

**A MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF WORD FORMS USED ON
INSTAGRAM**

BY

SUNDAY OGHENEKEVWE EMMANUEL

ART2004774

**DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS STUDIES
FACULTY OF ARTS**

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY
NIGERIA**

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**A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that this project was carried out by **SUNDAY OGHENEKEVWE EMMANUEL**, with MAT. No. **ART2004774** in the Department of Linguistics Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City.

Mr. Agharuwa G.O.
(Project Supervisor)

Date _____

Confirmed by

Prof . M. S. AGBO,
(Head of Department)

Date: _____

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I, **SUNDAY OGHENEKEVWE EMMANUEL** with matriculation number **ART2004774** declare that this work titled “**A MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF WORD FORMS USED ON INSTAGRAM**” has successfully passed the anti-plagiarism test (with a score of %), and so does not violate any copyright regulations.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to God Almighty for giving me the grace to complete this project work and my academic programme at large.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply thankful to the Divine for bestowing upon me the endurance and fortitude to reach this significant milestone.

My heartfelt gratitude goes out to my parents, Mr and Mrs Sunday Oghosomo and to my siblings, Vincent O. Sunday and Juliet O. Felix for their constant support, encouragement, prayers, and financial assistance during my academic journey.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the morphological structures and forms of language used by Instagram users, highlighting the innovative ways in which they modify and create words in their social media interactions. The set objectives include: to identify and categorize various morphological patterns, including neologisms, abbreviations, and blends, that are commonly used in Instagram posts and comments; to examine the sociolinguistic factors that influence the creation and usage of these morphological forms, including age, cultural background, and social context; to analyze the impact of Instagram's visual nature on language use, particularly how images and emojis interact with and shape word forms; and to contribute to the broader discourse of language evolution in digital communication by offering insights into how social media platforms influence morphological innovation in everyday language.

Data for the study was collected using a qualitative content analysis approach focused on Instagram posts and comments. The primary source of data consisted of public posts tagged with specific hashtags relevant to language use, such as wordplay, slang, and neologism, which are likely to showcase a rich variety of morphological innovations. Additionally, a sample of comments beneath selected posts were included to capture the interactive aspect of communication on the platform. A systematic sampling method was employed to ensure diverse representation across different user demographics, including age, gender, and cultural background. The data collection also considered varying types of users, such as influencers and everyday users, to examine any variations in morphological language use. This process was conducted over a specified timeframe to ensure relevance and currency in the examples being analyzed.

Qualitative content analysis was utilized to systematically analyze the morphological structures identified in the Instagram posts and comments. The

analysis involved coding the data to identify recurring patterns, categories, and themes related to morphological innovations, such as initialisms, abbreviations, and affixations. Each identified instance of morphological structure was examined in context to understand its usage, meaning, and potential sociolinguistic influences.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

In the age of social media, platforms like Instagram have transformed the way individuals communicate and express themselves. This shift has introduced a plethora of new linguistic forms and styles that reflect the dynamic nature of contemporary language use, particularly in informal settings. The motivation behind this study is to explore the morphological aspects of word formation that emerge in Instagram interactions. As users navigate their everyday lives through posts, comments, and captions, they create and innovate linguistic forms that are often influenced by cultural, social, and technological factors. By focusing on the morphological characteristics of these word forms, this research aims to highlight the evolution of language in the digital age while capturing the nuances of identity and community that emerge within these interactions.

Morphology, the branch of linguistics concerned with the structure and formation of words, serves as the primary lens through which this research is conducted. The project investigates various word forms, such as neologisms,

abbreviations, acronyms, and blends that are prevalent on Instagram, examining how users manipulate language to serve their communicative needs. Through a systematic analysis of these morphological constructions, the study elucidates the rules and patterns that govern word formation on this platform, contributing to our understanding of language in the context of social media.

This study's contribution to knowledge lies in its interdisciplinary approach, merging insights from linguistics, communication studies, and digital culture. By documenting and analyzing the morphological innovations that occur on Instagram, the research provides a clearer picture of how language adapts to new communicative environments. Furthermore, it contributes to the ongoing discourse regarding language change and variation, particularly in relation to youth culture and digital communication. Ultimately, the findings of this study will not only enrich linguistic scholarship but also inform educators, linguists, and social media researchers about the evolving nature of language in the digital age, offering a significant perspective on the interplay between language, identity, and technology. The language used on social media is referred to “Netspeak”, “internet language” or “computer-mediated communication (CMC)” language. It has witnessed a significant

evolution since its inception with the advent of the internet. Netspeak encompasses an array of linguistic elements, including acronyms, emoticons, emojis, internet slang, and informal lexis utilized in online communication. Its genesis can be traced back to the emergence of so-called "chat speak" in the late 20th century with the rise of online chat rooms and instant messaging platforms. Netspeak has since expanded across various digital platforms and has become ingrained in contemporary digital discourse.

The history of Netspeak can be linked to the rise of digital communication technologies in the 1980s and 1990s. The early forms of Netspeak were primarily characterized by the use of abbreviations and acronyms, such as "LOL" (Laugh Out Loud), "BRB" (Be Right Back), and "TTYL" (Talk To You Later), which were employed as convenient shortcuts for conveying messages in real-time online discussions (Crystal, 2011). Emoticons, the progenitors of today's emojis, also played a pivotal role in the development of Netspeak, serving as expressive visual aids to compensate for the absence of nonverbal cues in text-based communication (Baron, 2000).

The evolution of Netspeak has been profoundly influenced by the socio-technological developments in internet culture. The increasing prevalence of

social media, instant messaging applications, and online forums has nurtured a fertile ground for the proliferation of Netspeak. Internet slang, characterized by the incorporation of colloquial language, novel terms, and puns, has also contributed to the dynamic evolution of Netspeak, reflecting the amalgamation of diverse linguistic influences from various online communities and subcultures (Thurlow, 2006). The advent of emoji keyboards and text-based expressive symbols has further broadened the realm of Netspeak, introducing a visual dimension to digital communication.

The development of Netspeak parallels the transformative impact of the digital landscape on language use. As a unique form of communication, Netspeak has transcended conventional linguistic norms, paving the way for novel pragmatic conventions, stylistic variations, and innovative language structures. The amalgamation of traditional language with digital linguistic conventions has given rise to multifaceted forms of expression, reshaping the communicative landscape and fostering new communicative practices in virtual environments. This dynamic evolution underscores the adaptive nature of language, reflecting the ongoing interplay between technology, culture, and language evolution in the digital age.

In conclusion, the history, evolution, and development of Netspeak epitomize the dynamic fusion of language and digital technology. From its nascent stages in online chat rooms to its pervasive presence on contemporary social media platforms, Netspeak has undergone a remarkable transformation, redefining the boundaries of digital communication and perpetuating new linguistic norms. The continued evolution of Netspeak underscores its enduring relevance in the digital age, illustrating the intricate interweaving of language innovation, technological advancements, and digital sociolinguistic practices in shaping contemporary linguistic landscapes.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The problem this project addresses is the lack of comprehensive understanding and academic exploration regarding the morphological structures and innovations present in the language used on Instagram. As one of the most popular social media platforms, Instagram fosters a unique communicative environment where users frequently manipulate existing language forms or create new ones through abbreviations, blends, and neologisms. However, existing linguistic studies have primarily concentrated

on formal language use and have largely overlooked the dynamic and evolving nature of language within informal digital contexts. Consequently, this gap in research limits our understanding of how social media impacts language development, particularly in terms of morphology. This study aims to fill this gap by systematically analyzing word forms used on Instagram, thereby contributing valuable insights into the interplay between language, technology, and contemporary communication practices.

1.3 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this project is to analyze the morphological structures and forms of language used by Instagram users, highlighting the innovative ways in which they modify and create words in their social media interactions. The set objectives include:

- i. to identify and categorize various morphological patterns, including neologisms, abbreviations, and blends, that are commonly used in Instagram posts and comments;

- ii. to examine the sociolinguistic factors that influence the creation and usage of these morphological forms, including age, cultural background, and social context;
- iii. to analyze the impact of Instagram's visual nature on language use, particularly how images and emojis interact with and shape word forms; and
- iv. to contribute to the broader discourse of language evolution in digital communication by offering insights into how social media platforms influence morphological innovation in everyday language.

1.4 Methodology

For this project, data was collected using a qualitative content analysis approach focused on Instagram posts and comments. The primary source of data consisted of public posts tagged with specific hashtags relevant to language use, such as wordplay, slang, and neologism, which are likely to showcase a rich variety of morphological innovations. Additionally, a sample of comments beneath selected posts were included to capture the interactive aspect of communication on the platform. A systematic sampling method was employed to ensure diverse representation across different user demographics,

including age, gender, and cultural background. The data collection also considered varying types of users, such as influencers and everyday users, to examine any variations in morphological language use. This process was conducted over a specified timeframe to ensure relevance and currency in the examples being analyzed.

Following the data collection, qualitative content analysis was utilized to systematically analyze the morphological structures identified in the Instagram posts and comments. The analysis involved coding the data to identify recurring patterns, categories, and themes related to morphological innovations, such as initialisms, abbreviations, and affixations. Each identified instance of morphological structure was examined in context to understand its usage, meaning, and potential sociolinguistic influences. This approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of how morphological creativity developed within the social media landscape, thereby providing insights into the broader implications for language use in digital environments.

1.5 Significance and Justification of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to illuminate the adaptive and evolving nature of language within the context of social media, specifically Instagram. As digital platforms increasingly shape communication norms, understanding how users manipulate language can provide insights into broader linguistic trends and the sociocultural implications of these changes. By focusing on morphological innovations, this research contributes to the fields of sociolinguistics, digital communication, and applied linguistics by providing a nuanced examination of how language evolves in response to new media technologies. Furthermore, the findings may inform educators, linguists, and communication specialists about the ways in which informal language practices can influence formal language use, particularly among younger demographics who are frequent users of social media.

The justification for this study is rooted in the pressing need for linguistic research that reflects contemporary modes of communication. Despite the growing prevalence of social media as a primary means of interaction, there remains a significant gap in understanding the complexities of language use in these digital environments. Traditional linguistic studies

often focus on formal and written language structures, neglecting the dynamic and creative interactions that characterize platforms like Instagram. This study seeks to provide an empirical foundation for understanding these innovations, justifying its relevance in a rapidly changing communicative landscape. Additionally, by examining how users navigate linguistic creativity within the constraints and affordances of social media, the research will contribute valuable insights into the relationship between language, identity, and social interaction, thereby enhancing our comprehension of communication practices in the digital age.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, we present a review of definitions of concept that are paramount to this research. It is divided into three sections. The first section reviews the concept of language, morphology, netspeak, and computer mediated communication. The second section discusses the previous studies while the third section presents the concerns of present study.

2.1 Conceptual Review

In conceptual review, attention is given to the different postulations or accounts about a phenomenon and how these accounts contribute to our understanding of the phenomenon.

2.1.1 Language

According to Okolo and Ezikeojiaku (1999:1) “language permeates our lives from birth to death. It is a medium by which we establish and experience our most important human relations. It serves as essential tool for conducting the most mundane transactions of our daily lives. Truly language spreads

everyone's life from birth to death, it influences individuals to develop interest in how people interest in how people of another geographical zone interact with their own means of communication". To them, language is a medium by which people establish and experience their most crucial and important human relations. By this definition, language could be seen as the important factor that brings and creates oneness among every human. Language has the ability to bring unity among different speakers from different communities, what this means is that language cannot be left in any activity or transaction being conducted in our daily lives.

In Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics (1998:672) language is seen as "the vehicle for the expression or exchanging of thoughts, concepts, knowledge and information as well as the fixing and transmission of experience and knowledge". It is based on cognitive processes, subject to societal factors and subject to historical change and development. In this definition, language refers to a specific form of expression that is restricted to humans, and differs from all other possible languages, such as animal communication and artificial language through creativity, the ability to make conceptual abstractions, and the possibility of metalinguistic reflection. In

linguistics, the ambiguity of the term language is differentiated and clarified depending on the given theoretical concept and interest through abstraction and delimitation of sub aspects. In this process the following concepts are distinguished (with varying terminology). A specific system of signs and combinatory rules which are arbitrary but passed on as conventions. Such linguistic systems, which Ferdinand de Saussure calls *langue* (*langue vs parole*), are the object of structural investigation, while research oriented towards a generative understanding of language attempts to describe the underlying linguistic competence of a speaker as well as the speaker's creative ability to produce a potentially infinite number of utterances, depending on his/her communicative.

Uwajeh (2010:9) says "language may be said to be any semantic symbolic representation intercommunication system-structure". According to Uwajeh (2010), language is an object made of both semantic and symbolic substances. Both the semantic aspect which is also known as meaning and symbolic aspect which is also known as the form part cannot be separated from each other. Language is a means of presenting reality, that is, R3 represents R2, R2 represent R1. For example, if someone says "house", the thought and the

“house” is a communicator while the other is a communicate. In another moment, the communicator turns to communicate while the communicate turns to communicator, by this, language is truly therefore an inter communication tool. Language is a system structure means the unit that makes up language i.e signs or lexical element. This definition reveals that there must be a form counterpart for meaning of an expression and vice versa. Uwajeh (2010) is right by saying language is semantic symbolic, in the sense that, there must be both form and meaning. In communication language should be in the state of potentiality when it is waiting to be used (system) and also in the state of actuality when it is actually used (structure). Uwajeh therefore is right by saying language is a system structure component.

2.1.2 Morphology

Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics (1998:770) states that “morphology is the study of form and structure of living organisms which was taken up by linguistics in the nineteenth century as a cover term for inflection and word formation”. In school grammar, morphology corresponds to the study of forms, that is, the sub disciplines of inflection as well as of the study

of word classes and their classificational criteria. In various ways word formation is treated as an independent discipline beside morphology or as a further sub discipline of morphology. It further explains that there are three types of morphological models:

- (a) Items and arrangement grammar pursued in American structuralism with consideration to distribution.
- (b) The concept of an item and process grammar (process morphology) which is fundamental to generative grammar and in which basic abstract forms are transformed into their surface structure forms and
- (c) The word and paradigm model (paradigm morphology), which posits not the morpheme, but the word as the basic element of morphological description.
- (d) The basic concepts of morphology in recent linguistics were developed in the framework of dictionary of language and linguistics structuralism. Here, morphology consists of the study of form, inner structure, function and occurrence of a morpheme as the smallest meaningful unit of language.

Arnold and Andrew (2001:xvii) defines morphology as “the study of word structure as the interface between phonology, syntax and semantics”. They argue that morphology is at the conceptual centre of linguistics. They further state that words contrast relationship with other by virtue of their forms, that is, the form paradigm and lexical groupings. Malt (2009) defines morphology as “the mental system involved in word formation or the branch of linguistics that deals with words, and how they are formed”. This definition presupposes the fact that morphology studies patterns of word formation within and across languages and attempts to formulate rules that model the knowledge of the speakers of those languages, the morphological analysis of a natural language which is a productive analysis of natural language which is a productive area of research in linguistics. Morphology therefore serves of natural language which is a productive area of research in linguistics. Morphology therefore serves as a way of gaining insight into the word structure and formation in a language.

Haspelmath and Sims (2002:3) argue that “morphology is the study of the combination of morphemes to yield words”. The definition above implies that morphemes are used to form words and that words cannot exist except

morphemes come together to form them. This may not be entirely true. Words are actually morphemes and morphemes are two categories; morphs (bound morphemes) and words (free morphemes). Not all words are formed from morphs and the fact remains that Morphs bring in an additional grammatical meaning to the root word they are added to the definition therefore does not recognize the difference between a word and a morph.

2.1.3 Netspeak

David Crystal in his book *Language and the Internet* (2001) defines netspeak as the language used in computer mediated communication, such as emails, instant messaging, and social media. Ever since the internet was introduced as a means of communication, researchers have been interested in how it affects the usage of language. The way language is used online is different from the way it is used in formal writing and also in speech. This 'online' language is based on features found both in written and spoken language, and it crosses over the boundaries that usually divide spoken and written language (Crystal 2001). Crystal (2001) calls the language online 'Computer Mediated Communication' and it contains a new kind of initialism

which is the general term for acronyms, abbreviation and multi-word phrases that are compressed into a single word.

Coleman (2012) credits role-playing gaming online as being the birthplace of CMC. Multi-user dungeon games commonly called (MUD'S are games where several users play together. According to Coleman (2012) "because of the speed of play and the relatively limited range of topics in MUD'S acronyms and abbreviations become common place among the users of these games" (Coleman, 2012: 270). The norms and conventions applied when writing online is vastly different from both written and spoken language. The internet offers completely novel dimension of stylistic variation (Crystal 2004). Dent describes the phenomenon of internet language as a "blurring of boundaries between spoken and written language" (Dent, 2007:4). For example, the grammar is characterized by highly colloquial constructions and non-standard use (Crystal 2001). Orthographic features have been affected,, for example through the removal of capitalization and punctuation (Crystal, 2001).

2.1.4 Computer Mediated Communication

Computer mediated communication refers to human communication via computers there are what we call computer mediated tools. This tools allow

different persons all over the world to send messages, pictures to one another according to Kaolan and Haenlein (2010:61) computer mediated communication “allow people to create, share or exchange information, ideas and pictures or videos in virtual communities and networks”. The people that are communicating or exchanging messages do not see each other.

Walther (1992) defines computer mediated communication as “synchronous or asynchronous electronic mail and computer conferencing, by which senders encode in text messages that are relayed from the senders’ computer to the receivers”. In other words, communication between people in different places via the instrumentality of computers could take place synchronously (at the same time) and asynchronously (at delayed time). Lane (1994) stressed that CMC is essentially a medium of written discourse. Lane also suggested that in order to partake in CMC, one must have a minimum working knowledge of computer modems and communication software and be familiar with process of engaging in interpersonal CMC.

2.2 Previous Studies

Baym et al (2004:299) carried out a two studies comparison of college students' interpersonal communication online, face to face and on the phone. A Communication diary was used to assess the relative amount of social interactions college students conducted online made a comparison between face-to-face conversation and telephone calls. A study carried out reported the use of internet with long distance social circles to the use of other media within those circles and examines participants' internet interaction was perceived as high in quality, but slightly lower than other media. The results indicated that while the internet was integrated into college students' social lives, face to face communication remained a dominant mode of interaction.

Walter (2011:443) compared computer mediated communication and interpersonal relations, in his study the term computer mediated communication can also be referred to as social media language or CMC while interpersonal relations can be termed face-to-face communication his study reported that computer mediated communication is important in establishing an interpersonal communication. Most good friends met virtually before they met in real life. Yarnhagen, Mcfall, Pugh, Routledge, Sumidamac Donald, and

Kwong (2009) carried out a study to find out whether there were any differences between how different types of informal language were used in IM conversation. This study reported that the most common features of IM language included abbreviations such as 'BRB', acronyms such as 'lol' and also included typing completely in lower case (Varnhagen et al 2009).

2.3 Concerns of the Present Study

The concern of this study or the linguistics view point is to show the relationship between linguistics and net speak or computer mediated communication, the relationship between this two concepts can be said to be Internet linguistics and Internet Linguistics deals with the synchronic analysis of language in all areas of Internet activity, including email, the various kinds of chat rooms and games interaction, instant messaging, and Web pages, and including associated areas of computer-mediated communication (CMC), such as SMS messaging (texting) (Crystal, 2005:1). The emergence of a new academic discipline does not take place very often, but the arrival, evolution, and rapid growth of the Internet in the last three decades has affected most if not all aspects of human life and society and has aroused diverse academic

interests, thus giving birth to a new discipline – Internet Studies. Internet Studies is an interdisciplinary field that studies the social, psychological, pedagogical, political, technical, cultural, artistic, and other dimensions of the Internet and associated information and communication technologies. In recent years, Internet Studies have become institutionalized as a course of study at several institutions of higher learning, especially in the West. Internet-focused contributions to the field come from traditional academic disciplines such as geography, sometimes using the label cyber-geography, sociology, or cyber-sociology, psychology, or cyber-psychology, and literature, or cyber-literature. In fact, it seems there are as many “cybers” as there are subjects. Linguistics also has a major contribution to Internet Studies through its new domain which can as well be referred to as cyber-linguistics. The new linguistic field was proposed and pioneered by the English linguist David Crystal. He, however, did not call it “cyber-linguistics”. He named it “Internet Linguistics” (Crystal, 2011). The Internet has permitted language to evolve a new medium of communication different in fundamental respects from traditional speech and from writing. It is this new “electronic medium” and the type of language features that are unique to the Internet (i.e. Netspeak) which Internet

Linguistics concerns itself with. The field is also known by various other terms – Cyber-linguistics, Net-linguistics, Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), and Web-linguistics. Its studies are intended to benefit both linguists and Web users.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CONTENT ANALYSIS

3.0 Introduction

Content Analysis is a research method used in linguistics to analyze and interpret the content of written, spoken, or visual communication. It aims to systematically identify and examine the presence, meanings, and relationships of words and concepts within texts and speech. The theoretical framework of content analysis is grounded in the principles of semiotics, discourse analysis, and linguistic anthropology, drawing on theories of language, communication, and social interaction to understand the meanings and messages embedded within linguistic texts. Content analysis incorporates methods from quantitative and qualitative research, allowing for both numerical and interpretive analysis of linguistic data.

One of the pioneering proponents of content analysis in linguistics is Harold D. Lasswell, an American political scientist, and communications theorist. Lasswell's work laid the foundation for the study of mass communication and propaganda. His seminal text "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society" outlines the basic principles and techniques of

content analysis, emphasizing the importance of understanding the symbolic meanings and cultural contexts of language use.

3.1 Theoretical Foundations of Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research method that is deeply rooted in various theoretical foundations within the field of linguistics analysis. It involves systematically analyzing and interpreting the content of texts, conversations, and other forms of communication to uncover underlying meanings, relationships, and patterns. The theoretical foundations of content analysis draw from multiple disciplines and schools of thought, including semiotics, discourse analysis, linguistic anthropology, communication theory, and social psychology, to name a few. The integration of these diverse frameworks allows for a comprehensive approach to understanding language and communication.

One of the key theoretical foundations of content analysis is semiotics, which is the study of signs and symbols and their use and interpretation. Semiotics provides the theoretical underpinning for content analysis by emphasizing the significance of linguistic signs in conveying meaning. According to semiotic theory, language is a system of signs and symbols that

carry specific meanings, and content analysis seeks to decode these meanings within linguistic texts.

Within the realm of discourse analysis, another theoretical foundation for content analysis, language is viewed as a social practice that reflects and shapes social structures and power relations. Discourse analysis focuses on how language is used to construct and convey social identities, as well as how it influences and is influenced by social contexts. Content analysis, within this framework, seeks to uncover the ideological and discursive patterns embedded in linguistic texts and conversations.

3.2 Theoretical Orientation of Content Analysis

The theoretical orientation of content analysis as a theoretical framework in linguistics analysis encompasses a diverse range of theoretical foundations that contribute to the understanding of language, communication, and social interaction. These theoretical underpinnings provide a robust framework for examining the content of texts, conversations, and other forms of communication to uncover underlying meanings, relationships, and patterns. This essay will discuss the theoretical foundations of content analysis, drawing

from semiotics, discourse analysis, linguistic anthropology, communication theory, and social psychology, and highlight their significance in shaping the theoretical orientation of content analysis.

Communication theory also plays a significant role in shaping the theoretical orientation of content analysis. This theoretical framework examines the processes and dynamics of communication in various contexts, providing insights into how messages are transmitted, received, and interpreted, as well as the effects of communication on individuals and societal structures (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). In the context of content analysis, communication theory informs the study of the transmission and reception of messages through linguistic texts and communication channels.

Finally, social psychology offers theoretical insights into the ways in which language influences attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions. Theoretical principles from social psychology are integrated into content analysis to examine the impact of language on individuals and groups, as well as the role of language in shaping social interactions and relationships. The theoretical orientation of content analysis in linguistics analysis is deeply rooted in diverse theoretical foundations, including semiotics, discourse analysis, linguistic

anthropology, communication theory, and social psychology. The integration of these theoretical frameworks provides a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to understanding language, communication, and social interaction within diverse cultural and societal contexts.

3.3 Theoretical Organization of Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research method used to analyze and interpret the content of communication, such as texts, images, and audiovisual materials. It is a widely used technique in various fields, including linguistics, sociology, political science, and media studies. In linguistics, content analysis is used to study the structure, meaning, and use of language in various contexts. The theoretical organization of content analysis in linguistics involves various theoretical frameworks that guide the analysis and interpretation of linguistic data.

Another theoretical framework that informs the organization of content analysis in linguistics is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of language and power, developed by scholars such as Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk. CDA aims to

uncover the ways in which language is used to reproduce and challenge social inequality and power relations. According to CDA, language is a site of struggle and contestation, and the analysis of language should be embedded within the broader social and political context. In content analysis, the theoretical organization of CDA involves an emphasis on the analysis of discursive strategies and linguistic features that contribute to the reproduction or transformation of power relations.

For example, in a study of media representations of refugees, an analyst using CDA may focus on how language is used to construct and perpetuate certain stereotypes and ideologies.

The theoretical organization of content analysis in linguistics involves the use of various theoretical frameworks to guide the analysis and interpretation of linguistic data. These theoretical frameworks provide different perspectives and tools for understanding the structure, meaning, and use of language in different contexts. By drawing on these theoretical frameworks, researchers are able to conduct systematic and rigorous analyses of language content, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in linguistics and related fields.

3.4 Theoretical Applications of Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research method used to analyze subjective content, such as written or visual materials, with the goal of identifying patterns and insights. In the field of linguistics, content analysis can be applied as a theoretical framework to investigate linguistic features and communication patterns in various texts, conversations, or other forms of communication.

The theoretical applications of content analysis in linguistics are wide ranging and can be used to study language use in different contexts. For example, content analysis can be applied to analyze the language used in political speeches, media representations, or social media conversations. This method provides linguists with the ability to systematically study and interpret language use, which can help to uncover underlying meanings, attitudes, and beliefs within the texts or spoken language.

Content analysis can also be used in the study of language in political speeches and rhetoric. Linguists can apply content analysis to analyze the language used in political speeches, debates, and public addresses, in order to understand how politicians and public figures use language to convey their messages and influence public opinion. This research can provide insight into

the rhetorical strategies employed in political communication, as well as the impact of language use on the perception of political figures and their policies.

The theoretical applications of content analysis in linguistics provide a valuable framework for studying language use and communication patterns in various contexts. This method can be applied to investigate language in media representations, social media conversations, political speeches, and other forms of communication, in order to gain insight into language use and its impact on society. By systematically analyzing language use, linguists can uncover patterns, meanings, and attitudes within texts and spoken language, contributing to a deeper understanding of communication and language use in different contexts.

3.5 Theoretical Applications of Content Analysis to Netspeak

Theoretical applications of content analysis in the study of social media netspeak and computer-mediated communication offer valuable insights into language use in digital environments. Content analysis can be applied as a theoretical framework to investigate linguistic features and communication patterns in social media posts, comments, and conversations, with the goal of

identifying patterns, meanings, and attitudes within digital communication. This essay will provide a detailed discussion of the theoretical applications of content analysis to social media netspeak and computer-mediated communication, supported by definitions and references.

The theoretical applications of content analysis to social media netspeak and computer-mediated communication can be understood within the context of linguistic research. Language use in digital environments is influenced by various factors, such as the affordances of different social media platforms, the use of emojis and other nonverbal elements, and the impact of digital interaction on linguistic norms. Content analysis allows linguists to study these factors and their impact on language use, providing a theoretical framework to investigate communication patterns in social media netspeak and computer-mediated communication.

Theoretical applications of content analysis to social media netspeak and computer-mediated communication contribute to a deeper understanding of language use in digital environments. By using content analysis as a theoretical framework, researchers can systematically investigate communication patterns, language variation, and the impact of digital interaction on language use. This

research provides valuable insights into language use in the context of social media networks and computer-mediated communication, contributing to a broader understanding of digital communication and its influence on linguistic practices.

3.6 Summary of Chapter

Content analysis is a research method that is deeply rooted in various theoretical foundations within the field of linguistics analysis. The theoretical foundations of content analysis in linguistics analysis are diverse and interdisciplinary, drawing from semiotics, discourse analysis, linguistic anthropology, communication theory, and social psychology. Discourse analysis is another crucial theoretical foundation for the orientation of content analysis. Discourse analysis views language as a social practice that reflects and shapes social structures and power relations.

One theoretical framework that is commonly used in content analysis in linguistics is the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) developed by Michael Halliday. SFL is a theory of language that emphasizes the functional uses of language in social context. According to SFL, language is organized into three

metafunctions: the ideational metafunction, the interpersonal metafunction, and the textual metafunction. Content analysis can be used to investigate the language used in different types of media, such as newspapers, television programs, and online news articles. The theoretical applications of content analysis in linguistics provide a valuable framework for studying language use and communication patterns in various contexts. One theoretical application of content analysis to social media netspeak is the study of language variation and change in digital communication. Content analysis can be used to analyze the linguistic features and communication patterns in social media posts and comments, in order to understand language variation, the use of slang, and the influence of digital platforms on language norms.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter entail the analysis and discussion of the findings of the data collected and organized for the present study. The study is divided into three sections: 4.1, the internal structure of Instagram’s wordforms; 4.2, the processes in Instagram’s wordforms; and 4.3, the discussion of findings.

4.1 The Internal Structure of Instagram Wordforms

Instagram wordforms have different morphological structures. Morphological structures are structures of words that distinguish one word from another. There are three morphological structures of are: simple structures, compound structures and complex structures.

4.1.1 Simple Wordforms

Simple wordforms consist of one morpheme. They are usually indivisible and they cannot be broken down into smaller or meaningful parts.

The data in (1) below shows some simple Instagram wordforms:

1. a. Ance - Announce
- b. F8 - fate
- c. Pls - please
- d. t3 - tree
- e. 2day - today

From the above data, it is the case that simple Instagram wordforms show a fusion of alphabets and numbers. The numbers are often pronounced as letters. Some more data are presented in (2) below:

2. a. Ba3 - battery
- b. 29t - tonight
- c. L8 - late
- d. C - see
- e. H8 - hate

4.1.2 Compound Wordforms

Compound wordforms are made up of two separate words joined together to make a new word. These words unlike simple ones, can stand alone,

have meaning, function and make complete sense. Consider the data in (3) below:

3. a. Gf - Girl friend
- b. Bf - Boy friend
- c. Sm - Social Media
- d. Hm - Head mistress
- e. Fu - for you

It is observed from the data set in (3) above that most netspeak compound structures are formed by taking the initials of the two formal written words. The data in (4) shows some more compound structures:

4. a. Ft - Full Time
- b. Tb - Throw back
- c. Op - Off-point
- d. Vn - voice note
- e. Np - no problem

Some compound forms that we consider compounds are also formed by abbreviating two words consider the data in (5) below:

5. a. Skulby - school boy

- b. Clsrn - class room
- c. Secgen - secretary general
- d. Nvm – never mind
- e. Strm - rest room

4.1.3 Complex Wordforms

The third wordform of the internal formation of Instagram wordforms are those with complex structures. These are termed complex structures because their formal forms are made up of both lexical and functional categories. The data below are examples of netspeak's complex structures:

- 6. a. AMA - Ask me anything
- b. LOL - laughing out loud
- c. IMO - in my opinion
- d. TTT - tell the truth
- e. WULLNP - wish you long life and prosperity

These complex structures of Instagram wordforms as seen above often takes initial letters from word to pass or communicate messages among netizens.

Other examples are seen below:

7. a. AFAIK – as far as I know

b. Brk - be right back

c. Brs - behind the scene

d. Btw - by the way

e. HMU - hit me up

4.2 Morphological Processes in Instagram WordForms

The data collected and analyzed for the present study shows that there are four morphological process noticeable in the wordforms and they are Numeration, Alpha-numeration, Clipping and Initialisms.

4.2.1 Numeration

Numeration is the process of using numbers to replace words or sentences and phrases. There are basically two types of numeration processes which are: lexical numeration and sentential numeration. Lexical numerals refer to those wordform where numbers are used to replace words. Consider the data in (8):

- a. 8 - Ate
- b. 2 - twice/two
- c. 5 - Bye
- d. 4 - Four/for/fore
- e. 3 - Tree
- f. 1 - One
- g. 7 - Perfect
- h. 3 - You
- i. 6 - Sense

Sentential numerals on the other hand consist of combination of numbers used to replace whole sentences. Consider the data in (9):

- 9. a. 253 (he loves you)
- b. 183 (I hate you)
- c. 143 (I love you)
- d. 443 (they love you)

4.2.2 Clipping

This process entails the reduction of a word to one of its parts (Marchad and 1969). Clipping is also known as truncation or shortening. The data in (10) show a number of clipped wordforms on social media:

10. a. Doc - doctor
- b. Fac - faculty
- c. Sch - school
- d. Gym - gymnasium
- e. Lib - library
- f. Hos - hostel
- g. Admin - administrator
- h. Tho - though
- i. Lap - laptop
- j. Uni - university
- k. App - application
- l. Fav - favorite
- m. Ex - examination

The above are examples of clipped abbreviations. They are used in formal writing also these clipped abbreviations that serve as words in some media communication involves the cutting off the last part of a word, using only the beginning of the word to stand for the entire other example are:

11. a. Min - minutes
- b. Rep - representative
- c. Fri - Friday
- d. Bro - brother
- e. Prof - professor

Here the words are clipped in order to allow for fast typing and chatting, like said earlier some are used in formal context while majority are used only in chatting situations.

4.2.3 Blending

Blending is the combination of clipping and compounding in which new words are created by the overlap of words or fragments of existing words. Blending is of two kinds: word -word blending and word- number blending. Word-word blending is when two or more words are clipped and then joined

together to form a new word. Word-word blending is a process among other processes of Instagram word forms. Consider the data in (12) below:

12. a. Emotags - emotion and tag
- b. Gootube - google and youtube
- c. Wefie - we and selfie
- d. Shopaholic - shop and alcoholic
- e. Smog - smoke and fog
- f. Bio pic - biographical and picture
- g. Kidult - kid and adult
- h. Edutainment - education and entertainment

We also have what we call word-number blending. This is when numbers are joined with a word to form a new word. The data are in (13) below:

13. a. 2mr - tomorrow
- b. 2day - today
- c. Ba3 - battery
- d. B4 - before
- e. 29ite - tonight

- f. H8 - hate
- g. 5re - fire
- h. 2geda - together
- i. 2L8 - too late
- j. 6nwen - since when

4.2.4 Initialization

Initialization is a word formation process in Instagram wordforms. Under initialization we have: abbreviations and acronyms. Abbreviation is a process that is used to shorten words. Some of the abbreviations are also used in formal writing while a major number of these abbreviation are only used. Consider the data in (14) below:

- 14. a. Imp - impossible/ important
- b. Bcz - because
- c. Cul8r - see you later
- d. 1dafl - wonderful
- e. Blz - business
- f. Bmd8 - be my date
- g. Arnd - around

Abbreviations are of different forms. We have what we call stylish abbreviation; they are different from other forms of abbreviation. Examples are:

15. a. Aiiit - alright
- b. Roomie - roommate
- c. Bunkie - bunkmate
- d. Hubby - husband
- e. Lappy - laptop
- f. Addy - advance
- g. Chairmo - chairman
- h. Presido - president
- i. Pappy - father
- j. Lera - latter
- k. Bera - better

Phrases and sentences can also be abbreviated. Abbreviation does not apply to only words. Most times this type of abbreviations include numbers and letters in forming a word. For example:

16. a. B4n - bye for now

- b. Dnt bl8 - don't be late
- c. Ih8u - I hate you
- d. L8r 2nt - later tonight
- e. Bmd8 - be my date
- f. Cul8r - see you later
- g. 6nwen - since when

Abbreviation also means shortening of words but there is a major difference between abbreviation and clipping. Abbreviation is the result of shortening or reducing while clipping is the process of shortening a word.

The second under initialization is acronyms. These class of word forms entails the use of the first letter or numbers that sound like letters, of words in phrases or sentences to form an acronym that is treated as a word on Instagram.

Examples are:

- 17. a. LOL - Laughing Out Loud
- b. I12 - I want to
- c. I 8 U - I Hate You
- d. LMC - Loan Me Cash

- e. TMTT - Tell Me The Truth
- f. WOM - Word of Mouth
- g. BAE - Before Anyone Else

4.2.5 Deletion

Deletion is a morphological in Instagram and it involves deleting some part of the word and retaining some. It is different from clipping in the sense that word initial position media and final can be deleted the same time. Deletion is mainly of two kinds: only vowels deletions and vowels plus consonants deletion. In only vowel deletion, all vowels are deleted and the consonants are retained. Consider the data shown (18) below:

- 18. a. Clss - class
- b. grt - great
- c. Mrkt - market
- d. Hstl - hostel
- e. Rstrm - restroom
- f. Ltr - later
- g. pls - please

- h. Slf - self
- i. plc - place
- j. Nt - not
- k. bt - but
- l. Rm - room
- m. hv - have
- n. hrt - heart
- o. schl - school
- p. chr - chair
- q. brk - break

The next type of deletion is the vowel + consonant deletion where both vowel and consonant are deleted to form a word. Consider the data in (19) below:

- 19. a. Imp - impossible
- b. K - okay
- c. Trkn - trekking
- d. Fwd - forward
- e. Bc - because

f. Tns - thanks

g. Tmr - tomorrow

4.3 Discussion of Findings

This section entails a detailed discussion of the organized data in section 4.1 and 4.2 above. From our findings it was discovered that there are three internal structures for wordforms on Instagram and they are: simple, compound and complex structures. Firstly, under the simple structure words that are these structures are made up of one words. We also discovered that simple words are used on Instagram, but in different forms. Examples of simple words used on the Instagram are:

Bk – book

Pls – please

L8 – late

A – hey

The compound structures are made up of two separate words joined together to make a new word. Consider the examples below:

Gf - Girlfriend

- Bf - Boyfriend
- Sm - Social Media
- Hm - Headmistress

Thirdly, complex structure entails the combination of two or more words which usually have different word classes unlike compound which has the same word class. Examples are.

- AMA - Ask me anything
- ASAP - as soon as possible
- LOL - laughing out loud
- IMO - in my opinion
- CuL8r - see you later
- Leme - leave me alone
- TTT - tell the truth
- WULLNP - wish you long life and prosperity
- SMH - shaking my head

We also discovered that there are five (5) word formation processes.

Clipping

Blending

Initialization

Deletion

Numeration

Clipping is one of the ways words are created or formed in network. It involves the shortening of a longer word. These clipped words that serve as words in netspeak or computer mediated communication involves the cutting off the parts of a word. Clipping most times reduce the word to one syllable. Clipping do not change the part of speech or the meaning of the word. According to Irina Arnold [ru] (1986), Clipping mainly consist of the following types:

Initial clipping

Final clipping

Media clipping

Complex clipping

These different types of clipping take place in social media. Consider the

Examples below:

Initial or (fore) clipping retains the final part of the word. Examples are:

Net (internet)

Phone (telephone)

Boot (reboot)

Gator (alligator)

Versity (university)

The second type of clipping is the final clipping. It has to do with word form where the beginning of the word is retained. This is done so as to allow for fast chatting and typing. Using the beginning of a word to stand for the entire.

Some examples of these of this type of clipping are shown below:

Doc (doctor)

App (administrator)

Lib (library)

Toi (toilet)

Sch (school)

Fac (faculty)

Hos (hostel)

App (application)

The third type of clipping is media clipping. It involves retaining only the middle of a word. Examples are:

Flu (influenza)

K (okay)

Grats (congratulations)

The last type of clipping used is the complex clipping. Complex clipping is removing multi-parts from multiple words. It is the shortening of a compound word by preserving and combining its initial part (or first syllables). Examples of complex clipping include:

Photo op (photo opportunity)

Rom com (romantic comedy)

Cable gram (cable telegram)

Op art (optical art)

Org- man (organization man)

Wikipedia (wiki encyclopedia)

From the discussion above, we have shown that there are four types of clipped word form namely, initial clipping, final clipping, media clipping and complex clipping

Another type is deletion. Most of the words have their vowels deleted For example,

Ltr (later)

Rm (room)

Slf (self)

Brk (break)

Chr (chair)

Tab (tab/tablet)

Clk (click)

Tmr (tomorrow)

This class of wordforms are the most common because people seem to get along and know what formal word is intended. The deletion of vowel also makes typing of chats and messages faster.

The third group of word formation process is numeration. This group of wordforms are very limited in number. It has to do with words forms that are numbers. Where the numbers are used to replace an entire word. We have two types of numerals.

lexical numerals

Sentential numbers

Lexical numerals refers to those forms where a number is used instead of a word. Examples of lexical numeral are

7 (perfect)

3 (tree)

2 (too, two/to)

4 (four/for/fore)

6 (sense)

3 (you)

Lastly, sentential numerals on the other hand consist of combination of numbers used to replace the whole sentences:

253 (he loves you)

183 (I hate you)

143 (I love you)

444 (they love you)

Blending is another process. A word formed from parts of two or more words. In this sense blending is a process, among other processes of creating words. Examples include:

Globish - global + English

Roomie - room + mate

Bunkie - bunk + mate

Wikipedia - wiki + encyclopedia

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

This project entailed an analysis of the morphological processes in Instagram wordforms. This work focused on wordforms used among Nigerian students especially the University of Benin. The word forms discussed has to do with the internal structure of the words used. We examined how the words are formed, their various structures/the features that constituted the structure of the words used.

This project including this is made up of five chapters. Chapter one entailed general introduction to the study, consisting of sections on the background to the study, the History of computer mediated communication, the present study, method of data collection and analysis, among others. Chapter two, concerned the literature review which had three sections. On the conceptual review, previous studies and concerns of the present study respectively. Chapter three is the theoretical framework and four focused on

the data which involved analysis and discussion. The work ends in chapter five which entails the summary of the work done, summary of project findings and the conclusion, the references then follow.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The present study entailed an analysis of the morphological processes of Instagram wordforms. The summary of the findings are as follows:

1. Instagram wordforms have three internal structures: simple, compound and complex.
2. There are five basic morphological processes in the Instagram wordforms analyzed and discussed and they are:
 - a. Clipping
 - b. Blending
 - c. Initialization (Abbreviations and Acronyms)
 - d. Deletion
 - e. Numeration

5.3 Conclusion

The present study was a morphological analysis of wordforms on Instagram. We simply established the different morphological structure and formation processes based on their internal structure and not based on their function. The work is basically a morphological work hence there is much work left undone such as establishing the inflections found in wordforms.

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