

Morphological Analysis and Communicative Effect on Neologisms During Covid-19 Pandemic

Yingyue Kang^{1,*}

¹*School of Foreign Language, Hebei Normal University, Hebei Province, China*

**Corresponding author. Email: 1243677809@qq.com*

ABSTRACT

Neologisms in linguistics refer to words or phrases that have recently been created or invented or given new meanings to existing words based on specific social and cultural backgrounds, which shows the vitality and creativity of language to some extent. In today's world, Covid-19 has undoubtedly become a hot issue of global concern in recent years, and new words have come into being. During the Covid-19 pandemic, neologisms mostly appear in the form of nouns, adjectives and verbs, and they all involve common morphological processes such as compounding, blending, coinage, clipping, acronym, borrowing and lexical deviation. The emergence and development of the Covid-19 neologisms are the direct reflection of the pandemic. These neologisms play an important role in cooperation and communication among people around the world.

Keywords: Covid-19, Neologism, Morphological Analysis, Word Formation, Borrowing, Lexical deviation, Communicative Effect.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is closely related to people's lives. Language is dynamic. In order to adapt to the changes of society, language is constantly developing and changing. Some new words are created, and many old words are given new meanings [1]. The Covid-19 pandemic has not only brought enormous challenges and pressures to global health and pandemic prevention efforts, but also greatly changed the way people interact and live their daily lives. The Covid-19 pandemic has become a key topic of global attention. In this context, new terms, words and phrases related to the pandemic have also emerged, including the word "Covid-19", which is shortened from "Coronavirus 2019" [2]. This paper will focus on the morphological process of Covid-19 neologisms, as well as the frequency and communicative effect of neologisms with different compositions, in order to contribute to the study of Covid-19 neologisms and global protection against Covid-19 pandemic.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

When studying the composition of Covid-19 neologisms, Asif, Zhiyong, Iram, and Nisar [3] started from the three compositions of Krishnamurthy's neologism model [4] and introduced medical terms related to the pandemic and frequently used keywords.

However, their analysis of the morphological process of neologism was not comprehensive enough. Katherine [5] adopted a descriptive-qualitative design to specifically analyze the morphological structure of Covid-19 neologisms but did not explain the meaning and frequency of them. Shahlee and Mustaffa [6] also conducted a study that looked at the morphological processes and word types of neologisms used by teenagers on social networks. The data came from a group of English majors at a university in Malaysia. By capturing 90 neologisms from several social networking platforms, the results show that young people tend to create new words through the process of using acronyms. However, the study also did not look at the morphological structure of neologisms. Using Twitter as the primary data source, Qasim and Haneen [7] tested the communicative effect of neologisms with different compositions by searching for their frequency in more than 5 million tweets from January to June 2020, and specifically introduced the meaning and usage of these neologisms, but this data is limited and remains in the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. METHODOLOGY

In 2010, Krishnamurthy proposed the theory of neologism model, which divides the composition of neologisms into three parts: word formation, borrowing

and lexical deviation [4]. Starting from these three parts, this paper will analyze the morphological structure and process of neologisms during the Covid-19 pandemic and explain the meaning of each neologism respectively. In addition, using the coronavirus corpus as the latest data source, the paper studies the communicative effects of neologisms with different compositions by analyzing and comparing the frequency of Covid-19 neologisms.

4. WORD FORMATION

Word formation is the rule of forming words by morphemes. It is a grammatical analysis of the structure of a word and explains the combination of morphemes in the internal structure of a word. Blending, compounding, acronym, coinage and clipping are common ways of forming new words during the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.1. Blending

Blending is the process of combining parts of two words or condensing one word with parts of another to form a new word. Blending seems to be a very effective way of forming covid-based neologisms. In fact, almost all activities and occasions during the pandemic were "covidized" [2]. The table 1 below introduces common Covid-19 neologisms using blending.

Table 1. Blending

Neologism	Morpheme	Meaning
Covidiot	Corona + idiot	People who don't follow the the rules and act like an idiot.
Covidient	Corona +obedient	People who follow the directives and orders during the pandemic.
Coronacation	Corona + vacation	A holiday due to the spread of the pandemic.
Morona	Moron + corona	People who act stupidly during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Quaranteams	Quarantine + teams	Online game teams that emerged during the pandemic lockdown.
Covexit	Covid + exit	An approach to stay out of the pandemic lockdown.

4.2. Compound

A compound is a combination of two words that have different meanings and are given a new meaning. For

example, the word doomsrolling is a combination of two free morphemes, doom and scroll [5]. The table 2 below introduces some common Covid-19 neologisms using compounding.

Table 2. Compound

Neologism	Morpheme	Meaning
Blursday	Blur + S + Day	All the days blur into one another and you're not sure what day is today.
New normal	New + normal	Something discovered for the first time that never existed before.
Zoombomb	Zoom + bomb	The privacy protection and security of Zoom meetings are threatened

4.3. Acronym

For the convenience of writing and expression, the ingredients in the appellation of things are regularly reduced or omitted, which is called acronym. An acronym is a word made up of the first letter of a different word, which is itself a word [8]. There are three common acronym neologisms, Covid-19, WFH and PPE, which respectively refer to Coronavirus Disease 2019, Work from Home and Personal Protection Equipment.

4.4. Coinage

As a new word, coinage is a process of word formation in which a new word or expression is intentionally or accidentally created [8-9]. For instance, the word Rona is clipped from corona. It's a humorous or satirical way of referring to Covid-19, especially during a pandemic when social distance poses interesting challenges.

4.5. Clipping

Clipping is a new word derived from a longer original or clipped expression [10]. For example, Iso is made up of self and isolation, which refers to staying indoors and not interacting with other people during the pandemic. In addition, the word Rona is a typical use of clipping.

5. BORROWING

Borrowing occurs when a word or phrase is taken from one language and used in another [6]. However, previous studies showed that the borrowing of neologisms created during the Covid-19 pandemic is more likely to be from jargon to common language, so that people can adapt to daily life after the pandemic [7].

The table 3 below shows some common Covid-19 neologisms using borrowing.

Table 3. Borrowing

Neologism	Meaning
Clinical trials	To determine the efficacy and safety of the investigational drug by conducting tests or experiments on humans.
Contact tracing	Trace or identify people who may have met an infected person and collect contact information.
Pandemic	A disease that is endemic nationally or globally.
Quarantine	Quarantine is a measure of risk management. It is an evaluation process to confirm that a certain object meets certain requirements and standards.
Social distancing	Social distancing means that you keep a certain distance from other people.
Vaccine	Vaccines refer to biological products made from various pathogenic microorganisms for preventive inoculation.
Self-isolation	Self-isolation refers to staying indoors and not interacting with other people during the pandemic.

6. LEXICAL DEVIATION

Lexical deviation is the process of creating new words. Lexical deviation occurs when you make up a word that has never existed before [6]. This form of neologism is mainly found in ordinary discourse, rather than in tweets from official medical institutions or medical and scientific conferences [7]. The table 4 below reflects some neologisms resulting from lexical deviation.

Table 4. Lexical deviation

Neologism	Meaning
Corona cuts	A person who worked as a hairdresser for his family during the pandemic due to the closure of hair salon.

Doom scrolling	A person may spend too much time browsing social media and news websites to absorb negative news.
Elbow bump	The informal greeting of two people touching elbows, which is popular during the pandemic.
Miss Rona	Personification of coronavirus. Comparing coronavirus to a villain who doesn't fool around.
Quarantine and Chill	Families in isolation do many leisure activities together. The phrase makes it sound more like a choice than a government mandate.

7. THE COMMUNICATIVE EFFECT OF NEOLOGISMS

Based on the coronavirus corpus, by collecting the usage data of neologisms on different social media, it is found that the communicative effects of diverse compositions of neologisms above are different. The following table 5 lists neologisms in order of their frequency.

Table 5. The frequency of neologisms

Neologism	Frequency	composition
Pandemic	2,169,509	Borrowing
Vaccine	1,431,095	Borrowing
Quarantine	330,665	Borrowing
Social distancing	273,891	Borrowing
Contact tracing	69,583	Borrowing
PPE	64,517	Word formation (Acronym)
Clinical trials	48,262	Borrowing
New normal	35,300	Word formation (Blending)
Self-isolation	30,628	Borrowing
WFH	5,192	Word formation (Acronym)
Iso	2,689	Word formation (Clipping)

Rona	1,039	Word formation (Coinage & Clipping)
Elbow bump	493	Lexical Deviation
Covidiot	261	Word formation (Blending)
Quaranteams	100	Word formation (Blending)
Doom scrolling	61	Lexical Deviation
Blursday	47	Word formation (Compound)
Morona	42	Word formation (Blending)
Quarantine and Chill	33	Lexical Deviation
Miss Rona	20	Lexical Deviation
Coronacation	9	Word formation (Blending)
Covexit	8	Word formation (Blending)
Zoombomb	8	Word formation (Compound)
Corona cuts	6	Lexical Deviation
Covidient	2	Word formation (Blending)

By comparing the frequency of neologisms with different compositions, the neologisms using borrowing have better communicative effect. The frequency of neologisms formed by acronym and clipping is second only to that by borrowing, which facilitates the communication among people during the Covid-19 pandemic.

8. CONCLUSION

Every major public event is accompanied by the evolution and innovation of language and vocabulary. The Covid-19 pandemic has dramatically changed the way people live and communicate, with new words and existing words given new meanings. The emergence of Covid-19 neologisms reflects the creativity of language, which is a direct reflection of people's life during the pandemic. Driven by social media, new words spread more widely and are used and recognized by more and

more people. By analyzing these new words, we can understand the current public concerns, the trend of the pandemic, and people's discussions and opinions on the changes and challenges brought about by the pandemic. This paper introduces the morphological process of the generation of Covid-19 neologisms and their meanings from the aspects of word formation, borrowing and lexical deviation, and compares and analyzes the frequency and communicative effect of neologisms with different compositions, which to some extent promotes the research and development of linguistics and lexicology related to Covid-19 neologisms and contributes to the early victory over the pandemic.

REFERENCES

- [1] Samigoullina, A. D. "A STUDY OF ENGLISH BLENDS RELATED TO COVID-19." *Russian Linguistic Bulletin* 1 (25) (2021): 30-34.
- [2] Aleksandrova, Aleksandra. "Covid-Based Neologisms in Media Texts." *KNOWLEDGE-International Journal* 46.6 (2021): 993-996.
- [3] Asif Muhammad, et al. "Linguistic analysis of neologism related to coronavirus (COVID-19)." *Social sciences & humanities open* 4.1(2021). doi:10.1016/J.SSAHO.2021.100201.
- [4] Krishnamurthy, Sarala. "The chutnification of English: An examination of the lexis of Salman Rushdie's "Midnight's Children"." (2010).
- [5] Akut, Katherine B. "Morphological Analysis of the Neologisms during the COVID-19 Pandemic." *International Journal of English Language Studies* 2.3 (2020): 01-07.
- [6] Ibrahim, Estabraq Rasheed, et al. "A Sociolinguistic Approach to Linguistic Changes Since the COVID-19 Pandemic Outbreak." *Multicultural Education* 6.4 (2020): 122-128.
- [7] Al-Azzawi, Qasim Obayes, and Haneen Ali Haleem. "" Do you speak Corona?": Hashtags and Neologisms since the COVID-19 Pandemic Outbreak." *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation* 4.4 (2021): 113-122.
- [8] Mweri, Jefwa. "Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) effects on language use: An analysis of neologisms." *Linguistics and Literature Studies* 9.1 (2021): 36-47.
- [9] Nabila, Ersyalia, and Tryanti R. Abdulrahman. "An analysis of new English words created during COVID-19." *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities* 9.1 (2021): 19-32.
- [10] VOLOSCUIC, Ina. "The milestones of neologism formation." *6t International Virtual Symposium*. 2020.