

A Study of Semantic Changes in the English Vocabulary (Social Media Neologisms)

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Abstract:

The English language, a dynamic system constantly in flux, has undergone significant semantic transformations in the 21st century due to the rise of social media. New words have been created (neologisms), while old words have acquired new meanings. This is particularly concerning for older generations. The study is based on the premise that language develops over time and the emergence of neologisms have negatively affected especially adults of 45 years and above.

Based the prediction, the research therefore aims at investigating the dynamic nature of the English language, specifically focusing on semantic shifts and the emergence of neologisms in the 21st century. The study equally aims at investigating the negative effects of the emergence of neologisms on leaned adults.

This research utilizes a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. A Google form questionnaire that incorporated 11 Closed-ended questions and 10 Open-Ended questions with a blend of 9 exercises was administered to 60 learned adults. Data was collected from Facebook, Tiktok and online dictionaries. The Labovian Sociolinguistics principles, Prototype Theory, and the Functional Load Hypothesis served as the theoretical underpinnings in carrying out this research.

The research identified some frequently used neologisms on social media. The study reveals that the creation of neologisms is influenced by an interplay of socio-linguistics and technological factors. The study reveals that the rapid evolution of language has led to confusion and misunderstanding, particularly among older generation.