

An exploration of 'cunt'-derived neologisms in present-day English

Uma exploração dos neologismos derivados de 'cunt' no inglês contemporâneo

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the emergence of neologisms derived from the word “cunt” in contemporary English, particularly within the context of internet communication. Traditionally considered a rather offensive word in English, “cunt” has undergone a notable transformation in social media settings, acquiring more positive and varied connotations. An example of a “cunt”-related neologism is “I was bored, so I decided to cuntify my lighter” (X, 2024), in which “cuntify” means to make something more charming or appealing. Thus, this study aims to document and analyze the new uses of “cunt,” focusing on how they integrate into broader linguistic frameworks such as Derivational Morphology and Construction Grammar. The research involved extracting data from the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) to capture real-time usage of “cunt”-derived neologisms. By applying derivational suffixes listed by Crystal (2018), such as “-age,” “-dom,” “-ery,” “-hood,” “-ism,” “-ocracy,” and “-ship,” the study identified a range of new terms like “cuntage,” “cuntdom,” “cuntery,” “cunthood,” “cuntism,” “cuntocracy,” and “cuntship.” These neologisms reflect diverse meanings, often highlighting attributes like empowerment, boldness, and innovation. Analysis also identified potential analogies based on phonetic similarity, such as “cunter scale” mirroring “Richter scale,” “cuntic” mirroring “Atlantic,” and “cuntette” aligning with “cadette,” among others. These analogies likely arise from the term “cunt” being highly adaptable, allowing it to integrate seamlessly with various morphological structures and representations. Analysis also utilized Fillmore et al.’s (1988) framework for classifying constructions. The study found that “cunt”-related neologisms typically fall under decoding constructions, as they require contextual understanding for their meanings. Moreover, they adhere to standard grammatical rules, rendering them grammatical constructions, and they exhibit flexibility in form and meaning, characteristic of formal constructions. Findings also suggest that these neologisms are highly productive in present-day English, contributing to the evolving landscape of internet language and reflecting broader cultural shifts towards inclusivity and self-expression.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

Cunt. Neologisms. Derivational Morphology. Construction Grammar.

RESUMO

Este artigo explora a emergência de neologismos derivados da palavra “cunt” no inglês contemporâneo, particularmente no contexto da comunicação pela internet. Tradicionalmente considerada uma palavra bastante ofensiva em inglês, “cunt” passou por uma transformação recente nas redes sociais, adquirindo conotações mais positivas e complexas. Um exemplo de um neologismo relacionado a “cunt” é “I was bored, so I decided to cuntify my lighter” (X, 2024), em

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que “cuntify” significa tornar algo mais charmoso ou atraente. Assim, este estudo visa documentar e analisar os novos usos de “cunt,” focando em como eles se integram em estruturas linguísticas mais amplas, como a Morfologia Derivacional e a Gramática de Construções. A pesquisa envolveu a extração de dados da plataforma de mídia social X (anteriormente Twitter) para capturar o uso em tempo real de neologismos derivados de “cunt”. Aplicando sufixos derivacionais listados por Crystal (2018), como “-age,” “-dom,” “-ery,” “-hood,” “-ism,” “-ocracy” e “-ship,” o estudo identificou uma série de novos termos como “cuntage,” “cuntdom,” “cuntery,” “cunthood,” “cuntism,” “cuntocracy” e “cuntship”. Esses neologismos refletem significados diversos, frequentemente destacando atributos como empoderamento, ousadia e inovação. A análise também identificou potenciais analogias baseadas na similaridade fonética, como “cunter scale” espelhando “Richter scale,” “cuntic” espelhando “Atlantic” e “cuntette” alinhando-se com “cadette,” entre outros. Essas analogias provavelmente surgem pelo termo “cunt” ser altamente adaptável, permitindo sua integração harmoniosa com várias estruturas morfológicas e representações. A análise também utilizou a estrutura de Fillmore et al. (1988) para classificação de construções. O estudo descobriu que os neologismos relacionados a “cunt” geralmente se enquadram em construções de decodificação, pois exigem compreensão contextual para seus significados. Além disso, eles aderem às regras gramaticais padrão, tornando-os construções gramaticais, e exibem flexibilidade em forma e significado, característica das construções formais. Os resultados também sugerem que esses neologismos são altamente produtivos no inglês atual, contribuindo para o cenário em evolução da linguagem na internet e refletindo mudanças culturais mais amplas em direção à inclusividade e autoexpressão.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

Cunt. Neologismos. Morfologia Derivacional. Gramática de Construções.

1. Introduction

This paper aims to explore neologisms associated with the word “cunt” in contemporary English discourse, highlighting their novel manifestations across written internet language. We will concentrate on describing contemporary usages of the word “cunt” that are not associated with its former derogatory or sexual meanings, aiming to shed light on the semantic transformation of sensitive words.

According to the *Urban Dictionary* (2024), the word “cunt” has two distinct meanings. The first refers to female genitalia, while the second describes a person who is thoroughly disliked, as in “He thought his music teacher was a cunt”. Although both meanings are used in fairly negative contexts, they have different etymological origins and are not directly related to each other.

“Cunt” meaning “female genitalia” dates back to Middle English “cunte” and has two theoretically disputed ancestors (Etymonline, 2024). The first one seems to be related to Old Norse “kunta,” as well as Old Frisian, Middle Dutch, and Middle Low German term “kunte,” all deriving from Proto-Germanic *kuntōn. Its origin is uncertain, potentially linked to the Latin “cuneus” (wedge) or the Proto-Indo-European roots *geu- (hollow place) and *gwen- (woman). The second possible ancestor is the Latin “cunnus,” which may stem from the PIE roots *sker- (to cut) or *(s)keu- (to conceal), being connected to Greek “kysthos” and Lithuanian “kutys.” According to Beirne (2019), the earliest English register of “cunt” appears in 1230 in the street name

“Gropecuntlane,” and, by the 15th century, the word was rendered obscene and was replaced by euphemisms.

The word “cunt” meaning “stupid person” or “lowlife” dates to circa 1920 and is now primarily a British slang. According to Etymonline (2024), this sense likely evolved from the French word “con,” which was adopted by soldiers during World War I. In late 19th-century France, “con” was an insult for an effete man and eventually came to mean “cretin.” Originally considered extremely rude, it was often spelled aloud to avoid saying it directly. Over time, “con” became commonly used to denote a stupid person, as evidenced by the 1984 film “P’tit Con”. In some dialects, it is used more casually and not necessarily as an insult, as seen in Irvine Welsh’s 1998 play and Blindboy Boatclub’s podcast tagline. However, in American English, “cunt” remains a severe derogatory term against women.

While traditionally considered one of the most offensive words in English, “cunt” has undergone a notable transformation in social media settings, acquiring more positive connotations in recent years. Thus, this paper aims to explore the non-derogatory and non-erotic emerging uses of the term “cunt”. Consider the following tweets, extracted from the website X (2024):

1. Ok but why is your costume **CUNTY** and you are in **UNCUNTY** shoes? sir please take those sperrys OFF
2. she flew the motherplane directly into the world serve centre and **cuntagon** #goldenglobes
3. i still can't believe we got **cuntyoncé** for this era like i've never been more alive
4. I was bored so I decided to **cuntify** my lighter by adding rhinestones ✨
now I let her be bejeweled
5. going to the hairdresser tmrw imagine the serve if my hair was **cuntily** cut

The examples 1-5 above showcase cunt-related neologisms that emerge within different grammatical categories: *cunty* (adjective), *uncunty* (adjective), *cuntagon* (proper noun, possibly an analogy with “Pentagon”), *cuntyoncé* (proper noun, possibly an analogy with Beyoncé), *cuntify* (verb) and *cuntily* (adverb). These examples showcase how there seems to be a wide range of morphemes that can be attached to the root “cunt” to form novel words with different meanings. They also show how the word “cunt” acquired new connotations that sets it apart from its traditional meaning.

According to Lind and Eriksson (2024), the 21st century has witnessed the emergence of new meanings for words once burdened with negative associations. Among these, “cunt” stands out as a prime example. It is probably around 2021 that “cunt” began to embody notions of empowerment, strength and confidence regardless of one's sexual identity. This shift might be linked to the viral trend “serving cunt” (also spelled #servingcunt) that emerged on the social platforms *X* and *TikTok*. An example of this construction provided by the Urban Dictionary (2024) is “No matter what she does, Bayonetta always seems to serve cunt... every single time”. In this example, the videogame character (Bayonetta) is depicted as a symbol of unyielding confidence and empowerment, showcasing unwavering self-assurance and dominance in her demeanor. This portrayal reinforces the evolving positive connotations of the word “cunt” in depicting strength and self-assuredness.

Lind and Eriksson's (2024) study on the *TikTok* trend #servingcunt touches upon the linguistic reclamation of “cunt” within the context of fourth wave feminism on social media. Their research posits how women use humor and shamelessness to resist traditional shaming cultures. According to them, by creating a subculture on *TikTok*, women have redefined “cunt” to signify confidence, empowerment, and solidarity. Their digital ethnographic analysis demonstrates how the term's evolving usage now embodies feminist resistance and the creation of a supportive, empowering linguistic environment online. In short, if women can reclaim and redefine a term historically used to demean and control them, they can effectively challenge broader societal norms and expectations. This reclamation is not merely linguistic but also cultural, as it reflects a shift in how women assert their identities and agency in public and digital spaces.

It's possible that it was after #servingcunt went viral that a series of non-derogatory uses of the word “cunt” emerged. These new instances shed their reliance on the “serve” component, allowing the word to appear independently. For instance, in an *X* post exclaiming “I luv nastyona like that girl is so cunt,” the term is used as an adjective to convey a singer's empowerment and allure, as opposed to its historical usage, which was either sexual or derogatory. Additionally, the word began being used regardless of one's sexual identity, as illustrated in the following *X* post: “met gala harry was so cunt”. Here, “cunt” was used to describe celebrity Harry Styles' confident fashion choices, highlighting how the term transcends gender and sexual identity to encompass broader notions of self-expression and defiance of norms. This illustrates the dynamic nature of internet language and the necessity of documenting it.

Thus, this paper aims to provide a preliminary analysis of the form and meaning of

neologisms stemming from the word “cunt,” shedding light on their emergence and significance in contemporary online communication. We posit the hypothesis that “cunt”-related neologisms are rather productive in present-day English, being readily attachable to a wide range of derivational suffixes. To achieve this, a qualitative analysis will be conducted, delving into posts featuring “cunt” derivations on the X platform. Data will be described according to the principles of Derivational Morphology and Construction Grammar (Fillmore et al., 1988). This paper is divided as follows: Section 2 explores the premises of derivational morphology and Construction Grammar; Section 3 describes the methodology; Section 4 presents the findings; being followed by the conclusions and references.

2. Derivational Morphology and Construction Grammar

This section describes the premises underlying Derivational Morphology, before delving into its integration within the framework of Construction Grammar. According to Trask (2013), Derivational Morphology is a subfield of Morphology that examines the processes by which new words are formed from existing ones. It contrasts Inflectional Morphology, which deals with the variation in words forms for grammatical purposes, such as in “cat/cats” or “eat/eats/ate/eating/eaten” (Trask, 2013, p. 142). Generally, whereas inflection doesn’t alter the substantial meaning of a word (as the modifications involve grammatical transformations), derivation does (Crystal, 2018).

Derivational processes typically include affixation, compounding, conversion, and blending². Affixation, which is the focus of this paper, involves the addition of prefixes, suffixes, infixes, or circumfixes to base forms to create derived words. For example, the suffix -ation is attached to verbs such as “explore” and “educate” to form nouns such as “exploration” and “education” (Crystal, 2018, p. 210). Compounding combines two or more base forms to create a new compound word (e.g. “sunflower,” “whiteboard”). Conversion changes the word class or syntactic category of a base form without altering its phonological shape (e.g., “to butter” (verb) → “butter” (noun)). Blending involves the fusion of parts of two or more words to create a new word with a blended meaning (e.g., “brunch” from “breakfast” and “lunch”).

An important concept in derivational morphology has to do with productivity. According to Brown (2005, p. 122), productivity refers to “the property of an affix or a morphological process to

² While some sources, such as Crystal (2018), categorize compounding and blending as derivational processes, others, like Hamawand (2010) and O’Grady & Archibald (2016), treat them as separate word formation phenomena.

give rise to new formations on a systematic basis". Thus, a derivational process is considered productive if it can be freely applied to create novel words that speakers of the language readily understand and accept. For example, in English, the suffix "-ness" can be added to adjectives to form nouns indicating a state or quality (e.g., "happiness," "sadness," "brightness"). This suffix is highly productive because speakers can easily attach it to a wide range of adjectives to create new nouns. In addition to suffixes being readily attachable to a content word, the reverse scenario — where a content word readily accepts a variety of suffixes — can also demonstrate productivity (Brown, 2005). Consider a base word like "perform." This word can easily accept various suffixes to create new words: "performer," "performance," "performable," "performative," and so forth. The base word "perform" demonstrates productivity because it readily combines with different suffixes to create a range of related forms with distinct meanings. As mentioned earlier, we are positing the hypothesis that "cunt"-related neologisms are rather productive in present-day English.

2.1 Construction Grammar

Construction Grammar (CG) is a theoretical model rooted on Cognitive Linguistics in which constructions take center stage in linguistic analysis. According to Hoffmann and Trousdale (2013), a construction is a pairing of form and meaning, which can span a continuum of lexical and grammatical elements. Constructions can vary in size and complexity, from simple word combinations like "kick the bucket" to more elaborate syntactic patterns like [the X-er, the X-er] (e.g. the bigger they come, the harder they fall") in comparative sentences (Fillmore, 1998b).

One of the key premises of CG is that constructions are not static entities, but rather flexible patterns that can be modified, combined, and extended to create new expressions and convey nuanced meanings. According to Bybee (2010), as opposed to generative models - which considered that redundant information was not part of cognitive/lexical representations - constructions aggregate detailed semantic, pragmatic and discourse-level information. In this sense, CG asserts that language users possess a repertoire of constructions acquired through language exposure and usage in authentic communicative contexts. Consequently, speakers have a rich and detailed store of linguistic knowledge, enabling them to produce and interpret language across diverse situations.

In Construction Grammar, Derivational Morphology is viewed as one of the mechanisms through which constructions are formed and interpreted. The analysis of derivational morphology within a constructional framework allows researchers to uncover regularities in word formation,

trace the development of constructional schemas over time, and investigate the interaction between morphological, syntactic, and semantic structures.

Unlike traditional frameworks that separate grammar from lexicon, CG assumes that constructions encompass both grammatical and lexical domains, blurring the boundaries between the two. This perspective highlights the fluidity and flexibility of language, as constructions can range from simple word combinations to complex syntactic patterns, each contributing to the overall structure and meaning of utterances. This holistic framework not only captures the cognitive nature of language but also facilitates the analysis of emerging phenomena, such as “cunt”-derived neologisms in English. As these neologisms exhibit a wide range of derivational suffixes and are situated within specific pragmatic contexts, CG emerges as an apt tool for their examination.

Research in Construction Grammar shows that even strange-sounding expressions are relevant in a language, as their usage impact other language subsystems (Bybee, 2010; McCulloch, 2019). While such expressions may not always align with conventional grammar rules, analyzing their attested patterns can enhance our comprehension of a language’s idiosyncrasies. A common CG method for analyzing a construction involves its qualitative categorization. In their seminal work, Fillmore et al. (1988) offer the first framework for the fundamental classification of a construction. Although other promising classifications have been proposed (Schultze-Berndt, 2002; Goldberg, 2003; Diessel, 2023), we will adopt Fillmore et al.’s (1988) framework, as it remains widely used in studies on emerging constructions (Bringe, 2006; Eddington & Mendoza, 2010; Hoffman, 2022) due to its clarity and effectiveness in systematically identifying and classifying new constructions.

The first classification presented by Fillmore et al. (1988) contrasts encoding and decoding constructions. According to the authors, encoding constructions establish a direct connection between words and meaning, relying on literal interpretations and standard grammar. For instance, “answer the door” and “wide awake” are examples of encoding constructions as they convey meaning without requiring figurative interpretations. Decoding constructions, however, involve non-literal interpretations that cannot be derived from the individual words alone. Examples like “kick the bucket” and “pull a fast one” illustrate this, as they require understanding idiomatic meanings beyond literal translations.

The second classification presented by Fillmore et al. (1988) contrasts grammatical and extragrammatical constructions. According to the authors, grammatical constructions seamlessly

fit into standard sentence structures, adhering to syntactic and grammatical rules. “Spill the beans” and “blow one’s nose” are examples of grammatical constructions due to their conformity to typical grammatical patterns. In contrast, extragrammatical constructions deviate from standard grammar and often appear as fixed expressions. Examples like “By and large” and “sight unseen” do not follow conventional syntactic patterns, functioning more as adverbial phrases or unconventional expressions.

The third classification presented by Fillmore et al. (1988) contrasts substantive and formal constructions. Substantive constructions consist of fixed units with specific meanings that cannot be easily deduced from individual words. “Let alone” serves as an example, functioning as a cohesive phrase with a unique meaning. Formal constructions, on the other hand, allow for flexibility in filling certain constituents according to specific rules. “The bigger they come, the harder they fall” exemplifies this, providing a template for expressing relationships without specifying exact lexical items.

Overall, Fillmore et al.’s (1988) classification system offers an adequate approach for describing emerging and idiomatic language forms, emphasizing their interaction with grammar and use. This framework will be applied to categorize “cunt”-derived neologisms in our study.

3. Methodology

This section outlines the chosen methodology. The first subsection describes the criteria employed for selecting the suffixes, whereas the second subsection focuses on data extraction and filtering processes.

3.1 Suffix selection

To explore the range of neologisms formed with the word “cunt,” we began by identifying potential affixes that could combine with the base word. A preliminary analysis on *X* revealed that “cunt” can be attached to both prefixes (e.g. “Rewarding people for uncunty behavior? Seems like a good idea”) and suffixes (e.g. “Sorry I was depressed not so cunty of me”). However, considering the whole extent of English affixes would be a rather extraneous task. Crystal (2018), for instance, compiles a list of 208 common affixes. Due to scope of this paper and to the extensive number of affixes available, we decided to narrow our study to derivational suffixes. This decision is based on the observation that derivational suffixes are more productive and frequently utilized in the creation of new words, allowing for greater flexibility and innovation in neologism formation.

Thus, the next step involved selecting a comprehensive list of derivational suffixes. For this task, we consulted five textbooks of English Grammar and Morphology. These textbooks were selected based on their physical availability by the researcher. Among them, Brinton & Brinton's (2010) textbook "The Linguistic Structure of Modern English" compiles 22 derivational morphemes. Hamawand's (2011) "Morphology in English: Word Formation in Cognitive Grammar" compiles 40 derivational morphemes. Curzan and Adams' (2014) textbook "How English works: A linguistic introduction" compiles 32 derivational morphemes. Carstairs-McCarthy's (2017) "An Introduction to English Morphology" compiles 25 derivational morphemes. Crystal's (2018) "Encyclopedia of the English Language" compiles 50 derivational morphemes. As the number of morphemes varied significantly across different textbooks, we decided to select the one which compiled more instances of derivational morphemes, this being Crystal's (2018). According to the author, his selection was based on the suffixes' productivity and relevance in generating meaningful new words in English. We also adopted Crystal's (2018) categorization, which organizes the suffixes into nine groups, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Crystal's (2018) list of common derivational suffixes

Category	Derivational Suffixes
1. Abstract noun makers	-age, -dom, -ery, -ful, -hood, -ing, -ism, -ocracy, -ship
2. Concrete noun makers	-eer, -er, -ess, -ette, -let, -ling, -ster
3. Nouns from verbs	-age, -al, -ant, -ation, -ee, -er, -ing, -ment, -or
4. Nouns from adjectives	-ity, -ness
5. Adjective/noun makers	-ese, -(i)an, -ist, -ite
6. Adjectives from nouns	-ed, -esque, -ful, -(i)al, -ic, -ish, -less, -ly, -ous, -y
7. Adjectives from verbs	-able, -ive
8. Adverb makers	-ly, -ward(s), -wise
9. Verb makers	-ate, -en, -ify, -ize/-ise

Source – adapted from Crystal (2018, p. 210)

Our aim with the suffixes shown in Table 1 was to explore how they could yield a diverse set of neologisms when combined with the root 'cunt'. The following section details the process of data extraction and the filtering criteria.

3.2 Data extraction and filtering criteria

To gather real-world examples of “cunt”-related neologisms, we turned to *X* (former Twitter), a platform known for its diverse and contemporary linguistic relevance. According to McCulloch (2019), *X* allows users to post and interact with content in real-time, making it an ideal platform to observe immediate and evolving language use. This is crucial for capturing neologisms as they emerge and gain traction. Moreover, according to McCulloch (2019), unlike some other social media platforms, much of *X*'s content is publicly accessible. This openness is advantageous for researchers who need to collect data without extensive privacy concerns.

For each selected suffix, we entered the base word 'cunt' with one of the derivational suffixes listed by Crystal (2018) into *X*'s search engine, following the order depicted in Table 1. This method allowed us to capture live uses of these potential neologisms³. On *X* (website), there are five options for searching for tweets: top, latest, people, media, and lists. Each of these functions serves a distinct purpose. The “top” category displays the most popular tweets based on engagement metrics like retweets, likes, and replies; it prioritizes tweets that have gained significant attention. The “latest” category shows tweets in chronological order, presenting the most recent tweets first. The “people” category filters search results to show accounts that match the search terms. The “media” category displays tweets containing images, videos, or other media types, focusing on visual content. Finally, the “lists” category shows lists created by users that include accounts relevant to the search terms, providing curated content collections. For our study, we decided to select tweets from the “latest” category, as it ensured that we captured the most recent and up-to-date posts, reflecting current trends.

From the eighteenth to the twenty-first of June, 2024, we conducted a search on *X* to extract tweets illustrating the usage of each derived word. To ensure that our examples reflected actual language use, we only considered neologisms that appeared in at least five different *X* posts⁴. This threshold was set to avoid anecdotal evidence and ensure linguistic validity and relevance. Thus, for each neologism, we compiled a set of five tweets. However, only the most recent tweet was included in our qualitative analysis, while the remaining four served as

³ For those looking to replicate the study, we recommend using the search functionality on *X* to locate tweets containing the identified neologisms, following the suffix attachment method described in Table 1 of this paper.

⁴ The terms “posts” and “tweets” will be used interchangeably.

supporting evidence to confirm the validity of the neologism's usage⁵. To maintain the quality and appropriateness of our data, we applied the following criteria when filtering the tweets:

1. **Language:** Since the study is limited to English only, tweets in other languages were filtered from analysis.
2. **Non-Derogatory and Non-Sexual Meanings:** As our focus was on emerging, non-offensive usages associated with the word “cunt,” tweets that contained derogatory or sexual meanings were excluded.
3. **Contextual Usage:** Neologisms were only considered if they appeared within complete sentences, ensuring they were used in a meaningful and contextual manner.
4. **Suffix Accuracy:** We excluded any forms that did not match the intended meaning of the derivational suffix. For instance, the suffix “-er” can form both the comparative adjective “cunter” and the noun “cunter.” Since we were not assessing inflectional suffixes, tweets that displayed the comparative adjective form were excluded.
5. **Repetitions:** Sentences that contained the same words as previously selected tweets were filtered from the analysis.

Upon completing the data extraction and filtering process, we analyzed each set of “cunt”-related neologisms as per the categories shown in Table 1. The analysis involved qualitative approaches to describe the linguistic patterns and semantic shifts associated with these new word formations. This involved coding the tweets for recurring themes, such as humor, social commentary, and cultural references, in addition to classifying them under Fillmore et al.'s (1988) categorization system.

4. Data Analysis

This section is divided into two subsections: the first provides a qualitative analysis of 'cunt'-related neologisms, each associated with one of the 50 common derivational suffixes listed by Crystal (2018). The second subsection classifies each neologism according to Fillmore's (1988) criteria of constructions.

⁵ Researchers interested in accessing the dataset can contact the corresponding author.

4.1 Qualitative analysis of the derivational morphemes

As mentioned earlier, data extraction involved entering the base word 'cunt' with one of the derivational suffixes listed by Crystal (2018) into X's search engine, following the order depicted in Table 1. Crystal's main derivational suffixes are divided into nine categories: (1) concrete noun makers, (2) abstract noun makers, (3) nouns from verbs, (4) nouns from adjectives, (5) adjective/noun makers, (6) adjectives from nouns, (7) adjectives from verbs, (8) adverb makers, and (8) verb makers. These categories will guide our qualitative analysis of the neologisms.

4.1.1 Concrete noun makers

This section describes “cunt”-related neologisms formed with the addition of a concrete noun maker suffix. Consider Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Concrete noun maker suffixes and potential neologisms.

Suffix	Example	Neologism	Tweet
-eer	engineer, racketeer	cunteer	Serving cunt as a career call that cunteer
-er	teenager, cooker	cunter	9.9 magnitude motherquake on the cunter scale
-ess	waitress, lioness	cuntess	happy birthday to the cuntess of slayvenia, mother of all lesbians, queen raiven!!
-ette	kitchenette, usherette	cuntette	Cuntette Kelly reporting for duty
-let	booklet, piglet	cuntlet	Looking crispy out the mother fryer and serving cuntlet
-ling	duckling, underling	cuntling	One of us in charge. The other one is my cuntling.
-ster	gangster, gamester	cuntster	Song I'm Working on 4 collab is so cuntster like omggg

Table 2 presents a selection of derivational suffixes applied to the base word “cunt” to form neologisms. The first column exhibits the derivational suffix added to the base word. The second column illustrates standard English words that utilize the suffix, extracted from Crystal (2018). The third column exhibits the neologism formed by combining the suffix with “cunt,” when applicable. The fourth column exhibits a sentence from Twitter demonstrating the neologism in use.

Let us begin with the suffixes -er and -eer. As pointed by Curzan and Adams (2014), both suffixes typically denote a person associated with a particular activity or profession (e.g. “engineer,” “teenager”). In the first example of the table, “cunteer” humorously implies someone

engaged in the profession of serving “cunt,” as meta-referenced in the tweet itself. In the context of social media and pop culture, this could refer to a bold person with an unapologetic demeanor. In the second example, “cunter” is used in an analogy with the “Richter scale” to describe the magnitude of an event related to “cunt”. For example, a high score on the “cunter scale” could indicate a high level of sexiness, empowerment, or innovation, while a low score might suggest a lack of these attributes. The examples in this paragraph illustrate how “cunt” can function not only as a common noun but also as a proper noun.

As for the suffixes “-ess” and “-ette,” these traditionally form feminine nouns to denote a female associated with a particular role or quality (Brinton & Brinton, 2010), as in “waitress” and “usherette”. Besides forming feminine nouns, the suffix “-ette” can also represent diminutive features (e.g. “kitchenette”). In the third example of Table 2, “cuntess” is employed humorously to celebrate a woman’s birthday, emphasizing her perceived qualities of sexiness and allure with playful exaggeration. It may also be drawing an analogy with the common noun “countess,” owing to their phonetic similarity and the potential allusion to a nation (“slayvenia” for “Slovenia”). Similarly, in the fourth example, “cuntette” might analogize with “cadette” (a lower-ranking officer), based on their phonetic similarity and reference to reporting for duty. These instances underscore the remarkable association between “cunt”-related neologisms and their analogical power. They also show how these neologisms seamlessly integrate with pop culture concepts.

Alike “-ette,” the suffixes “-lette” and “-ling” also form diminutive nouns, with “-ling” additionally denoting a younger or lesser version of something (Carstairs-McCarthy, 2017). In the fifth example of Table 1, “cuntlet” appears to playfully describe a smaller or lesser version of a “cunt,” as humorously depicted in the tweet's context. Likewise, “cuntling” in the sixth example playfully describes a lower-ranked or “apprentice” form of an individual, as portrayed in the tweet's context of a hierarchical relationship (“One of us in charge. The other one is my cuntling”).

Lastly, the suffix “-ster” often forms nouns denoting a person associated with a specific ability or quality (Crystal, 2018). In the last example of Table 1, “cuntster” seems to describe someone exhibiting positive and empowering abilities associated with the new contexts of the word “cunt”. These abilities may include a talent for charm, audacity or boldness.

4.1.2 Abstract noun makers

This section describes “cunt”-related neologisms formed with the addition of an abstract noun maker suffix. Consider Table 3 below.

Table 3 – Abstract noun maker suffixes and potential neologisms

Suffix	Example	Neologism	Tweet
-age	frontage, mileage	cuntage	Can we talk about the absolute cuntage gaga served during the judas era?????
-dom	officialdom, stardom	cuntdom	untouchable caused a 9.9 magnitude of cuntquake and formed a new continent to called motherlandia where itzy's the empress of the cuntdom
-ery	drudgery, slavery	cuntery	raised the grade boundaries at the school of cuntery
-ful	cupful, spoonful	--	--
-hood	brotherhood, girlhood	cunthood	CUNTHOOD IS A SPECTRUM
-ing	farming, panelling	--	--
-ism	idealism, racism	cuntism	she has a phd in cuntism
-ocracy	aristocracy, democracy	cuntocracy	Slay The Cuntocracy shirt https://t.co/9dC7sYuxNt
-ship	friendship, membership	cuntship	i do feel a certain cuntship (kinship of cunt) with this fanmade m&m

Table 3 exhibits derivational suffixes combined with “cunt” to form abstract nouns. The first column displays the suffix used, while the second column shows standard English words utilizing these suffixes. The third column presents resulting neologisms when combined with “cunt.” The fourth column provides Twitter examples illustrating the neologisms in context.

Let us analyze each instance, starting with the suffix -age. This suffix typically forms nouns indicating an action, condition, or result (Hamawand, 2011). Here, “cuntage” likely refers to the remarkable impact or presence of the celebrity in question (Lady Gaga), using the suffix to emphasize a noteworthy event.

In its turn, the suffix “-dom” typically forms nouns indicating a state, condition, or domain (Hamawand, 2011). In the example shown by the table, “cuntdom” might be an analogy of the word “kingdom,” as the tweet playfully makes reference to a potential geographical location (“motherlandia”). Thus, we assume that it might be making reference to a glamorous or remarkable fictional domain.

The suffix “-ery” often forms nouns that denote a collective or habitual practice (Carstairs-McCarthy, 2017). In the original tweet (“[they] raised the grade boundaries at the school of cuntery”), an embedded video shows a South Korean pop girl band (Girl’s Generation) performing at a live concert. In this context, “cuntery” likely refers to a collective behavior embodying the new

connotations of “cunt,” such as empowerment, sexiness, and/or innovation.

As a noun maker, the suffix “-ful” did not retrieve significant results. Although we found instances of “cuntful,” these forms were associated with the adjectival use of the derivational morpheme (e.g., “thank you, Jungkook, for your cuntful service”). A possible explanation for the absence of “cuntful” as a noun likely has to do with the specific semantic roles of “-ful” when forming nouns. In English, when “-ful” forms nouns, it typically indicates a specific measure or quantity of the base noun (e.g., “spoonful” means the amount that a spoon can hold) (Crystal, 2018). Thus, we assume that the base word “cunt,” being an abstract term, doesn't naturally lend itself to this kind of quantitative interpretation. This constraint possibly limits “cuntful” to its adjectival use, where it can more flexibly convey the qualities associated with the base word.

Moving on to the -hood suffix, this morpheme (alike -ery) typically forms nouns that indicate a collective state or condition of being (Brinton & Brinton, 2010). In the provided example (“CUNTHOOD IS A SPECTRUM”), “cunthood” might refer to the experience of embodying empowering, sexy or innovative features, emphasizing a spectrum or range of alluring experiences.

The suffix “-ing” did not yield any significant results as a noun maker. Although search results returned many instances of “cunting,” these forms were always preceded by a noun, making them function as adjectives (e.g., “oomfs on a cunting trip and he hasn't served in a few days 🤔🤔🤔”). A possible explanation for the absence of “cunting” as a noun is that one of the primary functions of the suffix “-ing” is to form nouns derived from verbs (e.g., “swimming” refers to the activity depicted by the verb “swim,” “building” refers to entities associated with the verb “build”). However, “cunt” is not a verb and therefore does not naturally convert into a gerund or noun form.

In its turn, the suffix “-ism” forms nouns indicating a philosophy, belief, practice, or ideology (Curzan and Adams, 2014). “Cuntism” might humorously suggest an ideology or belief system centered around the qualities of the base word: empowerment, sexiness or innovation. In the specific tweet from Table 3 (“she has a phd in cuntism”), it might have been used as an analogy with academic programs such as “journalism” or “postmodernism,” due to their phonetic similarity and the reference of a “PhD” course. On a similar note, the suffix “-ocracy” also forms nouns denoting a form of philosophy or belief system (Crystal, 2018). In the provided example, “cuntocracy” playfully suggests a form of governance or social structure dominated by characteristics such as boldness and allure.

Finally, it is known that the suffix “-ship” is typically employed to form nouns indicating a

state or condition, often pertaining to relationship or quality (e.g., “friendship” and “membership”). The neologism “cuntship” probably implies a sense of kinship or fellowship imbued with the qualities associated with the base word, utilized here to convey a distinctive bond or connection. The author elucidates this concept within the tweet itself, stating, “I do feel a certain cuntship (kinship of cunt) with this fanmade m&m.”

4.1.3 Nouns from verbs

Consider Table 4 below, which shows neologisms formed by adding a suffix commonly used to transform verbs into nouns.

Table 4 – Suffixes that create nouns from verbs and potential neologisms

Suffix	Example	Neologism	Tweet
-age	breakage, wastage	--	--
-al	refusal, revival	--	--
-ant	informant, lubricant	--	--
-ation	exploration, education	cuntation	rewatched fnaf movie again... oh the cuntation that vanessa gives during that one scene.. peak
-ee	payee, absentee	--	--
-er	writer, driver	--	--
-ing	building, clothing	--	--
-ment	amazement, equipment	cuntment	the cuntment day or something like that
-or	actor, supervisor	--	--

Table 4 displays derivational suffixes typically attached to verbs, combined with “cunt” to form nouns. Out of the nine suffixes, only two yielded significant results. Both “-ation” and “-ment” commonly form nouns indicating an action, process, or state resulting from the action of a verb (Crystal, 2018). For example, “exploration” stems from “explore,” and “equipment” comes from “equip.” In the case of “cuntation,” the neologism humorously describes a remarkable or alluring performance by an actress. As for “cuntment,” as seen in the example “the cuntment day or something like that,” it represents a state or condition associated with “cunt,” potentially analogous to constructions like “independence day” or “judgment day.”

When analyzing Table 4, we posit that the lack of verb forms related to “cunt” limits its ability to combine with suffixes that typically convert verbs into nouns. Since “cunt” is inherently a

noun, it doesn't naturally fit with the suffixes listed in the table to form new nouns from verbs.

4.1.4 Nouns from adjectives

Consider Table 5 below, which shows neologisms formed by adding a suffix commonly used to transform adjectives into nouns.

Table 5 – Suffixes that create nouns from adjectives and potential neologisms

Suffix	Example	Neologism	Tweet
-ity	rapidity, falsity	cuntity	“you better not be the statue of cuntity when i get there” me:
-ness	happiness, kindness	cuntness	unfathomable levels of cuntness... oh how i miss rockstar gf red era taylor

As pointed by Crystal (2018), the suffixes -ity and -ness both typically form abstract nouns from adjectives, indicating a state or quality (e.g., “rapidity” from “rapid” and “happiness” from “happy”). In the first example of Table 5, “Cuntity” humorously plays on this pattern, suggesting a state or quality associated with “cunt.” The tweet uses it analogously with the “Statue of Liberty,” likely to evoke a sense of empowered freedom or boldness associated with the reclaimed term. The second tweet highlights “unfathomable levels of cuntness,” nostalgically referring to Taylor Swift’s “rockstar gf red era,” implying an artistic period marked by bold, empowered or stylish qualities. Overall, the data depicted in Table 5 demonstrates how derivational suffixes can be applied creatively to generate new expressions that convey specific nuances or cultural references. This showcases the dynamic and evolving nature of language, where even taboo or reclaimed words can be playfully adapted to fit conventional grammatical structures.

4.1.5 Adjective/Noun makers

Table 6 lists “cunt”-related neologisms formed with the addition of a noun or adjective maker suffix.

Table 6 – Adjective and noun maker suffixes and potential neologisms

Suffix	Example	Neologism	Tweet
-ese	Chinese, Portuguese	cuntese	nonsense? baby she’s fluent in cuntese!
-(i)an	republican, Parisian	cuntian	guys listen to me shes the cuntian form of

			dragalge
-ist	socialist, loyalist	cuntist	me calling the cuntist to schedule my weekly cunt appointment s
-ite	socialite, Luddite	cuntite	What a cuntite

According to Hamawand (2011), the suffix “-ese” is typically used to denote languages or people from a particular region. We assume that applying this suffix to “cunt” might suggest a humorous or playful invention of a language. This could imply a unique way of speaking or behaving that is characteristic of the empowered, confident connotations that “cunt” has acquired in online settings. On a similar note, the suffix “-ian” or “-an” is used to form adjectives of nationality or group membership and can also describe someone belonging to or characteristic of a particular place or thing. “Cuntian” thus denotes someone who embodies the qualities of “cunt,” i.e. confidence, allure, empowerment — analogous to a Parisian being from Paris.

In its turn, the suffix “-ist” (Curzan & Adams, 2014) is often used to indicate a person who practices or is concerned with something or holds certain principles. A “cuntist” might humorously suggest someone who practices the art of being “cunt”—a person who embodies and performs the traits associated with the reclaimed and positive use of the term. In the third example of Table 6, it is possible that the tweet’s author wanted to make an analogy with “dentist,” due to their phonetic resemblance and a reference to an “appointment” in the same line. On a similar note, the suffix “-ite” is used to denote followers or adherents of certain movements or ideas (Curzan & Adams, 2014). Thus, a “cuntite” could imply a person who identifies with or is a member of the subculture that embraces the new, empowering connotations of “cunt.”

4.1.6 Adjectives from nouns

Consider Table 7, which shows neologisms formed by adding a suffix commonly used to transform nouns into adjectives.

Table 7 – Suffixes that create adjectives from nouns and potential neologisms

Suffix	Example	Neologism	Tweet
-ed	pointed, blue-eyed	cunted	what do they put in these car mirrors that make our reflections so cunted
-esque	Kafkaesque	cuntesque	LOOOVE THE WAY LOUIS' COAT IS THROWN OVER HIS SHOULDERS, I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT BUT

			THIS IS SO CUNTESQUE TO ME
-ful	useful, successful	cuntful	every time a new video of men dancing perfect night is posted i have to come back here for my mental stability, thank you jungkook for your cuntful service
-(i)al	editorial, accidental	cuntial	knkk exactly ya she majored in cuntial psychology
-ic	atomic, Celtic	cuntic	Jisoo took a dip in the cuntic ocean that day
-ish	foolish, Swedish	cuntish	This wasn't embarrassing this was fluently cuntish
-less	careless, childless	cuntless	"today I will wear my white button down" ... cuntless way to die but to each their own
-ly	friendly, cowardly	--	--
-ous	ambitious, desirous	cuntous	goodnight to cuntous cyberpunk men only
-y	sandy, hairy	cunty	thinking about the cunty boom mic operator from Saw (2004)

Traditionally, the suffix “-ed” forms adjectives from nouns or verbs, indicating a state or quality. In the first example, “cunted” suggests being endowed with or characterized by the qualities associated with the reclaimed and positive use of “cunt”. In a similar way, the suffix “-esque” forms adjectives indicating style, manner, or resemblance. “Cuntesque” implies something that has the style or qualities reminiscent of “cunt,” suggesting a certain flair or attitude.

In its turn, the suffix “-ful” denotes being full of or characterized by something (Brinton & Brinton, 2010). “Cuntful” describes someone or something that is full of the qualities associated with “cunt,” such as confidence and allure. Similarly, the suffixes -(i)al, -ic, and -ish all form adjectives meaning pertaining to or having the characteristics of something (Crystal, 2018). When affixed to “cunt,” they yield neologisms like “cuntial,” “cuntic,” and “cuntish,” each suggesting a connection to or possessing characteristics akin to the root. The examples also show the word “cunt” undergoing derivation for analogical reasons. “Cuntic,” for instance, might be an analogy with “Atlantic,” given their phonetic similarity and the use of the word “ocean” following it. Similarly, “cuntial” might resonate with “behavioral,” sharing phonetic likeness and the contextual association with “psychology.” Analogies such as these probably have to do with the fact that the term “cunt,” in its evolving usage, is highly adaptable and can seamlessly integrate with various morphological structures to convey nuanced qualities.

As for the suffix “-less,” it forms adjectives indicating the absence of something (Brinton &

Brinton, 2010). For instance, “careless” means lacking care, and “childless” means without children. Given the new, positive connotations of “cunt”—such as confidence, empowerment, allure, and bold self-expression—being “cuntless” implies an absence of these qualities. Thus, wearing a simple white button-down shirt is humorously described as a “cuntless way to die,” suggesting it is an unremarkable or uninspired choice that lacks flair, confidence, or boldness.

As for the suffix *-ly*, we did not find significant results. The absence of the adjective form “cuntly” in the data could be attributed to different reasons. First, the suffix “*-ly*” is most commonly used to form adverbs from adjectives (e.g., “quick” becomes “quickly”). If “cuntly” were used, it might have been interpreted as an adverb rather than an adjective. This could lead to confusion if authors meant to describe a noun's quality rather than modifying a verb. A second reason is the fact that, when forming adjectives, the suffixes *-ly* and *-y* are rather similar in terms of phonetic and semantic quality. The adjective “cunty,” as we will describe below, already seems to effectively capture the desired nuances, such as empowerment, boldness, and a subversive edge. Therefore, there might be reluctance to introduce a variation that could potentially dilute or compete with an already pre-established form.

Finally, it seems that the suffixes “*-ous*” and “*-y*” may both be used to emphasize qualities associated with the root, though they could have slightly different nuances. “Cuntous,” with its “*-ous*” suffix, might imply being full of or characterized by “cunt” qualities, potentially making it more suitable for contexts requiring stronger, more deliberate assertions. For example, in the example “goodnight to cuntous cyberpunk men only,” it seems to be emphasizing strong and notable characteristics of a set of video-game (Cyberpunk 2077) characters. On the other hand, “cunty” appears to be more versatile and might be more present in casual, playful remarks. For instance, the tweet “thinking about the cunty boom mic operator from Saw (2004)” includes a picture of a microphone operator on a movie set, dressed fashionably and striking an unconventional pose. In this context, “cunty” seems to be used in a lighthearted manner to emphasize a distinctive and memorable trait of the crew member.

As mentioned earlier, the ability to add various suffixes to “cunt” without altering its core meaning highlights the word's versatility in modern language. This shows how people are not only reclaiming the word but also broadening its use to cover a wider range of meanings and contexts. This linguistic trend reflects a larger cultural shift towards reclaiming and positively reinterpreting words that were once derogatory.

4.1.7 Adjectives from verbs

Table 8 lists “cunt”-related neologisms formed with the addition of a suffix used to create adjectives from verbs.

Table 8 – Suffixes that create adjectives from verbs and potential neologisms.

Suffix	Example	Neologism	Tweet
-able	drinkable, washable	cutable	How is he cute AND cutable at the same time
-ive	attractive, explosive	cuntive	twitter the only place where you’ll get called a cuntive christianphobic slutty bitch

According to Carstairs-McCarthy (2017), the suffix “-able” forms adjectives meaning capable of or suitable for something (e.g., “drinkable” means suitable for drinking). In the context of “cutable,” the suffix might be used in contexts where desirability and attractiveness are being highlighted, especially in an admiring or playful manner. The tweet “How is he cute AND cutable at the same time” suggests a person who is both attractive and embodies the qualities associated with “cunt,” similar to how “lovable” or “kissable” describe desirability in a sexual or affectionate context.

On the other hand, the suffix “-ive” forms adjectives that describe a tendency or characteristic (e.g., “attractive” means having the quality of attracting) (Hamawand, 2011). In the post “Twitter is the only place where you’ll get called a cuntive christianphobic slutty bitch,” the term “cuntive” might be used to describe someone with notable “cunt” qualities, such as boldness and empowerment, in a similar way to how “attractive” describes someone with qualities that attract. Thus, it's more about the nature or characteristic of the person, making it useful for describing someone's overall demeanor or behavior.

4.1.8. Adverb makers

Table 9 below shows neologisms formed by adding a suffix commonly used to form adverbs.

Table 9 – Adverb maker suffixes and potential neologisms.

Suffix	Example	Neologism	Tweet
-ly	quickly, happily	cuntly	taylor cuntly singing lavender haze as if she

			didnt drop the most gut wrenching surprise songs just now
-ward(s)	northwards, onwards	--	--
-wise	clockwise, lengthwise	--	--

According to Curzan and Adams (2014), the suffix “-ly” primarily forms adverbs from adjectives, indicating how an action is performed or the manner in which something is done (e.g., “quickly” means in a quick manner). “Cuntly” is a neologism derived from “cunt,” describing an action or behavior done in a manner associated with the reclaimed positive connotations of “cunt.” In the tweet provided, “taylor cuntly singing lavender haze,” the term is used informally and colloquially to emphasize Taylor Swift's singing style, suggesting a confident and assertive behavior.

The absence of formations with “-ward(s)” and “-wise” could be due to the specific linguistic contexts in which these suffixes arise. The suffix “-ward(s)” typically indicates direction or orientation (e.g., “northwards,” “onwards”), while “-wise” often denotes manner or direction (e.g., “clockwise,” “lengthwise”). If a sentence does not involve spatial or directional concepts, there may be limited relevance for forming neologisms with said morphemes. This also suggests that there might be some limitations or traditional uses for “-ward(s)” and “-wise” that make them less flexible for creating new, playful, or casual terms compared to suffixes like “-ly.”

4.1.9 Verb makers

Table 10 shows neologisms formed by adding a suffix commonly used to create verbs.

Table 10 – Verb maker suffixes and potential neologisms.

Suffix	Example	Neologism	Tweet
-ate	orchestrate, chlorinate	--	--
-en	deafen, ripen	--	--
-ify	beautify, certify	cuntify	the anime always has to cuntify sanji i respect it
-ize/-ise	modernize, advertise	--	--

According to Brinton & Brinton (2010), the “-ify” suffix is used to form verbs meaning “to make or become something”. For example, “beautify” means to make beautiful, and “certify” means to confirm or authenticate. By appending “-ify” to “cunt,” writers coin a verb that seemingly

suggests making someone or something more charming, empowered, or appealing.

The suffixes “-ate,” “-en,” and “-ize/ise” did not yield significant results. One possible reason for this absence is that these morphemes are used to create various word classes. For example, besides forming verbs, “-ate” can form nouns (e.g., “candidate”) and adjectives (e.g., “fortunate”), each with distinct meanings. Similarly, “-en” can form participles (e.g., “broken”) and adjectives (e.g., “wooden”). This competition among alternative forms could be constraining their emergence and acceptance. Additionally, the widespread use of “cuntify” as a verb might create a linguistic environment where alternative neologisms like “cuntate,” “cunten,” and “cuntize” struggle to gain traction. These alternatives may seem redundant or unnecessary when “cuntify” already effectively expresses the action of imparting 'cunt' qualities to an entity.

Having described the cunt-related neologisms and mapped their attachable morphemes, we now turn to their classification.

4.2 Classifying “cunt”-related neologisms

In this section, we apply Fillmore et al.'s (1988) classification system to categorize the “cunt”-related neologisms identified in our study. By analyzing the constructional patterns of these neologisms, we aim to uncover regularities in their formation and usage, shedding light on their grammatical properties.

4.2.1 Encoding vs. Decoding Constructions

Applying Fillmore et al.'s (1988) framework, we first distinguish between encoding and decoding constructions. As described in section 2.1, encoding constructions establish a direct connection between words and meaning, relying on literal interpretations and standard grammar. Examples of encoding constructions include “answer the door” and “wide awake.” In contrast, decoding constructions involve non-literal interpretations that cannot be derived from the individual words alone. Examples such as “kick the bucket” and “pull a fast one” fall into this category.

Regarding the first parameter, we suggest that cunt-related neologisms fall within the category of decoding constructions. These form-meaning pairings are not immediately understood by language users without prior exposure or explicit explanation. For example, consider this sentence from X: “9.9 magnitude motherquake on the cunter scale.” Here, the emergent meaning

of “cunt” diverges from its traditional derogatory and sexual connotations. Someone encountering this phrase for the first time might find it confusing, as its meaning is nuanced and relies on an analogical relationship. Only with some degree of instruction or explanation will the speaker be able to decode this novel form-function pairing.

4.2.2 Grammatical vs. Exagrammatical Constructions

Next, we classify “cunt”-related constructions as grammatical or extragrammatical based on their conformity to standard grammar. As described in section 2.1, grammatical constructions seamlessly fit into typical sentence structures, adhering to syntactic and grammatical rules. Examples such as “spill the beans” and “blow one’s nose” fall into this category. Extragrammatical constructions, on the other hand, deviate from standard grammar and often appear as fixed expressions. Examples like “by and large” and “sight unseen” do not follow conventional syntactic patterns.

We assume “cunt”-related constructions can be classified as grammatical. That is because these forms generally stick to standard syntactic structures and word orders, even if their meanings are rather unconventional. For example, sentences like “happy birthday to the cuntess of Slayvenia” and “thinking about the cunty boom mic operator from Saw” follow standard syntactic patterns involving nouns and adjectives, respectively, even though their idiomatic meanings might need some level of decoding.

4.2.3 Substantive vs. Formal Constructions

Lastly, we differentiate between substantive and formal constructions based on the nature of their meanings and structures. As stated in section 2.1, substantive constructions consist of fixed units with specific meanings that cannot be easily deduced from individual words or forms. Examples such as “let alone” fall into this category. Formal constructions, on the other hand, allow for flexibility in filling certain constituents according to specific rules. Examples such as “the bigger they come, the harder they fall” provide templates for expressing relationships without specifying exact lexical or morphological items.

Considering “cunt”-related constructions, we find that they primarily exhibit characteristics of formal constructions. These neologisms represent morphologically-open units with a wide-range of forms and meanings being associated with “cunt”. Examples such as “cunty” (adjective),

“cuntagon” (proper noun), “cuntyoncé” (proper noun), “cuntify” (verb), and “cuntily” (adverb) demonstrate this flexibility. Each form is morphologically open, meaning it can be adapted and extended in various ways to convey complex new meanings and nuances. These constructions do not function as fixed, monolithic units with singular, easily deducible meanings (as seen in substantive idioms such as “let alone”). Instead, they offer a template into which emerging forms with nuanced meanings can be inserted. Each construction retains a connection to the root “cunt” but adapts to different contexts and creative expressions.

In short, analyzing constructions involving 'cunt' reveals a complex blend of decoding processes, grammatical elements, and the creation of formal units. These constructions reflect the evolving nature of written internet language, highlighting both linguistic creativity and emerging cultural attitudes.

5. Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to explore neologisms associated with the word “cunt” in contemporary English, highlighting their novel and complex manifestations across written internet language.

Qualitative analysis revealed “cunt” being attached to a range of derivational morphemes, spanning multiple grammatical categories such as nouns (e.g. “cuntette,” “cunthood”), adjectives (e.g. “cuntable,” “cuntesque”), verbs (“cuntify”) and adverbs (e.g. “cuntly”). Among the 50 derivational morphemes gathered from Crystal’s (2018) encyclopedia, 36 seamlessly integrate with the root “cunt”. By employing suffixes like “-ette,” “-hood,” “-able,” “-esque,” “-ify” and “-ly,” speakers adeptly infuse “cunt” with nuanced meanings and connotations, ranging from empowerment and boldness to allure and innovation. Whether creating new nouns to denote roles, ideologies, or relationships, or crafting adjectives and adverbs to describe qualities or manners, this process highlights the adaptability and versatility of “cunt” within contemporary lexicon.

Analysis also identified potential analogies based on phonetic similarity: “cunter scale” parallels “Richter scale,” “cuntic” mirrors “Atlantic,” “cuntyoncé” parallels singer “Beyoncé,” “cuntial psychology” corresponds to “behavioral psychology,” “statue of cuntity” corresponds to “statue of liberty,” and “cuntette” aligns with “cadette”. These analogies likely arise from the term “cunt” being highly adaptable, allowing it to integrate seamlessly with various morphological structures and representations. They also demonstrate how terms coined in digital contexts can

effortlessly blend into pop culture concepts.

Fourteen suffixes did not yield significant results. These include: -ful, -ing, -age, -al, -ant, -ee, -er, -ing, -or, -ward(s), -wise, -ate, -en, -ize/-ise. A potential explanation for the absence of neologisms with these suffixes is their role in forming other word classes. For instance, “-ate” forms not only verbs but also nouns (e.g., “candidate”) and adjectives (e.g., “fortunate”), each with distinct semantic implications. Similarly, “-ly” can form both adverbs (e.g., “quickly”) and adjectives (e.g., “lovely”). Thus, the competition among forms across different categories might impose restrictions on the emergence and acceptance of specific cunt-related neologisms. We also believe that when certain suffixes are widely used, it can prevent similar suffixes within the same category from catching on. For instance, if 'cuntify' becomes popular as a verb, it might make alternatives like 'cuntate,' 'cunten,' and 'cuntize' seem redundant or unnecessary. Since 'cuntify' already clearly expresses the idea of giving something/someone the qualities of 'cunt,' these other options might struggle to gain traction.

Analysis also utilized Fillmore et al.'s (1998) framework to classify 'cunt'-related constructions, which helped clarify their structural and functional characteristics. Firstly, we posit that 'cunt'-related neologisms typically display traits of decoding constructions. These constructions involve non-literal interpretations where the meaning of the compound word or phrase (“cunty,” “uncunty,” “cuntagon,” “cuntyoncé,” “cuntify,” “cuntily”) cannot be fully predicted from the literal meanings of their parts. Instead, they rely on contextual and cultural knowledge. Secondly, we classify 'cunt'-related neologisms as grammatical constructions, as they stick to standard grammar and word order. For example, sentences including words like 'cunteer' and 'cuntedom' maintain typical syntax, even if their idiomatic meanings require some level of interpretation. Thirdly, we suggest that 'cunt'-related derivations typically embody characteristics associated with formal constructions. That is because these newly coined terms emerge as morphologically flexible units, encompassing a broad and complex spectrum of forms and meanings associated with “cunt”.

Lastly, our data reveals how sociocultural changes can lead to the reclaiming and positive reevaluation of taboo or derogatory words. In accordance with Lind and Eriksson (2024), we assume that by repurposing old words into neologisms, speakers challenge established norms and assert control, fostering empowerment, inclusiveness and self-expression within digital communities.

Future studies could explore “cunt”-related neologisms using large corpora and quantitative

methods in order to uncover the linguistic and social factors driving their emergence. Research on other emerging derivations could also shed light on the complexities of internet communication.

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