SOSYAL MEDYA NEOLOJİSİ

Perim DÖNBAK

English Teacher M.A, Adana/Türkiye, ORCID: 0009-0002-2195-0606, Mail: donbak.perim@gmail.com

Özet

Bu çalışma, sosyal medya neolojizmindeki kelime oluşum süreçlerini belirlemeyi amaçlamıştır. Çalışma verileri Collins Sözlüğü tarafından önerilen 39 sosyal ağ terimini içermektedir. Analiz, Krishnamurthy (2010) tarafından önerilen neolojizm taksonomisi kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Metodolojide, kapsamlı bir analiz sağlamak için nitel ve nicel yaklaşımları birleştiren karma yöntemli bir araştırma türü kullanılmıştır. Veriler sistematik olarak toplanmış ve her bir terimin sosyal ağ bağlamında belgelendiği ve tanımlandığı bir Excel dosyasında düzenlenmiştir. Bulgular, kelime oluşumunun sosyal medya bağlamında en yaygın neolojizm kategorisi olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca, sosyal medya bağlamında eski kelimelerin yeni anlamları da yaratılmıştır. Kelimeler bu özel bağlamda anlamlarında bazı değişikliklere uğramıştır. Çalışma küçük verilerle sınırlıdır; bu nedenle bu bulguları genellemek mümkün olmayacaktır. İleride yapılacak olan çalışmalarda, sözcük oluşum süreci farklı dillere ait belirli bağlamlarda incelenebilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Neolojizm, Sosyal Medya, Dil Evrimi

NEOLOGISM OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Abstract

The present study intended to identify word-formation processes in the neologism of social media. The study data included 39 words of social networking terms suggested by Collins Dictionary. The analysis was performed using the neologism taxonomy proposed by Krishnamurthy (2010). The methodology employed a mixed-methods research design, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis. Data was systematically collected and organized in an Excel file, where each term was documented and defined in the context of social networking. The findings showed that word formation was the most prevalent category of neologism in the social media context. In addition, new meanings of old words were created in the context social media. Words underwent some changes in their meanings in this particular context. The study was limited to small data; therefore, it would not be possible to generalize these findings. Further studies may examine the word formation process in specific cross-linguistic contexts.

Key words: Neologism, Social Media, Language Evolution

1. INTRODUCTION

All languages are dynamic. In this living system, new words constantly enter languages to describe new concepts and technologies and what they mean to us. Conversely, older words continually fall out of use as they decrease cultural significance. New words in the early phase of their life cycle are called neologisms. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a neologism as a new word, usage, or expression. For Newmark (1988, p. 140), neologisms are ''newly coined lexical units or existing lexical units that acquire a new sense''. From these definitions, one could comprehend that a neologism is both a newly-created word and an old word with a new meaning.

Introducing a new word often precedes any social, political, or technological change. The significant impact of digital technology on society has led lexicographers to observe that science and technology are major contributors to the emergence of new words (Crystal, 2002; Gozzi, 1990; Knowles & Elliott, 1997; Van Dyke, 1992). Social networking sites (SNSs) such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube have become popular among English-speaking users who utilize computers and mobile devices to connect and communicate online. This has significantly broadened the range of words in the English language. Gone are the days when ''Apple'' and ''Blackberry'' were solely fruits; even 'tablets' have entered the realm of social media. Lower-case letters are on the rise, the symbol ''@'' is flourishing, the full-stop is being reinterpreted as the ''dot'', and prefixes such as ''e-'', ''techno'', ''tele'', and ''cyber'' are breathing new life into entire trends. The meanings of commonly used words have seen significant changes (such as surf, add, friend, like, follow, spam, post, share, and web), while the English language has grown to include completely new concepts.

With the advent of social media applications, various new words have entered our lives. The neologism of social media has also attracted the interest of scholars. The existing body of literature concentrates on different aspects of neologism, such as translation (Hardini, Setia, & Mono, 2019), linguistic variations (Hamdan & Al-Salman, 2021), semantic change (Jahan & Irfan, 2021), linguistic changes (Asif et al., 2021), and morphological processes (Shahlee & Ahmad, 2022). It is now well-established that studies have revealed different aspects of the neologism of social media. The present study attempts to explore the neologism strategies used in the creation of social media words. Hence, it is assumed that it will contribute to the existing literature. The following research question constitutes the essence of the present study.

• What word-formation processes are used in the creation of social media words?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The influence of social media has brought about many changes in our lives, greatly affecting language development and the creation of new vocabulary. Other works have also investigated various aspects of neologism, focusing on how technology influences language creativity in developing new terms. For example, Nkhata and Jimaima (2020) discussed the processes of new word creation on social media, particularly in Facebook posts, highlighting the structural and contextual features of such neologisms. However, within the growing literature there is a distinct gap in comprehensive analyses that specifically investigate the word formation processes used in neologisms on social media. The current investigations often focus on specific linguistic features without considering how word-formation strategies interact and evolve in different social media contexts. This study aims to fill this gap by systematically analyzing both the principles of neologism and the reuse of existing words, thus contributing to the understanding of how languages evolve in the digital age.

The rise of social media has led to numerous changes in our lives. Social media plays a significant role in the development of new vocabulary. The study of the origins of words falls under the umbrella of neologism. Social media has sparked the creation of numerous new words for neologism. The examination in this literature review delved into the creation and transformation of words in online communication. We reviewed linguistics and social media studies to explore the impact of these emerging words. We aimed to consider how social media influences the formation of these words.

Since social media has created numerous words, several studies have concentrated on this issue. Nkhata and Jimaima (2020) delved into the process of new word creation within social media, particularly within Facebook posts. The study's objective was to understand the influence of technology on language creativity and grammar in online communication. The researchers examined new words' appearance and structure by analyzing a set of Facebook posts. The research highlighted the shortage of studies that specifically examine neologisms in online discussions by building on prior literature about neologisms and social media language. Through a study of Facebook posts, the researchers identified and analyzed new words, aiming to confirm whether these words adhered to traditional word formation rules or displayed novel morphological patterns. Social media platforms were shown in the study to play a crucial role as drivers of linguistic creativity, with users actively involved in inventing and using innovative vocabulary to articulate their thoughts and emotions. The study's findings supported the idea that social media platforms, like Facebook, had a major impact on the emergence of new words, also called neologisms. Their research determined that new words had been introduced over time, emphasizing the creative and productive nature of language in online contexts. The cyber-world was regarded as a place where individuals were actively introducing new words, which became widely accepted in communication.

In another study, Paizullayev and Sak (2024) brought attention to the continuous enrichment of the English language by introducing new words, or neologisms, reflecting the current ''neological boom'' in English. The study looked into how social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram contribute to the evolution of vocabulary in modern English by introducing new words. The research showed that the rise in active users on social media worldwide, reaching 4.2 billion by 2022, sped up the creation and use of new terms and abbreviations online. The study also observed that the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the dependence on virtual platforms for communication, underscoring the transformative role of social media in shaping language usage. In summary, the study emphasized that social networks like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were key platforms for the birth of new words and served as a valuable source for developing neologisms. The neologists delved into linguistic research, crafted dictionaries of neologisms, and scrutinized the usage patterns of recently coined terms in social networks and on the internet. Native speakers were not just the creators and adopters of new language forms but also the ones who popularized them, underlining the significance of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram in professional and personal communication settings. Research on newly coined terms in online platforms demonstrated the key role these innovative words play in modern English, illustrating the changing dynamics of the world and serving a pragmatic function. It was underscored how societal changes, swiftly advancing technologies, and introducing new terms were closely connected, demonstrating how neologisms vividly portrayed the current world.

In a corpus of research articles in neologism, Nelkoska (2020) explored the detailed relationship between social media platforms and the English language, investigating how the prevalent use of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram has changed communication dynamics. In line with linguist David Crystal's estimates of the extensive effects of internet usage on English in the 21st century, the study examined the distinct

linguistic transformations triggered by interactions on social media platforms. The research exposed compelling patterns in the formation and utilization of words by studying a compilation of sixty newly coined terms obtained from primary platforms and supporting sources like online dictionaries and published materials. Remarkable findings highlighted the easy exchange between nouns and verbs, the surprising broadening of pronoun meanings, and the varied word-formation processes apparent in the data. Using mixed-methods research, the study merged qualitative and quantitative analyses to present a complete view of the evolving language influenced by social media. By precisely examining and categorizing the neologisms, the study highlighted the complex mechanisms by which new words enter and become part of the English lexicon. In conclusion, the study provided valuable perspectives on the dynamic evolution of language in digital platforms, emphasizing the significant influence of social media on language creativity and the continuous enrichment of the English language.

Abbasova Yunis (2019) conducted a study on the impact of social media on language use, specifically focusing on the changes brought about by the widespread use of neologisms, abbreviations, acronyms, numeronyms, logograms, and emoticons. The study aimed to explore how these linguistic phenomena influenced the English language, particularly in the context of online communication. A qualitative research design was used, involving 60 participants from diverse fields of study, age groups, and genders. The research involved asking participants about their use of social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp and how they incorporate shortenings such as abbreviations, acronyms, logograms, and emoticons into their online communication was also analyzed.

Behera and Mishra (2013) scrutinized the growing frequency of neologisms in today's English language. Neologisms were newly coined words or expressions that emerged to reflect the evolving nature of language in response to societal changes. Neologisms are fresh linguistic constructs introduced to capture the evolving language landscape in light of societal changes. The article offered a detailed analysis of various new words that have become popular in modern English. The examples provided promoted combinations such as ''Britcom'' (British + Comedy) and ''Bromance'' (Brother + Romance), as well as fusion words like ''Brunch'' (Breakfast + Lunch) and ''Burkini'' (Burqa + Bikini). These inventive linguistic developments effectively transmitted brand-new ideas and phenomena concisely and expressively. The article also explored the pros and cons of including neologisms in everyday speech. Neologisms can help with creativity and communication but could also be barriers to understanding and acceptance for those using the language. The researchers pointed out the necessity of striking a balance between linguistic innovation and preserving clarity and coherence in communication. In closing, the article explored the dynamic aspects of language and the function of neologisms in reflecting and influencing social developments. Through an analysis of neologisms' origins, meanings, and impacts, the article highlighted the importance of linguistic creativity in reflecting modern life and enabling effective communication in a rapidly changing world.

Jahan and Irfan (2021) examined the development of the English language, paying special attention to creating new words in social media. The study explored how computer-mediated communication (CMC) has impacted semantic shifts and the introduction of new words in English. Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter were the main social media platforms selected by the researchers for their analysis. Using purposive sampling techniques, they examined a variety of commonly used terms on these platforms to determine the frequency and nature of newly coined words resulting from CMC. The study uncovered a noticeable transformation in the definitions of different English words, highlighting the role of social media in shaping language usage and communication patterns. The results indicated that the

fast and widespread use of social media has caused new phrases and language developments to appear in English.

The research highlighted how social media plays a crucial role in shaping semantic change and linguistic evolution in English. The researchers demonstrated the ever-changing nature of language interaction in the digital age by examining the development and spread of new words through computer-mediated communication. The results highlighted how external sociolinguistic factors and internal psycholinguistic processes drive linguistic innovation and transformation. The research offered important observations on the evolving meaning of words in the English language, especially in social media communication.

In a recent study examining the emergence of English neologisms on the social media channels TikTok and Twitter, Orolić (2023) explored how these new words came about and were integrated into online conversations. The study highlighted how neologisms are vital in reflecting and shaping modern language trends, especially in a digital context. The participants exhibited a deep understanding of newly formed words and what they represent, underscoring how these linguistic novelties effectively communicate ideas and concepts. In addition, the research examined how the period of English language acquisition impacts the comprehension of newly coined terms, ultimately concluding that there is no significant relationship. Online conversations showed a greater prevalence of neologism usage than offline interactions, perhaps due to the tight-knit online community connections. The researcher's study shed light on the changing language trends in the digital age by examining English neologisms on social media platforms TikTok and Twitter. With a detailed examination of recently created words and how they are used, the study has emphasized the ever-changing characteristics of language, which continuously adjusts to societal changes and technological advancements. The study indicated the substantial role of neologisms in reflecting and shaping modern communication practices, especially in digital platforms.

3. METHODOLOGY

Following a mixed-method research design, this study intends to examine the neologism strategies used in creating social media words. This research design is a complimentary means to the core of research content by supplying answers of adequate quality (Morse & Niehaus, 2009).

3.1 Data Collection

The study's data consisted of 39 social networking terms suggested by Collins Dictionary. The dictionary, published by HarperCollins, has more than 20 billion words and is available at https://www.collinsdictionary.com/word-lists/social-social-networking-terms. The dictionary defines each word in the social-networking context. In the present study, each word and its definition are copied to an Excel file.

3.2 Data Analysis

Examining the terms of social networking was done by utilizing Krishnamurthy's taxonomy (2010) to analyze neologism. It includes three main categories:

•Forming Words: Adding on, coining, joining, and mixing are some of the ways that new words can be made. One way to make a new word is to combine two or more words. To illustrate, the word ''blog'' has emerged with the influence of the culture of sharing diaries on the internet. The word ''blog'' can be seen as an online diary or educational site constantly updated or added. The word ''blog'' combines ''web'' and ''log''.

•Borrowing: Adding words from other languages to our own is another way to make neologisms. When we learn a language, we can use words that don't have clear meanings. By way of illustration, the word ''quarantine'' comes from the Italian word ''quarantena''.

•Lexical Deviation: This is another way that new words are made up. They come up with new words that didn't exist before. People often use neologisms to develop new words to discuss new ideas or events.

The neologism of the social networking terms was decided using the neologism strategies suggested by Krishnamurthy (2010). However, the researcher observed that old words were used with new meanings in our context during the analysis. Therefore, our analysis added a new category, ''old word new meaning'', as a new category of neologism. A total of 39 terms were categorized based on this taxonomy. The etymology of each word was also checked through an online etymology dictionary available at https://www.etymonline.com/. To ensure the reliability of the analysis, the results were checked by a scholar who earned a Ph.D. degree in English linguistics. After all necessary modifications were made based on the suggestions of the scholar, the descriptive statistics were run to calculate the frequencies and percentages of each category of the neologism category. The results were shown in tables by indicating the frequency counts and percentages and illustrated by the examples drawn from the data.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The ultimate aim of this study was to figure out the word-creation processes used in creating social media words. The neologism taxonomy suggested by Krishnamurthy (2010) was employed to do this. Before explaining these processes, it would be better to give an overall distribution of the categories of neologism in social media. Half of the data comprised words in the neologism formation category. In the present study, we added a new category of neologism ''old word, new meaning''. It was observed that many words were used in the social media context with new meanings. This new category included 45 % of the data in our case. Lexical deviation has a small place with a percentage of five.
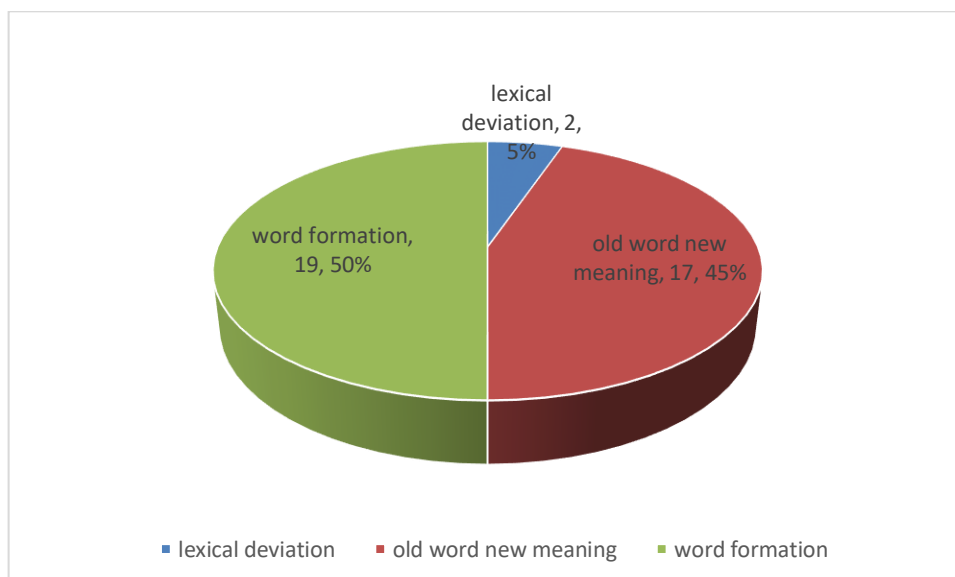

Figure 1. Categories of neologism

Now that we have a general understanding of the categories, we could delve into the categories in detail. Word formation was the most frequently seen category of neologism in our data. To understand the word-formation process, we need to identify the employment of subcategories in this context. Blending is a form of abbreviation that involves combining parts of words. By way of illustration, ''phishing'' is trying to trick people into giving secret information using fake emails or websites. The details are then used to steal people's money or to steal their identity to commit crimes. Another example is that ''sponcon or sponsored content'' is a widely used influencer marketing strategy on social media.

Compounding involves combining two or more words to create a new word, such as friend request and newsfeed. ''Friend request'' allows one to follow someone's online presence. ''Newsfeed'' is a webpage or screen continuously updated to present the most recent news or information. Affixation is a morphological process whereby a group of letters (the affix) is attached to a base or root word to form a new word, namely inbox and unfriend. For instance, the meaning of ''inbox'' as electronic mail was established in 1984, coming from combining in and mailbox. The use of ''in-basket'' for office mail systems can be traced back to 1940, while ''in-tray'' has been used since 1917. Nowadays, it is a space where users can access and communicate through direct messages on a social platform. For instance, since November 2007, the term ''unfriend'' has been used on Facebook to describe the action of removing someone from a friend list. It comes from combining the prefix ''un-'' with the word ''friend''. The term unfriended, meaning friendless, has existed since the time of Shakespeare. In contrast, the term ''unfriend'', meaning an enemy, has been used since the late 13th century primarily in the Scottish context and was still used until the 19th century.

The second category of neologism in the present study was the old word's new meaning. The concept of old words with new meanings explores how words can shift in meaning over time, straying from their historical definitions or contexts. Various factors, such as shifts in societal norms, technological advancements, cultural changes, or linguistic developments, can contribute to this evolution. Due to the language being a running and developing system, words can gain new or extra meanings to adjust to the shifting demands and contexts of communication.

Some old words with new meanings, such as trend and wall, have become part of social media language. Firstly, originating in the late 16th century, the term ''trend'' referred to how rivers or coasts flowed or bent in a specific direction, originating from the Middle English verb ''trend'', which meant to roll about, turn, or revolve. In today's social media platforms, when a topic, hashtag, or keyword gains substantial visibility and engagement, it is termed trending. Secondly, the evolution of the term ''wall'' can be traced back to its Old English origins as ''well'' and Anglian ''wall'', which was originally named to a man-made or natural rampart, dike, earthwork, dam, cliff, or protective fortification encircling a city or building. On social media, the wall is a designated area on a user's profile where the user and their friends can share messages, photos, and content.

The lexical deviation category was the least employed category of neologism. Clark and Gerrig (1983) describe lexical deviation as language that strays from the norm or expected vocabulary and word selection. In some situations, individuals show differences in their understanding, classification, or usage of lexical categories in contrast to the common understanding within a linguistic society. The lexical deviation may show itself through various expressions, including individual understandings of word definitions, conflicting assessments of category belonging, or original methods for labeling items. The variations in language users' understanding and use of words demonstrate the diversity and adaptability of linguistic cognition, showing unique differences in how individuals process and conceptualize language.

There are some examples of lexical deviation, namely direct message and instant message. ''Direct message (DM)'' on social media lets users communicate privately. Unlike public posts, direct messages are specifically shared between the sender and recipient(s) and are not visible to the general audience. ''Instant message (IM)'' on social media platforms provides a real-time communication platform for users. It empowers users to send text messages that are instantly received and can be responded to immediately by the other person.

Overall, word formation, which is a means of creating new words using different techniques, was our study's most common category of neologism. For Hacken and Thomas (2013), the word formation process is how to produce new words based on some lexical or grammatical rules. The English language has a natural acumen for word-formation processes. For instance, using affixes may lead to the creation of numerous words. Many words may be constructed through compounding. The linguistic properties of the English language likely make it easy to create new words through word formation. More interesting than new words, old words have gained new meanings in social media. The present study shows this case, which proves how social media have shaped our lives and language.

5. CONCLUSION

To sum up, this research provides important insights into the process of new lexical derivation in the social media space and highlights the dynamic nature of language re-development in the digital age. In the study, three main word formation processes were defined as forming words, borrowing, adding and each of them reflects contemporary communication practices and plays an important role in the emergence of neologisms. By analyzing a variety of words, we have shown how social media not only influences linguistic creativity, but also reshapes existing vocabulary according to users' needs.

This study aimed to examine the processes that create the words used on social media. The neologism taxonomy proposed by Krishnamurthy (2010) was used to classify the findings. The data revealed that word formation was the most frequently observed category of neologism, accounting for 50% of the total. In addition to these, we introduced a new category, old word, new meaning, which accounted for 45% of the data, to demonstrate how existing words are repurposed in social media contexts.

Also, the findings of this study can have wider implications in different areas. Understanding neologisms in language education and adding contemporary words to the curriculum can enrich language teaching. In addition, this study provides the field of linguistics with a more understandable perspective on the mechanisms of language evolution and word formation. Furthermore, recognizing the impact of social media on language can inform effective online interaction in digital communication.

Additionally, this study highlights the importance of ongoing research on the connection between language and technology. As social media continues to evolve, so too will the nature of the language used on these platforms. Future studies should aim to investigate how developing and changing technology influences language use and the creation of neologisms on social media platforms so that the researchers can better understand the interaction between language, culture, and technology.

6. REFERENCES

Abbasova Yunis, M. (2019). *Language of Social Media: An Investigation of the Changes That Soft Media Has Imposed on Language Use* [Conference Paper]. 9th International Research Conference on Education, Language and Literature, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Asif, M., Zhiyong, D., Iram, A., & Nisar, M. (2021). Linguistic analysis of neologism related to coronavirus. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, *4*(1), 100201. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2021.100201

Behera, B., & Mishra, P. (2013). The Burgeoning Usage of Neologisms in Contemporary English. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *18*(3), 25-35. https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-1832535

Clark, H. H., & Gerrig, R. J. (1983). Understanding old words with new meanings. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, *22*, 591–608. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0022-5371(83)90364-x

Crystal, D. (2003). *The English language* (2nd ed.). Penguin Books.

Gozzi, R. (1990). *New words and a changing American culture*. University of South Carolina Press.

Hardini, F., Setia, E., & Mono, U. (2019). Translation norms of neologism in social media interface. *Lingua*, (*16*), 1.

Hacken, P.T., & Thomas, C. (2013). *The semantics of word formation and lexicalization*. Edinburgh University Press.

Hamdan, H. J., & Al-Salman, S. (2021). The use of Arabic neologisms in social media applications. *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies*, *21*(1).

Jahan, J., & Irfan, H. (2021). Semantic Change in English Language: Social Media Neologisms. *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review*, *5*(2), 638-646. http://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2021(5-II)2.47

Knowles, E., & Elliott, J. (1997). *The Oxford dictionary of new words*. Oxford University Press. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*.

Krishnamurthy, S. (2010). The chutnification of English: An examination of the lexis of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. *Journal of Social and Cultural Studies*, *13*(1), 11–28.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Neologism. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved 2024, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/neologism

Morse, J. M., & Niehaus, L. (2009). *Mixed-method design*. Routledge.

Nelkoska, V. (2020). Neologisms under the influence of social media: Morpho-semantic analysis. *Anglisticum Journal (IJLLIS)*, *9*(10), 13–19. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4437703

Newmark, P. (1988). *The textbook of translation*. Prentice Hall.

Nkhata, L., & Jimaima, H. (2020). Neologisms in Social Media Discourses: A Case of Facebook Posts. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Language and Social Sciences Education*, *3*(2), 67-91.

Orolić, P. (2023). *Linguistic analysis of English neologisms in social media*. [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Osijek.

Paizullayev, Y. N., & Sak, S.T. (2024). The Influence of Social Networks on the Word Formation of Neologisms in the English Language (On the Example of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram*). Scientific Journal Bulletin of Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages Series Philological Sciences*,72(1). https://doi.org/10.48371/PHILS.2024.72.1.015

Plag, I. (2002). *Word-formation in English*. Cambridge University Press.

Shahlee, S., & Ahmad, S. (2022). Morphological Processes of Social Media Neologisms. *Development in Language Studies*, *2*(1), 19–29.

Van Dyke, C. (1992). Old words for new worlds: Modern scientific and technological word-formation. *American Speech*, *67*(4), 383–485.

White, A., Storms, G., Malt, B. C., & Verheyen, S. (2017). Mind the generation gap: Differences between young and old in everyday lexical categories. *Journal of Memory and Language*, *98*, 12–25. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jml.2017.09.004