

**Neologisms and Polysemy in Social Media: A Morpho-Semantic
Analysis**

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خلاصة البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة لمعرفة أثر استخدام مواقع التواصل الإجتماعي على لغة المستخدمين له من حيث ، الكلمات ، وتصرفها ، ومعانيها . يدرس دور مواقع التواصل الإجتماعي في إثراء التحصيل اللغوي أو إفقار التحصيل اللغوي . بيانات البحث حديثة لتواكب التغيرات الطارئة على تصريف الكلمات ومعانيها. عينة الدراسة عشوائية ، تتكون المستخدمين لوسائل التواصل الإجتماعي مثل (تويتر ، الفيسبوك) وغيرها من التطبيقات المستخدمة لديهم . إن التطبيقات المستخدمة ووسائل الإعلام في كثير من الأحيان يتحدد من إختيارات المستخدمين لها من حيث إختيار اللغة وتصريفها وبالتالي هذه الأطروحة تقدم نظرة فاحصة على الخصائص التصريفية للغة والتدقيق الإملائي ووسائل التواصل الإجتماعي من خلال أمثلة حية من المشاركات اليومية على وسائل الإعلام التي تؤكد ذلك.

كلمات دلالية: التواصل الإجتماعي، الإنتاجية التصريفية ، الإملاء، المصطلحات المستجدة

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the effect of using social networks onto the language of users in terms of word meanings and forms. Hence, this research is a linguistic study of the morphological characteristics of the language of social media through vivid examples from daily posts on social media. It looks into the role of social media in improving or worsening the linguistic performance of users. The research deals with up-to-date data in order to be examined from a morphological perspective. Due to the presence of large platforms of social networking sites, this study will be limited to neologisms in a specific media applications, Twitter and Facebook that are basically written in or deviated from English language. The sample of the study consists of random users of social media such as Twitter, Facebook and other applications that people usually use to communicate. The theory of morphological productivity is employed in the study to reach a conclusion on the most frequently used word formation processes that lead to social media neologisms. Results of the study indicate that social media and communication applications often determine the users' choice of words.

Keywords *social media, morphological productivity, neologisms*

Introduction

Language has a communicative function and people use different forms of language to express themselves either written or verbally. Through the past decade, people have created new ways of communication such as texting, sending emails and posting on social media applications and websites. In other words, a new era in socializing has started with the advancement of telecommunication and technology. As a result, the language used mostly by the new generations has dramatically changed due to the new methods of communication that force people to economize while using language. For instance, Twitter is one of the most popular and mostly used social media applications that allows users to write 140 letters as a tweet. Indeed, new words and vocabulary have appeared in their dictionary. Moreover, they may misspell or abbreviate words in order to write within the letters limit that they are allowed to use.

A morphological analysis of the language of social media is provided through tackling the notion of morphological productivity. The study is based on data collected from Twitter and Facebook that are basically written in or deviated from English language. It also analyses the word formation processes of social media neologisms and how the common words on social media are coined.

Significance of the Research

The motivation for this thesis lies in the observation that, despite the growing significance of social media as a subject of academic interest, only few linguists have investigated how language is used and involved in social media in terms of morphology.

Objectives of the Research

1. To describe lexical features and neologisms that can be found in the linguistic productions of language users who post on social media on a daily basis.
2. To examine factors that influence the production and usage of neologisms and netspeak.
3. To determine what the most frequent word formation process that is used in making social media neologisms is.
4. To evaluate social media neologisms from a morphological perspective.

Research Hypothesis

The research is set to test the validity of these hypotheses :

- Social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Tumblr¹ influence both forms and meanings of words.
- Neologisms use different word process from those used of Standard English.

Research Questions

1. What are the recent neologisms found in the recent production of social media users?
2. What are the factors that influence the production and usage of neologism in social media?
3. What are the most productive morphological processes in today's social media neologisms?

Limitations of the Study

The research is not concerned with methods of learning English or how social media improve language performance in classroom. In other words, it does not study the linguistic performance of students who use social networks in classroom. However, it focuses on the general impact of social media on the orthography and diction of all users from different backgrounds and ages.

Data Collection

Different data collection techniques are employed in this thesis in order to confirm or refuse the research hypotheses. The data will be collected by the following methods:

- I. **Personal Observation:** The first instrument used in this research work is observation. As a social media user, I have been able to observe a large amount of vivid data through taking notes from natural interaction or posts on social networks. The objective of such method is to understand the social environment in which users produce and deal with content in different ways. However, the challenge of this method is analyzing the results and that is why other data collection methods are needed to be combined with observation.
- II. **Questionnaires:** The method of written questionnaire in collecting data for linguistic research is essential, since it covers a wide variety of samples and results. In other words, using social media to give questionnaires will allow the researcher to get real examples of how users of social networks use language in terms of choice of words and spelling. The questionnaires are given

¹ Tumblr: a microblogging platform that is owned by Yahoo and allows users to post multimedia and content to a short-form blog.

anonymously because the respondents are not asked to provide their names which give them a certain freedom in answering naturally. Therefore, questionnaires data are more reliable for analysis. They also evaluate the relationship between the amount of time users spend socializing online and their morpho-semantic performance. Through *Survey Monkey*, which is a website that helps design questionnaires and surveys to be either printed or shared online, the following survey is created https://www.surveymonkey.com/create/survey/preview?sm=M_2B_PQrv6DmeYSCR2B0oVP_2BY_2Bxh78yaGrop4fDgZv8auA_3D

- III. Creating Mini- Dictionary of neologisms: The researcher will encourage participants from her own acquaintances and students to submit ten of their social media production such as tweets or Facebook status and posts in a certain webpage in order to recruit at least one hundred posts. The sampling technique is going to be snowballing whereby participants are encouraged to urge friends to contribute in order to create a dictionary which consists of about 50,000 words which will be manually analyzed. This dictionary is relatively small, yet it is significantly large for the purpose of the study.
- IV. Hashtags Tracking: Keeping tracking of Hashtags on Twitter from December, 2015 to January 2016 will allow the researcher gather sample of Hashtags that trend recently. Those samples are going to be real and current data that can be studied in order to fully understand the nature of hashtags, their use and the way they are usually created and become widely spread and used.
- V. Published materials on social media language such as *The Ultimate Glossary: Social Media Terms Explained* by Kipp Bodnar (2015)

Literature Review

Paola Maria Caleffi (2015) states in her article “The Hashtag ; a new word or a new rule?” that hashtags used in social media, especially Twitter, are considered a notion of morphological creativity. “A hashtag typically consists in a string of characters (possibly including numerical digits) preceded by the pound symbol # (also called hash). This combination serves as a label for the message itself. The use of hashtags was introduced on Twitter as a way to classify messages (tweets) according to the topic, thus allowing users to easily search for specific content and share information related to it.” (p.1)

Neologism is a broad term since it refers to a wide range of lexical items. According to Katie’s definition of neologism, it includes “a newly invented word, words that may eventually find their way into

the dictionary if they become widely accepted.” (2001:268). Aduda (2013) agrees with Katies in her definition, yet she adds that neologisms can be made up and created. Aduda’s study explains Dholuo neologisms and how they are interpreted by the respective community. Dholuo is the dialect used by the Luo group which consists of 6 million people who live in Kenya, Tanzania and Sudan. The members of the Luo group have invented new words that have been merged with the local language in the aforementioned countries. This study is related as it explains how neologisms are created and merged within society; yet its scope is sociolinguistics while the study in hand is based on morphological analysis.

Lucida (2005) states that neologisms or new words are constantly entering the lexicon to describe new concepts and technologies and what they mean to the users. Lucida’s study focuses on neologisms that are brought by technological advancement which is particularly relevant because this study investigates social media’s neologisms which are inseparable from technology. However, the mentioned study above is restricted to technological neologisms that begin with prefix e-. This study will investigate not a particular type of neologism but those neologism used by online users in social media.

Adel’s (2014) discusses the changes that have occurred in the language of Egyptian young people. Those linguistic changes in their spoken language are mainly caused by the spread of social media. Since Egyptian youth aged 18-30 uses a mixture of English and Arabic, this study tests the hypothesis that language of youth on the internet threatens the Arabic spoken language. The results and findings of the study show that although English is the official language of the Internet, yet it is found that Arabic is the dominant language in the Internet as Egyptian youth prefer to use Arabic in their communication.

Twitter is also a rich subject matter for researchers who are interested in the effect of social media on language. Also the language that is commonly used in Twitter is different in terms of content and structure. Three scholars in the Natural Language Engineering Lab in the University of Valencia, Spain have tackled the ironic content in some tweets. They attempt to describe and analyze “a set of textual features for recognizing irony at a linguistic level, especially in short texts created via social media such as Twitter postings or tweets”. (Antonio Reyes, 2013, p. 240)

Mworira sheds light on the use of English neologisms in social media using twitter in the Kenyan context (Mworira, 2015). The study has looked into the word forming processes that social media neologisms undergo to reach certain findings of English neologisms that are used in Kenya and also internationally. Another bachelor thesis in the University of South Bohemia in Czech Republic is about neologisms in English Language Blog Posts. The scholar Kamila Križaníková pays attention to word-formation processes by which these neologisms are formed. (Križaníková, 2015). The previous studies are concerned with the morphological analysis of the neologisms that are introduced to the English language through social media like the thesis in hand.

Nisar (2014) has submitted a paper entitled “Social media neologisms in modern lexical system of English language” in which he discusses how internet-based communication affects English vocabulary. He states “Social media neologisms are coined in this manner, creating a brand new word, combination of two words and usage of old words in totally new context. e.g. surf, meaning ‘to browse the internet’; ‘mac’ meaning ‘a kind of computer etc.” (Nisar 2014: 3). The author focuses on the lexical structure of social media neologisms and what morphological process they undergo to be formed. According to Nisar, the most word formation process of social media neologism is semantic extension. However; in this research, the word formation processes of social media neologisms are also being examined in terms of morphological productivity. According to the collected data, compounding is the most common morphological process of social media neologisms. Moreover, a semantic analysis of social media neologisms is incorporated for a better understanding of the nature of neologisms of social media.

Abdeen (2018) offers a corpus- based analysis of Hashtags in her research paper “Evaluation of Attitudinal Lexis in Twitter Political #Hashtags: A Corpus-Based Appraisal Study”. She investigates the influential role of evaluative language in social media. Her study aims to explore how a stance is created on social media discourse at a lexicogrammatical level. While Abdeen’s focus is lexicogrammatical; the scope of this study is morpho-semantic.

The Linguistic Framework

I. Social Media and Morphological Productivity

Social media neologisms are clear examples of how easily new words are generated. In social media, users are able to generate countless new words to enable them express new and old ideas which have taken on a

new cultural context. In other words, some words are given new connotation or new meanings due to the use of social media.

i. Morphological Productivity

There is a language feature that allows users to say things that have never been said before. That feature is called productivity or as Chomsky (1965: 6) suggests creativity. Hockett (1958: 575) gives the label “productivity” to that property of which allows us to produce new words. Likewise, in morphology, there is an emergence of productivity in coined words that are never heard or said before. Morphological productivity is the property of a morphological process to give rise to new formations on a systematic basis. Morphological productivity is one of the most debated areas in the study of morphology and word formation. Hockett (1958: 307) argues that productivity of derivational, inflectional or even syntactical patterns is seen when the speaker is relatively free to use those patterns to coin new grammatical forms and meaningful lexical items. On the other hand, Di Sciullo and Williams (1987:7) reasons morphological productivity to the simple fact that an affix can be used numerous times to create new different words. For instance, adding the suffix *-er* to verbs will result in having an agentive noun to describe the doer of the action such in *buy+ -er = buyer and sell+ -er = seller*. Another affix that proves the productivity of morphemes is having a new adjective that means exactly the opposite by adding the prefix *ab-* to the word. For example, *abnormal* is the antonym of *normal* by just adding the prefix *ab-*.

The first person to use the term productivity in the sense of the today linguistics

ii. Aspects of Morphological Productivity in Social Media

In social media, productivity is a basic requirement since this context is always up-to-date and changing. New topics are brought up every day which forms a fertile ground for creativity or productivity. Morphological productivity is usually defined as the ability of language users to produce and understand new words. According to Bauer (1983:66), “productivity is contrasted with creativity with is neither rule-governed nor predictable.” As a matter of fact, productivity allows the speaker to create various principled word forms. In fact, morphological productivity is the layout of Social media neologisms with regards to the word-forming processes where necessary. In addition, there are certain morphological properties that should be taken into consideration.

Morphological properties are the bases that may prevent the application of any morphological rule.

On the other hand, most of the morphological rules are violated in social media language. Social media users have a tendency to use language spontaneously and freely; as a result, they do not follow the language rules while writing new posts. The internal structure of words is acclimatized by grammar, in spite of that Social media language is full of morphological violations. A clear example can be found in the following tweet “Eatn bt thinking of my fare bk2sch”. The suffix *-ing* is one of the morphological features that are commonly violated by social media users as seen in the previous tweet *eatn*, which can be considered confusing as it could be interpreted as *eaten*. It is important to note that the Facebook or Twitter user chose to write the *-ing* in thinking which proves that he is aware of the *-ing* morphological property. Another example is the morphological feature of a derived adjective may include *-less* or *-ful*. *EGOT* is a commonly-used adjective on SNS that describes a person who conquered the entertainment industry by winning an Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar and a Tony. However, social media users tend to produce words without following the general rules or the norms of the language. This adjective has been derived recently, yet it does not include any morphological feature of derived adjectives. Users of social networks simply add the suffix *-s* to any word that they want to pluralize. As an example, some may use the plural form of the word *media* as *medias* neglecting the fact that the word *media* is already a plural form of *medium*. They also come up with new words such as *Stool-pigeon* and *Lazybones*. *Stool-pigeon* is a compound noun that means a police informer who reports social media posts to the authorities while *lazybones* which usually refers to a lazy person is used in social media context as a label for the one who does not access social media applications regularly because he is lazy. In the previous examples, Rule-Bending Creativity is evident since the meaning of the items in the compounds does not match with the resulting word. Hence, the first aspect of social media morphological productivity is rule-bending creativity and violating the morphological properties which is overlooking rule-governed creativity.

The second aspect in which social media productivity is seen occurs when users omit the phonological factor of wording such as the word *netizen*. In language, some affixes cannot be attached to some words due to phonological constraint. This phenomenon is called “phonological constraint”. Plag (2004) in his article “Productivity” states that “Phonological constraints can make reference to segmental or prosodic structure, sometimes in rather intricate ways. For example, the

verb-forming English suffix -ify only attaches to monosyllables words like *unify*, to words stressed on the last syllable like *rectify*, and to words stressed on the penultimate syllable and ending in /l/ as in *qualify*". There is another example for phonological blocking which is the verb-forming suffix -en.

Table 2: -en blocking can take place due to phonological constraint

Without Phonological Blocking	With Phonological Blocking
<i>Black-en</i>	<i>Green-en</i>
<i>Soft-en</i>	<i>Dry-en</i>
<i>Short-en</i>	<i>Long-en</i>

Social media users deal with language based on what makes sense for them. To make it clear, they don't understand why they cannot use the word "*long-en*" while they commonly use *short-en* in their discourse. In social media context, *wexting* is a word that phonologically matches *texting* which means walking with the head down due to *texting*. In fact, they apply the analogical reasoning while dealing with language. While creating new words, language users rely on deductive reasoning as they go through a logical thought process in which they apply a certain rule on different cases. Linguistically speaking, this is one way of how children acquire language. In other words, rule of analogy is a cognitive technique used by speakers to form new words of language.

Thirdly, as language changes with the advancement of technology, there are features which have been very productive at some time in the past but at the same time are being the least productive in the present. Consider the words *communist*, *splendid* and *swimmer*. After dividing the words into their morphemes and listing affixes, write the meaning of the morphemes including the affixes. Then, state the word class of the bases to which affixes are added and decide what the word class of the resulting new word is.

Table 3: Comparison between three productive affixes (*ist/ id/ er*)

Observing	<i>Communist</i>	<i>Splendid</i>	<i>Swimmer</i>
Morphemes	<i>Commune + ist</i>	<i>Splend + id</i>	<i>Swim + er</i>
Meaning of the affix	Practitioner of X	Having the quality of X	Doer or agent of X
Word Class of the base morpheme	N	N	V
Word Class of the new word	Adj	Adj	N
Other Examples	<i>Chartist/ Racist</i>	<i>Morbid/ Horrid</i>	<i>Worker/ Dancer</i>

The three morphemes *ist/ id/ er* almost give the same sense; however, they differ in the degree of their productivity. *-er* is the most productive affix since it is commonly used nowadays because it is an agent suffix; while *-id* is the least productive because it is not used as frequently as before. Indeed, the issue of morphological productivity is not measured by yes or no rather by more productive or less productive. The type of productivity used in testing social media language productivity is Type Frequency based Productivity. The total distribution of types formed by a particular word formation rule reflects its productivity. In other words, measuring the productivity of a certain affix will be related to the number of words produced by this affix

iii. Semi-Productivity

Mathews (1972) and Anderson (1992) recognize a special category of affixes that can be called “Semi-productive”. For example, *-ant* derivation achieves a variety of effects instead of changing words in a consistent way. When the suffix *-ant* is added to a verbal base, it creates an agentive nominal.

A) Depend + *-ant* = *Dependent*

B) Assist + *-ant* = *Assistant*

Verb + *-ant* = agentive nominal

Thus, *-ant* is productive because it allows creating new words with both new meaning and new word class. Conversely, this does not apply on all verbs as we cannot say *write-ant* or *adapt-ant*. The only explanation that linguists have is that it has to do with the bases. The affix *-ant* can only be attached to Latinate origin and it cannot be added to Germanic base. Hence, the notion of “semi-productivity” explains how idiosyncratic affixes fail to attach to apparent eligible forms. Lexical semi-productivity examples are found in social media daily posts in which users add affixes to forms inaccurately. For instance, the admin of a Facebook page for the current students and graduates of the American University of Cairo (AUC) addresses the members of his group as *AUC-ians*. To explain, he adds the suffix *-ian* to the abbreviation of the American University of Cairo (AUC) to create an adjective or a noun that become commonly used afterwards to describe any student who has ever been the AUC. He follows the same morphological rule of Asian or Russian, although he cannot add the suffix *-ian* to an abbreviation.

Data Analysis

In this section, the definitions of social media neologisms are either derived from Merriam Webster Dictionary or from the researcher's understanding of the words.

Table 4: A List of Commonly Used Neologisms classified according to form class

II. Word Formation Processes and Social Media Neologisms i. Neologisms

The Internet revolution changed the information world with regard to sharing, speed, storage and retrieval of information in whatever form regardless of the person's location. Consequently, new words and expressions have appeared and become widely-spread. Neologisms are newly coined and used words or expressions that are widely spread due to a social purpose. (Doludenko, 2012, p.6) " Štekauer (2008) describes neologisms as "a naming unit which was coined to satisfy a linguistic demand, be it the demand of a single member of a speech community, or a single unrepeated demand." (Štekauer 2008: 101)

Most neologisms have anonymous origin and only in few cases it is known who created the new words. In the past, neologisms were spread by the press, newspaper and magazine articles. Nowadays, the social networks have facilitated the coinage and spread of new words. Those words catch the users' attention and they immediately add them to their dictionary. There are many reasons producing a neologism. First, the urge to replace a foreign term with a domestic one may lead some users to create the word "*Fakkes*" to replace the expression "*let it go*" or "*nonsense*". Another motif is "the attempt at increasing the prestige of an occupation, e.g. ... *dustman – sanitation engineer* ..." (Peprník, 2006, 77) or creating new jobs who were not there before such as the *fashionista*, which is the job of a social media blogger, usually a girl who uploads her photos and videos with recommendation of fashion trends today and how people should dress up.

Verbs	Nouns	Adjectives/ Aderb	Abbreviations
Google	App	404	DM
Chilax	Troll	Geobragging	PP
Follow	Ego Surfer	Noob	RT
defriend	BFF	Cybrarian	CMC
Tweet	Sniping	Cyber	SNS
Re-tweet	Staycation	Adorbs	MT
Twicide	bitcom	Light-skin	TB
Sync	Netspeak	Blonde	FOMO
Keep calm	Emoji	Virch	WOBAT
Bridge	Hashtag	Banana	SMH
Block	Selfie	Togethering	BRB
Wordnap	Sossion	Adorkable	LY
Filter	Tweeps	Al desko	BAE
Tag	Catfish		FAB
Check-in	meme		AMA
	Snap		FOGO
	Bashtag		BHAG
	Mongo		TGIF
	Hubby		BYOD
	CTRL-ALT-DEL		YAify
	Bride -Zilla		SOLOMO
	Selfie- Stick		
	Bride-Chilla		
	Profile		
	Social Swarming		
	Socialbot		

Language is dynamic as it changes constantly. Due to the new inventions and changes, every language is in need for new words and terms. In other words, new things need new words and the human society is gradually developing and growing; therefore, language is going to develop and change as a social phenomenon. Moreover, there are certain language trends that come and go as time passes. Indeed, young people create new words almost every day. For instance, words like *wasted*, *cool*

and *chill* are commonly used as college slangs. Additionally, some old words are revived with new meanings like *surf* and *tweet*. The meanings of those words have broadened because of the new technological inventions.

Hence, it is crucial to study the formation of neologisms in social media which usually cover a variety of topics related to politics, culture, society, technology and youth recent common interests. There are many attempts to define word formation processes. For instance, Laurie Bauer finds the best definition for the morphological processes as “word-formation”. The term “word formation” is a traditional label, and one which is useful, but it does not generally cover all possible ways of forming everything that can be called a ‘word’. In particular, the use of the term ‘word-formation’ is of value when the rules for the formation of words are not identical with the rules of sentences.” (Bauer, 1983, 9). Another definition of word formation processes is the one of Rodney Huddleston “the processes by which new lexical bases are formed and the structure of complex lexical bases, those composed of more than one morphological element. The traditional term is simply word-formation: we add lexical to exclude the formation of words by inflectional processes.” (Huddleston, 2002, 28). According to Plag, the processes of word formation “as the term of ‘word-formation’ suggest, we are dealing with the formation of words.” (Plag, 2003, 12). Therefore, all the three definitions agree in the general meaning of the word formation processes to be how words are created.

Studying the formation of social media neologisms will provide us with a better understanding of them and a deeper insight into the socio-culture communication language. Formation of neologisms conforms to the traditional rules of word formation. The morphological processes that are used to form neologisms in social media are abbreviation, compounding, affixation, borrowings or loan words, conversion and coinage.

1) Abbreviation

The process of abbreviation means shortening a word or a phrase in order to save space. Social media users apply abbreviation in their posts which has become a trend resulting in more abbreviated neologisms. *Lol*, *TB*, *ROFL*, *Tyt*, *Gr8*, *2nit*, *btw* and *brb* are all common examples of social media abbreviation. According to Mokhsin (2015), “the increasing number of the social networking users amongst youth will also lead to the increased use of abbreviation and homophone words”. As a matter of fact, not only most of social networks like Twitter have character limitations, so

do other forms of new media, such as IM (instant messaging) which accordingly force users to abbreviate or minimize the number of letters they are using. Harris Interactive, a non-profit research board for communication, has conducted a survey about the most common 11 social media abbreviations. The research uncovers that the majority of Social media users do not initiate to use abbreviations unless, someone else started using them. Also, it is shown that *LOL* is the most common used abbreviation.

Table 5: A List of Abbreviations that are Commonly Trending in Social Networks Among Users

Abbreviation	Meaning
DM	Direct Message
PP	Profile Picture
RT	Re-tweet
CMC	Computer Mediated Communication
SNS	Social Network Sites
MT	Modify Tweet
TB	Throwback
FOMO	Fear of missing out
WOBAT	Waste of money, beauty and brains
SMH	Shaking my head
BRB	Be right back

LY	Love You
BAE	Before Anything Else
FAB	Fabulous
AMA	Am Gonna
FOGO	The desire not to attend a popular event that is over-hyped or over-commercialized
BHAG	An ambitious or difficult plan or goal shared on social media
TGIF	Thanks God It Is Friday
BYOD	The use of a personally owned mobile device, such as a laptop, smartphone, or tablet, to access a workplace network.
YAify	To rewrite or modify a work to make it more suitable for, or more appealing to, a young adult audience.
SOLOMO	Mobile phone apps that combine social networking and location data

Indeed, using abbreviations makes the daily content of social media understandable and time saving which serves the main purpose of social networking, a brief and quick social interaction. The morphological process of abbreviation is divided into three major parts:

- A. Acronym
- B. Clipping
- C. Blending

A. Acronym is the first kind of abbreviation in which a word is formed from the initial components in a phrase or a word. Nazaryan and Gridchin (2006) emphasizes that online posting is rich in acronyms and symbols to reduce time and effort used for communication. Moreover, Khaifa (2015) in her research "Pragmatic Functions of Social Media Acronyms" electronically sent a questionnaire about the most used acronyms to 300 users of

Facebook, twitter, Instagram, Reddit and Ask. The participants have reported 30 acronyms. “The acronym "LOL" occurred about 44 times in the SNC, with a percentage of 0.34%. LOL can be used to mean "laugh out loud" and it could be written as Lol, Lolol, LooL or Lolololol. LOL is mostly used in Facebook and twitter. Markman (2015) found out that LOL is used by females more than males. O'Neil, (2010) and Varnhagen et al (2010) outlined that LOL can be used to express happiness or a desire to share with someone his/her happy feelings.” (Khalifa, 2015, p.41)

The features of Acronyms are very special because they are space saving, eye-catching, interesting and easy to spread. It is often used to abbreviate long and frequently referenced names of organizations and terms such as *NASA* (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), *B2B* (Business to Business), *VIP* (Very Important Person), *C.O.D* (cash on delivery) and *SUP* (What's up?). There are two types of acronyms in social media. The first type is acronyms which are pronounced as a word like *FOFL*(Falling on floor laughing), *LOL*(Lots of love, also Laughing out loud) or *POS* (Parent over shoulder). The second type of acronyms is the one in which the word is pronounced as sequences of letters. *CID* (Crying in disgrace), *ILY* (I love you) *BRB* (Be right Back) and *GN* (good night) are clear examples of social media acronyms that are pronounced as a sequence of letters.

- B. Clipping is the second type of abbreviation which can be defined as the process whereby new words are formed by shortening other words or eliminating the initial part or the last part. In actual fact, clipping means reduction. Clipped words consist of reducing the syllables of the word. “Clipping is the word formation process in which a word is reduced or shortened without changing the meaning of the word. Clipping is the word formation process which consists in the reduction of a word to one of its parts” (Marchand,1969 in Fandrych, 2008). In other words. Clipping is about removing a whole syllable and/ or morpheme of a word. In some clipped words, the beginning of the word is retained such as *sig* (signature), *vert* (vertical) and *Adr* (Address). In some clipping cases, the initial part is eliminated while the final one is retained like in *net* (Internet) and *varsity* (university). Short forms of clipping represent the word in its entirety; however, the clipped fragment does not have to be part of the original word in social media neologisms. For instance, the word *meh* refers to who cares or whatever. Another example is *zzz* which means sleeping or bored. Certainly, clipped forms expose a certain sense of informality which is often reflected in their spellings. In other

words, social media clippings usually violate rules of orthography as *cuז* which is commonly used for cause or because.

- C. Blending is the morphological process in which new words are formed by combining syllables/ morphemes of two words, usually the beginning comes of one word and the end of another such as *brunch* (breakfast + lunch). In blending, syllables or morphemes are combined to form a new word. Blending involves the coinage of a new lexeme by fusing parts of at least two other source words of which either one is shortened in the fusion and/or where there is some form of phonemic or graphemic overlap of the source words (Gries 2004:639). In addition, Play (2013; 123) mentions that “blending is the result of two clipped words that are blended together to form a brand new word”. Furthermore, “a blend may be defined as a new lexeme formed from parts of two (or possibly more) other words in such a way that there is no transparent analysis into morph” (Baur; 1983;234). In social media daily interaction, blending is regularly shared when the users talk about certain topics that are trending. The following are some common examples of social media blended words.

Table 6: a list of blending words in social media

Social Media Blending	Original Words	Blending Pattern	Meaning
Bberrytweet	(Blackberry + tweet)	Semantic and phonological	using a Blackberry device to send a tweet on Twitter.
Chatiquette	(Chat + Etiquette)	Phonological + Semantic	basic rules of online communication
Celeblog	(celebrity + blog)	Morphological + phonological	A blog written by a celebrity
Celegram	(celebrity + Instagram)	phonological	A user who becomes popular on Instagram
Chindia	(China+ India)	phonological	A debate was raised on social media about which country (China or India) represents Asia the most
Babycino	(Cappuccino+ baby)	Morphological + phonological	A drink like a cappuccino is given for babies but without coffee to calm them down

Blook	(blog+ book)	Semantic	A blog that is based on a book
Bromance	(brother+ romance)	Morphological + phonological	Friends who fill the romance life of each other
Chocotherapy	(chocolate+ therapy)	Semantic+ phonological	Chocolate used as a therapy
Cyberchondriac	(cyber+ hypochondriac)	Semantic + phonological	a hypochondriac who imagines that he or she has a particular disease based on medical information gleaned from the Internet
Delcon	(delete + contact)	phonological	To delete a contact from the user's list
Foodpic	(food+ picture)	Semantic + phonological	A post including a picture of food
Fakefol	(fake + follower)	Semantic + phonological	A fake account created to increase the number of followers
Infotainment	(information + entertainment)	phonological	broadcast material which is intended both to entertain and to inform.
Instamood	(Instagram mood)	Semantic + phonological	A mood or feelings that encourage the user to keep posting pictures on Instagram
Propic	(Profile Picture)	+ phonological	a picture displayed in someone's Facebook account, so that the account is recognized easily.
Twabulous	(Tweet Fabulous)	+ phonological	A slang term used to describe a fabulous tweet
Tweeple	(Twitter People)	+ phonological	It is used to refer to or describe Twitter users
Twurvey	(Twitter Survey)	+ phonological	A survey sent to users through

			Twitter
Wefie	(we + selfie)	phonological	We shall take a group selfie

Alego in Hossenzadeh (2014; 18) mentions that “the term blending refers to the combination of two forms where at least one has been shortened. The shortening can be by simple omission of a part of a word or it can be a result of overlapping sounds or letter. Based on the given definition, blends can be created by omitting a part of source words (splinters)”. Hence, blending patterns are divided into three patterns. First, phonological blending is created when omitting a syllable of one of the original lexemes. Second is the morphological blending which can be defined as keeping one of the original morphemes in the blended word. Finally, semantic blending is when the blending process relies on the meaning of one of the original words.

- 2) Borrowing or Loan Words: the morphological process in which words are borrowed from another language and incorporated into a recipient language without translation. It is a smooth linguistic development achieved by adopting words from other languages together with concepts and ideas they represent and stand for. Surely, borrowed words are pronounced according to the phonological rules of the borrowing language. For example, “*viva*” occurs frequently in social media posts about sports and games. The origin of *viva* is Italian and it means long live. Bates L. Hoffer (2002, p.1) defines borrowing as “the process of importing linguistic items from one linguistic system into another, a process that occurs any time two cultures are in contact over a period of time.” Haugen also defines loan words as “The process of word borrowing is a consequence of the contact between two languages.” (1950, p. 212) The evolution of social media texts, such as Twitter and Facebook messages, has created many new opportunities for information access and language exchange. Another example is the borrowed word “*dala*” which comes from an Indian origin. The word *dala* can mean a sports team, or a political party or group of people or animals. It refers to a group of people with a shared interest so we can find many groups on Facebook starting with the word *dala*. One more example of loan words is *guru* which means a mentor or counselor. Some accounts on Twitter or pages on Facebook post motivational quotes and inspirational stories. Those accounts are usually called *guru*. *Guru* comes from Indian origin as well.

In social media, users from all over the globe chat and communicate which encourage borrowing and load words. Borrowing can be divided into direct loans and translation loans. Direct loans consist of borrowings with or without adaptation to the spelling and morphology of the recipient language, whereas translation loans are translated directly into the recipient language as they are such as the word *weekend* that has been heavily used by the Arab social media users. Many other English words that are borrowed by Arab users are found in Table 4. Sometimes, the borrowings are written in the users' first language. In fact, the following users are code-mixing while tweeting; therefore, they may borrow one word or expression from the English Language.

Table 7. English words that are borrowed by Arab users on Twitter

Tweet	Words	Meaning	Type of Loan Words
/kilil akkawntat momilla min Şidz/	Accounts	Personal Page on Social media	Direct
/ ar bløkt him zay ma: Radwa 2alet/	Block	prevent access to	Direct
/ hashofek feis two feis emta/	Face to Face	To meet in person	Translation
/Mabru:k ista:d fəa:d. kil gru:bat lwats btitkalam šanik/	Groups	Chatroom	Direct
/Mabru:k ista:d fəa:d. kil gru:bat lwats btitkalam šanik/	The Whatsapp	A well-known chat application	Direct
/shofi fi lsna:b/	Snap (Snapchat)	An application for sharing photos and videos for limited time	direct
/aswwi ritweet yaŞub.. ma: bi/	Retweet	To tweet a post published by another user	Direct

- 3) Conversion is also an important word formation process which is frequently used in social networking. Conversion means a category change in which a shifting in the original grammatical class to another class occurs. Particularly, conversion or functional shift is known as the process by which new words are created by using the same exact word with a new function. There are plenty of examples for conversion in social media neologisms. *Google*,

which is a well-known search engine, is used in social media as a verb that means search. In social media, the word *paper* can be used as a verb that refers to making paperwork. *Friend* is also used as a verb that indicates adding a person to the friend list or a list of acquaintances. In the previous social media neologisms, new words are derived from already existing words where they acquire new meaning in context. Thus, the meaning of the same lexical items is broadening by assigning new syntactical category to them.

- 4) Coinage means inventing total new words. It also refers to the extension of a name of a product from a specific reference to a more general one. In the process of coinage, new words are created outright, either deliberately or accidentally, to fit some purpose. A well-known example of coinage is the word “*kleenex*” which has become a repetitively used lexical item for the word tissue or napkin. It is worth pointing out that coinage is very popular in social media context since people create words and terms every day. For example, *al desko* is a coinage word that means eating while sitting on the desk. *Bling* is a coinage adjective for sparkling or flashy. A third example is the word *bluejacking* that means using your mobile phone with Bluetooth to discretely send anonymous text messages to the people around you. Before social media, it was very rare and uncommon to create new words or add neologisms to language by non-specialists; however, inventing entirely new words like the noun *staycation* (vacation at home due to financial constraint) or the verb *dooce* which is usually used in passive tense because it means to sack an employee because he blogged or posted about your company. Some linguists believe that most of social media coined words are made to be used once or twice only; nonetheless, if the coined word has been spread and frequently used by different users then it should be added to the language dictionary.
- 5) New words with new meaning: Some words are differentiated from regular neologisms since they have already existed in language before but they have gained new meaning because of the way it is used in social networking. There is a plenty of already existing word examples that acquire a completely new meaning; as a result, they function in language with a different purpose and sense. *Tweet* is a vivid example of new words with entirely different meaning. Before 2005, birds only can tweet as tweet means the sounds that birds make. After 2005, when Twitter was created, tweet has acquired a new meaning which is to post on Twitter. As a matter of fact, the development of technology and the progress of societies require new concepts to come into being with clear expression. On

the contrary, new concepts do not necessarily need creation of new words. Instead, they can be conveyed by meaning transfer or addition. Some linguists call this process “semantic transfer”. McMahon, (1994:174) argues that “semantic transfer is the formation of new words using a language’s own resources”. She further notes that words are typically polysemous thus can lose or gain meaning relatively early and do not have to lose an earlier sense to gain a new one. Consider the word *troll* which originally means an ugly cave-dwelling creature depicted as either a giant or dwarf, it is now used to describe someone who posts obnoxious comments on social networks or someone who negatively attacks other via tweets. Henceforth, this semantic transfer or adding new meanings to already existing words proves how social media neologisms and language is very productive and creative.

6) Derivation or Affixation

Yuke (2006, 57) believes that derivation is the most common word formation process as it builds new words by adding morphemes to stems through affixation. Neologisms on social networking sites can be derived from other words that already exist in a particular language, social media users add affixes to English words to form neologisms with specific meaning. Indeed, derivation is a highly productive technique in word formation since the word *blogger* can be formed by just adding the suffix *-er* to the base word *blog*. There are two types of social media affixations which are prefix and suffix. Prefix is when the affix is added to the beginning of the word stem like *abibliophobia* in which the word class does not change but there is a certain semantic change. On the other hand, suffixes do change the word category when they are added to the back of the word stem such in *muffin chocker*.

Table 8: Examples of social media derivational neologisms

Word	Type of affixation	Change Occurred	Meaning
<i>abibliophobia</i>	Prefix (<i>a</i> + <i>bibliophobia</i>)	Semantic (negative connotation)	fear of running out of things to read
<i>Astroturf</i>	Prefix (<i>Astro</i> + <i>turf</i>)	Semantic (artificial connotation)	to conduct a fake grassroots campaign on an online social network that creates the impression of legitimate interest in a product or

			service
<i>follower</i>	Suffix (follow+er)	Syntactic (V to N and Semantic (the doer of the action of following))	a person who supports and admires a particular person or set of ideas on social media
<i>muffin chocker</i>	Suffix (chock + er)	Syntactic (changing the word class V to N) and Semantic the meaning of the word has changed dramatically as it has become symbolic)	a piece of information, especially in the timeline or headline of newspaper, that is very shocking or exciting
<i>Miswant</i>	Prefix (mis+want)	Semantic (want usually has a positive connotation by adding mis- it gets a negative sense + syntactic (allowing prefix mis- to the verb want)	a mistaken belief that getting a particular thing is the route to future happiness
<i>obesogenic</i>	Suffix (obes+genic)	Semantic (change in meaning)	A person who supports obesity
<i>Retweet</i>	Prefix (re +tweet)	Semantic (to do the action of tweeting again)	repost or forward
<i>togethering</i>	Suffix (together+ing)	Syntactic (Adv to Adj)	spending holiday with people you know online
<i>Unfollow</i>	Prefix (un+ follow)	Semantic (negation of follow)	To stop tracking a follower or a page
<i>Unfriend</i>	Prefix (un+ friend)	Semantic (negation of add as a friend)	To delete a friend on social media
<i>Unlike</i>	Prefix (un+ like)	Semantic (negation of like)	To remove a like that a user has done earlier

7) Compounding

It is the morphological process of composing a word or a phrase of more than one free morpheme. The truth is compound as the most common word formation process generally and in social media. Compounding consists in the combination of two or more (usually) free roots to form a new word. There are certain characteristics for compound nouns. First, compound words behave grammatically and semantically as a single word. Second, since they behave as units, they accept only inflectional affixation like the plural –s at the end of the compound word. Moreover, compounds come in three types which are open, hyphenated and solid. The open compounding is formed with a space between the parts of the compound such in *cyburban myths* or *internet time*. Hyphenated compounds are the ones with a hyphen (-) separating the elements of the compound like *type-in-traffic* and *web-isode*. In solid compounds, neither there is a space; nor a hyphen. The components of the compound word are not separated by any element like *typosquatter*, *twitterverse*, *arachnerd* and *ubiquilink*. Consequently, it is an undeniable fact that compounding is the way used frequently in creating social media neologisms.

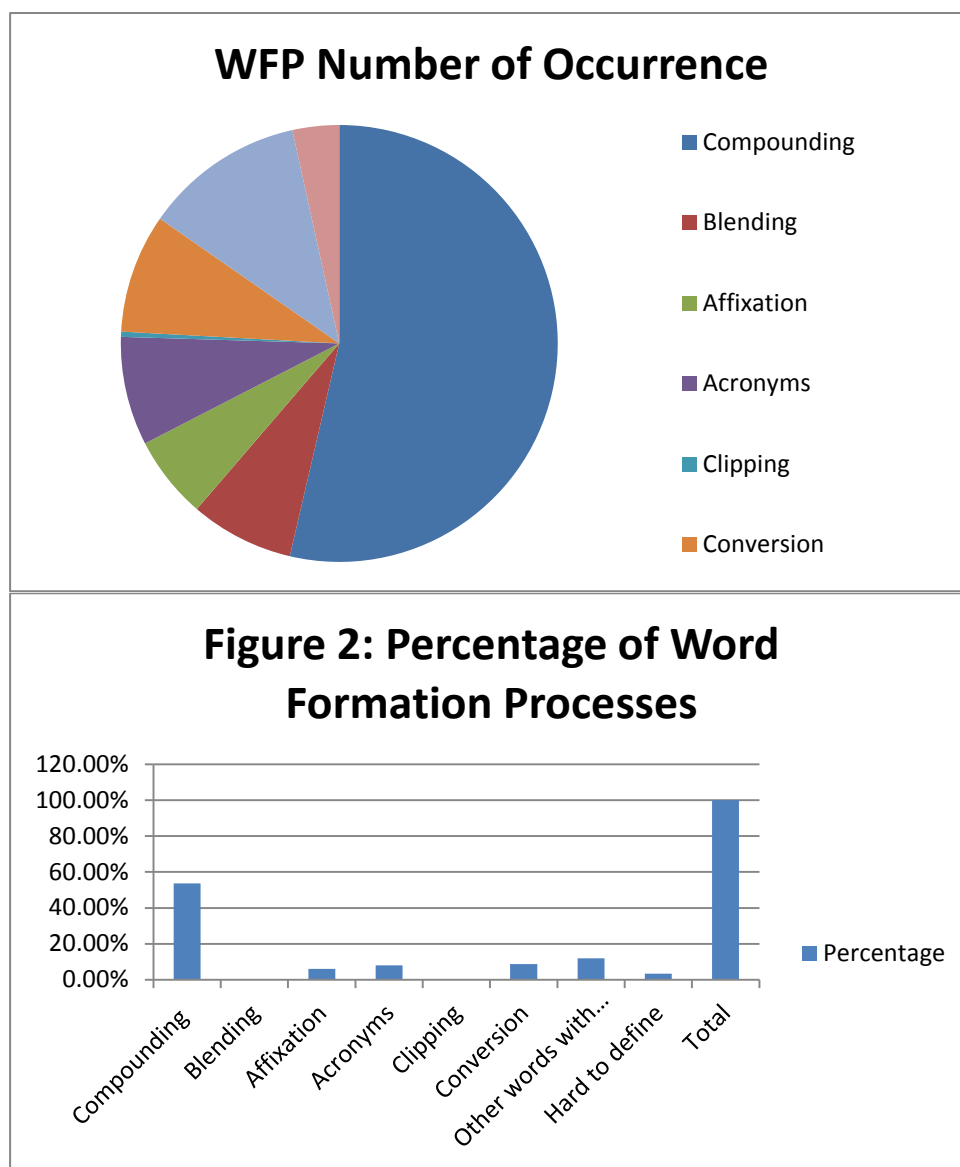
Table 9: A list of Social Media Compound Neologisms

Compound Neologism	Original Words	Type of Compound	Meaning
Blue-jacking	Blue + jacking	hyphenated	the sending of unsolicited messages over Bluetooth to Bluetooth-enabled devices
Brand Advocate	Brand + Advocate	isolated	A person or customer who talks positively about your brand or product.
Catfish	Cat + Fish	solid	lure (someone) into a relationship by adopting a fictional online persona.
Check-in	Check +in	hyphenated	the action of registering one's presence at a certain place/ location on social media

Dark Social	Dark +Social	isolated	The invisible shares that happen through channels like messengers, email, and text messages.
Ego-surfing	Ego + surfing	hyphenated	search the Internet for instances of one's own name or links to one's own website.
Facebook Live	Facebook + Live	isolated	Share live video with followers.
Home Feed	Home + Feed	isolated	Updates every time someone you follow posts a tweet.
Netspeak	Net + Speak	solid	the jargon, abbreviations, and emoticons typically used by frequent internet users.
News Feed	News + Feed	isolated	Updates influenced by friends, groups, subscribed pages, and activity.
Newsjacking	News + Jacking	solid	The practice of benefiting from the huge popularity of a current news story to amplify your sales and marketing success
Trending Topic	Trending + Topic	isolated	The most talked about topics and hashtags on social media.
Trendjacking	Trend + Jacking	solid	When a user leaps onto a big social trend, exploiting the buzz to get other users to engage with his

			brand
Selfie-stick	Selfie+ Stick	hyphenated	a device in the form of a rod on which a camera or smartphone may be mounted, enabling the person holding it to take a photograph of themselves from a wider angle than if holding the camera or smartphone in their hand.
Suggested Pages	Suggested Pages +	isolated	Pages a user may be interested in, based on previous pageviews, check-ins, likes, and friends.
Twitterati	Twitter +ati	solid	A-list Twitter users with hundreds and thousands of followers
Twitterverse	Twitter +verse	solid	It's where all the Tweepers hangout.
Wordnap	Word + Nap	solid	force a new meaning on an existing word

Figure 1 the number of occurrence of Word Formation Processes



Conclusion

The analysis of the word-forming processes that occur in social media justifies how social media neologisms are produced. Derived neologisms are formed by attaching an affix to a root. They are analyzable into a sequence of smaller units. Acronyms and abbreviations are motivated semantically. They carry the same meaning that the original phrase had before the acronym. Social networking sites are dominated by the youth who prefer shortcuts that are possible anywhere, and language is no exception. Most words are shortened to ease communication as well as to convey certain messages. Twitter abbreviations and acronyms make it easy for users to adhere to short message rule and be able to effectively communicate. Both acronyms and abbreviations are productive, especially in phrases that always take the first letter in each word in a phrase. It is therefore easy for these words to be formed and understood by the social media users. Compound neologisms consist of two bases.

Two existing words that are combined to form new lexical items function as single words. The most frequent type of compounding is the isolated compounds in which the two words stand alone and are not hyphenated.

Further Research

The collected data shows that other non-linguistic forms are used in social media context such as emojis; therefore, a future complete study should be carried out on the use of emoticons and emojis as a form of expression in social media communication. This field of social media can be studied from a semiotic perspective. Second, social media language has influenced the orthographical features of standard language; hence a detailed study is needed to investigate how internet English has affected students' language use at both high school level and university level.

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