COVID-19 AS A LINGUISTIC PHENOMENON AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN REGIONAL TERMINOLOGY

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the study of COVID-19 as a linguistic phenomenon based on the material of the Russian and English languages, as well as the impact of the pandemic on the vocabulary of two languages. The article examines the influence of the course of the coronavirus pandemic on the meaning of neologisms of lexico-semantic field "COVID-19". The beginning of 2020 was marked by the coronavirus epidemic, which turned into a pandemic. The wide spread of the disease affected not only the functioning of medicine and other social institutions, but also the lexical composition of languages, in particular English and Russian. At a time of social upheaval, the processes of language development are accelerating, an impression of chaos and instability is created. Among the most popular ways of forming coronovirus terms are metaphor, word formation (prefix and suffix methods), composition, truncation and abbreviation. In Russian, there is an active borrowing of the corresponding terms from the English language. The main research methods are component analysis of dictionary definitions. In addition, a semantic analysis is carried out on the basis of introspection and the use of linguistic observation and a descriptive method. In accordance with the peculiarities of the situation in society, the psychological attitudes of the masses, their linguistic taste and flair of the language are changing. A comprehensive linguistic analysis of the research material made it possible to establish that the lexeme COVID-19 in the English mass media discourse acquires additional connotations and serves to form an informational picture of the world that reflects the national-cultural characteristics of worldview and the system of axiological relations.

Keywords: neologisms, word derivation, vocabulary, terminology, pandemic, lexico-semantic field "COVID-19", metaphor.

Introduction

During periods of social stability, language processes proceed calmly and measuredly, affecting individual parts of the system. During the period of social upheavals, the processes of language development are accelerated, creating the impression of chaos and instability. During such periods, the language can change by thirty percent in one century. In accordance with the peculiarities of the situation in society, people's linguo-cognitive attitudes, their sense of language, lexical preferences are changing.

With the expansion of world diseases, vocabulary and new words also emerged. In 1738, yellow fever appeared and Spanish influenza spread in 1890. Poliomyelitis spread in 1878, later it shortened to Polio in 1911. After World War Two (WWII) epidemics broke out and most children were affected. In recent decades, it has been observed the share of linguistic coinage related to epidemic and pandemic. SARS appeared in 2003 while AIDS in 1982. In 1968, coronaviruses were discussed first time in the Paper of Nature but very few people had known in 2020.

This period will definitely go down in the linguistic history of the formation of neologisms and stable turns of speech. Linguists will also be able to draw a full conclusion after the complete victory over the coronavirus epidemic. Among the most popular ways of coronavirus terms forming are: word formation (prefix and suffix methods), composition, truncations, abbreviations and metaphors. In Russian, there is an active borrowing of the corresponding terms from the English language.

The surge of new words and phrases accompanying the sudden COVID-19 outbreak has created new lexical and sociolinguistic changes that have become part of our lives. Changes in the vocabulary of the language caused by the coronavirus pandemic have given rise to a lot of neologisms, changing the lexical structures of already existing words. There was a need for an urgent nomination of new phenomena, concepts and realities. Neologisms include both direct nominations and figurative rethinking, such as phraseological units and metaphors. At all stages of COVID-19, new words and expressions have been replenishing languages up to the present time as a natural socially conditioned phenomenon.

The emergence of COVID-19's coinages has remarkably increased to establish a trending base of global neologisms. The present study attempts to investigate the nature of the new English and Russian words and expressions that emerged in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. The trending role of neologisms was the subject of a study by Hamdan & Al-Salman [Hamdan & Al-Salman, 2021], whose findings indicated that the use of neologisms in social media applications has gained momentum and zest.

Historically, the language changes manifested in the lexical innovations and neologisms following the coronavirus spread are not unusual. According to Durham [Durham, 2018: 1], "a neologism is a new word or a new way of using a word and is not yet commonly accepted. From a linguistic point of view, language change and development are natural linguistic phenomena and are unstoppable [Hickey 2001]. This may be explained through viewing language as a social fact that can be easily influenced by social, political, and other events, especially those that affect whole communities and not individuals [Bauer, 2007, McMahon & McMahon, 2013]. The COVID-19 crisis has been so overwhelming that it has affected the international community indiscriminately.

The way people imagine what is happening in different parts of the planet is largely due to those images and interpretations, based on which we can talk about the formation of an information picture of the world. The latter reflects the national and cultural characteristics of the worldview and the system of value relations [Pesina, 2020].

Materials and methods

Since one of the objectives of this study is to examine the most dominant word-formation processes that characterized the COVID-19-stimulated neologisms, some types of word-formation processes are discussed below.

The main research methods of lexico-semantic field "COVID-19" are component analysis of dictionary definitions and analysis of non-trivial semantic components. The paper proposes a cognitive analysis of figurative meanings based on the underlying cognitive images based on nominative non-derivative meanings, speech and language context [Zimareva, Pesina, 2021; Pesina et al, 2021].

In addition, semantic analysis is carried out on the basis of introspection and the use of such methods as linguistic observation, descriptive method and comparison as a universal linguistic device.

Result

The Latin word 'corona' means 'crown'. The virus is called 'corona' because of its crown-like shape and spikes. In the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, to define new situations new words have been coined and they are widely used on print and social media. It was in the Oxford and Webster dictionaries that the well-known abbreviation COVID-19 (COronaVIrus Disease 2019) appeared for the first time. Already in April 2020, the compilers of the dictionaries published such words as "COVID", "self isolation", which have now become commonplace. One of the leading English glossaries, the Oxford Dictionary, has moved on to publishing monthly summaries of new words and expressions generated by the COVID-19 pandemic [One Look Dictionary Search].

The remarkable change has been increased in the frequency of words related to coronavirus day by day. The majority of the people were unaware of the coronavirus and scientific discourse before 2020. According to the related investigations "Coronavirus" was coined at the end of February 2020 and became prominent on the canvas of the globe very rapidly. Now it has become a global discourse. The new terms of coronavirus have emerged in February and March 2020, i.e. SARS-CoV-2, 2019-nCoV, nCoV, covid, and corona. The highest degree of response demonstrates that the majority of the people around the world are familiar with corona.

The terms "coronavirus" and "covid-19" have become a "favorable" basis for the formation of new rows of words in the Russian language. In connection with the emergence and spread of coronavirus infection, the following characteristic thematic groups of neologisms have appeared in the Russian language:

1) neologisms associated with the name of the disease:

a) neologisms derived from the word "covid" (covidnik);

b) neologisms derived from the word "coronavirus" (coronary speech).

2) neologisms that function in professional speech (ventilator, red zone).

3) neologisms reflecting the attitude of society towards the disease:

a) denoting social processes in society (self-isolation mode);

b) denoting groups of people (coronials, contactees);

c) indicating the format of work and training (remote, zoom);

d) denoting objects associated with the disease (sanitizer).

4) neologisms related to taboo vocabulary.

In Russia, scientists from the Institute of Linguistic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences have compiled a dictionary "Russian language of the coronavirus era". It includes about 3500 words, meanings and expressions for 2020-2021, which is 550 pages of "covid" vocabulary. It took a year and a half to compile the dictionary. Linguists analyzed these words and expressions, and also presented the reaction of society to these changes.

Currently, since the pandemic is not over, the new vocabulary continues to emerge. We can single out the most frequent words: "quarantine", "covid" or "zoom". There are lexemes formed by compounding. An example is the meaning of "covidor". This word refers to a place in the hospital for those patients with coronavirus who did not

have enough beds in the wards and who are forced to lie in the corridor (overlapping the words "covid" and "corridor").

"Covidiot" refers to both people who in a panic bought buckwheat as the main food product, as well as salt and toilet paper. This word refers to a part of the population that ignores the precautionary measures for the spread of coronavirus infection. The neologism "covidiot" is formed by merging with the superposition of the root morphemes "covid" and "idiot". This also includes the words "covid dissident" and "anti-vaxxer".

Among the neologisms, the following nouns can be distinguished: "coronanomics" – a special economic system during a pandemic; "corohara" (short for "coronavirus harassment") – the oppression of people who have recently returned from abroad, or those who cough in public places. The term "covideo" denotes a video game that help escape boredom during a pandemic, also "coronopticons" are applications for tracking user contacts, "corona-speak" is the ability to present news about the pandemic, finally "corona-chief" means the leader in control of the fight against coronavirus.

Based on the compiled list of neologisms, the word masklessness, which means 'wearing no face-covering,' is the example of a double-affixation.

Clipping is a word-formation process, which is also known as truncation or shortening. It results in the reduction of a word to one of its parts. An example is found in the clipping rona from 'coronavirus', and pandy from 'pandemic.' Backformation is the process of forming a new word by removing actual or supposed affixes from another word. An example is found in the verb vaccinate, a backformation from the noun 'vaccination,' and also in the verb sedate from the adjective 'sedative.' [Al-Salman & Haider, 2021]

Also, the mentioned lexemes became part of the new compound adjectives: "covid-infected" (markets), "covid-striken" (firms), "virus-control" (work), "virus-fighting" (firms), "virus-related" (stoppages), "virus-induced" (slump), "virus-imposed" (distance learning), "covid-related" (data), "second-most-covid-afflicted" (state), "coronavirus-proof", "corona-virus-fuelled" (exodus), "covid-battered" (places). "Coronaviva which means 'an oral examination or thesis defense taken online during the lockdown' and "zoom bombing" means 'hijacking and/or interrupting videoconferencing on the Zoom platform.'

Part of the adjectives are formed from the mentioned above lexemes in a prefix way. They imply the division of the world and time into "before" and "after": "pre-coronavirus", "pre-covid", "pre-virus" и "post-covid", "post-coronavirus", "post-virus".

The creation and instant replenishment of the "coronavirus" lexicon was expressed in the appearance of a generalizing neologism-metaphor "coronaspeak". Many previously known words have acquired new meanings and have become very popular in everyday life.

So, the term "social distance" was first registered in 1957 and meant rather alienation from other people. Now this means physical distancing from another person or group of people in order to avoid infection.

The abbreviation "PPE" (personal protective equipment) appeared in 1977, but was used mainly by medical workers. The word "self-isolation" has existed since 1940, but all this time it was used in a psychological context. In the era of a pandemic, the meaning of this word was updated and began to mean isolating oneself from other people in order to prevent the disease. It began to be used as a synonym for the word "a quarantine" in the sense of "restrictions that are designed to prevent the spread of infectious diseases." The abbreviation WFH (working from home) means "to work from home". The phrase dates back to 1995, but now it has acquired a new meaning [Encyclopedic dictionary-reference book, 2008].

Discussion

It makes sense further to compare the distribution of Russian-language terms of the lexico-semantic field "COVID-19" with similar terms that have become widespread in English. To do this, we will use the analysis data of I. Yakovlev [Katermina, Yachenko, 2020] who analyzed a number of issues of "The Economist" journal

(March-May of 2020). This research is of interest for us, as mass media are the subjects of production, reproduction and transmission of value meanings. Mass media makes a choice when only hundreds of events get to the page out of a million events. Thus, it has been reported that the word "covid-19" was used 1216 times.

Thus, the following lexemes are used as synonyms: "coronavirus" - 288 times and "virus" – 794 times ("covid-19" is a respiratory infection, and "coronavirus" is the causative agent of this infection), "corona" – 83 times and "covid" – 100 times (new lexemes formed by truncation), as well as "disease" – "disease", which was used 436 times. In the direct sense, all these lexemes are used only in articles related to medicine, while in other contexts they acquire many additional connotations.

The lexemes "coronavirus" and "covid-19" (as well as their truncated variants) are most often used in substantive-substantive phrases with lexemes "outbreak", "shock", удар», "crisis", "pandemic", "cases", "hit":

Unfortunately, like their models, the experts have not seen a covid outbreak before, which calls the value of their experience into at least a little doubt. Governments scramble to mitigate the covid-19 shock to already weak economies [The Economist, 2020].

Some phrases are built on cause-and-effect relationships, for example: "the coronavirus recession", "the coronavirus shut-down", "the covid catastrophe", "covid-19 lockdown", "covid-19 calamity", "covid-19 deaths", "covid-19 restrictions", "corona holiday".

In some combinations, the possessive case is used: "covid-19's obliteration of demand", "covid-19's spread".

The word combinations "the coronavirus situation", "virus factories", "coronavirus briefs", "a covid-19 hospital", "covid-19 wards", "covid-19 data", "covid-19 news", "a covid-19 committee", "a virus outlier", "covid-19 patients", "covid-19 task-force", "covid-19 hotspot", "coronavirus law" represent new realities. These word combinations are most often used with the adjectives "new" and "novel", indicating the novelty of the phenomenon. They are also found in combination with the present participles "rampaging" and "raging", which indicate the strength and speed of the spread of the phenomenon (rampaging – a course of violent, riotous, or reckless action or behaviour; raging – happening with a lot of force or violence).

He terms "coronavirus" and "covid-19" (as well as their truncated variants) are most often used with the following verbs: "to rage" (covid-19 rages), "to strike" (Since the virus struck), "to attack" (The virus <…> has attacked Europe's oldest population), "to destroy" (The virus has destroyed $23 trn in global market value), "to sweep" (With coronavirus sweeping the country"), "to hurt" (Covid-19 hurts emerging economies in at least three ways).

In the media discourse, the terms "coronavirus" and "covid-19" became part of new compound adjectives and expresses the division of the world and time into "before" and "after" using the pre- and post- prefixes. This lexeme acquired a negative connotation and is metaphorically regarded as a killer, enemy, threat; the image of war with the enemy was formed due to the use in the same context with words denoting military realities.

Conclusion

People around the world used the formation of different words to highlight their language effectively during the outbreak of Coronavirus. The people, who use language around the world, can generate and coin new words as per their interest and need. However, they practice it with the support of existing words. On the other hand, language plays a role like a bridge and it associates other cultures, languages, and individual persons and this type of linking represents syntactical words and new morphological structures. So, the language incorporates interpersonal and social phenomenon that transfers information from generation to generation.

In general, it can be noted that the terms of the lexico-semantic field "COVID-19" is constantly updating and it is unlikely that anyone can say with complete certainty which words will remain in the language and which will eventually cease to exist and sink into the past.

The terms "covid-19" and "coronavirus" serve as the basis for the formation of new words, which reflect the current state of the social society generated by the pandemic situations. In the media discourse, these words have also become parts of new word combinations. They express the division of the world and time into "before" and "after" using pre- and post- prefixes. These terms have negative connotations as the image of war.

In the present days, the study of the structural and semantic plan of such vocabulary allows one to get an idea of the mentality of modern people, of the specifics of collective psychology, expressed in lexemes that convey the direct perception of the phenomenon by the participants in the discourse.

Presently, neologisms are organized in different ways due to the crisis of the coronavirus outbreak throughout the world. Thus, neologisms emanate from different contexts of the incidence of COVID-19. Bauer (1994) summed up that "neologisms should continually take a shot at understanding them and also know the approaches to present them in a simple and readable way. At the moment when a word is coined, it may not be possible to tell what its eventual status will be in a language: it may become part of the norm of the language and turn out to have been a neologism, or it may not, and remain as nonce word".

Conflict of Interests

The authors confirm that the presented data does not contain any conflicts of interest.

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