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A Morphological Study of Neologisms in Nigerian Cyberspace Interactions

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Abstract: This study is a morpho-stylistic analysis of neologisms in Nigerian cyberspace interactions. While language use on the internet has attracted the attention of scholars at all linguistic levels, there appears to be a paucity of studies on the morphological aspects of newly formed words in Nigerian cyberspace interactions. Therefore, this study examines the morpho-stylistic features of newly coined words in Nigerian cyberspace interactions. The data for the study are drawn from Facebook. They consist of fifteen (15) Facebook interactions. They were screenshotted, cropped, and presented as data for analysis using Dokulil's (1958/1962) onomasiological theory of word-formation, as revised by Stekauer (2005/2006), with insights from Bauer's (2004) morphological productivity. The findings reveal that Nigerian Facebook interaction is a productive site for creating, adapting, and circulating neologisms and that these neologisms are motivated not only structurally but also semantically and pragmatically. It concludes that Facebook provides a productive environment for lexical innovation in Nigerian digital discourse.

Keywords: neologism, cyberspace interactions, Facebook, onomasiological, morpho-stylistics

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is a morphological study of neologisms and meanings in cyberspace interactions in Nigeria. It investigates the concept of linguistic novelty of new words, expressions, and structures emerging in language use, often reflecting cultural, technological, interpersonal, and social shifts in cyberspace discourse. These novel words or expressions help to expand the vocabulary of cyberspace lexis through frequent and regular usage both online and in day-to-day communications among users.

All living human languages are constantly changing (Smith, 2005, p. 1). The incessancy of language change often leads to the indeterminacy of the meaning of certain words, and this confirms the flexibility of language. That is, language is dynamic in nature and not static (see Janssen, 2016, Smith, 2005, Pengcuo & Zhang, 2020). Now and then, new inventions, innovations and technologies surface, so the formation of novel words or expressions to explain or describe these new experiences becomes exigent and inevitable. Eventually, new words are formed creatively by language users who need to express themselves. These coinages are what we refer to as neologisms - newly coined or invented words by the language community (see Cabré, 1999; Nkhata, 2019; Janssen, 2016). For example, before 2007, there was no such word as "hashtag," but it became a trending word for the first time on August 23, 2007, when tech developer Chris Messina first used it. Messina proposed using the hash symbol (#)

to group topics on Twitter (now X.com), and Stowe Boyd immediately popularised it; since then, hashtag has stuck as a neologism that is no longer new. In fact, since the emergence of social media in Nigeria during the early 2000s, a new community of language users with distinct linguistic features and stylistic behaviours based on shared knowledge has simultaneously emerged. Such emergence has also brought about the proliferation of new words and/or existing words being accorded new meanings based on contexts of usage.

Basically, anywhere language is used, stylistic investigation becomes relevant since stylistics is the empirical study of different styles of language use based on peculiarities and domains ranging from individual, group, field, profession, genre, and so on. One such domain is the internet, which, on its own, is termed "global village" (Crystal, 2001; Taiwo, 2012, p. 2). Interestingly, the primary means of connection and interaction in this global village is language. In the words of Odebunmi (2001, p. 6), "language ties members of a speech community together in continuing interrelationship". It is clear now that language is a pivotal tool with which humans express and share their thoughts, feelings, intentions, and emotions.

The internet, itself, is a different world or virtual world of its own and a key site for social interaction, civic engagement, and identity negotiation (Crystal, 2001, p. 12; Chilwa, 2014, p. 81; Maledo, 2023, p. 111). The interactants on this internet space are referred to as netizens or "digital natives" or "digital citizens (see Raji-

Oyelade, 2014, pp. 15-16). The language variety that these netizens use in their communications is termed “Netspeak” by Crystal (2001). To Crystal, Netspeak can also be called “Cyberspeak,” which includes all orthographic, graphic, and grammatical forms in online communication (Crystal, 2001, 17).

Since the development of the Internet in the USA in the 1960s till the 2000s, there have been new trends in the use of English (Netlish) in social media. Due to the urgent need to communicate, especially among young internet language users, the English language has been subjected to several modifications and changes to suit their communicative purposes. The language of the internet often involves the use of emojis, emoticons, logograms, abbreviations, acronyms, clipping, sentence fragments, misspellings, respellings, smileys, blends, localised expressions, slangy terms, taboo words, homophonic single graphemes, language mixing, Pidginised expressions, Americanised forms, consonant clusters, vowel elision, number-letter homophones, alphanumeric fusion words, lack of punctuation, and so on. In fact, the distinctiveness of internet language behaviour and communication patterns has led to the coining of a new field of study termed Internet Linguistics (Tamanno, 2024, p. 7). In his words:

Internet linguistics is in its infancy. The direction is developing rapidly. Today, there are many areas in the field of internet linguistics research: Internet Syntax, Internet Semantics, Internet Morphology, Analysis of Internet Discourse, Methods of Transmission (phonological, graphological, multimedia), Psycholinguistics, Sociolinguistic Directions in Internet research and projection and by analogy with traditional linguistics (see Tamanno 2024, p. 7).

The above simply suggests that internet linguistics has permanently emerged as a sub-branch of linguistic science, validating the internet as being sufficiently resourceful for the generation of linguistic data. There is a considerable amount of web data, multimedia, three-dimensional images, infographics, forums, communities, social media, blogs, Vlogs, messaging apps, online news, memes, GIFs, and so on. With all of these, the internet has now become the commercial hub where linguistic data can be generated and sourced for any research in language studies.

Cyberspace Interaction in Nigeria

Cyberspace interaction relates to the socially networked communications on the internet among users with distinct shared knowledge. The users, who are predominantly young folks, often engage in the invention of buzzwords or lexical innovation- the creative use of novel lexical items or the ability to expand the vocabulary of language by admitting and assimilating new words (Adeoti, 2019, p. 42; Maledo, 2021, p. 270). Cyberspace is a virtual world created by interconnected

computers and computer networks on the internet. It is a conceptual electronic space unbounded by distance or other physical limitations. The term was coined by William Gibson in 1982 to describe an advanced virtual reality network (see Horak, 2008, p. 122). For Taiwo (2018), cyberspace is a blend of the first morpheme in cybernetics (the study of how information is communicated in machines and electronic devices) and space (a generic term to denote a platform or environment where people can interact). The interactions on cyberspace produce a culmination of texts, or “cybertexts” in Lacanshire’s (2004, p.1) terminology, thus: “cybertexts are the pairs of utterance-message and feedback-response that pass from sender-writer to listener-reader, and back, through a channel awash with noise”.

The utterance-message / feedback-response above refer to the chitchats, threads or conversational interactions on the internet, while the channel points to any of the social media platforms, apps or handles like Facebook, WhatsApp, X.com (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Telegram, TikTok, Snapchat, LinkedIn, including a host of others. Since the introduction of all of these trending social media platforms, Nigeria, as a nation, has been and is still being a welcoming and bustling hub or haven for their continuing growth and popularity globally.

Historically, the introduction of social media in Nigeria followed the liberalisation of the telecommunications industry and the rapid expansion of internet access in the 2000s, transitioning from cybercafes to mobile-influenced access. While the global platforms emerged earlier, their adoption in Nigeria became significant between 2004 and 2010, and since then, the population of social media users in Nigeria has increased dramatically. In fact, according to the World Population Review of Social Media Users by Country (2026), Nigeria is ranked tenth in the world. Before the commencement of the social media era, one landmark event occurred: the launching of mobile phones by the then President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999. This marked the beginning of a new style of communication. In the early 2000s, however, there was, for the first time, access to the internet, but it was largely limited to cybercafes, with platforms like Yahoo Messenger and MSN Messenger being popular for instant messaging.

Shortly, social networking technologies emerged and changed everything, with Facebook being launched in 2004 and BlackBerry Pinging (BBM) in 2006. This became popular between 2010-2012; 2go in 2007 but mostly used between 2010-2013; WhatsApp coming on board in 2010; Twitter (now X.com) surfacing in 2006; YouTube & Google arriving in 2011; Telegram 2013; Viber and Imo showing up in 2016 & 2017 respectively; and of course, TikTok emerging latest in 2020. It is the evolution of these social media interactive outlets and many other Nigerian-oriented sites like

Nairaland.com, Naijaborn, Gbooza, NigeriaConnect.com, among others, that cater specifically for Nigerians (Alade, 2017, p.9). These have culminated in what is now known as cyberspace interaction in Nigeria.

Neologism as a Word-Formation Process

Neologism is a morpho-lexical process of inventing or coining new lexemes into the vocabulary of a language. In morphology, neologisms are newly formed words or expressions created through standard word-formation processes to describe new concepts, technologies, experiences, inventions, or social phenomena. Neologisms may have fluctuating spellings or even usages before finding their way into the dictionary if they become widely accepted (Nkhata, 2019, p. 8). New words or expressions are consciously or unconsciously created by language users to name new concepts, experiences, or situations. This is due to the dynamic nature of language, which enables speakers/writers to creatively select from a finite set of rules that allow them to produce an infinite number of novel but understandable words or phrases. In this way, neologism is to be viewed as a highly productive process of creating novel words and expressions in a language. In fact, it is the concept of Linguistic Creativity (morphological productivity) that enhances what is now being termed morphological productivity (Bauer, 2004; Plag, 2002; Katamba, 1993; Wolfgang & Ladanyi, 2000).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this study, an eclectic approach is adopted in explicating the data, using Dokulil's Theory of Word-Formation (DTWF) as the main theoretical perspective. DTWF was first propounded in 1958 as a theory of onomasiology, but with further development in 1962, it became a universal theory for any morphological analysis, and was also greatly reviewed, revised and simplified by Stekauer in 2005. It is an open-ended theory which states that a name, a word, a linguistic expression can freely be constructed provided such construction meets Dokulili's four onomasiological conditions, viz. SUBSTANCE, ACTION, QUALITY & CIRCUMSTANCE. Where the *substance* means the new word or lexical item that is formed, which itself must be meaningful, *action* refers to morphological process involved in the creation of a new word; the *quality* captures the syntactic category, that is, every word formed must be traceable to a word class (part of speech) or grammatical category; while the *circumstance* point to the fact that every new word formed is specified by time, place, manner and the domain of usage (context) like sports, football, pop culture, entertainment, fashion, technology, gaming, betting religion, politics, advertisement, relationship, and other emerging domains.

Apart from the theoretical approach above, insights are also drawn from Bauer' (2004) idea of

Morphological Productivity, which looks into the ability of morphological rules and/or word-formation processes to be used resourcefully to create novel items; as well as Crystal's (2001) notion of *Language and the Internet*, which is an aspect of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). To Crystal, the internet language isn't 'damaging' language but an evolving linguistic landscape.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of neologisms, which is an aspect of lexical innovation, has drawn significant attention in recent years, with scholars exploring various aspects and implications. For instance, Adeoti (2016) examines the lexical innovation process in T-Shirt labelling among final-year students of a Nigerian university, focusing on the creative use of morphological processes employed by students in the expression of certain beliefs and opinions of themselves and also in the creation of novel nicknames that are peculiar to them. Similarly, Maledo (2021) studies morpho-lexical creativity, pointing to lexical innovation in Joe Ushie's poem as it helps to resonate the theme of socio-political happenings in Nigeria. In another work, Bamigbola and Adeleye (2016) observe the use of neologisms among bus conductors in Lagos metropolis, explaining how these bus conductors or drivers' assistants, who are often called *agbero* in Nigerian motor park parlance, make choices from the linguistic system (grammatical and lexical choices) to express appropriate experiential meaning, that is, meaning concerned with the construal of their world experience. Interestingly, the neologisms that enhance ethnic politics in the Nigerian "change" regime are investigated by Rose and Ezeifeke (2018). They focus on the influx of ethnically skewed neologisms in the projection of power struggles and ideological contestations in these new lexical derivations and formations through the lens of CDA.

From the digital space perspective, Zubairu *et al.* (2020) explore the morpho-stylistics of crisis-motivated words in the online newspaper headlines of the Kogi State election of 2019. The findings reveal that neologisms are among the dominant morphological formations in the headlines that are capable of motivating crisis. Similarly, Taiwo and Donte (2020) explain the discursive functions of coinages (neologisms) in the Nairaland virtual community, adopting Fairclough's approach to CDA to account for the manifestations of linguistic novelty in the language of these cyberspace citizens as a means of expressing the multicultural consciousness and multiple linguistic and social identities of these users.

Internet slangs or what is, also called cyber slang or slanguage (see Odebunmi, 2016, p. 9), is a form of neologisms in both content and form. In this light, Maledo and Edobor (2023) analyse Nigerian internet-based slang morpho-semantically, revealing that these slangs are a means of forming in-group identity and

concealing certain secrets from members who do not have shared knowledge with the slang users in an interaction at a particular time. It is an aspect of language change which may be used by certain groups to differentiate themselves from other groups (Matsumoto, 2019, p. 200). Amadi *et al.* (2023) study the notion of new Englishes in the Nigerian context on social media. To them, the emergence of these new Englishes is due to the urgent need of young people online to communicate; as a result, they resort to importing words or expressions from indigenous Nigerian languages like Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo, and inserting, blending and incorporating them with or into English language expressions in interactive communications.

Costa *et al.* (2022) analyse the morphosyntactic and semantic formations of the COVID-19 or Coronavirus-related neologisms and neoterms. The study suggests that one of the most regular and productive word-formation processes in the creation of neologisms and neoterms is derivation. To them, these new lexical units—neoterms and neologisms—emerged for two main reasons: to designate new concepts which appeared within a specialised context and to transfer information produced by experts to a non-expert audience. Dahunsi and Aragbuwa (2025) examine social media-based political neologisms in Nigeria's 2023 presidential elections. Exploring the structural patterns as well as the semantic-cum-pragmatic implications of these political neologisms. Furthermore, Alfred (2019) attempts a morpho-semantic analysis of Netspeak neologisms in fashion and entertainment blogs in Nigeria, and the findings show that the dominant word classes that characterise the coined neologisms are nouns, verbs, and adjectives, and that there are no neologisms from the closed-class words like prepositions, pronouns, and conjunctions found in the data. This present study is different from the ones reviewed above in the sense that it focuses on neologisms on Facebook from the point of view of morphology, deploying an eclectic approach for vivid and analytical descriptions of the neologisms, which appears unavailable in existing studies.

METHODOLOGY

The data generated for this study consist of forty-eight (48) Facebook posts that contain instances of neologisms. After a thorough screening, fifteen (15) texts were then purposively selected due to the morphological processes involved in their creation and their stylistic features. The method of collection is by screenshotting and cropping specific posts featuring the use of these neologisms. The choice of Facebook as the cyberspace platform for the collection of data is premised on the fact that Facebook, as of late 2025 and early 2026, remains the dominant social media platform in Nigeria, with user numbers estimated between 38 million and over 47 million Facebook users across the country. The names and images of the Facebook posters are removed or blurred for ethical reasons.

The analysis of the data is guided by Dokulil's Onomasiological Theory of Word-Formation (1958) as reviewed, revised and simplified by Stekauer (2005/2006) with insights from Bauer's (2004) theory of Morphological Productivity. This theory is appropriate for analysing the data in the sense that it propounds four onomasiological categories with which a word can be described explicitly. The data is coded as Text I to Text XV for ease of identification and analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Text I: FAMCLIENTS

A Blessed Monday to all my Famclients who have been patronising our brands. Cheers 🍷
from #MumDeez_Affections_Hub

 Daramola A. Authority

 Like

 Comment

 Send

The substance in the above text is “famclients”, which is formed through the morphological action of blending. It has the quality of a nominal group, and it is used in the online circumstances of business/marketing by online business vendors as a shout-out or appreciation to their customers for their recent purchase. It is a term of endearment that business owners or service providers adopt as a persuasive strategy for continuing patronage. It is a word formed by blending *family* and *clients*. Apart from that, it also serves as an indirect advertisement by the user in registering the presence or existence of his/her goods or services in the online space to the awareness of prospective customers. In fact, Lieber (2009, p. 52) avers that “blending is used quite a bit in English in advertising, product-naming, and playful language”. Similarly, Beliaeva (2019), in line with Bauer (2004), concludes that the formation of blends, to a large extent, may give rise to productive constructions where part of a word that was once blended is used to form further blends (p. 21).

Text II: CROSSPOSTING

Crossposting to other FB groups that you belong often helps to attract more followers and engagement.

#crossposting

[See insights](#)

   1

“Crossposting”, the substance of Data II, is also formed through the action of blending to form a complex word: cross + post + ing. As used in this context, it is a verbal noun. In Facebook lingo, “crossposting” is when you publish the same post to multiple places, pages, or groups you belong to or manage. It is mainly used for content management and community building. It is a distribution tool used by Facebookers and /or online marketers to make their content reach different audiences, without re-creating the content each time. It

means reusing a single piece of content across pages, groups or business accounts. Crossposting is a gerundive compound word that is used both as a noun and as a verb in online interaction. This word is not older than 2019 because it began to be used for the first time when Facebook introduced a new feature to its app called *groups* or *pages* in April 2019. Since then, the word “crosspost”, with its derivatives “crossposts”, “crossposting”, “crossposted”, has come into existence as a new word capturing a new experience.

Text III: POV

There's freedom of speech 🗣️
But freedom after speech is not too sure 😊
POV...as you are opening mouth
waaaaah ,please also be at alert 🚨 and watch
your back 💯
And please dont forget to have kept genuine
evidence and some money 💰 for case
incase 😊
#friday #celebration with loved ones 🍷
A green and pinky Friday #asoebi

“POV”, which means “point of view”, is an alphabetism/initialism used as a nominal group in the context of viewers’ immersion. It is a socio-pragmatic act used to immerse viewers in a specific, relatable, or fictional scenario as if they are experiencing it. It implies a personal subjective experience that invites the readers to feel as though they are part of the action, often to invoke empathy or share a unique, humorous update. POV is always written in capital letters, often at the initial position of a post with either a colon (POV:) or an ellipsis (POV...). Although POV appears to be a pronounceable abbreviation (acronym), its letters are said one after the other in actual usage, which makes it to be an alphabetism or an initialism.

Text IV: IN ADDY

Happy birthday in addy to my very good friend, JD Royal, aka. the mobile dictionary. Make sure you enjoy. Everything good will come! Cheers 🍷 ...

[See insights](#)



“In addy” is an open compound formed through the morphological processes of compounding and clipping. The full compound word is “in advance” or “in addition”, but these are clipped to “in addy” depending on the intended semantic implications and circumstances of usage. It has become a Nigerian social media newly coined slang mostly used on Facebook and WhatsApp to mean “in advance,” typically when wishing someone a happy birthday ahead of the actual date. However, “addy” itself is originally a short form of “address” (usually an email address). It is erroneously used as an abbreviation for “advance”. In the context of this phrase, “in addy” is an adverbial phrase of time, as in “Happy Birthday in addy” or “In addy to my lovely sister”. Additionally, “addy” is a special type of clipping called hypocorism - a particular process in which a longer word

is reduced to a single syllable by adding a “-y” or “-i.e.” suffix to the end of the shortened word (see Yule, 2010, p. 56). This is the process that results in “addy” (advance) or other words like *selfie* (self-taken picture), *movie* (moving picture).

Text V: INSPO



The substance “inspo” is clipped from “inspiration” and, as a suffix, it is used frequently on social media to refer to visual content, ideas, or individuals that spark or inspire creativity or innovation. It points to, for instance, the person or firm behind a person’s outfit at a particular time. It is often used as a suffix and with a hashtag as its prefix, like *#OutfitInspo*, *#FashionInspo*, *#CakeInspo*. The usage makes “inspo” somewhat synonymous with the word “courtesy”, as in, “Outfit Courtesy: Yomi Casual Wear. From the verbal-visual text above in Sample 5, the Facebook user is obviously telling the audience the inspiration behind her outfit is that of a certain clothing vendor, *MumDeez Affection Hub*.

Text VI: FAVE

Notwithstanding the debate, Cristiano Ronaldo remains my fave. It may be difficult though but let's hope he wins 🏆 the 2026 World Cup!

[See insights](#)



This word “fave” is a clipped form of “favourite” for the things you like best. Its usage serves as a means of recommending a brand, product, or service through personal preference. Aside from being deployed for product recommendation, it is also a useful term in promotional authentication. For instance, in the Sample Text 6 above, “fave” is used to recommend, promote and authenticate Cristiano Ronaldo as the best footballer. Interestingly, heterography (variation in spelling) is one distinct feature of social media neologisms. Hence, “fave” is also seen online spelt as “fav”. Anywhere online, this word is almost always modified by the possessive adjective “my”, which makes the recommendation a personal choice.

Text VII: OOTD

#OOTD: #Heroine's Fabrics, other Fashion Concepts #MumDeez_Affection_Hub... Check it out...!



The substance *OOTD* is an acronym which means “Outfit Of The Day”, and it is used to showcase, document, and celebrate daily fashion choices. On Facebook, it serves as a visual diary where users-ranging from fashion influencers to everyday professionals-post photos or videos of their complete outfits. Such posting is often accompanied by an indirect advert giving a detailed description of where their clothes, shoes, bags, hair, and jewellery are sold or bought. In other words, the idea behind the use of *OOTD* is to popularise certain brands to attract customers to those brands.

Text VIII: FRIENDVERSARY

Happy friendversary to us, myself & my real G, William James... It's been a decade of unstoppable friendship...

[See insights](#)



The substance “friendversary” is formed through the morphological process of blending “friend” and “anniversary”. On Facebook is a yearly celebration of the date two users connected on the social media platform. Introduced as a dedicated feature, Facebook uses this event to promote interaction by highlighting the length of a friendship and sharing memories between users. It was coined in early 2015 by Facebook itself to automatically generate a video or photo slideshow featuring photos of you and the other person appearing in your news feed. It is a means of gratitude, nostalgia, reflecting shared experiences or highlighting the “how time flies” aspect of long-term digital relationships. Since its coinage, several Facebook users have been using the word to celebrate one another’s friendship tie.

Text VIX: STEEZE

With Burna Boy gifting himself with a ₦9 billion Bugatti Chiron to celebrate his recent birthday, I think he's got more steeze than every other Nigerian musician.

[See insights](#)



In Nigerian social media and youth culture, “steeze” is a popular internet slang that refers to a person's stylish appearance, confidence, composure, charisma, and fashionable way of carrying themselves. Morphologically, “steeze” is formed through the process of blending. It is widely believed to derive from the English word “style” together with the phonological element of the word “ease”, producing “steeze”, meaning “stylish ease.” Although the exact origin is debated, in contemporary Nigerian usage it has become an independent lexical item with a specialised meaning. Based on diverse usages on the internet, “steeze” could mean: “an attractive sense of style or fashion”, or “confidence and composure in one's appearance.” It serves several functions, like “complimenting someone's appearance or confidence”, “expressing admiration for a person's fashion sense”, “building identity, as young people use it to project a trendy and fashionable image”, “creating social prestige, since having it is viewed positively among Nigerian youths” and “humorous evaluation, especially when people compare who has more *steeze*. Unlike SE, where “steeze” is rare and mainly known in skateboarding (“style with ease”), Nigerian English has expanded and localised the meaning. It now refers more broadly to fashion, confidence, elegance, swagger, and overall personal carriage, making it a distinct Nigerian internet slang with a wider social meaning. Can “steeze” be considered a Nigerian internet neologism? Yes. Although the form “steeze” existed earlier in global youth slang, its current widespread meaning and frequency in Nigerian digital discourse represent a localised semantic development. In Nigerian English, it functions as a borrowed internet slang that has undergone semantic extension, and many scholars would classify its current usage as part of the evolving lexicon of Nigerian internet English.

Text X: STAYWOKE

Staywoke and don't just jump into every online business. Beware of scammers. A lot are not what they portray it to be online here. Staywoke!

[See insights](#)



“Staywoke” is a coined Facebook slang term meaning sustained alertness. It is formed through compounding as a morphological process, and in this context, it is a verb. In this case, “stay” and “woke”, the past tense of “wake”, are brought together to mean sustained alertness. It is used to stir up cyber-security consciousness among internet users. It is a pragmatic act of caution, reminding netizens to be actively circumspect so as not to fall victim to the schemes of hackers, fraudsters and/or cyber-criminals, whose activities involve money-doubling, sharing online meeting links, and e-registration for jobs.

Text XI: GOAT

It seems the goat 🐐 debate is over with Messi winning the World Cup. Fans insist C. Ronaldo is still the goat 🐐. Another World Cup Year, though... Maybe CR7's turn!

[See insights](#)

The substance “GOAT” is an acronym, and it is always written in all caps to distinguish it from “goat”, a domestic animal. “GOAT”, as used in social media in sports terms, is different from the popular domestic animal, goat. It is an acronym formed from the phrase “Greatest of All Time”. It is used to describe a footballer who is considered the best player ever because of exceptional skill, achievements, consistency, and influence. This word sprang up in football vocabulary almost for the first time in the Ronaldo-Messi competitive rivalry since the early 2010 as to who is the greatest footballer of all time between the two contenders. Since its coinage in football parlance, it has also been used in different domains where there is a need for comparison among a group of competitors. So, the GOAT label has come to stay as a metonymy for any athlete who is not just the best of their era, but also better than all who have played before them.

Text XII: SEC

"Be real for a sec 😊. Who do you think kids take after more – mom or dad? 👨‍👩 Share your thoughts! 📢

#BeReal #MomVsDad"

Me: I go for MOM 😘👉 Hemosis Official 🍰
DROP love 😊 emojis if truly u love ur
MOM let's go Guy's 🥰🥰🥰🥰🥰🥰🥰🥰🙏🙌
😊

#mom #dad #love

In Nigerian social media usage, “sec” is formed through the morphological process of clipping from the English word “second.” It is commonly used as a discourse marker to ask someone to pause briefly or to signal that the speaker has just realised something, wants clarification, or is about to make an important point. In Nigerian social interaction, *sec* means “wait a second,” “hold on,” “just a moment,” or “pause.” It is often used before expressing surprise, questioning an earlier statement, or drawing attention to something. The formation of “sec” is through clipping (also called truncation), where the longer word second is shortened by removing the final syllable while retaining its meaning. Unlike the full word “second”, which primarily denotes a unit of time, “sec” in online discourse functions mainly as a conversational marker rather than a literal measure of time. In SE, “sec” is simply an abbreviation of “second”, often used in informal writing or technical contexts (e.g., 5 sec). In Nigerian internet discourse, however, it has developed a pragmatic conversational meaning equivalent to “wait,” “hold on,” or “let me process this,” making it more of a discourse marker than a time expression. Thus, “sec” illustrates how a simple

clipping can acquire an expanded communicative function in Nigerian online interaction, serving as a marker of hesitation, surprise, emphasis, or conversational management.

Text XIII: OG

Messi opened his 2026 World Cup with a hat-trick. Cheers 🍷 to the OG of football ⚽!



In Nigerian internet culture, “OG” is formed from an initialism, and it is a noun. It means “Original Gangster”. However, this meaning has broadened considerably beyond its original sense in the Nigerian gaming community and youth culture on the internet. It is often used to refer to a respected veteran or pioneer in a particular field; someone who has been around for a long time and possesses considerable experience; a person regarded as influential, knowledgeable, or highly respected within a community. For instance, referring to “Messi as the ‘OG’ of football” in this context implies that Messi is the greatest when it comes to football. Other examples may include, “That guy is an ‘OG’ in crypto trading” (he is an experienced and respected crypto trader); “Don Jazzy is an ‘OG’ in the Nigerian music industry” (he is a veteran and highly respected figure in the industry). So, despite originating from the African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in the United States, where it originally meant Original Gangster, “OG” has undergone semantic broadening or shifting from “gangster” to “veteran,” “legend,” or “highly respected person, through global internet culture, music, and social media.

Text XIV: FAM

Remember, peace isn't found in revenge; it's found in release. True peace begins the moment you choose to let go.

Good evening, fam ✨

The Nigerian Internet lexeme “fam” is a shortened form or a clipping from the English word “family”. In Nigerian online communication, its meaning has broadened beyond biological relatives. It is widely used as an informal term of address or endearment among friends and online acquaintances. Any time it is used on the internet, it means friend, close associate, brother, sister, buddy, or member of one’s social circle. It can also be used to address someone generally in a friendly or familiar way, even if they are not personally known. It is also used in the plural form like “fams” or with the creative respelling as “famz” in some online communities. In SE, family refers primarily to people related by blood, marriage, or adoption. The clipped form “fam” in Nigerian internet usage, however, has undergone semantic extension. It no longer necessarily refers to biological family - it refers more broadly to friends, peers, followers, or anyone with whom the

speaker wishes to establish familiarity, cordiality or solidarity.

TEXT XV: OMO

Omo
Na today I know say I be government school
teacher
300 scripts marked and still counting
I was not informed 🤔🤔
God Abeg oooo 🙏

The term “omo” is one of the most widespread discourse markers in Nigerian online communication. Although it originates from the Yoruba language, it has become a pan-Nigerian internet expression used by speakers of different ethnic backgrounds. In standard Yoruba, “omo” literally means “child”, “offspring”, or “person”. However, in Nigerian internet English and online discourse, it has undergone semantic extension. It no longer primarily refers to a child. Instead, “omo” functions as an emotional exclamation meaning: “wow!”, “seriously!”, “oh my goodness!”, “can you believe this?”, “this is unbelievable!”, “I’m shocked”, “I’m impressed”, or “this situation is intense”. So, its exact meaning depends on the context and the speaker’s emotion. From a stylistic perspective, “omo” illustrates how Nigerian internet English incorporates indigenous Nigerian languages into digital communication. It demonstrates lexical borrowing, semantic extension, and pragmaticalisation, reflecting the dynamic and multilingual nature of online interaction in Nigeria. It has evolved from a Yoruba noun meaning “child” into a highly productive interjection and discourse marker that conveys a wide range of emotions in Nigerian digital discourse.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The study has revealed that Nigerian Facebook interaction is a productive site for creating, adapting, and circulating new words. The fifteen analysed data reveal that Facebook users manipulate existing lexical items to create words that are concise, expressive, socially meaningful, and appropriate to the communicative demands of digital interaction. The analysis shows that blending, clipping, compounding, initialism/alphabetism, and lexical borrowing are prominent morphological processes involved in the formation of the sampled neologisms. For instance, “famclients” and “friendversary” are formed through blending, while “inspo”, “fave”, “sec”, and “fam” demonstrate clipping. “Staywoke” illustrates compounding, whereas “POV”, “OOTD”, “GOAT”, and “OG” exemplify initialism or alphabetism. The findings also show that cyberspace neologisms perform communicative and stylistic functions. Such newly coined words are used to express solidarity, identity, solidarity, admiration, caution, social belonging and humour. For instance, “staywoke” functions as a pragmatic act of caution in relation to cyber-security; steeze is used to describe style, composure, and

admirable self-presentation, while “GOAT” functions as an expression for exceptional achievement in sports discourse. Furthermore, this study has revealed that these neologisms are not only structurally but also semantically and pragmatically motivated. The newly coined expressions acquire meanings that extend beyond their conventional lexical scope. For example, “sec”, originally a shortened form of second, functions as a conversational marker meaning “wait,” “hold on,” or “let me process this,” while “fam”, derived from “family”, is used to establish familiarity and solidarity with friends, followers, and online acquaintances. Similarly, “omo”, a borrowed word from Yoruba, has developed from its literal meaning of “child” into an interjection expressing surprise, shock, admiration, or intensity.

Finally, this study concludes that Facebook provides a productive environment for morphological creativity in Nigerian cyberspace discourse. The fifteen neologisms studied have shown that Nigerian Facebook users reshape, shorten, combine, borrow, and semantically extend existing lexical forms to meet their communicative needs. It also shows that these neologisms’ productivity extends beyond their morphological structures, as their meanings and functions are shaped by the social, cultural, technological, commercial, and pragmatic contexts in which they are used. This is evident in expressions such as “fam”, “omo”, “steeze”, and “OG”, which illustrate the interaction between morphology, semantics, pragmatics, and Nigerian sociocultural experience.

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