

**Communication****Playwriting: an Analysis of the Morphological Characteristics of Whatsapp and Facebook Messages****Eziwho Emenike-Azunwo<sup>1</sup>, Azunwo-Emenike Precious Uchechi<sup>2</sup>**

**Abstract:** The concept of writing in all its ramifications has remained pivotally significant in the process of documentations, from the antediluvian to the contemporary times. This is asserted on power, prowess and flexibility of the playwright in carefully adapting his environment and mirroring it satisfactorily. This paper examines the art of playwriting as a medium of adaptation of the society holistically and narrowing it to the influence of the social media (Facebook and whatsapp) on English language in making modern plays. In the process of interacting with people from different educational and societal backgrounds, social media platforms have influenced their use of English language and as such, the playwright captures them. This paper through the content and data analysis examines the influence of Facebook and WhatsApp on English language in playwriting processes in particular and the society at large. This paper hinges on Ludwig Wittgenstein's "Use Theory" and Aristotle's mimetic wisdom theory as its theoretical fibre. This study through three Facebook groups and three Whatsapp groups provides understanding of budding playwrights' experiences of using Facebook and WhatsApp and their view on how it affects their writing of plays in flexible English language. The paper recommends that budding and experienced playwrights should flexibly adapt the nuances of social media to stay germane, focus and creative in the contemporary theatre industry and advance the craft of playwriting in mirroring the society.

**Keywords:** Facebook; WhatsApp; Instangram; Gmail; Snapchat; Youtube

**Introduction**

It was Francis Bacon who in his radical thinking once postulated that reading maketh a man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man and Bernard Shaw in his famous demeanour submits that the craft of the playwrights is:

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Life as it occurs is senseless... for it is the business of the playwright to pick out the significant incidents from the chaos of daily happenings, and arrange them so that their relation to one another becomes significant thus changing us from bewildered spectators of a monstrous confusion of men intelligently conscious of the world and its destinies. This is the highest function that man can perform, the greatest work he can set himself to; and this is why (the playwrights) take their majestic and pontifical rank which seems so strangely above all the pretensions of mere strolling actors and theatrical authors (directors) (Qtd in Johnson 9).

This paper's crux rides at the back of the above assertion, in providing its direction in scrutinising the morphological features of *Whatsapp* and *Facebook* messages turning them into materials for flexible playwriting. Playwriting is a gracious and dignified art with distilled minds undertaking this creative enterprise for the good of mankind. Azunwo provides that:

Playwriting is an intellectual activity involving the creation and recreation, organization and intensification of human familiarity and knowledge, with the ultimate scrutiny of humanizing and civilizing humans and their ideological standpoint (8).

It is a process embedded with the creative and intellectual manipulation of ideas, materials, producing plausible stories in form of plots, characters, diction, music and dramatic action before a live audience. Playwriting could be seen as the dramatic composition of a play of which Yerima observes as "a letter from the playwright to the director, actors, and other members of the production informing them of a particular vision of his or hers" (15). In the thinking of Robert Cohen in the area of playwriting, he asserts that:

Since drama is a branch of literature, and since many dramatic authors begin (or double) as poets or novelists, it seems convenient to think of playwriting as primarily literary endeavour, as simply one of "writing". This perspective, however, obscures the fact that the "playwright" is not simply a "playwright", and that playwriting always entails considerations not common to other literary forms. By homonymic coincidence, "playwriting" sounds like an extrapolation of "playwright". But etymologically, the word "playwright" is parallel "wheelwright" or "shipwright": as a shipwright is one who makes ships, a playwright is literally "one who makes plays; not one who merely writes them. (Qtd. in Ohiri 2).

Sequel from the foregoing therefore, it becomes quite explicit to see a distinction which is essentially imperative, since some plays, or portions of plays are never written. He believes that improvisational plays contain a whole lot of certain rituals;

whole scenes of comic business, sub-textual behaviours, and many documentary dramas are created largely or entirely in performance and are learned through oral improvisation and repetition. The playwright is concerned with creation of scripts.

On the other hand, ahead of the preamble of information and communication technologies (ICT), it is on record that humans were never latent in nature, but were highly communicative and displayed numerous manifestations through writings of various degrees from one person to another. In the wake of many technological breakthroughs in our contemporary society, information dissemination has come to us in the snap of the fingers, reaching to thousands and millions, if not billions of people all over the world with a single post. Information and communication technologies have become a dynamic power for human existence. In the past few decades, information and communication technologies have provided society with a variety of new communication capabilities. People can therefore communicate their feelings, thoughts, etc, expressing them in real-time with others across the globe, using technologically added programmes like instant messaging, voice over IP (VoIP) and video-conferencing and Social networking. Asadu and Usua were not joking when they submitted that.

The last three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were decades of great technological breakthroughs in all aspects of human existence. As far as collecting, processing and dissemination of information, entertainment and cultural values, which are the main business of mass communication is concern, the decades witnessed new technologies that were never imagined in human history. (110).

It has become crystal clear that much of the written languages we see on the screens of our computers, tablets and smartphones, etc., that language now evolves partly through our interface with information and communication technologies. Contemporary information and communication technologies have become pivotal and as such, have manifested the great prophesy of Marshal McLuhan in 1964 that “the world will become a global village as a result of technology” (110), this according to him will enable the people function as if the people they were living next door across the globe. This academic prediction has however come to fulfilment, given that our smartphones now link information globally within a twinkle of the eye.

The concept of social media appears comparatively new, given that nobody has heard nor used social media decades ago. Researchers argue that the impact of social media relies on the fact that they employ mobile and web-based technologies to create

highly interactive platforms via which individuals and communities share, create and co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content (Ahlqvist, 2008). The social media technologies today operate using various forms such as magazines, internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, wikis, social networks, podcasts, pictures, videos etc. Social networking sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, 2go, Imo, Twitter, Youtube, Eskimi, LinkedIn, Yahoo, Gmail, Snapchat, etc., allow users across the globe to talk with one another on a regular basis as if they are in the environment, and the playwrights can however take advantage of these great opportunities in creatively writing his or her plays.

The heavy traffic on social media today calls for staid worry, as it affects the number of time some students live on the net. It is obvious that students now spend more on Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, and other social network platforms than they use for academic work. This has however skyrocketed with the aid of cell phones, which are nowadays in profusion amongst the youths. From observations, it crystal that most students hardly spend two hours without touching their phones for social media updates, changing of profile pictures and chatting. This obsession or habit on social media has in actuality manipulated the way we use language. The sway of social media on languages in general and English language in particular can never be whopping. Just like the two sides of a coin, this great advent has brought with it both negative and positive influence, nevertheless, this researched is aimed at studying the negative influence of the social on students writing and speaking skill of English Language and how these new slants and word formations can be applied by the playwrights in the area of playwriting. This research shall analyse the word formation processes involved in the English words of the social media, examine the spelling errors in the words used in the social media, and evaluate the origin of the words used and the changes it has undergone in the social media. Social media has made it easier to contribute to the development of language and as such, this study is becomes pivotal because, it will serve as an eye opener to prevent the negative influence of the social media, especially on the learners of English as a second language, even at the its application on playwriting. The brisk intensification of the social media has given the room for the urgent study and document the morphological characteristics engrossed in social media messages to facilitate the government know what policies to put in place, to reduce the over exposure of its citizens to the social media, thereby reducing the high rate of failure in English language, as a result of wrong spellings. A careful study of the word structures and the examination of the word formation processes as we did in this work with regards

to the social media messages will lend a hand both researchers and the social media community to learn and perk up on their writing skills and reduce spelling errors.

From the use of abbreviations, acronyms and affixation, to the use of numerals and smileys, social media have in more than one ways affected our use of language, especially in writing. It would be advisable for the social media users to learn the proper time and place for different types of writing. Uncountable words originating from social media and the wider internet have become so commonplace that they have now slipped into popular usage, and as such, we hardly become conscious it. A combination of acronyms, abbreviations and neologism has grown up around the social media to help us communicate better. With the increasing influence of the social media on the society, there is urgent need to investigate the social media use and misuse of the English language.

The words that surround us every day influence the words we use. From the introduction of new words, to new meanings for old words, to changes in the way we communicate, social media is making its presence felt. Language is evolving and only a naive person will think that the language of social media does not have effect on the way we use English in our day-to-day activities. Harris (1999) believes that, no one can be realistically shielded from the media, because, the media are omnipresent and enduring parts of our lives. Hence, there is a need to study the negative influence of the social media on the English language. Because the language we use to communicate with each other tends to be more malleable than formal writing, the combination of informal, personal communication and the mass audience afforded by social media is a recipe for rapid change. It is more appropriate to consider just how much of an effect social media have on the way we communicate.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research hinges on Ludwig Wittgenstein's "Use Theory" of meaning and Alexandre Dumas' (Fils) *How to Write a Play*. The meaning of words and sentences has been controversial issues facing scholars of different backgrounds. Ejele (2003) posits that:

The study of meaning did not suddenly surface in linguistics. For thousands of years, human beings have been concerned with the study of meaning. At various times and various disciplines like anthropology, psychology, philology (precursor to

linguistics) and philosophy... Even up to early twentieth century the focus was on the meaning of MEANING.... (5).

A follow-up from the foregoing therefore, the problem posed by meaning has been the kind that cuts across different disciplines. From Ejele's submission, Wittgenstein highlights the role of an expression in language and the role of language in human life. He is of the view that language is integrated in human behaviour and interactions with others in the society. This according to Ejele is because the way man uses language is useful to him only, if it is meaningful to those who share the language with him. The lesson however we draw from this theory is that the best way to classify a linguistic expression is that which accounts for how it is used, what it is used for and the effect of effects it creates, hence our choice of it as our theoretical framework.

Dumas' postulation on the other hand, submits you ask me how a play is written. You honour me greatly, but you also greatly embarrass me. With study, work, patience, memory, energy, a man can gain a reputation as a painter, or a sculptor, or a musician. In those arts, there are materials and mechanical procedures that he can make his own, thanks to ability, and can attain to success. The public, to whom these works are submitted, having none of the technical knowledge involved, from the beginning regarding the makers of these works as their superiors: They feel that the artist can always reply to any criticism: "Have you learned painting, sculpture, music? No? Then don't talk so vainly. You cannot judge. You must be of the craft to understand the beauties", and so on.

### **Conceptual Review: The Social Media**

Today, with the advent of new media of the internet, members of the audience are atomized where mass culture has been reduced to individual cultures. The degree of saturation of the social media within the nooks and crannies of modern society and the speed of its diffusion is so amazing. The popularity of the social media dates back to 2002 and has since grabbed and maintained the attention of tens of millions of internet users. Harris (1994) in Orlu Orlu (2013) believes that no one can be realistically shielded from the media; it is omnipresent and enduring part of our lives. For the past two decades, social media have become much famous worldwide to the point that researchers now find pleasure in researching about the various social media platforms and how much influence they have on the people. Despite the fact that almost everyone in the community is connected to at least one social media

platform, the youth and teenagers are the leading and most fanatic of these social platforms to the point that they even social network while in class or even church. With the introduction of the social media, children and youths now have access to the media. Omega and Asadu (2009) in OrluOrlu (2013) claim that the use of mobile the phone for browsing doubled the number of children that use the internet. Those between the ages of 16-30 have been seen to be the highest users of the social media (Rainie, 2011), While Moran, Seaman and Tinti-Kane (2012) believe that social media sites appeal more to student, since the sites give room for creativity as well as broaden their educational scope. Agu (2018) agrees that majority of the social media users are the young people, most of whom are students in higher institution.

Countless organizations, including religious bodies, are beginning to tap into the benefits of the social media (Okon, 2015 cited in Agu, 2018). Agu (2018) also believes that social media sites like Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Youtube, etc., help in the building of relationships among people with common interest. The common features of the various social media platforms include: creating a user account, creating a profile, uploading a profile picture, sending and accepting requests, having notifications and news feeds, etc (Azunwo, 2018)

### **The Morphology**

Morphology is one of the levels of linguistics like phonology, syntax and semantics. Linguistics is said to be the scientific study of human languages. Morphology is a bridge between syntax and phonology (Brown & Miller, 1980). While Ndimele (1999) identifies four different levels of linguistics: Phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics, Crystal (2003) argues that the branches of linguistics are five: phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics, Nwala (2015) argues that phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics are the four basic micro linguistic types.

Morphology is said to be the study of form. Yul- Ifode (2001) sees morphology as the study of form or structure of morpheme. Yule (2002) agreeing sees morphology as the study of form or forms. Katamba (2004) insist that morphology deals with the way morphemes organise to form words. In a related view, Ejele (2014) sees morphology as “the level of grammar which studies the internal structure or forms of words and their meaningful parts, primarily through the use of the morpheme concept as well as the rules by which words were formed” (p. 89). Umera-Okeka and Nwankwo (2009) point out that morphology is a Greek word that was coined by

Johann Wolfgang Von Goeth in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nwala (2015) similarly observed that the word morphology is derived from the Greek word ‘morphe’ meaning form. He sees it as “a body of rules governing the formation of words in a language” (p. 1). In a related view, Umera-Okeke and Nwankwo, (2009) and Nwala (2015) believe that the term morphology was lifted from the field of biology, which means, it studies life and form.

A word is seen as an essential unit of grammar of a language. It is a smallest linguistic unit that can stand on its own and make sense. (Crystal 1997) sees it as an independent unit that can form by itself a complete utterance. Every word has in itself some basic information which includes: the pronunciation, internal structure of the word, parts of speech, meaning and context of usage. Ndimele (2003) calls the phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic information. According to him, one essential characteristic of a word is the meaning it conveys. There are certain criteria given for identifying words, they include: the minimum free form criterion, which according to Bloomfield (1933), talks about a word becoming the minimal unit that can be pronounced alone and still be meaningful. The second is the isolability or pause criterion which is in tandem with Hockett (1958) view of a word as “any segment of a sentence bounded by successive points at which pausing is possible” (p. 167). Finally, the uninterruptability criterion, which holds that nothing can be added into a word to break it (Ndimele, 1993). Words can be categorized into two: lexical and functional words. Lexical words being the words with dictionary meaning, while functional words refer to those without dictionary meaning, but perform grammatical function. Words are basically classified into four: Simple, Compound, Complex and Compound-Complex words (Ndimele, 1999).

Derivational morphology- this is the opposite of inflectional morpheme. It is a process of adding an affix or affixes to the root or stem of a word to create an entirely new word. There are two types of derivational morphology: class-changing and class-maintaining derivational morphology (Umera-Okeke et al, 2009). Suppletive morpheme, Zero morpheme, empty morpheme, replacive morpheme, pseudo morpheme and unique morpheme (Nwala, 2015). The bound morpheme that is added to a free morpheme to derive a new word is known as an affix.

An affix is a bound morpheme that cannot stand on its own and make meaning. Ndimele (2003) agrees that “an affix is a bound morpheme which is not capable of independent existence...” (28). Affixes are described based on their positions and functions. The position of affixes differ from language to language (Onumajuru, 2007). TutorVista.com (2015), points out that an affix is a morpheme that is either



attached before, after or within to a word stem to form a new word. The process of adding an affix to the root or base of a word is called affixation. There are different types of affixes but English has only the prefix and the suffix. This is because most of the positional affixes in English come from prefix and suffix (Crystal, 1980). Anderson (1992) asserts that prefixes and suffixes are the most common used types of affixation, while Ndimele (1999) agrees that prefix and suffix are the only affixes in English language. Infix exist in Tagalog, a language that is spoken in the Phillipines (Allerton, 1979). The interfix is found in Igbo language, while the circumfix exist in the Malay language (Allerton, 1979).

An affix is always added to a root or stem. A root is the foundation on which new words are built. It is that part of the word that remains when other affixes and appendages are removed, while a stem is that part of the word to which an affix is added. Katamba (1993) agrees that a root is the irreducible core of a word with nothing else attached to it. The root is that central part of a word which remains after every other linguistic unit has been removed. "While all roots are stem not all stems are root" (Umera-Okeke et al 2014). Each segment of a morpheme is called morph and the different realization of a morpheme is called allomorph. In the words of Katamba (2004), an allomorph is the variant phonetic manifestations of a morpheme.

The process of creating new words in a language is called word formation processes. Word formation processes are as old as man and one way of creating new words is by adding affixes to an existing word (Ndimele, 1999). They are those morphological processes involved in bringing new words into a language (Umera-Okeke & Nwankwo, 2014). Simply put, word formation processes are the processes involved in creating new words. There are several processes and strategies involved in the formation of new words (Nwala, 2015). The processes have been divided by different scholars. Ndimele (1999), recorded eight strategies which are: borrowing, compounding, conversion, blending, coinage or neologism, acronyms, clipping or abbreviation and back formation. On the other, Umera-Okeke and Nwankwo (2014) claims that:

The main process of the word formation is derivation, the formation of new words on the basis of existing ones. Some other processes are borrowing and neo-classical formation, internal change, reduplication, suppletion, zero modification, compounding, clipping, blends, abbreviations, acronyms etc. (p. 51).

In a different opinion, Nwala (2015) summed up the strategies into compounding, coinage or neologism, borrowing, blending and acronyms. From the foregoing, it is

clear that language is like any other organism, it undergoes several processes to expand its lexical stock.

### **Facebook**

Facebook has become the most popular social networking site among college students and worldwide. Facebook has been utilized by a number of higher education institutions as a communication tool. Ellison et al (2007) found out that 94% of American college students were Facebook users, and they pointed out that Facebook primarily brought students on campus together. Among a number of social networking sites, Facebook is the most widely used social networking site used by various ages from children to adult. When it was created in 2004, it was used to facilitate social interaction among college students (Pempek, Yermolayeva & Calvert, 2009). Students have three most used social media tools: Facebook, Wikipedia and YouTube, for social engagement, direct communication, speed of feedback and relationship building (Liu, 2010). Shih (2011), believes that Facebook provides users with a variety of means to make friends across the globe, as well as communicate and interact with one another.

In order to be a member of Facebook, users first need to register. Then, users are able to create a personal profile to be used when they interact with others, add other users as friends, exchange public or private online messages, express common interests between users, build and maintain connections, and invite others to join a community (Davis III et. al., 2012; Pempek et. al., 2009; Wiki, n.d). The most important part of Facebook is a *wall* on which each user maintains a *profile*. Pempek et al (2009) sees a wall as a webpage containing basic information and personal information.

### **Whatsapp**

WhatsApp is a freeware and cross-platform messaging and Voice over IP (VoIP). WhatsApp is a free downloadable application requiring using a Smartphone to enable the participants to actively get engaged and get involved (Baffour-Awuah, 2015). The meaning of the word "WhatsApp" is derived from the English phrase "What's up?" which has the meaning of "What's new?" WhatsApp is said to be an instant messaging application that provides users access to exchange messages, pictures, videos and audio with friends and family. The affordability of the application makes it a good alternative to the Short message service (SMS). Users

can now easily share information, ask questions and get quick answer, share ideas and interact extensively through WhatsApp (Awada, 2017). WhatsApp was founded in 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum, but was acquired by Facebook in 2014. The application allows the sending of text messages and voice calls, as well as video calls, images and other media, documents, and user location. The application runs from a mobile device, though it is also accessible from desktop computers; the service requires consumer users to provide a standard cellular mobile number. Originally, users could only communicate with other users individually or in groups of individual users, but in September 2017, WhatsApp announced a forthcoming business platform which will enable companies to provide customer service to users at scale. As at February 2018, WhatsApp had over 1.5 billion users, making it the most popular messaging application. Agu (2018) believes that students spend more time on Whatsapp because the application can be accessed through the cell phone. WhatsApp is seen as a social system which permits learners to access a plenty of information quickly (Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014).

The WhatsApp could provide the learners with an opportunity to express themselves freely in a non-limited environment (Awada, 2017). The WhatsApp could be a tool used to increase learners' language skills and could provide learners with opportunity to express themselves in free environments (Rambe & Chipunza, 2013). Blended learning can be greatly enhanced by the WhatsApp instant messages (Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014). WhatsApp is currently available for iPhone, Android, Windows Phone, Nokia Symbian60 and S40 and Blackberry.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

Data for this study were obtained through participant observation of Facebook and WhatsApp messages from three groups each and were presented in tables and were qualitatively explained.

The data presented below illustrate the English language as used in the social media. The data proves the words as are used in the social media, as well as the origin of the words. The data are presented below:

1	Evn	Evening
2	Evry	Every
3	4	For
4	Fam	Family
5	4give	Forgive
6	Frm	From
7	Fyn	Fine/ Find
8	Fone	Phone
9	Gud	Good
10	G2G	Got To G
11	GM	Good Morning
12	GBU	God Bless You
13	Gerrout	Get out
14	Geh	Girl
15	Google (V)	Google (N)
16	Hehehehe/ Hahahahaha	Laughter
17	HBD	Happy Birthday
18	HML	Happy Married Life
19	HWA	Happy Wedding Anniversary
20	Hat	Heart
21	Hanty	Aunt
22	Huncle	Uncle
23	Hi	High
24	IJN	In JESUS Name
25	Issa	It's a
26	Iffa	If I
27	143	I Love You
28	1433	I Love You Too
29	Is	It is
30	Ish	Issue
31	Issorait	It's Alright
32	Ki	Kill
33	Kontinu	Continue
34	Lawd	Lord
35	Lemme	Let Me
36	LMAO	Leave Me Alone o
37	LMFAO	Laughing My Fucking Ass Out
39	LWKMD	Laugh Want Kill Me Die
40	LOL	Laugh out loud/ Lots of Love
41	Luv	Love

75	Luv U	LOVE YOU
76	LLNP	Long Life and Prosperity
77	Lyf	Life
78	Mrng	Morning
79	Moda/ Momma	Mother
80	Madt	Mad
81	M CM	Man Crush Monday
82	MOG	Man Of God
83	N/nd	And
84	Nyc	Nice
85	Neva	Never
86	No	Know
87	OMG	Oh My God!
88	Omgudnez	Oh my goodness!
90	Pls/ Plz	Please
91	Pple	People
92	Pic / Pix	Picture
93	PM	Private Message
94	Rotfl	Rolling on the floor
95	Rotflmao	Rolling on the floor laughing my ass/arse off
99	Savage	Savage
100	Sef	Self
101	Selfie	Taking Picture by yourself
102	Sori / Sowi	Sorry
103	Smh	Somehow
104	Smhooo	See me ooo
109	SOG	Son Of God
110	Tym	Time
111	Tnk u	Thank You
112	Tnx	Thanks
113	TTYL	Talk To You Later
114	U	You
115	Ursef	Yourself
116	Ur	Your
117	Upandan	Up and Down
118	Unfriend	To Remove Someone From Your Friend List
122	Ve	Have

123	Wat	What
124	Wud /Wuld	Would
125	Wan	Want
126	Wanna	Want to
127	Wen	When
128	WCE	Woman Crush Everyday
129	WCW	Woman Crush Wednesday
130	WhatsApp	What's up?
131	Warrisdis?	What is this?

### Discussion

The social media enjoys so much on the level of morphology of the English language. The influence of the social media is largely in the Word Formation Processes. Word formation processes are as old as man and one way of creating new words is by adding affixes to an existing word (Ndimele, 1999). Word formation processes are the processes involved in creating new words. And this word formation can be freely utilised and carefully applied by the playwright in the creative process. There are several types of word formation processes which include: borrowing, compounding, blending, neologism, acronyms, clipping or abbreviation, reduplication, back formation, etc. In the data above, we see cases where new words were formed using the morphological processes of affixation, clipping, borrowing, acronyms, abbreviations, etc. At this juncture, the playwright can actually take advantage of the word formation in his writing in order to woo the youths who have discovered a second home on social media in one way or another. Using the data above, we shall discuss the following word formation processes involved in the language of the social media.

### Acronyms

Acronym is one of the commonly used morphological processes that is found in the language of the social media. It is a word formation process in which the initial letters of two or more words are lifted to form a new word. This means that new words are formed by combining the initial letters of already existing words. Nwala sees acronyms as usually written in capital letters (15). In the case of the social media, acronyms are written both in small letters and in capital letters. Some acronyms found in the language of the social media are seen below:

BRB	Be Right Back
DM	Display Message
GM	Good Morning
GBU	God Bless You
G2G	Got To Go
HBD	Happy Birthday
HWA	Happy Wedding Anniversary
IJN	in Jesus Name
LMAO	Leave me alone o
LMFAO	Laughing my fucking ass out
LWKMD	Laugh want to kill me die
LLNP	Long Life and Prosperity
LOL	Lots of Love
MOG	Man of God
MCM	Man Crush Monday
OMG	Oh My God!
ROTFL	Rolling on the floor
ROTFLMAO	Rolling on the floor laughing my ass off
SOG	Son of God
SMH	Somehow
TTYL	Talk to You Later
WCE	Woman Crush Everyday
WCW	Woman Crush Wednesday

From the above data therefore, it shows that the English language as used in the social media makes use of acronyms. This is because of the busy nature of Facebook and the space constraint of the WhatsApp platform. Umera-Okeke & Nwankwo assert that acronym is one of the four main types of abbreviation. The other three are: shortenings, contractions and initialism.

### **Shortenings**

This can be seen as a morphological process in which the first few letters of an already existing word remains, while the rest letters are deleted. In the language of the social media, these words are used as a complete word and not an abbreviation and as such, no full stop is added at the end of the word. Examples are as seen below:

Derived Word	Origin
Bro	Brother
Sis	Sister
Fam	Family
Hi	High
Wan	Want
Pic/pix	Picture

### Contractions

This is another popular word formation process that is seen in the language of the social media. It is a type of abbreviation in which letters from the middle of the original words are deleted. Examples of contractions are as follows:

Derived Word	Origin
Bt	But
Beus	Because
Dnt	Don't
Evry	Every
Evng	Evening
Evn	Even
Frm	From
Hv	Have
Mrng	Morning
Pls	Please
Ppl	People
Sef	Self
Tnk	Thank
Wud	Would
Wn	When
Wat	What
Wud	Would

### Initialism

This abbreviation type was postulated by Umera-Okeke & Nwankwo (2009). It is a morphological process that involves the initial letters of a word that are pronounced separately. Examples of initialism in the English language as used in the social media include the following:



DP	Display Picture
DM	Display Message
PM	Private Message
B	Be

### **Coinage or Neologism**

This is a term in morphology that is used to describe a situation in which new words are created to name previously non existing entities. However, with time, the coined words get accepted in that environment (Ndimele, 1999). In the social media, especially WhatsApp and Facebook, words are being coined from the English language on a daily basis, to suit the communication purpose of the participant. Examples of these coined words include:

**Brostitute:** This was coined from the word prostitute. The term is used to describe a male prostitute. This term is used majorly by the females on the social media to describe a man who chases women.

**Selfie:** This is another popular word that was coined in the social media. It is used to describe the act of taking picture by one's self. It is a situation in which a person takes photo without the help of another person.

**Buzzword:** This is also another coined word that is used to describe a word or phrase that is fashionable at particular time or in a particular context.

**Troll –** This is also a coined word whose origin is traced to the social media. Troll is a word that is used to describe a person who creates problems online by beginning an argument or by offending people.

**Boo:** This is a word that was coined by the social media. It is used to describe a male partner in a relationship.

**Bae:** This is used to describe a female partner in a relationship.

**WhatsApp-** This is the word that was coined to name one of the social media platforms that is seen on a smartphone, which enables one to chat and make calls freely, from any part of the world, at a very fast rate. The term WhatsApp was coined from what's up? - An informal way of saying 'how are you?' in America.

**Slayqueen –**This is a popular word in the social media that is used to describe certain kind of ladies. The term stands for jobless ladies who go after men, spend their time on make ups, dresses and parties.

Facebook: This is a term that represents one of the social media platforms that gives people access to chat with friends and family at any time of the day and from all corners of the world.

Chai! Or Choi! These words are used interchangeably for exclamations on social media.

**Borrowing:** This is a word formation process in which one language collects words from other languages. The language that is being borrowed from is called the donor language, while the language is borrowing is called the recipient language. This borrowing is done to boost the number of words in the language (Nwala). In the case of the social media, the words are already existing words in English language, but are used to describe certain items or processes involved in the social media that may or may not necessarily mean the same thing in English language. Examples of borrowing are seen below:

Display Picture (DP): This is the term used to describe the picture that is seen on your profile on WhatsApp. This is the picture that is seen by everyone who has your number on his or her phone and that has a WhatsApp account.

Profile Picture: This is the term used to describe the picture that is displayed on your facebook account, that is seen by your facebook friends and intending friends. It is the picture that anyone that searches your account sees.

Profile: In the social media, this term profile means a summary about you- your name, date of birth, marital status, state of origin, educational qualification, interest, etc. This is usually displayed on your wall in your facebook account.

Wall: This is the term used to describe a place where an individual profile is kept. The most important part of Facebook is a wall on which each user maintains a profile. Pempek et al (2009) sees a wall as a webpage containing basic information and personal information.

Private Message (PM): This is another word that was borrowed from the English language. It is a term in WhatsApp that is used to describe a message that is sent to an individual directly. This happens mostly when you belong to a group together and you need to send a personal message to the person.

Inbox: This term applies to facebook, as it refers to a space in facebook where messages are sent and kept for the consumption of the owner of the facebook account or anyone that has access to that account.

**Account:** This is a term in social media that has to do with the registering of someone to any social media platform. It includes the provision of a user name, email address, phone number and/ passwords.

**Username:** This is the name that is used to address the owner of a facebook or whatsapp account. It could be a nickname, a business name or the real name of the individual.

**Password:** This stands for a word that is used to gain access to your facebook account. It could be a combination of letters, words, numbers or even names. This does not apply to whatsapp because whatsapp requires only your phone number.

**Crush:** This is term that is very popular among the facebook and whatsapp userd. It is used to describe an affection one facebook or whatsapp user has for another.

**Stew:** This is used when a lady is seductively dressed with all her sensitive parts showing

**Sauce:** This refers to a very beautiful lady with big bum and big boobs.

**Swag:** This means a good dress sense. It is used to address people with good dress sense.

**Savage:** This means a comment in response to a previous comment that soothes the first comment. In other words, it is a comment that comes as a result of a previous comment that was unnecessary.

**Share:** In the social media, this stands for the reposting of a previous post.

**Tag:** This means to add some other accounts to information that is related to them.

**Status:** This is a place on facebook were a all recent updates are made and seen by all your friends. These updates stay for a short period of time to give way for more recent updates.

**Post:** This is the formation that is shared among friends on facebook and whatsapp. It is what a facebook user writes on his or wall that is seen by all his or her friends.

**Like:** This mean to agree to the post of a person. It is usually used in the form of a thumb.

**Unfriend:** This stands for removing someone from your facebook account. This is done by pressing the unfriend option indicated on your screen.

**Twerk:** in social media, this means a seductive dance. It is used to refer to a dance step that involves mostly the bum of a lady rolling round.

**Shaketable:** This is making a controversial statement on social media that raises so much attention and in turn brings about so many comments or replies.

**Block:** This is placing a ban on restriction on someone or stopping someone from gaining access to you on any of the social media platforms.

### **Affixation**

Affixation is the process of adding affixes to the root or base of a word. It is a morphological process in which an affix is attached to the root or base of a word (Ndimele). An affix is a bound morpheme that cannot stand on its own and make meaning; it depends on a root or stem for its meaning. The position of affixes differ from language to language (Onumajuru, 2007). TutorVista.com (2015), points out that an affix is a morpheme that is either attached before, after or within to a word stem to form a new word. There are different types of affixes but English has only the prefix and the suffix.

In the social media, words are formed by adding affixes to the previously existing English words. There is an introduction of a prefix ‘h-’ that is added to already existing words like ‘uncle’ and ‘auntie’ as seen in the examples below:

Prefix Root	Derived Word
h- uncle	Huncle
	This is means uncle

Prefix Root	Derived Word
h- auntie	Hantie
	This means aunt

There is also a case of the ‘re-’ prefix that is added to the coined social media words as seen in the examples below:

Prefix Root	Derived Word
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re post repost - this means to rewrite what was previously written on your wall on facebook for others to see.

Another prefix found in the words used in the social media is the un- prefix. This is seen in the word ‘unfriend’.

## Prefix Root

## Derived Word

un+friend = unfriend- this is a situation where you remove someone from your friend list on facebook.

There is also a case of suffix in the words as used in the social media. For example, the word 'mad' in English language has only three letters (mad), but in the social media, it is spelt with an additional 't'. This means that there is an introduction of the suffix '-t' as seen below.

## Root Suffix

## Derived Word

mad - t madt

Interestingly, in the social media, there is a case of circumfix- an affix before and after the root of a word. This is seen in the example below:

## Prefix Root

## Suffix derived word

un- friend -ed unfriended

The word 'unfriended' is used to show the past tense of unfriend in the social media. It means that the act of 'unfriending' someone (that is, deleting someone from your friend list on facebook), had already taken place before the time of speaking.

Another example of a possible circumfix is found in the word 'unfriending' as seen below:

## Prefix Root Suffix

## Derived Word

un- friend -ing unfriending - This is the act of removing someone from your friends list on facebook.

## Compounding

This is a morphological process in which words are created by joining two independent words to form a new word. There are examples of compounding in the English language as used in the social media. Examples are shown below:

Shake + table = shaketable

Face + book = facebook

Slay + queen = slayqueen

Pass + word = password

Buzz + word = buzzword

User + name = username

### The Use of Numerals

Apart from the morphological features stated above, there are many cases of corruption found in the English as used in the social media. The term ‘corruption’ here means the social media has twisted some sentences in a way that it goes out of the norms of forming new words. For example, to achieve abbreviation, letters are replaced with numbers. Some examples are seen below:

Derived Word	Origin
2	To
4	For
B4	Before
4give	Forgive
143	I love you
1432	I love you too
G2G	Got to go

### Substitution

There is also a case of abbreviation where the social media flouts the rule by changing some letters of the original words. Some examples are seen below:

Derived Word	Origin
Adonbilivit	I don't believe it
Aswear	I swear

In the two examples of substitution above, the first person singular ‘I’ changes to the English first letter ‘A’. Other examples of substitution are below:

Aw	How
Bi	Be
Buh	But
Bin	Being / Been
Boiz	Boys
Broda	Brother
Aw	How
Bi	Be
Buh	But

Bin	Being / Been
Boiz	Boys
Broda	Brother
Beta / Bera	Better
Cuz	Cause / Because
Comman	Come and
Fyn	Fine / Find
Fone	Phone
Gud	Good
Gudnez	Goodness
Gerrout	Get out
Geh	Girl
Hat	Heart
Issa	It's a
Iffa	If I
Is	It's
Issoriat	It's alright
Ish	Issue
Kontinu	Continue
Lawd	Lord
Lemme	Let me
Sowi	Sorry
Tym	Time
Upandan	Up and Down
Warrisdis	What is this?
Wanna	Want to

Apart from the random substitution of sounds as seen in the examples above, there is one consistent way in which the social users substitute the letter [th] with [d]. Some examples are seen below:

Derived Word	Origin
D	The
Dat	That
Dem	Them
Deir	Their/ There
Dey	They
Dis	This/ These
Dos	Those

## **Discussion and Summary of Findings**

The discussion of findings was done based on the way the research questions of this study were presented.

### **Research Question 1: To what extent do the social media influence the English Language?**

It is no doubt that the data above were analysed and showed that the social media has great influence on the people and this has affected the way the people use the English language. The overture of the social media platforms, especially WhatsApp and facebook came with great influence (negative and positive) on the English Language. This influence goes to the extent of alterations and modifications of the English Language. The reasons given for these alterations are that the words are not usually very long because updates follow as further issues on the same story break (Ihejirika et al). This has resulted in the wrong spelling of words in the English language. Unfortunately, word spelling no longer receives serious attention by students (OrluOrlu).

It is easy to assume that new forms of technology (social media) have ‘dumbed’ down the English language (Tenore, 2013). Interestingly, those between the ages of 16-30 have been seen to be the highest users of the social media (Rainie, 2011), and great number of these youths are students. (Moran, Seaman and Tinti-Kane 2012). Agu (2018) agrees that majority of the social media users are the young people, most of whom are students in higher institution.

### **Research Question 2: In what ways do the social media influence our language use?**

Harris (1994) in OrluOrlu (2013) believes that no one can be realistically shielded from the media; it is omnipresent and enduring part of our lives. Though the influence of the social media is both positive and negative, the social media has greatly encouraged wrong spellings, unstructured abbreviations and unnecessary coinages, as well as the introduction of numerals and substitutions.



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**Research Question 3: To what extent has the morphological features of English language been affected by the social media?**

The finding shows that the social media influences the English morphology in so many ways, including the word formation processes. It shows that the social media makes use of acronyms, shortenings, initialisms, contractions, coinages or neologism, borrowing, affixations and compounding numerals, substitutions.

Researchers argue that the impact of social media relies on the fact that they employ mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, create and co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content (Ahlqvist, 2008).

**Conclusion**

It is now clear that the words we use every day in typing on the social media are actually connected to the English Morphology. Although some people see it as innovation, it is gradually creeping into our daily lives, including our education, as writing notes and formal letters are now entangled with the social media languages. People now write official letters using abbreviations, replacing the English letters with numerals, misspelling of words, and unnecessary addition of sounds, among others.

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