



## ANALYSIS OF WORD FORMATION PROCESS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

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### Abstract

**T**his study intends to look at the most common word formation process among Nigerian users of Social media ,taking facebook as a case study. The main aims are to describe the common features of word formation process used by Nigerian young adult Facebook users and identify the causes for employing these features on Facebook communication. The result showed that the most common word formation processes in everyday communication on Facebook are abbreviation (clipping, acronyms and combination of letters), blending and the use of emoticons with Abbreviation found as the most common word formation process among the three features . There are several reasons of this occurrence identified through online interview of the participants. Almost all the participants provided similar reasons for employing these

features. Mainly, the participants intend to save time, fill the communication gap or barrier among the users, indicate the group membership and show

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Clipping,  
Acronyms,  
Blending,  
Emoticons

some excitements that represent the emotions and feelings through communicating on Facebook. Latly, we briefly explained some other linguistic features seen from the data.

### Introduction

**T**his study is set against the background of recent technological advancements in internet-based communication and its corresponding effect on the English vocabulary. Linguist David Crystal once expressed his belief that the internet would be the trend to have the greatest impact on the

English Language in the 21st century. (Crystal, 2005) The use of internet and telecommunication technologies have truly shaped the way we communicate, contributing to the development of a whole new variety that defines internet culture. This study focuses on social media, revealing the new words that have been created as a result of social networking online.

Social networking sites (SNSs) such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube have attracted millions of English-speaking users who connect and communicate via the internet, using both computers and mobile devices. This has largely expanded the English vocabulary. ‘Apple’ and ‘Blackberry’ are no longer just fruits anymore and medical term ‘tablets’ now belongs to the social media register too. The lower-case is in ascendance, the symbol ‘@’ has flourished, the full-stop has been re-interpreted as the ‘dot’ and entire trends have been refreshed by prefixes like ‘e-’, ‘techno’, ‘tele’ and ‘cyber’. Meanings of well-known words have shifted dramatically (e.g. surf, add, friend, like, follow, spam, post, share, web), while the English vocabulary has expanded to accommodate totally new ones.

Thus, the primary purpose of this study is to investigate these new words in the lexical system of Modern English and reveal the major trends taking place within the processes of their formation.

### **History of social media**

Recognizable social network site launched in 1997, SixDegrees.com allowed users to create profiles, list their Friends and, beginning in 1998. Each of these features existed in some form before Six Degrees, of course. Profiles existed on most major dating sites and many community sites. AIM and ICQ buddy lists supported lists of Friends, although those Friends were not visible to others. Classmates.com allowed people to affiliate with their high school or college and surf the network for others who were also affiliated, but users could not create profiles or list Friends until years later. Six Degrees was the first to combine these features. Six Degrees promoted itself as a tool to help people connect with and send messages to others. While Six Degrees attracted millions of users, it failed to become a sustainable business and, in 2000, the service closed. Looking back, its founder believes that Six Degrees was simply ahead of its time (A. Weinreich, personal communication, July 11, 2007).

While people were already flocking to the Internet, most did not have extended networks of friends who were online. Early adopters complained that there was little to do after accepting Friend requests, and most users were not interested in

meeting strangers. From 1997 to 2001, a number of community tools began supporting various combinations of profiles and publicly articulated Friends. Asian Avenue, Black Planet, and Magenta allowed users to create personal, professional, and dating profiles—users could identify Friends on their personal profiles without seeking approval for those connections (O. Wasow, personal communication, August 16, 2007).

Likewise, shortly after its launch in 1999, Live Journal listed one-directional connections on user pages. Live Journal's creator suspects that he fashioned these Friends after instant messaging buddy lists (B. Fitzpatrick, personal communication, June 15, 2007)

On Live Journal, people mark others as Friends to follow their journals and manage privacy settings. The Korean virtual worlds site Cyworld was started in 1999 and added SNS features in 2001, independent of these other sites (see Kim & Yun, this issue). Likewise, when the Swedish web community Lunar Storm refashioned itself as an SNS in 2000, it contained Friends lists, guestbook's, and diary pages (D. Skog, personal communication, September 24, 2007).

The next wave of SNSs began when Ryze.com was launched in 2001 to help people leverage their business networks. Ryze's founder reports that he first introduced the site to his friends—primarily members of the San Francisco business and technology community, including the entrepreneurs and investors behind many future SNSs (A. Scott, personal communication, June 14, 2007).

In particular, the people behind Ryze, Tribe.net, LinkedIn, and Fraudster were tightly entwined personally and professionally. They believed that they could support each other without competing (Festa, 2003).

In the end, Ryze never acquired mass popularity, Tribe.net grew to attract a passionate niche user base, LinkedIn became a powerful business service, and Fraudster became the most significant, if only as "one of the biggest disappointments in Internet history" (Chafkin, 2007, p. 1).

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES**

Social network sites are: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, whatsapp, 2go,

### **Technical features of social media are**

- Offer some facilities to view profiles that display an articulated list of Friends who are also users of the system. Profiles are unique pages where one can "type oneself into being" (Sundén,2003).

- After joining an SNS, an individual is asked to fill out forms containing a series of questions. The profile is generated using the answers to these questions, which typically include descriptors such as age, location, interests, and an "about me" section.
- Most social networks also allow users to upload a profile photo.
- Allow users to enhance their profiles by adding multimedia content or modifying their profile's
- look and feel. Others, such as Facebook, allow users to add modules that enhance their profile.

#### FACEBOOK AS A CASE STUDY

The study intends to focus on common word formation process used by young generations who are active users of FB when communicating online. Therefore, in this research project, an analysis will be carried out to describe the most common word formation process used on FB .

The online communication such as FB has greatly impacted in people's live especially the young adults. The people who frequently used the FB have a greater impact on their styles in online spoken written text. The major problem that arise the widespread use of Netspeak among young adult users of FB may create a communication gap between the younger generation and older generations who are not even exposed to the online networking communication. Language inconsistency may lead to the problems such as miscommunication and communication breakdown. The parents often complained the way youngsters speak which is uncommon to hear.

According to Mathew (2000) while talking about Malayian youth, he says:

***“This group of English-speaking Malaysia Youth, like teenagers everywhere, will create terminology for group identity and as a secret language.”***

The young adult users may use different word formation process when communicating on FB. The differences of language used may lead to misinterpretation and confusion among users of different generations who are not familiar with Netspeak which contains new vocabulary, spelling modifications, symbols and emoticons.

#### **Statement of Problem**

The lexical system of modern English as it is represented in the FB has been neglected as a field of study. Many English speakers are unaware of what FB words mean as well as the process involved in its formation. This study therefore intends to solve this problem.

### **Purposes of the Studies.**

This study makes an attempt to answer the questions on how FB words are formed and also attempt to identify different words formation processes involved in its formation.

### **Significance of the studies**

To know the extent to which social media has added to English vocabulary and to analyze the word formation processes inherent in the formation.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

The path to finding answers to the research questions constitutes the research methodology. At each operational step in the research process, the researcher is required to choose from a multiplicity of methods, procedures and models of research methodology which best aims to achieve the research objectives. According to Adewumi (1988), it is important “to find a method which is compatible with the kind of thing one is trying to investigate.”

### **Nature of research**

The current research is said to be a kind of descriptive study because it attempts to describe systematically the influence of FB use on the word formation of Modern English and to describe the word formation processes mostly common in these formed words.

### **Sources of data**

The data was collected from primary sources. Data was collected through FB Using five participants chosen at random. The participants are limited to only young adults with the age range 20 to 40 years old. This is because this age group is those who are active users as they update their profiles frequently compared to the older generations. A total of thirty status updates will be analyzed in this study. They will be chosen based on their portrayed identity as Nigerians and their

status updates on FB contains elements of common features in word formation process. Participants chosen, using random sampling are contacted for their consent in order to use their data for the analysis of this project.

### **Technique of Data Collection**

The technique of observation that was used in this study is based on randomly chosen five participants. In this study, the researcher as ardent user of FB, observed the facebook comments of those five participants to identify FB words and to determine which formation processes it follows. The following step was followed afterwards to achieve research objective:

- a. Collect 5 status updates from each 5 Facebook Users
- b. Analyze the Data using content analysis
- c. Categorize and coded into 3 common word formation process: Abbreviations (clipping, acronyms and combination of letters), blending and the use of emoticons or symbols.

### **Mode of Inquiry**

This study requires quantitative modes in the data analysis to answer to the demands of the research questions. By this, quantitative mode identified the most frequent word-formation type and word class among these words collected during data collation.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

These two stages involve a number of close-knit operations which was performed with the purpose of summarizing the collected data and organizing these in a manner that they answer the research questions (objectives). According to according to Mathew, data analysis typically involves the editing, classification and interpretation of collected data. Frame work of Mathew P.H (1974)

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

[https://web.facebook.com/nimatullahi.musa?fref=fb&\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=%2Cdm-R-R&eid=ARDV\\_pdDf7uKFRssl\\_gz9kQoHpfnhT7f\\_IJQ1ZqWyF46RYoVaQDSD1P538elCkF5taZku-8dyK3exlwc](https://web.facebook.com/nimatullahi.musa?fref=fb&__tn__=%2Cdm-R-R&eid=ARDV_pdDf7uKFRssl_gz9kQoHpfnhT7f_IJQ1ZqWyF46RYoVaQDSD1P538elCkF5taZku-8dyK3exlwc)

[Nimatullahi Musa](#)

[1 hr](#) ·

MujMar.. Barakallahu fih.... May Allah bless dis beautiful couples

[Wasilat Yunusa](#) Congratulations may Allah put baraka in it

[Usman Abdullahi](#) Congratulations Congratulations..... May Allah Bless your new home

[Achor Abdulazeez Sule](#) Congratulations 🍰🍰🍰🍰🍰🍰

Data one above is a post by a facebook friend of the author, named: NimatuLahi Musa. Apart from syntactic composition in the post, such as code-switching of Arabic and English., BarakaLlahu fih is a complete sentence in Arabic, which means “ May Allah bless it. This can be glossed as follows:

Arabic: Baaraka Allahu fii hi

Gloss: Bless Allah in him(it)

Wasila Yunusa wrote the first comment to the update, which shows example of Code-Mixing, because a word from Arabic is mixed with the whole sentence in English.

The word formation process that are apparent in the status and comments of Nimatullah is the use of Clipping. NimatuLlah use “dis” in post which means “ thesev’ or ‘this”, because of fast writing involved in facebook comment and writing.

Another word formation process here is the comment of Achor AbdulAzeez Sule who use symbol : 🍰🍰🍰🍰🍰🍰 which is a sign of Happiness in other to save time.

Data 2:

would have withdrawn the agreement and contract if it was a self-financed project  
What are brothers for

**Muftah**

Thanks dear



**Prince**

The way forward is to consult some colleagues

Latest this evening

Data 2

It is a conversation between the researcher and one of his friends, through facebook messenger. The friend is named Prince and researcher named, Muftah as seen down: here, there is no much to say here

Data 3:

[https://web.facebook.com/olusola.philip?fref=nf&\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=%2Cdm-R-R&eid=ARBME8nbw1pyMNqoSdVi13ggxa55C2tt\\_9tA4kDFyDA7fHcAE3vHSSVhMsToKzOyyIzeE5zt5c9skWVU](https://web.facebook.com/olusola.philip?fref=nf&__tn__=%2Cdm-R-R&eid=ARBME8nbw1pyMNqoSdVi13ggxa55C2tt_9tA4kDFyDA7fHcAE3vHSSVhMsToKzOyyIzeE5zt5c9skWVU)

**Prince Olusola Philip**

November 15 ·



I am very sorry to announce that I'll be offline and totally out of the social media for some days. Nevertheless, I can be reached via my mobile numbers. Thanks for your love. I'll soon be back

[Quadri Hibroheem](#) Haaa our tutor what of the class that always hold

Data 3

The update writer: Prince Olusola Philips made use of Contraction in his update to save time. Example is : I'll

Here , a comment: Quadri Hibroheem said: Haaa is an exclamation mark, just to show unhappiness to the author's announcement of leaving social media for some while

DATA 4

[https://web.facebook.com/tijani.rasheed.9?fref=nf&\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=%2Cdm-R-R&eid=ARBdyERNvaLfpsA33wZdS5FiFGRAuAfxXxge1aBvcSwlbrRu84QMsZVCSWcqCoCW-GxeEKorUOhBJwODH](https://web.facebook.com/tijani.rasheed.9?fref=nf&__tn__=%2Cdm-R-R&eid=ARBdyERNvaLfpsA33wZdS5FiFGRAuAfxXxge1aBvcSwlbrRu84QMsZVCSWcqCoCW-GxeEKorUOhBJwODH)

**Tijani Rasheed** shared a quote.

2 hrs ·

NEXT

POST

»

Don't worry about the haters... They are just angry because the truth you speak contradicts the lie they live. – Dr. Steve Maraboli

Here, Tijani Rasheed made use of quotations as well as contraction ( don't)to save his time

DATA 5

I rejoice with Sister Sanni Mutmainah Ololade who made us proud and won OAU MBBS prizes. See how the congregation was hailing her and repeating her name including her colleagues. Barakallahu fik Sister Mutmainah.

I have said it several times that our sisters cover their ornaments and not their brains.

Who will help us to inform ISI management of University of Ibadan about this one as well.

Hijab haters should repent now before it is too late.

[#Hijab](#): Our pride, their fear#

[Ebun Mutiat Olayiwola](#) How I wish I'm the mother of Sanni Mutmahina Ololade. My head is just swelling. Congratulations o, Allah will put his blessings for you

[Lawal Olayiwola Adebayo](#) Am soooooo Happy...

Data 5.

Rasheed Haashim who posted the update made use of morphological process, called: abbreviation. For example, OAU, means Obafemi Awolowo University, MBBS, means Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery and ISI means International School, Ibadan

“Barakallahu fik Sister Mutmainah” here is an example of code-mixing between Arabic and English, as ‘sister’ in the sentence is English word mixed with Arabic sentence

## **CONCLUSION**

So far, we have seen that social media communication has some linguistic features, ranging from phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. this work will not give such opportunity to dwell into all linguistic features, we therefore concentrated briefly on Morphology and syntax. As a result, we have seen examples of the following from the data and sources. They are Code-switching, Code mixing, Clipping, Blending, Abbreviation and contraction. We do hope this little research can be a guide to whoever wants to write on topic

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