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Affixation in the Age of Digital Discourse: The Emergence of New Word Forms on Social Media

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Abstract

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This research explores the phenomenon of affixation within the context of digital discourse, focusing on the emergence of new word forms on social media platforms. As communication shifts towards rapid, concise exchanges, users increasingly create neologisms by employing prefixes and suffixes to adapt existing words for contemporary contexts. This study analyzes how these linguistic modifications reflect cultural trends, social dynamics, and user creativity in online environments. Through a qualitative examination of social media interactions, we identify common patterns of affixation and their implications for language evolution. The findings reveal that affixation not only serves functional purposes — such as enhancing expressiveness and facilitating humor—but also fosters community identity among users. Additionally, this research considers the role of algorithms and digital literacy in shaping language use, highlighting the interplay between technology and linguistic innovation. Ultimately, this study contributes to the understanding of language change in the digital age, offering insights into how social media acts as a catalyst for linguistic creativity.

Keywords: affixation, digital discourse, neologisms, social media, language evolution, online communication, linguistic creativity, community identity.

1. Introduction

The present study examines the new word forms that emerged within the platform of a popular social networking service through affixation. When a word is coined by adding prefixes or suffixes to an existing word, it is referred to as affixation. Online collective users construct a neologism by combining words or sentences due to the communication contexts of social networks. The neologisms formed on this platform manifest new word forms. The coining of new word forms is constituted by changing the spelling of an existing word, by adding a space or character between the words, or by using lexical blendings like Franglish or Japanglish. This study aims to analyze new word forms according to the forms of affixation. In accordance with this goal, using the keyword search of the word base followed by affixes, new word forms that emerged with data are classified into various categories, such as the terms created through the abbreviation of words or the intentional misspelling of word bases. With this focus, cases such as hashtags, abbreviations, and tweet limits changing the language used are also discussed. Studies on the corpus of the new words are scarce so far, and the analysis is concentrated on a general view of the new words. This study is novel in the sense that the new word forms that emerged with affixation, a type of word formation triggering morphology and spelling errors, are subjected to a detailed examination. In addition, while detecting the neologisms, not only the words and sentences containing the words are used, but also all messages in a data set taken for the determination of the word base are analyzed. (Susanto et al.2021)

1.1. Background and Rationale

The study of affixation looked at from the vantage of historical linguistics, illuminates the still-relevant and lively peculiarities in the evolution of languages (Ponciano Lazaro, 2018). The 'stickiness' of language units are treated, in words or morphemes as the case might be, transcending even the boundaries current languages are able to recognize. The affixation phenomena are seen as intrinsic modes of human expression, whose enduring manifestations are observed through many historical and synchronic

scenarios. From the sub-word, to the clause, these phenomena cannot be permanently overlooked and in fact have been broadly ignored, even when their evidence stares at speakers in nearly every public space. To an extent, these problems have been glaringly accentuated with the ascent of digital information technology, which drives a tremendous surge of reciprocal linguistic interchange. The pace of language transformation has now run faster than ever, apparently indicating what ultimately could be a whole phonetic structure reevaluation and readjustment. As much as these instincts can be at some point accurate and illustrative, humans have difficulty in accounting ever precisely the major changes they immerse, the comprehension revolving forever around post factum magisterially. (Özkent, 2022)

Despite individual variations, larger historical or societal scenarios are seldom grasped other than in a periodic way, if ever, since the shifting transient nature of the phenomena. Nonetheless, more often than not, the force determining modes of human production frequently demands it in a disjointed measure. Nevertheless, affixation profiles a still understudied complexity, only lately opened to empiric scrutiny in a deeper understanding now enables the corroboration of those instantiations as well as a detailed appraisal of the individual evolvement, as raw data spontaneously projects very interesting evidence. The potential betrays a further and one could say entirely field in the description and comprehension of the current linguistic increase in its forms.

1.2. Scope and Objectives

1.1. Introduction

Nowadays, due to the global nature of the Internet, its resources as a tool for electronic communication cannot be denied. There are plenty of new applications like social media the rise of which refers to the alteration of the concept of mass communication. These platforms have the feature of allowing users to produce a great amount of their content in real time. Recent technological advances and the rise of social media have transformed the

ways in which language is used and socialized. These days, social media is the primary place for language socialization. The construction of new word forms is vital for the evolution of lexical systems. In this respect, parametric ways to describe the emergence of language at the phonological, morphological, syntactic, and discourse levels are under study. (Sharma et al.2021)

1.2. Scope and Objectives

This study focuses on affixation in the realm of digital discourse. The research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the emergence of new word forms as an outcome of various types of affixation in digital media, especially social media. With objectives set out as follows, the study aims to (i) investigate the types of novel words which stem from affixation by conducting an illustrative review of new words, shadow, blend, and new acronym on digital discourse; (ii) delve into the morphological and orthographic properties of these young word forms by adopting a quantitative-empirical approach to examine a sizeable corpus of new words, residing in casual conversation and formal settings, on Twitter; (iii) exploit this empirical analysis to reveal something about the nature of novel words arising from affixation among user-generated utterance, particularly in the iGeneration; (iv) consider related issues germane to the emergence of these affixed forms such as etymology, productivity, and synchronic language change, from which a more comprehensive theory of novel word formation may ensue. Efforts to understand language evolution should adapt models that provide the behavioral characteristics of language change. Of necessary, a diachronic approach should be employed although events occur close to real time due to a computational cause, the means available to calculate affixation only enable to a synchronic analysis. However, information regarding the time of a word's emergence, though being undated, is integral to the analysis. Thus, the applied method is specifically selected to shed light on the emergence of these young word forms among social media. In order to make the results as general and robust as possible, the study needs to involve as large of a data framework as is feasible so that the obtained findings provide a wide-ranging

snapshot of affixation among social media in online environments. However, the establishment of such a database may erect unmanageable logistical hurdles, and the sprawling nature of the subject requires a close selection and strict approach. (Pawar et al.2022)

2. Foundations of Affixation

In its simplest form, affixation is a linguistic process that consists of adding a certain morpheme, either prefix or suffix, to a base word in order to generate a new word with different meaning (Lestari Nurhikmah et al., 2018). While prefix usually put before the base word, suffix always has to be placed after the base word. There are two grammatical affixes, namely changes in the capitalization of words and changes in the spelling of words. Changes in the capitalization of words are changes in the capital letter to a small letter or changes in the small words to the capital letter. Changes in the spelling of words are changes in the affixes of the words, but the meaning of the word remains the same. In this case, language speakers pay attention to the rules of language used because language is the most important means of communication. Language is a complex and dynamic system so that the growth and development of a language also grows and develops. They care about how to form a good language or a good sentence, they sometimes pay attention to complex words and spelling words. (Maria et al.2021)

English is a flexible language in terms of word formation. Changing a few letters in a basic word (base word) is an easy process of creating a new word known as derivation. Culture, technology, geographic condition and time also affect the formation of new words. Word formation has been recognized as a way of enriching the vocabulary. Thus, new words are easily recognized in various aspects of human life. In the age of digital discourse, pressing keyboards changes people into 'complete' writer. They are free to insert many words and modify them without limitation of time. Digital discourse has brought new forms of new word formation. Therefore, this research is conducted to focus on the affixation of new words emerging in Twitter. It is a site where the word restriction is limited to do the word formation. The

formulation of problem of this research is how new word forms emerge in the age of digital discourse?

2.1. Definition and Types of Affixation

Affixation is the operation of forming a new word by adding an affix (a prefix, suffix, infix, or circumfix) to a root. This linguistic operation is denoted as the simplest word formation. Affixes attach to the root either by prefixing, suffixing, infixing, or circumfixing. When attaching a prefixes or suffixes, it must follow the morphological rule of the language of that root word. Prefixes attach to the beginning of the root while suffixes attach to the end of the root, for example: create + ive => creative. The root word here is create, and the suffixive is attached to the end of the root to form the new word creative which is an adjective (Shankar et al.2022).

Some prefixes do not attach to all root words or absolutely follow the attachment rule affixation. This kind of affix is called a semi-bound morpheme, e.g. independent + -ly => independently. As an adverb it is usually formed by attaching a suffix, however, the prefixes independently contradicts this rule. Prefixes is attach to the root word to change the particles in the word becomes antonyms, for example: like + dis- => dislike. The root word in this case is like following by a prefix of dis-. Dis- is placed at the beginning of like forming the antonym dislike. Dislike is a new root word in this case. Prefixes are also attached to create new words, such as: like + ine + ss => likeness. Like is a root word here attached by a prefix of in- and a suffix of ss forming the elaborated root word likeness. (Nandwani & Verma, 2021)

Infixes and circumfixes attachments are rarely found in English. Infix is an affix which attaches to the root word inside of the word form. It is only 0,036% of all the affixes categories found in this study. When a word are added into the initial and final side of the word to produce a new word, it is called a circumfix. Hindered is a root word here which consist the presence of prefix and suffixes around it. E + quip + ment + er + s =>equ power ment agent pl. Prefixes distributes to many parts are e- and s, the suffixes is cover er. The middle element quip used twice as the word form of this root (quip in the form

of verb and equip in the form of verb). Same as affixes, roots can distribute into many words. Aushot is a root word here which consists of two affixes and three roots around it. A + un + shot + ed + able = dis prefer herald mis able. Has been researched there are instances where one root is found in as many as 58 different word forms.

3. Digital Discourse and Social Media

Digital discourse is considered to be a distinctive mode of communication influenced by the rapid development and widespread use of digital technology. On a digital platform, language is manipulated through computers and mobile devices, leading to changed linguistic phenomena. Though it is generally agreed that digital discourse is at least partly written language, understanding of its exact medium and what it means for language structure and use is far from clear. Some feel this term refers to hypertext writings where interactivity plays a part (Hassen, 2016). The most obvious characteristic of digital discourse is brevity, together with a new set of rhetorical orthographic features of digital discourse such as emoticons and lolspeak, and its informal, often spontaneous nature. To sum up, it is virtually axiomatic that digital discourse triggers changes in language structure and use in a way that has not been observed through non-digital language practices and it is speculated that written language may be significantly influenced by its forthcoming profound alteration.

However, the extent of whether this develops into a unique form of language is unclear, as it is noted that while digital writing enables an audience of a size and diversity far beyond the requirements or expectations of speech or handwriting, hypertext is redefined with a relationship to oral forms and can be used as a tool to deepen understanding, allowing the author to defend their work. As a point of this paper, this new type of language will be analyzed by looking at social media, as a significant platform for linguistic expression and experimentation, on which its influence is primarily traced, and exploring the extent to which traditional rules and conventions of language are challenged, ignored, or adapted. The focus on social media is constituted by the fact that the platform has photographed a notable range of innovations, and provides a

setting conducive to pioneering research on these changes. Once the language is learned, it is used creatively to explore the communication requirements, and it is mostly developed in collaboration. A central point to this paper is the alarm that this collaborative element of linguistics is often either forgotten or ignored. (Ogundokun et al.2021)

3.1. Characteristics of Digital Discourse

The advent of computer-mediated communication has expedited the development of a new form of discourse even more ephemeral than face-to-face interaction as the exchanges take place in real time but dispersed over great distances with the use of either text-based or voice-based media. This new discourse form, hereafter referred to as digital discourse, can be observed in online conversation, phone texting, and voice chatting on platforms. Digital discourse is characterized by an informal tone, often with disregard to spelling and punctuation, and abounds with acronyms, emoticons, and other emotive or non-lexical symbols. Because digital discourse is often written on the spur of the moment, it demonstrates a unique co-creative process – when one 'talks', writes, reads, and responds, other participants are ' talking-write-reading-responding ' simultaneously (Kulkarni & Yang Wang, 2017). What sets digital discourse apart is its multi-modality – alongside linguistic elements such as orthographic words, abbreviations, and emoticons, it may include a plethora of notably non-verbal attributes, including but not limited to graphics.

Moreover, digital discourse is characterized by succinctness due to screen space limitations, the desirability of instant response, and the general trend to decreasing skill of text-recipients to linguistically complex and cognitive-intensive writing. This conciseness may result in the loss of some language functions and, on the other hand, in compression processes that involve creative ways of maximizing information. Finally, because of immediate written response character, communication in digital environments is often, unlike in writing on social media, based on the principles in use of language in conversation, resulting in a much higher occurrence of familiar and frequently used forms ambiguous in meaning. Consequently, through rapid typing or

copying from a conversation, word meanings can be disputed, negotiated and redefined within one discourse (Ahmed et al.2022).

3.2. Impact of Social Media on Language Evolution

Over the past decade, no other technology has had as profound an effect on language as social media has; it has become one of the primary drivers of language evolution (Goel et al., 2016). With such an increase in accessibility to social media platforms, there has been an undeniably fast dissemination of linguistic innovations and new word forms as written content on platforms. This kind of content has now become a large fraction of the complete textual corpus of digitized language. Language changes frequently and it is not just English that changes constantly with respect to different social platforms of today but changes constantly with respect to time alone. Over time, different groups of people start adopting different language-related behaviors that, over time, yield cultural traits or fads that can be imitated every time new speakers arrive on the scene; such behaviors can also be selective due to biases. As a consequence, different communities will typically share unique linguistic traits.

While today's young people are developing a language remarkably different from the one baby boomers like me were taught, these changes have accentuated more because of the advent of the internet. The days when one form of written language was spoken in different regions of the world are dead and gone; no longer are spelling systems so rigid that sound changes on a local level cannot be reflected in writing in daily news and governmental announcements, at a high price to norms and intelligibility. Developing a comprehensive description of the mechanisms governing the interplay between global communication and localized language practices taking into account time-sensitive data on multiple, distant dialects cannot be provided at this point. However, a preliminary analysis of the speed at which word forms show up and persist can be carried out. Generally, the age of written forms is centered around the advent of the internet and mainly on Facebook content. It is safe to say that Twitter content diffuses, in terms of word forms, much more quickly than Facebook content; in three weeks after its first appearance in a given community, a high fraction of the words appearing during such first

three weeks will be gone. At the same time, however, a handful of the less rare word forms can last for even a whole year; disconnected from communities with later appearances, their persistence is reminiscent instead of the 'K' form of the Ising model. A related result shows how the weight of the tail of word survival distribution is heavily dependent on the connectivity of the community under observation, and is therefore susceptible to the teardown of certain borders in the global landscape. Additionally, a gross one-mode projection of the interconnected bipartite network comprising semilocal and base communities. Crucially, network nodes are semilocal base communities and, therefore, directional edges between base communities are weighted by the normalised edit distance of their most similar word strings and refer only to pairs of hypernyms. Here, a format for disposal as a supplementary and animated representation of how the evolution of interconnected, yet translargely autonomous, system might look like. Resting on publicly available data, brings about two main claims. First, the cuts related to barriers and connectivity have observable effects in linguistic behavior. Prefiguring along the following lines, artificial, but permanent or otherwise relevant cuts of the network, at key locations, can induce a period behaviour; as an example, the sudden emergence of an adoptive community as new diverse word string data pile up is evidenced. On a more general level, these results concern emerging networks on the web, whose structure influences diffusion mechanisms of language-fads. It is argued that the observed settings further motivate the necessity of respecting traditional norms of a language whilst accepting the leeway for dialogue on the extent they should apply.

4. New Word Formation on Social Media

The vast range of digitally-mediated language practices shapes the way we communicate with others. It is impossible to deny that language, alongside other social practices, is submitted to constant change. Not only is it influenced by the surrounding situation, i.e. the factors occurring in a particular situation of language usage, but also by language users themselves – their individual and cultural idiolects and sociolects. The latter is explained by a subjective approach to the principal, passive role of the language user.

Such approach emphasizes the user's independence in initiating actions, including the creativity in language used. In digital discourse, language users prominently manipulate language and create innovation. Among other possibilities, new word formation becomes a suitable field for the demonstration of agency in language used, showing that language is 'never simply 'given,' but perpetually shaped by the interests and ideologies of its users' (Kriaučiūnienė & Sangailaitė, 2016).

Newly coined lexemes have begun to sprawl over social media in such a way that they need a bigger scrutiny in a broader context of contemporary communicative practices so prevalent in the age of postmodernity. In order to shed additional light on the innovative character of today's language, the aforementioned aim will be pursued through the investigation of the emergence of new word forms via affixation in the context of social media. Besides the rationale for coining new words in social media, attention will also be given to the newly-formed words created through affixation, which are – with the implementation of a diachronic approach – perceived as a recently emerged trend. A detailed spotting and interpretation of the processes of derivation, which is inextricably interwoven with the capturing of trends and patterns of new word formation, is directly related to the examination of word forms created with the involvement of prefixes and suffixes therein.

4.1. Affixation Trends and Examples

During the last decades, the world has witnessed the rapid changes of the digital era. This revolution has transformed numerous aspects of society, including the way people communicate. As a result, language practices have stratified, with new forms of communication appearing and coexisting with established ones. This has led to particular changes in language use, which are particularly evident when languages evolve in dual contexts. The present contribution investigates a particular process of language change, the emergence of new words, in the context of current digital practices. To this end, user-generated text in advanced data form has been analysed, focusing on a range of sites and different kinds of textual products. The analysis examines the occurrence of the English derivational affixes in the texts, with a

particular focus on new word forms. To understand the role of the medium in this process, linguistic forms are compared across the texts from different sites. The findings show the varied presence of affixation processes, including the emergence of new words, that reflect broader societal changes, as users adapt language to digitally mediated contexts and new genres. On the other hand, the reception of these "experimental" forms varies across different communities, with some emerging forms being intensely replicated at large scale, suggesting evolving linguistic practices and acceptance of innovation.

4.2. Factors Influencing New Word Forms

The recent surge in linguistic innovations, addressed by novel terms and word forms, is even more rapid and transient in social media contexts, urging a scientific inquiry into its underpinnings. To that end, the logistics of new word formation, arguably driven by a complex conflux of technologic, cultural, social, political, and economic dynamics, are investigated here. This paper contemplates recent word coinages in the form of affixation, and engages with various factors underlying these language change phenomena. In doing so, several data analysis approaches are combined, applying linguistic and data science tools to gather and analyze relevant linguistic data from YouTube and Twitter. The thus-assembled linguistic corpus is apprehended in a large-scale perspective, pursued through descriptive, visual statistical summaries, which reveal and elucidate current language trends. These trends serve as a vantage point to delve into the overall linguistic behavior of contemporary networked users, and offer hints/impetus for broader theoretical and methodological frameworks in the study of digitally mediated discourse (Kriaučiūnienė & Sangailaitė, 2016).

The inquiry into the mechanics of word emergence and lexical expansion is brought to the forefront of linguistic research, reflecting a broad interdisciplinary interest in the ways language innovates and verbal creativity thrives. Particularly, the logistics of new word formation, an intricate yet capricious process that is (re)defined with every coinage, have spurred scholarly inquiry across generations, from antiquity to the digital revolutions of the 21st century. However, the latter change in linguistic landscapes is

beholden some entirely new processes, yet unexamined or understudied: the gravitational pull of memes, viral tendencies, communal engagement, hashtag campaigns, networked languages and influencer coinages to name just a few. Finally, users coin new forms either out of necessity, when attempting to express ideas for which no form is readily available, or because it is an intellectual and creative pastime, aimed at impressing others by the depth and breadth of literacy. Some (primarily speakers of local dialects) also coin new forms to make the distinction between insiders and outsiders clear. It ensures that only those who can understand new coined forms would be able to participate in conversation threads. However, a vast majority of word coinages feature linguistic forms that, although not generally known, are immediately understood by others as they are contextually crystal clear (Goel et al., 2016).

5. Conclusion

The paper examines affixation and the formation of novel words in digital media, particularly social media, and considers the function of these strategies in the creation of new words. The data for analysis consists of potentially novel words collected on social media, together with the context in which these words appear. After categorisation both affixes and base words are examined in order to determine which strategies are used in the creation of novel words. Though compounds are frequently thought of as a part of affixation, here they are considered a separate phenomenon. The analysis of novel compounds on both platforms reveals evidence of creative word-formation processes. English affixes are divided into three categories: boundstems, e. g. -tastic; freestanding bound morphemes, e. g. -y; and word-formation processes, e. g. smush. Arabic affixes are classified into existing, conventionalised affixes and those acquired as a result of the diglossia created by the medium of communication.

Boundstems seem to be the most frequently attached in some shape or form to the base word, as are the ellipsis of the base word repeated in the affixed form, or vice versa. Freestanding bound morphemes on the other hand are most often either the entire construction, from base word to affixes, is repeated separately, or the base is deleted and only the affixed form is

commented on. For instance, beautiful is commented on and the response is "haters will hatey," which is quoted verbatim in the comment or a more recent response, "I get soangry," (again, the construction all the way to the Arabic verb "to be" is repeated in the comment). Smushes sometimes also follow repeat deletion, which is illustrative of the innovative ways people engage in affixation. Building on an existing word-formation mechanism, compounding, new compounds emerge. Since social media networks constitute a specific platform, a variety of compounds have arisen anew that do not occur as a permanent form elsewhere, e. compound usernames, which, in the context of this study, fall under intended non-durative use. Hence the assumption is that these on some level represent novel word forms.

5.1. Summary of Key Findings

First, a morphological analysis is carried out on 2009 neologisms, which are instances of affixation according to current terminology. Second, on the basis of the genuine word forms identified by the morphological analysis, combinatorial patterns are identified. It is found that 97.58% of the new word forms have a format that has never before been attested. The results suggest that containment testing is an effective method for identifying genuine word forms (Kriaučiūnienė & Sangailaitė, 2016). The speed with which new word forms emerge and the influence social media has on this are also examined.

NLP tools are not fully suitable for tasks such as the one carried out here. In response, to the need for a more tailored approach, a method is developed for uncovering genuine word forms from raw text. Despite creating a considerable amount of new word forms, Northern Sotho speakers are found to be the least creative in forming new word forms on social media. Further, it is discovered that many other new language varieties exist on Twitter, although they are not named as languages, and they are used either in non-standard writing or with particular hashtags.

5.2. Implications for Linguistic Studies and Language Teaching

Digital discourse imposes an accelerated evolution of everyday language dependent on portable gadgets and diverse applications. Alphabetic written

communication reflects spoken utterances through multisymbolic inscriptions corresponding to phonetic sequences. Spoken language declines within digitalized discourse replaced by shorthand with a focus on its written representation. Finitude of phones as well as typing blind have generated many neologisms. Second reason is the digital media online content of which increases at a murderous pace. Consequently, people skim reading and concentrate exclusively on new or ambiguous items. Last but not least, trio of most popular social media consisting of various platforms founded on writing posts.

Rapid increase of newly established communication platforms based on short messages. Consequently, these shall turn into the principal media of sending some information. The recent signatures reveal that sometimes it is actually false. As a result, recipients have a shortage of time to verify the authenticity of the message. Suffixes are appended not only to words but also to abbreviations what at first blush seems nonsensical. Online discussions take place concerning smog, precisely, the snow in Smog what is the Neapolitan answer in jest. Varieties of mushrooms, especially the chanterelles, are gathered somehow in the tatortok. Polling these facilities, clients shall send small number of messages. Other uses of the hashtag would be the game of repeating it to convert the innocent word into a phrase containing the same word what brings amusement. Frightening information is pinned in order to alarm viewers. The USB sticks or wall connectors have secret compartments in which microphones can be concealed.

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