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Lexical Inventiveness in Ghanaian Socio-Political Discourse: The Form, Meaning and Motivation for Dumsor and Dumsor-Based Neologisms

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Abstract

Lexical expansion may be triggered by different factors. A recent case of protracted intermittent power outages in Ghana gave rise to dumsor, an Akan word which means 'turn off' and 'turn on'. This word spawned many neologisms, some of which became part of the political discourse in Ghana at the time. However, very few of the neologisms are actually in use because the situation that gave rise to them no longer exists and the formation of most of them was purely jocular. Based on data collected from Facebook posts and status updates, this paper discusses what is called the dumsor lexicon and the morphological and sociolinguistic motivations for the formation of the dumsor-based neologisms. First, we observe that the motivation for the linguistic behaviour that spawns such neologisms is consistent with the light heartedness of Ghanaians. We show that the neologisms fall into various semantic classes and that the morphological processes of compounding and affixation are employed predominantly but dumsor itself is partially anglicized and the affixes employed in the derivation of the neologisms are of English origin, because Akan, from which dumsor emanates, lacks equivalent affixes. Additionally, we observe that the use of English affixes could be because the originators of the neologisms either did not know alternative processes in Akan that could yield the same result or possibly did not find them useful because of the multilingual setting of the platform. Thus, we argue that the morphology of the neologisms and the range of items and concept they refer to betray the possible social backgrounds of the originators of the words and the multilingual setting of the linguistic behaviour.

Keywords: Affixation, Blending, Compounding, Dumsor, Lexical inventiveness, Neologisms, Word formation

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Résumé

L'expansion lexicale peut être attribuée à plusieurs facteurs. Une situation récente de pannes de courant de manière intermittente et prolongée au Ghana a donné naissance au terme dumsor, un mot Akan qui signifie « éteindre » et « allumer ». Ce terme produisit, à son tour, plusieurs néologismes, dont certains firent partie du discours politique au Ghana à l'époque. Cependant, très peu desdits néologismes sont vraiment utilisés actuellement, car la situation qui donna naissance à de tels néologismes n'existe plus et la formation de la plupart desdits néologismes eut purement pour but de faire des plaisanteries. En s'appuyant sur des données tirées des publications et des mises à jour des statuts Facebook, cet article discute ce que nous appelons le lexique dumsor et les motivations morphologiques et sociolinguistiques pour la formation des néologismes à partir du terme dumsor. En premier lieu, nous observons que la motivation pour le comportement linguistique qui génère de tels néologismes est cohérente avec la nature farceuse des ghanéens. Nous montrons que les néologismes entrent dans différentes classes sémantiques et que les procédés morphologiques de la composition et de l'affixation sont principalement employés. Nous montrons également que le terme dumsor est partiellement anglicisé et que les affixes employés dans la dérivation des néologismes sont d'origine anglaise, car Akan, d'où émane le terme dumsor, manque des affixes équivalents. En outre, nous constatons que l'utilisation des affixes anglais pourrait être attribuée au fait que soit les auteurs desdits néologismes ne connurent pas de procédés alternatifs en Akan qui pourraient produire le même résultat, soit, peut-être, ils les considèrent comme étant inutiles en raison du contexte multilingue de la plateforme. Par conséquent, nous soutenons que la morphologie des néologismes et la gamme des éléments et du concept auxquels ils renvoient sont révélatrices des origines sociales des auteurs de tels mots et du contexte multilingue du comportement linguistique.

Mots-Clés: Affixation, mélange, composition, dumsor, inventivité lexicale, néologismes et formation des mots.

Introduction

From about 2013 to 2017, the West African country of Ghana experienced a period of protracted intermittent power outages which came to be known by the word *dumsor*, an Akan word formed from two verbs – *dúrn* 'to turn off' and *só* [rendered as *sor*] 'to turn on', and the word spawned many neologisms, mostly jocular formation of lexemes based on *dumsor* or one of its constituents.

The concept designated by *dumsor* has been discussed from different perspectives, including the effect of *dumsor* on businesses, mental health of students and the health of the people generally (Boakye, Twenefour, & McArthur–Floyd, 2016; Doe & Asamoah, 2014; Ibrahim, Aryeetey, Asampong, Dwomoh, & Nonvignon, 2016; Owusu–Adjapong, 2018). For example, Boakye, et al. (2016) discussed *dumsor* as an economic issue, pointing out the negative effect of *dumsor* on the finances of hotels in Ghana. Doe and Asamoah (2014) discuss *dumsor* from the point of view of its effect on the profitability and competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises in the Accra Business District of Ghana. Finally, Ibrahim, et al. (2016) study *dumsor* from the point of view of its effect on the mental health of students. What remains to be done is a linguistic analysis of the form of the word *dumsor* and the many neologisms that it spawned.

Thus, the purpose of this paper is to provide a linguistic take on *dumsor*, and there are many potentially interesting lines of inquiry which could be pursued in such a study, including answering the question of whether the neologisms demonstrate codeswitching/codemixing or mixed language. However, we have chosen to focus on the formation of *dumsor* and its derivatives, deal with the question of what the derivations reveal about the cognitive processes that underpinned the linguistic behaviour and what the neologisms potentially reveal about word formation in Akan from which the word *dumsor* emanates as well as the backgrounds of the originators. We contend that because of the items for which the words are formed and the structure of the words that are formed, the derivations potentially betray the social backgrounds of the persons who engage in what an author called “linguistic gymnastics”.

We begin with a brief background, dealing with the Ghanaian inclination towards light-hearted formation of new words based on a trending issues in the society as well as the socio-political/–economic situation that engendered the formation of the words *dumsor*. In the sections on methodology and data, we deal with the data and how they were collected and processed. We then move on to discuss the structure and formation of the word *dumsor* and its variant forms as well as the word class, structure and semantic classification of *dumsor*–based neologisms. We point out that the *dumsor*–based neologisms have *dumsor* as the source word (Lalić–Krstin & Silaški,

2018). Before concluding the paper, we briefly discuss what the formation of the derivatives reveals about the potential backgrounds of the originators of the neologisms.

The background

Ghanaians are a very happy people in spite of the many difficulties they face as a result of the country's level of development. Their light-heartedness is seen in the way they handle potentially serious situations that would cause real strife in countries of comparable level of development. Writing for the BBC on 23rd September 2015, Elizabeth Ohene described this Ghanaian attitude this way: “[f]aced with a difficult situation in Ghana, our coping mechanism involves trying to make a joke out of the situation [...] The only way we can find to cope with the trauma is to find a way to make a joke out of the tragedy” (see <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34336319>). In the same vein, writing in his opinion column, Rodney's Potpourri, on page 10 of the 29th January 2019 edition of the Daily Graphic, Rodney Nkrumah–Boateng cites the following comment from Ace Ankomah: “[i]sn't it a great testimony to Ghana that today, we celebrate peace in Dagbon, and instead of crying over killings and confusion, we can afford a good-natured laugh over whose dressing “killed it” in Yendi?” Nkrumah–Boateng (2019) then goes on to remark that “[o]ur ability to laugh at and with one another from time to time is a useful valve for letting out steam and it is one of our greatest strengths as a nation, our differences notwithstanding.”

In recent years, aided by the power of social media, Facebook principally, this light-heartedness of the Ghanaian has been taken to a whole new level. The result has been a culture of lexical inventiveness that makes for interesting linguistic analysis. What happens is that when a new situation comes up, including potentially explosive or scandalous ones, a word related to the situation or a key actor in the situation, including the name of the main actor, becomes the basis for creating various lexical items to refer to the situation and related concepts, most of which tend to be only imaginary.

Three notable recent happenings have given rise to very interesting lexical derivations. The first relates to the behaviour of a former presidential candidate at a pre-election debate in 2012. The candidate, Mr Ayariga, kept coughing when a particular fellow contestant was speaking, thus interrupting what the other candidate had to say. This rather funny incident led to the formation of many words based on the name Ayariga and coughing, including *ayaricough*, *ayarigamania* and *ayarigation*. The second regards a scandal involving the payment of judgement debt to a man called Mr. Woyome, contrary to the decision of a High court and the express instruction of the then president of Ghana. The whole situation and the subsequent attempt by the state to retrieve the money gave rise to a sizable lexicon of derivations based on the word

woyome, including woyomoney, woyomize, woyombia and woyometrics. The third is the situation of a protracted period of unstable power supply which lasted for about four years, from about 2013 to 2017. This prolonged period of unplanned power outages in Ghana and the stress it caused led to the formation of the word dumsor, as described above, and it formed the base for derivatives such as dumsORIZATION, dumsorPIA and dumsorLOGICAL.

Generally, linguistic reaction to socio-political changes/disturbances is quite common cross-linguistically and vary widely, including creating neologisms and simply extending the meanings of existing lexical items to refer to identified socio-political changes. For example, the 'Watergate' scandal in the USA spawned many words whose second constituent is *gate*, which has come to assume the meaning 'scandal' (cf. Booij, 2012). So, among English speakers, a scandal is named by simply adding the form *gate* to the name of a participant in the scandal; the place where the situation occurred, the instrument for performing some relevant action or some other component such as an amount of money involved. Thus, for instance, if a scandal occurred in Sekondi, involving a person called Wɔnkyɛndzi and an amount of 2.5 billion Cedis on 21st March, then any of the following words could be a name for the scandal: Sekondigate, Wɔnkyɛndzigate, 2.5 billiongate and 21st March gate respectively.

A similar pattern of neologism creation was triggered by the UK's desire to leave the European Union, called 'Brexit'. In their study of Brexit-induced neologisms, Lalić-Krstin and Silaški (2018) observed three types of neologisms. The first type has Brexit as a model. That is, just as the word Brexit comes from the words Britain/British and exit, some of the neologisms were formed from corresponding names of countries and the word exit. Examples are Auxit [Austria+exit] and Frexit [French+Exit]. The second type has Brexit as a source word. Examples include Brexiter [Brexit+er], Brexiteer [Brexit+eer] and Brexitography [Brexit+o+graphy]. This means that the words in the group have all or almost all of the base Brexit and an affix. The third type has Brexit as inspiration. Here, the "new coinages are inspired by and/or modelled after Brexit" (Lalić-Krstin & Silaški, 2018, p. 6). These are words that are not directly related to the UK and EU referendum. Accordingly, they are not based on Brexit. Rather, other words referring to similar countries are used as bases to form, mostly humorous, words that refer to possible similar events in those other countries. Examples include Byegium [bye+Belgium], Caleavefornia [California+leave], Quitaly [quit+Italy], Retireland [retire+Ireland] and Slovakout [Slovakia+out].

The circumstances of the formation of dumsor and the many neologisms based on it fit into a recognised pattern of neologism formation. In the next two sections we deal with the methodology and data for this study before moving on to discuss the

form, formation and semantic classification of dumsor and its derivatives.

Methodology

Apart from one item – *sordum* – which came from the website of the parliament of Ghana, data for this study were collected from Facebook, which has become the major means through which Ghanaians communicate in non-face-to-face interaction. As would be expected by anyone who is familiar with choices that Ghanaians make with regard to the usage of social media platforms, when any issue comes up, Facebook is where one can gauge the response of the Ghanaian public. It is also where we may catch lexical innovations that the situation triggers. Therefore, over the period that the issue of the intermittent power outages persisted with intensity, there were many Facebook posts and status updates that dealt with the issue, and in those posts and updates were many derivations based on the word dumsor. Some of those Facebook posts became the subject of news items/stories on major traditional media networks. Thus, although there are other social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram from where one could find instances of dumsor-based neologisms, we targeted the most popular, which is Facebook, to collect the data for the presents study.

We collected the words, as we found them on Facebook, and we believe that the data we have are sufficient for the aims of the present paper. Future studies on the topic may consider other social media platforms than Facebook.

A chunk of the data came from a particular Facebook status update that specifically requested people to form their own dumsor-related words and define them.¹ This set of data is interesting for three reasons. First, it was initiated by one person with a huge following of people of varying backgrounds. As a result, it gathered in one place, a large amount of data with definitions, comments and sample constructions in which the words occurred. Secondly, the data were quite organised with very few semantically significant duplicates and multiple definitions. That is, different people who apparently had not read each other's posts ended up forming the same word, albeit with varied definitions signalling the potential psychological reality of the idea encapsulated in these new words. Thirdly, because the dumsor-based neologisms mostly occurred in constructions, one could tell their word classes. The result was very interesting in that it showed the people's ability to use both productive and not so productive English affixes to create new words and to clearly define them. A feature that is worth noting is the occasional provision of pronunciation guides, where the originator felt that there was the likelihood of mispronunciation. An example is "Sor+pplause (pronounced sor-plus)", see penultimate row of Table 1.

The list was also controlled to ensure that there were no personal attacks in the process. This is clear from the fact that the person on whose wall the discourse was taking place deleted an apparently personalizing entry by an individual called Emmanuel. This is captured in the following: "Emmanuel thanks for your word. I took it

¹ We refrain from naming the person on whose Facebook wall the discourse took place in the interest of anonymity and avoidance of potential infringement on the person's rights because we do not have the person's permission of to reveal their identify.

off because I wish to encourage this discourse in the spirit of humour and literary expression without any personality attacks. It is possible. God bless.” This is significant in that one of the unfortunate effects of the anonymity afforded by social media interactions is the personal attacks on people. Thus, by insisting on people keeping the platform free of insults and personal attacks, the “moderator” did very well and in so doing, though unintended, provided us with a rather nifty set of data.

The data

A selection of the neologisms and their definitions, as provided online, are in Table 1. The full list of 65 neologisms and their definitions are in an appendix (Table 18) at the end of the paper. Some neologisms in Table 18 do not have definitions, and that is exactly how they appeared in the sources of data. However, some of those ones are transparent enough to be understood, even without definition from the originators. They include the compound #DumsorMustStop (smile emoticon), which refers to a smile emoticon and contains the hashtag #DumsorMustStop which was created to put pressure on the then government to solve the dumsor problem.

The data were grouped according to word classes, where we identified three classes – nouns, adjectives and adverbs. We then grouped them according to the processes involved in their formation. Here we identified compounding and affixation as the two principal word formation processes. Other minimally employed processes are reduplication and conversion, where the constituent verbs of dumsor, dum and sor, are used as nouns. There is blending also, which occur together with compounding. These will be discussed further and exemplified when we deal with the formation of the dumsor-based neologisms.

The syntactic category, structure and formation of the word dumsor

The two main branches of morphology are lexeme formation which is about the formation of new words and inflectional morphology, which deals with the formation of different word forms representing the same lexeme. The present work falls within the domain of lexeme formation which may be carried out through many different processes. The two principal ones are compounding, which involves the formation of a new word by putting together two or more separate independent words and derivation, which involves the formation of a new word, by combining an independent base and a bound form called an affix. We show in this paper that the formation of dumsor and its variants involves compounding.

Therefore, it is argued that compounding should be understood to be a nominalization strategy in Akan (Appah, 2015). Approaching it from a constructionist perspective, it is argued that there is a constructional schema for compounding in Akan which is pre-specified to bear a syntactic category – noun – and that all compounds instantiate this constructional schema (Appah, 2013, 2015). It follows from

Table 1 : A sample of Dumsor-based neologisms and their definitions

Word	Definition (as provided by the originators)
#DumsorMustStop	The push to end it all once and for all
Bachelor of Arts in Citizenry Dumsology	“BA ‘Dum’ with Noisy Generator Symphony option”
Dum-ability	The ability to interrupt power supply anyhow
Dum-bae	A lady you met on one of your strolls as you couldn’t stay in your room because of heat.
Dum-Dum	A prolonged experience of one side of the equation often occasioned by a combination of Dumsor and specific area faults.
Dumsol	Analgesic medication to alleviate headache caused by excessive stress from dumsor and its accompanying effects
Dumsor-brity	A person who becomes a celebrity as a result of championing Dumsor issues
Dumsor-cline	An antibiotic used in treating chronic infectious bacteria in darkness
Dumsor-lacy	The fallacy of fixing the power crisis
Dumsor-losis	Vulgar Acute verbal diarrhoea on letter writers and vigil organisers.
Dumsor-nomy	The range of economic activities that benefit from the prolonged Dumsor in Ghana. Eg. Sale of generators, inverters etc.
Dumsor-pia	Going blind due to dumsor
Dumsor-talk	Purposeless lamentations about your dumsoric frustrations
Dumsor-tamol	Medication given to mitigate the effects of “Dumsor”...
Dumsorcrazy	The freedom to speak about Dumsor
Dumsorlogy	The academic study of the effects of “Dumsor”
Dumsormaniac	A person who is obsessed with issues about “Dumsor”
DumsorMustStopPhobia	The fear of citizens’ protest against dumsor
Dumsorphobia	The morbid fear of erratic power supply
Dumsorphonic	The sound people make when the light goes off
Dumsruption	An abrupt end to a programme or event because of “lights off.”
Edumdum-edumdum	IUPAC name for dumsor. It’s used in the lab where dumsor is processed
Sor-pplause (pronounced sor-plus)	The jubilation and spontaneous applause that erupts in your neighborhood when the “Sor” unexpectedly comes at a time when you are supposed to have “Dum”
Sor-Sor	An inexplicable experience of sustained “lights on” that you pray will last forever.... of course, those prayers don’t get answered

this that every compound in Akan will be a noun (Abakah, 2006; Anyidoho, 1990; Dolphyne, 1988) because it will inherit the nominal syntactic category from the schema. Thus, the nominal syntactic category of Akan compounds should be treated as a holistic constructional property (Appah, 2013, 2015). Hence, we have to say that dumsor and its variant, to be discussed below, exemplify transpositional exocentric compounds – (Bauer, 2008, 2010) because the word class of the output is not related to the word class of either constituent (see, Appah, 2016, 2017a).

Commenting on the syntactic category of dumsor, Ohene (2015) predicts that it

would undergo conversion and be used as a verb or an adjective in future. She writes:

Thus far “dumsor” has largely remained a noun, as in “we have dumsor”, and it is used as an exclamation, as in “oh, (swear word) dumsor!”. But I also see possibilities of it being used as a verb, as in “I couldn’t write the article because we were dumsored yesterday”, and as an adjective, as in “it was a dumsor week” (see <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34336319>).

The data we collected did not show any evidence of this. Therefore, our future work will look into the extent to which dumsor has been converted to other classes.²

Given that the actual output of the compound in Akan based on the two constituent verbs is dúrn̄sɔ́, it has to be noted that the conventional rendition of the word – dumsor – is an anglicized form of the Akan compound dúrn̄sɔ́, and that the anglicization affects only the orthographic form and not the phonetic realization which does not have a final ‘r’. The rhotic [r], however, shows up epenthetically in some derivatives, as the discussion of the form of the neologisms in the next section will show. Thus, we may point out that the anglicization of the orthographic form of the word is useful for the formation of certain derivatives.³

It is worth noting that another variant of the word dúrn̄sɔ́ emerged in the course of the discussion of the situation that led to the formation of the word. In this variant, the linear order of the constituent verbs is reversed. So that the word is rendered as sordum [sɔ́dúrn̄], as capture in the following report from the parliament of Ghana.

Mr Speaker, our President gave us the assurance when he came to the dumsor or sordum: whatever they call it – that he is not only going to manage the situation, he is going to fix it.

(see. <http://www.parliament.gh/publications/30/1058>)

² Although we limit ourselves to the data from Facebook, a reviewer argues forcefully that “the use of dumsor as an adjective is prevalent. A quick #dumsored check on Twitter threw up several hits (already as early as September 2014) while #Dumsor week, #Dumsor day and #Dumsor night are also trending. The focus on the examples on Facebook is thus not good grounds for conclusive statements such as this.” We would like to point out, however, that the reviewer’s claim stems from a fundamental confusion of “modifier” and “adjective”. In the examples cited by the reviewer, Dumsor is used as a modifier, but that does not make it an adjective. Dumsor, remains a noun that is modifying another noun – a nominal modifier. This is a rather common mistake that is made by many. However, we shall not be able to address this in the present paper because, it is beyond the scope of the paper.

³ A reviewer questions why “the word in question is spelt consistently by speakers in a way that is different from the orthography, regardless of dialect”. To the reviewer and the reader who might have a similar question, our response is that there is no dialectal variation in Akan as far as the spelling and pronunciation of the word in Akan is concerned. Again, as far as the anglicization is concerned, there is no question of dialectal variation either, because there is only this spelling – dumsor. We suggest that people who are familiar with Akan choose this anglicized version because of convenience, since most keyboards do not have the character /ɔ́/.

In the context of the formation of V–V nominal compounds in Akan, however, the form of sordum may be regarded as counterintuitive because, ordinarily, the order of the constituents is event–iconic, mirroring the temporal sequencing of the subatomic events coded by the individual constituent verbs (Appah, 2017b). The underpinning construal is that the light was on and it went off (dum) and came back on (sor), so the order is dum and then sor. That notwithstanding, one can argue that even sordum can be said to be accurate because, for the person who formed it, this “reversed” order could very well be the reality. That is, the light came on (sor) and then it went off (dum). Be that as it may, we acknowledge that dumsor was the more popular one and the variant that has survived. The other variant did not gain currency and our search did not return any derivatives based on it.

Dumsor-based neologisms: Their word classes and constituent structure

Three principal criteria for identifying the syntactic category of lexical items are the form, the meaning and the distribution of the items in question (cf. Croft, 2001; Lieber, 2010; Radford, 1997). Form, also called inflection, has to do with the appearance of the word. For example, generally, affixes attach to one specific word class, as captured in the unitary base hypothesis (Aronoff, 1976). Thus, the expectation is that nominal affixes will be different from verbal affixes, etc., so that only nouns will inflect for number, while verbs inflect for tense/aspect. However, this is not always the case and so may not help in determining the word class of an item (Lieber, 2010; Radford, 1997). By the criterion of meaning, it is known that while nouns will name, verbs will express action, adjectives express property, etc. However, it is also known that action, for example, may be expressed in nouns, such as the so-called action/process nominals (cf. Chomsky, 1970; Comrie, 1976; Grimshaw, 1990; Koptjevskaja–Tamm, 1993, 2006). This means that meaning may also fail in helping to identify the word class of a lexical item. Finally, the criterion of distribution considers where the word occurs and what it occurs with. For example, nouns occur with determiners while adjectives and adverbs occur with degree words. This criterion tends to be the most reliable, although not fool proof because a degree word like quite, for example, may occur with prepositions, adjectives and adverbs.

By and large, a combination of any of these criteria helps to identify the word class of any lexical item. For the words under consideration, the two criteria of meaning and distribution conspire nicely to correctly identify the syntactic category of the words. That is, one could tell the word classes of the dumsor–based neologisms with relative ease because the words mostly occurred in constructions supplied by the originators. We provide the word class of the neologisms, the processes involved in their formation and their internal constituent structure in Table 2 to Table 6. Their semantic classification is discussed later.

As noted above, in terms of the processes involved in their formation, we

identified two principal word formation processes – compounding and affixation. This can be seen from the data in column 3 of the tables. For each table, the first column contains the forms of the neologisms as presented in the sources of data, while the last column shows what we see as the internal structure of the word, which also reflects our perception of the stages of derivation, where there is multiple affixation.

In Table 2 are the words that are formed through affixation with dumsor as the base. Here, one or more affixes are used to form various words based on dumsor.

Table 2: Dumsor-based neologisms that are formed through affixation

Word	Word Class	Word formation processes	Constituent Structure
Dum-ability	N	Affixation	[[[Dum] _V -abil] _A -ity] _N
Dumsor-lization	N	Affixation	[[[Dumsor] _N -liz] _V -ation] _N
Dumsor-logical	A	Affixation	[[[Dumsor] _N -logi] _N -cal] _A
Dumsor-tia (pronounced 'cia')	N	Affixation	[[dumsor] _N -tia] _N
Dumsor-try	N	Affixation	[[dumsor] _N -try] _N
Dumsorcracy	N	Affixation	[[dumsor] _N -cracy] _N
Dumsordian	N	Affixation	[[[dumsor] _N -d-ian] _N
Dumsoric	A	Affixation	[[dumsor] _N -ic] _A
Dumsorlacy	N	Affixation	[[dumsor] _N -lacy] _N
dumsorlogically	ADV	Affixation	[[[[Dumso] _N -logi] _N -cal] _A -ly] _N
Dumsorlogy	N	Affixation	[[Dumso] _N -logy] _N
Dumsoville	N	Affixation	[[Dumso] _N -ville] _N
Chloro-Dumsor-phyl	N	Circumfixation?	[Chloro-[Dumsor] _N -phyl] _N

Two of the derivations are worth pointing out for discussion. The first is dumability in Table 2, which is built on the first constituent of dumsor – dum. The other one is Chloro-Dumsor-phyl, which seems to be a case of circumfixation, the process by which a base is put inside a discontinuous affix. The only problem is that the form that the base occurs in is not an affix. An affix is a bound morpheme, therefore, in cases of circumfixation, when the elements that flank the bases are put together after removing the bases, the result cannot stand on their own as free forms. In the case of Chloro-Dumsor-phyl, however, the form that occurs around dumsor, Chloro-phyl, is itself a word – a neoclassical compound (Bauer, 1998). Therefore, we have to say that the form Chloro-Dumsor-phyl only fits, rather grudgingly, into the class of words formed through affixation and the question mark is meant to capture this. It has to be pointed out, though, that such one-of-a-kind derivations show up occasionally in

instances where specific-situation-inspired-neologism formation happens. For example, in their study of Brexit-induced neologisms, Lalic-Krstin and Silaski (2018) identified an example in the class of Brexit-inspired neologisms, Caleaveformia [California+leave], where they showed that the neologism has the word leave occurring inside California.

Compounding is, by far, the most used process in the formation of the dumsor-based words. 26 (40%) of the 65 neologisms are formed entirely through compounding, as shown in Table 3. There are also a few instances of what is referred to as multiple formations, where the formation of a complex word involves more than one process at the same time. The ones identified in the dataset involve compounding and some other process. For example, 2 (3.1%) of the neologisms are formed through compounding and affixation, as shown in the last two rows of Table 3.

Table 3: Compounding and multiple formation involving compounding and affixation

Word	Word Class	Word formation processes	Constituent Structure
#DumsorMustStop smile emoticon	N	Compounding	[[#DumsorMustStop]A [[smile]N [emoticon]N]N]N
Citizenry dumsology	N	Compounding	[[[Citizen]N -ry]A [[Dumso]N -logy]N]N
Dum-bae	N	Compounding	[[Dum]N -[bae]N]N
Dumson	N	Compounding	[[Dum]N -son]N
Dumsor business	N	Compounding	[[dumsor] [business]]
Dumsor issues	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N [issues]N]N
Dumsor metre	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N [metre]N]N
Dumsor puetic	A	Compounding	[[[dumsor]N [puet]N]N -ic]A
Dumsor switches	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N [switches]N]N
Dumsor times	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N [times]N]N
Dumsor -overtime	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N [overtime]N]N
Dumsor -promise	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N [promise]N]N
Dumsor -talk	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N [talk]N]N
Dumsor -therapy	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N [therapy]N]N
Dumsor -trauma	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N [trauma]N]N
Dumsor -wear	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N [wear]N]N
Dumsoric frustrations	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N [frustrations]N]N
Dumsorman	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N [man]N]N
Dumsormania	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N [mania]N]N
Dumsormaniac	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N [maniac]N]N
DumsorMustStopPhobia	N	Compounding	[[#DumsorMustStop]A [phobia]N]N
Dumsoroscropy	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N -o- [scopy]A]N
Dumsorparty	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N [party]N]N
Dumsorphobia	N	Compounding	[[dumsor]N [phobia]N]N
Dumtonic	N	Compounding	[[Dum]V [tonic]N]N
Sor-Dum	N	Compounding	[[sor]V [dum]V]N
Dumsorlandian	N	Compounding -affixation	[[[dumsor]N [land]N -ian]N
Dumsorphonic	N	Compounding -affixation	[[[dumsor]N [phon]N]N -ic]A

A good number of the derivatives also involve a process that is intermediate between compounding and blending. There are 16 (24.6%) of them and they involve the whole of the word dumsor and part of another word which is simply a truncated version of the other base, as is typical of blending. See Table 4.

Table 4: Multiple formation involving compounding and blending

Word	Word Class	Word formation processes	Constituent Structure
Dumsor lisy	N	Compounding-blending	[dumsor] _N -[lisy] _N
Dumsor-brity	N	Compounding-blending	[[dumsor] _N -[brity] _N]
Dumsor-ciline	N	Compounding-blending	[[dumsor] _N -[ciline] _N]
Dumsor-litics	N	Compounding-blending	[[dumsor] _N -[litics] _N]
Dumsor-losis	N	Compounding-blending	[[dumsor] _N -[losis] _N]
Dumsor-nomy	N	Compounding-blending	[[dumsor] _N -[nomy] _N]
Dumsor-pia	N	Compounding-blending	[[dumsor] _N -[pia] _N]
Dumsor-porosis	N	Compounding-blending	[[dumsor] _N -[porosis] _N]
Dumsor-tamol	N	Compounding-blending	[[dumsor] _N -[tamol] _N]
Dumsor-tember	N	Compounding-blending	[[dumsor] _N -[tember] _N]
Dumsoranthology	N	Compounding-blending	[[dumsor] _N [anthology] _N]
Dumsorpasia	N	Compounding-blending	[[Dumsor] _N -[pasia] _N]
Dumsoteracy	N	Compounding-blending	[[Dumso] _N -[teracy] _N]
Dumsruption	N	Compounding-blending	[[Dums] _N -[ruption] _N]
Sor-pplause (sor-plus)	N	Compounding-blending	[[sor] _N -[pplause] _N]
Dumsol	N	Compounding/Blending	[[Dum] _N -[sol] _N]

Blending involves the formation of a word by combining parts of already existing words. The parts that are taken do not necessarily correspond to morphemes in the original words. This is the case with brunch, which combines the highlighted parts of the words breakfast and lunch, parts which clearly do not constitute morphemes in the bases, yet carry the full meanings of the bases into the new word. What we refer to as instances of multiple formation involving compounding and blending are found in derivatives like Dumsor-tember, Dumso-teracy and Dumsor-brity, which are formed from the whole of dumsor and the terminal part of September, literacy and celebrity respectively.

The foregoing discussion shows that the formation of 44 (67.7%) of the 65 neologisms involves compounding, being formed either entirely through compounding or through compounding and some other process.

There are other processes which are used minimally in the formation of some of the words in the dataset. One is conversion, the process by which a word of one category is used as a member of another category without a change in the form of the word. We find the constituents of the compound dum and sor, which are originally verbs, are used in nominal contexts. This is found in the definition of the neologisms

sor-pplause, and dumsorlogy, where both dum and sor are used as nouns, as shown in Table 5. In the word sor-pplause itself, the form sor is used as a noun which is blended with part of the word applause.

Table 5: Cases of conversion

Word	Meaning
Sor-pplause (pronounced sor-plus)	The jubilation and spontaneous applause that erupts in your neighborhood when the "Sor" unexpectedly comes at a time when you are supposed to have "Dum"
Bachelor of Arts in Citizenry Dumsology	"BA 'Dum' with Noisy Generator Symphony option"
Dumsorphobia	The scare of going home due to dum so you hang out all day and all night
Dumsorlogical	A branch of philosophy that majors on studying the undulating logic of "Dum" and "Sor."
Bachelor of Arts in Citizenry Dumsology	"BA 'Dum' with Noisy Generator Symphony option"

Another process that is used in the formation of only a few words is reduplication, the process by which a word is formed by attaching a copy of the whole or part of the same word to it (cf. Marantz, 1982; Moravcsik, 1978; Rubino, 2005a, 2005b). See Table 6.

Table 6: Reduplication in the formation of dumsor derivatives

Derivative	Word Class	Word formation processes	Constituent Structure	Definition
dum-dum	N	Reduplication	[[Dum] _v ~RED] _N	A prolonged experience of one side of the equation often occasioned by a combination of Dumsor and specific area faults.
sor-sor	N	Reduplication	[[sor] _v ~RED] _N	An inexplicable experience of sustained "lights on" that you pray will last forever... of course those prayers don't get answered
edumdum- edumdum	N	Reduplication	[[e-[dumdum] _v] _N ~RED] _N	

There are two types of reduplicated words that occur in the dataset. In the first, the individual constituents are simply reduplicated to form a new compound which we will classify as reduplicative compounds because the compound is formed from a doubling of the same base (Appah, 2017a; Dolphyne, 1988). In the second use of reduplication, the form dum is reduplicated and prefixed with e-, giving edumdum [e-dun~dum]. The result is then reduplicated to form the nominal edumdum-edumdum 'the fact of the light going off intermittently'. This is the only neologism that is formed this way. However, this means of forming nominals is quite common in Akan and is schematic, requiring the second reduplication because the first level of duplication plus prefix results in a bound form which does not occur in isolation in Akan –(see, Kambon, Duah, & Appah, 2019).⁴

An interesting question that we do not have a definite answer to is whether to regard hashtags as words. We have treated them as words in this study, as a convenient choice for present purposes only. This choice, however, raises the question of what their syntactic category is and what the word formation process(es) involved in their formation is/are. The process of forming the hashtag (e.g., #DumsorMustStop) may be characterised as univerbation, given that it involves the fusion of the elements of a phrase or clause into a word. This is because Himmelmann (2004, p. 27) defines univerbation, also called idiomatization, as the process of "creating a new lexeme out of two or more existing ones, which may continue to exist independently." However, every instance of univerbation in the literature seems to be the result of a diachronic process of lexicalization which occurs over a long period of time, while hashtags are formed on the spur of the moment. Again, while a hashtag may consist of multiple words that are fused, it may also contain a single word or even an affix, as in #ish, with the only distinguishing feature being the prefixed hash or pound symbol (#). Thus, univerbation may not be the process underlying the formation of hashtags. A final option is a process of multiple formation that involves the fusion or compounding of the original word or group of words and the affixation of the symbol (#). Clearly, the two questions of the syntactic category and process(es) involved in the formation of hashtags deserve to be looked into further.

In this section, we have dealt with the form and the processes by which dumsor-based neologisms are formed. We have noted that the two principal processes involved are affixation and compounding. Other processes that are employed minimally are conversion and reduplication. There are also instances of multiple formation where the formation of the words involves compounding and either affixation or blending.

Generally, the neologisms tend to share various kinds of formal relations with their bases. For example, we noted in the introduction that in their study of Brexit-

⁴Akan words that are formed this way include akasa-akasa, anante-anante and atase-atase.

induced neologisms, Lalic–Krstin and Silaski (2018) observed three types of neologisms based on Brexit. The first type has Brexit as a model. The second type has Brexit as a source word and the third type has Brexit as an inspiration. The foregoing discussion shows that the dumsor–induced neologisms belong to just one of the three identified by Lalic–Krstin and Silaski (2018). That is, the neologisms are based mostly on dumsor as the source. This is shown by examples like dumsormania [dumsor+mania], dumsorlogy [dumsor+logy], dumsorbriety [dumsor+briety] and dumsortry [dumsor+try], which have dumsor as a source word.

In the next section, we are going to turn our attention to the semantic classification of dumsor–based neologisms.

Semantic classification of dumsor-based neologisms

In cases of lexical inventiveness similar to what we are concerned with, the neologisms tend to bear various semantic relations with the base word and tend to belong to varied semantic classes. In this section, we attempt a semantic classification of the dumsor–based neologisms. To have an objective basis for classifying the words, we base the classification on the definitions provided by the originators. Most of the derivations are semantically transparent with their meanings deriving compositionally from the meanings of their constituents. Examples are Dumsor–briety, Dum–ability and Dum–Dum. Others like Chloro–Dumsor–phyl are not so transparent while others are semantically opaque, needing more background information, in terms of the prevailing situation at the time of their formation, to understand the definition given and the semantic classes such neologisms should belong to. Thus, in the following, we also make use of our knowledge as people who experienced the situation that dumsor encapsulates to provide further background information that will elucidate the classification, as the need arises.

Dumsor as an academic discipline or qualification

The first group of neologisms can be classified as academic, per their definition, because they may refer to academic subjects or qualification. The academic subjects include dumsorlogy and dumsorlogical. The neologisms that refer to academic qualification include Bachelor of Arts in Dumsor Business and Bachelor of Arts in Citizenry Dumsology. The full list is in Table 7. We observe that some of the definitions do not match the formal makeup of the word. An example is dumsorlogical whose formal makeup suggests a manner of doing something and yet the definition is that of an academic subject. We will comment further on such mis–definitions when we discuss what the neologisms potentially reveal about the social backgrounds of the originators.

Table 7: Academic (qualification, Subject, etc.)

Semantic type	Word	Meaning
Academic qualification	Dumsoteracy	This is a literary project.
	Bachelor of Arts in Dumsor Business	3 year degree programme with minor in “smart” economics
Academic Subject	Bachelor of Arts in Citizenry Dumsology	“BA ‘Dum’ with Noisy Generator Symphony option”
	Dumsorological	A branch of philosophy that majors on studying the undulating logic of “Dum” and “Sor.”
	Dumsoroscopy	Keen, objective, empirical study and examination of the politico–frivolous causes of Dumsor!

Dumsor as a medical condition, therapy or medication

The next group, classified as medical, constitutes the largest semantic class. Some members of this class may refer to a medical condition or disease – mostly physical/physiological ailments. They include Dumsor–porosis, Dumsorpasia and Dumsor–loysis. In all these cases, Dumsor is conceptualised as a medical condition which has a specific diagnosis, effect and remedy. For example, Dumsor–porosis, like osteoporosis is a bone deficiency but this time it affects the bones of business organisations and makes them inefficient and weak. ‘The condition is created by the absence of constant and stable supply of power.’ In a similar vein, Dumsorpia is an eye–related condition like myopia but it probably is a more acute condition as it results in blindness.

Other words in the group refer to the therapy or cure for some imaginary medical condition. An example is Dumsor–therapy, which refers to ‘the ability to relax and get in tune with the on and offs of electricity and still feel relaxed and not stressed about it’.

The final group within this class refers to medication. These are derived from a combination of Dumsor + what seems like an affix that has been taken from the name of an existing medication. They include Dumsol, Dumsor–ciline and Dumsor–tamol. Dumsor–ciline is based on the group of antibiotics Tetracyclines while Dumsor–tamol is based on the pain killer paracetamol. Interestingly, the meanings given to these medications are neatly mapped onto the original sources – Dumsor–ciline is an antibiotic just like Tetracycline while Dumso–tamol is an analgesic just like Paracetamol. The source meanings have been retained but the conditions they treat have changed. In all the examples above, we see that there are parallels drawn from the medical domain. The rest of the details are in Table 8.

Table 8: Medical (condition/treatment/medication)

Semantic type	Word	Meaning
Medical condition	Dumsor-lisys	
	Dumsor-pia	Going blind due to dumsor
	Dumsor-porosis	A condition of large holes of deficiency created in the bones of a Business production efficiency due to absence of stable and constant power.
	Dumsor-trauma	...not sure whether to go home after work, loss of affection and appetite
	Dumsorpasia	Growing bald or greying speedily over energy challenges (Sam I know quite a few people suffering from that.)
	Dumsor-losis	Vulgar; Acute verbal diarrhoea on letter writers and vigil organisers.
Medical (therapy)	Dumsor-therapy	The ability to relax and get in tune with the on and offs of electricity and still feeling relaxed and not stressed about it.
Medication	Dumsol	Analgic medication to alleviate headache caused by excessive stress from dumsor and its accompanying effects
	Dumsor-ciline	An antibiotic used in treating chronic infectious bacteria in darkness
	Dumsor-tamol	Medication given to mitigate the effects of “Dumsor” ...

Dumsor as a psychological state/condition

The neologisms in the next group are classified simply as condition and they are very much related to the preceding one because they mostly refer to the psychological state of the referents. The only difference between this category and the previous category is that, these are not medical conditions or ailments, strictly speaking. The words in the group refer to mental states – phobias and other experiences like frustration. They include words like Dumsorphobia “the fear of going home to meet total darkness”, DumsorMustStopPhobia “the fear of citizens’ protest against Dumsor”, and Dumsoric frustrations. Thus, the words in this group can be distinguished from the preceding ones which refer to medical conditions, therapy and cure.

Table 9: Condition (psychological/physical/state)

Semantic type	Word	Meaning
Condition	Dumsoric frustrations	xxx
Condition	Sor-Sor	An inexplicable experience of sustained “lights on” that you pray will last forever... of course, those prayers don’t get answered
Condition (psychological)	DumsorMustStopPhobia	The fear of citizens’ protest against dumsor
	Dumsorphobia	The scare of going home due to dum so you hang out all day and all night
	Dumsorphobia	The morbid fear of erratic power supply.
Condition / Experience*	Dum-Dum	A prolonged experience of one side of the equation often occasioned by a combination of Dumsor and specific area faults.

Dumsor as a person

We classify the words in the next set of neologisms as persons because they refer to human entities. The words that fall in this class include Dum-bae, Dumsor-brity and Dumsor-maniac. Dum-bae is an endearment term for a woman you meet when you are compelled to leave your room to take a stroll outside because it is hot in your room. Dumsor-brity refers to someone who gains popularity, notoriety or becomes a ‘celebrity’ as a result of active advocacy against Dumsor. A ‘Dumsor-maniac’, like any other maniac, has obsessions but this time the obsession is strictly about Dumsor. A Dumsortia is a person who suffers a minor stroke as a result of erratic power supply. One item in the group, which is based on only one of the constituents of dumsor – Dumson – is meant to be a surname. See Table 10 for the definitions.

Table 10: Person

Semantic type	Word	Meaning
Person	Dum-bae	A lady you met on one of your strolls as you couldn’t stay in your room because of heat.
	Dumsor-brity	A person who becomes a celebrity as a result of championing Dumsor issues
	Dumsor-tia (pronounced ‘cia’)	A person who suffers a minor-stroke as a result of erratic power supply
	Dumsor-maniac	A person who is obsessed with issues about “Dumsor”
Personal name	Dumson	The sumame of the one who is in charge of the Dumsor switches at the power stations.

Dumsor as property words

The neologisms in this class refer to various properties of the referents. In dumability, for example, the property of being able to interrupt power supply is referred to. The form dumsor-litics has to do with the ability of dumsor to polarize. In the case of dumsorphonic, it is an acoustic property which is being referred to. Finally, in dumsruption, an aspectual property is at issue because the word refers to the nature of the termination of a programme.

Table 11: Property words

Semantic type	Word	Meaning
Property	Dum-ability	The ability to interrupt power supply anyhow
	Dumsor-litics	The ability of Dumsor to sharply polarise people and discussions along partisan lines.
	Dumsor-lization	The sum total of dumsor
	Dumsorphonic	The sound people make when the light goes off
	Dumsruption	An abrupt end to a programme or event because of "lights off."

Dumsor as an action

A good number of the neologisms may be properly classified as expressing action (See Table 12). Interestingly, the form of some of the items in this group is not transparent, in that, unlike items in some other groups, one cannot look at the form of the words and deduce their meanings. That is, the meanings that one expects to find, on encountering the word for the first time, is not what the words mean, per the definitions given by the originators. For example, Dumsor-wear is defined as "[t]he act of activating wash and wear due to dumsor", even though on the face of it, and per the "Is A" condition or hyponymy test (Allen, 1978; Bauer, 2010), the word should refer to a kind of wear (an attire). In the same way, dumsor party is defined as "a desperately misguided attempt at making dumsor a partisan political affair". This meaning is not so obvious from the formal makeup of the word because per the meanings of the individual constituents, this word should refer to a party, most likely a political party, and not an action or the attempt thereof. The compound is, therefore, exocentric because an important component of the meaning is missing (Appah, 2017a; Bauer, 2008).

Table 12: Actions

Semantic type	Word	Meaning
Action	#DumsorMustStop	The push to end it all once and for all
	Dumsor-wear	The act of activating 'wash and wear' due to dumsor
	Dumtonic	When your coke isn't "chilled" and you manage to drink it due to erratic power supply...lol
	Sor-Dum	A prayer that your schedule will be accidentally switched because you need lights for your event.
	Sor-pplause (pronounced sor-plus)	The jubilation and spontaneous applause that erupts in your neighborhood when the "Sor" unexpectedly comes at a time when you are supposed to have "Dum"
	Dumsorhtology	Unwilling apology galore
	Dumsorparty	A desperately misguided attempt at making dumsor a partisan political affair

Dumsor as a chemical

Aside from the major groups identified and discussed above, there are many other semantic classes of the neologisms that do not have more than two different members. For example, two of the neologisms refer to substances that may be classified as chemical compounds. The first member of this class is Edumdum-edumdum which is defined as the "IUPAC name for dumsor. It's used in the lab where dumsor is processed." The other member of this class is Chloro-Dumsor-phyI which is characterised as an 'unproductive pigment that refuses to absorb dumsor for plant food and kills trees in SADA afforestation project'. Here, dumsor itself is a chemical that can be absorbed, but the definition is one that has to be interpreted, taking into consideration the socio-political issues that were at play during the period immediately preceding the formation of the neologisms. The expression "SADA afforestation project" has heavy political connotations, as it refers to a botched afforestation project meant for the upper half of Ghana that cost the nation a fortune.

Table 13: Chemical compounds

Semantic type	Word	Meaning
Chemical compound	Chloro-Dumsor-phyI	Unproductive pigment that refuses to absorb dumsor for plant food and kills trees in SADA afforestation project
	Edumdum-edumdum	IUPAC name for dumsor. It's used in the lab where dumsor is processed

Dumsor as a commercial activity

Another set of two words refers to commercial or economic activities, as shown in Table 14. One, Dumsor-overtime, refers to work schedule which is aimed at increasing productivity as a way of offsetting the effect of dumsor on productivity. The other neologism, Dumsor-nomy, refers to the range of economic activities that was engendered by dumsor and flourished as a result of the prolonged period of dumsor, including trade in generators and solar-powered lamps for domestic and commercial use.

Table 14: Commercial activity

Semantic type	Word	Meaning
Commercial/economic	Dumsor -nomy	The range of economic activities that benefit from the prolonged Dumsor in Ghana. Eg. Sale of generators, inverters etc.
Commercial/economic (Work schedule)	Dumsor -overtime	Working extra hours not necessarily to boost productivity but.... (you yourself know)

Dumsor as a system of governance

Only one word occurred in the database which relates to governance. Not surprisingly, it is dumsorcraacy, which refers to the rule of dumsor, and it occurred three times from three different people, who also gave three different definitions, capturing some interesting aspects of the Ghanaian conceptualization of democracy. For example, the first instance of dumsorcraacy is defined as “The freedom to speak about Dumsor” which has to be understood in the context of the Ghanaian conceptualization of democracy as freedom of speech – ka bi ma menka bi 'lit. say some and let me say some’.

Table 15: Governance

Semantic type	Word	Meaning
Governance	Dumsorcraacy	The freedom to speak about Dumsor
	Dumsorcraacy	Creating a culture of dumsor !
	Dumsor cracy	A form of governance which employs dead goats.

The definitions of dumsorcraacy also capture some humorous rendition of current political concerns. For example, the second definition captures the belief that the intermittent power outages were gradually becoming a regular feature of the life of the Ghanaian. In the same way, the third definition, which is a tongue in cheek one, takes a swipe at the then president of Ghana who had said that he was suffering the “dead goat syndrome”. As the saying goes, “a dead goat does not fear knife”. Therefore, the “dead goat syndrome” refers to the situation where some entity is no longer afraid of or sensitive to what could potentially harm it. The then president indicated that he was no

longer afraid of the agitations from various pressure groups that were meant to pressurise him to take action to stop dumsor, including threats of not voting for him in the following elections. Thus, that definition must be understood in the context of the socio-political discourse of the time.

Dumsor as a form of talk

Three of the neologisms refer to utterances, about dumsor. Two of them have to do with people’s expression of frustration with dumsor. They are Dumsor-try and Dumsor-talk. The other example has to do with series of promises of the then government to solve the dumsor problem. It has to be noted that all of the neologisms in this class are tainted with innuendoes. See Table 16 for the examples and their definitions.

Table 16: Utterance

Semantic type	Word	Meaning
Utterance	Dumsor -promise	Unending promises to end Dumsor
	Dumsor -talk	Purposeless lamentations about your dumsoric frustrations
	Dumsor -try	Poetic expressions of your Dumsoric frustrations

Miscellany

The set of neologisms in Table 17, are of varied semantic characterisation. They include words referring to location (Dumsoville), belief (Dumsor-lacy), time (Dumsor-tember), symbol (#DumsorMustStop smile emoticon) and instrument (Dumsor metre). See Table 17, for details.

Table 17: Others

Semantic type	Word	Meaning
Belief	Dumsor -lacy	The fallacy of fixing the power crisis
Symbol	#DumsorMustStop smile emoticon	
Sport /entertainment	Dumsor mania	A wrestling competition held in both light and darkness
Location	Dumsoville	A place one lives where there is Dumsor
Instrument	Dumsor metre	Static cost in monthly electricity consumption in these dumsor times
Manner	Dumsorlogically	Mehn! This class dey bee keke! I have improved my vocabs
Time /time frame	Dumsor -tember	Highest peak of erratic power supply
Arts/literature	Dumsor puetic	xxx

In this section we have presented and discussed various semantic classes of the dumsor-based neologisms. It is clear that these neologisms encapsulate the experiences of Ghanaians over the period that dumsor persisted, from about 2013 to 2017. Also, some of the neologisms were commentary on the major socio-political issues of the time.

Dumsor-based neologisms and the backgrounds of the originators

We indicated above that the formation of dumsor-based neologisms reveals quite a bit about the nature of word formation in Akan, from which the word dumsor comes. That is, given that the word is of Akan origin and the structure is Akan, as discussed above, one would expect the derivatives to follow the word structure of Akan and the affixes used also to be of Akan origin. However, as the discussions above show, the affixes that are used in the derivation are all of English origin, including forms like *-ize*, *-ic*, *-(at)ion*, *-al* and *-ly*.

A number of possible reasons for this situation come to mind. The first is that Akan does not have equivalent affixes and so the persons forming the neologisms had to rely on affixes from other languages, and the language that lends itself to such “exigencies” is English which is the official language of Ghana. Another reason which is stronger than the former is that the multilingual background of the persons involved in the discourse and the almost monolingual settings of Facebook usage in Ghana demanded that the words formed have the structure of English words which is relatively more accessible to Ghanaians who use social media and, particularly, the people who formed the words.

One of the claims made at the beginning of this paper is that from the semantic categories of the words, it may be possible to gauge the backgrounds of the persons who formed those words. That is, some of the neologisms seem to belong to certain specialised areas, including medicine and pharmacy (or science in general), and so the persons forming them must be very knowledgeable in the fields concerned. Examples include *Dumsor-pia* ‘Going blind due to dumsor’ and *Dumsol* ‘analgesic medication to alleviate headache caused by excessive stress from dumsor and its accompanying effects’. We can tell from this that the persons who formed these words must be knowledgeable in these areas or, at least, be educated to the level where the relevant scientific terms are introduced, or where the person can gain the capacity to familiarise themselves with the relevant field. Aside from the specialized terms, there are other neologisms that concern everyday existence of the people so that a person of any social background who has lived in the community long enough can form them. An example is *dumsorbriety* which refers to a celebrity.

As noted in the section on semantic classification, there are also cases where the form of the word and the definition given by the originators do not match at all. An example is the word *Dumsorlogical* which is defined as “[a] branch of philosophy that majors on studying the undulating logic of “Dum” and “Sor””. Clearly, this word should refer to a property and yet the definition given is that of an academic subject. In such cases, it is unclear whether we should put the inconsistency down to momentary mental lapses or we should assume that the person in question actually was not fully aware of what the word should mean, given the affixes employed. It is fair, therefore, to state that we can only guess what the words can indicate about the backgrounds of the persons who formed them.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have discussed the form, formation and the derivatives of dumsor, which came into existence during the unfortunate protracted incidence of power outages in Ghana which lasted for about 4 years, as well as the many neologisms that it spawned. We showed that the word dumsor is an Anglicization of the Akan verb-verb nominal compound *dum-so* which is formed from the verbs *dum* ‘to turn off’ and *so* ‘to turn on’. We also discussed the structure and formation of the neologisms which take dumsor as a base (cf. Lalić-Krstin & Silaški, 2018), showing that they are formed through the two principal processes of compounding and affixation. Other processes that are employed minimally in the formation of the neologisms are reduplication, blending and conversion. We showed that the dumsor-based neologisms fall into various semantic classes and may give an indication of the background of the persons who formed them.

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Appendix

Table 18 Full list of Dumsor-based neologisms and their definitions

Word	Definition (as provided by the originators)
#DumsorMustStop	The push to end it all once and for all
#DumsorMustStop smile emoticon	
Bachelor of Arts in Citizenry Dumsology	“BA ‘Dum’ with Noisy Generator Symphony option”
Bachelor of Arts in Dumsor Business	3-year degree programme with minor in “smart” economics
Chloro-Dumsor-phyll	Unproductive pigment that refuses to absorb dumsor for plant food and kills trees in SADA afforestation project
Dum-ability	The ability to interrupt power supply anyhow
Dum-bae	A lady you met on one of your strolls as you couldn’t stay in your room because of heat.
Dum-Dum	A prolonged experience of one side of the equation often occasioned by a combination of Dumsor and specific area faults.
Dumsol	Analgesic medication to alleviate headache caused by excessive stress from dumsor and its accompanying effects
Dumson	The surname of the one who is in charge of the Dumsor switches at the power stations.
Dumsor issues	
Dumsor Lisys	
Dumsor metre	Static cost in monthly electricity consumption in these dumsor times
Dumsor party	A desperately misguided attempt at making dumsor a partisan political affair
Dumsor puetic	
Dumsor switches	
dumsor times	
Dumsor-brity	A person who becomes a celebrity as a result of championing Dumsor issues
Dumsor-ciline	An antibiotic used in treating chronic infectious bacteria in darkness
Dumsor-lacy	The fallacy of fixing the power crisis

Dumsor-litics	The ability of Dumsor to sharply polarise people and discussions along partisan lines.
Dumsor-lization	The sum total of dumsor
Dumsor-losis	Vulgar; Acute verbal diarrhoea on letter writers and vigil organisers.
Dumsor-ninie	The sudden disappearance of power
Dumsor-nomy	The range of economic activities that benefit from the prolonged Dumsor in Ghana. Eg. Sale of generators, inverters etc.
Dumsor-overtime	Working extra hours not necessarily to boost productivity but... (you yourself know)
Dumsor-pia	Going blind due to dumsor
Dumsor-porosis	A condition of large holes of deficiency created in the bones of a Business production efficiency due to absence of stable and constant power.
Dumsor-promise	unending promises to end Dumsor
Dumsor-talk	Purposeless lamentations about your dumsoric frustrations
Dumsor-tamol	Medication given to mitigate the effects of “Dumsor”...
Dumsor-tember	Highest peak of erratic power supply
Dumsor-therapy	The ability to relax and get in tune with the on and offs of electricity and still feeling relaxed and not stressed about it..lmao
Dumsor-tia (pronounced ‘cia’)	A person who suffers a minor-stroke as a result of erratic power supply
Dumsor-trauma	...not sure whether to go home after work, loss of affection and appetite
Dumsor-try	Poetic expressions of your Dumsoric frustrations
Dumsor-wear	The act of activating wash and wear due to dumsor
Dumsorcrcacy	The freedom to speak about Dumsor
Dumsorcrcacy	A form of governance which employs dead goats.
Dumsorcrcacy	Creating a culture of dumsor!
Dumsordian	
Dumsoric frustrations	
Dumsorlandian	
Dumsorlogical	A branch of philosophy that majors on studying the undulating logic of “Dum” and “Sor.”

Dumsorlogically	Mehn! This class dey bee keke! I have improved my vocabs
Dumsorlogy	The academic study of the effects of “Dumsor”
Dumsorman	
Dumsormania	A wrestling competition held in both light and darkness
Dumsormaniac	A person who is obsessed with issues about “Dumsor”
DumsorMustStopPhobia	The fear of citizens’ protest against dumsor
Dumsoranthology	Unwilling apology galore
Dumsoroscropy	Keen, objective, empirical study and examination of the politico-frivolous causes of Dumsor!
Dumsorparty	A desperately misguided attempt at making dumsor a partisan political affair
Dumsorpasia	Growing bald or greying speedily over energy challenges (Sam I know quite a few people suffering from that.)
Dumsorphobia	The scare of going home due to dum so you hang out all day and all night
Dumsorphobia	The morbid fear of erratic power supply.
Dumsorphonic	The sound people make when the light goes off
Dumsoteracy	This is a literary project.
Dumsoville	A place one lives where there is Dumsor
Dumsruption	An abrupt end to a programme or event because of “lights off.”
Dumtonic	When your coke isn’t “chilled” and you manage to drink it due to erratic power supply...!d
Edumdum-edumdum	IUPAC name for dumsor. It’s used in the lab where dumsor is processed
Sor-Dum	A prayer that your schedule will be accidentally switched because you need lights for your event.
Sor-pplause (pronounced sor-plus)	The jubilation and spontaneous applause that erupts in your neighborhood when the “Sor” unexpectedly comes at a time when you are supposed to have “Dum”
Sor-Sor	An inexplicable experience of sustained “lights on” that you pray will last forever.... of course, those prayers don’t get answered