



## A Sociolinguistics Analysis on Slang and Technological Neologisms in Darren Watkins' (IShowSpeed) Gaming Livestreams on YouTube

**Adika Indotua Nainggolan**

English Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar

**Yolanda Jesica Sitanggang**

English Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar

**Leony Elisabet Situmorang**

English Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar

**Tessaria Simorangkir**

English Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar

**Monika Natalina Silaban**

English Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar

**Tiarma Intan Marpaung**

English Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar

Address: Jalan Asahan No. 19, Kelurahan Siopat Suhu, Kecamatan Siantar Timur, Kota Pematangsiantar, Sumatera Utara 21136

\*Corresponding author: [Yolandasitanggang2004@gmail.com](mailto:Yolandasitanggang2004@gmail.com)

**Abstract.** *This study investigates how slang and technological neologisms are formed and used in Darren Watkins' (IShowSpeed) gaming livestreams on YouTube, focusing on one full gameplay session of The Last of Us Part II. Drawing on a qualitative descriptive approach, the study collects lexical items from the livestream transcript and classifies them using Lazore's (2017) fivefold framework of blends, abbreviations and acronyms, clippings, repurposing of standard English, and coinage of new terms. The analysis distinguishes between general English slang influenced by broader internet culture and specialized gaming slang tied to gameplay mechanics and technological environments, as summarized in two tables of lexical items. Findings show that abbreviations and clippings (e.g., AFK, GG, PC, ult, stats) dominate the data, indicating a strong pressure toward linguistic economy and rapid real-time communication. Repurposed English terms (e.g., dead, stream died, carry, feed, grind) reveal systematic semantic shifts that rely on shared cultural knowledge within the streamer–audience speech community. Coinages and blends (e.g., nerf, buff, gank, lagspike) highlight the creative and community-specific nature of gaming discourse. Overall, the study argues that IShowSpeed's livestream functions as a socio-technical space where lexical innovation is driven simultaneously by efficiency, identity construction, and technological mediation, illustrating how digital gaming culture actively reshapes contemporary English vocabulary.*

**Keywords:** *sociolinguistics; technological neologisms; gaming slang; livestreaming*

**Abstrak.** *Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana slang dan neologisme teknologi dibentuk dan digunakan dalam siaran langsung permainan (gaming livestream) Darren Watkins (IShowSpeed) di YouTube, dengan fokus pada satu sesi permainan penuh The Last of Us Part II. Menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini mengumpulkan item leksikal dari transkrip siaran langsung dan mengklasifikasikannya berdasarkan kerangka lima kategori dari Lazore (2017), yaitu blends, singkatan dan akronim, clippings, penggunaan ulang bahasa Inggris standar, serta penciptaan istilah baru (coinage). Analisis membedakan antara slang bahasa Inggris umum yang dipengaruhi oleh budaya internet secara*

luas dan slang khusus gim yang berkaitan dengan mekanisme permainan serta lingkungan teknologi, yang dirangkum dalam dua tabel item leksikal. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa singkatan dan clippings (misalnya AFK, GG, PC, ult, stats) mendominasi data, yang mengindikasikan adanya tekanan kuat terhadap efisiensi bahasa dan kebutuhan komunikasi cepat secara real-time. Istilah bahasa Inggris yang digunakan ulang (misalnya dead, stream died, carry, feed, grind) menunjukkan pergeseran makna yang sistematis dan bergantung pada pengetahuan budaya bersama dalam komunitas tutur antara streamer dan penonton. Sementara itu, coinage dan blends (misalnya nerf, buff, gank, lagspike) menyoroti sifat kreatif dan kekhasan komunitas dalam wacana gim. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini berpendapat bahwa siaran langsung IShowSpeed berfungsi sebagai ruang sosio-teknis tempat inovasi leksikal didorong secara bersamaan oleh efisiensi, pembentukan identitas, dan mediasi teknologi, serta menunjukkan bagaimana budaya gim digital secara aktif membentuk kembali kosakata bahasa Inggris kontemporer.

**Kata kunci:** *sociolinguistik; neologisme teknologi; kata gaul; siaran langsung*

## INTRODUCTION

Sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and society. It focuses on how language is used in social contexts and how factors such as age, culture, technology, community, and identity influence the way people communicate. Language is not only a system of grammar and vocabulary; it is also a social tool that reflects who we are, where we come from, and how we interact with others. According to Holmes (2013), language is closely connected to social relationships and group identity. This means that the way people speak or write can show their background, community, and social belonging.

In the modern digital era, technology has become one of the strongest factors affecting language use and language change. Through the internet, social media, and online platforms, people communicate faster and more freely than ever before. One important linguistic phenomenon that has emerged in this context is technological neologism. Technological neologisms are newly created words or expressions that appear as a result of technological development and digital communication. These words are often used to name new objects, actions, experiences, or social behaviors that did not exist before, such as AFK (Away From Keyboard), GG (Good Game), Noob (inexperienced player), or Lag (slow internet connection).

These new terms are especially common in online gaming and streaming communities, where players interact in real time and need fast, expressive, and efficient ways to communicate. The writers were observing some new terms from one of the popular content creator on Youtube platform named Darren Watkins a.k.a IShowSpeed. Those technological neologisms and slang terms that came from the content creator's live

streaming are not only practical, but also social. They function as markers of identity and belonging within a particular community. When individuals use these terms correctly, they show that they are familiar with the culture, norms, and values of the group. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this shows that language is continuously shaped by social interaction and technological environments.

In hoping to produce a good result, the writers provide three questions related to neologism used in livestreaming gaming community specifically in IShowSpeed's livestreaming as follows.

1. What are some Technological Neologism that had been used in Livestreaming Gaming Community in specifically IShowSpeed's livestreaming channel?
2. What type of Technological Neologism mostly dominant in Livestreaming Gaming Community specifically in IShowSpeed's livestreaming?

Therefore, the study of technological neologism through a sociolinguistic lens is important because it helps explain how digital spaces influence human communication. It also shows how new words are not created randomly, but are directly connected to social needs, technological innovation, and community identity in the digital world.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **A. Sociolinguistics**

Sociolinguistics is the study of how language and society influence each other. It focuses on how people use language differently depending on their social background, culture, and communication setting. According to Holmes (2013), sociolinguistics explains the relationship between language and social structure, showing how language expresses identity, group membership, and social meaning.

Every community has its own way of speaking. People choose words, accents, or expressions that fit the group they belong to. For example, the way teenagers talk to each other is often different from how adults speak in formal settings. This difference is not random it reflects social identity and relationships. In the same way, members of online gaming communities also create and use their own unique words or slang that make sense only to those who are part of that group.

In the digital era, sociolinguistics has expanded to include online communication. The internet has become a new social environment where people interact daily, often using informal and creative language. Online platforms such as YouTube, Twitch, and Discord serve as modern “speech communities” groups of people who share common ways of speaking, jokes, and expressions. As Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) explain, a speech community is formed when people share linguistic norms and social meanings in communication.

Therefore, studying language in online gaming is not only about understanding the words used by gamers but also about understanding how those words represent identity, culture, and belonging. When players use certain slang terms, they show that they understand the culture of the group and share the same experiences as other members. This makes sociolinguistics very useful for studying technological neologisms, because these new words are a direct result of how society interacts and changes through technology.

## **B. Theory of Neologism**

### **Definition and Concept of Neologism**

The term *neologism* originates from the Greek words *néos* meaning “new” and *lógos* meaning “word” or “speech.” In linguistics, it refers to new lexical items or expressions that emerge to express new ideas, concepts, or realities within a language. Modern scholars emphasize that neologisms are not merely new words; they represent the dynamic evolution of language influenced by technological progress, social change, and cultural transformation. According to Kukiboyeva and Rakhimova (2024), neologisms are “new words or expressions that emerge to fill gaps in language or express new concepts, often as a response to technological advancements, cultural shifts, and globalization.” This definition reflects the role of neologism as a natural response to the continuous development of human society.

Similarly, Iligan and Lood (2022) define neologism as “a newly coined term, word, or phrase that has not been accepted in the mainstream lexicon.” Their explanation highlights the transitional nature of neologisms not all newly coined words become permanent additions to the lexicon, as they must first be socially accepted and widely used by speakers. Senapati et al. (2023) add that “neologisms refer to newly coined words

or phrases adopted by a language ... Sometimes, rarely used or obsolete words are also considered neologisms.” This perspective widens the scope of neologism, suggesting that not only completely new words but also revived or recontextualized old terms can function as neologisms when their meaning changes to fit new contexts.

From a broader linguistic point of view, Hajiyeva (2025) emphasizes that “the term neologism ... includes ‘a word that has acquired a new meaning’.” This definition points to *semantic neologism* a process where existing words are assigned new meanings without any change in form. Such semantic extensions often arise from metaphorical usage, social media slang, or technological terminology that gains new significance in digital discourse. Reinforcing this, Mahliyo Kukiboyeva and Nasiba Rakhimova (2024) describe language itself as “a dynamic, evolving process,” and state that “one of the key factors driving this linguistic evolution is the creation of neologisms.” This view underscores that lexical innovation is a fundamental mechanism of language evolution rather than an occasional or peripheral phenomenon.

### **Theoretical Perspectives on Neologism**

Recent studies (2020–2025) approach neologism as both a linguistic and sociocultural process. On one hand, it involves traditional linguistic mechanisms of word formation such as compounding, blending, clipping, acronymy, borrowing, affixation, and conversion (Al-Salman & Haider, 2021). On the other hand, it also embodies a social reaction to cultural and technological change. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, countless neologisms such as *Zoom fatigue*, *WFH*, and *infodemic* emerged almost overnight to capture new social realities. This demonstrates that neologisms function as adaptive linguistic tools that reflect current human experiences.

In addition to morphology, researchers highlight social acceptance and lexicalization as essential aspects of neologism theory. For a new word to be considered a true neologism, it must circulate within a community and be recognized by its speakers, either formally (through dictionaries) or informally (through widespread online use). The process of adoption and normalization shows how language users collectively determine which innovations survive. Rey (as cited in *Gaudeamus Journal*, 2023) describes a neologism as “a unit of the lexicon whose meaning, or whose signifier-signified relationship, was not previously materialized as a linguistic form in the immediately

preceding stage of the language.” This view reinforces the temporal and social dimensions of neologism.

### **Types of Neologism**

Neologisms can be categorized in several ways depending on how they are formed, how they function, or how they are used in social contexts. Linguists have proposed different classifications, but most modern studies (2020–2025) still build on traditional word-formation theories while integrating sociolinguistic and technological perspectives.

According to Al-Salman and Haider (2021) and Mattiello (2024), neologisms are generally created through morphological processes such as *compounding*, *blending*, *clipping*, *acronymy*, *derivation*, and *borrowing*. Meanwhile, Iligan and Lood (2022) categorize them semantically as *newly coined words*, *existing words with new meanings*, and *existing words with extended meanings*. These approaches show that neologism types can be understood both *formally* (how words are created) and *functionally* (how meanings evolve).

To provide the analysis complete and comprehensive, the writers put another characteristic of neologism Lazore (2017) narrows down and gives five big branches of neologism considered from the language change. They are blends; abbreviations and acronyms, clippings, repurposing standard English, and coinage of new terms. Here, the writers elaborates each characteristic of the neologism from Lazore (2017) and mentions several examples of coins which are mostly used in online gaming, found by several online gaming communities on social media. Several examples of neologisms in online gaming mentioned here might also be found in the data of the research. The illustration is in the table below.

No	Categories	The process	Coins	Description
1.	Blends	Combining parts of words	Exp N00bie	<b>Experience Points.</b> Points used to increase the level <b>Noob Newbie.</b> The term for new players who are lack of skill
2.	Abbreviations and acronyms	Collecting the first letter of each words	AFK BRB	<b>Away From Keyboard.</b> notification of gamers who cannot join the game <b>Be Right Back.</b> notification of gamers leaving the game for a while
3.	Clippings	Simply shortening the original forms	N Y Momon	<b>No Yes Monster.</b>
4.	Repurposing Standard English	Assigning Standard English terms with different meaning	Farming Grinding	Gathering items or materials from other game area. Repeating quests or specific parts.
5.	Coinage of new terms	Adding new words for certain game features	Smurf Roomba	Low rank account Robot Patrol

Table 1. Types of neologism from Lazore (2017)

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Data Collection Procedure

The writers employ qualitative method by choosing one of the livestreaming video from IShowSpeed first. Next, gathering the words that possibly are slangs and Technological Neologisms and used in the video while he was playing a game called The Last of Us Part 2.

### Data Analysis Procedure

The writers watched the livestreaming video from IShowSpeed channel also found the transcript, and discovered Technological Neologism Terms and slang that appeared in the livestreaming video, then determine what are the types of those Technological Neologism.

May,18- 2025, Source : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WOrNwG8Uu8>

The classification of slang words and technological neologisms identified in IShowSpeed's livestreams follows Lazore's (2017) framework, which distinguishes five major categories of lexical innovation—blends, abbreviations and acronyms, clippings, repurposing of standard English, and coinage of new terms. This categorization provides a structured way to examine how linguistic forms emerge, adapt, and circulate within digital gaming environments. Within the livestreaming context, these forms serve not

only to facilitate rapid communication but also to signal in-group membership and shared cultural knowledge among participants. The following tables present the lexical items identified in the dataset and classify them according to their morphological processes and sociolinguistic functions.

**Table 1 General English Slang Words**

<i>No</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>The Process</i>	<i>Coins</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	Blends	Combining parts of words	Livestream	Live + Stream. Refers to real-time online broadcasting.
			Speedrun	Speed + Run. Playing a game as fast as possible.
			Storymode	Story + Mode. Game mode focused on narrative/cutscenes.
			Multiplayer	Multi + Player. Game mode with more than one player
			Backseat-gaming	Backseat + Gaming. Giving unsolicited advice to the player in chat.
2	Abbreviations and Acronyms	Collecting the first letter of each word	ICU	Intensive Care Unit (hospital term used in game context).
			FOB	Forward Operating Base (military base term used in-game).
			W	Win. Expression of success or approval in chat.
			L	Loss. Expression of failure or disappointment in chat.
			AWOL	Absent Without Leave. Used informally for "missing / disappeared"
			PC	Personal Computer. Used to refer to the

				gaming machine (“my PC is [ ] up”).
			ICU/ER	Hospital acronyms re-used in dramatic in-game medical talk
			GG	“Good Game”. Used ironically or sincerely to end a match/fight.
			POV	Point of View. Used by chat to label camera/scene perspective.
3	Clippings	Shortening the original forms	Chat	From “chatroom,” referring to live audience comments.
			Bro	From “brother,” informal address term.
			Mod	From “moderator,” person who manages chat.
			Sub	From “subscriber,” person subscribed to channel.
			Noob	From “newbie”; inexperienced or unskilled player.
			Yo	Clipped greeting; short attention-getter to chat or characters.
			Nope	Clipped / informal “no”. Casual refusal or denial.
			Y’all	From “you all”; plural second-person pronoun (AAVE / Southern US).
			I’ma / I’mma	From “I am going to”; casual spoken future marker.
			’Cause / Cuz	From “because”; used in quick spoken explanations.

			'Bout	From "about"; used in fast, informal speech.
4	Repurposing Standard English	Assigning new meaning to existing words	Dead	Not literally dead; means "defeated" or "lost in game."
			Demon	Refers to strong enemy or infected creature in the game.
			Stream died	Not literal death; means the broadcast disconnected.
			Grind / Grinder	Playing continuously for long hours with high dedication.
			Demon	Used generically for very strong enemy/infected, not theological demon.
			Bot	Originally "robot"; insult for a player who plays like an AI / very bad.
			Script	Used to describe events that feel pre-arranged or "rigged" by the game.
			Stealth (verb)	From noun "stealth"; means to kill or move silently in game.
			Carry	From verb "carry"; means to hard-carry the team to victory.

		From “bait”; intentionally luring enemies into a trap.
	Camp / Camping	From “camp”; staying in one position to gain advantage.
	Tilt / Tilting	From “tilt”; emotional frustration that makes you play worse.
	Cap	Literally “cap” (hat), but in slang means “lie / not true.”
	Dead ass	Literally “dead ass”; AAVE intensifier meaning “seriously / honestly.”
	Chill out	Literally “cool down”; here = “relax, calm down.”
	Go to sleep	Not literal sleep; trash talk meaning “you got destroyed / give up.”
	Lock in	Literally “lock”; slang meaning “focus seriously / concentrate fully.”
	Sweat / Sweaty	Literally “sweaty”; used for ultra-tryhard player or playstyle.
	Sniper (metaphorical use)	Used for extremely accurate player, not just the weapon role.
	Michael Jordan of sniping	Using athlete’s name metaphorically to mean “GOAT / best at sniping.”
	Fake stream	Not literally fake; means prerecorded or suspected not-live content.

		Carry my stream	“Carry” used for keeping content entertaining / alive.
		Goat	Literally “goat”; acronym GOAT = “Greatest of All Time”, used as noun.
5	Coinage of New Terms	Creating entirely new informal terms used in gaming/stream culture	Noob Inexperienced player.
		Aimbot	A cheat that automatically aims at enemies.
		Troll	Person who intentionally disrupts or misleads others online.
		Lock in	Focus seriously on the game.
		W’s in the chat	Expression asking viewers to spam “W” to celebrate success.
		Fireflies	Faction name in the game <i>The Last of Us</i> ; function as an in-world slang label.
		Wolves / Wolf	Coined faction name (WLF); used as identity term, not real animal.
		Scars / Seraphites	Coined religious-faction terms for enemy group in the game.

	Infected	In-game coined label for zombie-like enemies.
	Apostate	In-game religious term for ex-member / heretic, used as slur.
	Rat King	Nickname for a unique boss creature; coined label in the fan/game community.
	Urban Warrior	Coined phrase for aggressive fighter/survivor in urban environments.
	Story mode	Game mode label coined by industry/community for narrative-focused play.
	Subcount	Coined metric: "subscriber count," treated as one lexical unit.
	Fake stream	Community coinage for "not truly live / pre-recorded stream."

**Table 2 Slang Words in Gaming Context**

<i>No</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>The Process</i>	<i>Game Slang Terms</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	<b>Blends</b>	Combining parts of two words	Smurf (Smurf character + account concept), Lagspike (lag + spike), Hitbox (hit + box)	" <b>Lagspike</b> " refers to sudden internet delay. " <b>Hitbox</b> " refers to the area where a character can be hit.
2	<b>Abbreviations and Acronyms</b>	Collecting the first	AFK (Away From Keyboard), GG	These shorten longer phrases for

		letter of each word	(Good Game), OP (Overpowered), HP (Hit Points), DPS (Damage Per Second), AOE (Area Of Effect), NPC (Non-Playable Character)	faster communication during gameplay. They improve efficiency in competitive environments.
3	<b>Clippings</b>	Shortening original forms	Ult (Ultimate skill), Pro (Professional), Admin (Administrator), Champ (Champion), Stats (Statistics)	These forms reduce longer words while keeping their meaning. Clipping supports fast-paced interaction in gaming chat.
4	<b>Repurposing Standard English</b>	Assigning new meaning to existing English words	Farming, Grinding, Carry, Feed, Push, Camp, Tank, Meta	These are standard English words but have new specialized meanings in gaming. For example, "Feed" means repeatedly dying and giving advantage to opponents.
5	<b>Coinage of New Terms</b>	Creating entirely new lexical items for game features	Nerf, Buff, Gank, Respawn, Smurf (as role identity), Inting, Backdoor	These words were created within gaming culture to describe mechanics or behaviors that previously had no exact term in standard English.

From both tables, it becomes evident that multiple types of neologisms coexist and interact within the livestreaming discourse. Abbreviations, clippings, and repurposed English terms appear as the most dominant types, indicating that linguistic economy and real-time communicative efficiency are central motivations in this setting. Meanwhile, coinage and blend forms highlight the creative and community-specific nature of gaming slang, where new meanings are socially negotiated rather than formally assigned. Altogether, the findings demonstrate that slang in IShowSpeed's livestreams is not merely stylistic, but reflects a broader sociolinguistic process in which digital communities construct identity, streamline communication, and embed technological experience directly into language use.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The analysis of Table 1 and Table 2 reveals that slang usage in IShowSpeed's livestreams consists of two overlapping but functionally distinct lexical domains: (1) general English slang influenced by internet culture, and (2) specialized gaming slang shaped by technological environments. Both domains are systematically organized by five neologism categories proposed by Lazore (2017)—blends, abbreviations and acronyms, clippings, repurposing of standard English, and coinage of new terms—indicating that linguistic innovation in this context is neither random nor chaotic, but structured around recognizable morphological and sociolinguistic patterns.

From Table 1, the data shows that general slang terms tend to emerge from informal online communication and are often tied to real-time interaction with audiences. Categories such as clippings (e.g., *chat*, *bro*, *sub*) and abbreviations (e.g., *PC*, *AWOL*, *POV*) appear highly productive, suggesting that efficiency and rapid message exchange are primary communicative motivations. Meanwhile, the category of repurposing standard English (e.g., *dead*, *bot*, *stream died*, *grind*) illustrates a semantic shift mechanism in which existing lexical items acquire context-dependent meanings. These terms rely on shared cultural knowledge between streamer and audience, demonstrating that meaning-making occurs within a socially bounded speech community rather than the general population

In contrast, Table 2 highlights that specialized gaming slang shows a stronger relationship to technological processes, gameplay mechanics, and competitive coordination. Abbreviations (e.g., *AFK*, *OP*, *AOE*, *NPC*) and coinages (e.g., *nerf*, *buff*, *gank*, *respawn*) dominate this domain, reflecting a need for precision and operational clarity during gameplay. Repurposed English terms (e.g., *carry*, *feed*, *push*, *tank*) similarly demonstrate semantic specialization driven by gaming-specific contexts rather than general internet culture

This suggests that gaming slang functions not only as social indexing but also as a technical lexicon enabling efficient communication during high-stakes or time-dependent interactions.

A comparative reading of the two tables further shows that gaming slang frequently influences general slang usage within the livestream. Terms such as *GG*, *noob*, and *carry* appear in both frameworks, showing mobility across domains. This linguistic diffusion indicates that livestreaming platforms serve as contact zones where specialized gaming vocabulary becomes normalized and integrated into broader digital discourse. Consequently, IShowSpeed's environment accelerates lexical innovation through constant exposure, repetition, and shared participation between streamer and audience.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that technological neologisms and slang usage in livestreaming are shaped by three interrelated forces: (1) morphological economy, (2) social identity construction, and (3) technological mediation. Morphological economy favors shorter, faster, and more efficient forms; social identity construction marks in-group belonging within gamer communities; and technological mediation creates new communicative needs that traditional vocabulary cannot satisfy. Therefore, the slang circulating in IShowSpeed's livestreams is not merely stylistic, but reflects the socio-technical reality of digital gaming culture and the evolving linguistic practices of its participants.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study examined the emergence and use of technological neologisms and slang within Darren Watkins' (IShowSpeed) gaming livestreams through a sociolinguistic lens. The research found that language practices in this digital environment are heavily shaped by technological advancement, real-time interaction, and

the social dynamics of online gaming communities. These linguistic innovations do not arise randomly; instead, they reflect communicative needs, identity formation, and cultural membership within the livestream audience and the broader gaming ecosystem

The analysis identified multiple neologism types as proposed by Lazore (2017), including blends, abbreviations and acronyms, clippings, repurposed standard English, and coinages. Among these categories, abbreviations and acronyms such as *AFK*, *GG*, *NPC*, and *AOE* appeared as the most dominant form due to their efficiency and frequency in fast-paced gameplay communication. This dominance indicates that morphological economy is a key driver in the creation and circulation of gaming-related language. Additionally, repurposed English terms such as *dead*, *lag*, or *carry* demonstrate how existing lexical items acquire new contextual meanings when embedded in technological and gaming settings.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the use of such neologisms functions beyond mere lexical innovation. These terms serve as markers of belonging, signaling in-group membership and shared cultural knowledge within the livestream audience. The livestream platform further amplifies this process by creating a hybrid interaction space where specialized gaming terminology spills over into general internet discourse, contributing to the broader evolution of digital language practices.

Overall, the findings of this study underscore that technological neologisms are an integral part of contemporary communication shaped by digital platforms, interactive media, and virtual communities. Livestreaming, in particular, accelerates both the diffusion and normalization of new lexical items, making it a productive environment for linguistic change. Further research could expand this analysis by comparing different livestreamers, platforms, or multilingual gaming communities to better understand how digital ecosystems continue to transform language in the 21st century.

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