A MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ABBREVIATED NEOLOGISMS OF SOCIAL MEDIA DISCOURSES AMONG *KENYANS ON X*

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

August, 2025

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work, prepared with no other than the indicated sources and support, and has not been presented elsewhere for a degree or any other award.

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CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend for acceptance of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology a thesis entitled: ***"A Morphological Analysis of Abbreviated Neologisms of Social Media Discourses among Kenyans on X."***

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother and late father, who believed in me and encouraged me to pursue my postgraduate studies.

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the rise of social media platforms has transformed communication patterns and language use across the globe. Among these platforms, X (formerly known as Twitter) stands out as one of the most influential, having witnessed the emergence and widespread adoption of abbreviated neologisms. This study conducts a morphological analysis of abbreviated neologisms used by *Kenyans on X.* The objectives are threefold, to: describe the morphological structures of these abbreviated neologisms; second, to examine the correlation of non-linguistic variables and demographics on the use of abbreviated neologisms among Kenyans on X; and analyze these abbreviated neologisms within social media discourses using the natural morphology framework (NMT) propounded. NMT is a functionalist theory that explains word formation based on cognitive, phonological and pragmatic principles, with emphasis on naturalness, economy, iconicity, productivity, adaptability and universality. These tenets provide the framework through which the abbreviated neologisms were evaluated. Regardless of this increasing linguistic trend, scarce research studies have been done on morphological frames of abridged neologisms, especially in the Kenyan cyberspace. Data in the study was obtained using systematic sampling based on posts publicly posted on X by Kenyans. Posts were recorded through taking screenshots of abbreviated neologisms, and this led to a corpus of 150 items. The neologisms that look to be the shortened forms were defined and characterized using the context. Subsequently the data was categorized on the morphology of the neologisms and included the type of abbreviation, source words or roots and other morphemes. This category gave an idea of the regularities and tendencies of the application of shortened neologisms on X. The results yield valuable information on the morphological morphs of shortened neologisms, and represent one of the intimate details of the innovative use of language by the Kenyan X users. The paper pinpoints the importance of social media platforms in the evolution of language that proves the technological impact on the formation process of words. The result of the investigation was that initialisms, clipping and contraction are used to create abbreviated neologism. The analysis revealed that young people were more prone to use abbreviations as compared to the old. Also, restrictions to technological constrains like character length of that platform, and the platform interaction have a big role in influencing the use of word formation on X as it fosters creativity among the KOX in their use of language. Moreover, the study means a lot because it would document the changes in modern language and will be of benefit to language education and lexicographic practice in the digital era. These observations highlight the wider perception of language variation and change through social media platform..

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CMC	-	Computer-Mediated-Communication
CBD	-	Central Business District
DM	-	Direct Message
KOX	-	Kenyans on X
NMT	-	Natural Morphology Theory
SMD	-	Social Media Discourses
SMS	-	Short Message Service
SNS	-	Social Networking Site
UGC	-	User-Generated Content
WFR	-	Word Formation Rules

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Abbreviated neologisms: Newly created words or phrases formed by shortening or abbreviating existing words or phrases, emerging in the context of online communication by Kenyans on X (formerly Twitter).

Computer-mediated communication: The communication between individuals or groups facilitated by using computers or mobile devices, enabling individuals to interact and engage in conversations remotely, particularly X, to interact in real-time or asynchronously.

Hashtag: A word or phrase preceded by the '#' symbol used in social media platforms such as X to group posts or messages with similar topics or themes.

Kenyans on X: A group of Kenyan online users on X (formerly, Kenyans on Twitter) who actively engage in discussions, debates, and conversations on various topics, including social, political, and cultural issues in Kenya and beyond.

Lects: Distinct linguistic varieties spoken or used by specific groups of Kenyans on X. These varieties may be regional or reflect different age groups, gender, or professional affiliations within the online community.

Neologism: Any new word or expression used by Kenyans on X, either as a completely new term, an existing word given new meaning, or a term repurposed for online interaction. In this study, the focus is on neologisms that have been abbreviated for ease of use in online spaces.

Netizens: Group of internet users, specifically Kenyans, who actively engage in social networking sites like X. These individuals are central to the creation, spread, and usage of abbreviated neologisms within their online communication.

Netspeak: The specific language or linguistic style employed by Kenyans on X.

Social Networking Sites: Platforms like X where users can form connections, share content, and interact with others.

Social varieties: Variations in language associated with different social groups or communities within the Kenyan online community on X.

Standard English: a variety of English languages acceptable as the national norm in any English-speaking country, for Kenya it is British English.

Tweep: An individual who actively engages and participates in the X community and forms connections with other users on the platform.

Tweets: Short messages posted by users on the social media platform X.

X: Formerly Twitter, a social media platform that allows users to post and interact with short messages called tweets.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into several sections, including the background to the study, a statement of the problem, research questions, and objectives. The justification of the study as well as the scope and limitations of the study are also outlined.

1.2 Background to the Study

Users on X often create and popularize new words and phrases to convey their messages more succinctly within the character limits imposed by the platform (Mworia, 2015). Social media platforms facilitate user-generated content which allow individuals to share ideas, experiences and cultural narratives. This may be seen to create the development of language especially in the use of neologisms and abbreviations. The abbreviated neologism phenomenon is more sharp in the Kenyan scenario since people who use social media have novel ways of using language that fit into the high speed way in which communication occurs in the social web. It aims to analyze the morphological forms forming the foundations of these emerging forms and the way in which they exemplify similar trends of linguistic innovation in digital environments, more generally. It is not only X that showed this tendency; Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram became other prominent social networks where neologisms came to be cultivated and spread (Shalee & Mustafa, 2019). A large audience and high communication rates are regarded as the enabling characteristics of these platforms that foster the creation of new linguistic modifications, i.e., abbreviations and acronyms, that allow users to be faster in passes and more efficient in conveying information (Yong & Kris-Ogbodo, 2019).

It was found that people use these neologisms that testify to the evolving characteristic of language and interaction in the digital era. Thurlow et al. (2004) offer a general perspective of how new media is being used in terms of language usage in situations, or rather language use in computer communication which involves social interaction. They highlight socialities and interactive features of the digital discourse, and discuss how the technologies of communication influence the language use in general. Conversely, the present research has been precision targeted on the morphological structures of the abbreviated neologisms in a Kenyan culture.

Mattiello (2013: 64) defines abbreviation or shortening as the fact that new words are created by shortening other lexemes. Trask (1997: 85) describes the term abbreviation as a short-form in writing words or phrases which also have an expanded form written in full. The linguistic component has also defined the abbreviation as an aspect of word formation studies as a means of differentiating between various methods through which words can be shortened (Crystal, 2008). Thus, abbreviations can help to save space, time, prevent the repetition of long words and phrases, or fit the common usage (Young & Kris-Ogbodo, 2019:102). They also assume that abbreviations utilized by netizens are the abbreviations which the netizens know the meaning thereof.

Yong & Kris-Ogbodo (2019:103) refer to neologism as the creation of words within a language. The use of abbreviated neologisms is characteristic of the social media, text messaging, and other means of communication where the space is occupied and needs to be Hoseaved, or one has to get information or communicate fast (Jones, 2015). Yong &Kris-Ogbodo (ibid) note that there is an ambition to save space and time during typing and to make the users of a certain online community feel a sense of belonging and community and such goals are usually achieved when adopting abbreviated neologism. Therefore, the paper actually covered the truncated neologism and their

manifestation in terms of morphology, clustering of the paradigmatic associations, and word creation.

According to Crystal (2008), speed of communication being high and the small space occupied by the text-based messages on the social media, they have given rise to novel forms of language that are best suited to the media. This particularly becomes true of X which only allowed 140 characters in a post when it was first implemented. Later on, however, it was added to 280 characters per post in 2017 (Boot et al., 2019). This character length is comprised of both the words and the spaces of a tweet along with the punctuation and the hashtags. The limitation of a finite character count motivates the user to sum up their thoughts in the allocated space accordingly, hence, the formation of clipped neologisms as well as other neologisms involving the means of shortening words.

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) differs in the way language is employed because of certain peculiarities of digital environments. Herring (2001) argues that written text on text-based communication forms are common among users and thus does not involve the traditional non-verbal interaction like voice intonation and facial expressions. This will be mandated to adapt other ways to imply meaning and emotions. The duration between messages broadcast on SNS also affects the rhythm and the rhythm of the discussion (Crystal, 2011). Crystal (ibid) proposes that CMC distorts the use of languages by supporting informal languages use such as slang, neologisms and jargon universal to the internet. All these linguistic innovations are developed when users change their styles of communication to the digital environment. This gives the illusion of online identity and belonging such as Kenyans on X. As Thurlow et al. (2004) opine, dis-inhibition behaviours can be attributed to the relative

anonymity and distance associated with the CMC use due to an enduring tendency to behave as one might never have in an actual situation.

Although past studies have covered several aspects of language use on the social media, there is a significant knowledge bottleneck regarding the morphological structures that endow abbreviated neologisms among the Kenyan social media users. The studies conducted by Mworia (2015) and Shalee & Mustafa (2019) give general ideas of the formation and spreading of neologisms but in most cases attention is not paid to their detailed morphological approach, particularly concerning matters of abbreviations. Moreover, the majority of the studies have been focused on social-cultural connotations or on communicative efficacy of neologisms. The study by Mworia helps understand the formation, meaning, integration of such neologisms into the certain communication, and contributes to the overall understanding of how language is evolving in the world of online interaction. It is also concerned with aspects, which promote production and consumption of neologism in SNSs. Not much focus is drawn to the structural part of their formation. Moreover, the active character of digital communication implies that the language changes quickly thus the study that does not pay attention to the latest trends is also at a threat of being outdated. With the evolutionary trend of language in social media platforms such as X, the study fills a much needed gap in analyzing neologisms formation not only in Kenya but also in identifying morphological structures underlying formation of neologisms through investigation of social media discourse. In this way, the proposed study will provide a new dimension that stands out of the definitions and broad overview of the previous studies intended to furnish the understanding of the statics of the dynamic environment of digital communication.

The article is based on the opinion of Ferdinand de Saussure who held the language as arbitrary because he was the pioneer of the science of linguistics especially through his concepts as expressed in Course in General Linguistics which was posthumously published in 1916. Saussure observed that the relationship between the meaning of a word and how it is pronounced or the configuration of that word does not exist in nature. It is not a case that these two elements are necessarily connected, according to him, the correlation between the two elements is arbitrary, in the sense that it is grounded on convention and nothing more (Falco 2005). The arbitrariness principle means that among various speech communities the same object or concept might be presented totally differently. One of the major tenets of Saussure linguistics is believed to be the principle of arbitrariness. It foregrounds conventionality and social construction of language in that the connection words and their meanings are not natural but instead the connection lies in the hands of the linguistic system and the speech community (Al-Saeed, 2016). This aspect of language comes to life in the manner in which it is applied on social networks where users, especially peers often innovate and use new forms of language, which can be vastly different compared to the traditional language (Yong & Kris-Ogbodo, 2019).

Also, the research is based on the ideas that language is always a creative attribute. Such element of creativity allows the speakers to come up with new expressions and even invent new constructions of language and meet different communicative needs and context. This creative aspect of language has been spoken of many times by Noam Chomsky who illuminates how people continue to generate and comprehend an infinite collection of sentences they have never heard before (Bergs 2019, Onsman, 1982). It is not only some languages that exhibit this innovative use of language but rather all human languages have this in common. This is because the creativity that

speakers have helps them create innovative expressions and to invent new varieties of language depending on the different communicative demands and situations. The generative grammar theory of Chomsky postulates the linguistic syntactical concept that users of language have innate abilities of generating and comprehending unlimited amounts of grammatically sound sentences before and after, and therefore including, the never-before-heard sentences. Having acknowledged this concept of the lingual creativity, the researchers acknowledge the dynamic and innovative aspects of language usage, specifically as it can be applied with the help of the digital environment of communication, such as the platform of X. The ideas brought forward by Chomsky allow the researchers to examine how the creative side of the lingual experience can be used by the users of KOX in order to shape new forms of lingual product.

Mworia (2015) states that this dynamism and ever changing nature of language in social media, especially in the Kenyan region, is a fine example of such principles of arbitrariness and creativity. She also mentions that the users of the social media psychologically involve themselves in an amusing, imaginative language in most cases creating abbreviated neologisms which are not only arbitrary in its shape but also very creative in use. Through the analysis of these linguistic phenomena, the work is going to present the reader with better insight into how language is progressing in the conditions of digital communications and the linguistic processes that are at work.

Expansion in Social Networking Sites has changed the way individuals develop and exchange information and ideas (Mworia, 2015). Mworia (ibid) also points out that interpersonal and social functions are becoming more dependent on the web, due to

the extraordinary increase of machine-assisted interpersonal communication on social media platforms as internet continues to shift in its character. But once we are over-reliant on internet, natural disasters and human-created disasters such as cyber-attacks could switch off the system and make it difficult to access and save online profiles (Dominic, 2011). Shortened neologisms as used on the social media has also been fodder of controversy and some have argued that it has been one of the indicators of degeneration in the language not to mention the communication routine that was once there (Crystal, 2008). Some of these neologisms are characterized by abbreviations, which usually refer to some tendencies, concepts, or trends emerging on the Social Networking Sites (Yong & Kris-Ogbodo, 2019).

Moreover, neologisms that are presented in an abbreviated structure have been formed and stimulated by the Social Networking Sites (SNSs). According to Martin (2008), and Lusk (2010) social media is a form of communication through the use of Facebook, blogs, Twitter, MySpace and LinkedIn. According to Eke (2018), social media can be defined as electronic communication, social networking and micro-blogging. It enables its users to build online communities to spread information, ideas, personal messages and other contents, including images and videos. Barasa (2010: 6) notes that users or the members of social networking sites have the opportunity of connecting and networking with either strangers or their acquaintances based on any common interest that they may have. Similarly, SNS has evolved and grown over the years and so has the language in these platforms. Due to technology, communication has been simplified with the numerous social networks sites that have emerged in the market. There is a great influence of social media on the way individuals interact as well as communicate with each other. The social media language is found to be informal and is largely abbreviated (Mworia, 2015).

Kenya is referred to as the Silicon Savannah of Africa because it is the front-runner in Africa with regard to the use of smartphones and internet consumption (Kanyi, 2019). The census report of 2019 states that 43.5 of the Kenyan population possess a mobile phone (KBS, 2019). Among them, 22.6 percent of the population aged above three years access the internet using mobile phones. As of the end of 2022 the smartphone penetration was 60.2 percent with a total population of 49.4 million. Moreover, Communication Authority during the period of 1 st October to 31 st December 2022 reported that mobile data internet subscription stood at 47.76 million with the subscription in the mobile broadband services being 66.8 percent (Kemp 2023). Kenya is also well endowed with social media given that as of January 2023, the country has 10.55 million social media users which translates to 19.3 percent of the total population. According to an argument by Lenhart (2009), youths especially those below the age of 25 years constitute three city quarters of adults using social networking sites in Kenya. This high mobile phones penetration, access to internet and social media use is evidence of how digital technology is vital in development of communication and any events on the Kenyan society.

Twitter opened in the year 2006, and since then, it has become one of the most used social media platforms in the whole world, established by Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams (Boot et al., 2019). Billionaire Elon Musk purchased twitter in 2022 and on March 2023 he renamed the site to X. X is a social media site which enables people to send and receive short messages referred to as tweets. The users are able to use a limited number of words to create short messages with a maximum of 280 characters, which might include text, pictures, videos, and links. The posts are supposed to be very brief and easy to share. Hashtags can also be used on the platform as they enable users to attach their tweets with particular keywords or subject matter.

Hashtags provide the ability to categorize, help other users find them more easily, and get KOX involved in larger discussions. The popularity of tweets as a form of communication is due to its brevity and shareability. In case of Mworia (2015). X has transformed the manner in which individuals interact via the Internet and has greatly disseminated news, information and culture in the digital era.

According to Peters (2016), neologisms are cultivated in such social media as X and Instagram where users want to express complicated thoughts and ideas in the most concise and attention-grabbing way. Therefore, these social-network sites have enabled a speedy propagation of neologisms since users share and re-share information containing new vocabulary and phrases. Moreover, online communities have emerged, and social media has made it easier to form communities sharing their own culture and language (Wright, 2018). In most instances, such communities coin the shortened neologisms in order to display a sense of collective identity, which says that they are part of those who keep to modified neologisms. Wright (ibid) then gives an example of the application of the phrase on fleek to signify something whose style or grooming is ideal as it was first applied in a Vine video and then took on with other social media users.

Kenyans on X(KOX) is a lively and vibrant online society that has Kenyan users that come together discussing, debating and making comments on social, political and cultural matters. It was approximate that the Kenyan users on X started attracting each other according to the basis of shared interests in politics, entertainment, and sports around 2018, one year after Twitter [now, X] launched operation in Kenya (Bogita, 2023). The application of twitter to provide Kenya a hashtag trending tab, KOT, was

initiated by Ramadhan Oluoch mainly referred to as Ramzzy and other tweeps according to Bogita (ibid). The online chat group has experienced magnified power both internally and outside the country since it employs X to make their views heard, to tackle social problems, and hold key individuals accountable (Ochieng, 2019). The platform of X could be described as having received much interest owing to its characteristic app traits that only allow one to employ a limited number of characters per post. The use of shortened neologism is also intrinsic in the style of communication used by KOX, so that users could share their thoughts with minimal word count to fit in the character count of the platform. English and Kiswahili are the only languages that are used in KOX mainly on X, but they intermix it with their native languages, slangs, and local jargons (Mworia, 2015).

Being an active and influential online community with specific linguistic style, KOX resorts to the use of abbreviations and neologism in online communication. By investigating the character and trends of these shortened neologisms, it will be possible to find answers to the innovations in linguistics and the way in which language transforms within the context of the digital era. Ochieng (2019) suggests that one of the most striking aspects of KOX is its hashtag activism, whose users can be observed to spread awareness, gain support, and energize around a certain cause in social life. The commentary of online community such as the KOX and its influence on social and political challenges has been noticed on the news and in the internet (Ochieng, ibid). Linguistic creativity has led to the development of a sense of identity, sense of humor and social cohesion amongst the KOX users. The internet is among other things that have contributed towards variations in language. The characteristics of Netspeak linguistic forms are significantly affected by the limitations of technology per se, e.g. the character limit of X as a platform (Deumert et al., 2019). The complex

morphological composition of the abbreviated neologisms is one of the key issues in productive research on the topic and their incorporation into the lexical sources.

The study contributes to the discussion on the evolution of abbreviated neologisms on digital platforms by providing an in-depth examination of the morphological structures of the abbreviated neologisms used by the KOX community. By analyzing the creative processes behind these abbreviated neologisms, the research highlights the adaptive nature of language in response to technological constraints and social functions. Furthermore, this study situates the linguistic practices of KOX within broader sociolinguistic frameworks, demonstrating how digital communication can shape and redefine language usage and norms. These insights are crucial for understanding the dynamic relationship between language, society and technology, contributing to the ongoing discourse on how digital platforms serve as incubators for emergent linguistic phenomena.

Traditional language resources such as dictionaries and lexical databases are primarily designed for established words with well-defined morphological patterns. However, traditional lexicographic procedures must be abandoned due to the dynamic nature of abbreviated neologisms. Researchers have to delve deep into the underlying morphological processes that drive the generation of these linguistic innovations in order to create comprehensive lexical resources. Therefore, the morphological analysis of abbreviated neologisms on X is critical to decoding how these expressions are created effectively. As more and more people rely on technology to interact and communicate with one another, it becomes imperative to interrogate how technology has affected language through social networking sites.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The active use of the social media has led to the creation of a novel social media X, as one of the most prolific platforms to create and share information, ideas, and linguistic innovations. Though all media including Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, have contributed to this trend, X (ex-Twitter) is one of the high lands of linguistic innovation. The character limit per post that characterises it has made the user behaviour feature (a study of the behaviour of users on the tool), and even its requirement, the compact and efficient forms of expression. This limitation has put technological, and the high-intensity, participatory character of the platform has enabled the introduction and quick proliferation of abbreviated neologisms. Regardless of these new forms taking on an increasingly dominant presence, there is scarce academic knowledge about their morphological construction, particularly in the Kenyan digital sphere. Shortened neologisms usually do not follow traditional rules of word-formation or even traditional rules of grammar and morphology. The deviations make it significantly difficult to categorise them systematically or interpret them based on some existing linguistic models. That way, the morphological study of reduced neologisms poses an essential challenge to the linguistics of language change because such constructions may not be transparent, can comply with irregular constructions, or can be founded in the shared contextualized knowledge of a particular online community. This paper aims to fill the research gap of the existing studies because it identifies, describes and analyses abbreviated neologisms among Kenyan users on X. Through this, it tries to bring to the light the changing interface between language and technology, providing a window to the linguistic processes which support digital communication and how language is now evolving in the modern world. With the advancement in technology and as new words are formulated to describe new

technology, new communication means are created. Such emerging forms of using language along with new technology should be determined, defined and analyzed. Language users, thus, need a restricted collection of rules to come up with a possible list of neologisms. This implies that the word formation rules will not just be applied in analyzing the already existing words but also in coming up with new words. In focusing on the strange use of language that KOX applies, the paper seeks to examine the structures of the morphologies of such neologisms and the differences between the use of language on other social networking sites (SNS). The findings of this study will help to learn more about how language can develop in a certain atmosphere of social and cultural conditions, capturing not written before words/definitions peculiar to the KOX Federation.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study on a morphological analysis of abbreviated neologisms used on social media discourses by Kenyans on X was guided by the following specific objectives:

i. To describe the morphological structure of abbreviated neologisms employed by Kenyans on X (KOX) users.
ii. To examine the correlation of non-linguistic variables and demographics on the use of abbreviated neologisms among Kenyans on X.
iii. To analyze how NMFT accounts for the formation of abbreviated neologisms used in social media discourses by KOX.

1.5 Research Questions

From the aforementioned objectives, the study sought to answer the following questions:

i. What are the morphological structures of abbreviated neologisms employed by Kenyans on X users?
ii. What is the correlation of non-linguistic variables and demographics on the use of abbreviated neologisms among Kenyans on X?
iii. How does the NMFT account for the formation of abbreviated neologisms used by Kenyans on X in social media discourses?

1.6 Justification of the Study

Social media usage and technology by default is a major aspect of areas of study in the 21 st century because one cannot live without technology in the world today. The paper fell under the larger research topic of digital linguistics in terms of the morphological patterns by which abbreviated neologisms in social media take place. Some works, including those by Mworia (2015) and Shalee & Mustafa (2019), focused on neologism in the context of social media, although, these studies have failed to deliver an in-depth study in the morphology of forms. This paper therefore tried to bridge that gap by providing a close analysis of morphological morphologies of contracted neologism employed on X (Twitter) by Kenyans. The present study focuses by giving a detailed morphological description on the structure of such forms particularly in the Kenyan setting and specifically in the English language practice. This paper, by focusing on the internal linguistic formation of the abbreviated neologisms, sheds light not only on the changes in language taking place in the social media, but also on how morphologically innovative language is in the localisation of the digital settings. The

literature review also discussed the odds taken by social media in integrating itself with the communication in society. This was in the quest to interrogate whether the English language has adapted to the social networking sites due to shortened neologisms developed through the said sites.

By analysing the present trend of contemporary language change with the help of social media and how the latter does not only contribute to the linguistic change but also gives a push to language change, this research will contribute to the ever-increasing body of works on such a trend as the use of netspeak (Crystal, 2008). This research records the current changes in the language that occur in Kenya through digital communication by looking at the acronyms that are being employed in the digital communication text on X. It helps realize how these shortened forms are attributable to both thought processes behind the construction of language (like morphological creativity) but also in the sociolinguistic forces that result in this change. Therefore, the research expands prior knowledge to include not only a localized, but also a morphological, approach to the developing linguistic practices in the digital era. Linguistic diversity will find a more complete and accurate reflection in internet than would ever be possible previously, and the creative potential of the new means of expression is carving out new regions of expression. Thus, the given study serves as a document of the new forms of expression that we might observe language evolve.

With the help of the consideration of the morphological structures of the abbreviated neologisms, the given study provides the contribution to the comprehension of the way of creation and application of these words in the digital environment and allows to comprehend the phenomenon in more detailed manner. Similarly, through such linguistic innovations, a researcher is able to learn or attain the knowledge on the

cognitive process in word formation i.e. morphological rules, constraints and patterns. This information can be used to increase our knowledge of how human beings produce language and express creations.

Moreover, the study also concentrated specifically on Kenyan case as it gives the rare views on the usage of abbreviated neologisms as it occurs in this particular culture and scenario. These findings are vital in the endeavor understanding how the social media especially X, given the limited characters limitation feature, can be seen to be a catalyst and filter of linguistic innovation. In comparison with the other platforms, such as Facebook or WhatsApp, X encourages briefness and instantness that, in turn, promotes the development of non-standard word forms.

The abbreviated English neologism on social media applied in the Kenyan context and internationally has to be studied since Netspeak is not limited to one geographical area. Other studies that have been done on international scales like the one by Crystal (2008), and Thurlow et al. (2004), have covered the evolution of language to the social media, but they end up discussing general trends, globally, without looking into localized language practices. This research is of value in understanding the application of language by Kenya users particularly to fit the quickly-responding, character-constrained needs of X and broadens the knowledge of language change based on social media and in culturally and linguistically varied contexts relevant to Kenyan case-study. The paper enriches the general knowledge about the situation of language utilization in Kenya and the use of social media in establishing linguistic habits. The analysis of the research looks at abbreviated neologisms present in netspeak in Kenya with special regard being focused on the language that the Kenyans in the group who were nicknamed Kenyans on X use. Research of the abbreviated neologisms in the social media is a necessary field of study. It will also assist researchers in performing

the current linguistic landscape giving great understandings on how and why these linguistic forms have been undergoing changes in terms of their structure as well as their use in the digital era.

1.7 Significance of Study

The research of A Morphological Analysis of Abbreviated Neologisms is of great importance in terms of studying the development of the language and especially the development of social media discourse. As a phenomenon of linguistics, abbreviated neologisms can be viewed as an indicator of the versatile and changeable directions of language, as a result, its capacity to develop and adjust to the evolving communicative demands of users. Crystal (2011) has argued that language is never fixed; it is always evolving as influenced by the social interactions and technologization occurring in the contemporary world. Among the main contributions of the study, the light can be thrown upon the process of evolution of the language. Exploring the morphological features of shortened neologisms, the study throws some light at the inventive tactics, which the KOX use to produce new linguistic forms. This process does not only reflect the innovative potential of the language, but emphasizes the impact of technological gain and cultural setting on language development.

The paper is useful to lexicographers and all language professionals engaged in the study and analysis of language. Shortened neologisms can be informal and might be incomprehensible to ordinary speakers of a standard variation of a language. It also involves creating a set of correct and non-generic lexical resources about those reduced neologisms and this is only possible with proper understanding of their morphological representation. Ongoing research and adaptation of lexicography is therefore essential so that the dynamic nature of these words can be kept abreast. I also want to add that informal language forms should be monitored in different contexts and among

different communities, in order to have a good coverage of lexical documentation projects. Linguistic analysis of truncated forms of words and phrases will be useful in developing language technology that can cope with the flux of language. The research is thus helpful in the creation of linguistic tools like dictionaries, grammar and language teaching and learning materials, which could support teaching and learning the second language English.

Moreover, the research will dwell on the questions of language variation and standardization in the digital space. With more linguistic forms expanding, they break down the conventional ideas of standardization and emphasize the variability of contemporary language use. Studies reveal that social media promotes creativity in the use of language, allowing its users to use abbreviation and slangs to communicate succinctly (Thurlow & Poff, 2013). Such an imaginary language is more than a simple vocabulary expansion, it also creates interactive spaces in which language change and acquisition are possible (Sutherland, 2018).

Of special importance is the study of how language has varied and been standardized through the lens of abbreviated neologisms. The latter are developed as different linguistic patterns appear and reshape the environment, disrupting the vision of traditional language standardisation and emphasising the heterogeneity of language use in the digital world. The casual aspect of social media also promotes creativity in language use in which the user utilizes abbreviated forms and slang to express and deliver information as succinctly as possible. Not only can social media be used to improve vocabulary learning and language acquisition, but it can also enable the users to practice their linguistic skills in practice and gain instant feedback by their peers. The analysis of reception and assimilation of these neologisms in the general

communication presented in the study is a source of valuable information both on the debate of language variation and standardization at the modern times.

The findings of this study are thus extremely valuable to further our knowledge of language change, semantics, social cultural commentary and linguistic variability and standardization within the frameworks of the discourse of social media. The study concentrating on the morphological portion of the abbreviated neologisms will add to the more detailed and complex picture of the interrelation pattern of language and the transformation digital world at the quickest wave..

1.8 Scope and Delimitations of the study

Research was carried out on the definition of abbreviated neologism present in the English language, and their process of morphological formation. Other properties of neologisms, like their meaning, formation and frequency of usage, have been considered in previous studies but not necessarily their morphology, especially on X. Through the word formation processes analysed in the course of the study, the study, therefore, examined the processes issues that are involved in the formation of these types of abbreviated neologisms. The researchers restricted the study to the chat online team dabbed KOX. Considering the number of social networking sites currently employed, the research was limited to the data of truncated neologism present in the KOX handles. X was used to collect the data because it possesses chats that give real-time information about abbreviated neologisms in English. It is possible that all data generated by X may not be involved and therefore only purposively sampled data was utilized in the study.

The researchers gathered the study data in the form of posts made on X that were publicly available during the three-month period, i.e., between November 2023 and

January 2024. This period was chosen to give representative sample of recent developments in use of abbreviated neologisms. It will only include the post that is in English, and which use the Kenyan English. Code-switching was not included in this research. The analysis further omitted the usage of closed correspondence (private messages) and erased or otherwise unacceptable posts as per the privacy rights or community policy on X. Further, the study restricted the process to analysis of textual contents alone and not the usage of images or videos, audio files, emojis and emoticons which could have also provided linguistic information. Simultaneously, information obtained in other social media, including WhatsApp, Facebook, Telegram, LinkedIn, and Snapchat, was outside the scope of the research since linguistic properties and user profiles might vary a great deal compared to X.

The research focused on geographical looping to the posts that might be plausibly assumed to be those of Kenyan users of X. This restriction was based on Kenyan-oriented language indicators, the use of hashtags, availability of a Kenyan flag in the name and cultural dimensions. The decision to use X as a platform was informed by its wide popularity among Kenyans, its distinctive attribute of using hashtag activism not to mention how diverse they are in terms of using lingual expressions. Focusing on these aspects, the study sought to present an inclusive morphological study of abbreviated neologisms, to understand more about the spontaneity of language in the digital creation of communication expressions among Kenyans.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the background of the study, the statement of the problem, research objectives and research questions. Justification of the study and scope of the study has also been discussed. In the subsequent chapter, it shall conduct a review of literature pertaining to the research and the theoretical framework of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In this section, a critical review of the literature pertinent to the study is conducted. Similarities and differences with this study are established and aligned to the views of other researchers. The theoretical framework on which this study is based is also discussed.

2.2 Morphology of Neologisms

Morphology refers to the morphological aspects of a word (how the words are built in a language), and how its internal structure is configured (Oz, 2014). It also examines the forming of words and construction of meaning of words. The abbreviated neologism on social media use morphology significantly as they innovate and transform such novel words. Jimaima and Nkhata (2020) affirm that without addressing the concept of productivity in the formation of words, the morphology cannot be discussed. They observe that productivity requires the aspect of creativity since speakers of a language have a limited set number of rules to generate a possible list of new words at any particular time. The rules are not only supposed to be utilized to acquire an analysis of the existing words, but they are also supposed to be used to synthesize new words as well. New words created by users on social media can be sufficient in number to help them to communicate new and old ideas that have acquired a different cultural context. Thus, the study narrowed down to abbreviated neologism

on X and examined the processes of word formation that enter into action in the creation of the abbreviated neologism.

As with the words of Standard English, social media neologisms are formed with the use of morphological operations that appear in English. The morphological examination could become a valuable source of research when it comes to the way abbreviated neologisms are formed and applied to the social media. Kappler and Werning (2017) conducted one of the studies related to neologisms in Instagram and Twitter. They came to the conclusion that such neologisms tend to have certain morphological features, e.g., the use of consonant clusters or chopping longer words; besides that, the paper aimed at determining the role of social media neologisms. The authors concluded that these neologisms make a person feel in-group identity and have emotions in text. According to Jimaima and Nkhata (2020), some of the word formation processes that result in neologisms in the social media are initialism, clipping, blending, and affixation, including compounding, pseudo-construction, and social media pseudo-compounding. Abbreviated neologisms on social media may be regarded as a kind of innovative language in which online communication is informal and fast (Kappler & Werning, 2017).

Morphology and language, as a whole, tend to be productive due to word formation processes that occur on some bases (Jimaima and Nkhata, 2020). They also state that productivity is vulnerable to the time aspect. They adopt diachronic perspective, that some words are lost over the years and new inventions are emerging in the social media, due to technology. According to Lucida (2005), new words are continuously being added to the lexicons to define new ideas; hence, older words keep coming out of use as they lose their cultural value, with regard to the impact of digital technology.

According to Aronoff (1976:17-18), the most unproblematic task of morphology is identified with the task of listing the set of possible words of any particular language and that the theory of morphology analysis should not be limited to the theory of word formation rather they should provide description of the neighboring theories which are phonology and syntax. According to Aronoff (1994), morphology must be identified as a module, layer or level of description since it exhibits peculiar, irredundant properties. These properties have to be described in order to give the explanation of how morphology interacts with other structures in the linguistic world like syntax.

When examining the abbreviated neologisms, we should realize that words are defined as sound and meaning and that those words are defined as structure. All non-phonological properties are here housed at the level of structure. Such properties are case, gender, tense, inflectional class, among other processes. The literature reviewed will inform the study on a morphological analysis of abbreviated neologisms, since it will give the context that is vital to the study.

These forms of language can be studied morphologically and thus be used to understand communication processes on social media to an extent that abbreviated neologisms are formed and how their structure relates to meaning and application. The above-mentioned reviewed literature implies that the promotion of new linguistic practices via the use of social media has led to the emergence of shortened neologisms. The morphological analysis of the given neologisms can assist in determining the morphological structure of these neologisms as well as give a hint about their usage in social media communication. Altogether, this gives an idea of the language use and communicative practices shifting in the presence of social media.

This research aimed to find out the abbreviated neologisms, analyze them, classify, and outline their expression. Accordingly, the given research helps us learn about how

these words look and feel in their structure and form. As the internet and other technology develop, netizens have invented new terms in an effort to convey novel things. The study, therefore, aimed to determine how netizens are playing with the property of language that makes it dynamic to coin new abbreviated neologisms hence enlarging the vocabulary of any particular language in use. Similarly, neologisms continue to evolve generation to generation; therefore, research needs to be necessary to come into contact with discovering and describing emerging abbreviated neologisms when they arise.

2.3 Social Media Discourses

Technology has been changing rapidly over the years and new methods of communication have emerged as well as modification of language use. An outstanding consideration is the emergence of the social media through which the manner in which individuals connect online has changed. These developments in technologies have also affected the use of language on the social media. The use of language in the social networks is currently gaining momentum as the language in these sites is developed as Netspeak or Chatspeak (Lenhart, 2009). One can frequently use these words and phrases in informal written language. Page (2012) laments that the number of abbreviated neologisms in the social media has gone up considerably in the last ten years. According to Page (ibid) the nature of social media platforms such as X, their character limitations, has necessitated the need by users to shorten down their messages thereby forming shorten neologisms. According to Page (2012) and Crystal (2011), the phenomenon of social media has resulted in a new type of communication that is short and informal and an increase in new linguistic forms as well (abbreviated neologisms). Crystal (ibid) also observes that the use of language has been

significantly affected by the change of technology, especially with regard to social media.

This paragraph is divided into four parts that discuss various issues of the usage of the abbreviated neologisms in social media. The corresponding sub-section revolves around similar abbreviations and neologisms and assesses an overview account of emerging terminologies and phrases in modern languages. The second sub-section plagiarists into the interaction of technology and word formation where the technological innovations have given rise to new forms of language. The third is oriented at employing shortened neologism in social media and investigating how such limitation of characters in these platforms has necessitated the development of new language use. The fourth sub-section examines morphology of shortened neologisms.

2.3.1 Abbreviations and Neologisms

Neologisms are new words or combinations of words that enter the vocabulary due to the development of culture, technology and the social life. Neologisms also include words which already exist but are given new meanings. One of the most typical forms of neologisms encountered in social media texts including X is an abbreviation. The popularity of such words used by KOX also shows the dynamics of how the users of social media networks abbreviate words in a word-shortening process that is used to generate new words to match the communicative purpose on the platform (Mworia, 2015).

Crystal (2018) notes that abbreviations have a long-standing history in language evolution since they have been employed in ancient writing systems, manuscripts during the Middle Ages, and in early print culture as the means of making communication easier and saving space. He offers useful information on the use of abbreviations that were used as short cut symbols or characters to signify common

words or phrases, and enabled scribes to write fast. He also observes how abbreviations have constantly changed in their nature to form part of effective communication in the medieval manuscript to early print culture. This was implemented when the space-saving methods were critical aspects in creating texts using minimal resources. In the modern use of communication, as Crystal (ibid) understands, the influence of digital communication platforms such as mainly social media such as X has played a massive role in the molecular growth of abbreviated neologisms. Since there is a restriction of characters in tweeting and a necessity to be able to express in a concise and meaningful manner the users are left to be imaginative and come up with truncated forms of words and phrases to represent their messages.

Abbreviated neologisms imply that new words are created out of shortened existing lexemes and denote three phenomena that are correlated with each other, i.e., clippings, acronyms, and initialisms (Jimaima & Nkhata 2020). Clippings/truncation refers to the process of dropping certain parts of a word to form another word with same meaning and initialisms are mostly written in capital letters with no spaces or periods among them (Jimaima & Nkhata ibid). They also indicate that as opposed to acronyms, initialisms are not read out as words rather, letter by letter. According to Crystal (2008a:1), an abbreviation is a shortened form of a word, one of the meaningful parts of a word is removed, at the end of a word, e.g. exam, or the beginning of a word, e.g. phone. Crystal (2008a:1) also says that abbreviation is often a word that has been developed in linguistics in the study of word formation, whereby, several ways of how words can be abridged are distinguished.

Conversely, neologism entails the formation of new words in a language with the use of several processes in words construction. Aronoff (1980) asserts that, grammar can generate a lot of words and that such words must obey word formation regulations. The neologisms, which are produced in that way, are known as new words (Jimaima & Nkhata, 2017). These neologisms can be allocated in all kinds of grammatical categories. Mworia (2015) claims that they may serve as nouns and act as references to people, objects, or notions. It is also possible to use the abbreviations as verbs (action or state), adjectives (descriptions and qualifying adjectives), adverbs (modification of the verbs and adjectives), and interjections (emotion and reactions). According to Kubova (2010; as cited in Jimaima et al. 2020), a neologism can be described as any combination of words/set of expression used in line with the productive rules of word formation in English. According to Crystal (2018), linguistic creativity results in neologisms that show that users are flexible with their language and can use it to convey new things and experiences. According to him, the ongoing formation of neologisms continues to depict wealth in the language and demonstrates the evolving aspect of human communication.

This paper has its foundation on an extensive literature that has examined the cultivated sense of language in online communication. The above discussed literature has underscored the language change that is evident in the social media, where there is a special emphasis on the development of abbreviation and the coins of words that users find efficient and creative in their engagement (Crystal, 2011; Danet & Herring, 2007). They have been mainly focused on Western studies where special focus is on Twitter and Facebook. They have also reemphasized the place of sociolinguistic influences on linguistic innovation wherein technological limitation in the use of language has been mentioned.

Similarly, unlike previous studies, the present study, in turn, would be limited to the Kenyan digital environment to provide a special insight into how the local conditional cultural and linguistic circumstances affect the formation of abbreviated neologisms and their adoption. Contrary to the existing literature which usually ignores non-Western contexts, the present paper entails the excessive coverage of how Kenyans on X acquire the use of progressive morphological strategies to coin the innovations in new forms of expression. Through the study of a wide variety of user-generated content, the research provides an insight into the interaction between language and technology therefore adding to a more comprehensive picture of using languages in the Kenyan situation.

The motivation behind neologisms is developments in social life, technology, and, in some instances, culture (Jimaima & Nkhata, 2020). Another research made by Aduda (2013) relied on the Dholuo neologisms and how the Luo community perceives this. It examines the type of neologisms that have been coined by the members of Luo community that have been integrated with the local language. The above study dwells on neologisms and other forms of word formation that are applicable to this study. The study, however, is not the same as the proposed study because it is limited to the Dholuo language and that the neologisms cannot be comprehended by people who do not speak this particular language since the translation of the same to English does not necessarily transfer meanings. With this in mind, the proposed research will seek to explore the shortened neologism of one of the languages of wider communication whose use is worldwide; that is, English. Other than the fact that his study focusses on Dholuo neologisms, his area of study is sociolinguistics whereas the given study is a morphological analysis.

Magaiwa (2016) observes neologisms in the language Igikuria which is a Bantu language spoken by the people of Kuria in East Africa. The researcher examines how new words and expressions are made and accepted among the Igikuria speakers. Magaiwa examines the technologies, the socio-cultural, and the environmental factors that facilitate the formation and acceptance of new lexical units. The linguistic processes reflected in the formation of information on neologisms are also analyzed, and the researcher singles out the processes of borrowing, word blending and semantic shifts. The results also indicate that the Igikuria follow the culture of using neologisms to connect with new technology, societal tendencies, and surroundings. This is one of the indicators that show that language is sensitive to modern trends. Magaiwa also points out the dynamism of language by looking at the neologisms that exist in this Bantu language. It is different in the current study as it targets abbreviated neologisms in one language: in English.

Setka and Plauc (2021) assume that neologisms exemplify relatively new or incidental concepts, terminologies, words, or phrases that can undergo daily use but not fully into the language. The combination of their great popularity and the fact that they are extensively used leads to an impression that on social networking sites worldwide they are rapidly adopted. The influence of these social networking sites has been enormous in the sense that they enhance and accelerate communication and build relationships among other undertakings (Setka & Plauc, 2021). The use of neologisms introduces new ones that do not resemble existing words in the English language. Therefore, neologisms continue to emerge and increase the English vocabulary, and their improved comprehension can help each learner utilize English language use in any form, acquire the required information, and eliminate their communicative capacity (Shahlee & Mustaffa, 2019). However, the study takes a different position and that is

of neologisms enhancing the communication capacity of learners per se. This paper considers abbreviated neologisms as an addition of new words and phrases to the English language.

Similar results were observed in other studies, e.g., the study by Shahlee and Ahmed (2022, p.25) revealed that of their 93 neologisms gathered using social sites of their choice, it can be concluded that acronym represents the largest percentage of use 33.3 percent, where 31 neologisms fell. In addition, the research of Orolic (2023:16) concluded that: the most frequent processes of word formation are abbreviations and acronyms 35 percent. Clipping, a process whereby words are shortened, is another word construction process that is quite popular (20 percent of neologisms are clips). The frequency of use led to the conclusion that the following are 15 percent compounding, 15 percent semantic shifting, 5 percent blending and coinage.

In addition, Kang (2022) investigated the morphological structure and process of neologisms in the Covid-19 pandemic and revealed the meaning of every neologism. The researcher identified the use of words to be formulated in form of compounding, blending, affixation, conversion, abbreviation, acronym, clipping, onomatopoeia or antonomasia. In short, clipped neologisms such as clippings, acronyms, and initialisms are a widespread occurrence in the process of language change especially among the youth in the social media. Innovations in these words consist in shortening of words that were existing before and they are treated as a creative manner of adapting language in changing social and cultural conditions.

2.3.2 The Interplay between Technology and Word Formation

Correlation of technology and neologism in the word formation in the social media has become a trending research in the past few years owing to technology being a driving

factor in language evolution (Crystal, 2011). Some researchers have attempted to explore the way new linguistic practices have been created through technological developments and have led to the development of new words and expressions. According to Herring et al. (2010), the popularization of abbreviations and acronyms in computer-mediated communication is quite famous and that it is associated with the formation of such new forms of communication. In the same manner, Tagg et al. (2014) explore the influences of digital media on language use, particularly the informality and the immediacy of the social media sites that have resulted in the creation of new forms of language. Crystal (ibid) writes about the emergence of a new type of communication in the social media, marked by succinctness and lack of formality, thus generating new words and phrases.

It should be stressed that the issue of language evolution and innovation is a complicated one to be affected by a number of factors. As far as Crystal (2011) is concerned, the catalyst provided by social media is the spread of linguistic innovations. In the above study, Jimaima and Nkhata (2020) have considered the interaction of technology and grammar to determine whether the involved lexical items can be classified into the familiar mechanisms of word formation. New words are also seen as having been coined over time as a result of creativity of language and productivity in their study. According to their findings, not all neologisms obey the word formation rules, but are formed by the processes of pseudo-word formation. The current research is biased to morphology which is perceived as the process of forming words in language. A word has to be formed not separately but it has to be formed in rules that govern the word formation.

With the introduction of the digital form of communication through the use of social networks, instant messaging and email, such modern methods changed the way the

interaction occurs among individuals and information transfer because they offer real-time communication, which triggered the necessity to be as concise and efficient in using language as possible (Baron, 2008). New concepts and ideas born with the technological discoveries and improvements also need to be captured in literal terms. According to Crystal, language users are creative when it comes to arriving at neologisms to describe these new forms of technologies and related phenomena (2008). Among the important features between technology and word formation and most particularly in case of social media is the rapidity with which a novel word and phrases can go viral (Baron, 2008). Social media sites give users the ability to introduce content with a worldwide audience instantaneously, therefore, new words and phrases are easy to be introduced to the online lexicon. The property of language of creativity and property of arbitrariness currently serve as models to explain the morphology of the abbreviated neologisms utilised by KOX.

In another article, Deumert et al. (2019) note the emergence of possibilities related to the visibility and expression of African languages on the Internet due to the advent of digital media and mobile communication, in particular. But linguistic repertoires tend to be represented as mobile and fragmented linguistic resources, such as phrases, words or expressions, as opposed to bounded resources with names, such as Kiswahili and isiXhosa. It gives instances of how Kenyans on Twitter (KOT) employ the use of hash-tags such as #KOT and #SomeonetellCNN to discuss politics and react to falsification of African realities. As the English language is usually employed in these hashtags because of their international nature, Kiswahili and other local languages are more pronounced in the use of local issues. This proves that the use of shortened neologisms and multilingual writing behaviors can be used as ways of self-identification and communication with political and social problems that Kenyans on

social media adopt. The research gives an effective scope to examine the morphological mechanism out of which these new linguistic forms emerge.

Rundell (2013), examines the impact of social media on developing and accepting of new words in the English language. The other thing that he considers is the role of user-generated content in shaping neologisms in the social media. In accordance with the work constructed by Rundell (ibid), the types of the user contribution to the lexicographic projects consist of the wiki-style, user-generated content (UGC), and crowdsourcing. He investigates the use of dictionaries like Urban Dictionary and Merriam-Webster Dictionary that require their users to submit new neologisms to them so that they become part of the English language.

Social media give their users the possibility to develop and post content such as new words and phrases (Mworia, 2015). She continues by stating that this has resulted in a great number of neologisms that are used on a specific platform or community, like the case of tweet and retweet on Twitter. This is because the study focuses on understanding English neologisms in wider Kenyan social media context discussed by Mworia. Her study will reveal the dynamics impacting on the generation and application of these neologisms in the social networking sites (SNSs) coupled with the evaluation of the effectiveness of these neologisms in communication. It is worth noting that she defines many processes of word formations, which are used during the process of creating neologisms; they include; derivation, compounding, semantic transfers, clippings acronyms, abbreviations and graphological deviation. Although the research conducted by Mworia creates a starting point on how to understand neologisms in Kenyan social media, my study goes a step further as it focuses on abbreviated neologisms in social media. My specific interest is trying to understand how these short forms operate in online communication, in the context of user

interaction and decoding. In contrast to Mworia whose research is more global in its scope of word formation processes, my research is focused on peculiarities of word forms as well as implications of abbreviated forms. Although both the articles serve the same purpose of contributing to the knowledge about language evolution in the digital realm, in this research article, the researcher focused on abbreviated neologisms and it presents a different angle to Mworia results which makes the present research article of value.

In the study by Oneydum (2012), the researcher examines 70 neologisms in social media that were observed in the following SNSs: Facebook, My Space, Messenger, Twitter, Yahoo, YouTube, and Blackberry Messenger. Based on this work, he categorized the 70 neologisms into the 5 morphological processes which are blending, compounding, affixation, semantic extension and coinage. The researcher was also keen on the situational dynamics surrounding the formation and reshaping of such linguistic innovations. Abbreviations, acronyms, and hashtags were found to be one of the major findings of the study as being a prominent form of social media neologism. These abbreviated and condensed terms are the language shortcuts or an efficient way to communicate in the dynamic world of computer-mediated communication. The research of Onyedum sheds light, as well, on the influence of the social and cultural context on the creation of social media neologisms. Onyedum (ibid) also insists on the dynamism of language and the ways in which social networking sites have come to be beacon of linguistic innovativeness. The analysis provides an understanding of the current changes that occur in the field of communication in the digital space, in which the vocabulary of social media represents a dynamically changing language due to its active adjustment to the changing technologies and the new realities of the society in which people live. Another issue that the research highlights is the importance of

internet memes and viral material in the diffusion of neologism through different social media. In contrast to the study above, the current one will not examine memes rather will focus on the abbreviated neologisms and the way they are made.

The paper examined the hybrid and murky relationship between technology and word formation in social media, how new words and phrases are created in a hurry, and essentially considers the peculiar features of these platforms and communities using these platforms.

2.3.3 The Use of Neologisms on Social Media

Social media is a collection of technologies developed on the ideological and technological basis of Web 2.0 and offers to create and share user-generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2018). Eke (2018) refers to social media as a type of electronic communication in the form of a social network and micro-blogging site where people build online communities to exchange information, ideas, personal messages, and any other content. Yong and Ogbodo (2019) cherish the fact that social media has achieved much popularity and impetus in sharing information. Computer mediated communication has seen social media, such as X, the online platform at which the subject matter in the proposed study will revolve, becoming a useful means of communication among the people of Kenya on X.

The research conducted by Yong and Ogbodo (2019) considers social media-based communication as more of an instance of a communication facilitator, which is out of the scope of the present research. However, the research will be used in the current study because it will widen the scope of this study to explain how abbreviated neologisms emerge and are used within the context of social media. Their paper also illuminates the elements of social and cultural determinants which impacts the usage

of shortened neologisms in social media. They observe the social media has become a strong force in displaying social and cultural aspects, and abbreviated neologisms tend to be entertained by the users who wish to bring out particular meanings and identities. The research above will be beneficial to the current study since it will provide a guide into the social and cultural backgrounds in which these linguistic forms are applied.

A research of English neologims in the social media has been conducted by Mworia (2015). The research is restricted to twitter and English in Kenya. The article by Mworia (2015) was based on the lexical pragmatic theory that explores linguistically defined meanings of words as they are altered. The theory of lexical pragmatics further points out the premise that language lexical units are systematically studied, and interpreted based on a specific contextual situation. The study by Mworia is interested in contextual meaning realization. Lexical pragmatics investigates the use of distinction between semantics and pragmatics on the word or phrase, instead of utilizing it on a whole utterance (Blutner, 2004). A higher level of the linguistic structure is to be elevated above word formation and language governing rules which is the focus of the suggested study, to lexical semantics. Lexical semantics also explains multi word units, a unitary or collective meaning that is never the same as the separate meaning of the words utilized in it (Mworia, 2015). Nonetheless, the paper examined single terms to define and illustrate morphological characteristics with the help of the theory of natural morphology (NMT). Inclusion of abbreviated neologisms in the proposed study has also critically examined the abbreviation neologisms used in Kenyan netspeak, especially the setting of the language use by KOX.

According to Caleffi (2015), making use of the hashtags on social sites, especially twitter (now X) is considered as an instance of morphological creativity. A hashtag is most often a combination of characters (which may or may not contain numbers)

followed by the hash #. It is a combination that labels the message itself. Hashtags began on X when they were used to classify messages or tweets into ore to their subject. This helped the users to access and distribute information concerning it easily. Katie (2001) defines neologisms as the usage of a newly coined word together with the use of words that might become acceptable in the dictionary in case of their increasing popularity. She says that neologisms may be invented. The above researches were based on the utilization of hashtags that is not the core of the current study.

Lucida (2005) also examines the neologisms that are continuously getting into the vocabulary to explain the new concepts and technologies and what they imply to the users of the same. The paper narrows down on particular neologisms which are occasioned by the changes in technology. This research is applicable to the conducted study because both the research studies examine neologisms in social media; and neologisms in social media cannot exist without technology. Nevertheless, the research conducted by Lucida is limited to the technologies related neologism reinforced with the prefix of e-.

In another piece of work conducted by Adel (2014), the researcher explores the innovations that have taken place in the language spoken by the Egyptian youth. He states that the main reason behind such a choice of linguistic change in their vernacular is because of the spread of social media. It explores the hypothesis that the spoken Arabic language is threatened because the Egyptian youth 18-30 years old use English and Arabic. The results and findings of the study prove that even though everyone utilizes the English language as the official language of the internet, the most used language in the internet happens to be Arabic since it is the language that the younger generation of Egyptians uses to communicate. It is contrasting with the present work,

however, because the current work examines English shortened neologisms used by KOX.

There is also a corpus-based analysis of hash-tags given by Abdeen (2018). She studies the effects of assessing expressions over social media. The point her study is to examine is the process of forming a stance on a lexico-grammatic level in the social media conversation. The study conducted by Abdeen is lexico-grammatical whereby the one presented here is morphological. Although the present paper is based on a morphological analysis of abbreviated neologisms in the use of Kenyans on social media, it also differs in several points compared to the study conducted by Abdeen (2018). First, Abdeen concentrates his research on the lexico-grammatical aspects and critiques parley in social media communication, whereas the proposed study is a morphological study of the process of forming words behind the shortening of neologisms adopted by Kenyans in social media platforms.

Secondly, Abdeen (2018) analyzes general linguistic characteristics and attitudinal positions in social media discourse, but the research today focuses on morphological specifics of abbreviated neologisms, that is, the use of clippings, acronymic and initialism-type forms of neologisms. Thirdly, the study by Abdeen offers a corpus-based analysis of the use of language in social media whereas the present study will be a contribution to the existing knowledge on how Kenyan people creatively transform and condense existing lexemes in order to compose new words over social media, which are part of the dynamic use of language. The present research has a narrower focus than the one by Abdeen, although it, too, focuses on language use in social media; the former studies morphological processes involved in shaping the appearances of abbreviated neologisms, whereas the latter does not restrict itself to the particular aspect of language and explores lexico-grammatical and evaluative

properties in the broader context. This morphological line will provide additional information on the dynamism of the language changes as promoted by social media communication within the Kenyan setting.

The consideration of the use of abbreviated neologisms through Kenyans on the social media makes use of the framework presented by Deumert et al. (2019) useful. Their paper covered how African languages have become visible and articulated in online spaces through the use of digital media and in particular, through mobile communication, sometimes as mobile and dispersed linguistic repositories (phrases, words, or expressions) as opposed to bounded units with names.

The above paper provides instances of Kenyan on X (KOX) usage of hashtags and playful misspelling to engage in political debate and dispute the misrepresentations of African reality. This is consistent with the direction of the proposed study that targets to carry out a morphological study of abbreviated neologisms of Kenyans on X. An interesting context to their argument on the usage of a combination of Kiswahili, English, and other languages by Kenyans and their view on the processes of translating identity away into standard forms is useful in contextualizing linguistic creativity of the abbreviated neologisms used on X.

Nevertheless, the current research does not reproduce the book chapter as it extends its theorization to underlying themes of multilingualism and digital representation of African languages by limiting itself only to the morphological processes of the formation of these abbreviated neologisms. The research also included a more detailed examination of clipping, acronym, and initialism expressions known as Kenyan on X, and how these are changing attributes of language usage in the online environment. This is added to the already available literature on the use of African language on

online platforms and provides some understanding on how fluid language change can be when guided by social media behaviour usage.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Natural Morphology Theory (a functionalist theory of Dressler, 2019) was employed in the study and was applied to explain morphological preferences on extra-linguistic motivations. Natural Morphology theory is a theory in linguistics that proposes that cognitive and communicative constraints in which language structure is formed, the language structure is influenced by language rules instead of the language constraints (Bybee, 2009; Dressler, 2019). The theory believes that words and phrases in a language are constructed most economically and efficiently to be communicated. Such a view as NMT also indicates that patterns of word formation in a language are not incidental but on principles of universality that is shared by all languages (Dressler et al. 2011). The theory believes that the organization of words is the result of interconnection between linguistic and non-linguistic factors aka the physical features of the human body, the mental capacity of the users of the language, and the social and cultural environment that the language is practiced in.

Word formation in NMT follows two major principles that include lexical economy and iconicity. The lexical economy idea implies that efficient and straightforward morphological patterns of languages are adopted and languages are minimally or economically articulated in sound-building and mental processing. As applied to the present study, this principle applies in abbreviated neologisms where speakers want to have brevity and convenience in communication. Speakers make it by shortening long-seeming words or phrases. The iconicity principle holds that words have a correlation between their form and meaning. It indicates that the selected abbreviations possibly express either semantic or conceptual propinquity of the initial words or phrases. In

fact, by looking at the iconicity of shorted neologisms, we wander in searching how the shortened forms identify key elements of meaning or trigger the causes of association in response to the original words..

The tenets of NMT that are of interest to the current paper are the ones considered by Bybee (2002): economy, analogy, paradigmatic relations, generalization and frequency. The concept of economy has implied that linguistic structures will tend to be formed in an efficient manner possible. In case of abbreviated neologism, it would be pertinent to view the economy of language by speakers in abbreviating words and adopting new forms that profitably meet communication purpose under the boundaries of the limitations (character limits) on X. One must also know how analogy can be used in constellation of abbreviated neologisms. Through investigating how the current linguistic trends are extrapolated or adjusted to make the short forms, one can derive conclusions on the way of language innovation and language change among KOX.

The character of naturalness is displayed in inclinations as opposed to rigorously predictive truths or maxims. These preferences may be in conflict with one another and with other preferences, typological and system-specific, leading to cross-linguistic diversity. The parameters of morphological naturalness are the preferences or tendencies of historical languages with respect to the choice of morphological techniques, operations, rules.

Galeas (1998) has singled out the main parameters that regulate these preferences. These are the diagrammaticity of morphological structures, the morphotactic and morphosemantic transparency, which focuses on the understandability of the distribution of morphemes and focus on the relation between form and meaning,

respectively, morphological pattern uniformity, encoding transparency, and form distinctiveness. Others are indexicality (what forms signify), metaphoricity (metaphorical elaborations), size of the signans (the intricacy of the morphosyntactic elements), signans base (the base of the derived forms). Galeas additionally emphasized the fact that natural languages prefer to select techniques based upon a trade off involving markedness and naturalness. Based on this theoretical background, the researcher had used this knowledge to examine its modern application to language use on social media. Another area of interest examined in the study is the effect that these parameters of preference play in the formation and acceptance of shortened neologism in internet-based environments. The framework provides some useful information on the realities in the world of digital communication in terms of these preferences, specifically, cross-linguistic..

Regarding shortened neologisms in social networks, a natural morphology theory analysis would argue that speaker would coin and adopt these textisms because of enhancing economy and effectiveness of communication in online environment. This is a theory that suggests that the constraints of digital communication, including a need to save space and time on digital messages and 2 the need to express feelings and social identities define the nature of textisms. The netizens ad-hoc use the shortened neologisms in a spatial-temporal setting to achieve communication since Netspeak is without geographical limitation. This is in part what constitutes language change. As such, theories like Optimality theory might not portray this type of a scenario. Natural morphology framework will conveniently be used in examining the syntactical properties of abbreviated neologisms and describe their morphological component. The natural morphology theory that assumes that a meaning and a titular use of a word

is manifested in its morphologically constructed business structure can be applied to grasp the structure and purpose of abbreviated neologisms adopted by KOX.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has delved into the literature reviewed for the study. It has explored how different researchers have to define general abbreviations and neologisms on social media. It has also looked at the interphase between technology and word formation and how these abbreviated neologisms are incorporated into English. The chapter has also looked at studies on the use of abbreviated neologisms and explores the natural morphology theory (NMT) on which the study is hinged.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the methodological background of this research study referring to a qualitative methodology that will be applied to direct the researcher in the investigating of the abbreviated neologisms among the KOX. It indicates the digital habitat of X as the scope of the study, further explains the sampling approach applied in capturing the data. In this chapter, the analytical strategy of using content and thematic analysis is also explained. The validity of the study and the ethical considerations have also been outlined in the chapter and have been addressed to give a coherent account of the research process.

3.2 Research Design

The research design utilized in the proposed study is descriptive research design as it will suffice in discussing the morphological structures of abbreviated neologisms employed by Kenyans in the social network site X (previously twitter). The descriptive types of research are appropriate in studies that are expected to give a detailed description of phenomena as they naturally happen in the absence of distorting the variables. Within the present research, the design will allow identifying, classifying and examining the structural characteristics of abbreviated neologisms in on-line discourse.

Although the general methodology is a qualitative approach, the descriptive design will specifically instruct the purposeful gathering and interpretation of semantics data based on digital discourse in X. The design enables the researcher to investigate the multifetishized and imaginative manners in which language users are able to bend

morphological structures to the affordability of digital communication platforms. This decision to use a descriptive design is also further supported by the purposes of the study as outlined in the chapter one of the research. The descriptive framework allows grasping the specifics of language innovation within the context and producing linguistic knowledge based on the real user data.

3.3 Study Area

This research study shall address the online social media platform X (previously known as Twitter) with specific reference to using Kenyan X users generated content. X is a common social media platform with short-form text type interactions on which users make so-called tweets that can consist of texts, photos, videos and links. Ochieng' (2019) says that X has become an important medium of social interactions, cultural expression and linguistic innovation due to its real-time nature as well as its wide reach. According to Ochieng (ibid), Kenyans discuss different issues on politics, religion and social issues. This is why it is a good source of research on new linguistic phenomena like abridged neologisms.

This decision to use X as an area of study was informed by the fact that the linguistic form of the area is unique in the sense that users tend to engage in creative and dynamic use of language activities in order to maximize character limitation and get accustomed to the speed of interaction in digital communication. The linguistic materials gathered were restricted to data that can be ascribed to Kenyan users. Social analytics and identification of such content included examination of user accounts, Hash tags and cultural reference popular in Kenya. The choice of Kenyan X users as the population also depends on how they mostly used English or a combination of English and dialects in their tweets, which is what the study embarked in terms of the linguistic practices under the digital discourses. The study aimed to address the source of linguistic

innovations that occur in the Kenyan digital discourse by focusing on posts to this demographic.

X contains diverse users and an opportunity to divide and search issues with hashtags and advanced search facilities that created an ideal setting to acquire information on the use of language. As an open-access platform (privacy and data protection policies apply) it can be used to compile a considerable body of linguistic information which is publicly accessible; hence it is a most suitable platform upon which this morphological analysis may be performed. The scope of study was confined to other social networking methods or the offline communicative environment because linguistic dynamics in X are exclusive and possibly incomparable to all other platforms or face-to-face discussions.

3.4 Sampling

Sampling entails drawing a part of population to form a representative of the population in question. Creswell (2014) holds that the selection of a sample is based on the type of population that applies regarding the study. The sampling method used in this study was purposive sampling in that the sources of data are selected out of a purposeful need to use what is most relevant to the research objectives. The approach is backed with the work of Creswell (2014), Patton (2002) and Barasa (2024), who all support the purposeful selection of the participants/data points due to having certain qualities that align with the intended subject of the study.

The purposive sampling was appropriate in this research study because it enabled the researcher to focus on data that provided the context of the linguistic phenomenon in question, namely: abbreviated neologisms as used by Kenyans on X (previously

Twitter). The criteria of collecting the tweets were as follows: the focus on the tweets that showed the language of the Kenyan users concerning the keywords, hashtags, trends and profiles of public users who could have demonstrated their Kenyan identity. Based on the X profile of the user namely having a Kenyan flag or any other identifying mark on their usernames like their name was Kenyan, the researcher was able to differentiate between a Kenyan user using the site and a user who was not Kenyan. The technique facilitated the researcher to retrieve data that was not only contextually but also, linguistically rich.

The research was conducted over three months (November 2023 January 2024) using screenshots of 300 Twitter tweets accounting to the public. The choice of this period was meant to collect the existing trends and provide diversity of language use in different areas such as viral tweets, trending conversations and our day-to-day communication. All Tweets were publicly available and within stipulated time bracket.

Considering the initial sample consisting of 300 screenshots, a careful analysis was made by the researcher to isolate the screenshots having evident examples of abbreviated neologisms. The tweets that had no enough context, could not be relevant to the study or included no abbreviations were not selected. This resulted in retention of 30 percent of the screenshots after this filter process. These screenshots were characterized by distinctive and creative application of shortenings of neologisms and may be regarded as a legitimate representation of linguistic behaviour of Kenyans on X.

Among these 300 screenshots, the researcher was able to find 30 neologisms that were of abbreviated lists. These were manually retrieved and validated on the basis of criteria namely novelty, brevity and it is within the context of use. In the case of the

current research, abbreviated neologisms are simply new words or phrases which either have been shortened or abbreviated due to convenience or brevity and have typically been created in particular communities or online forums. These words summarise the emerging language phenomena, which coincide with cultural shifts, innovations in technology or even social intercourse. The sample size was considered large enough to give an in-depth description of the morphological trends of abbreviated neologism and to guarantee reliability and validity of the results of the study. The sample size also enabled the researchers to identify the similar morphological trends and also the variations in the use of abbreviated neologisms in the X discourse of the Kenyans.

This is the last group of 30 neologisms out of which qualitative analysis of morphology was considered sufficient. As Marc Mason, (2010) argues, qualitative researches are more concerned with the depth and richness of the data studied than they focus on large sample sizes as they seek to identify patterns and produce in-depth results as opposed to generalizing the research to wider populace. The sample helped in accessing the repetitory patterns of the morphology and unveiling the innovativeness and versatility in the use of language by the Kenyan X users.

3.5 Data Collection

This study got its data by copying screen shots of publicly available posts at X. The screenshots were taken using a phone and the data had to be stored in a password - protected file. The study used participant observation and semi-structured interviews in the collection of the data.

3.5.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation assumed the researcher as an observer actively participating in the X platform in the capacity of an observer. This approach enabled the researcher to access the digital world of Kenyan X without making any interference within the specific group, which helped observe the speech phenomenon of using abbreviated neologisms in real-time.

By tracking selected users, hashtags and conversations that were relevant among Kenyan X community, the researcher was literally following them online and took note of the abbreviated neologisms that were consistently used, both in terms of frequency and spread across the system. One possible way of observing these linguistic patterns was the timeframe, which included the observation period between November 2023 and January 2024. The information was gathered through periodical accesses to the publishing site at various hours of the day and snapshots of the tweets that were published publicly, with shortened neologisms in usage. The researcher kept a digital record in which each screenshot was coded by date, user profile (where possible) and linguistic features of interest.

In the effort to address the observer effect or the possible alteration of natural behaviour because of the presence of an observer, the researcher ensured the use of a less intrusive method. No tweets were analysed, and there were attempts to modify, prompt or induce the discourse or behaviour of users. The researcher did not identify him/herself as a researcher in the interactions; therefore, making the use of language natural and spontaneous. Moreover, there could be one-on-one contact in the form of mere monitoring of conversations and tendencies but no direct engagement that can influence user behaviour.

A phone was used to take screenshots of the posts and comments of neologisms in abbreviated form in the open. This documentation recorded the use of these neologisms in different settings, their frequency, variety and the interactant dynamic of using these neologisms. Along with some passive observation, the researcher also engaged in the discussions and even contributed to them, observing trends and paying attention to user experiences in terms of employing and interpreting these linguistic inventions. Nevertheless, this participation was organized in general threads and trending topics without announcement of the research agenda, to avoid distorting the use of natural language. This interaction informed the researcher with firsthand information on how the abbreviated neologisms changed, were incorporated in communication and affected by the social interaction on the platform.

This introduction of participant observation gave a major boost to data collection because language was captured in the most natural and free state. Such a method was especially useful in researching the development of abbreviated neologisms, because they enabled a more delicate interpretation of the social and linguistic background of its presentations. The observation of abridged neologism in real-time communication would have revealed insights that could not be gathered by conducting interviews and surveys separately giving a more comprehensive insight into the meaning, interpretation, and usage characteristics of the neologisms in the Kenyan digital society. Participant observation as immersive was suitable within the framework of the study as interpretivism because the researcher was able to study language application in its natural digital context. Such methodology added more depth to the quality of the data gathered and enhanced the research findings as a whole.

3.5.2 Interviews

There was also a use of semi-structured interviews. A guide with detailed questions was formulated, which included open-ended questions to understand the meaning and use of abbreviated neologisms within participants. The questions were constructed in such a way, to obtain answers concerning their use and use of abbreviated neologisms. Systematic random sampling which is a probability sample method was used to sample 30 respondents so that every eligible sample respondent has an equal opportunity of being selected in the sample. This approach made the interview sample more representative and objective and had less researcher bias that tends to be prevalent in non-probability methods such as purposive sampling (Bryman, 2016). The researcher then developed a sampling frame whereby they established a population of Kenyan X users who had shown strong usage patterns of abbreviated neologisms during the three months of observation (November 2023-January 2024). On this list, every third participant was picked on until we got 30 participants. This method helped to select participants in regular intervals and, at the same time, contributed to demographic diversity and minimized subjective selection.

Interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants in order to enable them to be accurately transcribed and analyzed. Participants were selected on the following basis: the frequency of use, diversity in the demographic backgrounds, engagement levels on the platform. The interviews corresponded for 30 to 45 minutes and concerned their implications and the meanings regarding the gathered abbreviated neologisms. Comprehensive notes were also taken to facilitate the recording of non-verbal reactions and contextual hints that also helped parsing linguistic phenomena. Although the participants did not necessarily need any formal linguistic training, the questions were set to provoke their reflective answers to their every-day use of

language and awareness of the common communication patterns. Such a methodology aligns with a qualitative research which places at a high regard the experience-oriented, user-based data in the interpretation of language variation and innovation (Patton, 2002). The interview technique played an important role in revealing the morphological complexity and these sociolinguistic aspects related to the usage of short neologisms. Understandings earned through what participants said enhanced the knowledge on how such linguistic phenomena add colour to the dynamic process of language in digital environments.

This data collection was therefore proactive, involving indirect conversations tracking and trending within the X users community, which was monitored in terms of the social group and dynamics surrounding the shortened neologisms. Observation was very useful in giving background to the data and helped in understanding the textual data. Additionally, participant observation made it possible to instantly collect and capture language during the process as it happened on the platform, providing a dynamic insight into the incorporation of neologisms into communication stream, their frequency and their contextual meaning. The method was best aligned to the qualitative emphasis of the study whose importance is to observe the natural process where language in social media is used.

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

A content analysis was used in order to classify and measure the instances of truncated neologisms in the online communication of Kenyan Online X (KOX) members. Such an approach made it possible to study the text directly to establish particular regularities of language application, including the morphological mechanisms of neologism formation and its sociolinguistic role, which are to signal identity, belonging to a group, or innovation. To enter the second phase of Brauns and Clarke

framework (2006), the actual reading process started with screenshots of each text to gain a good understanding of the data.

After this initial immersion, this study developed preliminary codes of the data. These codes were constructively formulated to capture the theme of the study which is on the morphological properties and the social roles of the abbreviated neologisms. The next step implied grouping these codes into more general categories, which were further carefully considered and updated in a way that they could be related to the research questions and were coherent. Based on such categories as linguistic innovation, social identity, and communicative efficiency, the major themes were defined and analyzed in terms of what they can reflect on the digital performance of KOX and its language use.

The clarification of the principal themes, accompanied by their names, the comprehensive reflection of the ways these principal themes could be connected and lead to a more comprehensive interpretation of abbreviated neologisms in KOX community were parts of the last steps of the data analysis. Incorporation of a methodological framework by Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis into the process added more value, guaranteeing a well-guided and extensive sight of data interpretation. The results were then built up into an extensive report, where the frequency and importance of each of the categories and themes identified were presented in the digital discourse.

To examine the morphological elements of the truncated neologisms, the researcher used the dedicated systematic approach to solving the problem according to the principles of morphological analysis described by Bauer (2003) and Lieber (2009). All the neologisms were analyzed according to their morphemes (combining forms,

affixes and roots). Occurrence and productivity of various morphological patterns were then measured and compared throughout the dataset. Using content analysis and the thematic framework of Braun and Clarke (2006) made this method an effective tool of analysis that is based on the textual evidence and can present valuable insights into the use and the effect of an abbreviated neologism among KOX, thus contributing to the current study as an example of the insights into the evolution of a language in the digital environment. The morphological analysis assisted in illuminating pathways through which the creative processes were applied to the development of these new lexical elements, which reveals the linguistic ingenuity of the KOX community in the adaptation of language to the demands of their communicative needs in the digital space.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

There were a number of methodological strategies that were deployed to verify the validity and reliability of this study. According to Guion (2004), the accuracy and true nature of the research findings, also known as validity, was taken care of by carefully designing the processes of data collection. A purposive sampling method was used to select the participants who could represent the rest of the KOX population and thereby improve the external validity of the study. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data enabled a deeper investigation into linguistic phenomena under consideration, which cannot but ensure the validity of the research findings and make it impossible to treat the results of the study as artificial, but the specifically authentic ones. To enhance the validity further, participant observation was included in the study and the observation gives a detailed explanation of the situation and the use of language in social media platforms.

Reliability on the other hand is an indication of some consistency and replicability consistency on the findings of a study (Guion, 2004). This was done in an orderly data collection and analysis manner. The systematic extraction of the information in a multilateral way through content analysis allowed drawing out patterns and themes in language use by the KOX people in experiments with the language use. Besides, the research was able to use a specific framework on thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) which meant that the steps followed by the data processing and interpretation could be replicated in future studies hence confirming the reliability of the results. Also, keeping a thorough documentation of the research, starting with the collection of data and continuing with the process of the analysis work, would keep the methodologies of the study applicable and reviewable by indicating the ways they could be implemented in similar scenarios and solidifying the reliability of the study.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

During the research process, the researcher closely followed the research ethics, taking into consideration principles prescribed by Babbie (2010) who stressed the need to put ethical considerations into the research cycle. The study employed all the sources accurately referenced to denote academic integrity. Prior to the collection of data, the School of graduate studies at Masinde Muliro University of Science and technology granted Permission, and finally a research permit was sought to the National commission on Science technology and innovation enabler at the NACOSTI. The use of X services and API documentation was adhered to with extreme care and detail when being used to gather data on the platform as regards to the privacy and safety of the user. As recommended by Beninger (2017), username and other identifying information were converted into anonymous form and tweets were also analyzed according to a non-identifiable numbering system set out during sampling where prior informed consent was also obtained as no data was collected. According to the guideline of the terms of service of X, the researcher established that the identity of X users should not be revealed to maintain their privacy. To follow the terms of service used by X, the researcher went through the terms of service provided by X to ascertain its terms on the use of platform content toward a research. In regards to their policy, as the tweets are not formed using privacy settings, they are deemed to be publicly available information. Use of X content is covered under fair use laws where the limited usage of tweets is permissible for the aim of making a criticism, commentary, research or education. Sticking to these principles and referring to the terms of service of X, the researcher would be able to use the platform content in a responsible way including taking screenshots of tweets without violating rights and the privacy of the users. Moreover, data management entail safe storage and handling as digital files will

be password-protected in order to deal with confidentiality and wholesomeness of the research data.

3.9 Chapter Summary

The methodology section summarized the broad study that was used to explore the use of abbreviated neologisms by the KOX. By adopting the Study Onion crafted by Saunders as a guiding model, the research used both qualitative approaches, seeking to explore the digital language practice of the Kenyan people on the X. The study is thorough in collecting information through participant observation interviews and document analysis using purposive sampling to follow a descriptive research design. This methodological design provided a subtle analysis of language innovation within the confines of online communication and provided valuable information on the morphological phenomena of clipping and contraction popular in the X community in Kenya. Accordingly, the chapter establishes a strong base towards the further analysis of the data in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The chapter provides the results of the current study on the application of reduced forms of neologisms by Kenyans on X in the context of identification and morphological analysis. It will focus on discussing the interdependence of digital communication technologies and word formation, or subsidiarily, the way the limits and possibilities on X have altered linguistic usage among KOX. The chapter explores the most common factors, forms, and consequences of using abbreviated neologisms, which will give an insight into the evolving interaction between technology, language,

and social identity in the digital environment. The chapter aims to have a contribution to the learning of how digital environments lead to linguistic innovation and a larger socio-linguistic tendency through this exploration.

4.2.1 Morphological Structure of Abbreviated Neologisms

The aspect of morphological analysis plays a very significant role in the study of linguistic phenomenon, particularly in the study of abbreviated neologisms in modern language use. Morphological analysis is the key in analyzing the structure and formation process of abbreviated neologism. Morphological analysis in this study was done by dissecting each 1 of the 30 abbreviated neologisms sampled in order to gain the insight into their structure and the processes behind their formation. The abbreviated neologism was gathered over a duration of three months between November 2023 and January 2024.

There are ever more new words (neologisms) created through various morphological processes. A typical example is the initialism, creation of new words with use of initial letters or first part of a sequence of words (Setka & Plauc, 2021). The analysis of neologisms appearing on the social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, X, demonstrates that the word construction using acronyms is one of the most common processes (Yong & Kris-Ogbodo, 2019). Coining in the form of clipping Most neologisms are formed through clipping, which is the shortening of a multi-syllabic word, or sometimes consonants, by one or more syllables. Such morphological processes enable language to swiftly evolve and add vocabulary to keep pace with the new ideas and technologies (Mworia, 2015). Abbreviations based on initialisms, clipping and contraction are very prolific means of forming lexical novelties in the

scenario of social media and current communication. Through the study of morphology of these crumbled words we get to understand how language is evolving and evolving to meet the new demands of language.

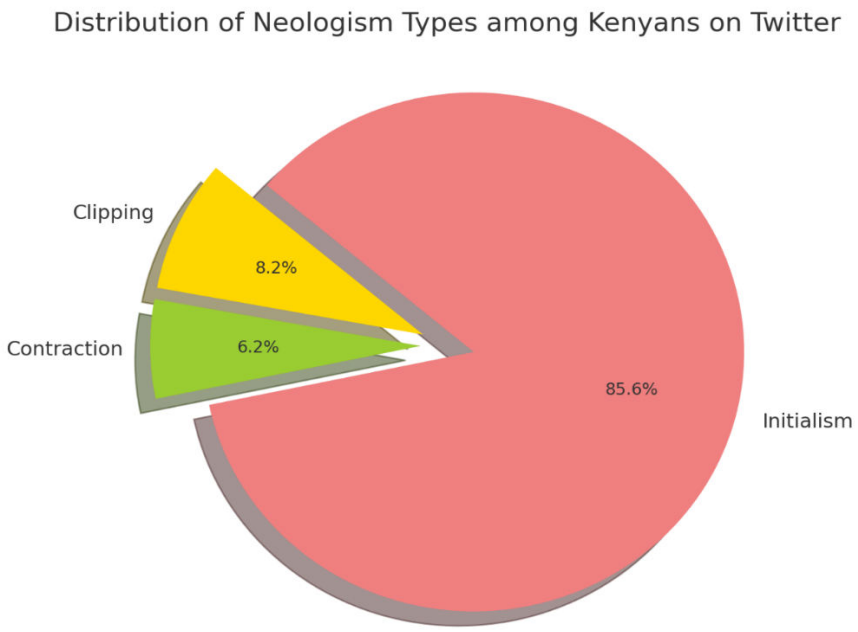


Figure 4.1: *Distribution of Neologism Types among Kenyans on X*

The above-presented figure 4.1 illustrates the neologism type distribution among Kenyans on X, according to the gathered data. Such representation gives a direct and instant insight into the use of various forms of abbreviated neologisms in this online community. The statistics regarding abbreviated neologisms in Kenyans on X (KOX) shows the overall predominance of initialism, which resulted in an overwhelming figure of 85.6% of the total observed number. This high percentage allows emphasizing the preference in using initialism as one of the forms of abbreviation in this context.

However, other types of abbreviated neologisms, in particular, clipping and contraction, make a much smaller part of the observed data in contrast. In particular, clipping comprises a percentage of 8.2 out of the neologisms, with contraction taking

6.2. Smaller percentages represent that although these ways of abbreviation exist in the KOX community, they are substantially much less than initialism.

The fact that initialism is highly encountered in Kenya on X can be explained by the presence of various situational variables. To begin with, the project found that the subjects were inclined to focus more on brevity and quickness, which is not uncommon in the online settings. Although the maximum length of the messages has grown as the platform evolved, it seems that the culture of informal brevity continues to exist. The desire towards condensed styles might also be informed by the necessity to condense intricate ideas to the targeted audiences who share common culturally or contextually oriented variables, just as in the study by Yong and Kris-Ogbodo (2019).

It is necessary to keep in mind, though, that the claim that the platform limits like character limits or communicative purpose affect morphological decisions are interpretation of the linguistic data and interviews of the participants, not an experimental claim. A possible correlation between non linguistic variables (like age, gender, frequency of using X) and preference of morphological structure is also further put to test in other sections (see 4.3).

Not only is this distribution not a simple set of numerical values but it is representative of more fundamentally linguistic and social processes in the KOX society. The favoring of initialism may stem out of a cultural or communication preference, whereby brevity and economy of digital communication is required. Additionally, the extensive use of initialism may also be associated with limitations of the platform (character length), as well as the tendency towards a more minimalistic style of communication that has the ability to communicate multifaceted notions. The visualization supports this by highlighting that first and foremost, the use of initialism

as a process of development of abbreviated neologisms is widespread in the digital discourse community of the Kenyan X users. It brings out the fact that initialism has taken over, and it has become a prevailing trend, which determines how communication should be done on this platform. Analyzing such trends, we acquire the understanding of the dynamic character of the language and the character of the linguistic habits of a digital community and how it is adapting its language practices to the limitations and possibilities of online social media platforms.

4.2.2 Initialism

The first aim explored the analysis of abbreviated neologisms in the social media discourses of KOX. The results demonstrate high dependence on initialisms, clippings and contractions that report on the linguistic frugality painted by the necessity of brevity.

Below is a tweet that has been transcribed;

Example 1

> *Tulikuwa* colonized *hadi akili, hatufikirii*…Our chefs, baristas are no longer creative?? Or we don't have professionals anymore, **SMH**! (X 2023)

SMH in the tweet means shaking my head. In online communication, this abbreviation is frequently used when people want to mean that they disapprove, feel disappointed, or do not believe. Here, SMH informs the reader of how the writer is angered by what she considers a degradation of creativity and professionalism among the chefs and baristas in the hospitality sector in Kenya. The reference to SMH is expressive in message and helps to convey the emotional reaction of the author in a non-verbal context and to the text.

The initialism SMH is common and being used often in most digital mediums such as social networks like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, text message, and even internet forums. Its use is not limited to a certain region or group of people, and it is therefore a common instance of how abbreviated neologisms have entered mainstream daily online communication. The current amazing popularity of "SMH" points to a great efficiency of the introduction of such an emotional reading reaction in the written word as brief as possible. The user states that he is worried about the fact that chefs and baristas do not show any creativity or professionalism and finishes his post with the abbreviation of disapproval SMH (shaking my head).

Example 2

> Ain't got no kids but **IMO** it's expensive coz you gotta have your finances in order and you also gotta make sure you give your kids enough attention. Basically it's all about being ready to have kids. (X 2023)

In example 2, the tweet is expressing their perspective on the financial and emotional readiness required for raising children. Here, the initial letters of each word in the phrase are used to create the neologism "IMO," to mean 'in my opinion'. In other cases, it can be written as "IMHO" to mean 'In my humble opinion.' This is a common practice in digital communication to save space and convey meaning in a clear and concise manner. This includes both grammatical and lexical words. Notably, the entire tweet is written in English without any code-switching. This choice likely reflects the awareness of X users that the platform is public and accessible to a broad audience, some of whom may not understand Kiswahili or Sheng'. This increases the likelihood that the message will be understood by many readers. Additionally, it's worth noting that multiple abbreviated neologisms can be used within a single tweet to reduce the number of characters. This practice allows users to share more information within the

platform's character limits, demonstrating the efficiency and adaptability of language in digital communication.

Example 3

> **Tbh**, guys are usually chasing engagement on X. The same time he spent tweeting, he could have just googled. (X 2023)

The abbreviation "tbh" stands for "to be honest." This neologism is formed through the process of initialism, where the initial letters of each word in the phrase are used to create a more concise expression. The above tweet was in response to someone who had asked a question on X. Here, the user is offering their candid opinion that many users on X are primarily focused on seeking engagement. The phrase "tbh" introduces this statement, signaling that what follows is a straightforward and truthful observation. This abbreviation is commonly used in digital communication to introduce an honest or frank comment. Interestingly, the term "tweeting" is still being used even though the platform's name was changed from Twitter to X. This reflects the persistence of certain terms and language conventions despite changes in branding. The verb "tweeting" has become deeply embedded in the lexicon of social media, signifying the act of posting updates or messages on the platform, regardless of its current name.

This tweet also illustrates how the abbreviation "tbh" helps reduce the number of characters used, allowing the user to convey their message more efficiently within the constraints of the platform. The adaptation of language to fit character limits while maintaining clarity and expressiveness is a hallmark of communication on social media.

Below is a tabular representation of neologisms identified in this study that are formed through initialism.

Table 4.1: A tabular representation of words formed through the process of initialism

Word Formation Process	Structure	Derived Word
Initialism	Already Been Chewed	ABC
Initialism	As Far As I Know	AFAIK
Initialism	Away From Keyboard / A Free Kill	AFK
Initialism	Ask Me Anything	AMA
Initialism	As Soon As Possible	ASAP
Initialism	Age/Sex/Location	ASL
Initialism	At The Moment	ATM
Initialism	By any Chance	BAC
Initialism	Be Back Later	BBL
Initialism	Be Right Back	BRB
Initialism	Best Friend of the Office	BFO
Initialism	Back Off Buddy	BOB
Initialism	Behind the Scenes	BTS
Initialism	To Be Honest	TBH

Saleh (2019) notes that initialism is a contraction made up of initial letters of different words and sounded as a word. In addition, Sahlee and Ahmad (2022) explain that an acronym is a name composed of the initial letters of a series of words or an initialism, or an alphabetism made up of a combination of initial letters of a given series of words among which, when making up an acronym, a couple of independent linguistic items i.e.free morphemes are put together. Among the identified neologisms in this study, 83.3 percent of them resulted in creation of neologisms using initialism highlighting the predominance of the process in neologism word formation in the context of KOX.

Furthermore, the majority of the neologisms that can be found in social media are constructed through initialism [+Initial]/acronym word formation rule stipulated in a study by Nkhata and Jimaima (2021). Hence, the active use of initialisms in KOX suggests the linguistic adaptation to the challenges and the possibilities of the new digital space. Initialisms are effective and efficient mean of communication as it shortens phrases into a set of letters. This is essential when you have to be concise and

quick in such platforms as X. The findings can be supported by the study conducted by Sahlee and Ahmad (2023), where they observed that; Twitter had launched its operation with an upper limit of 140 words per post. The introduction of the tweet limit, however, increased the maximum post length to 280 characters, which was still short, nevertheless, more expressions has been made possible. Consequently, this prompts the user to employ and culminate neologisms, most notably contraction of word operation like acronym and abbreviation.

Thus, initialism is not only about convenience but a very high level of knowledge about the rules of communication on the platform. The use of initialism also alludes to an encompassing cultural use among KOX of code messages in creating a filter of closedness or group belonging.

4.2.3 Clipping

Clipping, as identified in the digital discourses of Kenyan X users, exemplifies a strategic adaptation to the brevity required by social media communication. This morphological process involves reducing words to shorter forms without significantly altering their original meanings, as Saleh (2021) argued. Bauer (2003) defines clipping as a process whereby a lexeme is shortened while retaining the same meaning and still being a member of the same form class. The dataset reveals a variety of clipped words that are integral to the efficiency and speed of Twitter interactions. For instance, "Advertisement" becomes "AD," and "Between" is shortened to "BTN," demonstrating how users condense language to convey messages in a clear and concise manner. Here is an example of how these clippings are used on X;

Example 4

> I’ve gone to art café gastro bar and idk if I’m overthinking, but I swear the **yt** people were the only ones being served. (X 2023)

In this case, the user has used ‘yt’ to refer to people of the white race, complaining how they receive preferential treatment as compared to Kenyans like himself. This reflects a linguistic economy, optimizing character usage while retaining the semantic core of the expressions.

Example 5

> **Lol** did you like him **tho**? Women if they like you, they’ll even accompany you to Grogon as your car gets fixed, wdym. (X 2023)

In this case, "tho" is a clipped form of the word "though." This shortened version is commonly used in informal digital communication to save space and make the text more conversational.

The tweet also demonstrates the use of multiple abbreviated neologisms. For instance:

- "Lol" stands for "laughing out loud," which is an initialism used to express amusement.
- "Wdym" stands for "what do you mean," another initialism that conveys a request for clarification.

The use of "tho" at the end of a sentence adds a casual tone, making the message feel more conversational and relatable. This practice is typical in digital communication, where brevity and efficiency are often prioritized.

Example 6

> **Ppl** are not poor **bc** they're lazy/ignorant. They're poor bc a system was put in place to fervently concentrate wealth in the hands of a few. In fact, we need not fight poverty. We need to fight the concentration of wealth. (X 2024)

In the above tweet, the neologism 'ppl' (people) and 'bc' (because) demonstrate an example of clipping, whereby a word is shortened by removing one or more syllables. The word 'people' is clipped to 'ppl' by removing the vowel letters 'e' and 'o.' This process makes the word more concise and suitable for informal conversations especially on X.

Table 4.2 : *A tabular representation of the words formed through the process of Clipping*

Word Formation Process	Structure	Derived Word
Clipping	Advertisement	AD
Clipping	Between	BTN
Clipping	See You	CU
Clipping	Pretty Good / Pregnant	PG
Clipping	People	PPL
Clipping	Probably	Prolly
Clipping	Thanks	Tnx
Clipping	Though	Tho
Clipping	Time	TYM
Clipping	You Are / Your	UR
Clipping	Hugs And Kisses	XOXO
Clipping	Ecstasy	XTC
Clipping	White	YT

Notably, from the present study findings, clipped forms like "PPL" for "People" and "UR" for both "You Are" and "Your" highlight the role of this process in facilitating a conversational tone within the platform's constraints. The transformation of "Thanks" to "Tnx" and the adoption of "XOXO" for "Hugs and Kisses" further illustrates how clipping serves not just functional purposes but also carries emotional and relational nuances.

Example

This **tym** just stay single and independent. (X, 2023)

The spelling accorded to these words have nothing to do with the author not knowing the right spelling but has more to do with how the words sound for instance;

a. Tym- time
b. Luv- love

Even culturally specific terms, such as "420" for "Cannabis/Marijuana" and "XTC" for "Ecstasy," are clipped, suggesting that this linguistic strategy transcends mere convenience, embedding itself within the socio-cultural fabric of digital communication. Through these examples, it is evident that clipping as a word-formation process is not only a response to the digital medium's limitations but also a reflection of the creative and dynamic nature of language use on social media, embodying the complex interplay between linguistic innovation, communicative efficiency, and cultural expression.

4.2.4 Contraction

The analysis conducted in the study regarding the contraction as a word- formation phenomenon in KOX brings an important perspective to language adjusting to the online culture of communication. These are contractions, in which together they combine parts of several words to create a shortened phrase and indicate the informal, conversational tone that prevails in social media dialogue, according to Shahlee and Ahmad (2022). The exact examples like B4 (before), Imma (I am going to), Lemme (let me) are not only the representation of the efficiency of the language usage in social media like Twitter but also illustrate deeper, colloquial intimacy users have deployed in the digital environment. They are imitations of the spoken language, thus the gap

between written and oral communication is narrowed and a feeling of familiarity and proximity towards the users creates a domino effect. This is something similar to the study conducted by Jimaima and Nkhata (2020) who stated that social actors could use these neologisms as they share common sociocultural knowledge.

Table 4.3: *A tabular representation of words formed by the process of contraction*

Word Formation Process	**Structure**	**Derived Word**
Contraction	Before	B4
Contraction	Come on	C'MON
Contraction	I Am Going To	Imma
Contraction	Let Me	Lemme
Contraction	Want To	Wanna
Contraction	You All	Y'ALL
Contraction	Forget	4get
Contraction	Today	2day
Contraction	Tonight	2nyt

Example 7

But **b4** God they are all the same, they are dead! (X, 2023)

Example 8

Ngl, peer pressure *ya* twitter *imefanya* **y'all** her fans, lmao. (X, 2024)

Further analysis of contractions like "Wanna" (want to) and "Y'all" (you all) underscores the versatility of these linguistic forms in expressing desires, plans, or collective identity within tweets.

Example 9

Haha, *umeamka ukaamua kua* character for **2day**. (X, 2023)

The use of numerical substitutions in "2day" (today) and "2nyt" (tonight) illustrates a creative blend of linguistic economy and phonetic representation, a hallmark of digital language evolution. Moreover, according to Saleh (2021), such contractions serve the practical purpose of adhering to character limits and enriching the communicative

texture of X discourse, embodying the dynamic interplay between linguistic innovation and the pragmatic demands of digital social interaction. Through these contracted forms, KOX users navigate digital communication constraints while enhancing their online interactions' expressiveness and relational depth.

Thus, the analysis implies the possibility to view the morphological procedures of abbreviation among KOX not only as pragmatic adjustments to the limitation of digital communications but rather as endowed with deeper social and cultural sense. The prevalence of initialism reflects a community that thrives in linguistic creativity, making use of the opportunities of digital media in order to establish a distinct sense of identity and form of interaction. Nevertheless, the lower frequency of clipping and contraction does not reduce their significance but, rather, implies the variety of options KOX uses to move across the linguistic and social world of digital discourse. These results suggest the existence of a dense fabric of language use among KOX, the fabric that could be outlined as an amalgamation of efficiency, creativity and cultural specificity.

It can be seen in the findings that technological affordances, such as the restrictions of X- character and the swiftness of communication, and the global setting of the platform bear a great influence on linguistic activities. Such technological limits and possibilities have spurred KOX users to devise a vocabulary of contracted neologisms that achieve efficient and speedy communication due to a feeling of affiliation and coexistence. The study also pointed to the speed of communications of the given linguistic innovations that are circulated throughout the platform which serves as one of the contributions of the dynamic linguistic changes that are being formed in the digital era.

The high-frequency and tendencies of the use of neologisms abbreviation among KOX highlights the effect of digital communication technologies on language usage and development. Initialisms, clippings, contractions turn out to be important morphological features used by the users on the ground of digital medium constraints, as well as demonstrate the socio-linguistic tendencies and the creative power of users. The need to examine the relationship between technology and word formation unveils the flexibility of language adaptability to communicate in changed communicative contexts, which demonstrates the influence of the digital platforms on language and cultural use in modern communicational settings. The study, in its turn, provides analytic insight into the dynamics of the digital discourse that can assist in the comprehension of the current process of language development in the time of social media.

4.3 Correlation of Non-Linguistic Variables and Demographics on the Use of Abbreviated Neologisms

In this section, the second study objective, which was to explore the relationship between non-linguistic variables and demographics with respect to the use of abbreviated neologisms among Kenyans on X (KOX), is fulfilled. The information collected in this section was based on both semi-structured interviews and linguistic content analyzing of posts on X of 30 participants selected within the period between November 2023 and January 2024. This section will be an overview of the demographic details of the members whose posts on X were included in the linguistic data gathering on the study. As indicated in Chapter Three, 30 participants to participate in the semi-structured interviews were identified.

Table 4.4: *Age distribution of x users*

Age Group	Number of Participants	Percentage
18-24	8	26.7%
25-34	12	40.0%
35-44	7	23.3%
45-54	2	6.7%
55+	1	3.3%

As seen in table 1, the data indicates that majority of the participants were between 18-34 years old, accounting for 66.7%, suggesting that young adults are more likely to use abbreviated neologisms on X. It is the youth who are who make up three quarters of the adult users of social networking sites. The gender distribution of the participants was as follows:

Male: 16 participants (53.3%

Female: 14 participants (46.6%)

The gender distribution shows a relatively balanced representation with a slightly higher proportion of male participants.

Participants were also categorized based on their frequency of X usage.

Table 4.5: *Participants' Usage Frequency of X Platform*

Usage Frequency	Number of Participants	Percentage
Daily	22	73.3%
Weekly	6	20.0%
Monthly	2	6.7%

As shown in table 4.5, it is clear that most of the participants selected for this study are frequent users of X with 22% of them logging in on a daily basis and this is equivalent to 73.3%. The high percentage of daily users suggests that the sample primarily consists of active X users who are more likely familiar with and use abbreviated neologisms. Their frequent exposure to trending topics, viral hashtags, and real-time

conversations meant that they were more likely to not only encounter but also adopt emerging abbreviated forms. This correlation suggests that higher engagement with the platform increases the probability of using and coining neologisms. The bio data provides an overview of the participants' demographics, which will be crucial in analyzing the patterns and trends in the use of abbreviated neologisms by Kenyans on X. The technological infrastructure of X, such as the 280-character limit and hashtag-based interaction, shapes how users communicate and contribute significantly to morphological structures of abbreviated neologisms. The quickness of conversation favored by the site favors rapid-fire interplay where brevity is prized and familiarity is rewarded, two qualities which truncated neologisms present. Moreover, mobile-first real-time design of the platform is an ideal opportunity to create a word, to test and to normalize it quickly. It also shows the convergence of technology and linguic imaginations in this zone.

Furthermore, the time-sensitive format of the platform requires the communication to be short and urgent. This kind of urgency has also bred an appreciation of linguistic forms that are fast to type, comprehend and react to. Inherent in their form, initialisms satisfy these arguments by providing an abridged syntax, which endorses the time-sensitive needs of online communication. Less common but also expressive of such an economization of language are clipping and contraction, measures by which users consultatively exploit their own adaptations of the available and contractual possibilities of the digital medium.

4.4 Analysis of Abbreviated Neologisms using Natural Morphology Theory

The third goal of the current study was to explore the sphere of abridged neologisms used by people on X in Kenya with reference to the theoretical framework of the Natural Morphology Theory (NMT). In linguistic theory, NMT (as a theory that

focuses on the inherited, cross-linguistic universal features determining the construction and stricture of words) is an effective prism through which the morphological mechanisms of abbreviation, acronyms, and initialisms popular in the digital realm can be understood. In using NMT, this section strives to explain the normalcy and systematic morphological formations of the formation and use of abbreviated neologisms in the digital sociolinguistic complex of the KOX.

As per Bauer (2003), NMT gives an explanation to morphological behavior. According to NMT, morphological phenomena do not occur at random but are determined by a set of principles of universality, iconicity, and economy, which readily finds illustrations in the case of morphological strategies used by KOX.

4.4.1 Universality

Universality in NMT means the concept of some morphological process or another being prevalent in lots of languages due to human cognitive preferences (Dressler, 1985). The processes are termed as being natural since they are broadly attested, and thus learning and processing are easy to come by. The prevalence of initialism and clipping in KOX in this research has a correlation with the processes that can also be observed in other languages and settings according to the tendency of cognitive preference towards brevity and recognizability. This hence implies that the KOX preference in these forms is in conformity with the international trends in morphological abbreviation, which is cognitive naturalness. Anderson (2015) contends that the concept of universality postulates that particular morphological patterns are globally more popular since these are cognitively simpler and cognitively less-demanding to process..

Example 10

I don’t care. I am not one of them. But if the worst came to be, I would be on the frontline for the **LOML**. (X, 2023)

From the present study findings, this is reflected in the widespread use of acronyms such as; LOML which stands for ‘love of my life.’ These abbreviated neologisms are not only prevalent among KOX but have achieved global recognition due to their succinctness and universality.

Example 11

Guess I better sign up for that jealousy class **ASAP**! (X 2023)

Example 11 contains the abbreviation ‘ASAP’ which stands for ‘as soon as possible.’ According to Anderson (2015), the principle of universality posits that people tend to favor forms that are easy to process, remember and reproduce. This preference stems from human cognitive limitations, which lead to the selection of more straightforward linguistic structures across languages and communities. ASAP is a prime example of a morphologically simplified form that replaces a longer expression. Abbreviations like these are short and immediately recognizable, making it universally preferred in both formal and informal contexts.Bauer (2003) also notes that in order for a morphological process to be considered natural, it is required to be widespread, frequent and widely distributed within a particular language.

Example 12

LOL!!! You can treat house-girls as queens but when they decide to leave, they will leave. Hakuna formula. (There is no formula) (X 2023)

In this context, ‘LOL’ meaning laughing out loud is quite common in use in tweets. It is commonly used in informal online communication to indicate amusement or laughter. However, in this tweet it has been used sarcastically or ironically to show

amusement and disbelief where no matter how well house girls are treated in some instances, they still choose to leave without adhering to any set expectations. Here is another example;

Example 13

> **Lol** mmeweka your local celebs kwa pedestal mpaka kuna code of conduct, ndio maana everyone moves na the same script. Mimi ni raiya tu, life is short not to be yourself in order to please celebs. (X 2024)

Example 14

> Pure comedy. I don't mean to be bitter but you will not clean the river this way **LOL**. Wallah they're all pocketing this hakuna kitu. (X 2023)

In example 13, the user begins with "LOL," expressing amusement or disbelief at the extent to which people idolize local celebrities. This initialism sets a casual and slightly mocking tone. The tweet discusses how this idolization has led to a uniformity in behavior, with everyone following the same script to please celebrities. The mix of English and Swahili reflects a conversational and informal style typical of social media interactions in Kenya. The main message of the tweet is a call for individuality and authenticity, suggesting that life is too short to be lived solely for the approval of celebrities.

In example 14, the user criticizes efforts to clean the Nairobi River, using "LOL" to convey sarcasm and disbelief at the perceived futility of these efforts. The tweet highlights ongoing pollution by residents and industrial companies, arguing that current methods are ineffective. The tone is a blend of sarcasm and frustration, underlining the ineffectiveness of the actions being taken. The tweet is a combination of English and Swahili ("hakuna kitu") and Arabic term and phrase ("Wallah") which is an indication of Nairobi being famous with various cultures and people that speak

many languages. According to the author, the more drastic involvements like construction of perimeter walls isolating people and companies with the river is required. The tweet is about how the attempt made currently is not only in vain but also fraudulent with corrupt leaders administering funds with their pockets.

Both of them employ the use of LOL to emphasize their statements sarcastically and to put down the actions, which are performed in society and are inefficient. A blend of languages incorporates a casual talkative nature that is prevalent in social media in a bilingual society. Finally, the two tweets could promote transformation, be it in personal authenticity or odds of practice or on environmental concerns.

Example 15

> Looking at the background, the meeting is yet to start and rather than engage in chit chat like the rest of the cabinet she chose to check her **SM** accounts.
>
> **Tbh** I'd do the same. Small talk tires me out. (X 2024)

The tweet illustrates the principle of Universality in the natural morphology theory. The principle of Universality suggests that certain morphological processes are common across different languages and cultures, indicating a shared cognitive basis for language formation and use. This principle posits that the formation and usage of certain neologisms follow universal patterns that can be found in various languages and linguistic contexts.

In this tweet, two neologisms are used, "SM" (social media) and "Tbh." (to be honest) and these abbreviations are examples of initialism, where the initial letters of each word in the phrase "social media" are used to form the neologism "SM." Initialism is a very common and globally accepted morphological phenomenon in online communication. It permits effective and terseness expression which is especially good

at platforms that have character restriction or at environments where communication is swift like at X platform.

Likewise, there is also another initialism, tbh, a shortening of to be honest. This neologism is applied everywhere in the form of digital communication to present an open or direct statement. The unique morphology process is applicable in the various linguistic diverse cultures as evidenced by the usage of the abbreviation tbh. Within the tweet, these neologisms are used to achieve efficient communication of the user in conveying his message, though within the restrictions set upon the character limit by the platform. Reducing communication by means of universal rules of morphology may be seen in both the usage of the acronym of the term social media, or social media, and the use of the term to indicate an honest opinion, or tbh.

The tweet also brings up an aspect of the digital communication that contributes to the practice of such abbreviations since communication users usually find themselves in situations where they are to share a complex idea in a swift and confined way. This example can serve to apply the principle of Universality in the theory of natural morphology because some morphological processes such as the formation of initialisms are universally followed to act as an aid to communication in the digital era.

4.4.2 Economy

The principle of economy in NMT refers to the tendency to minimize linguistic effort while retaining communicative clarity. The theory emphasizes the cognitive economy of language. It suggests that language users prefer linguistic structures that are easy to process and minimize cognitive effort. In the context of abbreviated neologisms used on X, this means that the formation of abbreviated neologisms is cognitively efficient. Therefore, in forming abbreviated neologisms, KOX often aim for brevity and conciseness to fit within character limits. KOX exhibit this principle by prioritizing

shorter forms that reduce typing effort and screen space while maximizing comprehension. They emphasize linguistic expressions to convey messages efficiently. For instance;

Example 16

> He wanted to break protocol by trying to speak after the MP **IMO** though. (X 2023)

These abbreviated neologisms adhere to NMT's principle of economy, which advocates for the least effort in language production and processing, allowing for rapid communication, a necessity in the fast-paced environment of X, where brevity is both a constraint and a stylistic preference.

4.4.3 Iconicity

Iconicity in Natural Morphology refers to a transparent relationship between the form and meaning of a word. In the case of abbreviations, iconicity can be observed when the abbreviation clearly resembles or evokes the original phrase. Abbreviated neologisms often reflect iconic relationships between their shortened forms and the original words or phrases. The shortened forms often retain a recognizable connection to their full counterparts. The principle of iconicity in NMT, which implies a direct correlation between form and meaning, is also observable in the dataset. Study findings suggest that neologisms such as "SMH" (shaking my head), “POV” (positive vibes only), "ICYMI" (in case you missed it), et cetera, are not arbitrary but iconically represent the actions or sentiments they abbreviate. In written form, these abbreviations often visually resemble the full phrase they represent in terms of initial letters. This visual similarity helps users quickly decode the meaning of the abbreviation, hence making their comprehension easier. At the same time, the

formation and use of these abbreviated neologisms are deeply embedded in digital culture. They symbolize the fast-paced, concise communication style that is typical of online interactions. Their iconic nature is not only in their form but also in their representation of a specific mode of communication that is prevalent in contemporary digital environments.

Similar findings are reiterated in the study by Orolic (2023), where their study notes that because sometimes they explain an emotion better; they quickly become the standard expression for something, and it is easier to describe specific concepts using neologisms. This is exemplified in the tweet below;

Example 17

> I endorse this message heavily. It’s usually so funny how utterly disrespectful and rude they are on the **TL** but they come to the **Dm** with their tails wagging between their legs asking for help and other funny requests **SMH**.

Therefore, this iconicity enhances these forms' intuitiveness and communicative efficiency, aligning with NMT's assertion that natural morphological forms best preserve the semantic transparency between a word's form and its meaning. Over time, the repeated use of certain abbreviations makes them iconic in the sense that they become instantly recognizable symbols of specific phrases or ideas. For instance, frequent exposure to “SMH” in various contexts helps users to associate the abbreviation with the act of shaking one’s head in disbelief or disapproval. Abbreviated neologisms therefore exemplify how language evolves to meet communicative needs of its users by being efficient, recognizable symbols of more complex expressions.

4.4.4 Productivity

According to the theory of natural morphology, the productivity principle is an aptitude of linguistic mechanisms at creating a huge amount of new forms. Ease or difficulty of applying a morphological process to create new words is called productivity. The process to which users can be generally flexible and apply is a very productive one. Initialism and clipping were not only common within the scope of this study as they also extended to a number of fields, such as social commentary, entertainment and politics. This shows the efficiency of these morphological strategies by KOX users since on a continuous basis users coin new forms to suit new content and discussion. The principle is important in comprehending how the users of social media establish and embrace new abbreviations. The theory acknowledges that not all linguistic processes have equal productive status i.e. are easily extendible to form new realizations. NMT goes further to support the assertion that languages are productive in terms of morphology, which implies that language speakers can make up new forms on the grounds of old patterns.

Abbreviations created by the users of social media are always based on the existing linguistic patterns. This process of constant creation of shorter neologisms is demonstrative of morphological processes in digital communication being so productive. Natural morphology theory asserts that productive processes are the ones that can be commonly and repetitively utilized in order to form new words forms. The formation of abbreviations in social media, in this instance, is an extremely fruitful process, since it is repeated regularly and according to predictable patterns, thus enabling the users to quickly change their language and contextually use it in relation to modern trends.

To illustrate, initialisms-neologism in which the first letters of words are combined to make up a new term-are one of the most common abbreviated forms of neology. The use of initialisms comprises 83.3 percent of all the novel words that emerged in the study in question. This large proportion means that the formation of initialisms is not only a frequent process but also is very fruitful. It enables its users to create new terms fast, which can easily be comprehended by other people within the same locality.

Firstly, the productivity of initialisms and other abbreviated forms corresponds with the postulates of the natural morphology theory, which focuses on the simplicity and regularity, through which new forms are formed and interpreted. Speed of communication is crucial in the digital world; hence, the capability to create and understand emerging abbreviations in the quickest manner is of great benefit. This flexibility makes language live and dynamic, in the needs of the current speed of the social media communications.

Besides, the use of initialisms in social networking points at the effectiveness of this procedure. Initialisms give the information in shorter, easily identifiable form, thus, they are best suited on the platform that restricts the number of characters per message, such as X platform. This is also an efficiency which increases the productivity of initialism which only serves as a major process in the continued formation of digital language. In this sense, the natural morphology theory of productivity can therefore be vividly seen in how social media users have continued to innovate through abbreviations in order to ensure that their communication remains concise and up to date.

Moreover, the analysis provided in the present study shows that there is an inherent pattern of morphological innovation within constraint, one of the main important concepts in NMT. Introducing syntactic neologisms like FOMO (fear of missing out)

and YOLO (you only live once) in KOX discourse, however, exemplifies the role an online communication channel plays in stimulating creativity in the language within the confines of its technical limits and social constraints of the system.

Such innovations do not simply answer to the dictates of the character limit of X but they define a more systematic, systemic morphological process which is aligned to the principle of morphological creativity and morphological adaptability as is kindred to NMT. Equally, Nkhata and Jimaima (2020) reaffirmed the theme of creativity, since, based on their study results, they identified that:

> "…In the same vein, the example in [4] shows how creative social media actors are; we note that 'honey' is shortened to form 'hun' and not 'hon.' We see the introduction of a new vowel instead of maintaining the vowel 'o' in the word 'honey."

These neologisms therefore represent morphological creativity, in that the innovations in language are not entirely constrained but propelled by an innate need to be expressively efficient, and culturally identificatory. Furthermore, the results of the study regarding the use of creativity and productivity in the instance of the development of new words with the passage of time and neologisms in social media states that they can be perceived as the result of the use of language creativity and language productivity (Nkhata and Jimaima, 2020). It, in turn, leads to the conclusion that the virtual scape is productively used by social actors, which makes the emergence of new lexical units ubiquitous..

4.4.5 Adaptability

Adaptability is defined as his or her capacity to creatively adapt or extend morphological rules to be used in new contexts. These neologisms reflect the principle of adaptability in NMT as they reflect how words are created to compress complex

social phenomena in order to express them more efficiently, thus, showing the dynamic interrelation between language form, communicative demands, and affordances of digital platforms.

Moreover, the data points provided in the current study indicate that the thematic range of the truncated neologisms, which ranged between the manifestations of personal feelings, likes, and tastes, to features of the social media platforms, also contributed to the assumption of the morphological phenomenon to be bound to the communicative demands and cultural environment of its users by the premise of NMT. Acronyms such as DM (direct message) and RT (retweet) stress the role of neologisms in getting through the peculiarities of Twitter functions and cultural specificities, and this detail pertains to the NMT views on how morphological innovation is determined by context.

4.4.6 Naturalness

Naturalness of linguistic forms is the tenet of the theory. Naturalness is the mental uncomplicatedness, commonness and communicative effectiveness of a morphological process. Natural processes are more favorable to learn, more transparent and less identifiable (Dressler, 2003). Natural morphological process involves the processes that are easy, regular, and very easy to predict which involves a tendency of preference to simplicity an ease of use. The simple, memorable, and straightforward neologisms, which follow the linguistic trends, will most probably become adopted. Formal naturalness helps with the maintenance of neologisms and making them popular.

Thus, the results of the current research support the provisions regarding Natural Morphology Theory and expand its use to the domain of digital linguistic landscape. The shortened neologisms of the Kenyans on Twitter are what relates to the random,

iconic, and economical characteristics that NMT assumes to be the core of natural morphologizing. It is explained as this alignment outlines the topicality of NMT in explaining linguistic innovation in the context Internet-based communication, which demonstrates the effectiveness of the theory in describing the lingual naturalness of the morphological creativity and adaptation, which accompanies the brightest online discourses.

4.5 Discussion

The main aim of the study will be to examine truncated neologisms in Kenyan X discourses, and this leads to showing how the popularization of a neologism is dynamic and with a flexible interrelationship between the linguistic innovation and the digital communication space. The majority of initialisms, as shown in the data, is consistent with the trends in the field of digital communication in which the concise and proficient use of language is a priority. The existence of this finding can be reconnected with the lexical economy and iconicity principles presented in NMT, which implies that morphological patterns embraced by KOX are determined not by chance but rather the cognitive and communicative requirements of the digital medium.

In chapter two on literature review currently, it is made clear with regard to the effects of social media on language use, the emergence of netspeak or chatspeak, whereby there is informal written usage. This development follows the text of Crystal (2018) that refers to neologisms as a result of active word formation rules. As we have seen with KOX, a good example of this productivity is the birth of neologisms in the form of abbreviations in the twittersphere due to the restriction of characters and the need to have those limited characters convey a message. Moreover, the results of the study coincide with the works of Onyedum (2012) that found that morphological processes

of blending, compounding, affixation, semantic extension and coinages are used in creating neologisms in social media. Initialism can be viewed as a kind of coinage of KOX, where initialism serves the need of the condensed and direct language style of online communication.

However, despite the current research finding showing initialisms as one of the prevailing factors in the use of English neologisms in Kenyan social media, it contrasts with the findings of Mworia (2015) that recorded more polymorphic processes of forming neologisms in English, particularly in Kenyan social media. This inconsistency might be explained by the fact that the current study narrows down to abbreviated neologisms as opposed to a more general analysis of all types of neologisms. It also hints at the fact that Kenyans on X may attach importance to some types of abbreviation more than to others given the peculiarities of the platform communication process and their cultural and social backgrounds.

This is evidence of a tactical decision by KOX to accommodate first and last name limits imposed by Twitter, a sophisticated awareness of what the medium can provide. This conclusion is evidence-based in view of Setka & Plauc (2021) who observe that the language on social networking sites is dynamic, and neologisms are expeditious on these sites due to their adaptability and ease of communication. The fact that initialisms are rapidly accepted and spread in KOX indicates that the community is skilled in using linguistic innovations to strengthen ties and facilitate communication with others and keep up with the global trends without losing a cultural identity.

Besides, the interaction of technology and word formation, which this study reveals, demonstrates the theoretical framework of NMT as linguistic organization is viewed as adaptations to extralinguistic motives. The digital environment of Twitter with its

limitations and possibilities creates the environment of morphological innovation that drives the users towards effective and iconic forms of expression. This finding can be aligned with the focus of the literature review on the transformational role of social media in affecting language that implies that the linguistic practices are being directly affected by the technology advances that are characteristic of Web 2.0, and this is echoed by (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2018).

The fact that the study focuses on abbreviated neologisms also indicates the role of social and cultural factors in the linguistic innovation system. As mentioned in the literature review and as Magaiwa (2016) reveals, in the case of the Igikuria language, social-cultural, technological, and environmental factors determine the creation and adoption of new lexical items. Likewise, the use of initialisms in KOX is not only a language solution to a digital limitation but also a socially based, in-group, and cultural characteristic. The combination of these two movements of technology and culture on language innovation offers a more complex view of the morphological activities involved, implying that the use of shortened versions of neologism employed by KOX is representative of a larger socio-linguistic trend.

4.6 Chapter Summary

The analysis and discussion of the data obtained on using abbreviated neologisms by a sample of Kenyan Twitter users was given and discussed in chapter four in details. Through the qualitative approach, the chapter went into the morphological process of clipping and contraction and revealed patters of language creations that are limited by the nature of digital communications. This finding indicated that there was strong preference on the use of these processes as an efficient means of engagement in the use of language in Twitter platform with its character conditions. Participant observations and document analysis have helped in enhancing the analysis because it

gave a good idea of the socio-linguistic setting of these neologisms. This has been discussed as the linguistic adaptation indicated the creative reaction of the users to digital affordances as well as the manifestation of greater culture and communicative activities among the Kenyan Twitter users. This chapter successfully tied together methodological approach presented in the last chapter and empirical findings of the study by providing valuable interpretations of data in the context of already established linguistic theories and studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The analysis examined language creation in the online space, especially by performing a morphological examination of abbreviated neologies adopted by Kenyans on X (formerly Twitter), commonly known as KOX. The chapter is a summary of study findings, and some conclusions and suggestions based on the research findings. It also gives areas that are recommendable to study more. The findings have been summarized in consideration of the objectives the study aimed at getting. The research topic aimed at accomplishing the following goals; to describe morphological structures

of abbreviated neologisms as used by KOX, to examine the relationship between non-linguistic variables and demographics and use abbreviated neologism of KOX and to analyze abbreviated neologisms as used in social media discourses by KOX based on Natural Morphology Theory.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

This chapter summarizes the results of the research on morphological analysis of short neologism as used by Kenyans on X (KOX). This study tried to describe the linguistic landscape under the influence of KOX in terms of morphological strategies and word formation, explore the relationship between non-linguistic factors and demographics, and use of abbreviated neologisms as of KOX users. It also looked at how the Natural Morphology Theory explains the origin of these neologisms. The results are categorized under the three main goals of the research.

5.2.1 Objective One- To identify the Morphological Structure of Abbreviated Neologisms Used in Social Media Discourse by KOX

The description of morphological structure of shortened neologisms used by KOX was the first goal. It was found that the most important feature of the entire analysis is the heavy dependence on three most common categories of morphological strategies: initialisms, clippings and contractions. Of these, initialisms turned out to be dominant showing a kind of linguistic economy necessitated by the necessity to communicate succinctly in spite of the restrictions of the character limit of X.

This paper has determined that most of the cases were initialisms used to convey a message like the use of BRB (be right back), ICYMI (in case you missed it), TBT (throwback Thursday), and FOMO (fear of missing out). The given liking of the initialisms is an echo of the fact that people got accustomed to the character limits of the platform and had to respond to it by using the form of linguistic compression that helped them to convey the necessary information in the shortest possible time without losing the most important details.

Less prominent when compared with initialisms, but nonetheless vital in informal and dynamic alternative to KOX discourse, were the clipping and contractions. Besides their usefulness in making conversation more concise and efficient, clipping, like fam (family) sis (sister), and contractions like gonna(going to) and wanna(want to), are used to pass on subtle meanings and cultural implications. Such truncations are indicative of identity of users and communal spirits of the KOX community, badges of social identities and group identity.

5.2.2 Objective Two-Correlation Between Non-Linguistic Variables, Demographics and Use of Abbreviated Neologisms

The second study aim was to investigate the connection between non-linguistic factors and demographics with the use of shortened neologisms to Kenyans on X (KOX). Results demonstrate that the demographical variables (age, gender, and the habit of use of a platform) and non-linguistic (the technological limitations and the social incentive) features have a considerable role in the appropriation and dissemination of an abbreviated neologism. The analysis of the data given in the participant profile indicated that there was a strong connection based on generations, with the younger audience, especially between the ages of 18 and 34, tending to use abbreviated neologisms as opposed to the older generation.

Though the gender mix was quite even, some use of abbreviated neologisms was slightly more common among men participants, which might have been caused by wider involvement in the online discourse or a set of a particular fields usage. Such demographic trends are interoperative with technology aspects, specifically the opportunities and limitations of X. This morphological change is evident in the use of abbreviations (introduced by the character limit in the platform) and the speed of digital interactions as well as the interactive reach of the platform across the entire world. Within such confines, users are forced to use economical forms like clippings, initialisms and contractions in order to convey one successfully. The results show a high correlation between the age and rate of use and the use of abbreviated neologisms enhanced by the technological layout of the site, X.

5.2.3 Objective Three-Application of Natural Morphology Theory to the Formation of Abbreviated Neologisms

The third goal was to examine how the theory of the Natural Morphology explains the, in fact, creation of abbreviated neologisms adopted by KOX. The Natural Morphology Theory assumes that there are universal laws of naturalness that regulate

morphological processes, like effort to perceive, produce and process stimuli. Based on this theory, morphological forms more apt to be arrived at and then articulated, more perceivable and comprehendible, have greater tendencies of being borrowed and preserved in a language.

The results indicate that the development of shorter neologisms that are created by KOX fits into the theory of Natural Morphology. Shortenings, contractions, and initialisms are techniques that help increase the easiness to produce and perceive. As an example, initialisms that are used in conversation such as LOL (laugh out loud) or IDK (I don know) decrease the mental load to both parties, the speaker, and the listener, as they lessen the amount of syllables and letters it takes to express a thought. Clippings and contractions also ease the speech further straightening the longer words rendering the main semantics of the wording, but reducing the length.

Furthermore, the theory of Natural Morphology underlines the importance of iconicity, i.e. the similarity of the form and meaning in the processes of morphology. As the study discovered, most reduced neologisms employed by KOX could be characterized by some form of iconicity, such that the shortened versions could sound familiar to hearing the full ones and maintain a clear connection between the two, thus making their recognition and memorization easier.

Also, the societal aspects of Natural Morphology Theory could be seen in the results. The utilization of shortened neologisms convergence of KOX users is not the mere pragmatic use but also acts as identity and belongingness tool to the group that is being used as a communication tool. The analysis demonstrates that such linguistic preferences are dictated by the need of the users to conform to the norms and practices established in a digital community, which once again proves the assumption in the

theory described by the fact that morphological processes depend on social and cultural influences.

Thus, the results provided by the research represent a complex picture of the phenomena defining linguistic nature of KOX discourse. The rates and shapes of abbreviated neologisms in KOX demonstrate the influence of the digital communication technologies on language functioning and change. The development of initialisms, clippings, and contractions can be seen as the major morphological options used by users to negotiate the boundary of the digital medium in terms of the larger socio-linguistic trends and user creativity. Such a study of the combination of the forces of technology and word creation expresses in its language the adapting nature of language to new communicative conditions, emphasizing the impact of digital platforms on shaping current linguistic and cultural behaviors. The thorough study provided by the paper will add to the comprehension of the existing digital discourse dynamics and will help us to gain important insights into the further development of the language in the time of social media.

5.3 Conclusions

This study aimed to analyse the formation and use of abbreviated neologisms by Kenyans on X (KOX), guided by three specific objectives. The conclusions presented below are organized in alignment with each objective:

5.3.1 Objective 1: To identify the Morphological Structure of Abbreviated Neologisms Used in Social Media Discourse by KOX

Overall, the study found out 30 shortened neologisms that KOX used within the range of time the study was conducted. Initialism, clipping and contraction were the main morphological processes which occurred and led to the creation of the neologisms.

Initialisms represented the largest portion (85.6) of the data gathered indicating that the users of KOX tend to simplify multi-word phrases into acronyms especially as a space and time-saving mechanism. There were also clipping (8.2%) and contractions (6.2%), albeit at lower frequencies. It shows that even though several strategies are used in the creation of abbreviated neologisms, initialism occurs in larger numbers as the morphological mechanism at hand.

5.3.2 Objective 2: To Examine the Correlation between Non-linguistic Variables and Demographics on the Use of Abbreviated Neologisms

The results indicated the significant interrelationship among demographical factors on the use of abbreviated neologism. Of relevance were age, and frequency of platform use. The younger group of participants (between 18 and 34 years) would more likely use the abbreviated forms than the older ones. Moreover, users who used X on a daily basis were more inclined to acquire neologisms than were those users who used it on a weekly or monthly basis. These linguistic decisions were also guided by non-linguistic factors like technological constraints (specifically of presence of a limit of character numbers) and the necessity of fast communication. These findings indicate that the convergence of demographic characteristics and technological forces are factors that make a significant contribution to the discourses of morphological abbreviation witnessed within KOX.

5.3.3 Objective 3: To Analyse Abbreviated Neologisms by KOX using Natural Morphology Theory

The analysis of the abbreviated neologisms employing the Natural Morphology Theory was conducted with reference to such fundamental principles as naturalness, economy, iconicity, productivity, adaptability, and universality. The evidence

reflected in the data indicated that the abbreviated variant invoked by KOX showed naturality as per cognitively easy and phonetically reachable forms. Economy was distinctly followed in the females preference of the shorter form, a factor that signaled little work both in production and in text interpretation. Initialisms which did not suppress salient semantic features had iconicity that is, a resemblance between the form and the intended meaning. Also productivity and flexibility were evident through constant new forms created that could adapt to new needs in language. The fact that most users employ these strategies implies that there is an element of universality in the online linguistic behaviour of the KOX community.

5.4 Recommendations

To increase the levels of comprehension and interest in abbreviated neologisms among Kenyans on X (KOX) and digital communications in general, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Apply tools of linguistic analysis in SNSs. Linguistic analysis programs and algorithms that analyze trends in real time should be implemented into the social media platforms, like the appearance and development of abbreviated neologisms. This would help optimise the user experience and result in useful information that will be used in linguistic study.

2. In their research, scholars ought to encourage documentation and indexing of abbreviated neologisms by engaging in lexicographic activities. Digital linguists and lexicographers need to cooperate to create extensive databases or dictionaries of such neologisms and offer them to researchers, as well as language lovers and citizens, in general. Promote the joint work of the developers of social media platforms and

linguists to introduce functionality that would sustain the diversity and change in languages.

3. Include the theory of language development and digital communication into the learning programs. Curricular plans in formal education should have programs about digital communication and the language development in the social networks. Such an incorporation will give students the requisite competencies to negotiate and critically assess the use of language online.

4. Motivate and conduct the cross-cultural research on the language use and innovation. Promote acting on cross-cultural studies in language usage and innovation to open the way to enhanced knowledge of linguistic diversity and convergence in online communities. It is possible that the study of various users of a language with different cultural and lingual backgrounds will provide clues about universal features of linguistics and culture driven language use.

5. Devise user friendly language analyzing interfaces. Social media tools ought to provide their church attendants with language accessible interfaces through which they can browse linguistic trends and neologisms in their own language and other languages. This can encourage the more conscious use of language and its active development on the net.

6. Promote Inter-disciplinary studies. Advance studies which mix linguistics, computer science, sociology and anthropology to examine the effects of digital communication on language. This kind of research can be used to create a more comprehensive view of the mechanics of how abbreviated neologisms operate in part of the digital community such as KOX.

These recommendations can serve the purposes of the in-depth comprehension of the use of abbreviated neologisms and their influence on the digital communication of KOX and the rest of the digital communities.

5.5 Areas of Further Research

As much as the present study provided valuable insights into the morphological analysis of abbreviated neologisms used by Kenyans on X, further research needs to be carried out to investigate semantic connotations and nuances that are embedded within abbreviated neologisms. This can offer deeper insights into their cultural significance as well as their communicative functions. The study also suggests further studies on the evolutionary analysis or historical development of abbreviated neologisms over time in order to track the emergence, diffusion and obsolescence of certain neologisms. The evolutionary trajectory of neologisms over time can provide valuable insights into language change and adaptation in digital environments. From the data collected for this study, there was use of other non-linguistic forms that are used on social media such as emojis and emoticons. This study suggests further research to be done on the use of emojis and emoticons to be carried out from a semiotic perspective. Further research can also be done on the prevalence, patterns and functions of sheng and shenglish by KOX so as to provide valuable insights into the intersection of language variation, expression of identity and digital communication. Exploring these areas can enhance our understanding of the complex linguistic dynamics within KOX discourse.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Personal Details of Respondents

Age …….

Location …….

Gender …….

Occupation ……

The use of Abbreviated Neologisms has become prevalent on X. Abbreviated neologisms are newly created words or phrases that are formed by shortening or abbreviating existing words or phrases.

1. How long have you been using X and how frequently do you engage with the platform?
2. Are you aware of and familiar with the concept of abbreviated neologisms on X?
3. Have you encountered and used abbreviated neologisms in your own tweets or interactions on X?
4. What motivates you to to use abbreviated neologisms on X?
5. Are there any influencers or trends on X that contribute to the use of abbreviated neologisms?
6. Are there any challenges or limitations you face when using or interpreting abbreviated neologisms on X?

7. How do you perceive the reception and understanding of these neologisms by other X users?
8. Are there any differences in interpretation or potential misunderstanding?

APPENDIX II: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Study Title: A Morphological Analysis of Abbreviated Neologisms: A Case of *Kenyans on X*.

Researcher: Rebin Buyaki Obwang'i

Institution: Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

Contact Information: rebinbuyaki@gmail.com

Purpose of the Study

You are being invited to participate in a research study that seeks to understand the use, interpretation, and evolution of abbreviated neologisms by Kenyans on X (formerly Twitter). Your participation will help provide insights into the linguistic practices of digital communication among Kenyan X users.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be involved in the following:

- Interviews: You may be asked to participate in an interview (lasting between 30-45 minutes) where we will discuss your understanding and use of abbreviated neologisms on X.

- Observation: The researcher may observe how you engage with neologisms on X, taking note of your interactions (e.g., tweets and retweets) on public forums.

- Data Collection: With your consent, your publicly available tweets that contain neologisms may be analyzed as part of the research. These will be anonymized to ensure your identity is protected.

Confidentiality

All the information you provide will be kept confidential. Identifiable details, such as your username, will not be disclosed in the study. Your responses will be coded, and the data will be presented anonymously. The study will only use publicly available data from X, and any personal details will be anonymized or removed to protect your privacy.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to decline or withdraw from the study at any time, without any consequences. If you choose to withdraw, all data related to your participation will be deleted immediately.

Benefits and Risks

There are no direct personal benefits for participating in this study. However, your contribution will add to the academic understanding of digital communication trends in Kenya. There are minimal risks associated with your participation, as only publicly available information will be used, and your identity will remain anonymous throughout.

Data Security

All data will be securely stored in password-protected digital files and will only be accessed by the researcher. The data will be used solely for academic purposes.

Consent Statement

By signing below, you acknowledge that:

1. You have read and understood the purpose of the study.
2. You understand the procedures and what will be required of you.
3. You have been assured that your participation is voluntary and that you can withdraw at any time.
4. You are aware that your identity will be protected, and your personal details will remain confidential.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX III: GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATED NEOLOGISMS

Abbreviated Neologism	Meaning
ABC	Already Been Chewed
AD	Advertisement
AFAIK	As Far As I Know
AFK	Away From Keyboard / A Free Kill
AMA	Ask Me Anything
ASAP	As Soon As Possible
ASL	Age/Sex/Location
ATM	At The Moment
BAC	By any Chance
BBL	Be Back Later
B4	Before
BRB	Be Right Back
BFO	Best Friend of the Office
BOB	Back Off Buddy
BS	Bullshit
BTAIM	Be That as it may
BRT	Be Right There
BTS	Behind the Scenes
BTW	By The Way
BTN	Between
C'mon	Come on
CU	See You

CPC	Cost Per Click
CT	Can’t Talk
DM	Direct Message
DAE	Does Anyone Else
DK	Don't Know
DIY	Do It Yourself
DYK	Did you know / Do you know
ELI5	Explain Like I’m Five
FB	Facebook
FBF	Flashback Friday
FBO	Facebook Official
FF	Follow Friday
FFS	For F***'s Sake
FOH	Front of House
FOMO	Fear Of Missing Out
FS	For Sale
FR	For Real
FTFY	Fixed That For You
FTW	For The Win
G2G/GTG	Got To Go
GG	Good Game
GA	Google Analytics
GC	Group Chat
GL	Good Luck / Get Lost

GRWM	Get Ready With Me
GT	Good Try
GTFO	Get The F*** Out / Off
GTM	Google Tag Manager
GTR	Got To Run
HB	Hurry Back / Hug Back
HBD	Happy Birthday
HD	High Definition
HIFW	How I Feel When
HMB	Hit Me Back
HMU	Hit Me Up
HO	Home Office
HT/H/T	Hat Tip
HTH	Happy To Help / Here To Help
ICYMI	In Case You Missed It
IDC	I Don’t Care
IDK	I Don’t Know
IG	Instagram / I Guess
IK	I Know
IRC	If I Remember Correctly
IKR	I Know, Right?
ILY	I Love You
Imma	I Am Going To
IMHO	In My Humble Opinion

IMO	In My Opinion
IP	Internet Protocol
Irl	In Real Life
Istg	I Swear To God
JK	Just Kidding
JS	Just Saying
Lemme	Let Me
LI	LinkedIn
LMAO	Laughing My A** Off
LMK	Let Me Know
LMS	Like My Status
LOL	Laughing Out Loud / Lots Of Love
MCM	Man Crush Monday
MFW	My Face When
MT	Modified Tweet
MTFBWY	May The Force Be With You
NBD	No Big Deal
NM	Not Much
NP	No Problem
NSFW	Not Safe For Work
NVM	Never Mind
OMG	Oh My God
OML	Oh My Lord
OMO	On My Own / One Man's Opinion / Old Man Out

OMW	On My Way
ONO	On Or Near Offer
OOTD	Outfit Of The Day
OP	Original Poster
OTP	One True Pairing
PFP	People's First Party / Pin-Feed Printer
PG	Pretty Good / Pregnant
PM	Private Message
PMSL	Pee Myself Laughing
POS	Parent Over Shoulder
PPL	People
Prolly	Probably
PVO	Positive Vibes Only
RL	Real Life
ROFL	Rolling On The Floor Laughing
ROFLMAO	Rolling On The Floor Laughing My A** Off
RT	Retweet
STFU	Shut The F**k Up
SMH	Shaking My Head
TBBH	To Be Brutally Honest
TBD	To Be Decided / To Be Determined
TBH	To Be Honest
TBT	Throwback Thursday
TGIF	Thank God It's Friday

TIL	Today I Learned
TL;DR	Too Long; Didn't Read
TMI	Too Much Information
Tnx	Thanks
TTYL	Talk To You Later
TY	Thank You
TYM	Time
TYVM	Thank You Very Much
TW	Twitter
UR	You Are / Your
Vn	Voice Note
Wanna	Want To
WB	Write Back / Welcome Back / Way Bored
WBU	What About You?
WCW	Woman Crush Wednesday
WFH	Work From Home
WTH	What The Hell / Heck
WTF	What The F***?
XOXO	Hugs And Kisses
Y'all	You All
YO	Years Old
YOLO	You Only Live Once
YT	YouTube/White
YTC	YouTube Channel

XTC	Ecstasy
4get	Forget
2day	Today
2nyt	Tonight
420	Cannabis / Marijuana

APPENDIX IV: NACOSTIC PERMIT

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

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