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### Morphological Innovations in Digital Communication: Understanding Neologisms in Online Spaces

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#### **Abstract:**

This research explores morphological innovations in digital communication by examining the emergence and use of neologisms in online spaces. As digital platforms facilitate rapid exchanges of information, users frequently create new words through morphological processes, reflecting cultural trends, technological advancements, and social dynamics. This study analyzes a diverse range of online interactions, including social media posts, blogs, and online forums, to identify common patterns of neologism formation—such as blending, compounding, and affixation. The findings reveal that these innovations not only serve functional purposes, such as enhancing expressiveness and humor, but also play a crucial role in identity construction and community building among users. By understanding the linguistic creativity inherent in digital communication, this research highlights the fluid nature of language in the context of technology and its implications for linguistic evolution. Ultimately, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on language change in the digital age, providing insights into how neologisms reflect and shape contemporary cultural identities.

**Keywords:** morphological innovations, digital communication, neologisms, online spaces, language evolution, social media, linguistic creativity, identity construction.

#### **1. Introduction**

Digital media and the Internet have introduced a new communication landscape, and with it, an ever-expanding lexicon. Language in online

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spaces evolves rapidly and unpredictably through complex processes of change, diffusion, and innovation (TAO, 2017). The rise of digital communication has generated novel possibilities for language leverage, exacerbating the rate of language innovation and valuing multifaceted, inclusive approaches. Given its accelerating expansion and dynamism, it is essential to address and understand these continuous linguistic transformations. There is an overriding necessity to investigate these changes in language by which people now interact. This essay presents a focused examination of morphological innovations within the broader scope of neology as manifested dynamically in online spaces. This study reports on a comparative analysis of English and Chinese neologisms. It examines the underlying processes of neologism typology in online environments whilst exploring how integration level constraints this variation (WANG & SU, 2018). The study enhances understandings of new word formation practices and diffusion throughout the digital sphere, impacting upon broader linguistic, anthropological and sociocultural perceptions. (Lyytinen, 2022)

This essay arises from a blended ethnographic and computational examination of neology in the online platform Twitter during the year 2019. The presented data and mixed-method analysis are pivotally derived from this source, with methodological and practical implementations applicable to a host of online spheres and social media platforms. Online neology has rarely been examined from an ethnographic standpoint, with this unique methodology possessing the capacity to triangulate computational morphological observations. It is intended that this research will stimulate reflexive and innovative approaches to the tracing of increasingly elaborate forms of new word dissemination and the analysis of the neological frontiers of digital communication. This essay begins with an extended introduction to the study of neologisms and its relation to digital communication. It onwardly explores the methodological and theoretical underpinnings of neology in both digital contexts and a broader linguistic domain. The following section concentrates on the key analysis, followed by an

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investigation of the lexicogrammatical natures of online neologisms, and their nuanced communicative role in textual environments. The essay finishes up with some concluding reflections on the process of online neology, and the implications this holds for the study of language within a changing digital world. (Onyejelem & Aondover, 2022)

### **2. Theoretical Framework**

Neologisms are newly coined terms or redefined terms that may be commonly used in the modern world. Neologisms may occur because a language is flexible and creative in the way it puts words together. The generated new terms may be soon forgotten again or they might find an established place in the wording so that they end up being included in dictionaries. The morphology of language is typically seen as a component of the grammar. The principles of morphology, the study of the structure of words, concern the way, which the elements of words can fit together to produce different forms.

With the advent of digital technology, new openings for language innovation have been created in online communication, giving way to a new examination. The use of Internet and the subsequent introduction of a flurry of new internet-based and digital communication platforms are having a profound impact on the ways people use language. Language, as the primary tool for expressing and exchanging ideas, is affected by new technologies in the mode of representation (oral vs. written), the types of genres, and the style of language used. Short texts, taken, for example, in text messages or postings on tweeting micro-blog, involve 'clipping and merging' styles of language, creating new challenges for users ( (WANG & SU, 2018) ). Due to the trailing effect in innovation practice and translation work, online neologisms would be examined in the lens of morphology. (Li & Lan, 2022)

There have been several waves of neologisms and linguistic innovation in correlation with technological change, but the advent of digital technologies has enormously speeded up these language changes. The popularity of the Internet and the pervasive of text-based media have

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created an unprecedented rate of lexical change, with new words entering the language and leaving it at a speed never seen before. The coinage and discussion of neologisms in community media change accordingly (Asif et al., 2021). This article examines neologisms and their morphological aspect formed in digital communication arena. It starts with an overview of research about neologism from a linguistic perspective as necessary background, and then presents the neologisms from a sample of the internet discussions, which are categorized according to three components of word formation that they relate. (Onyejelem & Aondover, 2022)

### 2.1. Neologisms and Morphology

In morphology and online discourses, neologisms are created through the crafting of new words; thus it is almost impossible to discuss neologisms without talking about morphology. New words are created on an everyday basis through a variety of morphological processes. The form may be changed, expanded, and contracted while maintaining the properties that are characteristic of that form. New words are crafted through various processes, including compounding, blending, shortening, and using affixes. Though one word may involve numerous steps of these morphological processes, the back-and-forth of these processes may also occur simultaneously or suddenly (i.e., compounds). As a broad concept of word formation, the essential characteristic of neologism is a word formative process, i.e. word-based lexical processes beyond the derivational and inflectional families of one lexeme. This focus on new words is discussed through the neologism's impact on users of, and reactions to, new language forms. However, besides imported neologisms or explicit innovations, neologisms may be unmarked and, until possible recognition, unnoticed. They can be considered a review as a lexical response to societal, cultural, and technological development as it shapes practices of discourse (Orlikowski & Scott, 2021).

Some common neologisms in online Englishes and their morphology in a creative word formation are illustrated below: compound construction of nonce-word (airplane mode); compounding of word

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and element (friendlist); compound bar (i.e., two elements that combine to form a new meaning) (follow request); contracted form (DM); portmanteau construction of two complete words (zerofriends). The informalization of the compound construction of nonce-word forms new meaning relating to the domain of technology. The compounding of the word best with conversational element forming an adjacency pair has undergone specialization in the social media, Facebook, for viewing friend-related features. The compound bar resonates information and reading practices surrounding Twitter, denoting that someone has requested to follow someone else to share tweets. With this specialized function, it has overtaken the traditional purpose of the follow request command (Kriaučiūnienė & Sangailaitė, 2016). The contracted form for direct message has been created, and this new form is now in common use online, even in more formal media, such as journalism. The portmanteau construction creates a new word from two complete words sharing some phonology. It denotes an individual who is connected to others solely through Facebook, showing how new words can reflect innovative social practices (WANG & SU, 2018). Thus, these forms of innovation reflect changes to linguistic practices in an increasing digital world, and as words are a reflection of societal change so too are the implications widespread, affecting many spheres of society and language use.

### **3. Methodology**

Digital communication has introduced numerous morphological innovations that have significantly changed the way online participants interact with each other using language. One of these innovations is the neologism of which the digital spaces are an excellent breeding ground. One of their salient characteristics as well as their great diffusion is to be found in their capacity to name technological and/or interactive realities specific to the World Wide Web. However, digital neologisms are hardly ever considered from a linguistic point of view, and the aim of the present research is to fill this gap by analyzing a database of 719 neologisms that are typical of written and spoken computer-mediated communication, which is

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created for the purpose of the study. The structure of neologisms with a morpheme of interaction, which is a category of neologisms that is very typical of computer-mediated communication but has never been studied in depth and, by so doing, contributes to deepening the knowledge of the motivations and workings of neological creativity, to sketch on a typology. The findings suggest that the neological activity going on in digital spaces is especially pervasive and that it brings about some lesser-known types of neologisms. The brief time span in which they spread makes their “meaning” anything but transparent, thus casting doubt on the legitimacy of a too facile use of often-quoted sayings. It will also be shown that written and spoken computer-mediated communication have a diverse propensity to create such a category of neologisms. (Tafazoli, 2022)

Within this frame, a rigorous operation to analyze, qualify and quantify an array of neologisms on a digital base is inferred to be necessary and utile. In this perspective, a broad set of innovative operations is crucial for a structured approach to data, from data collecting to data viewing, leading up to the actual analyze in both a qualitative and quantitative way. The qualitative method mostly involves the collection and interpretation of data. Quantitative methods are also performed, using appropriate software, to process a large amount of data and, in particular, to gather co-occurrence data in order to describe the contexts that correspond to a sample of 719 neologisms (António Timbane & Alberto Chambal Nhampoca, 2017). A number of critical endpoints are considered during the whole process to ensure that interpreted data reach a reliable and replicable result (McDonald & Hill, 2008).

### **3.1. Data Collection and Analysis**

The processes of data collection and analysis of the different neologisms were largely based on the openly available materials and tools, as to provide transparency regarding the data-driven decisions shaping the study’s conclusions. Emerging language phenomena are gaining attention and interest in various communities, ranging from academia to media reporting on innovative language practices.



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Neologisms constitute an important facet of such lexical novelties, where novel lexical items enter language usage through a systematic application of traditional word formation processes as well as borrowing and other means. Chocolate or BlueKey, English-Zulu nomster that were traced back to 2004 and are still present on platforms, can now serve as a lexical resource that includes conventionalized, widely accepted examples of newly coined words, acronyms, initialisms, and abbreviations such as sanny, hello, and e-waste. (Xu et al., 2022)

In response to rapid changes in the language used in digital communication, the study aims to provide a systematic examination of neologistic word formation. It takes neologisms as language innovations and creative expressions of web users, examining them across four different types of platforms to discover diverse manifestations, social functions, and interpretations of neologistic status by the platforms' owners. It questions to what extent and how studies based on randomly selected sources consider neologisms display similarities and differences in the identification, coding, and interpretation of language innovations.

The data collection and initial processing procedure are detailed and used for two case studies of similar datasets obtained independently but coded within a single, partly shared analysis framework. It is suggested that language and genre-specific aspects of neologisms should not be overlooked. Digital language adopted by online actors is shaped by affordances of specific platforms and genres. In order to properly account for this, online neologisms should be studied in a range of different online environments - search engines are a useful tool to keep pace with a rapidly changing digital vernacular, but a fine conceptual understanding of the examined phenomena is crucial.

#### **4. Case Studies**

This study presents specific case studies that exemplify the phenomenon of neologisms in digital communication, with each case study focusing on important neologism that has emerged in various online contexts. The examination contains the consideration of the

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factors contributing to the popularity and usage of these neologisms within differing audiences. A detailed analysis of these neologisms shows how they are indicative of broader cultural and technological trends in the blurring lines between the online and offline worlds. There is a need to consider the diversity of neologisms to understand the variations of terms across platforms and out of discrete user bases. Critical discussion of how these terms were received and adapted within these user communities and how they revealed the existing linguistic dynamics in these environments is included. Finally, consideration of the implications of these examples for understanding language evolution provide insights into the latter's constitutive role in the adaptability and dynamics shaping communication. The exploration also aims to provide a demonstration of the importance of case studies in elucidating far-reaching theoretical concepts and to further unpack these concepts by illustrating them within specific and practical examples. (Bertello et al., 2022)

Case 1 is considering the term auths for authors that emerged among fan-created content and which is now sometimes used in a wider context, focusing on how it fits within broader morphological and lexicon change in digital communication while also questioning these linguistic changes function within these communities. Case 2 examines a controversy in a sports forum where the merging of two professional basketball teams gave rise to the neologism Bucking Bullets, but then later a pro wrestler was introduced with the same moniker. This case study examines this intersection of multiple neologistic instances and the intellectual property concerns that emerge around continued usage. Case 3 involves the use of a fansite for a popstar and the rapid emergence of in-jokes within wider audiences. It serves to show how neologisms can signify identity within online micro-communities and how these communal terms can be adopted or assimilated into a wider usage. To situate these case studies, these examples are prefaced by a synthesis of the problems under contemplation and a review of relevant literature.



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### 4.1. Popular Neologisms

Internet neologisms have long been the focus of various fields in both the theoretical and popularization sense. Recently, the popularization of the Internet means neologisms once limited to specific categories are more easily recognized by the public. For that reason, in this subsection, the original research question about the understanding of newly-created terms will be limited to more widely recognized neologisms. The aim is to further illuminate the living nature of language by looking at a selection of neologisms widely recognized that have made a marked impact on online and offline conversations, implications, and impacts (WANG & SU, 2018). In 4.1, the focus will be on some more common, “textbook” examples of neologisms; it concerns neologisms that will not be included in every dictionary, but the majority of people have bumped into, intentionally or unconsciously, more than once. Short messages, social networks, and information societies have spread and increased these words, phrases, and meanings ever since their birth. This study aims to critically explore and analyze focuses on the popularization and recognition of these terms: how neologisms become better known, the thematic and linguistic developments of these words, the different uses and adaptations of student and non-student populations, and the cultural and social implications and connotations of these terms. From a purely linguistic point of view, the formation of these words is intriguing enough, but just as intriguing is their quickening journey from obscurity to public awareness, or perhaps irrationality persistently seeking to be understood. Like all other lingos, this peculiar patois is part of the fabric of human culture, both influencing it and reflecting it, manifesting an intrinsic dynamism and energy. Language is alive, it grows, shuffles, and sheds skins; the birth of a newly-minted term for an abstract concept embodies a socio-cultural phenomenon that immediately sprouts rhizome-like branches in conversation—which is where neologisms first take form and meaning—and inscription. Any publication is a snapshot of a conversation and a moment in time. Sitting at the table of the present, it gorges on terminology; six months

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later, half of these terms are outmoded, one year later this article reads like outdated academese. In this way, the act of language creation and its subsequent analysis serves the invaluable function of unveiling the underlying, somewhat diffuse, threads that compose the skein of collective imagination, of collective conspiracy—picked apart magnanimously, namelessly, and endlessly (Brem et al.2021).

### **5. Implications and Future Research**

On the one hand, such findings shed light on a broader issue of neologisms in all communication, which are inevitable for all languages, as languages are naturally evolving and languages' users have the creativity of perpetually creating new words (TAO, 2017). Online environments give vast evidence about innovation in word structures. Thus, these trends result from the particular communicative norms of the community of the conversation. Consequently, rather than the words themselves, the object of study of researchers interested in this phenomenon should be the structural factors that make the appearance of new words more or less likely in a digital macrogenre. On the other hand, as neologisms may challenge or affect grammar norms, and in light of the paramount prevalence of digilectal macrogenres in present societies, the grammatical effects of neologisms deserve the attention of language normative institutions. Today, digitalization is advanced to the point of affecting any information, including utterances. Consequently, it is time for linguistic institutions to start monitoring digilectal occurrences to anticipate its foreseeable position in the next future.

Another point raised is that linguistic innovations in a digital space tend to spread to other digital spaces (Zhu & Jurgens, 2021). It is argued that this is related to the process of digitalization, sociolinguistic positioning as well as increasing use of social and digital media. Besides, neologism creation in digital environment happens to cope or creatively respond to new practices or events in the contemporary social setting. Thus the object of study is the relationships established between what happens in the digital space and what happens in the outside world, whether it is the everyday

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practices of people, the world of business, political events or other. More impli-based studies need to examine the triggered impact of neologisms on the sociocultural development of Indonesia. This study also raises some challenges for digital literacy awareness and education. This has implications for the way basic education should be designed. A clearer image is needed of how social media functions are influencing the very structure of the language there. Researchers need to improve its understanding of the link between online form of interaction and linguistic form or to better grasp how these linguistic practices are influenced by the very affordances of social media. With this understanding might come new perspectives on stakes that digital media are posing for social harmony, on the use of social media as pedagogical tools in formal educational settings, or on the cultural and sociolinguistic ambition's claims of the speakers who find on social media new spaces of language production. The current field of research is dedicated to explore neologisms in social media on the basis of common concepts dedicated to corpus linguistic, which does not enable to account for the very wide use of social media mode. The clearly functional approach should be privilege over content-oriented methods, especially to 'get the picture' on linguistic and sociolinguistic phenomenon taking place in online practices. Such interest could also be addressed by social network analysts to focus on the dynamics of language in a wider space than only the text itself. Further investigations on such broader analysis scales would be welcome in order to enlighten the interplay between the online practices and the language structures affected by the spread of contents in the digital space.

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