



The Online LexiCOIN: Exploring the formation and use of English slang blends

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Abstract:

This thesis aims to explore the manner in which English slang lexical blends are formed and used in computer-mediated communication. The focus is particularly on how blends are used on the social media platforms, Facebook, Twitter and Reddit. Portmanteau words, also referred to as lexical blends, are a common process by which new words are formed and introduced into a language, particularly regarding slang. The introduction of the Internet and its growing availability has acted as a catalyst for the introduction of new slang words to the English language, especially since language usage on the Internet is not moderated in the same way that printed texts have previously been. This allows linguists to study the changes in word creation and word formation as it is progressing, using the tools that have thus far been unavailable.

Since there is a lack of consensus among linguists, this thesis explores the various definitions of the term ‘blend’. While substantial research efforts have been made to categorize and systematize blends, the blends that appear online and enter colloquial exchanges are hardly ever formally recorded and analyzed in detail. The aim of the study is to conduct a thorough investigation of online dictionaries and sources for lexical blends, and 220 of them are assembled in a list in the appendix. These were analyzed in terms of the formation process according to Lehrer's taxonomy. The investigation consists of 12 highlighted examples analyzed in-depth, which are classified as the ‘final sample’. The ‘final sample’ showcases the variety of different blend structures, domains and social media sources (Facebook, Twitter, Reddit) that have been consulted.

Blends online are typically formed via merging of two words into one single word, usually with some degree of overlap. It is also common to create online slang blends from words that are already in slang usage. The thesis also concludes with the three main motivating factors as to why language users create new blends, recognizing the most commonly used online domains for lexical blend proliferation, and the potential of these domains to inspire further blend proliferation. These factors include effectiveness, or blends that are used online for the sake of quick delivery of information or for a quick punchline in humorous exchanges. The second factor listed is creativity and entertainment, the difference being that creativity is an aspect most commonly user-generated, while entertainment is more likely to be mass-produced for vast audiences. The final factor is the creation of identity online, or establishing a brand, which is commonly done by constructing a blend that would attract attention and serve the purpose of further distinguishing one's online presence.

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1. Introduction

The proposed thesis will inquire into the formation and usage of internet slang words created via the formation process known as *blending*. This thesis aims to investigate how the meaning of blends (also known as portmanteaus; Cambridge Dictionary, 2022) in slang is established and maintained via online communication. The thesis aims to examine how this specific trend in the creation of neologisms affects language and habits of its online speakers. Danilović-Jeremić notices that “corpus-based studies of blends associated with particular genres in which blends proliferate, such as newspaper headlines, advertisements, or titles, are almost non-existent” (2021:55). While slang has received considerable research attention and online communication is constantly examined and monitored by the contemporary linguistic community (Mattiello, 2018), the process of creating and using blends in online slang remains under-researched, hence the point of departure for this thesis.

Understanding the coinage and usage of new blends can offer insights into the processes that innovate online communication. In order to identify modern slang blends, three online dictionaries were consulted: Urban Dictionary, Dictionary.com, and The Online Slang Dictionary. Social media platforms have had a large impact on our everyday communication practices (Allen, 2017), so posts containing 12 of the identified blends were collected from three of the largest platforms: Facebook, Twitter and Reddit.

1.1 Research questions

This study involves investigating two research questions, which are as follows:

RQ1: How are portmanteau words being introduced through slang to the English language?

RQ2: How are these words used and maintained on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit?

Following these research questions, the goal of this thesis is to identify the slang terms that belong to the subcategory of blends and analyze the ways in which they are used and maintained in online settings. Although this aspect of language development has received limited research attention, computer-mediated communication (CMC) has had a large impact on communication practices. This thesis, therefore, seeks to gain knowledge of how new words are introduced through slang to the English language via Computer-Mediated

Communication. Through establishing channels whereby more or less anyone can communicate with a public audience, Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) has prompted the creation of a large number of new words in the English language (Liu & Liu, 2014), constantly generating new lexical variations and meanings under the network environment. The first research question specifically focuses on how new lexical blends are formed and whether there is an established path to lexical blend formation. The analysis performed in the results elaborates on the formation processes that typify the collected sample of blends.

The second research question involves looking at how the meaning of the identified blends is established and maintained by internet users in online discourse communities on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Reddit. The importance of studying internet blends also reflects the need of speakers to develop new expressions driven by a variety of reasons. While some blends are formed for the sake of, for example, entertainment, others reflect more complex communicative needs for which no adequate solution can be found in the existing corpus. By investigating various types, definitions, and uses of blends in a virtual environment, this thesis will present the processes of formulating blends and demonstrate how these blends are used on social media platforms.

Blends that have come up due to extensive usage of the Internet and social media have only been mentioned sporadically, and few studies have investigated the connection between the lexical category of blends being influenced by the unwritten rules of cyberspace (Cook, 2011; Šomanová, 2017). This study takes a qualitative approach to investigating how lexical blends are created and used across the internet. It intends to showcase blends as a product of word creativity and the communicative needs of speakers, their desire to creatively contribute to the lexicon by adding this innovation, as well as the accidental creations inspired and coined on an impromptu basis.

The motivating factor for this thesis developed as a response to the everyday use of online content creation tools to make meaning. While digital literacy initially meant obtaining technical skills that would be required to successfully seek, create and communicate information via personal computer, the complex nature of those communication practices has recently expanded enormously (Groom & O'Connell, 2018). Procházka (2014:53) points out that, "the Internet has introduced new online reading comprehension skills that redefine the traditional concept of literacy". One of the more notable examples that I encountered during the online dictionary inquiry was the example of 'computeracy', a lexical blend that merges the notion of *computer* and *literacy* (Wiktionary, 2022).

The use of images, designs, video and audio files in everyday communication has added several other layers of complexity (Jenkins, 2009). The broader social structure influences the messages we send and receive. Aside from the historical, political, ethical and cultural contexts, we have now witnessed the way that a digital environment also influences messages and opens its contents up for interpretation. In fact, “citizen-producers employ media literacy competence in their consumption, understanding, and creation of messages” (Allen, 2017:969).

These new practices have potentially opened up the more traditional means of communication, such as physical text, to the interpretation and modification of digital text. Finneran (1996:ix) describes the discrepancy between a printed book and digital text by emphasizing the fixed, linear and non-interactive nature of a printed text that is “essentially confined to a single medium”. This stands in stark contrast to the multimedial computer screen and the way in which texts are created, preserved, disseminated, and studied. Due to how the sudden expansion of blend creation and usage online coincides with the expansion of the definition of digital literacy, there is reason to assume that the literacy expansion somehow might have affected the way that we perceive meaning and the form and structure of language. Lee and Barton state that, “technology-related changes in life are embedded in broader social changes. Contemporary life is changing in many ways which impact on language and communicative practices” (2013:2).

The research conducted on the basis of such terms and conditions is expected to corroborate the perception that the formation of such neologisms is prompted by the communicative patterns of the speakers, as well as their humor and lexical creativity. This thesis aims to explore what those patterns and motifs are more thoroughly and attempt to categorize them in the subsequent chapters.

2. Theory

This chapter presents the theoretical underpinnings for the present study of how lexical blends are formed and used. Firstly, the chapter defines relevant terms and reviews previous studies related to language change. This includes the explanation of factors that normally drive language change and their effect on lexical blends. An important aspect of blends that are revised here is the types of formations that are most likely to be used in order to create blends. Secondly, this section explores the etymological background and how it can affect word creation, as well as showcasing examples from the digital era and their development.

The next section concerns blends and lists the most relevant definitions representing the spectrum of interpretations of contemporary linguists regarding this subject. In addition, the term ‘slang’ is defined in the next subsection. This definition is particularly tailored to the more specific domain of internet slang. This is followed by an overview of previous studies that have touched upon the topics of etymology, neologisms, and blends. Finally, the subsection on Computer-Mediated Communication explains the modes of communication that are available online, the leverages and obstacles of online communication, and the role of social media in the revolution of language. The last section presents a summary of the theory chapter.

2.1 Language Change

“One of hardest notions for a human being to shake is that a language is something that *is*, when it is actually something always *becoming*. ” (McWhorter, 2016:8)

All aspects of language have the potential to change. In the case of grammar and phonology, for example, the change is more obscure and tends to occur over longer periods of time. However, the aspects of lexis and semantics are among those where the change is more evident, instant, and progressive (Bybee, 2015). The modern linguistic subfields abound in empirical evidence to support their perspective on language change, particularly historic and the branch of sociolinguistics. Although the evidence of language change presents itself in more obvious instances of everyday language, the processes that contribute to that change often have more substantial and complex roots, which is the ultimate inquiry of this study.

In order to illustrate just how quickly words are being created and meanings are shifted, take the currently polysemic word ‘thread’ as an example. A ‘thread’ might embody one very

specific notion for the generation that is growing up today, likely one that relates to the meaning of an online discourse topic, for example, a Reddit thread. Social media has used the term ‘thread’ to mark and discuss niche topics even before the platform Reddit became one of the most visited online social sharing platforms (Small Business, 2022). However, looking back, there is a substantial new development in the way this word has been used in the past few decades. The older notion of the word would pertain to something less abstract, while the immense digital input has caused the newer, virtual definition of the word to become perhaps even more prominent than the original. The original meaning of the word ‘thread’, of course, relates to sewing and is composed of filaments (Merriam-Webster, 2022). Hence, language evolution shows continual progress among speakers whose notions of certain concepts and meanings change within one lifetime.

These semantic changes, alongside phonological and grammatical alterations, are the essence of language change. Merriam-Webster dictionary (2023) explains that the most common influx of new words is achieved through borrowing, shortening, or clipping, or via processes of back-formation, blending, or acronymy. Some other words are created through a functional shift (e.g. converting a noun into a verb), transfer of personal or place names (e.g. *silhouette* from the name of Étienne de Silhouette), combining word elements, folk mythology, or onomatopoeic imitation of the sounds in nature. Occasionally words appear spontaneously and are characterized as literary or creative coinages (e.g. Google). While some of the material in the ‘candidate blends’ list can be attributed to more than one of these groups, the main focus of this thesis are words that seem to have been intentionally blended and posted on social media.

Another perspective on language change is given by Bybee (2015, xv). She introduces her perspective on language change by stating that: “Change reveals the nature of the cognitive processes and patterns used in speaking and listening, and shows us what ordinary language users can make out of the material they are given to work with”. This definition of language change is the point of departure for this thesis and, to an extent, classifies and describes the malleable and ever-evolving nature of a uniquely human product that is language.

2.1.1 Factors that drive language change

There are a variety of factors that drive language change. While some languages, such as Finnish, remain sporadically affected and largely unaltered by language globalization currents, English is strongly affected by global factors and hence pliable on a much larger scale (Hickey, 2003). Global factors influence languages on smaller or larger scales, which often depend on the language's geographical placement, as well as their placement in the language family tree.

Languages are influenced by traveling, cultural exchanges and assimilation, advances in education and technology, as well as societal differences. There are examples in English of words that have been affected by travels (e.g. *fjord* - Norwegian, OED, 2022), cultural exchanges (e.g. *sushi* - Japanese, OED, 2022), and technological breakthroughs (e.g. *malware* - French/English compounding, OED, 2022). Dictionaries get regularly updated in order to keep up with the influx of new words. Newly formed constructions can be introduced to the language by various processes such as compounding, blending, acronymy, affixation, and clipping. For example, the process of acronymy usually involves using a series of (initial) letters in place of the full phrase (“FOMO” - fear of missing out; Your Dictionary, 2022), which reads as “*fomo*“, a completely new and independent word. Some other words can be combined via the process of blending, such as *glamping*, which unites the two notions – “glamorous” and “camping” (Schaub, 2022).

It is also evident that the format of specific channels can greatly impact the outcome of one’s textual output. To illustrate with an example what will later be fully analyzed, a standard Facebook post will contain between 100 and 200 characters that the algorithm will recommend for better engagement rates. The character limit of Facebook is 477 before the post is given a “see more” section (Gessler, 2022). Although it is possible to write a post of any length on Facebook, users may want to delimit their post to 477 characters in order to gain more traction. Furthermore, shorter posts of 0-50 words are typically more successful (Hutchinson, 2022). The governing algorithm does this in order to maintain fully accessible and easily consumable content, which then prompts creators to adhere to an unwritten rule of keeping the content concise, straightforward, and at the same time likely to stand out. These characteristics then perfectly align with the inherent nature of blends, which Lehrer refers to as “eye-and-ear-catching” words (Lehrer, 2003:371).

Another observation that the idea for this thesis is based on is that the newly-coined urban lexicon is steadily making its way into the mainstream through social media channels such as Instagram, Reddit, Facebook, Youtube, Tiktok, Twitter, etc. Even long before the Internet had

entered into the mainstream, Algeo (1980:264) noticed that, “words come into being, change their uses, and pass out of existence far more readily than either sounds or grammatical constructions. Today especially, new words are easily made, and because of the marvels of mass communication they are quickly disseminated.” A myriad of examples of newly-coined catchphrases have found their place in scripts of popular contemporary TV shows, which made this kind of word creation method a very relevant one that continues to spread in various domains of everyday life (Danilović-Jeremić, 2021:65). In relation to the entertainment industry, more and more people each day consume popular culture, and Tisdell and Thompson (2005:4) note that scholars are trying to bring attention to teaching about critical media literacy.

2.1.2 The impact of pop culture

Another contributor to the ever-expanding corpus of the English language is the consumption of popular culture during the 20th and 21st centuries. The term “culture” requires an explanation in order to be applied in this thesis. There is a distinction between the ‘big C’ culture and the ‘small c’ culture. The ‘big C’ culture or *large* culture as Holliday refers to it, has to do with “prescribed ethnic, national and international entities” (Holliday, 1999:237-238). This culture is also “taken as the basic unit in influential cross-cultural management studies” (Hofstede, 1991, cited in Holliday, 1999). In contrast, a small culture is attaching culture to the inner workings of small social groupings or activities. Holliday explains that a small culture approach attempts to liberate culture from ethnicity and national notions along with the stereotypes that they may carry (1999:1). The works of popular culture and the mainstream works of art, music, film or literature that are mentioned in this thesis are understood as belonging to the ‘big C’ culture.

According to Browne, popular culture represents the “*culture of the people*” (Philosophy Now, 2022). Popular culture is described as mainly the culture of the modern West, further propagated through literature, fashion, radio, television, and all forms of art. The general society has recently had an opportunity to also develop its own cyberculture (Crossman, 2022). The ‘pop culture content’ that grew to become so vast towards the end of the 20th century only got more disseminated with the help of mass media and smartphone technologies (Allen, 2017:972). While it has historically been a small elite that has moderated language change, popular culture has put language change into the hands of a larger demographic. This was due to the fact that literacy teachings had only become available to the general public in the late 1700s and early 1800s (Kern, 2000). The notion of pop culture affecting language use and vocabulary has been thoroughly explored in academia in the past two decades. To illustrate, pop culture plays a

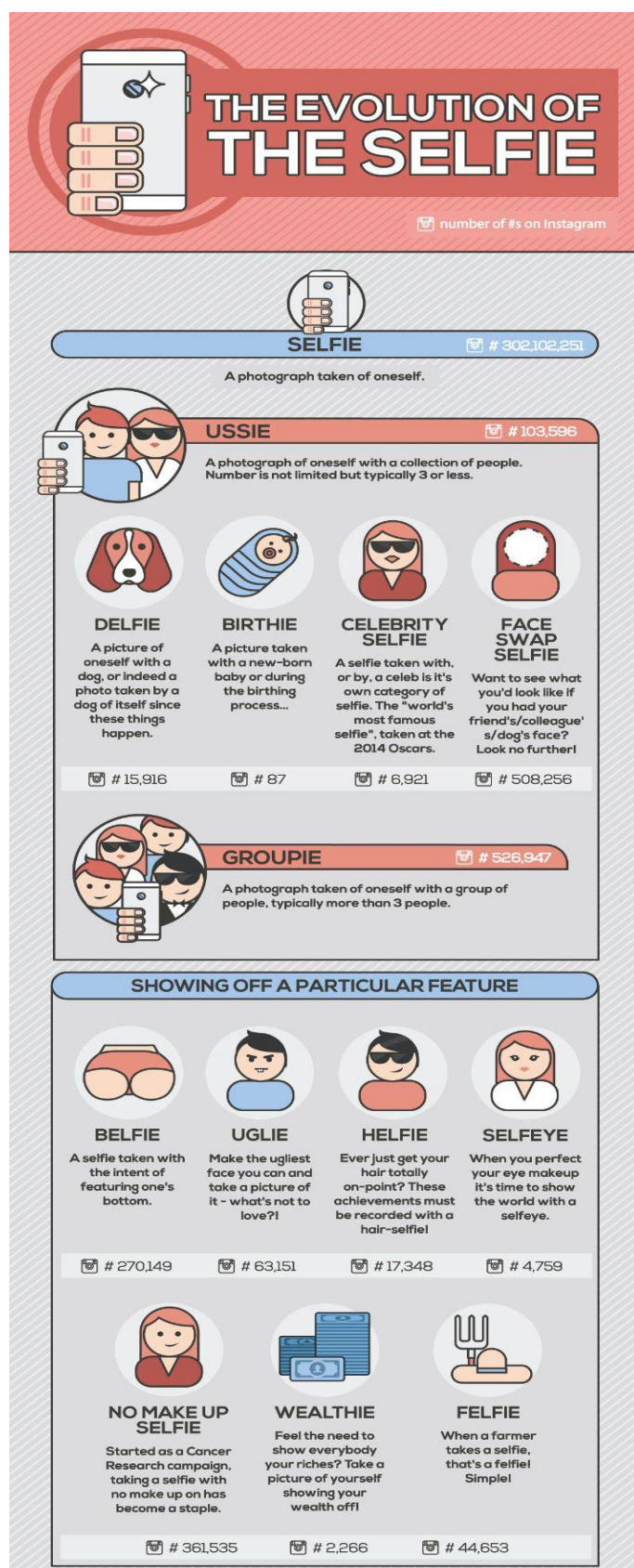
prominent role in language learning for Japanese learners of English (Murray, 2014), and is used in various approaches to teaching English (Liu & Lin, 2017).

This thesis will focus on changes that can probably be linked to three main motifs: entertainment, efficiency, and the identity of social media users. Using hybrid forms has often been seen as a method for attention-grabbing, whether the motivation is to be humorous, concise, or to contribute to language in one's own particular way (Mattiello, 2019:15-19, Renner, 2015:131). Lehrer (2007) explores attention-grabbing as a concept that drives word creation. Novel words, she explains, are likely to attract more attention in a world where all sorts of stimuli surround us. Lehrer (2003:371) also states that the reason for shortening some forms comes from what is known as Zipf's Law (Hosch, 2022), whereby frequently used forms tend to get shortened for the convenience of use. She identifies several acronyms, clippings, and a few blends that are shortened for efficiency. However, new blending trends cannot always be linked to language efficiency.

Another motif for using blends appears in instances where blends are likely to be used in building an identity on social media, for example. There are blends such as *brogrammer* (bro+programmer), *cybrarian* (cyber+librarian) and *incel* (involuntary+celibate) that depict specific notions related to careers or lifestyle types with robust online communities (Bitsch, 2022). Mattiello (2019:21) reports that one of the main motivation factors that produces blends has to do with covering "a conceptual or lexical gap in the language, or to produce a stylistic or textual effect."

2.2 Etymology

Language change is often investigated by tracing a word's origins, or its etymology. Durkin (2011:2) defines etymology as "the investigation of word histories". This includes investigating how words enter the language, how they have developed in meaning and form, as well as tracing the changes in spelling and pronunciation. This thesis focuses on how the words enter the language. More specifically, this study relies on etymology to pinpoint different manners by which neologisms enter the English language through the use of virtual platforms.


Image 1. Image showing the evolution of the term *selfie*

Mattiello (2017) relies on Green (1991) and Algeo (1991) when addressing the term and notices that “lexicographers, indeed, tend to use the labels ‘neologism’ and ‘new word’ interchangeably in the titles of their dictionaries“. She continues to make a distinction in common usage within the linguistic community, where a ‘new word’ is seen as an umbrella term for any newly-coined words, but the term ‘neologism’ stands for specific words that are intended to spur language enrichment (2017:24).


In many cases, present-day neologisms are formed through compounding or blending (Lehrer, 2003:371). The Global Language Monitor (2022) reports that as many as 5,400 words enter the English language per year. In comparison, William Shakespeare is credited as contributing around 2,000 words to the English language (Mabillard, 2022).

The scholars’ consensus seems to be that a large number of modern-day neologisms can be attributed to mass media and the Internet. Lehrer (2003) observes that this phenomenon is associated with new things, processes, and concepts that require names.


AFTER AN EVENT




AFTER SEX SELFIE
This fairly self explanatory evolution of the selfie is taken post-coitus.
12,608




HEALTHIE
Not to be confused with a heffie, this is a picture of oneself enjoying a healthy lifestyle, be it at the gym or eating a salad.
31,295




I WOKE UP LIKE THIS SELFIE
A photograph showing off ones beauty immediately after waking from slumber.
1,409,149



DRELFIE
A selfie taken whilst drinking alcohol is referred to as a dreffie, a drunk-selfie.
1,887




HOTDOGS OR LEGS SELFIE
Often taken when on holiday, this selfie highlights the striking similarity between tanned legs and hotdogs.
73,833




SPACE SELFIE
A selfie taken with the small requirement of space exploration, but having been taken by man and machine alike.
3,208

ALTERNATE METHODS


MISCELLANEOUS



DRONIE
Got a drone and need a use for it? Take a picture of yourself from the sky!
18,372




YOUIE
Essentially the antithesis of a selfie, a youie is a picture of somebody else, remarkably similar to a traditional photograph.
2,356




SHELFIE
Take a picture of your bookshelf showcasing your collection of literature and you've got yourself a shelfie!
367,319

DANGER SELFIES


Despite this particular section evolving from the selfie, we have included them separately, as taking part in these will inevitably prevent the chances of any future evolutions! DO NOT ENGAGE IN THESE!




HIJACK SELFIE
Apparently this is a thing - getting a selfie with the person that has recently hijacked a plane.




"ROOFER" SELFIE
Illegally climbing to the top of the tallest buildings in the world just to take a selfie, a.k.a. roofing is not a good idea.



DANGEROUS ANIMAL SELFIE
Being chased by a dangerous and life-threatening animal is not the time to take a picture of yourself!



CLIFF EDGE SELFIE
Cliff edges do not become any safer by taking a picture on them - stay away!



WEAPON SELFIE
Unless you are a weapons expert you should not be handling them, let alone taking selfies with them!

It is often desirable that the newly-formed terms are familiar-sounding terms, which may be why blends have become so common. This is often labeled as word formation by analogy. (Mattiello, 2019).

One process by which new words can enter the language is via lexical modification. This change happens by slightly modifying existing words in order to create new words (e.g. *selfie*).

Certain social phenomena, such as the 'selfie', are a consequence of digital breakthroughs and advancements that have become widely available to all in a short period of time (Lakshmi, 2015). These amateur self-portraits are linguistically fascinating as the genre of 'taking a photo of oneself' has simply morphed into a 'selfie', by shortening the phrase and adding a common suffix '-ie' (Shields, 2001).

The first documented use of this term happened in a 2002 video clip shot by Nathan Hope (Cole, 2022). Since then, the selfie culture has boomed to include its own subgenres of self-portraits, with their own eponyms. Correspondingly, these subgenres have also grown to have an '-ie' suffix, creating a profusion of terms that are related to the original term 'selfie' by way of rhyme and context (Pek, 2014).

A website dedicated to the creation of infographics (Visualistan, 2022) has produced a visual aid that represents a comprehensive overview of selfie culture. The examples such as ‘ussie’, ‘groupie’, ‘belfie’, or ‘delfie’ encapsulate the notion of taking a selfie with an addition of another person, group, animal, or in order to highlight a particular physical feature. These derivatives of what is originally a lexical modification have become metadata tags, a user-generated hashtag that enables data cross-referencing on social media platforms such as Twitter or Instagram, in order to access content more easily (Hashtags, 2022).

Lexical modifications in this case allow us to observe and understand how users of the platforms create nonce-formations that can then also be used as hashtags. These nonce-formations, or *occasionalisms*, are coinages that are created for a specific occasion, such as an event, a social media campaign, or a limited-edition product, for example, *foobar*, *galumph* and *blicket* (Wiktionary, 2022, 2022, 2022). On rare occasions, these nonce-formations generate enough traffic to be adopted into mainstream language. The prime example of an occasionalism and also a blend that was adopted into common everyday usage is the word *chortle*, defined as an act of chuckling while snorting (OED, 2022).

2.3 Blends

The lexical category of blends is a somewhat disputed one. According to Beliaeva, “properties of blend words made it difficult to provide an exhaustive description of blends as a word formation category or even define what a blend is” (2019:5). Lehrer (2007:116) describes the phenomenon of blends as the “underlying compounds which are composed of one word and a part of another, or two parts of two (and occasionally three) other words.” Cook (2011:846) distinguishes blends from other lexical categories as words that are “formed by combining a prefix of one source word with a suffix of another“.

Due to their differences in structure, blends have yet to be officially defined, with every dictionary and scholar providing their own unique definition regarding the category of blends. Some scholars (Dressler, 2000; Bauer, 2004; Bat-El, 2006; Tomaszewicz, 2008; Ralli & Xydopoulos, 2013) adopted separate and very strict interpretations of the category of blends, deciding to exclude certain features or manifestations of overlapping in complex words, creating a distinction between ‘proper blends’ and those whose nature does not qualify them for the membership in said category (Renner, Maniez, Arnaud, 2013:4). Bat-El notes that the category of blends is delimited to those words where only the inner edges of the two are truncated (2006:66). This emphasis serves to distinguish blends from the category of clipped compounds,

where the right edges are truncated (e.g. The Union of Benelux - *Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg*). Among others, this matter of contention on the morphological status of blends is what prompted Beliaeva to revisit this category of ‘fuzzy boundaries’ (2019).

There have, however, been attempts to categorize lexical blends according to formation processes. These processes by which blends are created have been systematized by Lehrer in the article *Blendalicious* (2007), in which blends are considered from the viewpoint of their structure, phonology, orthography and examined potential morphological productivity of blend constituents. Lehrer continues to explain splinter productivity, where a blend constituent becomes so common in other blend creations that it assumes the status of a morpheme, and behaves linguistically like a combining form (2007:132). The focus of that chapter is on the structure of blends, and the different formation types. These formation types sometimes rely on the phonology or the spelling of a source word.

According to Lehrer, there are four types and two subtypes of morphological structure in regard to blends. The combining process for *mocktails* (mock+cocktails), which features a full phonetic overlap of one or more phonemes, and belongs to type 4, differs from *dickstraction* (dick+distraction), where the interjecting element *-ck* takes the precedent and defines this blend as a subtype of the same group, and includes a discontinuous element with partial overlap. The full account of all types is presented in a table with examples in the Results section (see Methodology 3.4.1 for a full overview of Lehrer’s taxonomy).

Other than the perspective of morphology, lexical blends have been an object of scrutiny in fields such as pragmatics, psycholinguistics, phonology and prosody, as well as an object of various cross-linguistic studies (Renner, Maniez & Arnaud, 2013). The authors of this review of lexical blending observed that “in order to accommodate many diverging views, one may resort to adopting a prototypical approach and consider that the most inclusive definition to be retained and that the above characteristics are not to be taken as defining features, but as typicality features” (2013:4).

2.3.1 Defining blends

Lexical blends are created by merging or overlapping two distinct words, or splinters of words (Lehrer, 2007), that being introduced together form a new meaning or encompass a specific, usually dichotomous phenomenon. Slang words are widely used and continuously introduced into English via the Internet (Barrett, 2006), and modern slang words are most commonly formed via clipping, blending, coinage, or compounding (Qin, 2017).

For the sake of this thesis, the author adopts a hybrid definition for this lexical formation - blends are often described as a compound created by clipping or overlapping two distinct, recognized words (Beliaeva, 2019:1). This type of word formation combines two words and typically makes use of their original meanings. Because of its versatility, the process of blending words this way has become popular on the Internet, where freedom of expression has led to frequent instances of newly-formed blends. Another term has emerged recently denoting the same phenomenon - *frankenwords*. This in itself is a blend created by merging the first part of the name *Frankenstein*, referring to Mary Shelley's novel, and the word *word* itself.

Amalgamations such as blends and their constituent parts have been referred to in research using many different terms. The phenomenon was often referred to in research as *portmanteaus*, which gradually faded from the academic register and became replaced by the term 'lexical blends'. In addition to that, the discrepancies in nomenclature also stem from a few distinct views on the linguistic nature of this concept. By the same token, the proliferation of blends is, at times, understood as a word creation, and at other times, a word formation process. Although there is no doubt that blending is a "major process by which new lexical material can be created" (Connolly, 2013:3), the issues with word formation arise when a predictable mechanism of word formation is needed to delimit this category. What cannot be disputed, however, is that "blends are remarkably diverse in their formal structure" (Beliaeva, 2019:2).

On the other hand, Lehrer and Mattiello have treated blends as a separate lexical category, using distinct terms in order to showcase the formation processes. They adopted the labels such as *splinter*, in previous research known as *truncations* or *fracto-lexemes*, as well as a grouping method that helps categorize the individual blends based on their morphology. This study will adhere to the categorizations and terminology used in the latest Mattiello (2017, 2019) and Lehrer studies (2003, 2007) to carefully examine the habits of online speakers when forming and using lexical blends.

2.4 Previous research on etymology, neologisms, and blends

The relevant linguistic literature has been mostly concerned with the morphology of blends, prosody, and phonology, as well as the neurological processing of novel blends. Blends have been dissected through the lenses of various linguistic disciplines and frameworks. The subdiscipline of psycholinguistics, cognitive and computational linguistics are particularly relevant to this thesis, alongside the morphological accounts of the nature of blends. Renner, Maniez, and Arnaud (2013:5) refer to these lenses as "disciplinary vantage points", onto which

the methodological approaches (e.g. experimental, corpus-based, etc.) and theoretical frameworks are applied.

In addition to this, the authors of the 2013 collection of articles on lexical blending Renner, Maniez and Arnaud have observed that many researchers resort to adopting a “prototypical approach” regarding defining blends. They often consider the most inclusive definitions to be the ultimate choice, somewhat perpetuating the existence of ‘fuzzy boundaries’ in literature and many diverging accounts of blends throughout disciplines. The retrospection also concludes that, on account of their unpredictability, the lexical category of blends has been somewhat unfairly treated, often considered as a product of word creation rather than a word-formation process (2013:8). Connolly (2019:3) concurs that blends have often been “considered as a peripheral morphological process“, citing Kemmer and Lehrer. Moreover, Connolly characterizes this lexical domain as an open one, where additions are rather easy to occur, compared to the closed categories of language, such as grammar for example, where changes occur more gradually and diachronically (2019:2).

Lehrer (2007), Mattiello (2019), and Jurado (2019) have all used a morphological perspective, adopting various frameworks. Jurado’s (2019) account on the nature and productivity of splinters largely relies on Lehrer’s works from 2003 and 2007. In particular, this study recounts the theoretical framework and introduces the views of conceptual blending, with a focus on *-gasm*, which is characterized as a highly productive splinter. As briefly mentioned before, Lehrer (2007) also discussed the productivity of certain splinters such as *-(a)holic*, and *-thon*.

Directly related to this topic is the topic of lexical innovation and adoption, further tested by Lehrer (2003) and Connolly (2019) by means of experiments measuring psycholinguistic response. Both Lehrer and Connolly have attempted experiments in order to discern the psycholinguistic properties of the proliferation of blends, and how quickly a human brain is able to process them. Connolly (2013) also tackles the innovation and adoption of English blends through experiments aimed at understanding the sources of blends and whether the participants would agree on meanings. The conclusions of this experiment note that there are various factors that influence speakers’ decisions on whether to adopt or reject an innovative form. Certain meanings are less accessible, Connolly concludes, which hinders the adoption process of particularly polysyllabic blends.

From the viewpoint of word formation, the morphological predictability of blends has been examined by Beliaeva (2019) and Mattiello (2019), in addition to Renner (2015) who takes into account the notion of wordplay. More recently, there have been attempts made at

understanding how language change is affected by the new global phenomenon through identifying blends that have originated as a response to it. Samigoullina (2020) chose to tackle the incursion of blends into the English language following the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. She states that the global phenomenon has inspired many coinages and neologisms, but a notable portion of those are blends. She dissects these covid-related blends and categorizes them from the aspect of word formation processes. The results of her paper list 73 different covid-related blends, and 6 different formation types. Akin to her study and unlike Bat-El's view on the nature of blends, this thesis follows a broad approach to lexical blends citing that "blending [is] a more extensive category that comprises a variety of lexemes, the distinguishing feature being the truncation of some linguistic (phonetic or orthographic) material from one or both source lexemes" (Samigoullina, 2020:30).

The (2003) study by Lehrer had the goal of understanding how readers process novel blends in the English language. In her bid to change the ingrained attitude toward lexical blends and word formation in neologisms, Lehrer performed a series of experiments with the goal of pinpointing the lexical retrieval time of the two source words that constitute a blend and their comprehension. In the conclusion, Lehrer points out that "neologistic creations have become so common that speakers of English have developed strategies to process them quickly and automatically" (2003:379). The conclusion of the 2003 study is similarly somewhat underwhelming as Connelly's conclusion. The experiments showed a slow response when identifying the two target words that make up a blend. However, Lehrer insists that the nature of blends is such that the automatic response would be somewhat undesirable. The linguistic appeal is appreciated more when consumers of products, for example, take the time to examine and savor the puzzle that is presented to them in the form of a novel blend (Lehrer, 2003:380).

Lehrer's (2007) study focuses on the specific lexical category of blends and their proliferation in the recent decades. Lehrer acknowledges the challenges of the lexical category of blends, maintaining a stance that traditional morphology textbooks treat lexical blending as 'marginal and uninteresting'. However, in this chapter, she intends on redefining blends, she examines their conceptual background and proposes a new categorization in terms of blend formation. Lehrer lists the proposed groups (e.i. the taxonomy used in this study) and follows it by discussing the phonology of blends. The crucial part of any blend is its constituents, also known as splinters, which are further assessed in this journal. Lehrer refers to her previous studies that were focused on experiments processing novel blends and contexts that facilitate blend identification. Following the lists of domains that blends tend to occur in, she concludes that these formation tactics should no longer be considered marginal (2007:132). Blends have

increased in frequency, however, the genres that blends are most commonly found in, according to Lehrer, are those that rely on seeking the public's attention (2007:133). These studies have stepped outside of the constraints of the views formerly held by linguists.

Another study with similar goals, but somewhat different methodology and viewpoints is the 2019 data-driven study by Mattiello. The goals of the study included recognizing the contexts or registers within which blend formation takes place, the intentions behind creating new blends, the description of the 'attributive'¹ type of blends, and potential combining forms that could follow attributive blends. Mattiello chooses to focus on the emergence of new splinters, pragmatic context, and the frequency of new English blends by testing a sample of 245 items. Mattiello (2019) used qualitative and quantitative methods in order to form a corpus. The samples were drawn from the online version of the Oxford English Dictionary (OED, 2022), through an advanced search method. The dictionary revealed a strong increase in the number of new blends formed in the past half a century.

This paper concludes that the formation of blends could not be described as transparent and that, as a category, blends will likely not fit the established morphological modules and theories. However, she listed the results as clearly in favor of the increasing importance of blends in particular domains, aside from the already established contexts, such as marketing or entertainment. Mattiello (2019:23-24) summarizes that "blending is growing as a word-formation process, with several new blends that are lexicalized, included in the OED, and attested in corpora of English with low to high frequency."

Cook (2011) offered another perspective on the creation and usage of novel English blends, through the lens of social media. The goal of the study is especially relevant to the goal of this thesis, as it also aims to sort through an abundance of online textual content (in this instance found on Twitter) in search of lexical blends with the help of simple computational processing, with the same intention of addressing those forms that are in use, but have not been recorded in dictionaries. Using methods such as observation of public domain posts on Twitter and recognizing corpus patterns, Cook investigated computational lexicography, word formation and distribution of blends online.

This study (2011) features a sample group of 976 *candidate* lexical blends, recovered through the Twitter Streaming API (application programming interface). The distinction that is made acknowledges that the raw data collected online on the basis of observation and keyword

¹Mattiello explains the notion of attributive blends as: "Attributive blends exhibit an "endocentric relation" with their head [Bat-El 2006: 67], which therefore has a greater semantic weight than the first component (i.e. the modifier)." (2019:2-3)

sampling has the potential to, once analyzed, fall under a different lexical modification category. The methods discovered that 57% of all recorded candidate blends are judged by the researcher to be blends, and “have an interpretation corresponding to their respective candidate source words” (2011:850). Cook considered the usage of the recovered blends, documenting the range of creativity, and tried to identify which of them are in regular usage. Over 7,000 unique candidate blends have been recorded, and a plan is set to analyze and record many more, with the intention of making the database publicly available (2011:853).

2.5 Slang

Unlike physically published writings, language used on the internet is often unmoderated, and, as such, slang is widely used. Merriam-Webster (2022) defines *slang* as “an informal non-standard vocabulary composed typically of coinages, arbitrarily changed words, and extravagant, forced, or facetious figures of speech.” In other words, slang refers to a specific set of words that are generally considered to be informal.

Even though slang frequently occurs in speech amongst people of various communities, and is a highly discernible feature of language, most historical and modern-day linguists have failed to agree on a single definition. Drake (1980:63) states that “slang is a common linguistic behavior. Despite this, it has been collected, rather than defined and studied by linguists.” Additionally, he describes slang as characteristically a group phenomenon, and “connected with a group identity” (1979:64). Slang typifies the vocabularies of more informal, social communities (1979:65), while ‘jargon’ is present in the vocabularies of professional communities. The latter refers to more specific communities such as those made around a profession, an activity, or an interest group (BBC, 2022): “Jargon [...] the specialized technical language of different occupations and interests, is fundamentally impersonal and serious, whilst slang is basically friendly and humorous” (Hudson, 1978:2).

Blends appear in various domains, from academic and scientific, to electronic and virtual. A lot of these domains are strictly either formal or informal, however, blends have found their place in nearly all linguistic registers. It has become quite common for blends to assist in naming newly discovered or created hybrids in science or agriculture. Scientific phenomena such as *botox*, *endorphin*, *vitamin* and *genome* are all blended words. It’s also increasingly popular to name animal cross-breeds, especially dogs, by forming a newly-coined blend. This is how an ever-growing list of dog breed blends, which includes examples like *puggle*, *dorgi*, *pomsky* and *chiweenie* has earned its place in relevant encyclopedias and online dictionaries

(Wikipedia, 2023). What may have started as an informal way of addressing an object of a hybrid nature, blends as proper names substantially gained enough traction to create a new sub-genre of animal classification.

Similarly under-researched is the domain of blends used in slang. While slang is typically used in colloquial exchanges where there would not be a lot of written records, lately the introduction of computer-mediated communication and the channels in virtual space allowed this kind of informal communication to be documented. The Internet has gained a somewhat infamous reputation of “being there forever”, with one website stating that “Our pasts are attached to our names in digital perpetuity” (Salon, 2023). This potentially means that the majority of what we generate in the virtual space is likely to stay there for the foreseeable future. While in many other aspects this kind of historical recording of events, thoughts, images, etc, could be detrimental, it allows us to observe the way a language is used from a very unique new perspective. The following subsection will divulge the basics of computer-mediated communication and the way language has been affected by it since the advent of the Internet and the widespread digital availability.

2.6 Computer-mediated communication (CMC)

This study focuses on language usage in slang on the internet, which is referred to as computer-mediated communication (CMC; Baron, 2003:10). Kiesler, Siegel, and McGuire (1984:1123) define CMC as “a key component of the emerging technology of computer networks. In networks, people can exchange, store, edit, broadcast, and copy any written document. They can send data and messages instantaneously, easily, at low cost, and over long distances.” They argue that the online discourse communities (a social network of participants who share some set of communicative purposes; Kehus, Walters, Shaw, 2010:68) tend to integrate niche-specific terms into their online communication practices.

Moreover, they point out that electronic-based communication is deprived of the nuances of speech, which leads to improvised, often arbitrary instances of altered orthography, punctuation, capitalization, and lexicology. Communication facilitated by various social media websites, forums, and platforms can be conveyed via numerous modes, and each of them carries new forms and instigates language change. People nowadays use social media to keep in touch with friends and family, stay informed or seek out opportunities. Lutkevitch & Wigmore (2022) defines social media as: “a collective term for websites and applications that focus on communication, community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration“. The

information generated through social media is also referred to as User-Generated Content (UGC) and is “usually applied to describe the various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end-users” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:61). They also explain the overwhelming increase and societal impact of UGC by listing different drivers for this change:

While UGC has already been available prior to Web 2.0, as discussed above, the combination of technological drivers (e.g., increased broadband availability and hardware capacity), economic drivers (e.g., increased availability of tools for the creation of UGC), and social drivers (e.g. the rise of a generation of “digital natives” and “screenagers”: younger age groups with substantial technical knowledge and willingness to engage online) make UGC nowadays fundamentally different from what was observed in the early 1980s. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:61)

Furthermore, we cannot discuss language change without exposing the history of the words that are being put under scrutiny, in this case, blends that have been found online.

In the study of English blends made in slang, the etymology can help pinpoint the processes that guide word formation by recognizing patterns and exploring the motivation behind spontaneously creating the amalgamations of words that are nowadays seen more often on the Internet. The changes that had brought about the expansion of Internet English (i.e. *Netspeak* or *Cyberspeak*; Merriam-Webster, 2022) as a new register of online communication are similarly prompted by the fluidity of electronic media where the freedom of creativity and self-expression bring about witty coinages that are the focus of this thesis. Crystal (2001:66-67) observed that the rate of emergence of new and playful internet variations has been unparalleled in contemporary language use. He continues to demonstrate the behavior and language habits of *netizens* (internet+citizens) by citing Branwyn’s (1997) *Jargon watch*, which explains the obscure origins and insufficient etymological background that these neologisms have.

Written communication used to be more formal before the advent of computer-mediated communication. In a textual context, informal language has gained a higher status since the advent of computer-mediated communication in the mid-1990s. Informal ways of communication in the online-based communities, or internet slang register began almost concurrently with the advent of internet access in common households around the mid-1990s (Science and Media Museum, 2023). According to Crystal (2001:67), “Internet users are continually searching for vocabulary to describe their experiences, to capture the character of the electronic world, and to overcome the communicative limitations of its technology”.

In 1995, one of the most visited websites Dictionary.com emerged as the first online dictionary. The need to document and define all of the new expressions circulating the web at the time inspired the creation of the Online Slang Dictionary (1996), which is still being used as a reference to this day. In 2004, the first entry in Urban Dictionary was published. The three online dictionaries mentioned will be the key reference points when assembling the dataset for this thesis.

2.6.1 Online dictionaries and social media platforms

The main subject of the thesis involves a thorough look into an aspect of language and vocabulary, which implies the use of mainly textual data. Hence, the primary sources for identifying blends are online slang dictionaries, which occasionally feature notes on formation, origin and usage of blends.

Potential uses of blends that were featured on the Internet, but had been published in a different format had to be omitted for the sake of simplicity and due to limited time. Hence, the entirety of the cited data originated from text-based sources, such as a dictionary or a post/thread. The data collection process involved three different platforms – Facebook, Reddit and Twitter. These platforms have a combined number of average monthly users of around 3,3 billion people (Statista, 2022), with nearly 60% of internet content being posted in English (Statista, 2022). These platforms were used in order to compile a sample of posts containing the blends in order to investigate their usage. This was intended to create a vast field of data to compensate for the obscurity of these terms. The outcome of the word search in each browsing section was taken into consideration when discussing in-depth results.

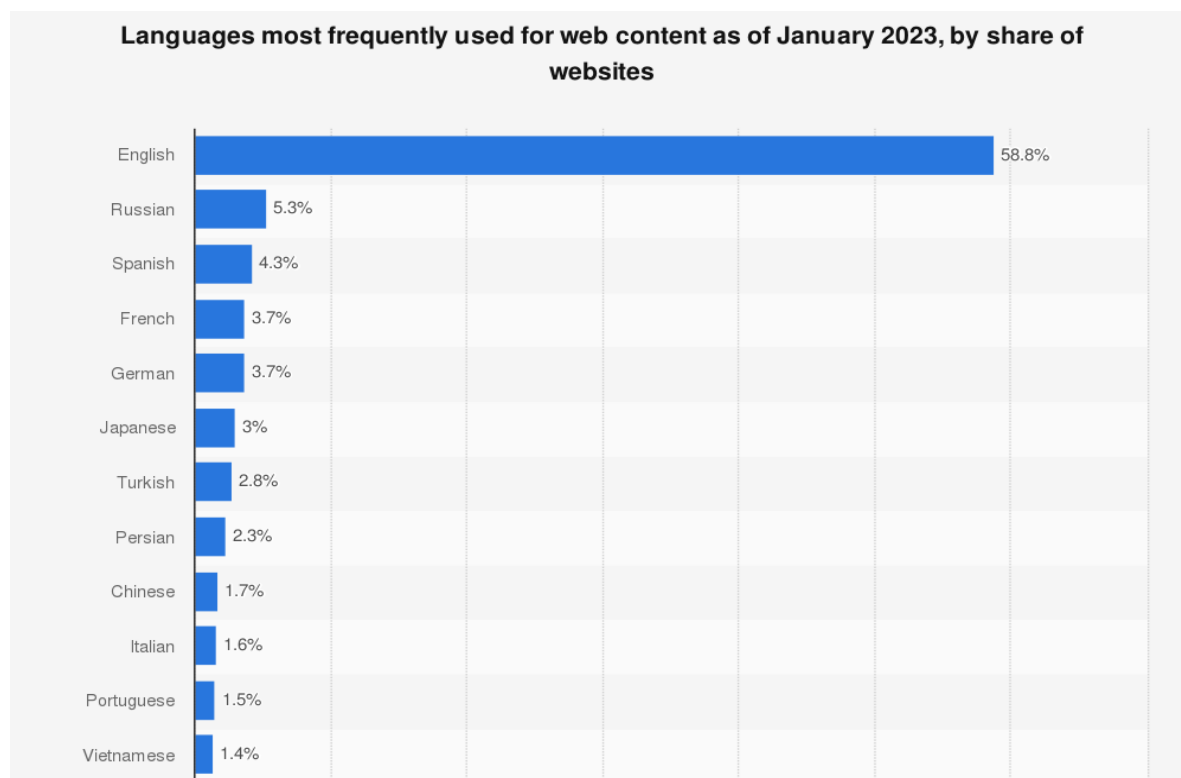


Image 2. Image showing the percentage of most frequent languages used by share of websites (Statista.com, 2023)

With as much as 60% of the most commonly used internet portals in English, there is a basis for the assumption that a large portion of the online language input is potentially prone to changes and different kinds of alterations caused by language transfer, be it positive or negative (Qin, 2017). These alterations could be attributed to a large number of reasons, some of which will be discussed in this thesis.

2.7 Summary

To reiterate, the purpose of this study is to delve into a specific pattern of creation of neologisms that fall under the category of blends which then also transforms into a study of certain communicative patterns of online speakers. The terms discussed do not have the official standing in the verified corpus of the English language. Nevertheless, written communication has changed with the arrival of the Internet (Crystal, 2001), and this change warrants academic attention. These novel communication channels seem to have somewhat altered the way one forms thoughts (Naughton, 2022), structures, and ultimately words in order to fully encapsulate the essence of most of what needs to be said. As the bibliography here shows, these neologisms and

ways of dissemination have steadily become a highly researched topic, as they continue to progress even further alongside technology. Although the previous research heavily focused on the new linguistic and psychological aspects of CMC (Kiesler, Siegel & McGuire, 1984), the topic of blends followed later on as it was explored through both quantitative and qualitative lenses (Jurado, 2019; Renner, 2015; Cook, 2011; Gries, 2004).

This section has covered topics such as etymology and language change and the factors that drive it. It also showcased slang and blends used in slang, demonstrated the impact of pop culture on communication patterns and themes, and explained computer-mediated communication. It has also presented a substantial review of the previous research that had been conducted on mutually relevant points of interest. The next chapter describes the methods used in this study.

3. Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology used to identify and analyze slang blends, and to collect and analyze social media posts. There are two samples that this thesis looks at. The first sample consists of blends taken from online slang dictionaries and the second sample is social media posts that feature the blends. This chapter will describe the sources that were used to collect the samples, which include online dictionaries, such as Urban Dictionary, and three social media platforms, namely Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit.

This is a data-driven study, which is defined as “the science of storing data, discovering correlations, storing correlations, and interactively querying data and correlations” (Amer-Yahia, et al., 2016:1). Apart from sourcing the data from the dictionaries, the thesis introduces examples that were harvested in the online communities of Facebook, Twitter and Reddit in order to obtain blends that are used in authentic online interactions. The second sample collection comprises of social media posts featuring the lexical blends that were previously identified in online slang dictionaries. This is followed by a description of the data analysis methods, ethics, and considerations related to reliability and validity.

3.1 Methodological approach

For the purpose of exploring language creation in blends online, this research takes a qualitative approach. Among the many definitions of this approach, the following definition is considered most relevant to the present study:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:3)

A qualitative approach also has a parallel match in a quantitative approach. Quantitative approaches rely on numerical information, the weighable and gaugeable material that can be assessed in measurements. Quantitative methods have an advantage when decoding isolated variables in large datasets. The methods used in quantitative approaches are more result-oriented, while this study adopts a more process-oriented viewpoint (Key Differences, 2022). In regards to the exploratory nature of this study, a quantitative approach would not account for the way in which slang blends are formed and disseminated across social media.

The mixed approach is also a possible research path for this study. Mixed methods involves “research in which the researcher uses the qualitative research paradigm for one phase of a research study and the quantitative research paradigm for another in order to understand a research problem more completely” (Cresswell, 2005, quoted in Migiro and Magangi, 2011).

However, the choice was made to include only a qualitative perspective. Qualitative methods are more suitable for exploratory studies. Furthermore, reducing language to quantitative variables may lead to overlooking the meaning that the words under study convey. The aim of the study focuses on depicting language change and real life contextual use of specific phrases in slang, which prompts the researcher to adopt a pathway that would more accurately assess those circumstances, i.e. a qualitative description of the findings.

3.2 Data collection methods

Two data sets were collected and analyzed for this study. The first data set comprises of blends that were identified by consulting online dictionaries. The second data set comprises of social media posts collected from Facebook, Twitter and Reddit. This section describes the methods used to collect this data.

3.2.1 Finding candidate blends

In order to collect the blends, three online dictionaries were consulted in order to identify candidate blends. The term ‘candidate blends’ comes from Cook’s (2011) *Using social media to find English lexical blends* and where this term is used to help distinguish the blends that have been gathered. The first set is marked as ‘candidate blends’ and involves every lexeme that had been identified online but had not yet been proven to be a blend. This working set of

words reserves a possibility that, upon closer inspection, some constituents may turn out to be a different kind of compound (i.e. *romcom* - a clipped compound).

After compiling a list of candidate blends, the process by which each word is formulated was examined and only the words that were formed via the process of blending were included in the final list of words used for this thesis. The process of blending is defined by Lehrer as underlying compounds which are composed of one word and a part of another word, or parts (a.k.a. splinters) of two words (2007:116). The main distinction between blends and other compounds, Lehrer explains, is that its constituent parts, or splinters, cannot stand as an independent word. In order to verify that a ‘candidate blend’ is actually a blend, we can try and use the splinters independently. For example, the blend *wronglish*, is made up of the word ‘wrong’ and a splinter ‘lish’, extracted from the word *English*. *Lish* in itself has no meaning, but as part of a blend, considering also the overlapping of the letters -ng in the blend *wronglish*, gives a slight hint towards its meaning.

3.2.2 Verifying blend status

The plan for processing the data includes verifying the collected data between each of the sources, providing the details stated there as the basis for the analysis. This process of verifying consists of cross-checking all three of the chosen databases, and locating the blend in the slang subsections (as presented in Dictionary.com) or out of a selection of definitions (as found in Urban Dictionary) that are the result of a keyword search for each of these entries. Since the entries in these dictionaries are crowd-sourced, meaning that anyone can add and edit the dictionary entries, the blends that were included were delimited to words that had entries in at least two out of three of the chosen sources. In addition, the aim of the thesis is chosen to represent the data that is absent from the official governing bodies of the English language but has been in occasional use on social media. In order to identify the lexical blends that do not officially exist in the standard English language, terms that are recognized by the Oxford English Dictionary were excluded from the data set.

3.2.3 Blend collection process

The data chosen for this thesis are sourced from three major internet slang databases, Urban Dictionary (2022), Dictionary.com (2022) and the Online Slang Dictionary (2022). The data was collected through the process of trial and error. The data-retrieval process was

multifaceted owing to the fact that advanced language searches do not provide the users with a ‘blend’ category. In order to come across blends in different sources, the advanced search settings offered keywords or different types of formation categories. The category of blends is absent from the consulted sources, which implies that each word taken from a list of slang words and phrases on, for example, Dictionary.com had to be individually detected out of 900 slang entries. Another method for gathering blends was through observation of social media feeds, which would often provide certain blends in context, and those blends would then be verified by the use of online dictionaries.

The first step for collecting data was to consult popular online dictionaries of slang expressions in order to identify blends based on orthography. For example, the first dictionary used was Dictionary.com (2022), where the most recent slang expressions, covering the span of the last three years, are recorded. Among the 900 terms listed in Dictionary.com’s database of slang expressions, roughly 200 were added to a potential sample of ‘candidate blends’. The candidate blends, which were selected to be examined based on their orthography and partially based on the lexical content, were then compiled into a spreadsheet with their links bookmarked and added to the list.

With each new blend that would be recognized, whether out of a dictionary, an online article describing the use of certain blends, social media feeds or a few miscellaneous ones observed in TV shows, the next step would involve adding the blend to the list of all ‘Frankenwords’.

This is an Excel sheet that compiles all the ‘candidate blends’, their sources, the links to definitions and whether or not there is enough content in the online dictionaries for them to be considered for the results chapter of this thesis. The spreadsheet features 200 collected blends over the course of one year: from October 2021, until October 2022. The collection was then delimited to 12 final entries (see chapter 4) with the help of various sources.

The process of delimiting these blends went as follows: the first step was confirming which of these blends existed in two out of three sources. This would grant substantial validity to the coinage and would provide a wider definition pool for comparison in meaning. Around 50 blends were found to exist in two out of three selected dictionaries. The second step was thematizing these blends in an effort to understand whether there are topics, sources, functions, formations or any other aspects that may connect them. The examples were then color-coded based on these aspects, and the most ‘colorful’ of these examples made it to the final list, which was then cut down to a final list of 12, which was considered an optimal

number that would showcase the varied nature of blends adequately without burdening the result chapter with excessive information.

Other than the example of the ‘words formed by clipping’ category in the Online Slang Dictionary (2022), there are very few examples online where an internet search leads to some of the more obscure lexical blends (the more famous examples tend to repeat themselves in blend-related articles). While this was a major impediment in the process, the help of the social media ‘search’ feature streamlined the process of compiling a set of data once the blend has been identified in the dictionary or an alternative source. Certain candidate blends showed a spectrum of uses, or were a homophone that carried a specific separate meaning. Therefore, each candidate blend had to be carefully considered by consulting multiple platforms. As each platform relies on crowdsourcing, which can be unreliable, the aim was to consult several platforms to ensure that the information was accurate.

A significant portion of the candidate blend data set had been intentionally delimited by the researcher at this point in order to exclude the vulgar examples from the list. The reasoning for excluding certain terms is made due to the fact that swear words and other cases of profanity have been extensively studied. The gathered material had proven to be significant in size, which meant that terms that carry a specific derogatory connotation could be left out, perhaps to be included in separate research later on.

3.2.4 Description of the dictionaries that were consulted

As previously stated, the sampling stage of the research had to be conducted via browsing and identifying data sets mostly contained in the three dictionaries. Having dealt with the history of these sources and the notion of crowdsourcing, the following paragraphs will present the general layout of the web databases in an attempt to give more credibility and comprehensively cover the methods that had been used in the research.

1. Urban Dictionary

Urban Dictionary (2022) is an online database of mainly English expressions, that is crowdfunded and maintained by a community of language enthusiasts. The concept implies that anyone can register and thus have the ability to alter what becomes a part of the online database for urban expressions. An article from Technology Review (2022) states that Urban

Dictionary was, in fact, created as a parody on Dictionary.com in 1995, but has since grown into a valuable resource on the Web.

Another considerable difference between this and an academic source type of dictionary is that this open-ended dictionary allows many definitions to be entered for one word. While the drawbacks of this approach to a language corpus are clear and the space for misinterpretation is evident, this method of keeping records allows for a broader representation of the many shades of meaning that follow specific expressions. Urban Dictionary is a particularly useful resource for researching slang expressions on the Internet. The open-source approach allows for a variety of interpretations in regard to which a certain consensus can be drawn. It would be safe to assume that this consensus validates the meaning(s) and uses for an expression in question.

2. Dictionary.com

The focus of the thesis was on the specific corpus in this dictionary. The material in this corpus largely consists of recent slang words (the dictionary started keeping records of slang terms in October 2018) and has since grown to include over 900 terms and expressions. This slang database is continuously updated.

This feature allowed a fairly straightforward process of listing through slang words and phrases in an effort to locate potential lexical blends. These candidate blends were then bookmarked and stowed away for further analysis later on. The terms that were set aside have only been studied based on face value, i.e. their orthographic appearance, at the initial stage of compiling the data.

A closer look revealed that slang terms that are found in the Dictionary.com (2022) database had an ‘origin story’, a clear definition, a few examples from the web and pronunciation transcription indicated in square brackets (e.g. *feminazi* [**fem**-uh-naht-see]). Many of the terms also featured a paragraph or two on usage, indicating the potential discourse groups and ways in which the term in question can be interpreted.

3. The Online Slang Dictionary

Unlike the previous sources, this source is copyrighted and edited by Walter Rader. The segment about the dictionary states that jargon, aphorisms, neologisms, informal speech and idioms have been collected and assembled together since 1996.

The hierarchical structure of the thesaurus in The Online Slang Dictionary is unique compared to other databases on this list, as it provides a tool to calibrate specificity. It can either grant a more detailed outlook or a broader perspective of the notion. This algorithm identified and singled out around 80 examples of words that were formed by merging two separate words into a new entry.

Here are some of the examples of candidate blends that have been observed by this source: *twerk* (twist+jerk), *staycation* (stay+vacation), *sheeple* (sheep+people), *snark* (snide+remark), *threepeat* (three+repeat), etc.

3.2.5 Justifying the use of crowdsourced websites

One of the challenges of investigating modern language change is that new words are not recognized by official dictionaries (such as the Oxford English Dictionary) until they have been used a certain amount (OED, 2022). In order to investigate modern slang, this study had to rely on crowd-sourced websites such as the Online Slang Dictionary (2022).

Crowdsourcing is defined as “the act of outsourcing tasks originally performed inside an organization, or assigned externally in the form of a business relationship, to an undefinably large, heterogeneous mass of potential actors” (Cheng et al., 2020). The limitation of crowdsourced dictionaries is that anyone can add and edit entries. This “independent form of division of labor” means that there is both a high probability of success and valuable input while also reserving a potential risk of content manipulation (Thieringer, 2023). Additionally, for crowdsourcing platforms with a unique task, maintaining a clear vision and not diluting the content is also listed as a critical issue. Moreover, the sourcing of the right crowd and maintaining quality are usually the most concerning of all online-based sources which require user input (McCarthy, 2022). A typical example of this kind of website is Wikipedia, which is described as an “open content online encyclopedia created through the collaborative effort of a community of users known as *Wikipedians*” (Tech Target, 2023).

Despite their limitations, these crowdsourced dictionaries proved to be a useful tool for identifying slang candidate blends. This is partially due to the fact that with the technology came useful tools that would help ‘grade’ the level of accuracy, usually in the form of an ‘upvote’ or a ‘downvote’. These markers are a way to gauge the users’ opinion on the definition in question, mainly as a feedback response to the definition that was volunteered to the crowdsourced platform. In terms of Urban Dictionary, there are no official sources that would tackle the presumed connection between the number of ‘upvotes’ (or

‘downvotes’) and the reliability of the statement that is submitted as a definition. It’s important to note that some of these definitions have stated certain words to be blends, and that the given ‘upvotes’ gave certain credibility to the word being defined.

The definitions with the most ‘upvotes’ were chosen as representatives of the source. This falls under the many ways of unconventional fact-checking of online sources. The participants on most platforms now have a way of fact-checking each other, leaving comments, corrections, and virtual reactions to the information given. The potential of changing or updating the information is also constantly available to these users, which renders this kind of source highly relevant. Two of the sources listed here, Urban Dictionary and The Online Slang Dictionary offer these tools to all registered users.

Communication facilitated by various social media websites, forums and platforms can take any shape, and each of them carries new forms and instigates language change. The delimitations were set to the virtual space solely, with materials that are available online, which renders the category of geographic location unmeasurable.

3.3 Collection of social media posts

The second data set comprises of posts collected from the social media platforms, Facebook, Twitter and Reddit. These online platforms, which include a discussion-based virtual community and forum, a multimedial networking website, and a ‘microblogging service’ (Hetler, 2022) for broadcasting content, are chosen to cast a wide net when canvassing the virtual space for obscure blends in an informal environment. The working assumption that led to these specific choices was that the formats of these platforms could also influence the urge to condense and reshape words and seek new meanings. This means that certain expressions would be spontaneously created online by users who have run out of character space (see theory, 2.1.1), or are looking to create a more powerful impact with a few words.

3.3.1 Criteria for selecting social media posts

The posts were collected by conducting a search on each of the platforms using the final list of 12 blends (see section 3.2.3). The final set of 12 blends was compiled into tables with the relevant information about their definitions, origins and usage stored. The examples of usage were collected by browsing social media platforms by entering the blend in the search bars.

The search settings and requirements vary among the platforms. The posts that were chosen were extracted strictly from the public space on social media platforms.

In order for the search to be conducted without the algorithmic limitations, the advanced search settings had to be adjusted to ‘public’. This ensures that personal preferences and funneled content² would not eventually jeopardize the objectiveness of this study and impact the researcher’s perspective. Depending on the platform that the search was being conducted on, the use of hashtags or inverted commas had to be implemented. Public posts from Facebook, tweets or Reddit threads were sorted and eventually included to represent the blend’s usage under these criteria:

- The blend had to be found in a textual format.
- The post had to be in the English language.
- The post featuring the blend had to be under 300 characters to ensure that the data collection and analysis steps were manageable, and to avoid length discrepancies across the posts.
- The post had to convey a coherent, contextualized message (i.e. some posts only contained single words and were therefore difficult to understand).
- The comments, likes or other attachments had no merit in selecting the posts and were excluded from the dataset altogether.

Upon completing the browsing part of the process and selecting a post, a screenshot of the post was taken and filed into an archive. This archive is a private folder made on the researcher’s personal computer, which holds the screenshots of all the posts that had been used in the study. The screenshots had been collected and filed but all the identifiable information was immediately redacted and kept off the record. Upon taking the screenshot, the personal identifiable information was immediately redacted using image editing tools by drawing rectangles over the handles³ and/or names that had to be permanently obscured. In regards to posts taken from Facebook, the public posts would feature individuals but could also include posts from pages, groups or events, which were also taken into account. This

² Funneled content is a common approach to marketing that serves to “to generate leads and sales of our existing products.” Funneling is also widely used across platforms to help generate and deliver a more target-specific content (Hochuli, ,2022)

³ Social media handles are usernames by which users recognize each other, that simplify the communication process and help establish a digital identity. A handle is most commonly made up of a symbol, such as @, and is usually followed by an abbreviated company or personal name (Smart Insights, 2023; Indeed, 2023).

implies that with 12 blends, 36 different posts had been compiled and sorted, three posts from three separate platforms for each of the representative blends chosen.

I made a decision to choose these 12 blends to try and represent various trends in the best possible way the characteristics were observed in the list of candidate blends. This is due to the fact that these blends could also be sorted into categories based on formation, origin, theme, etc. For example, the dog-themed sub-set of blends includes all the blends in the ‘candidate blend’ list that have any relation to breeding dogs or owning dogs as pets. The sub-set collected for this study features words such as *pupdate* (pup+update), *puppuccino* (pup+cappuccino), *dogress* (dog+progress), *furminator* (fur+exterminator), *doggles* (dog+goggles), *brofur* (brother+fur), *morkie* (malteser+yorkie), *labsky* (labrador+husky), *pomsky* (pomeranian+husky), *boxador* (boxer+labrador), *corgipoo* (corgi+poodle), *labradoodle* (labrador+poodle), *cavachon* (Cavalier King Charles spaniel+bichon frise), etc.

3.4 Data analysis

This study involved analyzing each of the data sets separately. This section describes how each data set was analyzed. Regarding the research questions, the process of analysis will be twofold. The study features a question related to origin and morphology, as well as questioning the usage of lexical blends in online slang.

In the process of data analysis, the approach to form the dataset is largely independent. Previous methods used to research similar topics were considered, but mostly too constrained to be applied here. There have been instances in previous studies of adopting Barrett’s (2006) method of finding new lexical items. Cook’s (2011) study on using social media to find lexical blends features the adapted version of this approach, albeit limited to the Twitter platform. The data set compiled for this study originated from various sources, either by actively seeking out words that had been merged and listing through slang dictionaries, or on rarer occasions, by happenstance, while browsing the Internet.

3.4.1 Lehrer’s taxonomy

Firstly, the sample of blends was analyzed in order to identify the process by which they were formulated. This analysis involved using Lehrer’s (2007) taxonomy. One of the steps in recognizing the nature of blends that had been collected was to categorize them based on their individual formation types. This section will present Lehrer’s taxonomy of blend

formation patterns. In her chapter, *Blendalicious* (2007), Lehrer begins by pointing out the wide spectrum of word formation devices in nearly all languages. She goes on to recognize the various ways in which until recently a marginal category of words, lexical blends, have been formed. Lehrer performed a characterization of blends and recognized four main types by which new blends are being generated, along with two subtypes.

For the sake of simplicity, this study will refer to them as six separate formation types (see table below). In its structure, blends can contain full words or splinters (Lehrer, 2007:117). The most common form of a blend, according to Lehrer, is the one that features a full word followed by a splinter (e.g. *momtrepreneur* - mom + entrepreneur), and within the same type - a blend containing a splinter followed by a full word (e.g. *guncle* - gay + uncle). Also common are blends made up of two splinters, such as *zoomer* (Gen. Z + boomer). The first three types of blends have no degree of overlap, either phonemic or orthographic.

A different way of forming blends includes complete overlap of one or more morphemes. In this study, the most common types of blends found in online slang are blends that contain at least some degree of phonemic and orthographic overlap. An example that illustrates this would be *trashtag* - trash + hashtag. This type usually implies that some part of the source word has to be counted twice, while spelling may or may not be affected, the phonemic aspect usually stays the same.

However, an uncommon type of blending that also involves complete overlap is blends featuring a discontinuous element. One example of this is a blend *detextive* - detective + text. The last type of formation includes partial overlap alongside a discontinuous element. This is the type where parts of both source words are present, such as in *pandelirium* - pandemonium + delirium. This thesis will hereinafter distinguish between these formation types as blend groups I, II, III, IV, V and VI, respectively.

	Group I (full word +splinter) or (splinter + full word)	Group II (two splinters)	Group III (beg+end) or (both splinters beginning of words)	Group IV (complete overlap of one/more phonemes)	Group V (discontinuo us element) *infix* complete overlap	Group VI (partial overlap)
blend	guncle	zoomer	confuzzled	trashtag	detextive	pandeliriu m
formation	gay + uncle	Gen. Z+ boomer	confused + puzzled	trash + hashtag	detective + text	pandemoni um + delirium

Table 1. Table showing Lehrer's (2007) taxonomy of blend formation patterns.

In addition to distinguishing blend structure, this thesis also seeks to answer how these blends appear in the informal lexicon. The origins of blends are also recorded, where origins can be accounted for. Certain sources, such as Dictionary.com (2022) and Wiktionary (2022) usually include a paragraph on the origin of the blend in question. The reason for including the origins of blends is for the purpose of exploring how lexical blends are introduced into the English language. This analysis shows that blends spontaneously occur online, but there are cases where certain blends are being popularized by global events, the media, current trends and other phenomena. For example, a more extensive look into the blend *throuple* shows that even though this coinage existed in the digital sphere for over two decades, the real breakthrough into the mainstream happened in 2020, after the premiere of a Netflix documentary (Modan, 2022). This analysis aspires to discover how societal perceptions have changed the way language is generated and used.

Another aspect of data analysis looked into blends being used in context across three of the most relevant social media platforms. This analysis provides a unique perspective on blends and how they behave in a natural, unprompted setting that is the digital public space. It's important to show this spectrum of usage online, as it depicts the polysemic nature of words, the same blends would have different interpretations and ways in which they can be used.

3.4.2 Thematic analysis

The research question guiding the second part of this study relates to how lexical blends are used and maintained on the three chosen social media platforms. Along with many different interpretations of blends come many different approaches to using them in the digital space. In order to analyze the social media posts, a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was conducted. Because of how nuanced the qualitative approach to the collected dataset is, this analysis was deemed the best choice in order to examine and categorize the results.

According to Braun, “Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (2006:79). The choice to analyze the data using this method ensures the benefit of flexibility while still providing a detailed account of data. The more typical use of this method includes ‘thematizing meanings’, which is somewhat applicable to this research. In this case, the focus is on how users used the blends, particularly regarding whether they explicitly reformulated the word's meaning or not.

This specific method, which is often referred to as a tool that can be used in various research perspectives and topics, is used to minimally organize and describe a dataset in extensive detail. Instead of attempting to fit the data into predetermined categories, it allows researchers to determine themes according to the content of the specific data set. Despite this critique, the tool is still widely present in qualitative research studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006:6). Braun (2006) continues to note that regardless of the particular analysis path, the focus should be placed on consistency. In the step-by-step guide, there are six phases in total, but the four that I would be using are marked as crucial for most research instances. These phases correspond to noticing patterns in meaning, actively looking for those patterns, and issues of potential interest in the data. Finally, the last phase concerns reporting of the content and meaning of patterns (themes) in the data (2006:15).

The vital part of the process of thematic analysis is coding, which goes hand in hand with writing. However, the first phase entails familiarizing oneself with the data. Before the coding stage can begin, the researcher should get a firm grasp on the depth and breadth of the content. This stage of ‘active reading’ serves to identify potential ideas and patterns that will be useful in subsequent stages (2006:16). The second phase involves initial coding from the data, using the most basic segments that can be assessed in a meaningful way. This organization of data into meaningful groups then leads to recognizing themes. The next phase involves sorting the different codes into potential themes. Phases 4-6 involve reviewing of the

themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report. This thesis focuses on the first three phases.

Upon collecting and processing the data into tables, the social media posts across platforms would contain one out of four different types of blend presence. The following patterns emerged, which were then separated into four different themes, with corresponding codes:

- Unmarked sentence: US
- Reformulated sentence: RS
- Unmarked hashtag: UH
- Reformulated hashtag: RH

The post that features an unmarked hashtag (UH) for example, incorporates the blend, but is present solely as a hashtag, without an added explanation:

Someone asked him to the prom and he said yes. #promposal /image/ (Twitter).

An unmarked sentence (US) is similar, but the blend is in this case present in the sentence and without the use of hashtags, and the meaning is supposed to be deduced:

Gourmet Cronut... Don't mind if I do! /image/ (Facebook).

The instance of reformulated hashtag (RH) uses explanation in other words to capture the meaning of the blend:

Hey class! Feminist vocab 2018: 1. #Mantrum: men's tantrums over sexist bullshit their fragility can't handle. Courtesy @user [...] (Twitter).

The reformulated sentence (RS) uses the blend without including the hashtag of the blend in question:

mask mandate is a perfect timing for tyra to be lyke "its all about the eyes, so how to smize while wearing mask" (Reddit).

3.5 Ethics, reliability, and validity

This subsection discusses the ethics related to the data used and harvested from the internet and how this thesis handles those issues. The subsequent paragraphs give an overview of validity and reliability.

3.5.1 Ethics

This study involves collecting data from the internet. Although the information on the internet may be publicly available, it is not possible to collect personal data for research purposes without asking users for consent according to Norwegian regulations (NSD, 2022). Personal data was not considered necessary for the present study, so data were collected anonymously. In order to ensure anonymity, no names or internet handles of users whose words, posts and threads were recorded. Furthermore, any personal names and handles in the posts were replaced with 'user' or 'handle', respectively. This means that the study did not need to be registered with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

3.5.2 Validity and reliability

When it comes to validity in qualitative research, there have been certain points made to better distinguish between different ways of interpreting qualitative data and its validity. Other than the commonly cited internal and external validity, Johnson (2019:5) differentiates three additional forms of validity: descriptive, theoretical, and interpretive. The theoretical form usually applies to the operational *hows* and *whys* of a phenomenon. Descriptive validity reflects factual accuracy and is therefore highly concerned with the objectivity of what has been reported (2019:4). In addition to descriptive validity, interpretive validity is just as applicable to this study and it is defined as: "the accuracy in reporting the facts, interpretive validity requires developing a window into the minds of the people being studied. Interpretive validity refers to accurately portraying the meaning attached by participants to what is being studied by the researcher" (Johnson, 2019:4).

The data collected during this study relies on the authentic pieces of information provided by users in a natural environment, which is in this case a digital setting. The data collected had been unprompted by the researcher. Having been gathered through the unconventional method of online observation, the data is considered to have a high degree of internal validity. Mackey and Gass (2005:107) explain internal validity as researchers making sure that the results of our study are valid, i.e. that they reflect what is believed and that they are meaningful in the sense that they have significance not only to the population that was tested, but, at least for most experimental research, to a broader, relevant population. External validity, on the other hand, refers to generalizing a study's findings to a larger population.

Depending on the setting, the data collected in a study might change, and external validity is higher in relation to the consistency of these results.

The data set used in this study is small compared to the overall amount of output being produced on all three separate social media platforms, and crowdsourced data that had been extracted from the online dictionaries. For example, the points of interest described in Dictionary.com that relate to each blend in particular, such as the origin and usage, proved to be an invaluable source of information that would help prove the validity of the source and material found in this thesis. In addition to this, the dictionaries have been cross-checked in an effort to establish a meaningful connotation for the candidate blend. It is, however, not possible to fully represent how blends are coined and used. However, by considering a large number of candidate blends, and by choosing from this list of blends that seem to represent the main trends underlying these phenomena, the study should have a relatively high level of external validity.

Reliability can be considered to be “the extent to which a measurement of a phenomenon provides stable and consistent results” (Carmines and Zeller, 1979, cited in Taherdoost, 2020:33). Taherdoost (2020:33) also describes reliability as closely concerned with repeatability. This thesis uses a previously established taxonomy by Lehrer (2007) in order to get a firm grasp on the formation patterns of lexical blends. By using the same method for the candidate blend analysis, the results ought to be replicable.

It should be acknowledged that the data collection methods are not entirely reliable. The collection of slang words from several different websites is a relatively exploratory process. This means that the systematization of data is challenging, due to different user-specific settings. Collecting social media posts is subject to the given algorithms of the social media website in question. These algorithms are often changing according to user needs.

Aside from the blend composition, another aspect of blends that was analyzed in this thesis revolved around consolidating relevant themes. The reliability of thematic analysis is proven solid by following the steps outlined in Braun and Clarke (2006). Moreover, by focusing on whether or not social media users qualify the meaning of the blends they use, the themes should be straightforward to apply.

4. Results

In accordance with the two separate research questions, the results section is divided into two parts. The first part reports the results related to various blending formation techniques and is presented in a table. The second part consists of the in-depth analysis which offers background details related to 12 words chosen to exhibit the colorful nature of lexical blends, referred to as the ‘final sample’.

This chapter will present findings related to 12 words that have been specifically chosen to reflect the spectrum of uses, various patterns of formation and semantic relationships to illustrate the contexts behind the emergence of blends. The subsequent tables showcase the qualitative survey of social media posts and various linguistic-oriented articles and online dictionaries in an effort to answer the first research question about how blends are being introduced through slang into the English language. The second research question aims to discover the frequency and the appeal of merged words, as well as how these particular examples appear in context. Each example is given a separate table, presenting entries from the digital databases, and social platforms, as well as the commentary on origin and instances where differences in language creation approaches relate to the blend in question.

To reiterate, this chapter heavily relies on the input from non-academic online sources, since they are considered to be data holding valuable information that relates to this study. The source formatting is kept as it is shown in the original post or source.

4.1 Formation types

Table 2 shows a more structured layout of blend types divided into different cells and labeled as Groups I-VI of Lehrer’s taxonomy. Earlier in the thesis, a decision had been made to treat the four main types of blends and two of the subtypes of type 4 as equal, separate groups here. The types (or groups) are defined according to the blend formation structure, whether they feature full words, splinters, and complete or partial overlap. It is crucial to point out at this point that the structural makeup of blends is occasionally difficult to diagnose due to them having various morphological, phonetic and prosodic features that often intertwine. These features also contribute to the blend’s potential for wordplay and intricacy which is highly valued in certain domains (Lehrer, 2007; Renner, 2018).

It is also evident in the table that certain types of blends are more prominent than others. The majority of the words in the Frankenwords spreadsheet (Appendix I) fall in Group IV and VI. In this study, the blends featuring full words are a little less common than words that feature an overlap of some kind. A moderate amount of blend examples belong to groups I-III. However, when it comes to dividing the data between type IV and its subtypes, the majority of the data ended up in group VI, or the second subtype of Lehrer's type IV which characterizes blends with partial overlap. Blends that contain infixes, also known as blends with a discontinuous element (Group V), tend to be the rarest ones. It is important to note that even though this is a detailed approach to defining lexical blend structure, the ambiguity of blend convergences, and unclear boundaries between splinters still exist and are sometimes difficult to systematize.

Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV	Group V	Group VI
(full word +splinter) or (splinter + full word)	(two splinters)	(beg+end) or (both splinters beginning of words)	(partial/complete overlap of one/more phonemes)	(discontinuous element) *infix*	(partial overlap)
<i>Friendsgiving</i>	<i>incel</i>	<i>cronut</i>	<i>hickster</i>	<i>detextive</i>	<i>smize</i>
<i>momtrepreneur</i>	<i>cavachon</i>	<i>throuple</i>	<i>brony</i>	<i>adorkable</i>	<i>promposal</i>
<i>selficide</i>	<i>pomsky</i>	<i>blerd</i>	<i>tinderella</i>		<i>maskne</i>
<i>guncle</i>	<i>radass</i>	<i>libtard</i>	<i>mantrum</i>		<i>smexy*</i>
<i>bridezilla</i>	<i>zoomer</i>	<i>biscoff</i>	<i>funemployed</i>		

Table 2. Table showing some of the gathered blends in an adapted view of Lehrer's taxonomy

4.2 Social media examples

The data collection for this thesis produced around 200 different 'candidate' blends. In order to verify that the candidate is truly a blend and fits the aforementioned criteria, a cross-section of three online slang dictionaries was performed using those terms. The cross-section of all three social media platforms produced roughly 30 potential examples that would be featured in the results section. Considering that the research led to an exhaustive

amount of information, a decision was made to feature 12 examples of blends in the ‘final sample’ that were considered to be representative of various formation techniques, origins, and types of usage attached to them. The following subsections are organized to include a short morphological description, definitions outsourced from online dictionaries, a paragraph on etymology, and examples of blends found on social media.

4.2.1 Smize

The word *smize* is a blend of the words ‘smile’ and ‘eyes’ - [sm]ile + [eyes] = smize. This example belongs to Group VI of the adapted Lehrer’s taxonomy, blends featuring a partial overlap. This is a unique example, where the first splinter overlaps with the word of origin - *smile*, however, the second part of the word is also merged. This is why this blend is defined as partial phonetic overlap, while also acknowledging the orthographic structure. Definitions of the word *smize* were found in two of the three online dictionaries that were consulted.

Dictionary.com (2022) defines smize as:

[smahyz] - verb;

To smize is to smile with your eyes, usually in a sexy and playful way. Fierce!

Urban Dictionary (2022) defines smize as:

“Smile with your eyes”, as coined by supermodel Tyra Banks on the thirteenth cycle of America's Next Top Model. [...] *Erin (C13): Excuse me while I go throuth ("throw up in my mouth")*. *Tyra: You need to smize more in your pho-to*. *Erin (C13): "Smize"?* *Tyra: Smiling with your eyes*.

According to Urban Dictionary (2022), the word was coined by the supermodel Tyra Banks. She used it on the television show America’s Next Top Model (2003) as part of her coaching of trainee models. One of the variations of the word is ‘super smize’, which refers to when a person smiles with their eyes, but remains expressionless below the nose.

In more recent years, the word has been revisited on social media platforms in connection with wearing face masks during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not possible to see when someone is smiling with their mouth while wearing a face mask, hence the value given to the act of ‘smizing’. It is one of many covid-related blends recognized by Samigoullina (2020:31). The following are examples of this usage in social media posts:

<i>smize</i>	User/Thread date	Post	Thematic analysis
Facebook	<USER> 8 Jun Public	Getting ready for chemo session three (of six). Apparently, when I smize, I just look angry. Sending love to everyone even if my picture doesn't! 🙄🙄🙄	US
Twitter	@user Mar 19, 2021	March 20 is the #InternationalDayOfHappiness Despite #COVID19 and universal masking we can still try to #smize! To share smiles with our eyes Happiness is infectious. Let's spread the word hope to #CUsmile 😊	RH
Reddit	r/ANTM 2 months ago	mask mandate is a perfect timing for tyra to be lyke "its all about the eyes, so how to smize while wearing mask"	RS

Table 3. Table showing the social media examples for the blend *smize*

4.2.2 Promposal

The blend *promposal* is a combination of the words ‘prom’ and ‘proposal’. This example is a representation of the partial overlap, characterized in this study as Group VI of Lehrer’s classification. This blend is found in three out of three consulted online dictionaries.

Dictionary.com (2022) defines *promposal* as:

[prom-poh-zuhl] - noun;

The act of inviting a date to a prom, often using props or gifts in a staged or choreographed scene:

The elaborate promposals at our school have become insanely competitive.

Urban Dictionary (2022) provides multiple definitions, however, the choice to include this one is justified based on the number of total upvotes (1802):

A proposal from one person asking another person to the prom; is the combination of the words "prom" and "proposal."

Jake: I'm thinking about how I'll do my promposal...

Sean: Who're you going to ask?

Jake: Well, I haven't decided yet.

Sean: You have to decide before you ask someone to prom!

Slang Dictionary (2022) defines this blend as:

noun; The asking of a person to a prom.

The article *The History of Promposals: Where did they come from?* pinpoints the first use of the word *promposal* in written media. According to Abele (2022), high school students' creative ways to ask each other out on a prom date were first described as a *promposal* in 2001 in Dallas, Texas.

The same article lists the consequent usages of the word and practices over the following two decades. The term gained more traction with the arrival of social media, but it still continues to be prevalent in billboards, banners, balloons, and other prom-related material. The act of 'promposing' is ultimately described as an established cultural phenomenon (Abele, 2022). The following are examples of this usage in social media posts:

<i>promposal</i>	User/Thread date	Post	Thematic analysis
Facebook	<PAGE> 16 Jun Public	11 awesome celebs who accepted their fans' promposals: /article/	US
Twitter	@user Jun 19, 2022	Someone asked him to the prom and he said yes. #promposal /image/	RH
Reddit	r/AmongUs 2 months ago	I'm doing a promposal for my girlfriend. I got the marching band, salsa club, choir, cheerleaders, broadcasting, and this. /image/	US

Table 4. Table showing the social media examples for the blend *promposal*

4.2.3 Cronut

The blend *cronut* is a trademark pastry, invented by a New York based chef, who created the culinary overlap between a croissant and a donut - cro(issant)+(dough)nut. This blend features two splinters, one is the beginning of the first source word, while the other splinter is found at the end of the second source word. This places it in the Group III of Lehrer's

classification. The following entries describe the blend. Dictionary.com (2022) defines *cronut* as:

[kroh-nuht, -nuht] - noun;

Trademark.

a brand name for a pastry made from croissant dough that has been deep-fried and shaped into a thick doughnut-like ring.

Urban Dictionary (2022) defines *cronut* as:

a deep fried and glazed croissant a.k.a. a mix between a donut and a croissant

Liia: Hey, what are those delectable looking glazed, buttery pastries over thurr?

Nush: Well duhhh, they're cronuts!

**and the fattyness begins*

In 2013, New Yorkers discovered Cronuts, forming long lines for a chance to taste a deliciously sounding combination of donut-croissant. The baking innovation is a “crossover between food that is both fried and flaky“, elevating a staple item into something more sophisticated, helped by the credibility of its creator, Dominique Ansel (Gross, 2022).

An article documenting the journey of the *cronut* and the baking process gives a few hints about its popularity. The article describes the emergence of “*cronut* copycats” on a global scale, citing different spinoff versions of the famous pastry, such as the ‘doissant’, which can be found at the Chocolate Crust Bakery. This pastry phenomenon has been present for over a decade, according to the same source, but its continuous relevance is proven by the many social media posts and places of business that seem to wish to try out the popular treat with their own customers (Gross, 2022). The following are the examples found on social media, recounting the use of *cronut* across the chosen digital platforms:

<i>cronut</i>	User/Thread date	Post	Thematic analysis
Facebook	<PAGE> 17 June, 2022	Gourmet Cronut... Don't mind if I do! /image/	US
Twitter	@user Jun 20	Happy Monday! We've got everything you need to start the week off right including these chocolate and cherry cronuts! Plus a very tasty specials board... 🍒🍒🍒🍒 /image/	US
Reddit	r/Breadit 19 days ago	Made holland cream filled cronuts this morning. /image/	US

Table 5. Table showing the social media examples for the blend *cronut*

4.2.4 Smexy

The blend *smexy* is created by merging words - smart and sexy. From the aspect of blend structure, this blend is slightly controversial, as it can be perceived as both Group VI, blends with partial overlap (the letter *s* at the beginning of the source words), while it can also be argued that this example belongs in the Group II, blends with two non-overlapping splinters. The reason for this controversy could be that the splinter *s* may not carry enough structural integrity to warrant being a splinter on its own. Alternatively, this word is used as a “playful, more intensive version of *sexy*” (Dictionary, 2022). The consulted online databases have provided the following definitions. Dictionary.com (2022) defines *smexy* as:

[smek-see] Smexy is a blend of smart and sexy, referring to someone who has both brains and beauty.

It can also just be a fun way of calling someone sexy.

Urban Dictionary (2022) defines *smexy* as:

(adjective)

Defining a person as sexy combined with being smart and sexy

Damn, that chick is freaking smexy

*A slang term for someone who is more than just sexy.

Sophy: Aby, you're smexy!

Aby: Woot! I'm damn smexy!

Slang Dictionary (2022) defines *smexy* as:

hotness in a cute sort of way. Most often used girl-to-girl as a "friend" term.

Do I look OK for the dance?" Leah said. "Yeah, you look totally smexy," her best friend Maddy replied.

The origins of specific blends are difficult to trace and Urban Dictionary's example depicts that issue. Even though Urban Dictionary users first reported the word in as early as 2004, there have been rare occurrences of it prior to 2008. In such instances, the website Internet Archive's Wayback Machine provides some context (2022). This specific digital searching tool helps pinpoint the websites that have used the keyword as part of the title or as the website's URL. One example that the Wayback Machine provided is the website called *Smexy Books* (Web Archive, 2022), a book review-oriented website most active in the early 2010s.

The origin of this adjective blend may be obscure, but the usage is manifold. SlangLang (2022) reports that the usage of *smexy* prevails in anime-related communities, and among those interested in video games. Even still, the digital communities have recorded fairly consistent usage across all platforms since it has first been digitally recorded. These are the examples of usage sourced from Facebook, Twitter and Reddit:

<i>smexy</i>	User/Thread date	Post	Thematic analysis
Facebook	<USER> Jun 9	I have to get something off my chest... I've been in love with somebody in this group. She's very hot and smexy. Her names Sarah. Even though she killed and tortured my turtle, she has my heart and love. 😍🥰	US
Twitter	@user Nov 4, 2021	i got a haircut.. feeling ##smexy 😊	UH
Reddit	r/lgbt 2 months ago	Me calling a homie smexy but then adding “no homo” /Meme/	US

Table 6. Table showing the social media examples for the blend *smexy*

4.2.5 Mantrum

The combination of the words ‘man’ and ‘tantrum’ created a new blend - *mantrum*. In terms of structure, this blend belongs to Group IV, which is characterized by a phonemic overlap, either partial or complete. This term, alongside some of the other ones mentioned in the formation list, sets apart a separate subcategory of thematic blends that use the word *man* as one of the constituents in order to better define the notion that they are describing by introducing the blend. The other constituent might conventionally be perceived as rather feminine in nature, or typically experienced and used by women. Similar examples include blends such as *mankini*, *manstruate*, *mangina*, *mansplain*, *manther*, etc. These are the definitions of *mantrum* taken from online dictionaries. Dictionary.com (2022) defines *mantrum* as:

Mantrum is a slang term for a temper tantrum thrown by a man.

In general, the term is used to mock adult males perceived to be acting childish or overly emotional in some way. More specifically, *mantrum* is used to call out double standards that women are more often criticized as being emotional than men are, and that displays of strong emotion from women are more often penalized in society than they are for men.

Urban Dictionary (2022) defines *mantrum* as:

when a grown man throws a tantrum when he can't have his way.

Rick had a mantrum when he found out he couldn't have McDonald's for dinner

Slang Dictionary (2022) defines *mantrum* as:

[man-trum]

An uncontrolled expression of anger: an angry outburst by a man behaving like a child.

The term is also occasionally characterized in some online dictionaries as a tantrum thrown by a man as a result of perceived rejection by a woman (Online Slang Dictionary, 2022). One of the signs is the uncontrollable need to re-establish perceived power by lashing out, emotionally or physically. Since then, the general understanding of the term might have shifted slightly to denote any type of outburst thrown by men. Prior to 2008, there is hardly any digital trace of the notion of *mantrum*. Two additional online dictionaries corroborated that the word has been used in articles and booklets a few times, but the word has not had a lot of online traction until the year 2020 (Word Sense, 2022; Wiktionary 2022).

Mantrum is said to have been popularized in 2020, on the basis of a Taylor Swift song titled *The Man*. The blend eventually entered into the mainstream following a tweet that was posted while promoting the song, alongside a video featuring a male tennis player - throwing a *mantrum* (Dictionary.com, 2022). Perhaps the best definition can be found online, as it is used in context, than those given by the online dictionaries. The examples listed below seem more specific, particularly related to perceived inappropriate male reactions that are arguably depicting forms of sexism:

<i>mantrum</i>	User/Thread date	Post	Thematic analysis
Facebook	<USER> 17 May Public	...your colleagues just witnessed a mantrum and immediately left 🤦🤦🤦 if you hear anything about it tell them they're welcome for some new vocabulary.	US
Twitter	@user Jun 10, 2018	Hey class! Feminist vocab 2018: 1. #Mantrum: men's tantrums over sexist bullshit their fragility can't handle. Courtesy @user 2. #Misogymnastics: extreme brain workout to justify misogyny at the expense of common sense and intelligence. Courtesy @user	RH
Reddit	r/FemaleDatingStrategy 9 months ago	Newly-separated Scrote creeps on female FB friends, throws mantrum when they don't respond THINGS SCROTES SAY /screenshot/	US

Table 7. Table showing the social media examples for the blend *mantrum*

4.2.6 Zoomer

Zoomer is a blend with an intricate formation story. This blend is formed by merging together two splinters, the *z* from Gen. *Z* and the *-oomer*, as a splinter taken from the term (baby) boomer. This places it in the Group II of Lehrer's taxonomy, words made up of two splinters. The word was inspired by an analogy with the term baby boomer, a generation born between 1946 and 1964. The subsequent generations are named X, Y and Z, respectively. This is how members of (Generation) Z and the term (b)oomer created a new label for those born after 1995, although these boundaries are not as clearly defined (McKinsey, 2022). Some sources state that *zoomers* are the ones born between 1997 and 2012, to be followed by Generation Alpha (Warren, 2022). Dictionary.com (2022) defines a *zoomer* as:

[zoo-mer]

A zoomer is an informal term for a member of Generation Z, born in the late 1990s and early 2000s. It can be used with a neutral, mocking, or ironic tone.

Urban Dictionary (2022) defines *zoomer* as:

Refers to members of Generation Z and is a play on the term ‘Boomer,’ which refers to members of the Baby Boomer generation.

The term Zoomer is also in reference to the fast-paced upbringings members of Generation Z are characterized to have due to the fast advances in technology and culture that has been happening around them as a result of the interconnectivity of the American and Global populations because of the ubiquity of internet-connected smart phones and social media.

Dictionary.com (2022) goes on to explain the meaning and origin of *zoomer* being modeled on boomer, preceded by Generation Z shaped on the terms Generation X (roughly between 1966—80) and Generation Y, who are better known as millennials (born in the 1980–90s). The term has been in circulation since at least 2016. The dictionary also mentions theories that people might have come up with *zoomer* because of the more tongue- and keyboard-twisting likes of Gen Z-er? Gen-Zee-er? Gen-zer? Gen-zed-er? Zoomer may just be easier to pronounce. It also cleverly plays on the verb zoom. However, the creativity of blends does not end there, as is shown in the case of *zillennial*, “a microgeneration consisting of persons born 3 years before the end of Millennials and/or 3 years after the start of Generation Z (1992 - 1998)” (Urban Dictionary, 2022). The people born in this generation often carry the characteristics of both the preceding and the subsequent generations (Knockri, 2022).

In order to investigate the use of this particular blend, we first need to make a distinction between the two homonyms, with different etymologies. While both rely on the notion of (baby) boomer, the first meaning of *zoomer* is not a blend and denotes an active member of the baby boomer generation (Wiktionary, 2022). The second etymology and meaning are examined in this table. “Zoomers make up a large and diverse young population, about 27% of the US by some estimates. Popularly, zoomers are associated with the use of digital technology and social media, having progressive and inclusive viewpoints, and being concerned about the future, especially climate change” (Dictionary.com, 2022). Examples of digital usage are as follows:

<i>zoomer</i>	User/Thread date	Post	Thematic analysis
Facebook	<USER> 6 Jun Public	Bird's nest haircut, broccoli haircut, zoomer perm - whatever you want to call it, this is what it's all about. · A breakdown of all the goofy zoomer haircuts	US
Twitter	@user Jun 1	As a Gen Xer, I think that it's my job to help hold things together long enough for this new generation to find its feet and save us all... #GenX #zoomer #allinthistogether #hope	UH
Reddit	r/Bumble 1 month ago	Girl is speaking Zoomer gibberish at me, how do I respond?	US

Table 8. Table showing the social media examples for the blend *zoomer*

4.2.7 Funemployed

The blend *funemployed* emerged from adding the noun ‘fun’ to the adjective ‘unemployed’, hence creating another adjective with an overlap - fun+(un)employed. The structural makeup of this blend places it in the Group IV – blends with partial overlap of phonemes. This blend is used both sarcastically and literally. It can mean that not every period of unemployment is considered wasted time, but rather a period when one takes time for themselves and enjoys the newfound freedom and leisure, while also searching for something meaningful (Kagan, 2022). Dictionary.com (2022) defines the term as::

[fuhn-em-ploid] - adjective

without a paid job but enjoying the free time:

Ask one of your funemployed friends to come along with you.

Urban Dictionary (2022):

People who are unemployed and using the free time to have fun and explore new areas in their lives while they wait for their next job opportunity.

"Hey, man, I just love being funemployed now. I can have all day and night to enjoy my life and have fun, instead of working for The Man, you know."

An article by The Guardian states that “The concept of the funemployed has actually been bouncing around US newspaper columns since the start of the global economic crisis three years ago” (Jones, 2011).

Funemployed is often used with a hint of sarcasm, or a judgemental tone directed towards the slightly more ‘spoiled’ lifestyle (Jones, 2011). However, it is also present in the context of taking time off work and committing to certain enriching activities, such as traveling, for example. In addition, the term is used as a trademark for a card-based party game made by IronWall Games (BoardgameGeek, 2022). The examples found on social media are listed below:

<i>funemplo yed</i>	User/Thread date	Post	Thematic analysis
Facebook	<USER> 20 hrs Public	...All of my scores are posted and I'm funemployed for the summer. The bad news is that I woke up sick on my first day off and tested positive for covid. C'est la vie.	US
Twitter	@user 14h	My favorite part of #Funemployed summer is I have the ability to do things like meet up with a friend at a coffee shop in the middle of the day. The downside is, well, no money 😞	UH
Reddit	r/cats 2 months ago	Spent the last month funemployed after an unexpected layoff. I start my new position in office tomorrow and I'm very grateful, but I already miss all the quality time I've been able to spend with Miss Beans :(/Cat Picture/	RS

Table 9. Table showing the social media examples for the blend *funemployed*

4.2.8 Adorkable

The word *adorkable* is a blend created by inserting the word ‘dork’ in the word ‘adorable’. The blend *adorkable* is also unique in its formation. The word *dork* is inserted in the middle of the word *adorable*, altering spelling by just one letter -k, and shifting the meaning of the word. This term belongs to a rather uncommon type of blend, Lehrer’s Group V, which

features a discontinuous element, a word acting as an infix. This implies complete overlap.

Dictionary.com (2022) defines this blend extensively as:

Adorkable is an informal adjective used to describe someone as being cute or likable due in part to having characteristics considered “dorky,” such as being a bit awkward or having unusual interests.

The word is a combination of the sense of adorable meaning “cute” or “charming” and the word dork, which is generally used in the same way as words like nerd and geek—to refer to someone considered a bit socially awkward, unstylish, etc.

While words like dork and nerd are used both negatively and positively, adorkable is always used positively. It implies that a person’s quirky characteristics are part of what makes them charming or appealing.

Example: *The shy, adorkable little sister became the most popular character on the show.*

Urban Dictionary’s (2022) earliest definition of *adorkable* is:

A person who has an intelligent, quirky and random personality and combines it with being adorable, cute or beautiful. Can apply to girls, guys or couples.

Bethany is adorkable.

Slang Dictionary (2022) defines this blend as:

Adorable dorks.

Oh Lord he's so adorkable with his glasses and them rose-colored cheeks.

The first instance of the usage of the blend adorkable on the Internet dates back to 2001, when the blog by that name was published (Kurp, 2022). Another definition provided in Urban Dictionary helps describe this blend as, among the general examples found in popular TV shows, the characters Ross from *Friends*, Jim from *The Office*, and Chuck from the TV show *Chuck* (Endacott, 2022). It is the nerdy but classy style with a hint of silliness in their personality which is often portrayed by Steve Jobs, Conan O'Brien, Chuck Klosterman, Malcolm Gladwell, and Rachel Maddow (Urban Dictionary, 2022). The following examples were collected via browsing social media:

<i>adorkable</i>	User/Thread date	Post	Thematic analysis
Facebook	<USER> 29 Sep 2021 Public group	Sharing my adorkable doggo, Graham!! He's only 9 months old (Birthday is Dec 10!) Was on our way to our training session but rain has other ideas! (Also car was parked at time of picture in the driveway at home!)	US
Twitter	@user Mar 8th	Caitriona Balfe and Sam Heughan being the most Adorkable Goobers when they're twinning over their answers 😂🥰 (👏: BuzzFeed)	US
Reddit	r/FlashTV 2 months ago	Fun trivia: Danielle Nicolet played an adorkable teenage robot named Reese that innocently unleashed an apocalyptic plague known as the Replicators back in 2002. (Stargate BTW, great show!) Actor Fluff	US

Table 10. Table showing the social media examples for the blend *adorkable*

4.2.9 Tinderella

This blend is created by merging the word ‘Tinder’ (a popular dating app founded in 2012 that involves swiping images of other users left or right according to whether the user finds them physically attractive) and the word ‘Cinderella’, a classic folktale (Wikipedia, 2022) that was made very famous by an animated Disney character of a young woman that due to circumstance remains temporarily unavailable to her prince. The blend belongs to Group IV, which means it has substantial phonemic overlap (Tinder–Cinder). While definitions of *Tinderella* may vary, in the most general sense, this blend describes an attractive female on *Tinder*, perhaps one that was accidentally swiped the wrong way.

Tinderella is also a common way of describing those users who use the app religiously, perhaps to the point of obsession. Another variation of this blend is *Tinderzilla* (Dictionary.com, 2022). Although not a common blend found in relevant online sources, *Tinderzilla* is a play on words of both *Tinderella*, and another common blend, *Bridezilla* (5.1.1). Two out of three online dictionaries define the blend in question. Dictionary.com (2022) defines *Tinderella* as:

[tin-duh-rel-uh]

A play on words between the classic fairy tale Cinderella and the popular mobile dating app Tinder, a *Tinderella* is an attractive person on Tinder, particularly one who's accidentally gotten away. This usually doesn't involve a glass slipper, but rather an accidental swipe left when using the app.

Tinderella can also refer more generally to any female Tinder user, especially those who use the app religiously, perhaps to the point of obsession, as if a *Tinderzilla*.

Urban Dictionary (2022) defines *Tinderella* as:

An attractive female discovered through the tinder dating application.

I saw this absolute tinderella on tinder.

This term was evidently created by a dating blogger, the name of which had to be discontinued due to copyright laws, because it featured the name of the company - *Tinder*, in the title. "The term *Tinderella* was popularized, though, in 2014 by an anonymous blogger who went by the name *Tinderella* and wrote about her adventures in the wild world of *Tinder* online dating", states the paragraph on the origin of the term in the consulted source (Dictionary.com, 2022).

Even still, subsequent comedy skits and occasional TV shows used the term to describe "the dream girl found on *Tinder*". This predominantly online phenomenon remains very popular in the online dating world and has several more interpretations. These interpretations range from "dates that lead to a fairytale ending", to describing a "too eager to find love" type of situation (Dictionary.com, 2022). These are the examples sourced from online platforms:

<i>Tinderella</i>	User/Thread date	Post	Thematic analysis
Facebook	<USER> 23 February 2018	You people must have heard story of Cinderella now its time to know about Tinderella. ☺ ☺ (A modern #fairytale based on Tinder)... #cinderella #tinder #tinderella /video/	RH
Twitter	@user Jan 20, 2019	Swiped right, then said yes... IM A TRUE #TINDERELLA !!! /images/	RH
Reddit	r/disneyvacation 3 months ago	How to adjust to your sex life as a newly-single Cinderella /image/	US

Table 11. Table showing the social media examples for the blend *Tinderella*

4.2.10 Throuple

The word *throuple* consists of what is left after the truncated end and beginning of the words thr(ee)+(c)ouple. This example is characterized by two non-overlapping splinters, one coming from the beginning, and the other from an ending of the source word. This places it in Group III of Lehrer's taxonomy. A three-people couple, now labeled a *throuple* describes a polyamorous relationship, a lifestyle where all three parties are committed to each other. This term is commonly misinterpreted as a sexual encounter among three people, however, the notion of a throuple is gaining more recognition (Siclait & Miller 2022). Dictionary.com (2022) defines *throuple* as:

[thruhp-uhl] - noun;

three people who are engaged or married to one another, or involved as romantic partners:

The throuple have been dating for the past two years and now live together in an intimate one-bedroom apartment.

(Unlike a threesome, which is a single sexual experience involving three people, a throuple is an ongoing arrangement where three people are romantic partners. A throuple can involve a mix of genders and sexual orientations. Throuples have

children together, live together, and get married, though only two of the three can legally be married. Throuples can engage in intercourse or be purely romantic.)

Urban Dictionary (2022) defines *throuple* as:

A threelationship; a relationship with three partners

The throuple walked into the restaurant on Valentines Day

Non-traditional relationships have had many different labels over the years, and the digital proof of the use of the blend *throuple* dates back to a forum from 1994, called Usenet. Other labels that have been used to describe this particular kind of relationship were a *triad*, or occasionally, a *ménage à trois*. As a bonus blend, the term *threelationship* also appears to describe the same kind of arrangement. The blend *throuple* was thrust into the spotlight in 2017, when the show RuPaul's Drag Race brought further attention to the term. Another instance where the blend gained in popularity and recognition was during the 2020 streaming of the Netflix hit documentary, *Tiger King* (Dictionary.com, 2022).

An article in Medium (Du Journey, 2022) helps define the notion of *throuple* as a subset of polyamory, where the consenting parties can be of any gender or sexual orientation. The article goes on to list instances of popular culture tropes in which the word was used, and how it affected the society's outlook on polyamory and non-traditional relationship structures. These are some examples found on social media when searching for the blend *throuple*:

<i>throuple</i>	User/Thread date	Post	Thematic analysis
Facebook	<PAGE> 14 October 2021	This Throuple Answers Your Burning Questions They were a couple until both of them fell in love with someone else. They're now in a throuple, answering your most asked questions about polyamory. /video/	RS
Twitter	@user 30 August 2022	Need to get dressed but the other two are in my room....are they sleeping, f**king, showering? Who knows. This is awkward. #throuple #pollyproblems	UH
Reddit	r/BestofRedditUPdates 1 month ago	OP's husband and best friend asked her to become a throuple when she walked in on them. Her boss turns out to be a real one	US

Table 12. Table showing the social media examples for the blend *throuple*

4.2.11 Selficide

The blend *selficide* is the bringing together of the words ‘selfie’ and ‘suicide’. This example is particularly interesting from the etymological aspect, as it features another slang derivative - *selfie*, as the main constituent. The structural categorization places this example in Group I, full words that have attached splinters (*selfie+suicide*). The Guardian (2013) once reported that the term *selfie* originated in Australia, and quickly became Oxford’s international word of the year.

Since it first appeared, the term *selfie* has gained official status in dictionaries (OED, 2022), and became a prolific derivative starting point for blends. There have been instances of merging different splinters with the splinter (-)*elfie*, to create a new version of a selfie, such as *belfie*, *shelfie*, or *welfie* (NBC News, 2022). Other derivatives include blends such as *selfie-steem* (a mental condition in which one stares at their selfie too long, causing them to have low self esteem; Urban Dictionary, 2022), or *smelfie* (when you smell yourself; Urban Dictionary, 2022). The chosen example for this thesis, *selficide*, has been defined in two out of three consulted online dictionaries. Dictionary.com (2022) defines *selficide* as:

[sel-fee-sahyd] - noun

Selficide is the act of accidentally dying while trying to snap that perfect selfie.

While that photo of you swimming next to a shark might get some serious likes, you, unfortunately, won't be around to enjoy them.

Urban Dictionary (2022) defines *selficide* as:

When a person dies while trying to take a selfie from a dangerous position or area.
This man committed selficide while trying to take a selfie hanging off the side of a high-rise building, and fell to his death.

The blend of *selfie* and (sui)*cide* appeared in 2014, described in a definition in Urban Dictionary (2022). The *selficide* 'epidemic' has become a public affair in some places more than others. The manner in which so many people have lost their lives, especially in certain parts of Southeast Asia and India according to their own accounts (Dipti, 2022), warranted selfie-free zones to be instituted across the world. The phenomenon also provoked many studies that look into the connection between the thrill of the danger and one's need to capture it in a selfie (Du Preez, 2017). "A 2018 study headed by Dr. Agam Bansal of the India Institute of Medical Sciences found that, between October 2011 and November 2017, over 250 people died in the act of taking a selfie" (Dictionary.com, 2022). Here are some examples extracted from social media that depict the usage of *selficide*:

<i>selficide</i>	User/Thread date	Post	Thematic analysis
Facebook	<USER> 22 July 2021	And then there is this point at this Tourist place called Selficide Point... The name is self explanatory...now nobody takes selfie there!	US
Twitter	@user Jul 10, 2016	love selfies, but would never put my life in danger for one! behold my travelling selfies #carteblanche #selficide /photos/	RH
Reddit	r/Selficide ⁴ 3 years ago	Woman dies after falling off cliff at popular selfie spot in Australia... /link/	US

Table 13. Table showing the social media examples for the blend *selficide*

⁴ This example contains an exception, where the blend is present on the Reddit platform as the name of the subreddit, as opposed to being in the contents of the post.

4.2.12 Friendsgiving

The term *Friendsgiving* is created by merging the word *friends* and the word *Thanksgiving*. This blend represents an informal way of referring to a holiday celebration where the focus is placed on friends instead of, or in addition to, the traditional celebration with one's family. Structurally, this is a peculiar example because the non-truncated part of the second source word, *-giving*, is a word in its own right, coming from a compound source word *Thanksgiving*. This means that the splinter, in this case, may not behave as a 'regular' splinter, even though their nature is, as previously established, highly idiosyncratic. Still, from the morphological perspective of blend creation and in terms of the proposed Lehrer's taxonomy, this blend characterizes Group I, a full word featuring a splinter. Dictionary.com (2023) defines this blend as:

[frendz-giv-ing] noun, informal

a gathering of friends to celebrate Thanksgiving with a feast, falling near or on Thanksgiving Day, in contrast to the traditional celebrations that typically involve family

Urban Dictionary (2023) defines this blend as:

The celebration of Thanksgiving dinner with your friends. This usually occurs on the Wednesday before or the Friday after Thanksgiving Day, since Thanksgiving is usually reserved for family gatherings.

"Hey guys, bring over your family leftovers to my house on the Friday after Thanksgiving to celebrate Friendsgiving!"

Additionally, Dictionary.com (2023) explains this budding cultural phenomenon as an opportunity for people to gather with their childhood friends when coming back home for the holidays. These gatherings may be held on Thanksgiving day itself, or a few days around the actual holiday. It is typically held on the fourth Thursday of November, and entails a large family feast. The earliest instances of the word *Friendsgiving* in print appeared around 2007, (Merriem-Webster, 2023) and a little later (2008, 2009) is when the social media posts that included the word began to circulate, albeit without a formal explanation.

In 2011, the blend became a part of a commercial campaign as well as a plot point for one of the episodes of "The Real Housewives" TV show. Since then, Merriem-Webster (2023) confirms that this blend has been a part of multiple holiday commercial campaigns for

different brands, and continues to be referred to as a more informal way of celebrating Thanksgiving. An article in the Atlantic (Fetters, 2023) notes that since the year 2014, around 960,000 posts are linked to the term *Friendsgiving* via the hashtag. One of the points made in the article is as follows: “It is, of course, distinctly possible that the surging popularity of Friendsgiving is directly tied to the power of portmanteaus. Slapping a catchy name onto an existing concept can, after all, make it seem trendy or suddenly ubiquitous, even if the thing itself has been around for decades (see: bromance or jorts).” These are some of the examples found on social media when searching for the blend *Friendsgiving*:

<i>Friendsgiving</i>	User/Thread date	Post	Thematic analysis
Facebook	<PAGE> 18 November 2022	Friendsgiving, office parties, rehearsals, or just wanting to party! Our chefs are the reason for the season 🥳🥳🥳 Book them today to make 2022 a season to remember! Our restaurant chefs come straight to you! Call, text or inbox us today! 228-346-8326 🍴🥬🍷🍷🍷🌲 /photos/	US
Twitter	@user Nov 24, 2022	Gluten Free Chocolate Banana Bread. #Friendsgiving #Thanksgiving /photo/	UH
Reddit	r/mildlyinfuriating 4 months ago	Went to a friendsgiving, they let their neighbor know ahead of time that they would be having people over, it was 4:45pm on a saturday and about 6 people were there at that point. He abruptly knocked on the door once, taped this note to the door and ran off. /photo/	US

Table 14. Table showing the social media examples for the blend *Friendsgiving*

5. Discussion

Researching online use of lexical blends in slang called for some speculation and innovative strategies to be implemented early on in the process. The two research questions were formulated following some initial observations relating to the frequency of lexical blend occurrence in the digital space, particularly on the most used social media, thought-sharing and discussion platforms. This chapter intends to investigate the background of how slang lexical blends are formed and introduced into the English language (Q1), and how these words are being used and maintained on Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit (Q2). The introductory paragraphs will elaborate more on how blends are formed and what inspires this language change.

The chapter will look into some of the examples from the results chapter and attempt to gauge which of the motivational factors are most common and why. The chapter will explore how frequent blends are as a formation process, the three main motivating factors behind blend creation online, and why some formation patterns occur more often than others.

The following subsections deal with language creativity and how computer-mediated communication has affected language formation. The tendency for certain blends to become an inspiration for other new blends and the splinters to be used and reused again is at the core of understanding language creation tactics. The final subsection tackles the limitations of an entirely online conducted research and its pitfalls.

5.1 How are blends formed through CMC?

Even though the subcategory of lexical blends is often characterized as marginal (Lehrer, 2007), the overall input of neologisms that can be classified as blends is quite large - approximately 43% according to analyses performed by Cook and Stevenson (2011). An article in Cambridge.org states that up to 25% of all new words in the Cambridge new words list are blended words (Norton, 2022), but it is difficult to estimate the extent to which this figure applies to slang. In addition to this, Gries (2004) also defines this habit as a “frequent and productive word-formation process” which includes shortening, fusion and some degree of phonemic or orthographic overlap. This thesis relies on these new findings and challenges the traditional view of blends as being seldom useful (Thornton 1993:148, cited in Matiello,

2019) and often treated as marginal in the morphological categorizations (Danilović-Jeremić, 2021:53).

Computer-Modified Communication allows us a more in-depth look into the channels that create and maintain language as it is being developed. Cook also points out that a very large amount of textual input is readily available for researching and performing a lexicographical analysis. The methodological approach that was used in this study was enough to draw conclusions regarding the 2,291 identified candidate blends, out of 12 million potential tweets. This proves that while a more constructive method for blend identification might be necessary, the presence of blends is confirmed.

Blends are formed using many different strategies, but those most relevant for this thesis look into how Computer-Mediated Communication affected the proliferation of blends. The results here show a very high correspondence with blends on social media and newly released content that would fall under the umbrella of popular culture. To illustrate this point, the often merged names of celebrities are commonly used to represent the habit of editors and content creators online to stand out. This habit of giving celebrity couples nicknames usually featuring a blend proved to be a massive commercial success in the early to mid-2000s, with the coinages still being used to refer to them and the specific era of their personal histories (Jones, 2022).

While certain blend types are created intentionally and with significant consideration, in order to accommodate for the duality of a couple for example, other blends that were discovered during this research process appear to be more opportunistic in their nature. In the sphere of social media, words that are used often depend on the context of the platform, whether posting on a specific thread online, chatting with someone via Messenger, or broadcasting thoughts on Twitter. The intention, or lack thereof, when it comes to blend creation is difficult to prove or disprove. However, the final product of it, has the potential to be adopted into *netspeak* and become an established lexical unit within the English language.

One of the key observations made during this study is that inventing new words online sparks further creativity and linguistic interest, rather than disapproval. In fact, one such instance can create entire new genres, fan-fictions, characters, etc. The genre of documentary has lately been further subdivided into *docudrama* (documentary+drama), *docuseries* (documentary+series), *docusoaps* (documentary+soap operas). The word “documentary” is uniquely productive in its nature, as it holds two very productive splinters. Hence, the blend iterations such as *shockumentary* (shock+documentary), *rockumentary* (rock+documentary) and *mockumentary* (mock+documentary) also fall under the scope of the

same headword. The next section will look more into the productivity of blends and the nature of commonly used splinters.

5.1.1 How words are created and recreated

This thesis argues that the lexical changes and inventions follow closely with the new patterns of understanding as well as online content digesting and challenge the pre-established notions via online discourse channels. The usage of lexical blends during political or marketing campaigns is a widely discussed topic in many online articles (Beliaeva, 2019) and previous studies (Medvid et al., 2020; Danilović-Jeremić & Josijević, 2017). Beliaeva also lists company names, cultural groups, professional vernacular, names of musical bands and other popular culture tropes as frequent domains in which blends are particularly poignant (2017:19). Besides the ability to reveal a hybrid nature of the denotata, Beliaeva also highlights the use of blends in wordplay by citing works by Renner (2015), Dressler (2000) and López Rúa (2004).

As displayed in the example of *documentary* inspired blends and dog-related blends listed in 3.3.1, certain domains seemingly produce more blends than others. Occasionally, one blended word can be enough to start a trend, subdomain, or genre. A great example of that is the blend *Bridezilla*, usually found in internet threads discussing wedding planning. The blend, which merges the word *bride* and an animated sci-fi character *Godzilla*, which became synonymous with wreaking havoc. Hence, we have blends such as *Groomzilla*, *Tinderzilla*, *momzilla*, *catzilla*, etc. This blend created a possibility for the splinter *-zilla* to become a highly productive splinter. Some of the examples listed and deconstructed below- *Megxit* and *Nutflix*, are created as a result of blend productivity, originating from well-established blends like *Brexit* (Britain+exit) and *Netflix* (internet+flicks). Upon inspecting around 220 blend creations, some splinters are easily noticeable to be more present than others. There has been significant research done in terms of splinter productivity, a lot of which has been cited in this study (Jurado, 2019; Lehrer, 2009; Beliaeva, 2019).

In the case of the online LGBTQ+ community, plenty of blends have been observed. Due to the fluidity of their gender and identity expression, certain blends have been created in the LGBTQ+ discourse community to best showcase the complexity of their predisposition. This is only a small portion of blends created in this domain: *transbian*, *hasbian*, *guncle*, *ambisextrous*, *aroace*, *gaydar*, *yestergay*, *gayborhood*, etc.

The electronic and tech industry is also a highly productive blend domain. Examples such as *email*, *emoticon*, *malware*, *alphanumeric*, *netizen*, *podcast*, *webisode*, *webinar*, among many others (Lee, 2023) that are in use online and offline are representative of how frequent usage of this formation tactic is still continually implemented to denote new technological concepts.

In comparison to the non-slang oriented collection of blends that was gathered on Wikipedia via crowdsourcing, the slang blends online that were found during this study belong to highly specific genres, which potentially render these blends more obscure to the mainstream audience. Certain iconic and very popular threads on Reddit and online, such as r/BlursedImages (2023), feature a blend in the title that is otherwise not found in domains other than internet slang. A peculiar online community of influencers developed within the last decade, called *petfluencers* (Green, 2023), that tend to present themselves online via a lot of lexical blends, presumably in an effort to stay relevant and cute. This community of online creators that pose as their pets online and frequently tend to try and interpret their pets' supposed thoughts in a jocular manner. Some of the examples of blends that have spun off from these conversations online are: *doggles*, *pupdate*, *pupparazzi*, *brofur*, *dogress*, *sniffari*, *barksplosion*, *begotiation*, etc.

Popular themes observed in blends from Appendix 1, the Frankenwords spreadsheet also include terms relating to friendships (*dudevorce*, *bromance*, *frenemy*, *Friendsgiving*), sexual relations and dating (*situationship*, *shagnostic*, *sexploitation*, *sexcretary*, *sexit*, *sexting*, *sexcapade*, *masturdating*, *fuckstrated*, *fapusation*, *dickstraction*, *bangxiety*, *manther*) societal roles and traits (*brogrammer*, *mombie*, *momager*, *momtrepreneur*, *meninist*, *hobosexual*, *holosexual*, *retrosexual*, *vacctivist*), as well as physical appearance-related blends (*adorkable*, *bronde*, *baldylocks*, *beirdo*, *fugly*, *frohawk*, *smexy*).

As previously mentioned in Chapter 4., the 12 blends that have been selected for a deeper analysis represent a variety of formation types. It has previously been proven that certain formation tactics are more prolific than others (Lehrer, 2007; Mattiello, 2019; Danilović-Jeremić, 2021), which this thesis also attests to. By submitting a random selection of candidate blends from the Frankenword sheet into Table 2, the representation of Lehrer's taxonomy, the results are disproportionate when comparing the number of blends belonging to each category. There is a large majority of blends that belong to one of the two main categories, Group I - which encompasses full words and splinter merges, or splinter and full word merges, and Group II which is reserved for blends made up of two splinters. The featured blend examples such as *selficide* and *gunclle* belong to Group I. Group II is

represented via the word *zoomer*. *Cronut* and *throuple* belong in Group III, as they contain two splinters that are taken from the beginning of the first word, and the other splinter with an ending from the second word. Groups IV, V, and VI all contain a degree of overlap, which makes them very difficult to distinguish from each other. The original chapter by Lehrer (2007) that the table of taxonomy is based on included type 4 with two subtypes. In this thesis, Group IV is represented by the blend *funemployed*, due to the complete overlap of the phoneme *-un*. Complete overlap of phonemes is rare, but Group IV also allows for partial overlap as in the blend *hickster* (hick+hipster). Blends assembled in Group V are formed via by far the rarest blend formation tactic, one that includes infixes, otherwise known as discontinuous elements. The representatives for this group are the blends *adorkable* and *detextive*. Group VI is fairly represented in this sample, and is characterized by partial overlap. The blends that are featured which belong to Group VI are *smize*, *promposal*.

It is possible to consider these blends are more or less obscure depending on the type of formation, however, blends are notoriously difficult to predict. Aside from productive splinters, which are related to blends formed based on analogy (Mattiello, 2019:5), there have been other instances of regulating and organizing the blend patterns (Beliaeva, 2019; Jurado, 2019).

5.2 Blends and the motivation for language change

As is already established, this thesis aims to answer two research questions, relating to the formation processes and usage habits of lexical blends found in the public domain on social media. However, the overarching question is the one that deals with language change on a larger scale. The theory chapter (2.1) mentions various reasons for language change, and various circumstances that have spurred the language to evolve. The most notable instances of language change are those that involve lexical change (Hickey, 2003). This discussion on language change also explains that, being an open-class language segment, lexical change is most mutable and susceptible to new input compared to phonetic or grammatical changes. However, there is significantly more speculation than actual scientific proof that would explain the motivation behind language change. There have been certain noticeable regularities, but most of them deal with how and not so much with why languages evolve. Nevertheless, all languages are prone to change, and the process is largely regular, albeit unpredictable (Hickey, 2003:2).

While it is challenging to pinpoint the exact origins, the motivation for such changes is clearer. The changes are either internally or externally motivated. As Hickey (2003) explains, the language changes that happen as a result of new lexical input belong to the category of externally motivated language change. This implies that there are no discernible internal reasons (e.g. the tendency of grammar to self-regulate) as to why a new instance of language change occurs, other than it may become more fashionable to use slightly altered expressions. Some expressions develop colloquially in order to speed up and shorten the linguistic output, or in order to appear new and creative. Alternatively, the rather outdated views on language consider word creativity in this sense a form of ‘language decay’ (Hickey, 2003:4), but Hickey theorizes that the attitude towards this vernacular correlates to the disapproving attitude towards the community of speakers that are more prone to such coinages.

5.3 The motivational aspects of coining blends

Language change is motivated by several factors, the most prominent of which being efficiency, creativity, and identity. Efficiency in relaying a message is one of the common motifs when creating and distributing lexical blends on social media. As mentioned in the theory chapter (2.1.1), there are circumstances such as character limit on posts on certain platforms such as Twitter, that could also potentially affect the tendencies to create words that would shorten the initial intended output. There are also other instances across platforms where strong censorship policies are applied, which in turn alter certain expressions in order to bypass the flagged terms (West, 2018). For example, one of the more recent slang terms that was coined in an attempt to circumvent these platform restrictions and various language censoring algorithms is - *unalive* (Mazurek, 2023), instead of the term *kill*. Lexical blends, in addition to compounds and coinages, appear to be the perfect vessel for content creators, advertisers and general users that seek to establish a captivating ‘hook’ in their writing and generate a response quickly, while also being creative and remaining true to themselves and their brand.

5.3.1 Efficiency

When it comes to the term ‘efficiency’, a lot of examples can be listed. One can even make a case that all blends might have been created in order to save time, character space or

in order to avoid a long explanation or a long phrase. Speech communities seldom adhere to prescriptive rules and are known to use ‘shortcuts’ (e.g. *finna* - getting ready to do something, (be) about to; Dictionary.com, 2023) or euphemisms and embellished language (e.g. *lavender ceiling* - a glass ceiling specifically imposed on members of the LGBTQ+ community: an unofficial upper limit to their professional advancement; Dictionary.com, 2023) to get the specific point across. As Wieler put it, “Lexical systems respond to the changes in social life, which demonstrates social essence of a language” (2021:55).

The examples featured in this study that best illustrate this aspect of blend-creation are *zoomer*, *throuple* and *smize*. The reason for including *zoomer* here is due to speakers coming to refer to a generation of people as Generation Z, a.k.a. those born roughly between the years 1997 and 2006. This prompted the need for a more concise and catchy term for people who belong to it. As previously described (see 4.2.6), *GenZee-er* or *GenZed-er* sounded clumsy and cumbersome, while the existence of the term *boomer* created a logical pathway into shortening the notion while also tying it to the same theme - age groups. This blend encapsulated firmly the notion of the commonly used generational slang term *boomer* and applied it to the concept of a new demographic cohort. Additionally, it created a gateway into potential blend creation, also known as splinter proliferation, by inspiring an even newer term - *zillennial*.

The intuitive way of thinking might have also influenced the creation of the next example, *throuple*. The definition of a couple implies the relationship between two people. Adding a *thr-*, that was borrowed from *three*, representing the number of members in a three-way relationship. Blending together *thr-* and *-ouple* is potentially enough to give speakers that have so far been unfamiliar with this notion, a hint towards its meaning. Based on observation of the social media websites used in this study and the usage of words to describe this phenomenon that is related to polyamory, the majority of people discussing it prefer to use the more condensed term ‘throuple’, in contrast to using a whole phrase such as a ‘three person relationship’.

Contrastively, the word *smize* follows a seemingly less intuitive formation process (see Lehrer, 2003). The blend *smize* is an abbreviation of a phrase *to smile with your eyes*, which helps condense a generously worded action into a very short, simple one (Murphy, 2023). This is an example that also illustrates the need of speakers or the original discourse community (in this case, the modeling community) to label an action that would otherwise take a whole phrase, and condense it by blending words. Additional discourse community related examples that used the same principle to abbreviate their niche-specific items and

actions are *cosplay* (costume+play), *nonsumer* (non+consumer), *literotica* (literary+erotica), *fursona* (fur+persona), *catio* (cat+patio), *cybrarian* (cyber+librarian), etc.

In addition to efficiency for the sake of efficiency itself, many blends that have been observed appear to be clipped for the sake of comedic relief and novelty. While admittedly difficult as it may be to pinpoint exact underlying motivation for shortening a phrase or compound into a blend, the fact that these terms exist and are in circulation in relevant discourse communities is considered reason enough for this thesis to include them.

Efficiency goes hand in hand with creativity in the two examples: *promposal* and *selficide*. Both of these examples are evidently two terms condensed into one, that also offer an air of novelty and entertainment when first digested. These two examples are an illustration of what Lehrer refers to as the ‘puzzle of novelty’, an action that provides a specific satisfaction and amusement for the reader that has gotten the point (Lehrer, 2003:370). Again, the two examples can be considered a witty example of word-play. These examples showcase that some blends are easily distinguishable and most likely immediately deconstructed upon getting acquainted with them in context. This is supported by the fact that, upon closer inspection, the social media posts which featured them in this sample offered no explanation, yet the readers have, as observed in the comments, mostly gotten the meaning of the novelty word. The context in which these two examples are found online gives the readers and social media users enough of a clue about the connotation within the blend.

5.3.2 Creativity and entertainment

Another motivating factor described in theory has to do with creativity, a commodity that is highly valued in the world of constant stimuli vying for our attention (Lehrer, 2007). Naturally, creativity is the essential ingredient in creative spaces such as art and all its forms. As previously mentioned in theory (2.1.1) the impact of pop culture on language change and the idea of blending words has been monumental. Several studies have been performed that tackle, for example, the blended episode titles of animated children’s TV series (Danilović-Jeremić, 2021). While the TV, and nowadays more popular, streaming platform side of the entertainment industry proved to be abundant with lexical blends, these word creations are also found in video-game titles (López Rúa, 2019), magazines, newspapers, etc. The idea of blending words allowed the opportunity for content producers to have their own spin-offs of popular brands or previously viral lexical blends.

Every now and then, blends that have been specifically coined for events, phenomena or as a response to a viral TV show or movie become a part of the online mainstream. The responses to some previous familiar blends are featured in Appendix 1, the Frankenwords spreadsheet, and include terms such as: *Megxit* (a slang term for the decision of couple Meghan Markle and Prince Harry to step back from their senior roles in the British royal family; Dictionary.com, 2022), *Nutflix* (a fake startup company made up by comedian John Oliver in support of net neutrality in 2014, imagined to play only videos of men getting kicked in the crotch; Dictionary.com, 2022), *Seaspiracy* (a 2021 documentary film about the environmental impact of fishing directed by and starring Ali Tabrizi; McVeigh, 2022), *Hatreon* (created as a response for groups and individuals banned from platforms, an “alt-right version of Patreon” - a popular crowd-funding platform; Wikipedia, 2022), the Duke of *Deadinburgh* (the reference to the death of Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Phillip, made by a Youtube channel – Ask a Mortician, 2021).

Some examples that can be classified as a creative response to common phenomena that have been featured in the results chapter are *promposal*, *mantrum*, *selficide*, *funemployed*. These creative blends could have been created as a response to the common presupposition that the headword⁵ is commonly associated with. For example, most people associate the period of unemployment with an array of negative feelings. While that kind of interpretation is entirely valid, the inclusion of *fun* in the word *unemployed* immediately shifts the perception into a positive one, creating the necessary distinction. While *funemployed* can be only a temporary description of one’s circumstances in life, the deeper analysis discloses a propensity of those who identify as such to enjoy life, while also choosing a more optimistic view on what is conventionally considered an unfavorable circumstance (lack of employment).

Part of the motivation for blend proliferation and productive blend splinters is that a lot of it can be used to bridge a gap in meaning or establish similar intentions related to the idea without fully committing to it. The term *mantrum* likely exists due to the fact that the notion of a tantrum mostly refers to children (OED, 2023) but referring to the behavior in question could be considered an insult. It is, of course, probable that more than one motivating aspect contributed to creating blends, or that nearly all of them display a spectrum

⁵ According to Bauer and Choroleeva, there is a distinction between endocentric and exocentric lexical blends. According to them, in endocentric blends “the first component modifies the second one, the latter functioning as a semantic head”. (Bauer, 2006; cited in Jurado, 2019)

of these motivations in varying degrees. Certain examples, however, have been chosen here as they seemingly represent a better depiction of a specific trait or motivation.

Another example that embodies efficiency while capturing the creativity and complexity of the notion that is being described is *Blursday*, a word referring to the sensation of uncertainty of time passing and days of the week. Instead of going through the process of explaining how difficult it has been to tell the days apart, especially during the times of the pandemic, social media users have come up with a term that describes the precise feeling (Slang, 2022). In certain posts that were used as a basis for establishing research pathways in this thesis, such as with the example blend *sadcited*, the users of online platforms expressed the need to form new words due to their perceived lack of a specific sentiment in current vocabulary.

What is novel in terms of exchanging blends, however, investigating the use of blends on social media provides insight into a novel context. In this study, many blends were used online in posts, without providing the arguably necessary explanation for their origin and meaning. However, once paired with an image, a photograph, a video recording or some other kind of medium, the blend becomes easily readable (understood) or in terms of comedic value, humorous. Depending on the intended output of the user posting the blend, in the online setting and context, blends can exist and be disseminated in nearly any register. While they are mostly used as jocular, short-lived ad hoc creations (Mattiello, 2019), their potential in meaning-making appears boundless in the virtual sphere.

Both Lehrer (2007) and Renner (2015) agree that blends exist as a form of word-play, among other functions. One of the most common ways that the Internet, as well as social media, utilizes the entertaining potential of blends is through what is known as ‘meme culture’. According to Shifman, memes “may best be understood as pieces of *cultural information that pass along from person to person, but gradually scale into a shared social phenomenon*” (2013:18). She continues to define these digital creations as “highly compatible to the way culture is formed on Web 2.0” (2013:18). She solidifies the definition by stating that “memes shape the mindsets, form the behavior and actions of the social group” (2013:18). Blends, wordplay and the culture of Internet memes are three closely knit concepts online. While the three function without each other, the overwhelming amount of content produced online is achieved through some form of wordplay (Zenner & Geeraerts, 2018) and often involving lexical blends. These multimodal artifacts, as Procházka (2014) labels them, have been made possible by the Internet as they incorporate to varying degree, images, text, sounds and music from various sources. In fact, the Internet memes have been so

innovative that Procházka considers them a new form of literacy. I find it relevant to include memes as blend contributors and devices of distribution since a large part of the blends collected in the process of this study originated from meme materials.

Social media, Facebook, Twitter and Reddit in particular, are very notable sources for meme production and distribution (Procházka, 2014:60). It is so common that there are entire pages and threads dedicated to following up memes and trends related to them (Neo Reach, 2023). Because of their interactive nature, memes have established themselves as a vessel for creativity, humor and sarcasm. This kind of blend content disseminates on social media because of the ability to have interactive exchanges (Procházka, 2014:54) on what are now dialogic platforms. The results have shown in what ways the communication habits of online speakers have changed, and exchanging memes as a way of communicating is certainly one of many novelties of digital literacy.

Some examples gathered in appendix 1 - the Frankenwords spreadsheet illustrate this kind of creativity: *meowther* (meow+mother; meme presenting a cat and her kittens), *pigloo* (pig+igloo; meme commentary on an article about wild hogs keeping warm in a Canadian winter; Betuel, 2023), *Sunturday* (Sunday+Saturday; meme exploring the idea of a three day weekend), *outernet* (out+Internet; meme beckoning the readers to go outside). Granted, the majority of blends that appear in memes are opportunistic, one-time words that are referred to as *occasionalisms*, or nonce-formations.

Certain cultural references can be made using these blends. Here is an example (image 4) of a reaction that was posted on an Instagram meme page shortly after judgment was passed in the case of Gwynneth Paltrow's skiing accident (Helmore, 2023) and following the indictment of the former US president, Donald Trump (Geoghegan, 2023), which happened in the same week. During this week, both of these events were trending topics online. The humorous nature of this meme is expressed by forming a blend using the first part of name Gwynneth, and the last part of the word innocent, which she was ultimately deemed to be in this case, hence *gwynnocent*. This image and commentary of her is juxtaposed with the image of Donald Trump, the 45th president of the United States of America. The commentary that was made relates to the news of the indictment he received that same week. The meme reference was also made via Gwynneth's name, as for a brief period of time, while this, by some accounts 'frivolous lawsuit' (Cerullo, 2023), was being tried in court, her name almost became synonymous with court proceedings in the online meme creation circles.



Image 4. Image showing the gwynnocent meme, taken from sainthoax Instagram page (2023)

As a contrast to the funny blends, the discussion would be incomplete without mentioning the blends that are used in other contexts, both online and printed, and in academic registers. Mattiello states that blends “formed in specialized contexts, such as pharmacy, biology, or information technology, are more stable formations that experts adopt for their efficiency (Language Economy Principle) and effectiveness (Iconicity Principle)” (2019:6).

5.3.3 Online identity and branding

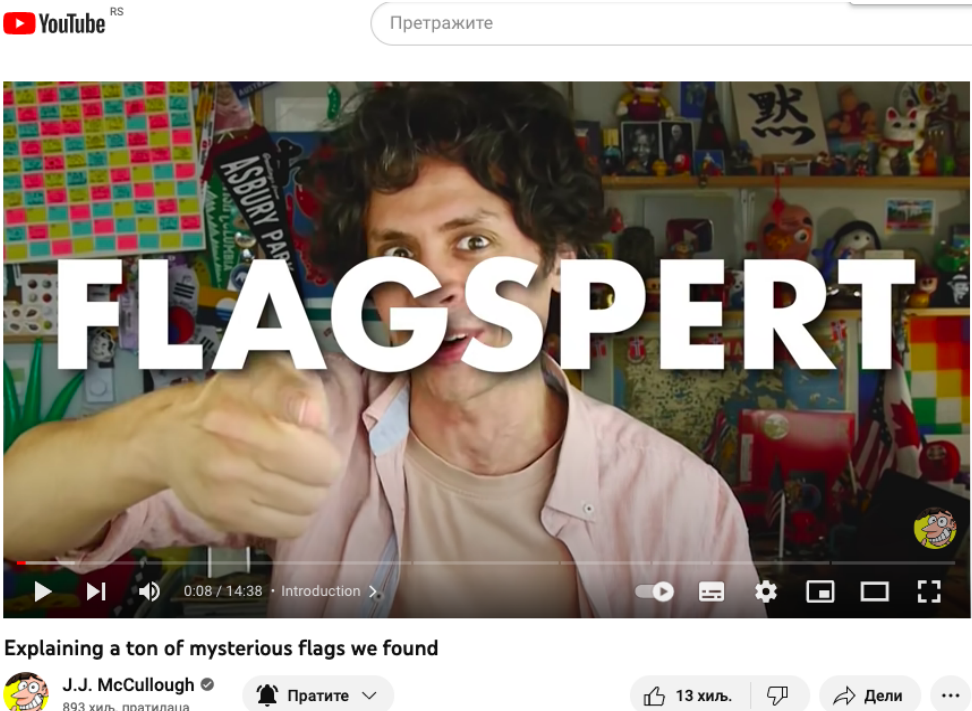
The third aspect that appears highly dominant in the blend creation process and motivation for blend creation is the aspect that involves creating identity online or establishing a brand.

It used to be the most common place for blends to appear in advertisements, commercials, magazines, headlines and product names (Lehrer, 2007). However, with the overwhelming majority of content moving online and outside of the realm of traditional marketing (Brooke, 2022), agencies and brands are forced to take their content creativity online. This is what social media marketers for brands such as Cronut™ (trademarked pastry), Funemployed™ (card game), Doggles™ (goggles made for dogs) and Biscoff™

(coffee-tasting biscuit spread) noticed and utilized in the digital sphere to market and showcase their product.

Additionally, certain groups or individuals use their creative language skills in order to set themselves or others apart, relying on the newly coined terms to emphasize a specific trait, behavior or belonging. The results have shown several examples and how they were used on social media to showcase identity. Examples such as *Tinderella*, *zoomer* and *funemployed* can describe more complex traits or habits which are condensed into a single word. Results have also shown that labeling someone as a *Tinderella*, for example, may not constitute much outside of a very specific context, in this case, online dating. However, this kind of multilayered blend that encompasses both physical appearance (usually an attractive female) and an action (accidental swipe left) at the same time is highly efficient, creative and discreetly describes one's traits. This blend is also a *gateway blend* into other creative spinoffs, or a potential productive splinter, on the topic of Tinder and its users (such as *Tinderzilla*).

Other instances of motivation behind blend creation could be the propensity of certain age groups or social groups to stand out by using novel forms, and attract attention by means of coining new slang language. The less common examples include labels such as *transbian* (transgender+lesbian; 2022), *flagspert* (flag+expert; 2022), *vacctivist* (vaccine+activist; 2022).





YouTube ^{RS} Претражите

FLAGSPERT

0:08 / 14:38 • Introduction >

Explaining a ton of mysterious flags we found

J.J. McCullough  893 хилъ. пратилица

Пратите 




13 хилъ.   Дели 

Image 5. showing the youtuber using the blend *flagspert* (taken from the J.J. McCullough Youtube channel, 2023)

There are plenty of blends referring to race, mental capabilities and other physical characteristics that are most likely to be used humorously or sarcastically to refer to someone's identity or traits. Blends such as *caucacity* (caucasian+audacity; Dictionary.com, 2023), *whitesplain* (white+explain; Dictionary.com, 2023), *meninist* (men+feminist, Dictionary.com, 2023), *feminazi* (feminist+nazism; Dictionary.com, 2023), *libtard* (liberal+retard; Dictionary.com, 2023), *wigger* (white+nigger; Dictionary.com, 2023), *whitemare* (white+nightmare; Urban Dictionary, 2023), *whitemanistan* (white man+Afghanistan; Reddit, 2023) all feature a certain degree of sexist, ableist or racist bias. The works of Wang and Kulkarni (2017), however divulge that “slang demonstrates prevalent gender and religious stereotypes“. Their work confirms the perception that slang can be used as a way to distinguish amongst one another in an online setting and that there is a prevailing tendency to label the carriers of specific traits in a colloquial exchange. The same authors have stated that “slang is firmly grounded in social connections and contexts enabling “group identity” (2017:1). This supports the observation that the ideals established in political correctness are sometimes disregarded, even mocked, in online colloquial exchanges.

Lexical blends can be taken as an example that reflects the changes in opinions on societal issues, either by inventing new vocabulary to overcome what is no longer considered politically correct or deliberately using new lexicon to earmark and criticize that same shift in mainstream views. Based on the data gathered during this study, an observation can be made that blends are often crafted to respond to some kind of politically (in)correct or intentionally ambiguous reference to a societal change, behavior or event (Mattiello, 2019). The equal rights movement and symbolic activism inspired the outpouring of neologisms and leans heavily into the power of words (Zavattaro, 2022). Izavčuk (2022) explores whether lexical blends and other intentionally fabricated language might be used as a peculiar countermeasure.

Just as lexical innovations can contribute to a unique linguistic identity of an animated television series (e.g. *Aquatraz*, *Amademoose*, *Excalibanana*, *Pinkasso*; Danilović-Jeremić, 2021:55), using language in a particular way is also an integral part of a person's identity. One's idiolect also influences the perception of one's identity when communicating online, and using blends, as well as other patterns, vocabulary and lexical constructions tends to convey a vivid image of one's characteristics (Azucar & Marengo, 2018). The choice to use

blends in online exchanges indicates that the user wishes to convey a humorous, informal or innovative message by specifically altering or employing this manner of word creation. Occasionally, this way of thinking and language-generating could mean that they are establishing their belonging to a specific discourse group, or showing intimate knowledge of the very niche-specific jargon that can be found in online forums.

5.4 Limitations

This study is an accumulation of the blends posted in the public domain on social media while drawing references and metadata from other relevant studies that are available online. However, the studies and the data featured in this thesis have not been easily obtainable at first. This section of the Discussion chapter outlines the limitations that have become evident as the research progressed.

The process of data collection proved to be the most demanding part of the research. The data that is readily available online is also largely unorganized and difficult to obtain via simple searches. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, blends that are used in slang have shown up rather sporadically and without much context. The process of delimiting a sample group was particularly difficult in this case. The non-systematic nature of the Internet has presented a challenge in terms of establishing patterns of language usage and approaching it in a scientific and systematic manner for research purposes. While it is somewhat straightforward to look up a term and find a definition on the Internet, the focal point of the research dealt with as of yet not defined terms, which presented an obstacle during the initial phase of blend collection. The solution to this obstacle was to change the perspective on blend collection, and consulting the more recent slang dictionaries that gathered neologisms, and then choosing the blends out of these lists one by one. Another system of collection involved typing the word ‘blend’ or ‘portmanteau’ in the search bar of the relevant social media platforms, which generated further input. The merged collection of blends has been entered into an Excel sheet, which was named ‘Frankenwords’, and the blends were structurally dissected into constituent parts. These were referred to as ‘candidate blends’, out of which a small selection, i.e. the ‘final sample’, was hand-picked for closer analysis of blend usage and formation patterns on the Internet. Even though the sample is arguably small, it arguably represents the extent of online blend creation, and it has a high degree of internal validity. The external validity, however, remains limited due to the small selection of blends that were closely analyzed.

Online versions of academic and non-academic sources such as Urban Dictionary, Cambridge Dictionary and the Oxford English Dictionary have presented limited results regarding the simple category of ‘blends’. In fact, the advanced searches that generally involve the formation types, usage types (colloquial, rare, slang, archaic, etc), parts of speech, and registers have failed to identify and distinguish ‘blends’ as a relevant and separate category. This meant that upon typing ‘blend’ or ‘portmanteau’ in the search bar, the results would only go as far as the literal term and not include the words that would fall under the lexical category of blends. When it comes to the full scope of online dictionaries that were used in this study, The Online Slang Dictionary (2022) and Dictionary.com (2022) came up with separate categories for ‘slang’, ‘clippings’ and ‘colloquial’, from which the blends have been manually selected. The assumption here is that slang dictionaries have already been created to be specific enough in their nature, that users are not allowed the possibility to narrow it down further by implementing categories such as ‘noun’, ‘technology’ or any other defining term that would aim at sizing the corpus down to a manageable number of entries.

Previous studies have, for example, found ways of bypassing this data collection issue using Twitter APIs (Application Programming Interface; 2022) which allow the scanning of the social media platform through specific keywords (Cook, 2011; Barret, 2006). However, this study was focused on using dictionaries for sourcing of the blends and social media for providing context and support by ways of real-life usage.

The objects of the study belong to a category that is usually found on the margins, which can inherently present a challenge regarding their validity. One of the limitations of this study in particular was the colloquial biases regarding words and especially blends outside of academic sources or prescriptive linguistic rules. These words are difficult to identify, categorize and analyze because of their essence and due to how often language changes happen. Nevertheless, these traits should not be considered justifications for the linguistic community not to attempt to follow up with these developments in certain attributes of language.

6. Conclusion

The present study has considered the elements of word creation, more specifically, lexical blends that are multiplying online across social media domains. The investigation into blend creation tactics and the patterns of usage online was accomplished through a broader collection of candidate blends, and a more specific qualitative analysis of the final sample of 12 words. The comprehensive analysis included the assembly of definitions gathered from online dictionaries supported by the examples of social media posts where the blends have been mentioned and used in authentic contexts.

In order to better understand the creation and usage of portmanteau online slang expressions and their effects on advancing the conversation, the choice of methods had to be almost exclusively Internet based. The explorative nature of the methods in this instance led the researcher to employ manual selection of examples from online databases of slang, and to access relevant discourse communities in order to observe the dissemination of lexical blends in a spontaneous environment. The thesis is characterized as data-driven, which in this case means that the entries chosen for this study have been manually selected according to a list of pre-established criteria, as presented in 3.3.1. The initial sample of blends contained 220 examples. Upon applying the criteria, the working sample contained around 35 blends. The final sample was formed and investigated according to researcher's own perceptions regarding the examples that would best represent the intricate linguistic properties that lexical blends have so far been confirmed to possess.

Besides answering the question of blend definition, origin and usage, the study also focuses on answering how these neologisms are being coined online. In order to investigate how blends are formed, the study relies on Lehrer's blend structure taxonomy. This study classifies the blends into six groups (I-VI), based on the structure and degree of overlap. The common types of blend formation, a full word and a splinter, were then compared to the somewhat less common types of blends that occur online, such as blends consisting of two merged splinters. Online coinages seem to be rather opportunistic in nature, and often feature a strong humorous element. It has also been observed that blends tend to reflect the duality of certain concepts that have, with the advancement of technology, become trending topics.

The results demonstrate the extragrammatical nature of blends as Mattiello suggests (2019), but also that blends tend to provoke splinter productivity which can ultimately lead to more stable blend creation patterns. The analyzed blends have also revealed a certain amount

of popularity in terms of registers and discourse communities that seem to prefer blending as one of the ways of contributing to the lexicon of their own niche interests. While it was evident that slang as a register is more acquainted with blends in everyday use, there have been other registers found in online databases where blends were useful in more than just instances of wordplay. There is yet to be compiled a singular database dedicated to blends, or blends found in online use as a specific sub-genre.

The origins of blends in an online environment can at times be difficult to pinpoint. While incredibly useful tools and date stamps exist in most online exchanges, it is tremendously challenging to ascertain whether the blend was created for purely online consumption, or if it had been recorded in speech prior to being published online. Additionally, the research focused on blends found online that are otherwise not documented by any official academic sources or databases of the English language. This presented significant challenges during collecting of the initial sample, such as accessing and organizing the information into a working sample. The main motivation, observing and documenting blends as they appear online in slang, has, despite those challenges, been completed successfully. Understanding the motivations behind the blend usage online was the focal point of the discussion chapter, which presented three major aspects of blend motivation and creation. Efficiency, creativity and entertainment, as well as building an online identity and branding are thought to be at the core of informal use of this lexical phenomenon. However, one of the limitations that could have affected the outcome of this study is the narrow final sample. While it was enough to showcase a multitude of blend traits and origins, the sample of 12 blends may not have been enough to unearth the entire scope of possibilities of blend motivations.

This study was also limited to three dictionaries and three social media platforms as sources of data. The Internet nowadays has expanded so much that non-moderators, everyday users like myself, could only access a very small sample of posts and published content. In this field of research, one that relies on the Internet as a basis for linguistic input, there is always a possibility to either omit, overlook or not have access to certain potentially valuable sources and platforms.

Another noteworthy aspect of the platforms which were used to collect data is the different demographics that are represented on different platforms. The demographics differ from one online platform to another. The presence or absence of these demographics might have skewed the results or potentially influenced the researcher's own perceptions of how frequent these lexical blends seem to be in online exchanges. The Internet is an enormous

database, and certain platforms are said to be biased and hold specific attitudes (Brandon, 2023) towards language use that could have potentially influenced what the search results have shown. Also, the methods of assessing these definitions and general online content is almost always crowdsourced, which is potentially unreliable.

Several paths could be further explored in future studies. One of the proposed starting points could be a comprehensive database of Internet slang that includes blends, acronyms, coinages, phrases and other non-essential terms that still qualify for research based on criteria mentioned in this thesis. Both slang as register, and blends as a lexical type have typically been marginalized. As Danilović-Jeremić (2021) concludes, in depth studies of lexical blends have been conducted, yet the genres and domains in which they are created have been left underexplored. Further avenues of research could involve investigating conceptual blending online and tendencies of the online speakers to merge concepts as often as witnessed here. The results of this study are merely indicative and further research comparing how constraints on different social media affect language usage is needed.

Finally, this study supports the view of some scholars like Mattiello (2021:3) that lexical blends deserve an equal place in the English morphological descriptions as other structural formations, especially due to their labeling function. This thesis concludes that blends appear to be more than just lexical oddities, and can be distinguished from compounds in terms of concepts they represent and in terms of structure and regularity.

7. References

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8. Appendix 1 - The Frankenwords Spreadsheet

1	anecdata	anecdote+data
2	adorkable	adorable+dork
3	askhole	ask+asshole
4	assache	ass+headache
5	baecation	bae+vacation
6	baldylocks	bald+goldylocks
7	bangxiety	banging+anxiety
8	barksplosion	bark+explosion
9	bastich	bastard+bitch
10	begotiation	begging+negotiation
11	belfie	butt+selfie
12	biscoff	biscuit+coffee
13	blerd	black+nerd
14	budtender	bud+bartender
15	blogging	web+log
16	Baltimoron	Baltimore+moron
17	Blursday	blur+Thursday
18	blursed	blessed+cursed
19	boxador	boxer+labrador
20	boregasm	bored+orgasm
21	bronde	brown+blonde
22	bromance	bro+romance
23	brookie	brownie+cookie
24	broflake	bro+snowflake

25	brofur	brother+fur
26	brogrammer	bro+programmer
27	broscience	bro+science
28	bridezilla	bride+godzilla
29	brony	bro+pony
30	beirdo	beird+weirdo
31	brainbow	brain+rainbow
32	catio	cat+patio
33	cavachon	cavalier+bichon
34	caucacity	caucasian+audacity
35	chairdrobe	chair+wardrobe
36	chillax	chill+relax
37	chocoholic	chocolate+alcoholic
38	cliterature	clitoris+literature
39	cosplay	costume+play
40	coronavsary	corona+anniversary
41	craftivism	craft+activism
42	cringetastic	cringe+fantastic
43	cronut	croissant+donut
44	confuzzled	confused+puzzled
45	corgipoo	corgi+poodle
46	cybrarian	cyber+librarian
47	cyberzine	cyber+magazine
48	demotional	detached+emotional
49	Deadinburgh	dead+Edinburgh
50	detextive	detective+text

51	diplobrat	diplomat+brat
52	dickstraction	dick+distraction
53	disastrophe	disaster+catastrophe
54	dolo	down+low
55	donorcycle	donor+motorcycle
56	doggles	dog+goggles
57	dogress	dog+progress
58	dankrupt	dank+bankrupt
59	duffin	donut+muffin
60	dudevorce	dude+divorce
61	earape	ear+rape
62	edutainment	education+entertainment
63	evailable	electronic+available
64	fapusation	fap+acusation
65	fauxhawk	faux+mohawk
66	fauxmosexual	faux+homosexual
67	fantabulous	fantastic+fabulous
68	feminazi	feminist+nazist
69	flexitarian	flexible+vegetarian
70	flagspert	flags+expert
71	flawsome	flaws+awesome
72	flavorite	flavor+favorite
73	Friendsgiving	friends+Thanksgiving
74	frenemy	friend+enemy
75	frohawk	afro+hawk
76	fugly	fucking+ugly

77	fuckstrated	fuck+frustrated
78	fuckening	fuck+reconing
79	fucktard	fuck+retard
80	funemployed	fun+employed
81	furkid	fur+kid
82	furminator	fur+exterminator
83	Furnado	fur+tornado
84	fursona	fur+persona
85	gayborhood	gay+neighborhood
86	gaycation	gay+vacation
87	gaydar	gay+radar
88	ginormous	gigantic+enormous
89	glamping	glamorous+camping
90	guesstimate	guess+estimate
91	gunt	gay+cunt
92	guncle	gay+uncle
93	grelow	green+yellow
94	hangry	hungry+angry
95	hasbian	has+been+lesbian
96	hickster	hick+hipster
97	holosexual	holographic+homosexual
98	Hatreon	hate+Patreon
99	hobosexual	hobo+homosexual
100	hunty	hunny+cunty
101	ignoranus	ignorant+anus
102	incel	involuntary+celibate

103	infodemic	information+pandemic
104	jeggings	jeans+leggings
105	jorts	jeans+shorts
106	kickasserole	kickass+casserole
107	kidlife crisis	kid+midlife crisis
108	labsky	labrador+husky
109	libtard	liberal+retard
110	liger	lion+tiger
111	labradoodle	labrador+poodle
112	limequat	lime+kumquat
113	literotica	literature+erotica
114	manstruating	man+menstruating
115	manther	man+panther
116	mansplain	man+explain
117	mangina	man+vagina
118	mankini	man+bikini
119	mantrum	man+tantrum
120	maskne	mask+acne
121	masturdating	masturbate+dating
122	meowther	meow+mother
123	meowsterpiece	meow+masterpiece
124	Megxit	Megan+exit (Brexit)
125	meninist	men+feminist
126	mipple	man+nipple
127	mocktails	mock+cocktails
128	mockumentary	mock+documentary

129	momager	mom+manager
130	momtrepreneur	mom+entrepreneur
131	moobs	man+boobs
132	morkie	malteser+yorkie
133	mombie	mom+zombie
134	netnography	internet+etnography
135	nappetizer	nap+appetizer
136	nintendinitis	nintendo+tendonitis
137	nonsumer	non+consumer
138	Nutflix	nut+Netflix
139	nutrageous	nut+outrageous
140	outernet	out+Internet
141	pandelerium	pandemonium+delerium
142	painsomnia	pain+insomnia
143	pastafarian	pasta+rastafarian
144	petfluencer	pet+influencer
145	phubbing	phone+snubbing
146	pigloo	pig+igloo
147	pineberry	pineapple+strawberry
148	playcation	play+vacation
149	plogging	plogg+jogging
150	pomsky	pomeranian+husky
151	pokemon	pocket+monster
152	pornocchio	porn+pinnochio
153	promposal	prom+proposal
154	procaffeinating	procrastinating+caffein

155	pupparazzi	pup+paparazzi
156	puppuccino	pup+cappuccino
157	pupdate	pup+update
158	radass	radical+badass
159	retrosexual	retro+metrosexual
160	sadcited	sad+excited
161	sadfishing	sad+catfishing
162	sadtember	sad+september
163	sarchasm	sarcastic+chasm
164	scumbro	scum+bro
165	seaspiracy	sea+conspiracy
166	sexcretary	sex+secretary
167	sexcapade	sex+escapade
168	sexit	sex+exit
169	sexting	sex+texting
170	sexploitation	sex+exploitation
171	selficide	selfie+suicide
172	selfiesteem	selfie+self-esteem
173	shagnostic	shagging+agnostic
174	sheroism	she+heroism
175	shelfie	shelf+selfie
176	shlitty	shit+litty
177	shatmosphere	shit+atmosphere
178	sheeple	sheep+people
179	skort	skirt+shorts
180	skullet	skull+mullet

181	slactivist	slacking+activitst
182	sliving	slay+living
183	smelfie	smell+selfie
184	smexy	smart+sexy
185	smize	smile+eyes
186	sniffari	sniffing+safari
187	snowga	snow+yoga
188	situationship	situation+relationship
189	Sunturday	Saturday+Sunday
190	spork	spoon+fork
191	standom	stan+fandom
192	staycation	stay+vacation
193	stresstember	stress+september
194	Tinderella	Tinder+Cinderella
195	tangelo	tangerine+pomelo
196	teamcher	team+teacher
197	thinspiration	thin+inspiration
198	therapissed	therapy+pissed
199	threepeat	three+repeat
200	throuple	three+couple
201	transbian	transsexual+lesbian
202	trashtag	trash+hashtag
203	trill	true+real
204	twerk	twist+jerk
205	twant	twat+cunt
206	tween	twelve+teen

207	unsult	underhand+insult
208	vacactivist	vaccination+activist
209	voluntold	volunteer+told
210	webinar	web+seminar
211	whigger	white+nigger
212	whitemanistan	white+man+Afghanistan
213	whitesplain	white+explain
214	whitemare	white+nightmare
215	wronglish	wrong+English
216	yestergay	yesterday+gay
217	zedonk	zebra+donkey
218	zonkey	zebra+donkey
219	zoomer	Gen Z+boomer