

Neologism: The language formation among Generation Z

Abella, Christian ✉

Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Philippines (abella.christian110494@gmail.com)

Gacusan, Mary Grace L.

Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Philippines (grasyasya09@gmail.com)

Pasahol, Alma M.

Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Philippines (alma.martinez29@gmail.com)

Ablang, Yolanda Suzima V.

Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Philippines (ysa4462@gmail.com)



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Abstract

This study explored the formation of neologisms among Generation Z within their digital discourse on Messenger. Through content analysis of group chat interactions, various neologisms prevalent among Generation Z students are identified and analyzed. The findings highlighted affixation, particularly the -ist suffix, as a common morphological process, generating terms describing individuals' skills or preferences. Also, acronyms are widely utilized, indicating students' proficiency in condensing expressions for digital communication. Furthermore, informal language and slang neologisms, borrowed from pop culture and social media, reflect sociocultural influences and contribute to social identity construction. This study underscored the dynamic language practices of Generation Z and the significant role of neologisms in their digital communication. It emphasized the importance of linguistic awareness and digital literacy in education. Additionally, deeper investigations into students' social interactions across digital platforms could provide additional insights into neologism formation and linguistic creativity. Thus, an audio-visual material in a form of an animated explainer video on neologism which could serve as a learning material can be developed.

Keywords: neologism, Generation Z, language formation, messenger, content analysis

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1. Introduction

In an era marked by rapid technological advancements and unprecedented connectivity, language is continually evolving and adapting to suit the needs and preferences of its users. Generation Z, the cohort born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, has grown up in a digital age, where online communication platforms have become integral to their daily lives. Neologism refers to the creation or introduction of new words, phrases, or expressions into a language (Algeo, 2006). It encompasses the process of inventing or coining novel linguistic forms to convey new concepts, ideas, or cultural phenomena. Neologisms can emerge as a result of societal, technological, or cultural changes, reflecting the dynamic nature of language and its ability to adapt to evolving needs and experiences (Crystal, 2016). Amusan (2023) and Nkhata and Jimaima (2020) both explored the use of neologisms and morphological inventions on platforms like Facebook and Instagram. While Amusan's study emphasized descriptive research methods and the influence of Labov's Variability Theory and linguistic relativity, Nkhata and Jimaima's study incorporated statistical elements and in-focus group interviews to analyze morphological categories and word formation rules. Both studies contributed to the understanding of how new words and linguistic innovations emerged and are employed in social media discourse.

Meanwhile, Willis (2020) took a unique approach by exploring the use of social media data for examining morphosyntactic variation and dialect syntax in Welsh. This study incorporated dialectology, syntactic variation, and computational sociolinguistics approaches to investigate the form of pronouns and the availability of auxiliary deletion. Unlike the previous studies, Willis emphasized the potential of social media data to replicate and enhance traditional research methods, providing geospatial distributions and implicational hierarchies that shed light on dialect syntax. Furthermore, Muhammad et al. (2020) focused on the language change observed in adjectives on Instagram. Their qualitative research approach examined internal and external factors influencing language change and highlights the transformation of adjectives into new forms, including English words, abbreviations, and contractions. While the previous studies explored various linguistic phenomena, this study specifically investigated the evolution of adjectives in social media discourse.

Despite their distinct research focuses, methodologies and language contexts, these studies share a common interest in investigating language change, morphosyntactic innovations and the impact of social media on linguistic patterns. They highlighted the emergence of neologisms, morphological inventions, syntactic variations and the influence of social media platforms on language. As social media emerges, digital communication platforms such as Messenger have become integral to our daily lives, transforming the way we interact, connect and communicate with others. Messenger offers a unique space for language innovation as individuals adapt to the affordances and constraints of these digital environments. Understanding the dynamics of language use on Messenger platforms is crucial for comprehending the impact of technology on contemporary communication patterns and language evolution. With the prevalence of group chat conversations in messenger applications, Generation Z has embraced a new form of communication that allows for real-time interactions, informal language usage and the rapid dissemination of ideas. It is within this dynamic linguistic space that we explore the novel linguistic creations and adaptations employed by Generation Z.

The emerging and flourishing influence of social media in language dynamicity continuously motivates researchers to conduct studies. In fact, existing researches on internet language and social media platforms dealt on neologisms on Facebook and Instagram (Amusan, 2023), Facebook and WhatsApp (Nkhata & Jimaima, 2020) and e-mails, SMS and Facebook (Ali, Be, & Hasnain, nd). Meanwhile, other studies have focused on the effectiveness of these social networking sites on the rapid spread of new words in their context (Edam, nd), the language change found in social media particularly on Instagram (Bahagia et al., 2020) and investigating the morphological categories present on Online News paving attention on the types of Morphemes (Fauzan &

Nurdiana, 2020). Noticeably, these studies utilized Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, e-mail and SMS as corpus for analysis and apparently Messenger conversations were not considered. Moreover, researches presented were foreign studies like Amusan (2023) in Southern Illinois, Nkhata & Jimaima (2020) in South Africa and Ali, Be and Hasnain (nd) in India. Further, the foci of these researches were limited in identifying neologisms and morphemes used in these platforms and seem to overlook the effect of these neologisms in communication. Clearly, the paucity of studies on neologism used by students in Messenger conversations and Tiktok contents and its effect in communication suggests needs to be addressed. Hence, this study was conceptualized.

It is crucial to note that the aforementioned studies predominantly employed Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, emails, and SMS as corpus samples, while giving limited consideration to Messenger conversations. Despite these scholarly endeavors to identify neologisms and morphological aspects within digital platforms, the broader impact of these neologisms on communication has been inadequately addressed. To bridge these notable research gaps, examining the neologistic usage patterns exhibited by Generation Z students within the context of Messenger conversations was stimulated elucidating its consequential effects on communication dynamics. By acknowledging the apparent paucity of studies in this particular domain, the current research endeavors to contribute to the scholarly understanding of language formation and innovation in the realm of online messaging platforms.

2. Methodology

Research Design - This study utilized a qualitative approach employing content analysis. Content analysis is a research approach that involves the systematic analysis and interpretation of qualitative data focusing on the content and characteristics of the information being studied (Berelson, 1952). It enables the quantification and examination of specific words, themes, and concepts, providing insights into their presence, meanings and relationships within a given context (Friedman, 2018). In this study, content analysis was applied to identify and analyze the neologisms used by Generation Z. The approach helped uncover the linguistic innovations, patterns and dynamics within their language formation process

Sources - For this study, the sources of data was derived from the accessible Messenger group conversations that took place within the subjects handled by the proponents during the school year 2022-2023. These subjects include Creative Writing and Contemporary World. These group conversations, served as the corpora of the study, provide valuable perceptions into the neologism usage within specific academic contexts. The selection of these conversations as the primary data source was ensured for the relevance and authenticity of the linguistic data collected since the subject being taught will provoke creative languages and contemporary terminologies used by the students. Further, Messenger was utilized since it is the most commonly used social media platform by teachers in connecting with their students. At the same time, it gave meaning to the gap of the research.

Further, the study focused on analyzing Messenger group conversations from Creative Writing and Contemporary World courses during the 2022-2023 academic year. The research aimed to investigate neologism usage within these specific academic contexts, examining linguistic patterns and innovations observed in the collected data. While the primary focus was on English, the study also considered any relevant neologisms from other languages used in the conversations including Filipino being its national language. However, it's important to note that the findings may be limited by the specific data sources used and may not fully represent the broader range of neologism usage in the Philippines. Additionally, the characteristics of the participants and the academic context could influence the results.

Ethical considerations were of utmost importance in the conduct of this research. The proponents ensured that all data collected from the group conversations were anonymized if needed and stripped of any personally identifiable information to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. In addition, informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in the conversations, clearly explaining the purpose of the study, the use of the data and their rights as research subjects. The study strictly adhered to ethical guidelines and regulations,

ensuring the ethical treatment of human subjects and the responsible use of the collected data.

Data Gathering Procedure - In order to gather the necessary data, the researchers obtained official permission from the concerned authorities to gain access to the group chat conversations of the selected participants. This step was essential to ensure compliance with ethical considerations and to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the students involved. Prior to data collection, the researchers informed the participants about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation and the anonymity of their contributions ensure that they fully understood the research objectives and agreed to share their chat conversations for analysis. Further, the collected group chat conversations were subjected to a thorough analysis to identify the neologisms used by the students. The researchers meticulously examined the chat conversations, scrutinizing the language utilized by the students to identify these innovative linguistic expressions. Additionally, the researchers aimed to determine the possible language mechanisms or equations employed by the students in the formation of these neologisms. By analyzing patterns and linguistic features within the chat conversations, the researchers explored how the students creatively combine and manipulate words, phrases, or concepts to generate new terms. This detailed analysis provided insights into the linguistic innovation and language dynamics exhibited by the Gen Z population, contributing to a deeper understanding of their communication patterns and language development.

Analysis of Data - Structural analysis was applied to the collected neologism data, utilizing established techniques such as semantic analysis and morphological analysis to unveil the underlying linguistic patterns and features present within the neologisms. According to Smith et al. (2022), structural analysis is a valuable technique for examining the meanings, conceptual relationships and structural components embedded within linguistic data. By employing structural analysis, the researchers were able to uncover the associations and morphological structures conveyed by the neologisms used by the students. The mode of analysis employed was justified due to its effectiveness in revealing the relationships, associations, and structures embedded within linguistic data (Hernandez & Ramirez, 2023). This analytical approach enables a comprehensive examination of the neologisms, shedding light on the linguistic creativity and processes involved in their formation.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 What are the neologisms identified in the students' group conversations?

Below is the list of saturated neologisms.

NEOLOGISMS	MEANING/DESCRIPTION
dancerist	a term used to describe someone who is good at dancing as a product of affixation (suffix -ist)
commenterist	a term used to describe someone who is fond of commenting social media posts as a product of affixation (suffix -ist)
likerist	a term used to describe someone who is fond of liking social media posts as a product of affixation (suffix -ist)
singerist	a term used to describe someone who is good at singing as a product of affixation (suffix -ist)
GG	an acronym term for "Good Game"
KS	an acronym term for "Kill Steal"
GGWP	an acronym term for "Good Game, Well Played"
SS	an acronym term for "Special Skill"
NCG	an acronym term for "Nice Game"
FR	an acronym term for "For Real"
FO	an acronym term for "Friendship Over"
BR	an acronym term for "Backread"
SNS	an acronym term for "Sorry Not Sorry"
RS	an acronym term for "Ride Safe"
dasurv/dsurb	an informal term for "deserving"
perf	an abbreviated term for "perfect"
soufer	an informal term for "super"
yo warrup	another way of saying "hey, what's up"
my g	a term used by a boy when calling a close girl friend though not really in a romantic relationship
sus	a term used for being suspicious

shook/shookt	a descriptive word when shocked or surprised
ghosted	a term used for ignored (such as in a relationship)
flex	a term used to show off
sharks	a term used to express in wanting to see something (from the Tagalog phrase PATINGen naman!)
ship	a term used to match someone (such as in a love team)
simpin	a term used to describe someone having a crush or obsession to a boy or girl
Sheesh	an expression used when you think something is cool or amazing but it can also be for annoyance or disbelief
Haysst	an expression used when somewhat worried
Shems	an expression used when amazed
Skrtr	an expression used when excited
glow-up	a term used for a make-over or transformation from bad to good
situationship	a term used to refer to a relationship without any label
bet	a term used to express agreement
red flag	a term used to refer to the negative attitude of a person
green flag	a term used to refer to the positive attitude of a person
sadge	a term used to describe sadness and depression in one
homies	a term used to refer a group of friends

3.2 What morphological processes are involved in the creation of the neologisms?

This unit presents the understanding of the underlying linguistic processes involved in the formation of these identified neologisms. Focusing on the identified neologisms data, the presence of neologisms such as *dancerist*, *commenterist*, *likerist* and *singerist* manifests the application of affixation, particularly through the *-ist* suffix. This derivational process involves the attachment of a productive suffix to base words, denoting a person associated with or possessing a specific skill or affinity. The neologisms observed reflect a creative utilization of affixation to construct new terms for individuals proficient or fond of dancing, commenting, liking and singing. Meanwhile, the utilization of acronym, as demonstrated by *GG*, *KS*, *GGWP*, *SS*, *NCG*, *FR*, *FO*, *BR*, *SNS* and *RS*, showcases an efficient linguistic strategy employed by students to abbreviate longer phrases or expressions. Acronyms serve as condensed forms of communication, commonly employed in digital and online contexts to facilitate faster and more streamlined interaction. This phenomenon highlights students' adeptness in utilizing abbreviation techniques for effective communication. Further, the inclusion of informal and slang neologisms such as *dasurv/dsurb*, *perf*, *soufer*, *yo warrup*, *my g*, *sus*, *shook/shookt*, *ghosted*, *flex*, *sharks*, *ship*, *simpin*, *Sheesh*, *Haysst*, *Shems*, *Skrtr*, *glow-up*, *situationship*, *bet*, *red flag*, *green flag*, *sadge* and *homies* sheds light on the influence of informal language in the neologism formation process. These terms often emerge through linguistic creativity, borrowing from diverse sources such as pop culture, social media and specific subcultures. Students employ these expressions to establish social identity, convey nuanced meanings, and align themselves with relevant cultural trends.

The data provides valuable insights into the linguistic processes involved in the formation of neologisms among students. The phenomenon of affixation is observed, wherein the *-ist* suffix is productively applied to existing words to generate neologisms that describe individuals possessing certain skills or preferences. This process showcases students' creativity in morphological derivation and their ability to expand the lexical inventory of the language. Furthermore, the prevalence of acronyms reflect students' adeptness in abbreviating and condensing expressions for efficient communication, particularly in digital and online contexts. This linguistic strategy allows them to convey messages more swiftly while aligning with the fast-paced nature of modern communication platforms. Finally, the emergence of informal language and slang neologisms highlights the sociocultural factors influencing linguistic innovation among students. These expressions serve as markers of social identity and are often borrowed from popular culture, social media, and various subcultures. The creation of such neologisms signifies students' active participation in the adaptation and transformation of language, as they incorporate and repurpose linguistic elements from their immediate environment.

3.3 *What audio-visual material on neologism can be developed?*

Creating audio-visual material on neologisms and their formation among Generation Z can be an engaging and informative project. Hence, an animated explainer videos can be created. An animated explainer videos that visually illustrate the process of neologism formation, including blending, borrowing, and semantic change using examples of popular neologisms among Generation Z can be developed. This can be a very scholarly material which can be used to discuss and elaborate more about words which have transpired due to Gen Z's creativity and exposure to the digital era most specifically in the world of social media. Further, animated explainer have become a potent teaching tool because they provide a visually stimulating and educational means of explaining difficult ideas. This is especially true when looking at the ever-evolving field of language and how Generation Z coined new terms, or neologisms. Animated video as appeal to visual learners and make abstract concepts more tangible and understandable, animated movies are useful for teaching neologisms (Mayer, 2009). Furthermore, students' learning can be made more interesting and engaging by the use of animation, music, and sound effects, which will boost their motivation and enhance retention (Clark & Mayer, 2016). Furthermore, by adding features like transcripts, audio descriptions, and captions, animated videos can be made accessible to students with impairments.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of neologisms identified in students' group conversations in Messenger revealed a range of linguistic phenomena. The neologisms demonstrated the use of affixation, such as the suffix "-ist," to create terms describing individuals with specific skills or affinities. Acronyms are employed as condensed forms of communication, showcasing students' efficiency in abbreviating expressions for digital contexts. The presence of informal language and slang neologisms reflected sociocultural influences, borrowing from pop culture and social media to establish social identity and convey nuanced meanings

These findings have important ramifications for teaching and learning. For teachers, the findings can inform their understanding of contemporary language trends and help them adapt their teaching methods to incorporate these new linguistic features. By recognizing and discussing neologisms, teachers can enhance students' language awareness and cultural literacy. Additionally, analyzing neologisms can provide valuable insights into students' creative processes and problem-solving abilities. For students, engaging with neologisms can foster language creativity and experimentation, as well as develop critical thinking skills. By understanding the context and meaning behind neologisms, students can deepen their understanding of language and culture. Furthermore, studying neologisms can encourage students to become more active and engaged participants in language evolution.

Further, it also offers various advantages in the context of education, especially for digital literacy, curriculum building and language instruction. New words frequently mirror societal shifts, technical breakthroughs, and cultural trends. Students can learn more about the historical events and cultural background that influence language by studying neologisms. As a result, language instruction may become more interesting and applicable to students' daily life. A dynamic and flexible approach to language training can be fostered by including the study of neologisms into language curriculum, which reflects the dynamic character of language. In addition, students' critical thinking abilities can be enhanced by analyzing neologisms as they investigate the linguistic mechanisms, cultural influences, and social settings that go into their formation. Students who do this may grow to be more astute language and media consumers. Furthermore, neologism recognition, comprehension, and usage is an important digital literacy skill. The study of neologisms can be incorporated into language arts curricula to assist students in gaining these abilities and equip them for success in the digital era.

4.1 *Recommendation*

Based on the conclusion drawn from the analysis of neologisms in students' group conversations in Messenger, it is recommended that educational institutions should emphasize linguistic awareness. This can be achieved by incorporating modules on language variation, neologism formation and sociocultural influences in language and

communication curricula. In addition, they should emphasize the development of digital literacy competencies, including the appropriate use of acronyms and abbreviations, understanding of informal language and slang and the ability to adapt communication strategies to different contexts. This will empower students to navigate digital platforms and engage in meaningful and efficient communication.

Implicitly, the study is limited by factors such as sample size, data collection methods, the rapid pace of language evolution, cross-cultural variations, ethical considerations and the subjective nature of neologism interpretation. To address these limitations, future researchers should closely monitor and analyze emerging neologisms and keep pace with language evolution among Gen Z. These could provide insights into cultural shifts, linguistic creativity and changing communication patterns, which can inform language education and policy development. Finally, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of neologism formation among students, future research could delve deeper into their social interactions, online communities and language use across different media platforms including mobile games.

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