

## Language Innovations in Digital Literature: Neologisms in Filipino Alternative Universe Fanfiction

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examined neologisms in a 702,917-word corpus of Filipino Alternate Universe fanfiction on X and TikTok. One hundred one neologisms were analysed based on their morphological structure following Dimaculangan and Sarmiento's (2024) proposed framework for Philippine English (PhE) word-formation. The study also expands the framework by proposing additional categories such as phonetic play, the multi-layered processes, and subcategories of orthographic deviation, namely, syllabic metathesis, retro spelling, extensionism, punctuolexicalization, and alphanumeric substitution. Additionally, 100 Generation Z participants were surveyed as to their familiarity with the identified neologisms. Results revealed a prevalent understanding of these neologisms, suggesting their widespread use in digital literature and discourse. This study contributes to the expanding lexicon of PhE and the Filipino language, offering insights into Gen Z's digital language innovation.*

*Keywords: Alternative universe; gen Z; morphological analysis; neologisms; Philippine English*

### INTRODUCTION

Language evolves alongside society, with technological advancement introducing concepts that require new terms (Widyana et al., 2024). In linguistics, new words are known as neologisms. Studying neologisms might explain how language adapts, bridges old and new meanings, and expands the lexicon. As Monderin and Go (2021) noted, this flexibility is central to language, allowing it to meet the shifting needs of its users. The internet has significantly accelerated this evolution. Facebook, Instagram, and X foster distinct communication styles shaped by character limits (Clark-Keane, 2023; Park & Namkung, 2022; Shahlee & Ahmad, 2022). Although social media is responsible for about 70% of emerging vocabulary, many terms are not formally recognised in dictionaries (Čilić & Plauc, 2020; Zayyan et al., 2023), yet they remain widely used in digital communication. Similarly, online literature became a creative outlet, with fanfiction gaining traction, especially on X. By the mid-2010s, it emerged as a K-pop hub where fans authored stories about their favourite idols (Ehrlich, 2020). This gave rise to the Alternate Universe (AU) subgenre, where fans reimagine idols' lives using synopses, character profiles, and fake chat dialogues (Caro, 2021; Rouse, 2020).

TikTok is also a popular application for AUs, with Southeast Asian fans using local audio on fan clips to create transnational stories (Geraghty et al., 2022). McGorry (2022) studied TikTok Point-of-View (POV) edits within fandoms, wherein authors would label the lead role as *Y/N* (Your Name), allowing readers to imagine themselves in the story. This became an alternative way for fans to engage with their idols. Consequently, this led researchers to study fanfiction and its culture. Geraghty et al. (2022) argued that fanfiction has evolved from a niche, community-based activity into a globally recognised mode of storytelling. It enables fans to articulate emotional connections to media and extend narratives beyond their original contexts. They further emphasised that fanfiction fosters creativity in ways traditional literature may not, asserting its legitimacy as a subject of academic study. Supporting this, Bangun et al. (2020) examined the works of AU authors *eskalokal* and *gabenertwice* on X, focusing on their creations and reader interactions. Findings suggested that fanfiction is shifting from physical to digital copies, aligning with broader trends in online media consumption noted by Geraghty et al. (2022).

The prevalence of digital fanfiction has also influenced fan language. Zayyan et al. (2023) found that K-pop fandoms frequently use neologisms involving vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and pragmatic shifts. Fans were found replacing words with emojis and numbers for letters. Similarly, Meinawati et al. (2021) observed that Indonesian K-pop communities online use abbreviations as a secret language for efficient discourse. In the Philippines, neologism studies centre on 'Internet Philippine English' (IPhE), coined by Gustilo and Dino (2019) to label Filipinos' online English usage. Media plays a key role in shaping IPhE, particularly in digital spaces where much of its evolution occurs (Paz, 2022). IPhE features altered spellings, semantic shifts, and the addition or reduction of characters. Common word-formation processes include affixation, blending, coining, and compounding. Dologuin and Lood (2023) categorised these neologisms into newly coined terms, existing words with new meanings, and words with expanded definitions. While Paz (2022) argued that these innovations remain unsuitable for academic contexts, they continue to enrich PhE through digital platforms.

Indeed, existing research offers significant insights into IPhE; however, it appears to predominantly analyse mainstream social media content, leaving Filipino fandoms underexplored. It then fails to capture the linguistic creativity that characterises fanfiction communities. The apparent lack of focused research is relevant considering the potential linguistic experimentation occurring within these online groups. Thus, the present study analysed the neologisms found in Filipino AUs, adopting Dimaculangan and Sarmiento's (2024) word-formation framework. While the framework provides a valuable typology of neologisms in PhE, its scope has so far been limited to general social media contexts. This study extends its application to AUs to examine how well the framework captures Gen Z language. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing discussions on digital morphology, creative word formation, and the evolving nature of youth-led language. Drawing as well from Horwich's (2004) use theory of meaning, the study: (1) identified the neologisms in AUs; (2) categorised the neologisms based on their word-formation processes; (3) analysed the morphological structures of the neologisms; (4) defined their meanings based on their usage in the story; (5) investigated Gen Z's familiarity and understanding of these neologisms; and (6) outlined the implications of the study to language, linguistics, and literature.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-method approach. First, a qualitative method examined neologisms in a 709,917-word corpus built from 104 AUs on X and TikTok by Gen Z authors (born 1997-2006), verified through self-disclosures on their accounts or linked Carrd websites. 2020-2024 stories from different fandoms (e.g., K-pop, P-pop, Anime) were converted to plain text files for processing using AntConc 4.2, yielding 35,736-word tokens, which were manually reviewed.

Neologism identification followed two primary criteria: (1) lexical items not attested in major English dictionaries, and (2) expressions exhibiting semantic, syntactic, or orthographic innovation relative to conventional usage. While the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (n.d.) was used as an initial reference, it was not treated as a prescriptive authority. Rather, it served as a contrastive baseline to identify absences in institutionalised global English. This allowed the study to highlight the hybridised and culturally specific neologisms found within IPhE.

The identified neologisms were categorised following Dimaculangan and Sarmiento's (2024) framework. Morphological structures were analysed by segmenting words into roots and affixes, with attention given to overt morphological markers and subtle morphophonemic shifts caused by internal modifications. To analyse meaning, the study adopted Horwich's (2004) use theory of meaning, which emphasises that a word's definition emerges from how it is used in context. Candidate neologisms were contextualised by examining their actual usage within AU storylines to ensure that they represented meaningful patterns rather than isolated forms.

Second, a quantitative method assessed the familiarity and acceptance of the neologisms among Gen Z through an online survey of 100 participants. Using an expert-validated four-point Likert scale questionnaire, the survey measured recognition of the terms and their contextual meanings. Data was collected from March to May 2024. The scale provided a guide that outlined its four interpretations: (1) Very Familiar: Participants highly recognise, understand, and confidently use the word; (2) Somewhat Familiar: Participants can identify the word with a vague meaning but lack usage confidence; (3) Not Very Familiar: Participants have encountered the word a few times but do not fully grasp its meaning; (4) Never Heard: Participants have no prior exposure with the neologisms.

TABLE 1. Four-point Likert scale for online survey

Mean	Interpretation
3.26 – 4.00	Very Familiar
2.51 – 3.25	Somewhat Familiar
1.76 – 2.50	Not Very Familiar
1.00 – 1.75	Never heard

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### IDENTIFIED NEOLOGISMS IN AUs

The study identified 101 AU neologisms, revealing 55 terms beyond Dimaculangan and Sarmiento's (2024) framework, prompting the proposal of additional word-formation processes. Furthermore, the findings support Geraghty et al.'s (2022) view of fanfiction as narratively innovative, challenging literary conventions through new storytelling and language experimentation on digital platforms, enriching online communication creatively.

## NEOLOGISMS PER WORD-FORMATION PROCESS

This section presents sample AU neologisms by their word formation, highlighting contemporary users' continuous expansion of digital language for unique and complex self-expression, underscoring the importance of studying their creation and usage.

### COMPOUNDING

Table 2 presents sample neologisms formed through compounding, which involves combining two or more words to create a new term. However, compounding in AUs is not merely a mechanical joining of lexical items; it serves both semantic compression and sociopragmatic expression. These terms often fill lexical gaps where standard vocabulary feels too formal, generic, or emotionally insufficient for the hyper-personalised tone of fanfiction.

TABLE 2. Neologisms under compounding

Neologisms	Meaning
Bebetime	Time spent with a significant other, like "date night".
Chismosavirus	Playful term for someone who spreads or receives gossip quickly, more like a disease.
Condomate	Refers to someone with whom one shares a condominium.

First, *condomate* is the combination of two nouns, ‘condo’ and ‘mate’. In this example, however, ‘mate’ serves as a suffix that denotes living arrangements, relational closeness, and intimacy in the stories. Compounding in AUs also extended to the formation of multilingual terms like *bebetime*, a fusion of the colloquial Tagalog ‘bebe’ (baby) and the English term ‘time’. The blend of local and global morphemes reflects the Taglish codebase of AUs, while time signifies the duration of emotional investment. This kind of multilingual compounding speaks to the hybrid identity of Filipino youth.

Similarly, *chismosavirus* humorously blends ‘chismosa’ (gossiper) and ‘virus’ to characterise gossip as both a social contagion and an unavoidable phenomenon. This metaphor is not incidental; it reflects how fan communities often critique, parody, and mirror real-world interactions. Thus, compounding in AUs does more than form new words; it compresses relationship structures, emotional registers, and social commentaries into single lexical items.

### BLENDING

In the Philippines, where English and Filipino coexist as lingua francas, speakers often code-switch to create neologisms blending local and global meanings.

TABLE 3. Neologisms under blending

Neologisms	Meaning
Warla	Someone who is always ready to argue or fight
Whyket	Blended form of ‘why’ and ‘bakit’

Blending is the process of combining the first syllable of a word with the last syllable of another word. It showcases how speakers can navigate two linguistic systems to express themselves more effectively. *Warla*, for instance, was initially a blend of ‘war’ and ‘sila’, but its current usage

has drifted far from its etymological roots. It now functions as a standalone term meaning to argue or start drama, even in singular contexts. This semantic generalisation suggests that once a blended neologism gains traction, its meaning can stabilise beyond its morphological origin. Blending, then, may not solely be a method of word formation observed in AU. It could also serve as a mechanism for semantic innovation within these fan-generated narratives, wherein meaning appears to be shaped by usage, not only structure.

Similarly, *whyket*, which merges ‘why’ and ‘bakit’, achieves more than lexical economy. It blends Taglish syntax into a single token, reflecting how code-switching itself is being lexicalised. These blends allow speakers to encode confusion, confrontation, or sarcasm in a manner that is recognisably Gen Z—efficient, playful, and emotionally marked.

While the study only found two samples in AUs, blending could be prevalent in other platforms. As Vacalares et al. (2023) noted, words like *awit* (aw + sakit) and *sorna* (sorry + na) follow similar patterns, affirming blending’s place in a broader linguistic repertoire shaped by shortness and relatability. Clearly, the fast-paced nature of online communication encourages users to simplify language while still making it expressive and relatable.

#### AFFIXATION

Affixation, particularly the fusion of English lexemes with Tagalog affixes, emerged as a frequent process in the corpus. This pattern is not coincidental; rather, it reflects a larger morphosyntactic dynamic within Taglish where imported terms are domesticated via native morphology.

TABLE 4. Neologisms under affixation

Neologisms	Meaning
Babyhin	To treat someone like a baby or to pamper them.
Basicin	To perceive something as basic.
Easyhan	To request someone to take it easy on something or an individual.

These neologisms challenge the view of affixation as purely morphological. The grammatical conversion of English nouns and adjectives into Filipino verbs reveals morphophonemic adaptability in IPhE, where affixes modulate emotional intent as much as basic syntactic transformation. The repeated use of affixation appears driven not only by structural convenience but also by semiotic potency. This process enables bilingual speakers to craft intimate, evaluative, and expressive words, potentially aligning with online discourse tone and interactivity.

The sample neologisms presented in this section will be further examined in the morphological structure section.

#### INITIALISM

Initialism is a prevalent process on platforms like X, often driven by character limits (Zayyan et al., 2023). The data found 18 initialisms, corroborating Meinawati et al. (2021) observation that shortening words is a trend among young people online.

TABLE 5. Neologisms under initialism

Neologisms	Meaning
BV ← Bad Vibes	Indicating an unpleasant feeling.
LT ← Laugh Trip	To describe something very funny.
PAYO ← Pay As You Order	Online Payment must be made once the order is placed.

Dimaculangan and Sarmiento (2024) employed initialism to encompass both abbreviation and acronym, unlike other researchers who view them as distinct word-formation processes. Following this, the study acknowledges that neologisms like *BV* (bad vibes) and *LT* (Laugh Trip) are pronounced by spelling out the letters, while *PAYO* (pay as you order) is pronounced as a single word.

Aside from the two established processes mentioned, Dimaculangan and Sarmiento (2024) also recognise other ways to create initialisms. First, pseudo-acronyms resemble the sound of the intended words (e.g., *INVU* for “I Envy You”). Another method is the combination of abbreviation-acronyms (e.g., *NCAE* – pronounced as /enkai/). However, the study only found neologisms that adhere to the established formations of abbreviations and acronyms.

Nonetheless, the expansion of initialisms is clearly reflected in AUs. Initialisms thrive not only because of character limits but also due to their performative brevity. These forms function as cultural shorthands, instantly recognisable to in-group members while often opaque to outsiders. For instance, *IJBOL* (I Just Burst Out Laughing) marks generational humour, existing alongside older terms like *LOL* (Munson, 2023). The compressed and exaggerated nature of this initialism is indicative of Gen Z's preference for dramatised self-expression.

#### CLIPPING

Clipping is another productive process observed in AUs, wherein longer lexical items are shortened while maintaining core meaning.

TABLE 6. Neologisms under clipping

Neologisms	Meaning
Alt ← Alter	Alternative subcultures that deviate from the mainstream.
Negats ← Negative	An expression used to indicate that something will not proceed as planned.

Words like *alt* (alter) and *negats* (negative) exemplify this form. However, these are not straightforward truncations. The ‘-s’ suffix in *negats* lacks standard grammatical or semantic function, primarily affecting the word's cadence. This suggests its potential classification as an empty morpheme, a bound morpheme serving a stylistic or phonological role rather than conveying inherent meaning. While plausible, this interpretation warrants further analysis of its usage within relevant online communities.

The study also found neologisms formed through Yule's (2010) hypocoristic clipping, such as *aftie* (afternoon) and *freshie* (freshman). These clipped forms often foster a sense of familiarity and intimacy among speakers, serving as casual and affectionate terms of address within social circles. Ultimately, clipping in AUs reflects more than efficiency. It represents a linguistic softening, signalling closeness or cultural belonging. By removing formality from base words, users reframe concepts into friendly, identity-driven slang.



# PUNNING

Punning in AU neologisms leverages homophony, polysemy, and cultural reference to infuse language with humour and social commentary.

TABLE 7. Neologisms under punning

Neologisms	Meaning
Ate Chona	Playful term for someone with an attitude.
Marites	Filipino slang for a gossip.
Nonsalad	A play on the word nonchalant.

The use of punning serves multiple functions within AUs, including enhancing characterisation. Terms like *Ate Chona* (from attitude) and *Marites* (a figure synonymous with gossip) exemplify how sound-based wordplay can create labels for social archetypes. *Marites* exemplifies semantic layering by referencing both gossiping women and cultural stereotypes, similar to the American “Karen”. This polysemy allows users to shift tone fluidly, moving from critique to comedy within a single neologism.

Likewise, *nonsalad* (from nonchalant) uses phonetic resemblance to playfully disrupt the original word and draw attention. These puns may sometimes be intentional disruptions, forms that can suggest a challenge to semantic expectation and possibly invite readers into an insider joke. The witticism encoded in these online terms reflects users’ metalinguistic awareness and desire to reinvent language on their own terms.

# ORTHOGRAPHIC DEVIATION

Deviation in orthography is a linguistic phenomenon involving modifications to standard spelling. It appeared to be a prevalent feature in AUs, as seen in Table 8.

TABLE 8. Neologisms under orthographic deviation

Neologisms	Meaning
Lovie ← Love	Endearment between lovers.
Ferson ← Person	Used humorously to refer to oneself or another person.
Korique ← Correct	Used humorously to indicate strong agreement with another person.

For instance, *korique* replaces the final ‘t’ in correct with the ‘que’ suffix. This alteration aligns with digital registers, often associated with queer-coded or hyperfeminised speech on social platforms. Meanwhile, *ferson* transforms the standard person into a playful self-reference, softening self-deprecation with humour.

In IPhE, standard spellings of L1 words are often altered while maintaining the core meaning of a word. These modifications showcase the adaptability of language and reflect cultural identity. While the variation *lovie* may be encountered outside AUs, given its widespread use as a term of endearment, the neologisms *ferson* and *korique* appear distinctly unique to IPhE. Such deviations often carry implicit phonological mimicry, visual aesthetics, or social stance. They reject standard spelling, favouring a DIY creativity and emotional authenticity.

#### ANAGRAMMATIC TRANSPOSITION

Proposed by Dimaculangan and Sarmiento (2024), this process is the act of rearranging the letters of a word to form another, which they also referred to as backwards spelling.

TABLE 9. Neologisms under anagrammatic transposition

Neologisms	Meaning
Lapuk ← Kupal	Jerk
Obob ← Bobo	Idiot

This linguistic phenomenon is prevalent in the Philippines, especially among online users. It serves multiple purposes, one of which is euphemism. Gen Zs often reverse the spelling and pronunciation of certain words to mitigate their impact, which may be deemed inappropriate or offensive (Cabantac-Lumabi, 2020). For instance, both *lapuk* and *obob* carry negative connotations, but are often employed to soften the tone when addressing someone.

#### HYPOCORISTIC EXTENSION

Another process Dimaculangan and Sarmiento (2024) proposed is hypocoristic extension, borrowed from Yule's (2010) hypocoristic clipping. In contrast to Yule's (2010) approach, where a longer word is reduced to a single syllable followed by '-ie' or '-y', hypocoristic extension expands a mono-syllabic word into two syllables before the addition of the two diminutive suffix.

TABLE 10. Neologisms under hypocoristic extension

Neologisms	Meaning
Blondie ← Blonde	Refer to someone with blonde hair.
Boyfie ← Boyfriend	Endearment for a boyfriend.
Brodie ← Brother	A close male friend.

This linguistic practice is not exclusive to the Filipino community; it mirrors a broader trend across various languages where suffixes are employed to convey affection. This modification not only creates endearing forms of words but also contributes to a sense of belongingness among speakers, enhancing social bonds and intimacy in communication.

#### PROPOSED WORD-FORMATION PROCESSES

Beyond established word-formation processes, neologisms in AUs were also formed through unique and intricate ways. Deviation extends beyond spelling modifications to include number substitutions and punctuation marks. This resonates with the findings of Dino and Gustilo (2017, 2018, 2019) on IPhE, suggesting a broader trend of language evolution in online Philippine communities.

Given the complexities of how neologisms are formed in AUs, the study proposed additional word-formation processes and further subcategorized orthographic deviation into syllabic metathesis, retro spelling, extensionism, punctuolexicalization, and alphanumeric substitution.

*Syllabic Metathesis.* This word-building process was initially introduced by Dimaculangan and Sarmiento (2024) under *anagrammatic transposition* to describe instances where letters within a word are rearranged, citing examples like *typar* for 'party' and *lodi* for 'idol'. However, this term



appears misaligned with the established definition of anagrams, which requires using all the original letters to create a new word or phrase with a distinct meaning (Al-Abodi, 2015; Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, n.d.).

TABLE 9. Neologisms under syllabic metathesis

Neologisms	Meaning
Dabarkads ← Barkada	Peer group
Matsala ← Salamat	Thank you
Tomguts ← Gutom	Hungry

Moreover, Al-Abodi outlined three criteria for forming an anagram: (1) it must be formed by rearranging the letters of another word or phrase; (2) every letter of the word must be used only once in the anagram; (3) the resulting anagram must create a new expression with a distinct meaning from the original word. In their example *typar*, the syllables of 'party' were only interchanged, retaining its meaning.

Therefore, this study respectfully proposes to separate the category (anagrammatic transposition) into two distinct processes: *syllabic metathesis* and *retrospelling*. Under syllabic metathesis will be words that undergo syllabic rearrangement, including neologisms found in AUs like *dabarkads*, *matsala*, and *tomguts*. Notably, the addition of the suffix '-s' appears to be an empty morpheme as well since the words cannot be pluralised.

*Retro Spelling.* Dimaculangan and Sarmiento (2024) also consider this process as anagrammatic transposition. Their example, *lodi*, exemplified the exact reversal of the original word 'idol'. Following Al-Abodi's (2015) criteria of an anagram, the example provided does not qualify as one due to the absence of semantic change and the failure to develop a new term.

TABLE 10. Neologisms under retro spelling

Neologisms	Meaning
Arat ← Tara	Used to invite someone to participate in an activity or encourage them to get going. Used to convey strong agreement with someone's statement.
Omsim ← Mismo	
Retsam ← Master	Refers to someone you look up to.

What such formations achieve, however, is coded expressions that reward insider understanding. *Lodi*, now widespread online, initially offered a novel way to express covert admiration, enabling indirect adulation without sounding direct or conventional. The word formation allows oscillation between legibility and stylised disguise—a signature of Gen Z digital expression.

This study respectfully suggested the term 'retro spelling' to name this process. The term *retro* is derived from Latin, meaning 'backwards', making it a fitting descriptor for this word-formation process. Unlike syllabic metathesis, retro spelling involves a complete reversal of letters as seen in *arat*, *omsim*, and *retsam*.

*Extensionism.* Another process Dimaculangan and Sarmiento (2024) proposed is hypocoristic extension, borrowed from Yule's (2010) hypocoristic clipping. However, it appears to diverge from the established understanding of hypocorism.

TABLE 11. Neologisms under extensionism

Neologisms	Meaning
Girlie ← Girl	Refer to someone who acts feminine.
Lovie ← Love	Endearment between lovers.

Yule defines hypocorisms as words shortened to a single syllable and then suffixed with ‘-y or ‘-ie’ (e.g., *aftrie* from afternoon). Oxford English Dictionary similarly defines hypocorisms as clipped words used as nicknames. In contrast, Dimaculangan and Sarmiento (2024) proposed hypocoristic extension as single-syllable words that are extended with the two diminutive suffixes. Examples from their study, *twinnie* (twin) and *hottie* (hot), involve no clipping. Like the ones found in AUs, they are all single-syllable words extended into two-syllable words. These terms carry strong implications of intimacy, affection, or stylisation. For example, *lovie* is not just an alternate form of “love” but a term of endearment that adds warmth and cuteness.

Combining hypocorism and extension appears contradictory, as hypocorisms are formed by clipping rather than lengthening. Thus, this study proposed to name the process as *extensionism*. It accurately describes the process of extending mono-syllabic words, without the potentially misleading connotation of hypocorism.

*Punctuolexicalization.* Punctuolexicalization refers to the integration of punctuation marks with lexical items to express tone, stance, or pragmatic intent. The Latin verb *pūctuō*, derived from the noun *punctum* meaning ‘point’, signifies the act of marking a text with punctuation marks.

TABLE 13. Neologisms under punctuolexicalization

Neologisms	Meaning
/srs	Serious
/gen	Genuine
/j	Joke

In AUs, neologisms such as */srs* (serious), */gen* (genuine), and */j* (joke) exemplify this process. This process is not only confined to AUs, as Christanti et al. (2022) were able to examine their prevalence on X. They found that the use of punctuolexicons is popular among neurodivergent individuals, as these forms typically appear at the end of statements.

Although these may initially seem like stylistic quirks, their emergence in AUs demonstrates a patterned, meaningful shift in how symbols are used in digital writing; the slash (/) is not merely decorative or typographic—it has undergone grammaticalisation. Analogous to the ‘@’ symbol’s evolution from a locative preposition (at) to a username tag, the slash in punctuolexical forms has been repurposed from a divider into a pragmatic morpheme.

In addition, the slash appears to draw influence from commands in coding and markup languages, which are also part of Gen Z’s digital environment. AU users may be repurposing the slash to perform similar “command-like” functions, activating shifts in tone or emotional intent. While further data is needed to establish its full lexical autonomy, it appears reasonable to propose that the slash is becoming semiotically self-sufficient within online communities.

*Alphanumeric Substitution.* The pattern of replacing phonemes or syllables with graphically or phonetically similar digits has long been a feature of digital communication, dating back to early SMS language and chat culture.

TABLE 14. Neologisms under alphanumeric substitution

Neologisms	Meaning
2day	Today
Leg8	Legit
F2F	Face-to-Face

This writing style typically occurs in Jejemon texting or Jejenese, a street language in the Philippines characterised by its nonstandard use of the English language (The Freeman, 2016).

In AUs, examples like *2day* (today), *F2F* (face-to-face), and *leg8* (legit) showcase how users compress and stylise text by integrating numbers into words. The substitutions are not arbitrary but reflect widely understood conventions. For instance, the 2 in *2day* aligns with its phonetic realisation as /tu/ in ‘today’. Similarly, the number 8 in *leg8* is commonly used in place of the /it/ or /eit/ sound found in syllables like ‘-it’ or ‘-ate’. These patterns have become standard enough in digital contexts like X and Facebook that they are often understood without confusion, particularly by students (Ibis & Sanchez, 2014).

Alphanumeric substitution reflects a linguistic economy shaped by speed and style. It transforms language into a convergence of sound, symbol, and identity. This also signals generational belonging, marking their users as digitally literate and culturally current. Its presence in AUs aligns with brevity, recognisability, and immediacy patterns in digital text, consistent with established digital youth language typologies and broader digital writing conventions.

*Phonetic Play.* This process refers to the creative manipulation of sound-alike words or syllables, often across languages, to generate new expressions that are humorous, intimate, or culturally coded.

TABLE 15. Neologisms under phonetic play

Neologisms	Meaning
BBQ ← Bebe Ko	Endearment between lovers meaning ‘my baby’
Ice ← Ayos	Good/Okay
Lung/s ← Lang	Just

In AUs, Users adopt English spellings that mimic Tagalog sounds, creating playful and often ambiguous neologisms.

For example, writing ‘ayos’ as *ice* exemplifies how speakers embed Filipino sentiment within an English form—a playful linguistic disguise reconfiguring global symbols for local meaning. *BBQ*, widely recognised as an acronym for ‘barbecue’, is reappropriated to stand for ‘bebe ko’ (my baby). These formations mirror linguistic remixing, where English orthography is bent to express local voice. Thus, AU neologisms subvert standard orthography and forge expressions through phonological distortion.

*Multi-layered Processes.* Digital language users increasingly challenge traditional linguistic categories through neologisms that combine multiple word-formation processes. This study examines multi-layered patterns in AUs, which may also appear in other digital spaces. Additional processes may yet emerge, reflecting the ongoing evolution of online language.

*Retro spelling + compounding.* The fusion of retro spelling and compounding is another process that appears unique to IPhE. This process involves the reversal of a lexical root, typically a noun or adjective, followed by the addition of an emotionally charged or stylistically expressive suffix.

TABLE 16. Neologisms under retro spelling + compounding

Neologisms	Meaning
Lodicakes	Playfully refer to someone you idolise.
Lodibabes	Endearment

Unlike retro spelling alone, this formation involves two processes: (1) two words are combined, and (2) the letters of one of the words are spelt backwards. *Lodicakes* is a prime example, where ‘lodi’ (idol) is combined with ‘cakes’, resulting in a new term. Likewise, *lodibabes* follows the same pattern, merging ‘lodi’ with ‘babes’. In AUs, these neologisms transform a general term of admiration into more personalised or affectionate variants. The suffixes are associated with endearment and casual intimacy, often used in peer-to-peer discourse. Such constructions appeared in contexts involving romantic dynamics or strong character attachment, suggesting that the compounds serve to intensify or stylise emotional engagement.

*Syllabic Metathesis + compounding.* Akin to the previous process, this word formation also utilised compounding, but the first word undergoes syllabic metathesis. What makes this process notable is its capacity for affective overexpression, a stylistic tendency in Gen Z and AUs.

TABLE 17. Neologisms under syllabic metathesis + compounding

Neologisms	Meaning
Matsalamuch	Thank you very much
Matsalalove	Thank you with love

As seen in *Matsalamuch*, a combination of the rearranged Tagalog word *matsala* (salamat) and the English term ‘much’, it conveys an exaggerated way of saying “Thank you very much”. Likewise, *Matsala* paired with ‘love’ depicts a more affectionate way of showing gratitude. These constructions were found in contexts where emotional expression is amplified, a pattern consistent with the expressive tone of AUs.

From a linguistic standpoint, this hybrid process highlights the coexistence of spoken and written manipulations: metathesis (often rooted in oral or informal speech) is paired with compounding (a more structurally driven written strategy). The prevalence of this process may indicate its function in shaping tone, signalling in-group familiarity, or contributing to playful language use in fan-driven narratives.

*Affixation + Orthographic Deviation.* This process involves modifying standard orthography through adding and altering affixes. In the dataset, neologisms appeared in humorous or sarcastic contexts, particularly where characters are exaggerating traits or referencing online behaviours.

TABLE 18. Neologisms under affixation + orthographic deviation

Neologisms	Meaning
Customizationavity	The ability to customise something to one's preferences.
Dickavity	A Filipino gay slang term that refers to the quality of a penis being particularly fuckable.
Sineenavity	The audacity of a person to merely acknowledge a message without responding.

For example, *sineenavity* is used to describe being ‘seen-zoned’, a colloquial term for when someone reads a message without replying. The addition of the *-avity* (from *-ability*) suffix, which mimics a formal or scientific register, appears to heighten the irony of the expression. Another is *customizationavity*, formed by combining the verb ‘customise’ with the suffix ‘-avity’.

Dickavity serves as another example of a modified version of the same suffix, different from the previous examples. This neologism combines ‘dick’ with ‘-avity’, suggesting romantic or sexual prowess. However, orthographic deviation in these forms often involves phonological lengthening, vowel modification, or superfluous syllables that enhance dramatic or parodic tonality.

These neologisms align with patterns of affixal creativity found in youth digital speech, where suffixes are repurposed to match tone rather than conform to grammatical convention. In AUs, this layering allows users to coin expressions that are reflective of digital genre conventions—such as maximalist expression and mock-formality. Their role in the dataset illustrates how affixation and spelling manipulation can work together to encode character mood, social commentary, or meta-discursive tone.

*Clipping + Reduplication.* In this process, the root word or a part of it is repeated (some with slight modifications) to form a new word with emphasis.

TABLE 19. Neologisms under clipping + Reduplication

Neologisms	Meaning
Delulu ← Delusional	Someone with unrealistic fantasies or ideas.
Rizz ← Charisma	Someone with a strong ability to attract a person.

AU data yielded examples such as *delulu* (from *delusional* → *delu* + *lu*), *solulu* (from *solution*), along with *rizz* (a clipped form of *charisma*), which illustrates minimalism and stylisation without Reduplication. In clipped-reduplicated forms like *delulu*, the base word is shortened, and its final syllable is repeated, forming a compact yet catchy term. These were found in character dialogues or narrative commentary where exaggeration, fantasy, or humour was being emphasised.

This hybrid strategy demonstrates the creation of morphologically efficient words imbued with both semantic and stylistic value. Clipping condenses polysyllabic terms, while Reduplication adds a phonological emphasis, enhancing memorability and expressiveness, potentially contributing to their digital circulation.

## WORD-FORMATION PROCESSES IN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE FANFICTION

Word-Formation Processes
Compounding
Blending
Affixation
Initialism
Clipping
Punning
Phonetic Play
Orthographic Deviation:
1. Syllabic Metathesis
2. Retro Spelling
3. Extensionism
4. Alphanumeric Substitution
5. Punctuolexicalization
Multi-layered Processes:
1. Syllabic Metathesis + compounding
2. Retro Spelling + compounding
3. Affixation + Orthographic Deviation
4. Clipping + Reduplication

This study expands Dimaculangan and Sarmiento (2024) framework by proposing nine additional word-formation processes, reflecting the complexities of neologism formation in AUs. These methods highlight the growing vocabulary and creativity of IPHE users, confirming its development beyond standard processes. While the precise stage of PhE's development within Schneider's (2003) dynamic model is debated, the growing autonomy and self-sufficiency of PhE in terms of vocabulary and usage suggest a shift towards establishing its own linguistic norms and standards.

## MORPHOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF NEOLOGISMS

In AUs where Filipino and English coexist, bilingualism drives linguistic innovation. This section presents eight neologisms formed through diverse affixation methods, showcasing creative blends that enrich online expression.

### TAGALOG LEXEME + ENGLISH SUFFIX

This method combines a Tagalog lexeme with an English suffix, as shown in Table 21.

TABLE 21. Neologisms under Tagalog Lexeme + English Suffix

<i>awitize</i> (int.)	aw + (sak)it + -ize /a.wi'taiz/
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Gen Z's linguistic innovation often prioritises expressive effect over strict grammatical function. A case in point is *awitize*, an interjection expressing disappointment (Jeresano & Carretero, 2022). It blends the interjection *aw*, a truncated form of the Tagalog word *sakit* (pain), and the English suffix *-ize*. Despite its morphological resemblance to a verb, *awitize* functions pragmatically as an interjection—its meaning shaped more by affect than grammar, suggesting semantic opacity.



Notably, *awitize* exhibits significant morphophonemic changes in both vowel and consonant sounds. The diphthong /aʊ/ in *aw* shifts to /'ɑ:/ when combined with (*sak*)*it*, merging the /w/ with the following /'i:/ from *-it*. The /t/ then attaches to the suffix *-ize*, producing the pronunciation /t'aɪz/. This restructuring emphasises rhythm and emotional tone over etymological transparency.

#### ENGLISH LEXEME + TAGALOG SUFFIX

This method forms neologisms by combining an English lexeme with a Tagalog suffix. Additionally, these terms are not classified under a shift in part of speech, as they result from affixation.

TABLE 22. Neologisms under English Lexeme + Tagalog Suffix

<i>babyhin</i> (v.)	baby + -hin	/b'eɪbɪhɪn/
<i>basicin</i> (v.)	basic + -in	/b'eɪsɪk,ɪn/
<i>easyhan</i> (v.)	easy + han	/i:zɪha:n/

Identified neologisms incorporate Tagalog verbalising suffixes, altering the lexical category of the base words while adding nuanced meanings. For example, 'baby' (noun), 'basic' (adjective), and 'easy' (adjective) became verbs with the addition of *-hin* or *-han*, yet their overall meanings remain closely tied to the base. Similarly, Lesada (2017) exemplified this phenomenon with the word 'fill-up' combined with the suffix *-an* to form *fill-upan*.

Furthermore, instead of morphophonemic shift, these neologisms exhibit prosodic adjustment. The suffixes are attached directly without significant alteration to the base word's phonological structure, for vowel-ending words like *baby* and *easy*, stress shifts to the suffix *-hin* or *-han*. For consonant-ending *basic*, stress stays on the penultimate syllable. These prosodic patterns reflect how borrowed lexemes are rhythmically adapted to Tagalog-inflected speech without altering their phonological structure.

#### ENGLISH LEXEME + ENGLISH SUFFIX

This structure adds an English suffix to an English lexeme, a process seemingly unique to Gen Z and IphE users online.

TABLE 23. Neologisms under English lexeme + English Suffix

<i>customizationavity</i> (n.)	custom + -ization + -avity
	/kʌstəmaɪz,eɪʃənev'ɪlɪti/
<i>decisionavity</i> (n.)	deci(de) + -sion + -avity
	/dɪs,ɪʒənev'ɪlɪti/
<i>dickavity</i> (n.)	dick + -avity
	/dɪkəv'ɒlɪti/

Gen Z users creatively modify suffixes to coin playful, meaningful neologisms beyond standard usage. For instance, *customizationavity* derives from the adjective *custom*, added by the nominalising suffix *-isation*, with primary stress on (mi); adding *-avity* shifts stress to (vil) to accommodate both suffixes.

Similarly, *decisionavity* derives from *decide* + *-sion*, which induces vowel changes and a stress shift before seamlessly connects to *-avity*-often with epenthesis-to maintain the root's clarity. *Dickavity* employs the variant suffix *-avity*, creating a smooth consonant-vowel transition from the mono-syllabic root *dick*, with stress shifting from the root to the suffix (vol). Despite their novel structure, the base words remain identifiable, ensuring intelligibility within Gen Z online communities.

#### ENGLISH LEXEME + TAGALOG INFIX + ENGLISH SUFFIX

This structure inserts Tagalog infix into an English lexeme, followed by an English-derived suffix.

TABLE 24. Neologisms under English Lexeme + Tagalog Infix + English Suffix

<i>sineenavity</i> (n.)	s + -in- + een + -avity /s, ɪniːnev'ɪlɪti/
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The Filipino affix *in* serves different functions depending on its usage: as a suffix, it forms imperative verbs (e.g., *sulat**in***), while as a prefix or infix, it marks object-focus and indicates a completed action (e.g., *sinulat*). This is exemplified in the hybrid neologism *sineenavity*, which combines the English lexeme *seen* with the Tagalog infix *-in-* followed by the English suffix *-avity*. Here, *seen* is reanalysed as a morphologically active root, with *-in-* marking object focus before the form extends nominally through *-avity*, referring to the social act of being “seen-zoned.”

The insertion of *-in-* follows Tagalog morphosyntactic rules for object-focus verbs. Extending *sineen* into a multisyllabic *sineenavity* introduces pronunciation complexities. To ease phonetics, vowel sequences coalesce due to the weakened /n/ in *sineen*, and primary stress shifts from the root to the new /nav/ segment, aligning with prosodic patterns of multisyllabic words.

Therefore, while these neologisms share similarities with slang in other languages, their witty nature, rooted in Filipino culture, makes them unique to this online community.

#### DEFINING NEOLOGISMS BASED ON USAGE

Table 25 shows 2 of 101 new terms identified from the word corpus of AUs. Their meanings are interpreted through Horwich's (2004) use theory of meaning, which posits that meaning depends on actual usage within discourse.

TABLE 25. Sample neologisms and their meanings

Neologisms	Dialogue	Meaning
1. Dogshow	“ <i>hilig mo mang dogshow</i> ”.	To poke fun.
2. Jalosi	“ <i>sus jalosi ka lang eh</i> ”.	Filipino slang for jealousy.

Critically applied, Horwich’s theory highlights how AU neologisms defy static morphological classification. Words like *dogshow* and *jalosi* are not derived through productive affixation or compounding rules in Tagalog or English but gain meaning through repeated, socially situated use. This usage-based approach complicates formal analysis, as meanings are contextually stabilised rather than structurally encoded.

The case of *jalosi* is illustrative. While it phonetically overlaps with *jalousie* (a type of window), its AU usage signals “jealousy”—a reinterpretation shaped by phonological play, affective tone, and local context. Such shifts underscore Hasan’s (2023) point that meaning is shaped by discourse and audience. Here, meaning is less about etymology than function: how the word is received, reused, and recognised within the AU community.

These formations, then, are not lexical errors but pragmatic innovations. They reveal how digital discourse creates flexible, interaction-based meanings, supporting Horwich’s (2004) claim that meaning is not fixed but enacted through use.

#### FAMILIARITY OF GEN Z ON AU NEOLOGISMS

Table 26 presents the familiarity among 100 Gen Z participants with 2 out of 101 neologisms.

TABLE 26. Survey results of 100 Gen Z Familiarity

Neologisms	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Marites	3.9	0.30	Very Familiar
Lodi	3.9	0.47	Very Familiar
Bebetime	3.9	0.39	Very Familiar
Dsurb	3.9	0.33	Very Familiar
Delulu	3.85	0.46	Very Familiar
Nonsalad	2.17	1.11	Not Very Familiar
IDKWTDA	2.37	1.16	Not Very Familiar
Customizationavility	2.42	1.19	Not Very Familiar

Findings revealed that Gen Z respondents demonstrated high familiarity with 49 neologisms. This aligns with Vacalares et al. (2023), who found that Gen Z exhibits higher intelligibility with internet slang than Millennials. Terms such as *marites*, *lodi*, *bebetime*, and *dsurb* all received mean scores of 3.9 with low standard deviations, indicating strong and consistent recognition. They are formed through retro spelling, clipping, affixation, and punning, processes that are widespread in digital spaces.

*Marites* had both the highest mean and the lowest standard deviation. Its widespread use has been well documented by Dacles (2023), who explains that it may originate from “Mare, among latest?” or serve as an acronym for “Master of Arts in Relaying Information Through Exaggerated Storytelling”. Though akin to the American *Karen*, it is framed more humorously in Philippine usage (Legaspi, 2021), contributing to its resonance across platforms, including AUs.

In contrast, neologisms such as *nonsalad*, *IDKWTDA*, and *customizationavility* recorded lower familiarity and higher standard deviations. These terms often involve more layered formations such as phonetic play, abbreviation, or affixal distortion, which may reduce accessibility or limit recognition to niche digital groups.

Patterns in the data suggest that morphologically simpler formations tend to yield higher familiarity among Gen Z users. However, this is not universal. *Delulu*, despite being a clipped and reduplicated form, ranked highly, reflecting how terms amplified by digital culture can gain traction regardless of structure. While this study relied on descriptive statistics, the results point to

a possible link between formation type, recognisability, and social function. These findings contribute to understanding how neologisms emerge and circulate within Gen Z communities, shaped by both linguistic patterns and digital participation.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE, LINGUISTICS, AND LITERATURE

The neologisms found confirm the presence of both established and emergent word-formation processes in Philippine AUs. These findings point to AUs as a productive site for linguistic innovation and suggest several implications. For language pedagogy, incorporating AU-based neologisms into digital literacy education can foster learners' critical engagement with evolving language forms. Rather than treating such terms as informal or peripheral, educators may use them to teach students how to decode meaning, recognise morphological patterns, and assess contextual use—skills essential for navigating dynamic online environments. From a lexicographical perspective, the cultural salience and widespread use of AU neologisms among Filipinos support their inclusion in updated Philippine English dictionaries. Dictionary policies may benefit from proactively monitoring digital genres like AUs and social media platforms, ensuring that emerging forms are documented and evaluated for formal recognition. This approach affirms IPHE as a living, expanding variety shaped by user creativity and digital interaction. Finally, acknowledging AUs as a site of literary production validates their role in contemporary digital literature. The inventive language practices within AUs highlight how narrative and linguistic creativity converge in participatory online writing, offering new avenues for research, literary analysis, and genre recognition.

#### CONCLUSION

This study examined neologisms in AU fanfiction on X and TikTok, highlighting how digital platforms serve as active sites for linguistic innovation among Filipino Gen Z users. The 101 neologisms identified illustrate how online communities creatively manipulate existing forms and assimilate global influences to express emerging cultural ideas in locally meaningful ways. These findings reaffirm the dynamic nature of language and its responsiveness to digital contexts. However, while these innovations reflect linguistic creativity, they also raise concerns about accessibility and inclusivity. The rapid evolution of slang and niche neologisms may limit intergenerational understanding, particularly for older users unfamiliar with such forms. Additionally, the normalisation of stylised language use in informal contexts could contribute to a widening gap between digital and formal writing norms. While this study centres primarily on Gen Z, Millennials, and Generation Alpha are likewise immersed in digital spaces and play key roles in shaping contemporary language, which presents fertile avenues for prospective research.

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