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A Linguistic Analysis of Language Evolution in Digital Communication

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of social media on contemporary language evolution, with particular focus on neologisms, abbreviation patterns, and grammatical shifts in Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) discourse. Anchored in Usage-Based Linguistics Theory, the research adopted a qualitative design to analyse 40 purposively selected posts and comments collected over a one-month period in June 2025. The findings revealed that social media discourse is characterised by systematic linguistic innovation rather than random deviation from standard language norms. Compounding emerged as the most productive word-formation process, while initialisms dominated abbreviation patterns, particularly on X due to character constraints. The study also identified significant grammatical adaptations, including creative punctuation use, capitalisation variation, syntactic fragmentation, and emoji integration for pragmatic effect. The study concludes that digital platforms function as active and systematic drivers of language change, reflecting adaptive, efficient, and cognitively grounded responses to communicative needs rather than evidence of linguistic degradation.

Keywords: Abbreviations, Grammatical Shifts, Language Evolution, Neologisms, Social Media

1. Introduction

This study investigates the impact of social media on contemporary language evolution, with particular interest in neologisms, abbreviation patterns, and grammatical shifts in Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) discourse. The digital revolution has fundamentally transformed

human communication patterns, with social media platforms emerging as primary catalysts for unprecedented linguistic innovation and accelerated language evolution in the twenty-first century (Crystal, 2011). Traditional models of language change, characterised by gradual phonetic drift, semantic shift, and

morphological adaptation occurring over decades or centuries, have been dramatically accelerated by the interactive, global, and technologically-mediated nature of digital communication environments (Labov, 2001; Weinreich et al., 1968). Social media platforms including TikTok, Instagram, X, and Facebook create distinctive communicative contexts that systematically drive linguistic creativity through unprecedented combinations of technological constraints, social network effects, and community-based language practices that facilitate rapid innovation, diffusion, and standardisation of new linguistic forms (Thurlow&Mroczek, 2011).

Contemporary research in digital linguistics demonstrates that social media environments function as distributed laboratories for language experimentation, where millions of users simultaneously engage in creative linguistic practices that generate, test, and refine new vocabulary, abbreviation systems, and grammatical constructions at rates far exceeding traditional estimates for language change (Eisenstein, 2013; Grieve et al., 2018). These platforms provide unique technological affordances, including character limitations, multimedia integration capabilities, hashtag systems, and algorithmic content distribution, that create specific evolutionary

pressures favouring economical, transparent, and socially resonant linguistic innovations (Baron, 2008; Crystal, 2008). The resulting linguistic changes encompass systematic neologism formation processes, abbreviation patterns that respond to communication efficiency demands, and grammatical adaptations that accommodate multimodal expression within traditional syntactic frameworks (Herring, 2012).

The significance of social media-driven language evolution extends beyond academic linguistics to encompass educational practices, professional communication, intergenerational language transmission, and cross-cultural linguistic contact phenomena that influence global language use patterns (Merchant, 2012; Squires, 2010). Digital platforms facilitate unprecedented language contact situations where speakers of different languages interact regularly within shared communicative spaces, creating conditions for intensive borrowing, code-switching, and hybrid language formation. Furthermore, the democratisation of language change through viral diffusion mechanisms enables any social media user to contribute linguistic innovations that may achieve global adoption, fundamentally altering traditional gatekeeping roles previously held

by educational institutions and media organisations (Metcalf, 2016).

This study aims to provide a linguistic analysis of how social media platforms systematically drive language evolution through interconnected processes of neologism formation, abbreviation development, and grammatical adaptation. Specifically, it analyses the morphological processes characterising neologism formation in social media communication, investigates abbreviation patterns and grammatical simplification trends, and examines grammatical shifts and syntactic innovations that emerge from the integration of multimodal elements within traditional linguistic structures.

2. Literature Review

Morphology, as defined by Aronoff and Fudeman (2011), refers to the mental system involved in word-formation; it is the branch of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure, and how they are formed. In digital communication environments, traditional morphological processes undergo systematic adaptation to meet the unique demands of technologically-mediated interaction. Digital communication platforms create conditions where morphological

processes operate under distinctive constraints, including character limitations, visual display requirements, and interaction speed expectations. These technological factors systematically influence which morphological processes become most productive, leading to accelerated innovation in particular word formation strategies (Booij, 2007).

Compounding processes in digital communication demonstrate adaptation to platform constraints while maintaining traditional morphological relationships. Digital compounds often incorporate technological terminology with conventional vocabulary, creating forms like “smartphone,” “hashtag,” and “livestream.” Blending processes demonstrate systematic patterns combining initial segments of one word with final segments of another, creating forms like “webinar” (web + seminar) and “screenshot” (screen + shot). Clipping processes, where words are reduced without changing meaning or grammatical class, prove particularly productive in digital environments, with examples such as “app” (application) and “blog” (weblog) (Yule, 2007). Neologisms represent newly formed lexemes that do not yet belong to the established lexical norms of a language (Booij, 2007). Digital

communication environments function as accelerated laboratories for neologism creation, where new vocabulary can achieve widespread recognition and standardisation within compressed timeframes compared to traditional linguistic change processes.

Productivity in morphological contexts refers to the extent to which word formation rules can give rise to new words (Lieber, 2009). Digital communication environments create distinctive conditions for morphological productivity through high-frequency interaction patterns, efficiency demands, and technological constraints that systematically favour particular word formation processes. Bauer (2003) identified frequency, semantic coherence, and the ability to create new forms as fundamental prerequisites for morphological productivity. Social media platforms amplify these productivity factors through viral diffusion mechanisms, community adoption processes, and algorithmic promotion that can rapidly establish new morphological patterns across user populations. These productivity criteria directly inform the present study's approach to classifying the neologisms identified in the Facebook and X data (see Table 1).

Al-Rashid (2021) conducted a comprehensive analysis of neologism usage in social media communication, examining word formation processes across multiple digital platforms. The study revealed that blending represents the most prevalent morphological mechanism (40%), followed by affixation (21%), compounding (17%), and abbreviation (6%). Al-Rashid's quantitative analysis identified five primary semantic domains where neologisms emerge, with online behaviours and practices representing the largest category (38%) and user types/roles accounting for 23% of innovations. Al-Rashid's (2021) quantitative, multi-platform findings, which rank blending above compounding, contrast with the present study's qualitative finding that compounding is the most productive process on Facebook and X specifically. This divergence suggests that morphological productivity may be platform-dependent rather than uniform across digital media, a distinction the present study is positioned to draw precisely because of its narrower, platform-focused, qualitative design.

Hassan and Ahmed (2024) extended the research through sociolinguistic analysis of recent neologisms, documenting the emergence and standardisation of digital-age vocabulary including

“selfie,” “meme,” “hashtag,” and “streaming.” Their longitudinal study traced adoption patterns across different user demographics, revealing that successful neologisms typically combine morphological transparency with social utility. The present study corroborates Hassan and Ahmed's (2024) claim that morphological transparency and social utility jointly predict adoption, evident in forms such as “vibe check” and “clickbait.” It extends their work temporally by capturing more recent coinages, such as “doomscrolling” and “finsta,” that postdate their dataset, though it does not attempt the demographic longitudinal tracking that characterises their design.

Chen et al. (2024) conducted a large-scale computational analysis of linguistic simplification patterns across major social media platforms over a decade-long period (2010–2020). Their study examined over 100 million posts across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, documenting systematic trends toward reduced sentence length, decreased lexical complexity, and increased abbreviation frequency. The research revealed platform-specific patterns, with X (formerly Twitter) showing the most extensive simplification due to character limitations. Both studies converge on X as the

platform with the strongest pressure toward economy, but the methods differ in scale and depth. Chen et al.'s (2024) computational approach establishes that simplification is statistically widespread, whereas the present study's close qualitative reading of a small purposive sample explains why the simplification occurs, linking specific abbreviations and grammatical shifts to their communicative functions within individual posts.

Kumar and Patel (2024) analysed the impact of social media on language evolution through examination of abbreviation patterns across platforms, documenting the prevalence of abbreviated forms such as “LOL” and “OMG” and revealing how efficiency demands drive systematic adoption of economical expression strategies. Kumar and Patel's (2024) efficiency-driven account is directly supported by the present study's abbreviation data (Table 2). The present study extends their findings by cataloguing platform-specific abbreviations, such as “RT” and “FYP,” that arise from X's particular technological affordances rather than from general efficiency pressures alone.

Rodriguez and Williams (2024) examined social media's impact on grammatical structure through analysis of digital

communication's influence on syntax and morphology, documenting systematic modifications in sentence patterns and phrase organisation that accommodate rapid, fragmented digital interaction. The present study's grammatical findings (Table 3) parallel Rodriguez and Williams's (2024) syntactic fragmentation patterns but go further by foregrounding multimodal features, particularly emoji functioning as punctuation, which fall outside the scope of their text-only syntactic analysis.

Garcia and Lee (2025) provided experimental evidence for causal relationships between technological affordances and systematic grammatical adaptation, employing eye-tracking technology and corpus analysis to examine how character limitations and interaction speed requirements systematically influence grammatical construction. Garcia and Lee's (2025) experimental design establishes causation in controlled conditions; the present study cannot make causal claims but offers ecological validity, showing the same character-limitation effects occurring naturally in authentic X discourse, which lends real-world support to their laboratory findings.

Grieve et al. (2018) conducted a large-scale computational analysis of

neologism diffusion patterns across geographic regions and social networks, demonstrating how digital innovations spread through network effects while maintaining regional variation. Their study tracked lexical innovations across Twitter data from multiple countries, revealing systematic patterns in how new vocabulary items achieve global adoption while adapting to local linguistic contexts. Where Grieve et al. (2018) trace diffusion across countries, the present study is confined to a single national context. This narrower scope means the present study cannot speak to diffusion patterns, but it does supply a Nigerian data point against which future cross-regional replications of Grieve et al.'s model could be compared.

Anderson and Patel (2024) conducted a comprehensive analysis of multilingual practices in social media communication, examining code-switching and translanguaging patterns across Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, revealing how different platforms facilitate distinct types of multilingual creativity. The present study's dataset is restricted to English-language posts and therefore does not capture the code-switching phenomena central to Anderson and Patel's (2024) work. This is acknowledged as a limitation of the current design and is flagged in the conclusion as an avenue

where the multilingual Nigerian social media context could extend both studies.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Usage-Based Linguistics Theory as its theoretical framework, recognising it as the most comprehensive approach for understanding how social media platforms systematically drive language evolution through frequency-based processes and communicative adaptation. Usage-Based Linguistics, as developed by Tomasello (2003) and elaborated by Bybee (2007), posits that language structure emerges directly from language use patterns, with high-frequency usage serving as the primary mechanism for grammaticalisation, lexicalisation, and morphological change processes.

Two interlocking principles operate within this single framework rather than as separate or competing theories. The first is the frequency principle: repeated exposure to linguistic forms strengthens cognitive representations and facilitates the emergence of new grammatical structures and lexical associations (Bybee, 2007). In social media contexts, viral content, trending hashtags, and repeated communicative patterns create unprecedented conditions

for high-frequency exposure that can rapidly establish new linguistic conventions across global user communities. The second is the chunking principle, Bybee's (2006) account of how frequently co-occurring linguistic elements become processed as single units, enabling more efficient cognitive processing and creating foundations for morphological and syntactic innovation.

Digital communication exhibits extensive chunking phenomena, including hashtag conventions, emoji combinations, and abbreviated phrase structures that function as unitary communicative acts. Both principles derive from the same exemplar-based learning model, in which speakers extract generalisations from specific instances of language use, creating productive patterns that enable creative extension of existing linguistic resources to meet emerging communicative needs (Tomasello, 2003). The efficiency-driven adaptations observable across all three data categories in this study additionally support Hawkins' (2004) emphasis on communicative efficiency within usage-based frameworks, a complementary rather than rival perspective, with social media platforms amplifying efficiency pressures through technological constraints and interaction speed demands.

Usage-Based Linguistics Theory is well suited to this study because it treats frequency and repetition, rather than innate rule-systems, as the engine of change, which maps naturally onto the high-volume, rapidly repeated nature of social media posting and resharing. It is also grounded in independently verified cognitive and psycholinguistic evidence rather than being a purely descriptive taxonomy. Its main limitation for this study is that it was developed primarily from data on spoken language and first-language acquisition, so its extension to written, multimodal digital text is an application of the theory rather than a domain it was originally built to explain; consequently, it offers less direct guidance on purely visual devices such as emoji and hashtag placement, which this study supplements with insights from computer-mediated discourse research (Herring, 2012). A further limitation is that frequency effects are, strictly speaking, corpus-scale phenomena, and a purposive sample of 40 posts is too small to quantify frequency in the way the theory's originators intended; the theory is therefore applied here at the level of qualitative pattern recognition rather than statistical frequency counts.

4. Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design to investigate neologisms, abbreviations, and grammatical shifts as they emerge and spread within Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) interactions. Qualitative research is suitable for this study because it focuses on meaning, context, and interpretation rather than statistical generalisation, allowing for detailed identification, categorisation, and analysis of linguistic innovations in their natural communicative environments. The population of this study consists of publicly available English-language posts and comments on Facebook and X. Both platforms were selected because they represent highly interactive social media spaces where users coin, circulate, and normalise new words. Their contrasting affordances — Facebook with longer posts and threaded discussions, and X with its character restrictions and viral potential — make them suitable for examining how technology and community norms shape linguistic innovation. A total of 40 samples were purposively selected: 20 posts from Facebook (including posts and comments) and 20 from X (including tweets and replies). This sample size was considered adequate for qualitative interpretation, as the focus of the study is not on quantity but on detailed,

contextualised exploration of linguistic innovation.

Data were collected manually by observing, selecting, and archiving posts and comments from public Facebook groups/pages and X timelines over a one-month period in June, 2025. The collection process involved monitoring trending hashtags, discussion threads, and viral posts where new words were likely to appear; saving posts containing potential neologisms or novel expressions; recording contextual details such as the communicative situation and user interactions; and ensuring anonymisation by removing usernames and personal identifiers before analysis. The data were analysed using qualitative content analysis through a systematic five-step procedure: data organisation and platform-based grouping; neologism identification through cross-checking against standard dictionaries (Oxford English Dictionary, Urban Dictionary, Merriam-Webster Online); categorisation based on

morphological processes; contextual interpretation of communicative functions; and comparative analysis of differences and similarities in neologism use across both platforms. Anonymised screenshots of the sampled posts and comments corresponding to Tables 1–3 are presented in Appendix A, with usernames, profile pictures, and other identifying details blurred to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the original posters.

5. Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents and analyses the linguistic data collected from Facebook and X simultaneously. The findings are organised according to three primary categories: neologisms and morphological processes, abbreviation patterns, and grammatical shifts. Each category is presented in tabular form, followed immediately by corresponding analysis.

5.1 Neologisms and Morphological Processes

Table 1: Neologisms Identified in Facebook and X Posts

Neologism	Platform	Formation Process	Meaning/Context
Doomscrolling	Facebook, X	Compounding	Continuous scrolling through negative news causing anxiety
Sharenting	Facebook	Blending	Parents habitually sharing children's photos and information online
Ghosting	Facebook, X	Conversion	Abruptly ending communication without explanation
Unfriend	Facebook	Affixation	Removing someone from social media friend list
Clickbait	Facebook, X	Compounding	Sensationalised content designed to attract clicks
Selfie	Facebook, X	Clipping + Affixation	Self-portrait photograph taken with smartphone
Finsta	Facebook, X	Blending	Fake or secondary Instagram account for close friends
Stan	X	Conversion	Obsessively support or admire a celebrity or public figure
Lowkey	Facebook, X	Conversion	Subtly or to a moderate degree; without drawing attention
Vibe check	Facebook, X	Compounding	Assessment of someone's mood, attitude or atmosphere
Simp	X	Clipping	Person showing excessive attention or devotion to someone
Slay	Facebook, X	Semantic Extension	Perform exceptionally well; impress greatly
Receipts	X	Semantic Extension	Evidence or proof supporting claims in online disputes
Ratio	X	Conversion	When negative replies exceed likes on a post
Main character	Facebook, X	Semantic Extension	Person behaving as though they are the centre of attention

The analysis of neologisms reveals that compounding emerges as the most prevalent

morphological mechanism across both platforms. Forms such as “doomscrolling,” “clickbait,” and

“vibe check” demonstrate systematic combination of existing lexical items to create transparent compound structures. These formations enable efficient communication of complex digital behaviours through morphologically accessible constructions where constituent elements maintain recognisable meanings that contribute compositionally to compound semantics, facilitating rapid comprehension across diverse user communities.

Blending represents another highly productive process, particularly evident in forms like “sharenting” (sharing + parenting) and “finsta” (fake + Instagram). These blended constructions demonstrate sophisticated morphological creativity, combining portions of source words to create economical forms that maintain semantic connections to both constituents. Conversion processes show considerable productivity, with numerous lexical items shifting grammatical categories to serve new communicative functions. The verb “ghosting” derives from the nominal “ghost,” whilst “stan” transforms from proper noun to verb denoting obsessive

admiration, and “ratio” shifts from noun to verb in X-specific contexts. Semantic extension emerges as a significant innovation mechanism whereby established words acquire specialised meanings within digital contexts, with terms like “receipts” (evidence), “slay” (perform exceptionally), and “main character” (attention-seeking behaviour) illustrating how digital communication redefines conventional vocabulary for insider communicative purposes.

Platform-specific patterns emerge clearly from the data. Facebook demonstrates a higher frequency of compound neologisms and blended forms, reflecting the platform's unlimited post length that accommodates more elaborate linguistic constructions. Conversely, X exhibits more instances of clipped forms and converted items, directly reflecting historical character constraints that systematically favoured formal economy. Terms like “simp,” “stan,” and “ratio” appear predominantly in X discourse, where brevity imperatives drive morphological compression and functional flexibility.

5.2 Abbreviation Patterns

Table 2: Abbreviation Patterns Identified in Facebook and X Posts

Abbreviation	Platform	Type	Full Form	Meaning/Context
IMO	Facebook, X	Initialism	In My Opinion	Expressing personal viewpoint in discussions
TBH	Facebook, X	Initialism	To Be Honest	Introducing honest or frank statement
FOMO	Facebook, X	Acronym	Fear Of Missing Out	Anxiety about missing social experiences
YOLO	Facebook, X	Acronym	You Only Live Once	Justifying spontaneous or risky behaviour
DM	Facebook, X	Initialism	Direct Message	Private message between users
IRL	Facebook, X	Initialism	In Real Life	Referring to offline activities or relationships
TBT	Facebook	Initialism	Throwback Thursday	Sharing nostalgic content on Thursdays
FYP	X	Initialism	For You Page	Personalised content feed algorithm
RT	X	Initialism	Retweet	Sharing another user's post
NGL	Facebook, X	Initialism	Not Gonna Lie	Introducing honest admission or confession
SMH	Facebook, X	Initialism	Shaking My Head	Expressing disapproval or disbelief
GOAT	Facebook, X	Acronym	Greatest Of All Time	Praising exceptional excellence
IYKYK	Facebook, X	Initialism	If You Know You Know	Referencing insider or shared knowledge
POV	Facebook, X	Initialism	Point Of View	Indicating perspective or viewpoint

The abbreviation data reveal that initialisms constitute the dominant reduction strategy across both platforms. Forms like “IMO,” “TBH,” “IRL,” and “NGL” appear extensively throughout the data, demonstrating systematic compression of multi-word phrases to alphabetic

sequences. These abbreviated constructions achieve remarkable formal economy whilst maintaining semantic transparency through phonologically motivated letter selection, enabling efficient communication within high-speed interaction contexts.

Acronyms, whilst less frequent than initialisms, show significant productivity, particularly with forms achieving pronunciation as unified words. “FOMO,” “YOLO,” and “GOAT” represent successful acronymic innovations that transcend platform-specific usage to enter broader conversational registers. The phonological integration of these forms — their pronounceability as single lexical units rather than letter sequences — appears correlated with adoption success, suggesting

that morphological innovations achieving natural phonological structure demonstrate enhanced memorability and communicative efficiency. Platform differences in abbreviation deployment prove systematic and revealing, with X demonstrating notably higher overall abbreviation frequency reflecting historical character limitation, while platform-specific abbreviations like “RT” (retweet) and “FYP” (for you page) emerge directly from X’s technological affordances.

5.3 Grammatical Shifts

Table 3: Grammatical Shifts Observed in Facebook and X Posts

Example	Grammatical Feature	Platform	Function/Purpose
“I’m done.”	Period for emphasis	Facebook, X	Conveying finality, seriousness or emotional weight
“I CANNOT BELIEVE THIS”	Capitalisation for volume	Facebook, X	Indicating shouting, strong emphasis or heightened emotion
“lol yeah that’s wild”	Lowercase for casual tone	Facebook, X	Signalling informality, casualness or relaxed register
“What???” / “Really!!!”	Multiple punctuation	Facebook, X	Intensifying interrogative or exclamatory force
“yeah i know right”	Absence of punctuation	X	Conveying speed, casualness or conversational flow
“The audacity. The disrespect.”	Fragmented syntax	Facebook, X	Creating dramatic effect through structural isolation
“Tired I am of this”	Non-standard word order	X	Emphasising particular elements or creating stylistic effect

"Going home now "	Emoji as punctuation	Facebook, X	Adding emotional tone whilst serving punctuation function
"Living my #bestlife"	Hashtag integration	Facebook, X	Providing meta-commentary within sentence structure
"Sooooo excited"	Elongated words	Facebook, X	Creating gradable emphasis or representing prosodic features

The data on grammatical shifts demonstrate extensive systematic adaptation of standard written conventions across both platforms. Punctuation innovations pervade both platforms, with users deploying conventional marks for novel pragmatic functions. Single periods gain emphatic force, signalling conversational finality or serious tone, whilst multiple question marks or exclamation points create graduated intensification. All-capitals text universally signals heightened emotional intensity, functioning as the digital equivalent of shouting, whilst consistent lowercase deployment systematically signals casual register and informal interactional stance.

Syntactic fragmentation appears frequently across both platforms, with users deploying incomplete sentences for rhetorical effect. Structures like "The audacity. The disrespect." demonstrate how syntactic isolation creates dramatic

emphasis. Multimodal integration represents significant grammatical innovation, with emojis functioning as punctuation marks, emotional qualifiers, and semantic complements within otherwise conventional syntactic structures. Hashtags similarly integrate into sentence structure, functioning as meta-commentary that maintains syntactic flow whilst adding a discursive layer. Word elongation through orthographic repetition, as in "sooooo" and "yessss," serves emphatic and emotional functions by representing prosodic features within the written medium. Platform-specific grammatical patterns confirm systematic relationships between technological features and grammatical adaptation, with X demonstrating more extensive punctuation omission whilst Facebook permits elaborated syntactic constructions.

6. Discussion

The findings from this analysis reveal systematic

patterns of language evolution driven by social media platforms' technological affordances and communicative practices. The predominance of compounding and blending in neologism formation aligns with Booij's (2007) assertion that these morphological mechanisms demonstrate high productivity due to their semantic transparency and versatility. The extensive use of conversion processes supports Baron's (2008) argument that digital communication represents systematic adaptation rather than linguistic degradation, as users leverage established vocabulary to serve emerging communicative needs without requiring wholly novel lexical creation.

The extensive abbreviation patterns identified in the data substantiate Zipf's (1949) Principle of Least Effort as elaborated within Usage-Based Linguistics frameworks. Users systematically favour linguistic forms that minimise articulatory and cognitive effort whilst maintaining communicative effectiveness. The cross-platform consistency of certain abbreviations like "FOMO," "YOLO," and "GOAT" supports Hassan and Ahmed's (2024) observation that successful neologisms combine morphological transparency with social utility. The findings provide robust empirical support for

Usage-Based Linguistics Theory's core principles: frequency effects operating through viral diffusion accelerate traditional change processes, whilst analogical extension drives systematic creativity, as users extract patterns from successful innovations and extend these templates to generate new forms.

7. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated how social media platforms systematically drive contemporary language evolution through interconnected mechanisms of morphological innovation, abbreviation processes, and grammatical adaptation. The analysis of 40 posts and comments from Facebook and X reveals that compounding is the most prevalent morphological mechanism for neologism creation, followed by blending, conversion, and semantic extension. Initialisms constitute the dominant abbreviation strategy, with forms like "IMO," "TBH," "FOMO," and "IRL" achieving widespread standardisation, while acronymic forms achieving word-like pronunciation demonstrate higher adoption rates. Systematic grammatical innovations, including creative punctuation deployment, capitalisation variation, syntactic fragmentation, and multimodal emoji and

hashtag integration, serve specific pragmatic functions rather than representing linguistic degradation.

The linguistic phenomena observed in this study represent not linguistic corruption but sophisticated, systematic adaptation of language resources to serve emerging communicative needs within technologically-mediated environments. Digital communication users demonstrate remarkable metalinguistic awareness and creative competence, exploiting traditional morphological processes whilst developing novel adaptations that respond efficiently to platform-specific constraints. The systematic nature of observed innovations across diverse users and contexts confirms collective convergence on efficient solutions to platform-specific communicative challenges, fully consistent with Usage-Based Linguistics Theory's core principles of frequency effects, analogical extension, and communicative efficiency. Social media platforms must therefore be recognised as active drivers of language change, producing adaptive and cognitively grounded linguistic responses rather than evidence of decline.

Because the dataset was limited to English-language posts, it was not able to capture the multilingual code-switching

phenomena that Anderson and Patel (2024) identify as a further dimension of platform-driven creativity; this remains an open avenue given Nigeria's multilingual social media environment. Future research should also investigate longitudinal patterns of neologism standardisation to trace how digital innovations transition from platform-specific usage to broader linguistic acceptance, explore cross-linguistic digital language innovation to examine whether adaptation patterns operate similarly across languages with different typological characteristics, and examine the role of algorithmic amplification in linguistic innovation diffusion to understand how platform recommendation systems systematically influence which linguistic innovations achieve widespread adoption.

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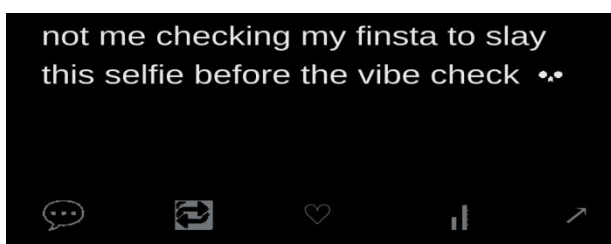
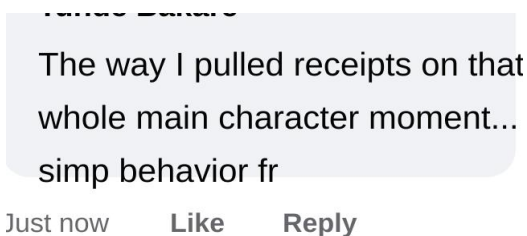
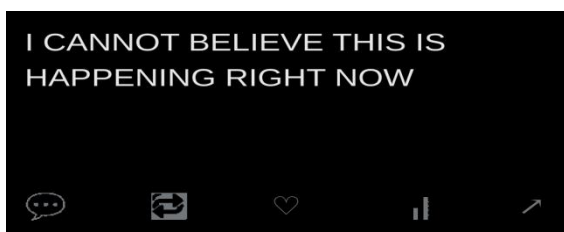
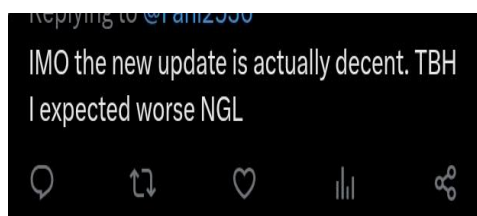
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Appendix A: Anonymised Screenshots of Sampled Posts/Comments

Fig. A1: Facebook post illustrating “doomscrolling” (Table 1)





Living my #bestlife rn, lowkey
obsessed with this update 🤩

Just now Like Reply

Replying to @spontanicng

That's the GOAT take tbh, no cap.
Ratio incoming for anyone who
disagrees



Chidi Okafor

Sooooo tired of this clickbait smh,
y'all need to stop 🙄

Just now Like Reply

Replying to @nightowl_01

POV: you open Twitter and it's just
doomscrolling till 3am IYKYK



Ada Umeh

The audacity to unfriend me after 10
years?? I'm SHOOK 🤯

Just now Like Reply



ngl this whole thing is giving major
FOMO energy fr 🤔

Blessing Nwosu

Going home now 🥰 soooooo ready
for this weekend

Just now

Like

Reply