

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

Naming is never a neutral act. The name a person chooses for themselves reflects how they think about, present, and position themselves in relation to others. Unlike birth-given names, which are typically assigned rather than chosen, usernames on social media are self-selected, making them a rich site for studying identity and social meaning. Van Langendonck (2007) proposed a four-part model of meaning—categorical, associative, emotive, and grammatical—that captures how proper names, including self-authored ones, carry meaning beyond simple reference, while Kisel et al. (2018) identified five social functions that self-authored digital names, or "nickonyms," can perform. These onomastic patterns can not only be found in formally studied names but can also be observed on social media platforms such as Instagram, particularly in the usernames chosen for second, more private accounts.

This research focuses on analyzing the second Instagram account usernames created by Generation Z users, based on the naming choices of 25 informants selected from a population of 99 second-account holders. Based on the first research question, the findings show that these usernames are structured using seven types of onomastic patterns. They are Blending/Wordplay, Compounding, Simplex/Borrowing, Phrasal/Clausal construction, Affixation, and Alphanumeric hybrid forms, while Onomatopoeia does not appear in the data. The most frequently used structure among second-account usernames is Blending/Wordplay, as much as 7 times (28%), closely followed by Compounding, found 6 times (24%). This is due to the fact that many second-account users favor short, unique, and semantically layered handles that remain memorable within Instagram's character limit while still signaling individuality and creativity. Meanwhile, Affixation and Alphanumeric hybrid forms occur in only a small number of usernames, each found only once (4%).

Based on the second research question, this study identifies four types of semantic meaning reflected in second Instagram account usernames, following Van Langendonck's (2007) model. The four types of meaning are categorical, associative, emotive, and grammatical meaning. From the findings on types of semantic meaning, it was found that categorical meaning occurs in all 25 usernames (100%), as every username, however stylized its spelling still presupposes a human referent. Associative meaning follows with 18 occurrences (72%), reflecting connotations that extend beyond the literal meaning of the words used. Emotive meaning is found in 12 usernames (48%), and grammatical meaning, marked through morphosyntactic features such as pluralization or numerals, is found in 8 usernames (32%). These four types of meaning are not mutually exclusive; a single username can carry more than one layer of meaning at once, showing a balanced tendency in which second-account usernames layer emotional and connotative content on top of their basic referential function.

Based on the third research question, this study identifies five social functions performed by second Instagram account usernames, following Kisel et al.'s (2018) framework. The five functions are self-presentation, community affiliation, emotional expression, creative/branding, and privacy management. The findings on the functions of second-account usernames show that self-presentation is the most dominant function, occurring 7 times (28%), followed by community affiliation and emotional expression, each occurring 6 times (24%). Creative/branding function is found 4 times (16%), while privacy management is the least reflected function, occurring only 3 times (12%) despite privacy being one of the most commonly cited reasons for maintaining a second account in the first place. This shows a paradox in which privacy is more often managed through platform mechanisms, such as follower curation, rather than being linguistically encoded within the username itself.

5.2 Suggestion

Building on these findings, several avenues for future research and practice can be suggested. To begin with, since this study analyzed only 25 usernames, the generalizability of its findings remains limited; future research would therefore

benefit from working with a larger and more diverse data, potentially stratified by age group, gender, or platform, in order to test whether the dominance of blending and compounding as structural strategies, along with the prioritization of self-presentation as a social function, holds true across broader and more varied populations of second-account users. In addition, because naming motivation cannot be fully captured through linguistic form alone, it would be valuable for future studies to triangulate structural and semantic analysis with direct accounts from users themselves, gathered through interviews or surveys, so as to better understand why particular names were chosen and to clarify the relationship between privacy as a latent motivation for maintaining a second account and its comparatively limited expression at the level of the username itself.

Furthermore, given that naming conventions may vary considerably across different social media platforms, a comparative study examining second-account usernames on Instagram alongside those on platforms such as TikTok or X (formerly Twitter) could help determine whether the structural and functional patterns identified in this study are specific to Instagram or instead reflect broader trends in digital self-naming practices more generally. Related to this, the finding that Privacy Management and Selective Visibility emerged as the least represented social function, despite being widely assumed in existing literature to be a central motivation for creating a second account, warrants further investigation; future research could explore whether privacy concerns are instead communicated through non-linguistic means, such as bio text, account settings, or the deliberate curation of a restricted follower list, rather than through the semantic or structural content of the username itself.

Finally, since the integrated framework combining Van Langendonck's (2007) typology of presuppositional name meaning with Kisel et al.'s (2018) taxonomy of social functions proved productive in revealing the layered and multifunctional nature of second-account usernames, this same framework could be usefully extended to other forms of digital self-naming, including display names, bio taglines, and pseudonymous handles used in gaming or online forum contexts, in

order to further test and refine its applicability within the broader field of socio-
onomastic research.

