

An Analysis of Word Formation Processes on Cosmetic Product Descriptions in U.S Celebrities' Beauty Brands

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Abstract

This research explored the types of word formation processes in the descriptions of cosmetic products. This descriptive qualitative study employed the classification of word formation processes proposed by Yule's (2010)—derivation, compounding, conversion, borrowing, blending, acronym, backformation, coinage, clipping, and multiple processes to analyze the data. The data were taken from the descriptions of cosmetic products in the beauty brands by U.S celebrities—Fenty Beauty, Rare Beauty, Kylie Cosmetics, and Florence by Mills which were released and in production in April, 2022. This study discovered 125 word-formation processes including derivation (42), conversion (29), multiple processes (17), compounding (16), clipping (8), borrowing (7), acronym (3), coinage (2), and blending (1). This study implies that derivation is the most frequently used in the product descriptions, suggesting that the use of derivation creates adjectives that modifies the products.

Keywords: *word formation, morphology, cosmetic product descriptions*

INTRODUCTION

U.S celebrities see the cosmetics industry as having massive profit potential. Over the last few years, U.S celebrities have been founding their own beauty brands. The number of beauty brands owned by celebrities keeps growing, including the top-selling Fenty Beauty by Rihanna, Rare Beauty by Selena Gomez, Kylie Cosmetics by Kylie Jenner, and Florence by Mills by Millie Bobby Brown. The trend started to grow in the 2000s when celebrities including Britney Spears and Paris Hilton, to Kim Kardashian launched their own perfumes (Northman, 2021). Celebrity beauty brands have not become such a big trend until Kylie Jenner launched Kylie Cosmetics in 2014. Following Kylie's success, Fenty Beauty by Rihanna started off its success by launching forty different shades of foundation at once. Celebrities can build stronger relationships with their fans by developing their own brand that represents their values and identity. In the end, it does not only benefit them financially, but it also brings the customers closer to their desires to achieve healthy skin and pretty looks like celebrities.

Based on the research conducted by Carnevale, Luna, & Lerman (2017) naming the products of a brand is one of the ways to pursue significant brand awareness as branding is highly reliant on language (p. 572). It can be seen through the language in advertising or on the packaging, words used on social media or word of mouth, and even the brand name itself, all of which are intended to convey a brand's meaning and influence on cognition, memory, attitudes, and behaviors (Carnevale, Luna, & Lerman, 2017, p. 572). As an example, British people still use the word *hoovering* which means "vacuum cleaning" since around 1900 when Hoover Suction Sweeper Company successfully produced their first vacuum

cleaner called a “Hoover” (Yule, 2010, p. 53). Another example is an instant noodle called Indomie produced by the Indonesian company Indofood which has been widely used by Indonesians as a general term to name every product of instant noodles from different brands in Indonesia.

Further, Product descriptions, along with the product's name, photos, and essential elements like model name, color, or size, are also important components of the content presented on the product page (Novgorodov, Guy, Elad, & Radinsky, 2020, p. 1). The goal of a product description is to offer buyers with information regarding the product's characteristics and benefits so that they are interested in purchasing it (Novgorodov et al., 2020, p. 2).

As giving the name and description for a brand or product must be full of consideration, U.S celebrities are trying to develop new names and descriptions for their products. This process of inventing new words for product descriptions is referred to as word formation. Word formations are the processes where new words are produced (Yule, 2010, p. 53). According to O’Grady & Archibald (2019), word formation is the domain of morphology (p. 5). Morphology sheds light on how language works. It demonstrates the importance of a wide range of word classes, the presence of internal word structure, and the presence of processes that create and modify words in a number of ways (O’Grady & Archibald, 2019, p. 100). Yule (2010) classifies word formation into ten processes namely coinage, borrowing, compounding, blending, clipping, backformation, conversion, acronym, derivation, and multiple processes (pp. 53-60).

Coinage, or the creation of completely new terms, is one of the least common processes of word formation in English. The most widely known are commercial product descriptions that become generic terms, which are usually written without capital letters. *Granola*, *nylon*, *teflon*, and *zipper* are examples (Yule, 2010, p. 54). In addition, the type of coinage derived from the name of person or place is called eponym. Examples of eponym are the word *volt* from Alexander Volta’s name and *jeans* which derived from the name of a city in Italy where the type of cloth was invented.

The process of borrowing, or the acquiring words from other languages, is one of the most widely known source for new words in English (Yule, 2010, p. 54). Over history, English language has borrowed numerous words such as *pizza* and *mafia* from Italian, *garage* from French, *yoghurt* from Turkish, *bazaar* from Persian, *taco* from Spanish, etc. Loan-translation, also known as calque, is a form of borrowing in which the components of a word are transferred directly into the borrowing language. (Yule, 2010, p. 55). For example, the Spanish phrase *perros calientes* which literally translated “dogs hot” is the calque for *hot dogs* in English.

Compounding is the process of merging two distinct words to produce a single new word (Yule, 2010, p. 55). This process of combining words is very common in English language. Joshi (2014) stated that there are closed compounds, hyphenated compounds, and open compounds (p. 11). Closed compounds are words that combined together without any space or hyphens. Hyphens are used in compounding in order to show that the component words have the same new single idea and to avoid misreading. Lastly, open compounds are formed by separating component words with space between them.

Typically, blending is formed by connecting the beginning of one word to

the end of another (Yule, 2010, p. 55). For example, *brunch* is formed through the process of blending the words *breakfast* and *lunch*; while *emoticon* is derived from *emotion* and *icon*; and *camcorder* from *camera* and *recorder*.

Clipping is the process of shortening a word that has more than one syllable (Yule, 2010, p. 56). While according to Katamba (2005), clipping is the word formation process that produces a new word with the same meaning as the original word by cutting off a component and reducing it to a word with one or two syllables (p. 124).

A special type of reduction process to form a new word is known as backformation. It is the process where one type of word is reduced to form another type of word (Yule, 2010, p. 56). Plag (2003) added that through backformation, words are formed by removing a suffix or their supposed suffix (p. 56). The verb *Donate* from the noun *Donation*, the verb *Diagnose* from the noun *Diagnosis*, and the verb *act* from the noun *action* are examples for the backformation process.

Conversion refers to the shift of a word's function (Yule, 2010, p. 57). It involves the functional shift of one-word class to another without any reduction. According to Katamba (2005), conversion words retain the same word form but are in different word classes (p. 48). The noun *drink* becomes the verb *to drink* (The boy is drinking soda), and the verb *to email* becomes the noun *email* are an example of conversion.

Acronyms are new words formed by combining the first letters of multiple words. There are several ways to form new words from this process. The first is forming the word CCTV and VCR which stands for "Closed-Circuit Television" and "Video Cassette Recorder" where the pronunciation is done by saying each letter separately. Other types of acronyms are ASAP, COVID, and FIFA where they are pronounced as new single words. Furthermore, many acronyms have become generally utilized terms such as *scuba* which stands for "self-contained underwater breathing apparatus" and *radar* which stands for "radio detecting and ranging" (Yule, 2010, p. 58).

The most prevalent word-formation process utilized in the development of new English words is derivation (Yule, 2010, p. 58). According to Yule (2010), derivation is formed through the use of a series of small "bits" known as affixes (p. 58). Furthermore, according to O'Grady & Archibald (2019), derivation employs an affix to create a word with a meaning and/or category different from its base (p. 107).

The types of affixes are prefixes, suffixes, and infixes (O'Grady & Archibald, 2019, p. 105). Prefixes are affixes that are added to the beginning of a word such as *discontinue* and *unhappy*. Meanwhile, affixes that are attached to the end of a word are known as suffixes. For examples, the words *prayer* and *useless* which contain the suffix *-er* and *-less*. Prefixes, suffixes, or even both are present in all English words formed through this derivational process such as *disrespectful* and *fool-ish-ness* that have more than one affix. Meanwhile, infix is an affix that appears within a word. This type of affix can be found in some other languages but is not commonly used in English. *Fan-bloody-tastic* and *abso-freaking-lutely* are the examples of infixes in English. Furthermore, according to Plag (2003), a word can have multiple affixes such as the word *unregretful* (p. 50).

The last type of word formation process is multiple processes. According to

Yule (2010), it is possible to use multiple word formation processes to form a certain word (p. 60). The word *snowballed*, for example, is formed through compounding and conversion. It is classified as a compounding because the words *snow* and *ball* are joined to form the noun *snowball*, which may then be converted into a verb by the process of conversion.

Previous research on word formation had been conducted (e.g. Indarto & Garnida, 2015). However, it focused more on analyzing compound nouns found in computer software terms. Unlike Indarto and Garnida's, (2015) study, the present study aims to reveal all the types of word formation processes instead of being limited to compounding. The data for this study were taken from cosmetic product descriptions of U.S celebrities' beauty brands namely Fenty Beauty, Rare Beauty, Kylie Cosmetics, and Florence by Mills released and still in production in April 2022.

The present study is aimed at answering the following questions: (1) What word formation processes are used in cosmetic product descriptions by U.S celebrities? (2) What word formation process is the most frequently used in cosmetic product descriptions by U.S celebrities? Therefore, the objectives of this study are to find out the types of word formation processes and their frequency of use in cosmetic product descriptions by U.S celebrities.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach since the collected data were in the form of words, specifically written texts. The design of this study is textual analysis. Textual analysis is the method for discovering how individuals make sense of and convey their lives and experiences by attempting to understand the language used in texts (Hawkins, 2017). The data for this research were word formation processes of cosmetic product descriptions in the beauty brands by U.S celebrities that were released and still in production in April 2022. The brands that are used as a source of the data were *Fenty Beauty*, *Rare Beauty*, *Kylie Cosmetics*, and *Florence by Mills*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Types of Word Formation Processes Used in Cosmetic Product Descriptions of U.S Celebrities' Beauty Brands

Out of the 10 classifications of word formation processes proposed by Yule (2010), this study found 9 classifications, namely derivation, compounding, conversion, borrowing, blending, acronym, clipping, coinage, and multiple processes.

a. Derivation

This study revealed that the derivation process is most frequently used word formation process in the descriptions of cosmetic products of U.S celebrities' beauty brands. The derivation process found in this study involved the affixation of suffix *-ing*, suffix *-r* or *er*, suffix *-y*, suffix *-ion*, suffix *-ie*, suffix *-o*, suffix *-al*, suffix *-th*, suffix *-less*, prefix *re-*, prefix *semi-*, prefix *un-* and multiple affixations. In

specific, the derivation process that mostly used is the use of suffix *-ing*.

The words which are formed through the addition of suffix *-ing* to their base word which were found in this study are classified as adjectives. As an example, the word *hydrating* from the word *hydrate* and suffix *-ing* found in *Pro Filt'R Hydrating Longwear Foundation* is an adjective that modifies the noun *foundation*.

b. Compounding

This study discovered 16 compounds in cosmetics product descriptions in the beauty brands of U.S celebrities. For example, the word *Travel-Size* in Fenty Beauty's *Baby What it Dew Travel-Size Makeup Refreshing Spray* is an adjective compound which formed by joining the word *travel* and *size* by using a hyphen. The word *travel* when standing alone means 'to journey' (Webster's Universal Dictionary and Thesaurus, 2005). While *size* means 'something's dimensions or propositions' (Webster's Universal Dictionary and Thesaurus, 2005). The combination of these words creates the meaning of 'a size ideal for travel, especially small and compact which easily carried for traveling'.

c. Conversion

There are 29 words formed by the conversion process which were found in this study. The conversion process found in this study involves the conversion of 20 nouns derived from verbs, 2 nouns from verbs and adjectives, 3 verbs from nouns, 1 adjective from verb, 1 adjective from noun and verb, and 1 adjective from adjective derived from adverb and noun.

The conversion of verbs into nouns is the most common process that is found in this study. The noun *block* for example, comes from the verb *block* which is 'to make movement of something to be difficult'. This word is found in the Kylie Cosmetics' *Baddie on The Block Pressed Blush Powder*. Instead of a verb, *block* in the mentioned product description is identified as a noun. In the process of conversion, the noun *block* has the meaning of 'a group or row of buildings' (Webster's Universal Dictionary and Thesaurus, 2005).

d. Borrowing

This study found seven borrowing words in the descriptions of cosmetic products in U.S celebrities beauty brands. There are three words that borrowed from Spanish namely *fiesta*, *mami*, and *sangria*. The word *fiesta* means "festival" or "religious celebration". While the word *mami* is literally translated as 'mom' and being adapted into English word, *mommy*. Further, borrowed from Spanish with the same spelling, the word *sangria* is an alcoholic beverage made from red wine.

Meanwhile, the other four borrowing words found in this study are the word *boujee* which was borrowed from French, the word *goji* from Mandarin, the word *kabuki* from Japanese, and the word *mimosa* from Latin. *Boujee* is borrowed from the French '*bourgeoisie*' which means 'people who belong into the social class between the rich and the poor'. However, in American slang, *boujee* refers to a person from the middle class who acts or wants to appear wealthier than they actually are. While the word *goji* is borrowed from Mandarin "枸杞 (gōuqǐ)" which

means 'the dark red, mildly tart berry of a thorny Asian shrub, typically dried and used in beverages'. Further, *kabuki* is borrowed from Japanese which is the Japanese classical dance-drama theatre known for its highly stylized performances, striking make-up, and exaggerated actions by the actors. Lastly, the word *mimosa* is borrowed from Latin: *mimus* or '*mime*'. *Mimosa* is a type of sensitive plant where if being touched, it leaves and stems will fold as well as if it is being exposed to light.

e. Blending

This study found only one word that formed through blending without the combination of other processes. The word that formed through blending that exist in the product descriptions by Fenty Beauty is *invisimatte*. The words that blended to form this word are *invisible* and *matte*. The word *matte* is substituting the end part of *invisible* which results a new term *invisimatte* which is contained in several product descriptions of Fenty Beauty.

f. Acronym

In this study, three acronyms were found. The first acronym that was found in this study is *LED* which stands for Light Emitting Diode which is a tiny light source that transmits light when electricity passes through it. Second, the acronym MVP is widely known as 'Most Valuable Player'. Third, *PR* is the acronym for Public Relations. These words are formed from the initial letters of their word components and pronounced by saying their initial letters separately.

g. Coinage

This study discovered two coinages in the descriptions of cosmetic products in U.S celebrities' beauty brands. These words are *Kendall* and *Kylie* where each of them is derived from the name of a person. This type of coinage is defined as eponym. Eponyms are new words formed from the name of a person or place (Yule, 2010, p. 54). Kendall Jenner is a 26 years old American supermodel, the older sister of Kylie Cosmetics' founder, Kylie Jenner. Moreover, as the founder of Kylie Cosmetics, Kylie Jenner's first name is used to name some of her own products such as ***Kylie*** LED Mirror and ***Kylie's*** Valentine Favorites.

h. Clipping

This study found eight words formed through clipping. These words are *beau*, *butta*, *cuz*, *festie*, *lil*, *sista*, *stunna*, and *sum*. The word *beau* for example, is a new word formed through the process of clipping the word *Beauty*. This clipping word is created by trimming its last syllable which is '*ty*'. Though being reduced the word *beau* still has its original meaning which is 'the state or quality of being beautiful' (Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary, 2008).

Another example is the word *butta* which formed from the process of clipping the word *butter*. This clipping word is done by trimming the syllable '*er*' that ends the word. The letter '*a*' then acts as a vowel to substitute the syllable '*er*'. Therefore, through this process, there is a change of sound from /ə/ to /a/ when

reading the last syllable of *butter* and *butta*. However, *butta* retains the meaning of its original word.

The last example is the word *festie* which is the result of the process of clipping. It is formed by reducing the word *festival* into shorter form and suffix *-ie* is added to its end. This clipping procedure is known as hypocorism. Though being shortened, *festie* still retain the meaning of *festival* which is ‘a time of celebration’ (Webster’s Universal Dictionary and Thesaurus, 2005).

i. Multiple Processes

There are 17 words that were formed by combining multiple processes of word formation that were found in this study. The word *kybrow* for example, is a noun derived from the process of coinage and blending. The words that blended to form this word are *kylie* and *brow* where the last syllable of *kylie* is substituted with the word *brow*. Furthermore, the word *kylie* itself is a coinage specifically an eponym since it derived from the name of a person. Another example is *mattemoiselle* which is a new word formed from multiple processes namely borrowing and blending. The words *matte* and *mademoiselle* are blended together to form this word. The word *mademoiselle* itself is a borrowing word from French which is a title for an unmarried French woman.

2. The Most Frequently Used Word Formation Process in Cosmetic Product Descriptions of U.S Celebrities' Beauty Brands

By using the classification of word formation processes by Yule (2010), this study found 125 word-formations in the cosmetic product descriptions by U.S celebrities’ beauty brands. The information on these data is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Word Formations Found in Cosmetic Product Descriptions in U.S Celebrities Beauty Brands

No.	Types of Word Formation	Number of Words Exists	The Words Found
1	Blending	1	Invisimatte
2	Coinage	2	Kendall, Kylie
3	Acronym	3	LED, MVP, PR
4	Borrowing	7	Boujee, Fiesta, Goji, Kabuki, Mami, Mimosa, Sangria
5	Clipping	8	Beau, Butta, Cuz, Festie, Lil, Sista, Stuna, Sum
6	Compounding	16	All-Over, Doubletake, Eyebrow, Eyeshadow, Flypencil, Freestyle, Handbag, Hollyberry, Lipstick, Longwear, Makeup, Scrubstick, Skinstick, Sunrise, Sunset, Travel-Size
7	Multiple Processes	17	Bronzer, Bronzing, Cheek-Hugging, Chocolit, Chromewrecker, Color-Correcting, Eyeliner, Flyliner, Full- Bodied, Highlight, Highlighter, Kabuki-Buff, Kybrow, Kylash, Kylighter, Lip-Loving, Mattemoiselle, Self-Reflecting

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8	Conversion	29	Block, Blot, Blush, Bomb, Chill, Color, Contour, Dirty, Drop, Even, Fluid, Head, Heat, High, Lift, Mark, Match, Mirror, Paint, Powder, Refill, Setting, Shape, Shine, Slip, Snap, Spray, Stick, Wax
9	Derivation	42	Amplifying, Baddie, Besties, Blotting, Blurring, Brightener, Collection, Commando, Complexion, Concealer, Diffusing, Discovery, Effortless, Frontal, Glossy, Hydrating, Illuminating, Lengthening, Liner, Mattifying, Melting, Plumper, Plumping, Precision, Primer, Puffy, Refillable, Refreshing, Retouch, Sculpting, Semi-Matte, Shaping, Sharpener, Shiny, Smoky, Styler, Toasty, Uncensored, Uncuffed, Volumizing, Warmth, Weightless
Total		125	

Through the ten classifications of word formations, this study found nine classifications—coinage, borrowing, blending, compounding, clipping, conversion, acronym, derivation, and multiple processes. The word formation process that was not found in this study is backformation. Furthermore, the result of this study shows that derivation is the most frequently used word formation process in forming the descriptions of cosmetic products by U.S celebrities. The derivation process has 42 out of the 125 data found. Meanwhile, the other 82 data are the total of conversion (29), multiple processes (17), compounding (16), clipping (8), borrowing (7), acronym (3), coinage (2), and blending (1).

CONCLUSION

This study explored the word formation processes in cosmetic product descriptions in U.S celebrities' beauty brands. By using the classification of word formation processes proposed by Yule (2010), this study found nine out of ten classifications. The type of word formation that does not found in this study is backformation. Hence, the types of word formation processes available in cosmetic product descriptions in U.S celebrities' beauty brands are derivation, compounding, conversion, borrowing, blending, acronym, coinage, and multiple processes.

Moreover, this study discovered the derivation process as the most frequently used word formation process in forming the descriptions of cosmetic products in U.S celebrities' beauty brands. In specific, out of 125 words, there are 42 words from the derivation process, 29 words of conversion, 17 words of multiple processes, 16 words of compounding, 8 words of clipping, 7 words of borrowing, 3 words of the acronym, 2 words of coinage, and 1 word of blending. Hence, it can be inferred that cosmetic product descriptions contribute to the addition of new words in English.

The study of word formation is not limited to the analysis of product descriptions. It covers a wide area that can be explored such as medical terms, political terms, technological terms, sports terms, etc. Besides of its high variety of data sources, there are a number of classifications of word formation processes proposed by linguists. As time goes by, new words will continue to appear. It is

hoped that there will be more studies that employ various data sources and classifications which can be useful as knowledge in the field of linguistics.

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