



Neologism in Selected Social Media Platforms: A Cross-Cultural Study

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Abstract

This research paper aims at investigating the use of neologism; new created words, in the comments and posts of social media platforms. The data are taken from the posts and comments found in Facebook, Instagram and Twitter platforms retrieved from January 2022 to January 2024 by Canadian, British, American and Irish users. It explores three types of neologism; lexical deviation, word formation and borrowing, adopting Krishnamurthy (2010) model. The study concluded that neologism expressions are widely used by social media users due to the invention of new products, the different cultural norms of each country and the global events. Word formation is the most common used type of neologism, recording the highest frequency, then comes lexical deviation and lastly acronyms. It is widely used by Americans, then British, Irish and lastly Canadians. In relation to the platforms, Facebook has shown a high prominence and a leading source of new words among the other platforms, serving as a great linguistic pot for neologism.

Keywords: *neologism, social media platforms, cross-cultural study*

1.1 Research Objectives:

This research paper traces the emergence of new words (neologisms) in the social media platforms cross culturally. It aims is to find, collect and characterize neologisms from the comments of American, British and Irish social media users on posts retrieved between 2022-2024. The researchers look for neologisms, what are the processes involved in the creation of these neologisms and how they are used by the interlocutors.

1.2 The Procedures:

The researchers analyze qualitatively and quantitatively the neologisms found in the comments of the social media users of the various platforms including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, following the model of Krishnamurthy (2010).

1.3 Importance of Studying Neologisms in Social Media:

Users of social networks and members of the culture get acquainted with the social neologisms by being expose to them. These users are also the greatest contributors to forming new expressions, words and phrases among others. Linguists and scholars can trace cultural and linguistic evolution through these terms by studying the shift from traditional media to social media usage of language.

1.4 Review of Literature



Prior studies dealt with neologism in different aspects and helped to understand what are neologisms and how they spread. Studies have shown that the IT age is very efficient and the social networks represent a new environment for the creation and development of new vocabularies. According to Peprnik et al. (2006), neologisms are not limited to the realm of linguistics but also signify broader societal shifts. Khan (2013) stressed that the invention of new terms is essential for observing language variation, particularly when existing vocabulary fails to capture emerging concepts. Similarly, Qaisar (2015) pointed out that neologisms play a crucial role in creating new words, reflecting contemporary viewpoints. However, the provided research papers based on previous data, and the current research will be dealing with the newest inventions only as found in social media platforms.

2.Theoretical Background:

Neologisms refer to words or phrases being newly than it used to be or never existed before, due to a certain change, either in society, culture, or technology. Nowadays, with the development of the internet and the social media platforms helped in language use creativity, therefore new words emerged into language.

2.1. Definitions of Neologisms

Neologism is defined by Crystal (1995) as "a new word or a new use of an existing word, the creation of which is often linked to changes in society, technology, or culture". Aitchison (2001) adds that neologism is "the addition new words or expressions to a language to accommodate changes in cultural, social, or technological contexts".

Neologism generally is the process by which new lexical items are used newly in a language or receiving new meanings and indications. Any recently created linguistic expressions including words, phrases or sentences is known as neologism holds any (that is understood by the language community or a small part of it to represent new object or situation, whether in technology, industry, politics, culture or science Busman (1996:324). On his part, Rey (1995) states that not all combinations are neologisms, for instance putting phonemes together does not indicate a neologism. It should be either a word, phrase or a whole sentence.

Usevičs (2012) describes a neologism as "a word or group of words that have been coined to represent a new concept, modify an existing one, or give an older term a more modern feel." Similarly, Ermolenko and Bazarova (2018) note that neologisms are invented words within a literary language, often derived from other languages, revitalized from older forms, or entirely the product of a writer's creativity.

2.2 Lexical and Semantic Classification of Neologisms:

Lexical neologisms are the coining of novel words, whereas semantic neologisms assign novel definitions to words that are already in use. Newmark (1988:140) classified neologisms basically into:

- A. Words with new meanings
- B. New invented words

1. Coinage or Invention:

This type refers to the new words that have been completely invented and were not existed before such as the word 'google' as a verb, to indicate searching online, came from the name of Google Company.

2. Blends:



This happens when the process of merging occurs; parts of two words or two words are combined together to form a new word, like 'brunch'. It consists of (breakfast + lunch), 'Spork' (spoon + fork) and 'smog' (smoke + fog).

3. Acronyms:

Initials of words form this neologism such as COVID 19 which is formed from the initials of the words Corona Virus Disease 2019 and RADAR standing for 'Radio Detection and Ranging'.

4. Loanwords:

Some words could be borrowed from other languages and used in the source language including 'Pizza' referring to the Italy and Sushi taken from Japan.

5. Compounding:

Combining two or more words to formulate a new word, for example: 'smartphone', 'laptop' and 'snowball'.

6. Semantic Shifts:

Some words do exist, but they are renewed, for example: the word 'mouse' it is known to refer to the small animal. With the invention of the computer, it is used to refer to the device used with it. Also, the word 'surf' now is used to refer to searching the net.

7. Eponyms:

Some neologism is actually the same of people's names, certain places, or even known brands, for instance, 'sandwich' referring to the Earl of Sandwich.

8. Technological Neologisms:

Some words emerge in language according to the development in technology, such as those related to the social media hashtag, tweet, bitcoin and selfie.

2.3. Processes used in the Creation of Neologism

Krishnamurthy (2010) identifies three main processes by which neologism is formed; the first process is called word-formation. It includes affixation, coinage, blending, compounding, and acronyms. The second process is borrowing. In this type, the speaker blends words together to form new words. He uses words or even sentences from various languages for the sake of making the interaction with other speaker/s easier and more effective. In fact, this process is very important for the expansion of the vocabularies in any language. The third process is known as lexical deviation. This occurs when the speaker creates a word that has never been used before. This process is what (Leech, 2014) refers to as the most effective way of neologism in which the speaker goes beyond the normal use of language in creating new words but still depending on the rules of word formation.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

The data of this work include the most famous and repeated 50 neologisms found in 300 comments of Canadian, British, American and Irish users on posts in Facebook, Instagram and Twitter



platforms retrieved from January 2022 to January 2024. The culture of these users were identified according to the groups they belong to in addition to the profile of each user.

3.2. Model of Analysis

This paper adopts Krishnamurthy (2010) in relation to the different processes of neologism (as stated earlier). The following diagram shows the elements of this model.

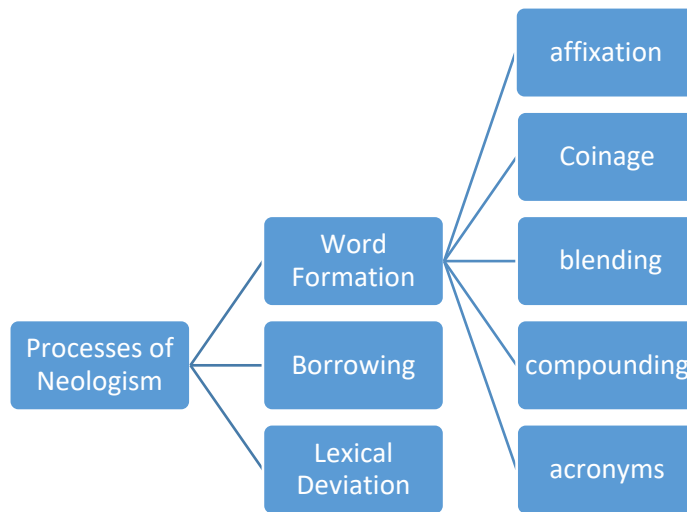


Fig. 1. Model of Analysis

3.3 Data Analysis

The following words are the most commonly used words on the social media platforms; Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, with their meanings and the processes of neologism that have been applied in generating them. Each expression is analyzed according to the adopted model.

1. **Goblin-mode:** It means the blatantly lazy and self-indulgent behavior of a person. goblin indicates a mythical creature, while mode indicates being in a certain manner or state. This neologism is formed through compounding; by combining the two words.
2. **Quiet quitting:** This describes a trend where workers do only the simple part of their job, without a real resigning. It is formed through compounding and affixation. Quiet refers to a silent state, and quitting is to stop a work.
3. **Cheugy:** This term is a slang expression that is created to describe something that is out of date or attempting too hard to be trendy. It combines and blends the two words 'cheesy' and 'cringe'.
4. **Doomscrolling:** The act of continuously scrolling through bad news on social media, despite the negative emotional impact. This is another blending of neologism, including "doom" (having a sense of expecting disaster) and "scrolling" (moving through content on a screen) to describe the act of nonstop and negative search for bad news online.
5. **Finfluencer:** It refers to the one who offers financial advices and tips on social media. It is a blend of "financial" and "influence". "financial" is blended with "influence", then the suffix "-er" is added to form "influencer". Blending and affixation processes are used here.
6. **Simp:** It describes someone who goes to excessive lengths to gain the affection of someone s/he admires. It is often used in a funny or sarcastic way. The term deviates from its original form "simpleton" through clipping. "simpleton" is shortened to 'simp'. Through lexical deviation, this neologism is formed.



7. **Bed Rotting:** this neologism describes a lazy or unmotivated person who spends a long time lying in bed, doing nothing. This term is a compound, combining "bed" (a piece of furniture for sleeping) and "rotting" (decaying).
8. **Flexirement:** it refers to the gradual shift, at a certain age, to retirement by doing part- time work rather than stop working at once. It is a blend of "flexible" and "retirement".
9. **Ghost Kitchen:** the restaurant that only delivers food without having a place for the customers to have meals in. It is formed by the process of compounding 'ghost' and 'kitchen'.
10. **Kenergy:** This neologism refers to someone energetic, having the vibe of the doll 'Ken'. This term is a blend of "Ken" (the Male Barbie character) and "energy".
11. **Anti-airport dad:** It refers to the father who is known to arrive at the airport late or who misses the flight. This compound phrase blends "anti" and "airport" and combines also "dad".
12. **Rizz:** it describes someone's attractive and romantic character who has the ability to flirt. It was originally taken from Black English to refer to a strong body, later on it is used to refer to a sweet talker and charismatic person. It is formed by lexical deviation.
13. **Broken rung:** it is used to refer to the situation by which a person succeeds quickly in his job in the early stages but cannot get a more high-ranking position or make any further progress. This compound includes "broken" indicating something that does not work, and "rung" refers to progress in a job.
14. **Exhaustion gap:** this neologism refers particularly to women, indicating their low energy and feeling tired due to the different tasks women do at home and work. This neologism combines "exhaustion" and "gap" via the compounding process.
15. **Beige flag:** it is a deviated form of the 'red flag'. It refers to something neutral, neither good nor bad and somehow boring. It blends the neutral color "beige" and "flag".
16. **Gender tenure gap:** This compound phrase shows that there is a difference in occupying positions between men and women. It indicates that women hold senior positions for a very short time compared to men. Compounding is the process that formed this neologism.
17. **Slay:** basically, this word means to kill, but it deviated to be used to indicate a great and an outstanding work or a perfect look of someone. It is formed through lexical deviation
18. **Vibe:** it is an abbreviation of 'vibration'. Good vibes or bad vibes indicate the mood and feelings of someone or the atmosphere of a place. It is a lexical deviation.
19. **Eco-anxiety:** feeling worried or panic form the environmental or climate change. Compounding process formed this neologism.
20. **De-Influencing:** in certain cases, the social media influencers warn their followers not to buy specific goods often for moral or personal aims and reasons. Compounding is the process that forms this neologism.
21. **Thirst Trap:** it refers to anything posted on the social platforms to draw the attention of the followers to admire it and to get large number of viewers to a certain issue or to a certain character. It is a compound of "thirst" (a slang for desire) and "trap" (a catching device).
22. **Cap:** To lie or exaggerate; opposite of "no cap". Lexical deviation is used.
23. **No Cap:** it means to say the truth, sincere and real things. no lying is involved. It is the opposite of lying and 'Cap'. It is composed by the process of compounding.
24. **Glow up:** A term used to designate someone's alteration, often in a positive and attractive manner. Compounding process is involved here.
25. **Flex:** it was typically used to describe the behavior of a person with muscles, then turned out to describe behavior to mean showing off or boast. Lexical deviation is the process that creates this neologism, since the meaning has been changed.
26. **Mood:** it describes the feelings of being touched by a certain post on social platforms. Lexical deviation is the process that makes this neologism.
27. **FOMO:** it is formed by the initials of the words: Fear of Missing Out. This neologism describes nervousness, discomfort and missing others that are absent in some enjoyable social events. This neologism is created by Acronym formation.
28. **Hard Launch:** It is a formal announcement of a relationship or a job in a post on platforms. Compounding creates this type.



29. **GOAT:** Greatest Of All Time, used to designate a person to be the prime in a certain domain. Acronym formation generates this neologism.
30. **Mewing:** this neologism describes how someone moves his/her tongue inside the mouth and making a contour for the jaws. Lexical deviation and affixation is used to create this expression.
31. **Vibe Check:** Evaluating or judging the mood of someone, a situation or a place. This compound phrase reflects the current common interface. Compounding process is used.
32. **Baddie:** this term is used to describe a positive attribute of an attractive and powerful woman; full of confidence. It is coined by affixation and blending.
33. **Low-key:** This refers to something done trickily or behind closed doors, behind someone's back. It has been formed by compounding and lexical deviation.
34. **High-key:** It means frankly or apparently. "key" is used to infer the significance of something. Compounding and Lexical deviation is the process used here.
35. **Bussin:** This term evolved from African American Vernacular English, describing very tasty and delicious food. Lexical deviation is used because the meaning is changed to include anything that is fantastic not only food.
36. **Bet:** it functions like the positive response okay or sure. Previously, it was used in gambling, through lexical deviation, it was changed to be generalized to any approval.
37. **Ghosting:** Sometimes, interlocutors end their interaction quickly without any prior warning like ghosts, therefore this term is used to describe this quick vanish. Lexical deviation and affixation are the processes used here.
38. **Stan:** It is commonly recognized through the pop culture to connote an excessively passionate fan. It blends "stalker" and "fan".
39. **Cancel Culture:** It describes the process of stopping the support given to famous or communal figures after witnessing certain scandalous or inappropriate situations. Compounding formation creates this neologism.
40. **Clapback:** A cunning, sharp and quick response to a negative criticism. It consists of the compound "clap" (to applaud) and "back" (response).
41. **Woke:** it denotes peoples' awareness of the social injustice. Basically, it was used in AAVE as a term in politics, then deviated to refer to social issues.
42. **Sussy:** it is taken from the word 'suspectious', but have been clipped to indicate the manner of being playful, especially in games. It has been coined for this particular usage.
43. **Litty:** it describes an enthusiastic or admirable situation, frequently at parties. Affixation and lexical deviation created this neologism. Originally taken from 'lit' to mean bright, but converted to mean having fun.
44. **Nepo Baby:** The son or daughter of a powerful, successful and well-known family that got his fame through their social connections. Originally, it is taken from 'nepotism baby', but have been abbreviated.
45. **Shook:** describes the mood of being stunned or disturbed. Abbreviation of "shaken" that has been coined and twisted. Clipping is the process of formation.
46. **Snack:** it is used to refer to food, but later on it came to be used to any attractive and desirable personality. Lexical deviation creates this neologism.
47. **E-Personality:** it describes the personality of a famous figure on net which totally differs from his character in reality. Compounding and Acronyms are used to form this new expression.
48. **Buzzworthy:** this expression is used to describe anything that is creative, popular and attracts attention. It is originally taken from the 'Transformers' series to indicate metal things, then deviated to the new meaning. Blending and lexical deviation are used here.
49. **Metaverse:** A virtual space that enables people to interact through games, meetings and any other actives through internet. This neologism is created by blending of 'meta' and 'verse'.
50. **Boomerism:** This neologism combines 'baby', 'boomer' and 'generation'. It denotes what fresh people call the elders (born between 1946-1964) as having old-fashioned and outdated behaviors such as writing with one finger in mobiles or holding certain principles. Lexical deviation and blending are processes involved in this neologism.



Discussion of Results

The results of analysis show that neologisms exist widely on social media platforms, they could be new invented words or words that already exist but new meanings are attached to them. Different processes are involved in the creation of neologism, in most cases, more than one process is involved in their formation. The word formation of compounding recorded the highest among the other processes in forming neologism, recording **36.7%**, then comes lexical deviation, recording **28.3%**, then blending of **16.7%**, then affixation of **11.7%**, then acronyms of **5%** and lastly comes coinage with **1.6%**. There is a slight difference in the number of occurrences in one platform than the other. Due to its great popularity among social media users, Facebook recorded the highest in involving neologisms, then Instagram and lastly Twitter. In relation to the cultural side, American social media users used more neologisms than do British, Irish and lastly Canadians. The following tables illustrate the processes involved in the formation of neologism and their frequencies.

Table 1. Processes of Neologism Formation

No.	Neologism	Process of neologism formation
1	Goblin-mode	Compounding
2	Quiet quitting	Compounding
3	Cheugy	Blending, Coinage
4	Doomscrolling	Blending
5	Finfluencer	Blending, Affixation
6	Simp	Clipping, Lexical deviation
7	Bed Rotting	Compounding
8	Flextirement	Blending, Affixation
9	Ghost Kitchen	Compounding
10	Kenergy	Blending, Affixation Lexical deviation
11	Anti-airport dad	Compounding
12	Rizz	Lexical deviation
13	Broken rung	Compounding
14	Exhaustion gap	Compounding
15	Beige flag	Compounding
16	Gender tenure gap	Compounding
17	Slay	Lexical deviation

18	International Conference	Lexical deviation
19	Eco-Anxiety	Compounding
20	De-Influencing	Compounding
21	Thirst Trap	Compounding
22	Cap	Lexical deviation
23	No Cap	Compounding
24	Glow up	Compounding
25	Flex	Lexical deviation
26	Mood	Lexical deviation
27	FOMO	Acronym
28	Hard Launch	Compounding
29	GOAT	Acronym
30	Mewing	Lexical deviation, Affixation
31	Vibe Check	Compounding
32	Baddie	Blending, Affixation
33	Low-key	Lexical deviation ,Compounding
34	High-key	Lexical deviation, Compounding
35	Bussin	Lexical deviation
36	Bet	Lexical deviation
37	Ghosting	Lexical deviation, Affixation
38	Stan	Blending
39	Cancel Culture	Compounding
40	Clapback	Compounding
41	Woke	Lexical deviation
42	Sussy	Clipping
43	Litty	Lexical deviation, affixation
44	Nepo Baby	Compounding
45	Shook	Clipping
46	Snack	Lexical deviation
47	E-Personality	Compounding, Acronym
48	Buzzworthy	Lexical deviation, blending
49	Metaverse	Blending
50	Boomerism	Lexical deviation , blending

Table 2. Number of Occurrence and Frequency of the Processes of Neologism Formation

Process of Neologism	Number of Occurrence	Frequency
Compounding	22	36.7%



Lexical deviation	17	28.3%
Blending	10	16.7%
Affixation	7	11.7%
Acronym	3	5%
Coinage	1	1.6%

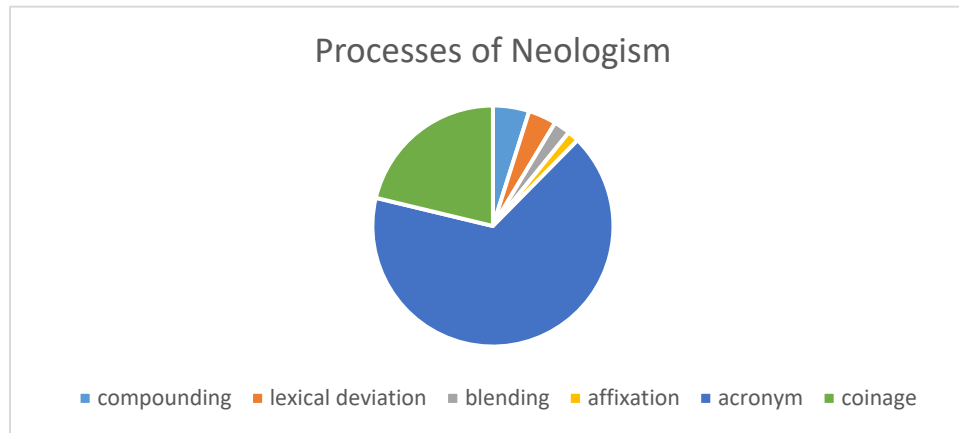


Fig. 2. Processes involved in Creating Neologism

Conclusions

After analyzing the data, the researchers concluded the following points:

1. Neologisms found in the comments of the users in the social media platforms reflect broader linguistic, cultural, technological, and social shifts.
2. The rapid emergence of new words between 2022-2024 underscores the vigorous nature of online interaction.
3. More than one neologism process could be used in the formation of a single neologism.
4. The processes of neologism highlight the creativity and adaptability of language in forming new words to capture contemporary phenomena and trends.
5. Most of the neologisms are found in all designated platforms but with a slight difference in the number of occurrence. Facebook records the highest, then comes Instagram and finally Twitter.
6. Neologisms influence how people express identity, emotions, and relationships in a digital age. There are certain variety concerning cross-cultural differences; Americans recorded the highest usage, then British, Irish and finally Canadian users.
7. Word formation is the most frequently used process of creating neologism, then comes lexical deviation and lastly acronyms.

Recommendations

It is recommended that future studies should continue to monitor this fast-evolving linguistic landscape, due to the emergence of neologisms on daily bases.

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