

## WORD FORMATION ON DRAGON NEST CHAT LANGUAGE

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### **Abstract:**

*Word formation is creation of new words, which sometimes changes a word's meaning. Words can be formed from multi word phrases as well. In many cases vocabularies in language are formed from combination of words (Haspelmath 2010: 102). Word formation does not only involve changing physical form of the word itself, but also changing the meaning of said word. There are also instances where the physical form retain its original form while the meaning changes. The phenomenon is called semantic change (Stockwell-Minkova 2001:149). In this thesis the research proposed that the said phenomenon occur in virtual environment, such as in MMORPG. Multiplayer online games that feature fantasy setting virtual environment. For the purpose of this research, Dragon Nest South East Asia server was chosen as data source. The samples are taken from players perusing [World] communication channel.*

*The result of the data analysis has shown that the phenomenon of word formation could occur in a virtual environment of MMORPG, specifically in Dragon Nest SEA. There are two word formation processes found: processes that involve physical changes and processes that do not involve physical changes but rather innate meaning. It is done by both processing daily language vocabulary both physically and changing its innate meaning to create new words that suits the said virtual environment context. This finding may influence future research on a fresh perspective and untitled field.*

**Keywords:** *word formation, semantic change, chat language, dragon nest*

With the emergence of information era, when internet and websites are available for general public instead of exclusively used by companies or military forces, it has been becoming easier for the public to access and share information. In short, internet has become a crucial tool for the mass to use as a vessel to communicate therefore plays a role in determining everyday language use. The most common vessel for communication comes in the form of text messaging available in cellphones, chat rooms, and online forums. Therein the public may share information both official and personal usage.

There are two types of news available online: official news and personal information. Such instances for getting official news are Jakarta Post which is available online as well as Yahoo!News which provides international tid bits in their main site. For personal use, there are sites such as DeviantArt, Tumblr, and Twitter which allows anyone to share their stories or opinion online. Some sites, like Tumblr and DeviantArt don't have character limits to their word processing application. Unlike those two, there are sites like Twitter that limits number of characters allowed in a single post. Therefore one must optimize word usage in a post and make the message as concise as possible while retaining idea the poster wishes to relay.

This trend is also used in online games where many players from all over the world gather and communicate to each other despite differences in cultural and language background. With limited character usage in the chat system, players must be able to relay information as brief as possible.

## **VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT COMMUNICATION**

Forementioned phenomenon also happens in MMORPG which stands for Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game. MMORPGs are games basing itself on fantasy content or setting, which may take place on Earth or constructed universe. In said constructed setting, a player's character or avatar enters a fictional or virtual environment and engage in various activities. They

have freedom to make progress as an individual (solo) or as a member of a group (party/guild/clan) to reach certain goals. According to Kongmee et al. (2011) it can be done by: Physical leveling when a player obtains individual numeric points from completing quest or task and defeating enemies. These numeric points will provide benefits for a player avatar in term of physical growth known as levels. Economic activity by engaging in game world's mercantile. In-game money is collected from trading with pre-built Non Player Characters (NPC) or other Player Characters (PC). A player also receives reward in form of in-game currency through completing quests. Social prestige is gained through group or guilds activity as players will have to contribute to their respective groups in form of activity or attendance.

Therefore MMORPGs are online games which allow people to engage activities in virtual or fictional environment and interact with other players. While it is quite similar to real world where people do engage in work or activities and communicates with other, the difference that in MMORPGs, the players interact using provided in-game chat system. It is similar to current mode of communication such as Whatsapp and Line. Akin to the forementioned two cellphone applications, MMORPG's chat system allows individual and group communication, even broadcasting system that is capable to send message to every player. However, the said chat system possesses limited number of characters therefore forces the players to relay their information as concise and accurate as possible.

Dragon Nest is a Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game developed by Eyedentity Games and launched by Nexon Korea on March 2010. Ever since the game are licensed by various game publishers throughout the world which enabled more people playing Dragon Nest. Shanda, for instance, is the game's publisher for China region while Cherry Credits is responsible for Southeast Asia region. For this study, the researcher chooses South East Asia (SEA) server as there are Indonesian players interacting with fellow SEA players using English language.

Players of Dragon Nest came from many region of the world. Despite

difference in cultural and language background, players are capable of relaying information to each other. These people are using common sentences developed in the world's chat log, not only to merely relaying information but also using as little space as possible. Therefore creating a common communication system for players from different language backgrounds to communicate easily.

This phenomenon warrants research in order to figure out what methods used by the players to make their messages as concise as possible while retaining their original idea. There are previous researches that involve new words formation such as Kalima's research on 2007 which involves methods where new words are formed in a game forum which dominated by abbreviating and clipping. Though in a forum, there are no character limitation employed therefore giving players more freedom in constructing their sentences compared to in-game chat system. Crystal's research on 2001 also touches the subject of internet as means of communication dubbed netspeak in general whether it's in a forum or communication through chat system in general. In which Crystal did not delve too deep inside specific community. Some areas in their research could be improved by performing research on a specific gaming community directly on-site, as in the game virtual environment itself. By directly observing Dragon Nest SEA players communicating through in-game chat system it is hoped that this research may shed more light on how new words are formed in gaming community, especially Dragon Nest SEA. Basing upon Kalima and Crystal's research, this research will focus on finding methods of new word formation which occur in game world itself utilizing in-game's chat system.

## **METHOD**

The research on Dragon Nest chat language is designed according to data type that is gained during data collecting progress. As the data type is in the form of qualitative data that is taken from social community inside Dragon

Nest SEA, the research will be conducted in the form of field research. In which the research is performed by having the researcher directly entering the community to study the society in their natural setting (Neuman 1997: 343-346).

As there are several Dragon Nest servers hosted by various game publishers, the researcher chose South East Asia server published and maintained by cherrycredits. SEA server contains Indonesian players that interact with fellow players in English language. By entering Dragon Nest SEA, the researcher will then take on the role of a silent observer and take notes of the new words that are formed in the game chat.

In field research, a researcher is expected to observe the field carefully and take notes in detail regarding the society they are in whether it is physical or verbal aspects. Not only that a researcher must take note of any contexts in occurring events (Neuman 1997: 361-362). In order to gather the data, the researcher will personally enter the game world herself. Within, the researcher will peruse the chat system provided by the game developers and observe the players' communication. Taking notes and screenshots from Dragon Nest SEA Springwood server. The data will be gathered in form of screen shots taken from the game itself as well as handwritten notes.

The first instrument used in this research would be the researcher herself as she will join the community herself and observe the players directly, therefore her player avatar is included in one of the tools used in observation. Another instrument used would be a laptop unit used as equipment to enter Dragon Nest SEA and taking screenshots. As well as pencil and notes to gather the data required for the research. Image processing program is also used when extracting data from screenshot form.

The data for this research is taken from chats of Dragon Nest SEA players in general and lists of formed words in Dragon Nest SEA forum. As the game itself is too vast and the usage of the chat channel is too diverse, this research is limited to gather the data from selected samples. The chosen samples are players using [World] chat tabs in Springwood Server of Dragon

Nest SEA. Time frame of data collection starts from 24th December 2015 to 24th of February in which Cherrycredits implemented newest patch for Dragon Nest SEA, such will render rise of new word formation while unused words related to older content will be rendered obsolete.

After gathering the data, the researcher selected the proper data needed for the research by filtering the data gained from notes and screenshots taken before (Neuman 1997: 361-362), comparing the data with results of previous researches and morphology theory in general. The data will be sorted according to their type and analyzed afterwards. The analysis will be focused on the process where everyday language vocabulary is formed into new words that contained new meaning only Dragon Nest SEA community members could understand. Therefore the process of the analysis will be as follows: firstly, the sentences will be broken down into individual pieces. After breaking the sentence and acquiring individual components, the units will then be sorted. Words that do not undergo any word processing nor shift in meaning will be ruled out from the data pool. After sorting the data pool and ruling out unprocessed words, the individual components that remained are compared to Juhamatti's research and sorted according to the word formation processes.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

After collecting and analyzing the data, it has been found that players of Dragon Nest SEA are actively forming new words out of everyday language into forms and context relevant to Dragon Nest SEA players. There are two word formation processes that are employed by Dragon Nest SEA players actively. Firstly, the process involves physical changes in original word to processed words. Secondly, aside from physical changes, there are also cases where processed word does not undergo physical changes, but instead the original meaning shifted into a meaning related to Dragon Nest context. Most of the findings are related to recruitment and economic activity.

There are three word formation processes occurring in Dragon Nest SEA's [World] channel: abbreviation, clipping, and corruption. These three dominates the word processes that undergo physical changes. On the other hand, there are five word formation processes that undergo innate semantic change. Those are : generalization, specialization, amelioration, pejoration, and metonymy.

Table 1. Two types of word formation found in DNSEA

Word Formation Involves Physical Change		Word Formation Involves Semantic Change	
Type	Processed Word	Type	Processed Word
Abbreviation	VON, VN, LF	Generalization	Nest, jade, sniper
Clipping	Sorc, barba, inqui	Specialization	Abyss, sorc
Corruption	newb	Metonymy	heel
		Pejoration	newb
		Amelioration	loli

### WORD FORMATION INVOLVING PHYSICAL CHANGES

According to Haspelmath and Sims, abbreviation is a phenomenon in which a group of words are joined into one by combining the first letter of each words together. For example, NATO is an abbreviation of North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The abbreviated word took [N], [A], [T], and [O] from their respective original words. Another instance of abbreviation would be IBM which stands for International Business Management, by arranging [I], [B], and [M] together. (Haspelmath Sims 2010: 40)

For abbreviation process there are forty word processes found in Dragon Nest. These samples are taken from both recruitment and economic activities. Most of them are related to in-game locations, hero classes, and player activities. The table below provides examples of detected words using abbreviation process which cover both recruitment and economic activities.

Table 2. Examples of Abbreviation

No	Original Word	Process	Processed Word
1	Volcano Ordeal Nest	[V]olcano [O]rdeal [N]est	VON
2	Light Fury	[L]ight [F]ury	LF
3	Abyss of Heat	[A]byss [O]f [H]eat	AOH
4	Buying	[B]uying	B
5	Selling	[S]elling	S

In Dragon Nest SEA chat log, abbreviation takes place in the form of first letters of a group of word combined together. The process is wherefore similar to Alphabetism, though the similarity ends upon the physical construct. Whereupon words that are processed through Alphabetism retain its original meaning, the same could not be said to words that are processed through Abbreviation.

Abbreviation occurs in both recruitment and economic activity. In recruitment activity the words originated from terms that are related to hero classes, player action, location, and system. While in economic activity, the processed words originated from terms that are related to player actions.

Clipping is a phenomenon of cutting a longer word into shorter one but retains original meaning. For example laboratory is clipped into lab but retains the meaning of a place where experiment is conducted. Gymnasium can be clipped into gym which retains the meaning of a place to train one's body. (Haspelmath Sims 2010: 40) Most prominent in this word processing is hero classes, player terms, and clipped item names. The table below provides example of the occurrences.

Table 3. Example of Clipping

No.	Original Word	Process	Processed Word
1	sorcerer	sorcerer	sorc
2	barbarian	barbarian	barb
3	normal	normal	norm
4	scimitar	scimitar	scmtr
5	gauntlet	gauntlet	gauntlet

Corruption is a phenomenon where letters in a word are changed with another with little to no change in meaning (Kalima 2007: 18). One example of this is leet speak or 1337 5P34K where alphabets are substituted with numbers in a manner that the processed word still resemble the original.

Table 4. Corruption word processing.

No.	Original Word	Original Word	Processed Word
1	EZ	Easy	Easy +z
2	SORCY	Sorcerer	Sorcerer + y
3	NID	Need	Need + i
4	NOOB	Newbie	Newbie + oo
5	BARBS	barbarian	barbarian + s

## WORD FORMATION INVOLVING SEMANTIC CHANGES

Word formation does not only happen in physical form but also changes in meaning or semantic shift. While the previous processes involve active physical changes, this phenomenon happens when daily language vocabulary is taken wholly into Dragon Nest SEA context without undergoing physical changes. While the physical form of said word remained the same, the meaning is changed according to Dragon Nest SEA's context.

This occurred to VON which undergoes abbreviation process. Each words have their own meaning. Volcano means a hill or mountain that has

a lake of magma. Ordeal itself means a trial to determine one's guiltiness or innocence. Wherefore Nest means a place where avian or other animal lay their eggs. After abbreviated into VON however, the meaning changed into 'a level 80 dungeon with harder difficulty for 8 players in a group'. It could be concluded that the original words had undergone meaning shift after processed into new word, in VON's individual case.

There are instances where the word itself does not undergo physical changes. Instead each respective word gained new meaning when used in Dragon Nest context. Saint, for instance, refers to a holy person sanctified by religious organization. In Dragon Nest it refers to 'hero class cleric's sub-class which is focused on healing'.

Among the data collected and analyzed there are words that generate new idea altogether when combined with Dragon Nest context. They carry no previous meaning from daily language but new meaning that is exclusive to in-game concept.

Take Shooting Star for example, in daily English language the word itself is compound of two words: shooting and star which refer to falling comet or meteorite burning in the atmosphere. In Dragon Nest context, however, the previous meaning was not carried into the game but instead a new meaning was generated. Inside game virtual environment and to the players of Dragon Nest, Shooting Star meant 'a class upgrade for academic hero class'.

Another example appears when referring to locations such as Wailing Wall. Normally it would be a compound word combining 'Wailing' and 'Wall' creating a noun. Despite so, the in-game location of Wailing Wall does not carry any semblance of location that incites scream nor wail, nor does the word itself carry meaning for 'wailing wall'. In Dragon Nest context, Wailing Wall merely refers to a location named so.

## CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this paper would give beneficial contribution to both society and academic institutions, especially students and researchers in linguistic fields. In this paper, it has been revealed that players in virtual environment of Dragon Nest SEA are actively processing daily language vocabulary into new words that are relevant to said environment's context. The players are utilizing linguistic processes in order to produce new words, which involve processing both physical structure and meaning of daily language.

Therefore, this opens up a new field of possible research for students and researchers aspiring in linguistic studies. Interested researchers may enter a virtual environment for performing researches in the future, which does not necessarily to choose Dragon Nest but other virtual environments available in the world. The data obtained in this research could be used as a base for future researches on linguistic studies in a virtual environment.

This research is mainly done in [World] channel which enable Dragon Nest Sea players in a server communicate to each other. Indeed there are a lot of participants involved in information relay in forementioned channel, but the downside of employing [World] channel in this research is that the information exchanged in the said channel is generally recruitment and economic activity. Processes that are observed are rigid at most, since the information relay requires coherence in sentences as short as possible. In another sense, the recruitment and economic information relay acts similar to job ads in newspaper. There are rare occurrences where personal information is relayed.

In doing so, the expected language compound between English language and players' respective mother language did not occur during the data collection. Those interactions happen in smaller unit of players instead of in public channels. Despite having enormous amount of data gained during data collection process, the specifically used words not quite as numerous as expected. For example, LFM is often used in recruitment activity. But in

the end, it is only one unit. The number of detected words is not as much as expected.

As such, this research is superficial at most, as it only observed a general aspect of the community in Dragon Nest SEA. Future research may benefit from observing smaller groups, such as player guilds, to find out if there is more variety in word formation processes employed in it. Guilds are generally formed by a group of people who has similar interest, therefore the information relay are more personal and often involve mother tongue usage. Often, that a guild contain members of different countries and chat using several languages at once.

During dungeon or nest runs, Dragon Nest SEA players need to relay information to be able to perform well during battle. Some of the players may command others or give suggestions, and comment on the situation. In short, the information relay is more personal and spontaneous. There are similar dialogue pattern that is employed during the dungeon or nest runs, whether the players realized it or not. This pattern may bode well for future researches.

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