



NEOLOGISMS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND THEIR FORMATION TYPES

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Abstract

The lexical enrichment of the English language is attributed to several linguistic factors, one of which is undoubtedly neologisms. Neologisms are known as the newly-coined words that reflect current changes in science, medicine, technology, society and culture. Nowadays, the neologisms are widely used on WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, Tik Tok, and Facebook, as a considerable amount of communication among people is taking place on these social media platforms. This research paper explores some of the high-frequency neologisms in social net communication, and analyzes the main morphological processes that govern the formation of those internet neologisms.

Key words: *neologisms, social networks, compounding, conversion, clipping, blending, abbreviations, acronyms.*

Introduction

Language is a dynamic system that undergoes constant changes over the time. Developments in society, science and technology are the primary sources of these changes. Consequently, new words or neologisms will be required to name and express those advancements and innovations. According to Crystal (1995), neologism is a newly-appeared word or a new usage of an already-existing word that is created because of the societal, cultural and technological changes. As for its etymological definition, the word neologism is derived from the Greek words “*neo*” - new and “*logos*” - word (Šetka and Plauc, 2021). Neologisms on social networks are relatively important as they facilitate quick and meaningful communication among online users. Social media neologisms are formed through various morphological processes, like derivation, blending, conversion, clipping, compounding, abbreviations and reduplication. Semantic processes, namely borrowing words from other languages and semantic shift are another two formation types of neologisms. In this paper, however, five major formation ways of internet neologisms are discusses by providing clear definitions and several examples for each type.

Methodology

As for the methodology, 25 frequently used neologisms were collected from popular social platforms, namely Facebook, Instagram and X (Twitter). Certain online dictionaries were consulted to provide definitions for the selected neologisms (*Oxford English Learners Dictionary / Cambridge Dictionary*). Moreover, some academic literature about neologisms by Ibrahim et al. (2024), Šetka and Plauc (2021), Lieber (2009) and Xheladini (2026) were reviewed to gain more up-to-date information about the topic.



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Neologisms and their formation process

Nowadays, each society is developing year by year, and the same is true for the language(s) used by the society members. Newly-coined words - neologisms - play a vital role to enrich the lexicology of a language and enable people to name new concepts in the modern life. Over the time, some words once considered as “neologisms” lose their status and turn into everyday vocabulary. To illustrate, the words like Internet, Wi-Fi, computer, business, marketing and etc. were regarded as neologisms some decades ago, but now, they have fully entered mainstream vocabulary. To cite from Šetka and Plauc (2021), neologisms “should not be older than 25 years of age” since their coinage (p.118). Social media, modern communication environment for the millions, is one of the frequent usage areas of neologisms. To understand how internet neologisms are born, one should firstly know about their formation process, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

1) **Blending** is the word formation process in which pieces of two words are combined to produce a new word. For example, *netspeak* (internet + speak) or *pictionary* (picture + dictionary). Xheladini (2026) notes that blending is one of the most productive ways of neologism formation. Blend neologisms are common on social media as they are innovative and concise.

2) Another fruitful word formation process is **compounding**. Compound neologisms are made when two or more lexical units are joined to one another. For instance, *smartphone*, *social networks*, *rainfall*, *fake news*. Šetka and Plauc (2021) claim that this morphological process is available in almost all languages, making it more recognized and productive way of creating new words.

3) **Clipping** involves reducing or shortening some parts of a word without changing its original meaning. Clippings are now popular on the Net since they enable communicators to type faster and convey their idea more easily. Common examples are: **flu** (*influenza*), **lab** (*laboratory*), **celeb** (*celebrity*) and so on.

4) **Conversion** is another innovative ways of making new words. It is based on changing the grammatical function or word class of a certain word, remaining its form unchanged. According to Lieber (2009), speakers can easily create and understand such neologisms as their original meaning is already clear to them. Examples can be: email - **to email**, google - **to google**.

5) **Acronyms** are formed from the initial letters of the words (Ibrahim et al., 2024). They are written in capital letters and pronounced as a single word. For example, *FOMO*, *VIP*, *UFO*.

Results

The table below demonstrates the definition and formation types of 25 neologisms that have been collected from various social media platforms.





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	Neologism	Definition	Formation type
1.	frenemy	A person who is your friend even though you dislike them	<i>Friend + enemy</i> blending
2.	admin	Shortened form of “administrator”	clipping
3.	FOMO	Fear of Missing Out (a feeling of anxiety that something interesting is happening somewhere else)	acronym
4.	doomscrolling	The act of scrolling through negative news on social networks for a long time	compounding
5.	celeb	Shortened form of “celebrity”	clipping
6.	netiquette	Behaviour rules of using the Net	net + etiquette/ blending
7.	to google	Search for information on the Google search engine	conversion
8.	hashtag	A special symbol (#) on the keyboard used to search for all messages in the same topic	<i>Hash + tag</i> / compound
9.	emoticon	A set of short keyboard symbols representing a person’s facial expressions	<i>Emotion + icon</i> blending
10.	info	Reduced form of “information”	clipping
11.	VIP	Very Important Person	acronym
12.	ghosting	Ending online communication suddenly without warning and by ignoring messages	Derivation (ghost + -ing)
13.	to friend	Verb form of a noun “friend” to add someone to a list of your contacts on social media	conversion
14.	phablet	Smartphone whose screen is smaller than a tablet, but bigger than a phone	blending
15.	OMG	Oh My God	abbreviation
16.	eco-anxiety	A feeling of anxiety about the environmental problems Ecological + anxiety	compounding/clipping
17.	pictionary	A dictionary with pictures	<i>Picture+dictionary</i> /blending
18.	hangry	Being angry because of hunger	<i>Hunger+angry/</i> blending



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19.	digital detox	A period when a person purposefully avoids using the net and social media	compounding
20.	fam	Shortened form of “family”	clipping
21.	edutainment	E books, TV programs, computer games that both entertain and educate	<i>Education+entertainment</i> blending
22.	bed rotting	A lazy person who mostly lies on bed without doing anything useful	compounding
23.	dm	Direct message	abbreviation
24.	LOL	Laughing Out Loud (expresses laughter in social media)	Acronym
25.	webinar	Online seminar	<i>Web+seminar</i> / blending

Conclusion

To conclude, the rapid development of social media has resulted in the emergence of many internet neologisms. This study examined twenty five high-frequency neologisms gathered from several social networks and analyzed them based on their word-formation process. The research findings show that most of the new terms in online communication are created in the form of blending, compounding acronyms, clipping and conversion. Among these processes, compounding and blending seem to be relatively common, highlighting online users' preference for using expressive, innovative and precise lexical items that foster quick and effective communication.

It is worth mentioning that the study results also indicate technological advancements and changing nature of digital discourse. Considering continuous development of digital platforms, neologisms tend to emerge rapidly, making their study a significant area of contemporary linguistic research. This research can serve as a beneficial resource for students, language instructors, linguists and translators with an interest in lexical enrichment and online discourse. Further research on comparison of English internet neologisms with the ones in other languages would be useful to identify cross-linguistic similarities and distinctions.

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