Neologisms: A Morphological Analysis of Social Media Discourses on the Zambian Online Media

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Abstract

Drawing on lexical morphology, the study discursively interrogates the outcome lexical items of the social media discourses and self-asserting narratives. An attempt is made to discursively examine the interplay between technology and grammar. The point of departure is the interplay between technology and word formation processes in establishing whether these outcome lexical items can be placed within the known word formation processes aptly discussed in morphology or form their own morphological categories. Although a lot of literature exists on social media discourse in general, little is known on the morphological outcomes arising from the transformative nature of technology on language. The study takes the view that, new words have been coined with time and social media neologisms should be seen as an outcome of the creativity of language as well as its productivity. The study problematizes lexical morphology in the broader context of media affordances in which creativity and self-asserting narratives drive and dominate the performativity of identity and communication on social media. The premise of the theoretical concerns is on three separate components: the Word Formation Rules, the filter and the mental lexicon. The paper takes the view that, even though most social media users may not be fully informed about the word formation processes which morphologists put forth, the shared sociocultural knowledge with which these actors come to virtual spaces is sufficient to productively transform the virtual-scape linguistically. To this end, the study shows that, though some of the neologisms created on social media conform to Word Formation Rules, others are created by 'pseudo' word formation processes.

Key words: lexical morphology, pseudo word formation processes and social media discourse.

1.0 Introduction

This study attempts to discursively examine the interplay between technology and grammar, as it relates to broader context of word formation processes. Thus the study discusses and implicates social media neologisms by gaining insight into some aspects of their morphology. The study establishes whether these neologisms can be placed within the established morphological categories akin to the English Language or form their own morphological categories. While literature abounds on social media discourse in general, for example, some scholars have looked at the benefits of social media, the functions and importance of social media and also the uses; there is also little literature on neologisms on social media; Mworia (2015) has done a study on, "the use of English neologisms in social media: A case of Twitter Language." She focuses on one social site, Twitter and looks at what factors influence the production and usage of neologisms in social media. Furthermore, she also looks at the extent to which social media neologisms are effective in Kenya's context of communication. And this is not an isolated study as other scholars have also looked at the effect of topic on word formation and the frequency of neologism use on internet forums and the conservatism of Emojis. However, there exists little literature on the morphological concerns as regards to whether these neologisms on social media can be placed within the realm of the English word formation processes.

1.2 Geographical location and the sociolinguistics of Zambia

Zambia is a landlocked country located in the southern part of Africa. Depending on one's location, Zambia is also viewed to be in the Eastern part of Africa. Some of its neighboring countries include, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, among other countries. It is worth noting that the Zambian social media platforms are interlinked and accessible to other neighboring countries mentioned above. It is seen that many pages/platforms, on Facebook, such as 'Mwebantu' and 'Zambian Watchdog' platforms have large followings and some of these followers are of Malawian, Zimbabwean, Namibian nations, to mention a few.

Zambia has ten provinces; Muchinga, Southern, Central, Eastern, Western, North Western, Northern, Luapula, Lusaka and Copperbelt provinces. The country has 73 tribes spread across the ten provinces of which each tribe claims to have its unique language. Having about 17 million inhabitants, these are spread widely across the country. Kapeya (1988) has argued that there are seven main vernacular languages on the media which represent all the 73 tribes found in Zambia; Bemba, Lozi, Kikaonde, Tonga, Chewa, Luvale and Lunda. These seven vernacular languages have official status and are distributed in the provinces as follows: Bemba (Northern, Luapula, Muchinga and the Copperbelt Provinces), Nyanja (Lusaka Province), Lozi (Western Province), Tonga and Lozi (Southern Province), and Kaonde, Luvale and Lunda (Northwestern Province), (Jimaima, 2016).

It is crucial to mention that before the seven local languages gained their 'official' regional recognition in the post-independence Zambia, the only official language was English. Being colonized by Britain, Zambia gave an official status to English (Kashoki 1978; Jimaima 2016; Banda & Jimaima 2017; Jimaima & Banda 2019. This therefore followed that, English was to be taught in schools, used in the media, in courts and basically as a means of communication. However, giving recognition to the seven local languages has given them some degree of recognition as official languages, and can now be used in Primary schools, in the media and also in courts.

1.3 Social media in Zambia

With the coming of technology, communication has been made easier; many people have had to do away with letter writing to communicate (cf. Blommaert 2010). Social media has introduced a new platform for easy communication through Applications such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter and Messenger, among other platforms. These new modes of communication can be utilized 24 hours a day, making it convenient for all.

It is critical to mention that a lot of Zambians owning smart mobile phones use social media, and according to the social media

Statistics in Zambia-June 2018, the social media Percentage Market Share was as follows:

Facebook	-	73.6%
Pinterest	-	13.13%
YouTube	-	4.79%
Twitter	-	4.73%
Google+	-	2.23%
linkedIn	-	0.61%

The above statistics clearly show that the mostly used social media platform is Facebook with 73.6% and the lowest being LinkedIn. The Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) in 2016 also released a report on the Zambians who spent their time on Social Networking Sites. Their survey showed that 63% of Zambians online spent their time on Social Networking Sites. This survey was conducted in all the ten provinces, both rural and urban areas.

2.0 The concept of neologism on social media

Zimmer (1964) has pointed out that there are many words which grammar can generate, although they ought to conform to the word formation rules. These new words can be added to the various grammatical categories. The new words coined are thus referred to as neologisms and Kubova (2010) defines a neologism as "any word/ set expression formed according to the productive word formation rules in English." Neologisms are as a result of developments (advancements) in social life, technology and in a few cases, culture. Similarly, Vogel (2017) in his academic paper of "Words Recently Coined and Blended: Analysis of New English Lexical Items", discusses and analyzes new lexical items which are coined or borrowed every year. He has argued that some of the derived, compounded and blended words have been added to the English dictionary.

Aduda (2013) further engages with neologisms and various word formation processes. He refers to the concept of neologism as broad and, thus, referring to lexical items. He further argues

that neologisms are new words borrowed from other languages or dialects; new words created through morphological processes. Aduda's (2013) study is based on dholuo neologisms and their interpretation by the respective community. Furthermore, Onyedum (2012) adopts Kubova's (2010) definition of neologism as any word/set of expression formed according to the productive word formation rules in English. Onyedum's (2012) study analyzes 70 neologisms on social media and focuses on the following social networking platforms; Facebook, Twitter, My space, YouTube, Yahoo, Messenger, and Blackberry Messenger. In addition, the study grouped the 70 neologisms into five morphological processes of blending, compounding, affixation, semantic extension and coinage. Mworia's (2015) study which focused on neologisms on social media in the Kenyan context brings into the spotlight the argument that the word formation processes used in the formation of neologisms on social media are derivation, compounding, semantic transfers, clippings, acronyms, abbreviations and Graphological deviation.. Finally, another linguistic study done on this field of neologism is by Jimaima & Nkhata (2017). Drawing on lexical morphology and lexical integrity, the focus of the study was on some reflections on the morphological and lexical aspects of the social media discourse and self-asserting narratives on the Zambian online media. The focus of Jimaima & Nkhata's (2017) study is similar to the current study in that it morphologically analyzes social media neologisms.

3.0 Theoretical appraisal: history and development of lexical morphology

One theoretical framework selected for this study is lexical morphology. This theory was first proposed in Pesetsky (1979), elaborated in Kiparsky (1982). Lexical morphology is a branch of morphology which investigates the processes by which words are formed. It focuses on the word formation rules that apply in morphology. To this end, we see the importance of the lexicon and filter in the formation and selection of words.

Zimmer (1964) has pointed out that there are many words which

a grammar can generate in a language, which accidentally and unsystematically never appear. This study focuses on social media neologisms, therefore, will analyze word formation processes at play in the creation of these neologisms. Aronoff (1981) postulates that all word formation processes are word-based. This follows that a new word is formed by applying a rule to an already existing word. For instance, from a verb 'proˈduce', we come up with a noun 'ˈproduction' and from the noun 'beauty' comes an adjective 'beautiful', among other words produced. Some of the word formation processes include Affixation (derivation and inflection), Compounding, Conversion, Coinage, Borrowing, Blending, Clipping, Backformation, Abbreviation and Initialism.

Morphology cannot be discussed without reference to productivity in word formation and Aronoff (1976) has argued that morphology of a language is quite significant because it is part of the grammar and trades in internal structural matters of potential-complex words of a language. However, there are constraints on what can be part of the word formation processes and because of this assertion, Word Formation Rules (WFRs) come into play. According to Aronoff (1976), a word formation rule specifies a set of words on which it can operate and every WFR specifies a unique phonological operation which is performed on the base. He further advances his argument postulating that a WFR specifies a syntactic label and sub-categorization for the resulting word as well as a semantic reading of it. This therefore entails that Word formation rules do not operate on anything less than a word, like a morpheme for example.

3.1 Productivity

It goes without saying that language is productive, and productivity is subject to the dimension of time. This follows that some words have been lost to the idea of historicity. We take the view that, new words have been coined with time and social media neologisms should be seen as an outcome of the creativity of language as well as productivity.

Productivity according to Baayen (1992) is the degree to which

native speakers use a particular grammatical process, especially in word formation. On the other hand, Bauer (1983) argues that a WFR is productive if it can be used synchronically in the production of new forms. Lyons (1977) gives his definition of productivity as a defining property of a language allowing a native speaker to produce an infinite large number of sentences to be accounted for by the rules of grammar. Unlike the other two scholars, Baayen (1992) and Lyons (1977), Bauer (1983) does seem to give an elaborate definition of the concept of productivity, which is in line with this study. Finally, Aronoff (1981) has argued that the meaning and utility of the term productivity in morphology generally identifies productivity with sheer number. What Aronoff proposes is that in comparing two Word Formation Rules (WFRs), two lists of words formed by the two WFRs should be made and added. The longer the list will be, the more productive the WFR hence.

Katamba (1993) has asserted that the concept of productivity can be linked to the idea of derivation. The applicability of word formation processes on certain bases is what makes morphology productive and language in general. Some bases have been made readily available to allow affixes while others not. From a diachronic viewpoint, some bases have become fossilized hence less productive. In this regard, productivity is subject to the dimension of time; meaning that while some words have been lost, we have new creations especially on social media. Lucinda (2005) has stated that new words constantly enter the lexicon to describe new concepts thereby; older words continuously fall out of use as they decrease in cultural significance considering the influence of digital technology.

Productivity entails creativity as speakers of a language require a finite number of rules to come up with a potential list of new words every now and then. This follows then that these rules are not only to be used to analyze existing words but to create new ones too. Katamba (1993) has proposed two concepts with regard to word formation: the rule governed creativity and rule bending creativity.

3.1.1 Rule governed creativity

This rule accounts for everything that is considered acceptable in

a language. This, however, is dependent on a formalized list of affixes which are to be attached to bases. For example, the suffix –ness is known for creating de-adjectival nominalization (nominal adjectives) as follows: 'happy- happiness.' This kind of creativity is quite helpful in a way as it makes it easier to create new words. This can be illustrated using the verb 'teach', we do know that to change the verb 'teach' to a noun, we need to use the affix –er, hence 'teach-teacher.' In the absence of such rules, one would have to come up with a much longer construction other than 'teacher', probably, "one who teaches."

It can further be argued from Aronoff's (1976) point of view that the word formation rules create ground to construct complex words on the basis of a list of morphemes available. He bases his argument on the following idea that word formation rules have an effect on the base of a word to render, based on a type of phonological, syntactic and semantic operation. This follows then that the affix added to the base of a word could affect the phonological operation of a word, it could also have an effect on the syntactic operation, that is the change in category and lastly, the meaning of that word could completely change. This view is further supported by Don (2014) who argues that affixes are lexical entries which have a phonological, syntactic and semantic characterization.

3.1.2 Rule bending creativity

Though not generally acceptable, the concept is prone to users of the English language today especially when it comes to language of the social media. It mostly manifests in compound, clipping and blending words which many people come up with. A vivid example of such a compound word in Zambia would be 'Zamtelligent' created from Zambia and Intelligent. Here we see the application of three rules: clipping, blending and Acronymy. Often so, rule bending creativities do not stay in the mainstream of language as they are opaque and can only be understood if there is shared knowledge of their use in contexts. Drawing on Bloomfield's (1933) argument about the mental lexicon having no rules or constraints regarding possible

words which can be made, it follows then that new words can be created without necessarily adhering to the Word formation Rules.

3.2 Mental lexicon

The mental lexicon is the vocabulary of language, every language is made up of words and it is because of them that changes exist in a language. Fowler (1983) asserts that the vocabulary is thus the first point of contact in the process of language change. The mental lexicon is critical to the study of neologisms. Katamba (1993: 65) asserts "neologisms are freshly coined words," therefore, the study shows interplay between morphology and the lexicon. It looks at how speakers are able to construct new words or sentences to suit the occasion. Many theories of morphology account for the ways in which speakers of a particular language are able to form not only words available in their language but also potential words which are not used in utterances. It can be argued that most of the words that speakers use in conversations are listed in the lexicon and thus 'memorized'. However, it is also true that speakers are able to come up with a considerable list of new words as they converse at a particular time. Therefore, the lexicon is not to be viewed as a stabile list as it can incorporate new words.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that there are rules in the lexicon and these rules are referred to as lexical rules. Katamba (1993) has argued that the function of lexical rules is to build word structure and these rules appear on two strata in the lexicon. It therefore follows that anything in the mental lexicon is a product of lexical rules; all words created. For example, in a Noun phrase, 'The student', the word order requires that a determiner 'The' comes before the noun 'student'. In an event where one says, 'student the', the phrase becomes syntactically unsound because the sub-categorization frame in the mental lexicon tells us that a determiner comes before a noun and not vice versa. Another example would be that of a Verb Phrase, 'will come tomorrow.' The auxiliary verb 'will' requires that it precedes the main verb, 'come.' In an event where one says, 'come will', syntactically, the construction becomes

unsound and the mental lexicon will automatically reject that. Furthermore, once an auxiliary verb is selected from the lexicon, the filter will block all word classes that are not main verbs. In this regard, instead of saying, 'Mary will town tomorrow'; the mental lexicon will not select a noun 'town' but will look for a verb instead so that the construction is syntactically correct.

It is crucial to mention again that Word formation processes are rule-governed, meaning that they are predictable and stable. For instance, each affix or base or word is pre-marked with a feature and non-words are filtered out/blocked. Following restrictions on what can be part of the word formation processes and not, in the mental lexicon exists the filter to filter out/block non-words.

3.3 The filter

Drawing on Katamba's (1993) thoughts, there are constraints on the creativity of language through the use of the filter. The filter's main task is to block the formation of non-words and in this vein; phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics are at play. The filter is the storehouse of all the idiosyncratic information pertaining to complex words which are permissible inflectional and derivational morphemes. This follows then that a filter will assign a feature [+N, -V] to prevent a verb to be formed in this context of [+N, -V]. To further this discussion, a filter may also assign a feature of [-Suffix] to prevent any suffixal material from being added to a word in the context of [-Suffix]. Lastly, a filter may assign a feature [-Lexical Insertion] in order to prevent any non-lexical item from being inserted into any syntactic structure. This rule therefore, distinguishes between potential and non-potential words.

As earlier noted the lexicon selects words and uses the filter to block non-words. Aronoff (1976) further argues that blocking may be due to the prior existence of another word with the meaning that the putative word would have. This entails therefore, that in adding the suffix–er to bases, to mean one who does something, for example; 'teach-teacher', 'bank-banker' and what not, -er can be blocked if suffixed to the verb 'fly' to form 'flyer', to mean 'one who

flies airplanes', probably because 'Pilot' already exists. Furthermore, some suffixes are said to be more productive than others and Katamba (1993) asserts that where there exists two semantically similar morphemes, one which is more productive than the other, the more productive morpheme is less susceptible to blocking than its less productive counterpart.

4.0 Methodology

The researcher used the qualitative approach, with some statistical elements to obtain data. In this regard, apart from using secondary sources such as the neologisms in the 21st Century and the A-Z of Social Media Key Terms by David Wilcox, primary sources were used. For the primary sources, the data were gleaned from the two social networking sites on social media; Facebook and WhatsApp. The data were collected in citation form as individual entries as well as discourse in form of screen shots of chats, postings and comments by different respondents on the named sites. The researchers read participants' chats, postings and comments on Facebook and WhatsApp. Furthermore, the researchers also used focus group discussions to get in-depth information about the use of neologisms and emoticons on social media. By engaging participants in focus group interviews, the researchers wished to establish how and where the meanings of neologisms are derived and whether they have standard meaning. It is crucial to mention that the respondents in the current study were active social media users on the named social sites. These were purposively selected according to age and also gender most preferably between ages of 16 to 30 years of age as they are active online users and are more abreast with the happenings on social media.

For the current study, the researchers had 40 participants who were divided into five groups with eight participants in each; three groups were engaged in the common face-to-face single focus group discussions while two were engaged in online focus group discussions. For the common face-to-face focus group discussions, the time allocation for each group was 60 minutes. On the other hand, it was

difficult to allocate time for the online focus groups as participants had different schedules and could not be online at the same time. Therefore, the discussion was dependent on the availability of the participants online which was aroused by the availability of mobile data bundles and also their time. For each focus group discussion, the researcher had the same number of 20 questions and recorded the answers that were given. The researcher wished to know how emoticons were used to express emotions. For a successful focus group discussion, the researcher created a friendly environment where participants were able to speak freely. Furthermore, as the moderator, the researcher stimulated the discussions with comments based on the topic at hand. This was to ensure that the participants understood the topic and participated fully.

4.1. Single face-to-face focus group

Firstly, it is crucial to make mention that apart from the participants; there should be a facilitator/researcher and recorder/observer in order to have a fruitful focus group discussion. As Burrows and Kendal (1997) have argued, focus group discussions require a team consisting of a skilled facilitator and an assistant and the facilitator is central to the discussion in managing relationships. In the current study, both the facilitator and observer played critical roles as shall be noted below. However, both did not to express their opinions regarding the topic at hand. In order to have a successful focus group discussion, the researcher ensured that the questions that were being asked were in line with the study's objectives and research questions. The questions asked by the Facilitator were mainly focused on one topic, being the use and meanings of emoticons and neologisms on Facebook and WhatsApp. The facilitator had to begin with the most important and easy questions which were; "How often in a day are you on Facebook and WhatsApp and what do you know about Emoticons and Neologisms?"

4.2 Online focus group discussions

Though not very different from the normal and common types of focus group discussions, the disparity however, lies in the method

in which it is conducted. This type of focus group discussion is applied within the online environment. Edmunds (1999) has added that online focus groups boast an aura of dynamism, modernity and competitiveness that transcend classic problems with face to face focus group discussions. In this case, for the current study, the researcher/facilitator engaged online WhatsApp users to get the information. The facilitator formed two Whatsapp groups each comprising eight members making a total of 16 participants. One group was for females while the other comprised the males. The idea was to establish whether there was a disparity in the usage of neologisms between males and females. The groups were also of different ages ranging between 16 and 30 years of age. The idea behind the mixing of age groups was to establish if there was a disparity in the usage of neologisms and emoticons between the younger and the older generations.

5.0 Identified Neologisms

In this section, findings relating to the identification of frequently used social media neologisms are presented in form of a table, and thereafter discussed. The Table below provides some of the neologisms used by the social media actors. There are further exploited for their meaning and morphological structure.

Table 5.1 showing the placement of identified neologisms on social media into their morphological categories

Item	Expansion	Affixal Material	Possible Morphological Processes at Play	Word Formation Rules (WFRs)
BAE	Before Anyone Else	Initials	Acronym/ Initialism	[+ initials]
BFF	Best Friend Forever	Initials	Acronym/ Initialism	[+ initials]
BFFS	Best Friends Forever	Initials + infl- s	Acronym& Suffixation	[+ initial] [+ S]
FYI	For your information	Initials	Acronym/ Initialism	[+ initial]

LOL	Laugh Out Loud	Initials	Acronym/ Initialism	[+ initial]
LOLEST	Laugh Out Loudest	Initials + infl-est	Acronym& Suffixation	[+ initial]
LMAO	Laughing My Ass Off	Initials	Acronym/ Initialism	[+ initial]
IKR	I Know Right	Initials	Acronym/ Initialism	[+initial]
BTW	By The Way	Initials	Acronym/ Initialism	[+ initial]
Hun	Honey	Clipped base	Clipping	[+ truncation]
ROTFL	Rolling On the Floor Laughing	Initials	Acronym/ Initialism	[+ initial]
Covidiot	Covid 19 & idiot	Lexical + clipped base	Clipping Blending	[+ blend] [+ trunc]
SMH	Shaking My Head	Initials	Acronym/ Initialism	[+ initial]
IDK	I Don't Know	Initials	Acronym/ Initialism	[+ initial]
DP	Display Picture	Initials	Acronym/ Initialism	[+ initial]
OMG	Oh My God	Initials	Acronym/ Initialism	[+ initial]
TBT	Throwback Thursday/Truth Be Told	Initials	Acronym/ Initialism	[+initial]
WTF	What The Fuck	Initials	Acronym/ initialism	[+ initial]
HBD	Happy Birthday	Initials	Acronym/ Initialism	[+ initial]
LMFAO	Laughing My Fucking Ass Off	Initials	Acronym/ Initialism	[+ initial]
Selfie	Self + ie	Inflection –ie	Suffixation	[Self] NP + [IE]
Friendversary	Friend Anniversary	Lexical + clipped base	Compounding/ Clipping/ Blending	[+ comp] [+ trunc] [+ blend]
Fam	Family	Clipped base	Clipping	[+ truncation]

Adobs	Adorable	Clipped base + Inflection	Clipping& suffixation	[+ truncation]
Y'all	You all	Initial + lexical	Blending	[+blend] [+ elliptical]
Wanna	I want to	Lexical	Pseudo-Elliptical construction	[+ elliptical]
Gonna	Going to	Lexical	Pseudo-Elliptical construction	[+ elliptical]
Photo bomber	Photo + bomber	Lexical + inflection	Compounding & suffixation	[+ compounding]
Bestie/besties	Best Friend/s	Clipped base	Clipping	[+ truncation]
Gal	Girl	Clipped base	Clipping	[+ truncation]
Pic	Picture	Clipped base	Clipping	[+ truncation]
Sweetie	Sweet heart	Clipped base + Inflection	Clipping	[+ truncation]
Fab	Fabulous	Clipped base	Clipping	[+ truncation]
Pliz	Please	Clipped base	Clipping	[+ truncation]
Thot	Thought	Clipped base	Clipping	[+ truncation]
Kikikikikikiki	Laughter	Repeated phonemes	Reduplication	[+ redup]
Hehehehehe	Laughter	Repeated phonemes	Reduplication	[+ redup]
Thank u	Thank you	Clipped base	Clipping	[+ truncation]
Congrats	Congratulations	Clipped base	Clipping	[+ truncation]
Picmix	Picture mixing	Lexical+ Clipped base	Compounding Clipping Blending	[+comp] [+clip] [+blend]
Faceversary	Facebook anniversary	Lexical+ clipped base	Compounding/ clipping/ Blending	[+comp] [+trunc] [+blend]

From the information presented in table 5.1 above, it is observed that, apart from initialisms/acronyms and clipped bases, other neologisms

on social media result from the following word formation processes; blending, compounding, reduplication, among other word formation processes. The information can be presented by use of a pie chart in **figure 1** below:

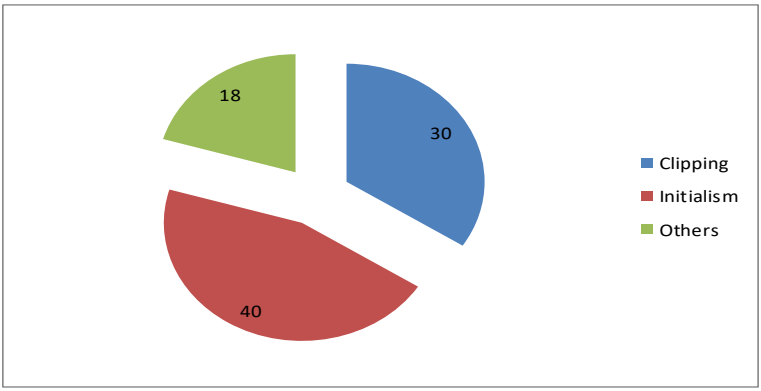

Figure 1

5.2 Initialism

Following Halle (1973), Anorof (1976) and Don (2012), the data in table 5.1 above are discussed with the hindsight of the morphological processes and word formation rules. From the foregoing therefore, it can be noted that, from the data presented above, the majority of social media neologisms are formed by the Word Formation Rules of Initialism [+Initial]/Acronym. Jimaima & Nkhata (2017) in their seminal paper asserted that one characteristic of these initialisms/ acronyms is the inclusion of all word initials respective of whether a given word is grammatical or lexical. This therefore follows that given a phrase, initials of both lexical items, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs] and grammatical words [such as articles, prepositions and even affixes] count. For illustration, in a phrase, 'Laugh out loud' all word initials are included regardless of their word class. Therefore, even the preposition 'out' in this case is just as important, hence the acronym, 'LOL.' In this regard, acronyms/ initialisms provide a way of turning a phrase into a word and that

the classical acronym is also pronounced as a word. In the examples below:

[1]. Laugh Out Loud = LOL
[2]. I Don't Care = IDC
[3]. I Don't Know = IDK

We notice a common morphological rule application; the inclusion of grammatical words such as prepositions. In respect to the consistence with which such phenomena occur, one is persuaded to theorize that just as in sentences, grammatical words are critical to the readability of social media neologisms. Their grammatical function supersedes the mere need to uphold the grammaticality of the structured forms; they are inserted in social media neologisms to fulfill the orthographical requirement. This is apparent as one observes that neologisms are lexical items per excellence of the virtue space just as the real lexemes or words are in oral or written remediation.

In example [2] 'IDC' provides another important dimension of social media neologisms; the non-inclusion of the negation particle 'not'. The fact that social media actors understood 'IDC' to mean 'I Don't Care' rather than 'I Do care' showed that there is a shared cultural knowledge among the actors regarding the meanings of social media neologisms. The same conclusion can be drawn from [3] 'IDK'. We notice the non-inclusion of the negation particle 'not', yet the acronyms were understood to mean 'I Don't Know' rather than 'I do know'.

5.3 Clipping

In this section, neologisms which are formed by the truncation rule are presented. From the findings of the study presented in table 5.1, social media actors deployed a strategy of clipping of longer linguistic forms in order to create more convenient forms amenable to easy re-deployment in unfolding online discourses. It is such forms which the study holds that they were created by the [+truncation] rule. In main stream morphology, the truncated forms account for the word

formation process known as clipping. This process involves cutting off part of a word and leaving the rest to essentially mean the same thing as the initial whole word meant. Bauer (2003) defines clipping as a process whereby a lexeme is shortened, while still returning the same meaning and still being a member of the same form class. From the Table 5.1, we focus on the following examples to illustrate the productive nature of clipping among social media actors:

[4]. Honey=hun
[5]. Fab=fabulous

Clipping may be one form of abbreviation as it involves the shortening of an existing word and letting it maintain the meaning of the whole word. We see that social media actors are economical with words hence subconsciously are able to put the word formation process of clipping in use. The idea that they are able to understand the example in [5] as 'fabulous' and not 'fabricated' draws back to the shared social cultural knowledge surrounding social media neologisms. In the same vein, the example in [4] shows how creative social media actors are; we note that 'honey' is shortened to form 'hun' and not 'hon'. We see the introduction of a new vowel instead of maintaining the vowel 'o' in the word 'honey.'

5.4 Blending

Following Marchand (1969), blends are portmanteau words formed by merging parts of the words into one word which meets the phonotactic restrictions of language. Aronoff (1981) postulates that all word formation processes are word-based. Going by Lexical Morphology, this follows that a new word is formed by applying a rule to an already existing word. From the findings presented in table 5.1, it was observed that social actors deployed the process of blending in the creation of some of the neologisms, although many may not have been aware of the rule [+blend] at play. The following are some of the blends social media actors were able to come up with:

[6]. Picture mixing=Picmix
[7]. You all=Y'all

From the examples provided above, we notice that social media actors were able create the neologisms by subconsciously deploying the word formation process of blending. We see the creativity exhibited in the formation of the blends above. In example [6], we notice the shortening of both words 'picture' and 'mixing' to come up with one word which is understood by only social actors to mean the initial. We note that the first syllables in both words are blended to come up with 'picmix.' The same analysis can be applied for example [7], we notice the blending of two words, 'you' and 'all' to come up with one, 'y'all.' The inclusion of an apostrophe in example [7] provides a dimension of social media neologisms; the punctuation at play is used to show possession or rather, 'belonging to' for example;
[8]. Mainza's cat- to mean, the cat belongs to Mainza.

However, we see in example [7] that the punctuation has been used not to show a form of possession. Perhaps, we could argue that the inclusion of the apostrophe is to drive a point home, to show that there are two words involved in the creation of the said neologism and also to help in the pronunciation.

Some scholars like Mworia (2015) have argued that blending is a combination of clipping and compounding in which words are created by the overlap of words or fragments of existing words. This assertion may be true to a certain degree as two existing words are first shortened and then stitched together to form one word as is the case for some neologisms presented in table 5.1.

5.5 Affixation

From the findings in Table 5.1, the following make the list of the process of affixation:

[9]. Self+ie=Selfie
[10]. BFF+s=BBFs
[11]. LOL+est=LOLest

Drawing on derivational morphology, Affixation is the most common type of word formation process as new words are coined from adding affixes to already existing words. Yule (2001) in his study discusses three types of affixes; prefixes which are added to the beginning of the base, infixes incorporated inside a word and finally, suffixes added to the end of a word. When we begin to talk about affixation, we refer to derivation as one of the word formation processes. Words can be derived from other words by way of adding affixes. Derivation according to Bussman (1996) is a process of adding bound morphs to already existing stems to create new words of the same or different word class. What we notice in examples [9], [10] and [11] is the process of suffixation at play. We notice that the affix, 'ie' has been added to a word to come up with a new word in [9], to mean 'getting oneself a picture'. [10], the addition of the affix 's' is to account for plurality and finally, in example [11], the addition of the affix 'est' is to account for the superlative form of the adjective 'loud' in 'Laugh out loud'.

Furthermore, Social media neologisms may be derived from already existing words and when that happens, they acquire a new meaning according to the context in which they are used. In the data presented in table 5.1, we see that very few neologisms result from the word formation process of Affixation, to be more elaborate; the process of suffixation.

5.6 Compounding

We see that in this section, a neologism formed by the process of Compounding is presented:

[12]. Photobomber- one who invades someone else's photo.

We notice that compounding is another common way of coining new words. Mworia (2015) has argued that the language of social media is made up of word combinations which form their own distinct meaning, sometimes derived from the root words or a whole new meaning. Onyedum (2012) puts forth an argument about compounds being constructed out of relatively small number of morphemes, whose meanings are well known. In this regard, social media actors

have combined two distinct words, 'photo' and 'bomber' to come up with a one word hence creating new meaning. This is similar to the findings of Mworia (2015) in her study of "The use of English Neologisms on social media: A case of Twitter language in Kenya."

5.7 Social Media Pseudo Constructions

From the data collected on social media neologisms, it was observed that certain neologisms cannot be placed within any established Word Formation Process. Similar to Jimaima and Nkhata's (2017) findings, some social media neologisms were best described as 'Pseudo- elliptical constructions' as they represent phrases without showing any structural features or constituents for phrases. Going by the established word formation processes and rules, it was observed that some of the neologisms could not squarely be placed within these word formation processes of compounding, initialism, blending, clipping and the rest. It was observed that social actors were able to communicate using these neologisms because they have a shared sociocultural knowledge. For example, it is quite unlikely for someone to know that example [13] is derived from the phrase "I'm going to" if one has no shared knowledge of what it refers to, as the process of ellipsis is at play. We see that some words have been omitted from the phrase making it superfluous. If we were to go by the Word Formation Rules, what is derived from a phrase are Initials/Acronyms but in the examples below, what we have are elliptical constructions. From what is seen, these elliptical constructions include among others;

[13]. Gonna "I' m going to"
[14]. Wanna "I want to"
[15]. Dunno "I don't know"
[16]. Itx "It is"
[17]. Kinda "Kind of"

5.8 Social media Pseudo-Compounds

Data collected also showed that some social media neologisms fall under the category of pseudo-compounding. Trommelen &

Zonneveld (1989) define a pseudo-compound as a compound-like word where at least one of the constituents is not a free morpheme in isolation. To elaborate further, in examples [18] and [19] below, 'friend' and 'face' are actual words in the English vocabulary while 'versary' is not. In most cases, pseudo-compounds are unique and have no lexical meaning of their own and are not found in the group of functioning words. Some of these neologisms include;

[18]. Friendversary "friend and anniversary."
[19]. Faceversary "Facebook and anniversary."

These are classified as pseudo-compounds as they defy lexical integrity and do not conform to the word formation Rules of [+comp]. The two neologisms above in examples [18] and [19] could not be considered as blends as blends are portmanteau words formed by merging parts of the words into one word which meets the phonotactic restrictions of language, according to Marchand (1969). In this regard, we have full words, 'Friend' and 'Face' and not parts of it, however, the word 'anniversary' has be clipped to come up with 'versary' which is not an actual word in the English vocabulary. From the observations made, we are for the view that the three word formation rules were at play in the creation of the two neologisms above: blending, clipping and also compounding. It does appear that a compound word was clipped then blended and therefore, it could not be placed within one established word formation process.

5.9 Morphological implications on Neologisms

From the data shown above, it can be observed that some social media neologisms flout the established Word Formation Rules (WFRs). Some of the neologisms flouting the Word Formation Rules include; LOLest "Laughing Out Loudest" and BFFs "Best Friends Forever." Going by the rule of affixation, [+Acronym] + [-Affix], an Acronym/Initialism cannot be affixed. This follows that given an Acronym; 'UN'- for 'United Nation' no prefix, suffix or infix should be added to form the following:

[20]. UNs -'United Nations', the suffix –s to account for plurality
or

[21]. unUN -'un United Nations', the prefix -un to account for negation.

However, the data collected reveal that some neologisms on social media are inflected. For example, [22] below:

[22]. Lolest "Laugh out loudest"

In lexical morphology, when it comes to the ordering of the strata, there are rules on how that should be done, and Katamba (1993) proposes that each stratum of the lexicon is associated with a set of morphological rules that do the word building. Furthermore, these morphological rules should be linked to phonological rules that indicate how the structure built by morphology is to be pronounced. In the above neologism, in example [22], this follows that some WFRs are flouted as derivation operates at the second level, after a word or a phrase has been formed, that is to say; laugh out loud + est. Going by the morphological rules, if we are to apply the rule of affixation, a word or phrase has to be formed first and thereafter, an affix added to it. What we see in example [22] is not a word but acronyms LOL plus a suffix –est. In addition, we note that in affixation of acronyms, we have this rule below:

[23]. [+Acronym] + [-Affix]

This rule therefore suggests that acronyms cannot be inflected, that is to say, [-Affix] to mean, not with an affix.

[24]. BFFs "Best Friends forever"

In the inflection of BFFs, 'Best Friends Forever', the suffix –s accounting for plurality and specifies the position the –s must occupy. In this case 'BFFs' shows that it must be affixed to the last 'F' of BFF, so that it reads; 'Best Friend Forevers' and not 'Best Friends Forever'. This is similar to what Katamba (1993) has asserted when he begins to talk about concatenative morphology. He argues that a grammar is organized in a series of hierarchical strata. Borrowing

also from Halle and Mohanan (1985), the word formation rules specify how morphemes are to be arranged in sequence to form actual words. Halle and Mohanan's (1985) thought leads to the linear arrangement of morphemes.

Therefore, in the broader context of linear ordering of morphemes, one should be able to account for the root and any affixes attached to it. Therefore, going by this thought, there is no end to what can be added to the root provided that the word is intelligible and does not flout the phonological rules.

Another school of thought can be seen from the point of Compounding; borrowing from the affixation of compound words, it is worth mentioning that the addition of an affix, specifically a suffix to a phrase entails that affixation as a principle is a right headed phenomenon. This follows that it is the base to the right which receives affixation. Therefore, in principle, the suffix –s should be attached to 'Friend' and not 'Forever'. 'Best Friend Forever' is a phrase; therefore, it is the head (in this case 'friend') which determines the syntactic category of the phrase by principle of percolation. In this case, the head is 'friend' which is a noun and therefore percolates upwards to the maximal projection which is the Noun phrase. This thought hence leads to the idea of inflection in number; 'BFFs' accounts for plurality in the construction but does not tell us where within the configuration the plural marker should be inserted. We take the view that inflection is an element outside word formation (in this case, 'compounding'). This therefore means that the addition of the affix –s only happens after one has already processed the compound. In this line of thought, the addition of –s will only happen after the processing of 'Best Friend Forever.'

Furthermore, from the data presented above, it can be seen that the mental lexicon is actively at play in the formation of social media neologisms. The mental lexicon is structured in a way that it determines the order in which word formation processes can apply. It is also actively involved in the selection of words in a particular order thus; non-words are usually blocked with the help of the filter. This is evident in the way the phrases are created, for example, most

interjections are quite predictable.

The word order in the neologism, OMG (Oh My God) for instance is quite predictable. Based on a shared sociocultural knowledge and history of social media actors, we are aware that when one is in shock and mentions, 'Oh,' we know that the selection from the mental selection will be 'My' and then 'God', among the plausible structures in social media discourses. For it was observed that it was unlikely for social media actors to say: 'Oh My Jesus' or Oh God My'. From the focus group discussions, it was maintained that certain phrases are rigid and can never be re-arranged. In this regard, using Halle's morphological theorization that feeds into affixal sensitivity and affixal selectivity and word selection, we are able to see how the filter in the lexicon is able to block some words from being selected to form social media tokens. This is because the mental lexicon has post-lexical rules which are concerned with phrases. In fact Katamba (1993) has put forth his argument that post-lexical rules can apply across word boundaries, to words after they have been grouped together to form phrases.

6.0 Conclusion

The study confirms that Facebook and WhatsApp as social media platforms have laid a foundation for newly coined words, otherwise known as neologisms. We conclude that, new words have been coined with time and social media neologisms should be seen as an outcome of the creativity of language as well as productivity. It then follows that, the virtual-scape is productively exploited by social actors, the result of which is the ubiquitous spread of new lexical creations. The applicability of word formation processes on certain bases is what makes morphology productive and language in general. This confirmation is arrived at by the many screenshots of neologisms obtained from the two social media platforms; Facebook and WhatsApp.

The study confirms that coinages of some social media neologisms are guided by some Word Formation Rules (WFRs). The study established that the social media neologisms could be placed

within some morphological word formation processes of Initialism, compounding, blending, and clipping, among other processes. The findings revealed that the majority of these social media creations are informed by the basic Word Formation Rules of initialism. This confirms earlier studies by Mworia (2015) and Jimaima and Nkhata (2017) who argue that the most common word formation processes deployed by social actors is Initialism, [+initial].

Another major finding was that, other neologisms flout the established Word formation processes, thus can be classified under new proposed processes of pseudo-elliptical construction, Pseudo compounding and pseudo onomatopoeia. Going by lexical morphology, with regard to word formation, two concepts devised by Katamba (1993) are critical; the rule governed creativity and rule bending creativity. Furthermore, it was observed that social media actors deploy both concepts in the creation of neologisms. On one hand, the rule governed creativity accounted for everything that is considered acceptable in a language. For example, the social actors' ability to come up with Acronyms, or clips from already existing words shows that the Word formation Rules were at play. On the other hand, the rule bending creativity is what social media language is prone to.

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