PHILOLOGY AND LINGUISTICS

Orel Anna

CSc. (Philology)

Assistant Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages,

the Institute of International Relations

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine

Vasik Yuliia

CSc. (Philology)

Assistant Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages,

the Institute of International Relations

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine

LANGUAGE OF CORONA-TWITTER: COVID-19 NEOLOGISMS

Abstract. *The article deals with neologisms coined by users of Twitter in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The new words that are mostly blends based on the 'Covid' and 'Corona' components refer to different spheres of the new pandemic reality.*

Keywords*: neologisms, blending, social media, Covid19 pandemic, Twitter.*

Today the language is evolving at so rapid a pace that new words are being coined almost daily. Neologisms that used to be quite a rarity now are breaking into the language and no dictionary can register them. Social networks are the major drivers of the production of neologisms since social networking "improve and speed up the communication, foster relationships and also boost business ventures" [1]. We can easily trace this amazing process in Twitter whose users are the most active, flexible, and ingenious language creators. Coronavirus pandemic has become the source for a great number of coinages that are mostly used as hashtags. It is quite interesting (and further examples will prove it) that the same coinages can be created by different people simultaneously.

All new words are created by one of 13 mechanisms:

1. Derivation. The commonest method of creating a new word is to add a prefix or suffix to an existing one.

2. Back formation. The inverse of the above: the creation of a new root word by the removal of a phantom affix.

3. Compounding. The juxtaposition of two existing words. Typically, compound words begin life as separate entities, then get hitched with a hyphen, and eventually become a single unit.

4. Repurposing. Taking a word from one context and applying it to another.

5. Conversion. Taking a word from one word class and transplanting it to another.

6. Eponyms. Words named after a person or place.

7. Abbreviations. An increasingly popular method. There are three main subtypes: clippings, acronyms and initialisms.

8. Loanwords.

9. Onomatopeia. The creation of a word by imitation of the sound it is supposed to make.

10. Reduplication. The repetition, or near-repetition, of a word or sound.

11. Nonce words. Words pulled out of thin air, bearing little relation to any existing form.

12. Error. Misspellings, mishearings, mispronunciations and mistranscriptions rarely produce new words in their own right, but often lead to new forms in conjunction with other mechanisms.

13. Blending. Compounding with a twist. Take one word, remove an arbitrary portion of it, then put in its place either a whole word, or a similarly clipped one [2].

Among the ways neologisms are formed blending is the most popular one. It is quite natural as the blend is a type of word formation which has become particularly popular in English in this new century, now accounting for a significant proportion of new words [3]. Blending is defined as formation of new words by joining two or more parts of words, or whole words, into a new word. Blends are classified as those formed by shortening the first part of the word, those with the second part shortened,

and those formed solely by an overlap of phonological material, i.e. without 'clipping' [4]. There are different ways in which words are blended.

1. Beginning of one word + end of the other.

Examples:

1) covidment = COVID+ commitment – a fear of commitment during times of Covid-19;

2) vaccitard = vaccine+bastard – a parent or a guardian that electively doesn't vaccinate their children but who regrets it later when their child as an outbreak.

2. One complete word is combined with a part of another word.

Examples:

1) an internest = Internet+nest – a cocoon of blankets and pillows a person gathers around oneself while spending long periods of time on the internet

2) maskne = mask+acne – acne produced by wearing face masks.

3. Overlapping: words are pasted together with their morphemes being assonant.

Example: covidiot = COVID+idiot –someone who ignores health advice about COVID-19.

Combining the words 'Corona', 'Covid', and other pandemic-related words with the words denoting traditional concepts from the pre-pandemic life Twitter users create a new post-Covid language.

It is interesting to note that some neologisms become the basis for others. Thus, Brexit, that entered the language in 2012 has spawn other words based on the similar pattern: **Covexit** (Covid plus exit) and **Brexvid** (Brexit plus Covid):

*The Government has delivered Brexit and now need to deliver **Covexit** using every power available to accelerate the roll-out of the vaccine. Absolute priority and needs a total national mobilisation to deliver the speedy immunisation of at risk groups [Twitter].*

*So your advice is to stop listening to experts and career off in a direction people want to hear even though it will do immense harm. Shall we call it **Brexvid** or **Covexit**? [Twitter].*

Brexit-based neologisms have entered the political discourse thus becoming the features of publicist style:

Brexvid? Covit? Brovid? *A simultaneous no-trade deal Brexit and ongoing coronavirus pandemic are now clearly possible and - however the prospect is to be described - both will have noteworthy economic consequences [BBC News]*

Brovid in the previous example is used when Covid and a no deal Brexit clash:

*French daily paper Le Monde reports that some commentators are now referring to a '**Brovid**' as the combined 'disastrous' combination of a no-future relationship deal Brexit in January 2021, together with a possible second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic [The Connection]*

One more similarly build coinage is **Loxit** meaning exit from lockdown:

What countries will need to start to develop is #Loxit – an exit strategy from the current lockdown, not to implement it immediately but to have it available as a plan [Twitter].

Strict pandemic requirements, especially masks wearing caused ambiguous attitude. It became the source of conflicts and clashes, being a psychological burden to many. One of the most common neologisms, **Covidiot**, refers to people who stubbornly ignore the pandemic rules:

*Too soon. Kids are not protected. I need to trust that non-maskers are actually vaccinated? One thing we've learned from all this is that we can't trust each other. I will not put the health and safety of my kids into the hands of some anti-masker, anti-vaxxer **covidiot** [Twitter].*

There are also ruder words for this concept, **Maskhole** and **Morona:**

*I never stopped masking in grocery stores, and especially at the incredibly busy HEBs. I haven't seen a **maskhole** since the pandemic first started, but that guy was at a Randall's – shouting down the poor employee who asked him to maskup. WTH is wrong with these people? [Twitter].*

*Make sure u wear shoes, then disinfect them. Also wipe every surface u touch first with a sanitiser wipe. Helps with Corona Virus and the **Morona** virus [Twitter].*

All words have clearly negative connotation since *covidiots* and *maskholes* pose a serious threat to the public health.

The pandemic has affected mental stability of many people who turned to be especially vulnerable to the changed reality. The feeling of insecurity and anxiety has spawned such apocalyptic neologisms as **Coronapocalypse** and **Coronageddon:**

Amazingly effective and safe vaccines are available *to everyone over 12 for free* yet so many people choose to get sick and die because of #reasons. Trumpism, Fox News, Facebook and sheer stupidity are proving to be the four horsemen of the **coronapocalypse**. *Get vaccinated, folks [Twitter].*

The notion that **Coronageddon** *is a "great plague" by any historical measure is objectively false and entirely preposterous [Twitter].*

The threat of infection led to constant health concerns and fears embodied in the word **Coronachondriac:**

If you have a mild cough and immediately think you have 'the sickness', are you called a **coronachondriac** *or a hypocorondriac? But seriously, are a lot of the true stats being covid up? Is this just one big coronaspiracy? [Twitter].*

On the other hand, the new circumstances made people more united, spawning such words as **Quaranteam**, **Coronaparty** and even **Coronadating:**

And finally, in the party mentioned but not described, in the book, made homemade pizza for our **quaranteam**, *followed by movies and popcorn, then a sleepover with* **quaranteam** *bestie [Twitter].*

"We get to **Coronaparty**"

"What does that mean?"

"Fewer people, mask and hand sanitizer" [Twitter].

If you're doing **coronadating** *on Tinder, move to Messenger/WhatsApp as fast as possible so that you're not talking on Tinder like all the other guys. It makes it more solid [Twitter].*

Leisure and past time have been greatly affected by the pandemic. **Corovacation** or **Coronacation** refer to the holiday imposed by the COVID-19 restrictions as well as to a vacation taken during the period of the pandemic:

Haven't you heard banks are on "**corovacation**"? *[Twitter].*

*thinking about how we called the "two weeks" that we had off of school in march 2020 **coronacation**...... [Twitter].*

The pandemic has seen a rise in conspiracy theories that are mostly spreading online. Such theories are not welcomed by many since they may have devastating consequences for the society, are misleading and often antisemitic. The coinage **Coronaspiracy** possess clearly condemnatory connotations:

*Facebook is infested with anti-maskers & **coronaspiracy**-theorists (my word). They are lucky not to have lost anyone from it or its complications yet. Let's see them change their tune when the inevitable happens & they get it themselves & infect someone they love. So many idiots [Twitter].*

It is quite natural that in such circumstances people try to look in the future and imagine post-Covid life. They make predictions about after-lockdown feelings using the word **lockstalgia:**

*I'm coining a term - #**lockstalgia.** Like other nostalgias, it reflects a rose-tinted view of the past, and it seems preferable to this dragging, halfway house we currently find ourselves in. I'm still making sourdough and watching re-runs of PE with Joe – so I definitely have it! [Twitter].*

Some people also predict a baby boom in 2020-2021 calling the new generation **Coronials**, **Covidials** and even **quaranteens**:

*In 9 months, there's going to be a big burst of new babies, reckon we should call them "**Coronials**" until they're thirteen and they can be called **quaranteens** [Twitter].*

*I'm guessing that we will see a baby boom in 9 months. Will they be called **covidials** or **coronials**? [Twitter].*

The pandemic has gravely affected the world economy. It gave rise to such blendings as **Covcession** (Covid plus recession), **Coronaconomy** (Corona plus economy):

*While it hurts, every industry is eating it during the **covcession.** It will get better when the global lockdown is lifted. Keep our focus on killing the virus. Put first things first, everything else will fall into line [Twitter].*

Business idea for the Coronaconomy: A daycare for workers-from-home to drop off their annoying and/or needy cat(s) for the day [Twitter].

Thus, the most productive way of Corona-neologisms formation is blending. The new-born words have highly emotional connotations. They are created mostly for the following purposes:

– help to deal with extreme psychological tension and great anxiety as they have humorous colouring;

– verbalize new concepts and phenomena (mask wearing, social distancing, lockdown, vaccination);

– express feelings, and attitudes (concerns, fears, nostalgia, condemnation etc)

Thus, English is a language responsive to the current trends and ongoing events. COVID-19 era is influencing the vocabulary, introducing portmanteaus as the most definitive lexemes to cover mixed denotata. However, it is arguable whether such words will become the part of the language as Brexit or will be forgotten when the new epoch comes.

References:

1. Ilic Plauc, Jelena & Šetka Čilić, Ivona. (2021). Today's Usage of Neologisms in Social Media Communication. Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences. 6. 115-140.

2. Bodle A. How new words are born. The Guardian [Electronic resource] – Mode of access: https://www.theguardian.com/media/mind-your-language/2016/feb/04/english-neologisms-new-words – Date of access: 03.08.2021

3. Massrura Mostafa. Trendy Blends: A New Addition to English Lexicon. International Journal of Language and Linguistics. (2013) Vol. 1. 4. 147-154.

4. Mikić Čolić, Ana. (2018). Word Formation of Blends. 19. 21-36.