronym
89.	Wknd	Abbreviation
90.	X	Acronym
91.	Yeet	Onomatopoeia
92.	Yikes	Onomatopoeia
93.	Youngins	Blending

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