A MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF TERMS USED IN GENSHIN IMPACT COMMUNITY ON HOYOLAB

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study analyzed morphological processes in terms used by the Genshin Impact community on HoYoLAB, where English serves as the lingua franca in communication between players. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data was collected from user posts and comments and analyzed using morphological theory. The results showed that composition is the dominant process, followed by compounding, clipping, initialisms, abbreviations, and derivations, which are primarily used to support efficient communication in online discussions, while borrowings are less common and mainly associated with narrative and tradition-related contexts. This study highlights the role of morphological processes in shaping community-specific terminology and reflects the dynamics of language use in digital gaming communities.

1. INTRODUCTION

English serves as the global lingua franca. People from many countries use English. English is also the primary language of the internet, media, and entertainment, allowing people to connect across borders. In today's digital era, English is also important in many international communities, including the gaming community. It does not just apply to online games, but also to casual offline games, board games, and other genres. In the gaming community, English is the main language used by players from different backgrounds. This allows them to share strategies, tips, and gaming experiences (Ensslin, 2012).

English's role in the gaming world extends beyond mere communication, as it also encompasses the development of specialized terminology. The utilization of these terms facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the game's systems, mechanics, and features by players, thereby enhancing their practical and efficient utilization. As Gee (2007) indicates, the evolution of terminology within the gaming community is inextricably linked to the progression of language in the digital and entertainment domains. These realms display a persistent adaptability to the evolving demands of players and the advancements in technology.

In the field of linguistics, a branch of science exists that focuses on the structure and formation of words, known as morphology (Katamba, 2006). The morphology of the English language plays a significant role in the formation of new terminology used within the gaming community. The significance of morphology lies in its capacity to elucidate the genesis of gaming-related lexical items through various word-formation processes. This linguistic approach assists in elucidating the development and utilization of such terminology by the gaming

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community for effective communication. However, the process of word formation in this domain includes clipping, acronym formation, and blending, which demonstrates the dynamics of language in a digital context.

An intriguing subject for examination in the context of morphology is Genshin Impact, a game that maintains a substantial international player base. According to Statista (2025), Genshin Impact recorded 50.8 million app downloads globally and an estimated 6.27 million monthly active users on mobile devices. The game fosters interaction among players, facilitates the sharing of experiences, and encourages the formation of communities both within the game itself and on digital platforms such as *HoYoLAB*. Within this community, players from different countries use English as the primary means of communication. This language functions as a lingua franca, facilitating comprehension of game mechanics, collaborative team dynamics, and the establishment of social networks within the game environment.

The terminology employed within the Genshin Impact community exemplifies linguistic creativity and offers a valuable subject for morphological analysis. The community produces a variety of new, distinctive, and contextualized forms of terms, indicating linguistic adaptation based on players' communication needs. Consequently, the primary objective of this study is to examine the relationship between English usage and word formation within this community. The gaming communities often generate terms through morphological processes like derivation, borrowing, compounding, blending, clipping, and the use of abbreviation such as acronyms and initialisms (Jannah & Tawami, 2024; Matiini, 2024; Shcherbina et al., 2022). For instance, Zahra & Winarna (2024) conducted a study on Genshin Impact's storyline slang and found compounding, clipping and suffixation as key processes in English-to-Indonesian translation of game slang. Meanwhile, Antonnova (2024) documented how gamers in communities employ borrowing, metaphor and lexical play in new words creation. Additionally, the researchers found that players often use game terms in everyday communication outside the community, which could lead to misunderstandings among non-players. This phenomenon suggests an important contribution to understanding language development in a digital context.

This study contributes to the field of education by helping educators understand how language develops among the younger generation, particularly in digital spaces like the HoYoLAB community. A morphological analysis of terms used by Genshin Impact players reveals how new vocabulary forms, develops, and functions in online interactions. Thus, it can serve as an authentic example in language learning. Additionally, this study enriches applied linguistic studies by presenting real data from gaming communities. It shows that language learning resources do not always have to come from classical or formal materials. The findings can also support a more relevant, contextualized learning process by showing that language in the digital world has scientific value important to teachers, students, and language researchers.

This study aims to investigate the morphological structure of terms used in an online gaming community. The terms created by the community exemplify linguistic creativity and also reflect morphological processes that can be traced and analyzed scientifically. Utilizing a morphological approach, the researchers sought to explore the formation of new words and the influence of the social context within the community on the development of its language. Therefore, the research is guided by the followed questions; what morphological processes are

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involved in the formation of terms used in the Genshin Impact community on HoYoLAB?, which morphological processes are most dominant in the creation of these terms*?*

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Morphology as Linguistic Framework

Morphology is a branch of linguistics that studies the internal structure of words and the process of word formation in a language. Morphological studies focus on how morphemes, as the smallest meaningful units, are combined to form new words, and how changes in word form contribute to their meaning and grammatical function (Bauer, 1983; Katamba, 2006). Morphological processes such as compounding, derivation, clipping, and abbreviation are the main mechanisms that enable languages to evolve and adapt to the communication needs of their speakers.

In the context of digital communication, morphological processes show a high level of productivity. The online environment encourages language users to create new lexical forms that are more concise, efficient, and appropriate to the limitations of text-based communication media (Crystal, 2001). Studies on computer-mediated communication (CMC) show that language users in digital spaces tend to prioritize speed and clarity of information, thereby triggering the use of words that are shortened, combined, or creatively modified (Herring, 2013).

2.2 Morphological Process in Digital Discourse

Digital discourse has become the main space for linguistic innovation. Crystal (2011) states that internet-based communication encourages the emergence of new language variations characterized by creativity, language economy, and flexibility of form. In computer-mediated communication (CMC), language users tend to prioritize speed, efficiency, and clarity, thereby triggering the use of abbreviated, combined, or creatively modified word forms (Androutsopoulos, 2015; Herring, 2013). Recent research shows that the digital environment accelerates the process of lexicalization and encourages high morphological productivity (Seargeant & Tagg, 2014; Zappavigna, 2022). Processes such as compounding, abbreviation, and derivation become key strategies in creating new terms that can be quickly understood by specific online communities.

In the context of social media and online community platforms, language evolves through repeated interactions between users, thereby forming a distinctive, practice-based terminology system (Page et al., 2014; Tagg et al., 2020). This shows that morphology functions not only as a linguistic system but also as a social mechanism for constructing collective meaning.

2.3 Compounding and Lexical Creativity in Online Communities

Compounding is one of the most productive morphological processes in modern English (Bauer, 2003; Plag, 2018). This process allows two or more lexemes to be combined to form new lexical units with more specific meanings. In the digital environment, compounding is often used to name new concepts that do not yet have lexical equivalents.

Research in online discourse shows that compounding serves as a key strategy in the formation of technical terms, particularly in interest-based communities such as technology, fandom, and gaming communities (Tagg, 2015; Zappavigna, 2022). In these communities, compound words allow users to convey complex information concisely without losing precision of meaning.

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In the context of digital games, compounding is used to represent game mechanics, character roles, and complex strategy systems. This process reflects the need for players to develop an efficient and easily understandable terminology system in fast-paced text-based discussions (Apperley & Beavis, 2011; Ensslin, 2015; Gee, 2007).

2.4 Abbreviation, Clipping, and Initialism in Online Communication

Abbreviations and clippings are very common morphological processes in digital communication. Yule (2022) explains that abbreviations include the formation of acronyms and initialisms, while clippings involve shortening words by removing part of their lexical form. In online environments, these forms are used to save typing time and improve communication efficiency.

Recent research shows that the use of abbreviations and initialisms is highly dependent on shared knowledge within a community (Tagg, 2015; Tagg et al., 2020). Therefore, these forms function effectively especially in communities that have a shared context and experience.

In gaming communities, abbreviations and clippings are key strategies for forming technical terms related to game mechanics, character statistics, and team strategies. These forms not only reflect linguistic efficiency, but also signify membership in a particular community (Apperley & Beavis, 2011; Deterding & Zagal, 2018).

2.5 Derivational Morphology and Evaluative Language in Gaming Discourse

Derivational morphology allows speakers to form new words by adding affixes to change word class or expand meaning (Bauer, 1983; Lieber, 2016). In digital discourse, derivation is often used to create evaluative and descriptive terms.

Research on language in online communities shows that derivative forms are often used to express judgment, intensity, and comparison (Zappavigna, 2022). In gaming communities, this process is particularly productive in forming terms that describe character performance, strategy effectiveness, and power levels in games (Apperley & Beavis, 2011; Ensslin, 2015). Thus, derivation functions not only as a word-formation mechanism, but also as a pragmatic tool for conveying evaluations and attitudes in player interactions.

2.6 Borrowing and Narrative World-Building in Digital Games

Borrowing is a morphological process that involves taking lexical elements from other languages (Katamba, 2006). In the context of digital games, borrowing is often related to narrative and world-building aspects. Game developers often retain the original form of a particular source language to create aesthetic nuances, exclusivity, and depth in the fictional world (Ensslin, 2015; Kress et al., 2001).

Recent research in game studies shows that borrowed terms function as symbols of lore knowledge and player community identity (Apperley & Beavis, 2011; Deterding & Zagal, 2018). Although its frequency of use is relatively lower than other morphological processes, borrowing still plays an important role in building player immersion and attachment to the game world.

2.7 Research Gap

Though studies on morphological processes in gaming communities are still relatively scarce in the context of the Genshin Impact community on HoYoLAB, previous studies provide an instructive basis. For example, Printsipalova (2024) analyzed gamer slang on video game forums and identified affixation, contraction, and clipping as significant morphological devices. Magria et al. (2021) surveyed slang use in Mobile Legends and reported six distinct processes of

word formation, with compounding being the most prevalent. Hsu (2018) demonstrated that gamers adapt their vocabulary based on their familiarity with their interlocutors, highlighting the specialized nature of gaming vocabulary. More recently, Daradkeh et al. (2024) observed the extensive borrowing and morphological adaptation of English neologisms within gaming lexicons globally. Furianto and Simanjuntak (2023) analysed gaming language as a variation of digital register in the game Valorant and argued that morphological processes (clipping, affixation) function to increase communicative efficiency in fast-paced online games. In Indonesian gaming settings, Hamzah et al. (2025) documented the blending of English gaming terms with Bahasa Indonesia through affixation, reduplication, and derivation. These studies affirm that morphological innovation is integral to gaming-related language. However, none have delved deeply into the Genshin community on HoYoLAB, thus underscoring the originality and importance of the present research.

Based on previous studies, it is clear that the connection lies in analyzing the morphological processes that arise in gaming communities. However, no research specifically examines game terms from a player's perspective using an application created to connect communities, such as HoYoLAB. While some studies provide linguistic interpretations, they have not discussed the educational impact of these terms. In addition, previous studies tend to discuss linguistic phenomena in games from a descriptive perspective, such as the types of terms or language forms used by players, without paying particular attention to how morphological processes work systematically in shaping the register of a particular gaming community. Studies that specifically focus on morphological processes in the Genshin Impact player community are still very limited.

Based on this research gap, this study positions itself as a morphological study in digital game discourse that specifically examines the process of term formation in the Genshin Impact player community on the HoYoLAB platform. By focusing on compounding, clipping, abbreviation, derivation, and borrowing, this research not only describes the linguistic forms used by players, but also explains how these processes shape community registers and support communication practices in the digital gaming environment. Therefore, this research is significant in filling this gap in the literature.

3. METHODOLOGY
3.1 Design
This study used a descriptive qualitative research design. According to Sugiyono (2020), descriptive qualitative research is based on the philosophy of post-positivism and is used to study natural conditions, with the researchers being the key instrument. The researchers employed a qualitative descriptive approach, which seeks to describe situations, events, phenomena, or behavior without making complex theoretical inferences. In this study, the researchers collected commonly used terms and describes their context of use, meaning in the community, and appearance in the Genshin Impact player community.

3.2 Research Source Data
The researchers gathered primary data from player's posts and comments from January to November 2025 in HoYoLAB. This platform was chosen because it serves as a central hub, where the community can interact, discuss gameplay, and use gaming-related terminology. The language used on the forum reflects authentic communication patterns among players, making it

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a suitable source for morphological analysis. Furthermore, HoYoLAB allows public access to its content, facilitating the documentation and analysis process. For the collection of secondary data, the researchers turned to a variety of sources, including books, journals, and linguistic theories related to morphology and game discourse.

3.3 Data Collection

The data collection process aimed to identify and analyze morphological terms found in English-language HoYoLAB posts and comments related to Genshin Impact character builds. First, relevant posts and comments were reviewed to identify community-generated terms frequently used when discussing character builds. The filtering process was conducted to eliminate duplicate entries, irrelevant content, overly generic terms, and items lacking morphological complexity. The refined dataset was analyzed to identify patterns in word formation and variations in usage. This step allowed the researchers to gain insight into how the community constructs meaning linguistically within the context of gameplay discussions.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis process involved five systematic steps to reveal the morphological patterns within gaming-related terms used in the HoYoLAB community. Each categorized term was analyzed using morphological frameworks. These frameworks were proposed by Katamba (2006), Bauer (1983), and Yule (2022). The analysis focused on word formation processes. These processes include derivation, borrowing, compounding, blending, clipping, and the use of abbrevation such as acronyms and initialisms. The analysis also considered other relevant processes when applicable. Following the morphological breakdown, the context in which each term appeared within the HoYoLAB community was interpreted to better understand its communicative function and community-specific significance. Finally, recurring patterns and dominant morphological processes were identified, and conclusions were drawn about the community's linguistic behavior.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on 15 posts and 65 comments by HoYoLAB users from January to November 2025, 400 terms containing morphological processes were found. To improve the accuracy of the analysis, the data was then reduced to 200 terms. The six most dominant morphological processes include *compounding*, *clipping*, *initialism*, *abbreviation*, *derivation*, and *borrowing*, with the frequency distribution as presented in the following table.

Table 1.1 Frequency of Morphological Process

No	Morphology Process	Total
1	Compounding	100
2	Clipping	51
3	Initialism	47
4	Abbreviation	29
5	Derivation	28
6	Borrowing	8

4.1 Compounding

The most dominant morphological process in this research data is *compounding*. The high frequency of *compounding* indicates that the Genshin Impact player community relies heavily on compound terms to explain complex game concepts efficiently. This trend reflects the linguistic creativity often observed in online environments where digital platforms encourage the creation of new terms to describe complex and evolving concepts (Crystal, 2001). This pattern is also closely related to the characteristics of computer-mediated discourse, which prioritizes efficiency and rapid information exchange in online communities with shared interests (Herring, 2013). In games with complex mechanical systems, such as those involving character roles, attack rotations, and specific team functions, short lexical forms allow players to convey detailed information concisely. The dominance of word combinations also reflects the linguistic strategy employed by the HoYoverse developers when introducing new mechanisms that cannot be fully represented by existing terms in other MMORPG games. Consequently, players adopt and develop new terminology by combining familiar lexemes so that meanings can be easily interpreted within the community. Research findings indicate variations in compounding patterns used by players, such as *noun + noun* (*Burst DPS*), *noun + verb* (*Gameplay*), *adjective + noun* (*Off-field DPS*), and *adjective + adverb* (*Cooldown*). This variation demonstrates the flexibility of morphological structures in gaming discourse, while also highlighting how word formation choices are shaped by players' communicative needs for speed and clarity.

Additionally, the existence of hybrid compounding such as Sub-DPS reinforces the finding that the process of term formation in the Genshin Impact community is dynamic and not limited to a single morphological process. The integration between derivation through the prefix *sub-* and the initialism *DPS* (*Damage Per Second*) reflects the tendency of players to optimize language efficiency while maintaining clarity of meaning. Thus, compounding functions not only as a word formation process but also as a primary discursive strategy in constructing and disseminating knowledge within the gaming community.

4.2 Clipping

After compounding, *clipping* is a process that is widely used to create terms in Genshin Impact. It found that Genshin players often abbreviate terms to write easily and efficiently. One example is *RES*, which stands for *Resistance*. When combined with 'shred', it becomes *res shred*, which is defined as an ability to lower the enemy's defense. Another example is *CRIT*, with the original word being critical. Terms that are often back clipped are usually combined with other words to form compound words. For example, the word "*critical*" is often added to damage or rate, resulting in *crit rate* or *crit damage*. Similarly, *Normal Attack* is often abbreviated as *Normal ATK*, or even *NA*, which becomes an initialism.

4.3 Abbreviation

Based on the results of data analysis, several forms of *abbreviation* were found to be used in the Genshin Impact community, one of which is initialism, which appears with high frequency. Interestingly, up to this stage of analysis, the researcher did not find any use of acronyms, where abbreviations are pronounced as one whole word.

The researchers also found some numerical abbreviations, which are shortened forms that involve numbers to represent certain terms. Examples include *R5* (*Refinement Level 5*), *A0* (*Ascension 0*), and *C6* (*Constellation 6*). The use of numbers in these terms serves to convey information about character progress in a concise and precise manner. Other examples are the

use of the terms *F2P* (*Free to Play*) and *P2W* (*Pay to Win*) which show a form of abbreviation with phonological substitution. In this context, the word "to" is replaced by the number 2 because of the similarity in pronunciation between 'two' and "to." This pattern reflects the linguistic creativity of the player community in optimizing writing efficiency without reducing the comprehensibility of meaning among fellow community members.

Initialisms rank third as the most frequently occurring morphological process in this research data. Initialisms fall into the category of abbreviations, which according to Yule (2022) is the process of shortening a word or phrase by using the initial letters of each constituent element, where each letter is pronounced separately. The findings show that initialisms are widely used to form community-specific terms that are generally only understood by Genshin Impact players. Examples include *AoE* (*Area of Effect*), *DPS* (*Damage Per Second*), and *ER* (*Energy Recharge*). These terms serve as markers for complex game mechanics that have become common knowledge within the community. The use of initialisms also reflects players' need for typing efficiency, both in creating posts and comments on HoYoLAB. By utilizing abbreviated forms, players can convey technical information quickly without having to write out the full form. Additionally, initialisms are often combined with other morphological processes, such as compounding (*Off-field DPS*) or derivation (*Sub-DPS*), further solidifying their role as productive elements in the formation of community terminology.

The frequent use of abbreviations and initialisms such as *DPS*, *AoE*, and *ER* indicates the presence of a specialized gaming register within the Genshin Impact community. These terms function as register-specific lexical items that are meaningful primarily to players who share knowledge of the game's mechanics and conventions. Within this register, abbreviated forms enable efficient communication of technical information while maintaining mutual intelligibility (Biber et al., 1998).

4.4 Derivation

Based on the results of data analysis, a number of terms were found in the Genshin Impact community that were formed through a process of derivation to adjust the meaning to the context of the game discussion. It found that base words often undergo changes in word class through the addition of suffixes, such as in the term healing, which comes from the verb heal. In addition, there is also the use of comparative and evaluative suffixes in adjectives, such as 'buffer' from the word 'buff' and '*tanky*' from the word 'tank'. These forms are used to describe characters or abilities in a more specific and contextual manner. The use of derivation in the Genshin Impact community demonstrates the flexibility of players' language in modifying root words to suit descriptive and evaluative needs. These derived terms are often used in strategy discussions and character evaluations, serving not only as linguistic markers but also as tools for conveying performance assessments in a concise and communicative manner.

4.5 Borrowing

Based on the results of data analysis, terms formed through the borrowing process were not found in significant numbers in the Genshin Impact community compared to other morphological processes. This shows that the formation of terms in the player community relies more on English lexical sources. However, there are several prominent terms resulting from borrowing that are often discussed by players lately, one of which is *Hexerei* and *Hexenzirkel*. These two terms originate from German, where *Hexerei* means "magic" or "witchcraft," while

Hexenzirkel literally means "circle of witches" or "coven of witches." In the context of Genshin Impact, these terms refer to a mysterious group of witches who play an important role in the game's lore. The use of the terms *Hexerei* and *Hexenzirkel* without further morphological adaptation indicates that HoYoverse retains the original form of the source language to create an exclusive feel and a specific narrative atmosphere. For the player community, these borrowed terms not only serve as markers of concepts within the game, but also as symbols of elite and community-specific lore knowledge. Thus, despite their low frequency, borrowings still have a strong discursive function in building the identity and depth of the Genshin Impact world.

4.6 Research Contribution

This study provides empirical contributions to linguistic research by examining morphological processes within the Genshin Impact player community that interacts through the HoYoLAB platform. Unlike previous studies that generally discuss language in gaming forums in general or across games, this study specifically highlights one large gaming community with complex mechanics and highly specific terminology.

From a linguistic perspective, this study shows that compounding is the most dominant morphological process in the formation of terms within the Genshin Impact community. This finding shows that players rely heavily on compounding, abbreviations, and derivational forms to create efficient and contextually appropriate terms to explain complex game mechanics. This reinforces the view that digital gaming environments encourage productive and creative word formation processes, driven by the need for fast, concise, and knowledge-based communication.

Additionally, this study positions the Genshin Impact community (HoYoLAB0 as a space for language production in digital discourse. This community not only uses terms provided by game developers, but also actively adapts, modifies, and develops lexical resources through interactions between players. Thus, the Genshin Impact community can be understood as a community of practice, where shared linguistic forms serve as a means of communication as well as markers of group identity.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that morphological processes play an important role in the formation of terms used by the Genshin Impact community on HoYoLAB. Of all the processes analyzed, compounding was the most dominant, indicating that the player community tends to combine familiar lexical elements to efficiently represent complex game mechanics. Additionally, the use of clipping, initialisms, and various forms of abbreviation reflects the need for fast, concise, and knowledge-based communication in online discussion environments.

Although derivation and borrowing were found in more limited numbers, both processes still demonstrate the linguistic flexibility of players in adapting word forms to the evaluative and narrative contexts of the game. Overall, these findings confirm that morphological creativity contributes greatly to the formation of terms specific to the Genshin Impact community, while also playing a role in building linguistic identity and knowledge exchange within the digital gaming community.

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