Morphological Analysis of the Neologisms during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The emergence of neologisms has always been an interesting phenomenon as it demonstrates the dynamism of language. This study intends to determine the neologisms during COVID-19 Pandemic through a morphological analysis. This study argues that the neologisms that emerge during the COVID-19 pandemic reveal the morphological processes that formed the new words. It further claims that the morphemic structures of the neologisms follow the general structures of English vocabulary. This study utilizes the descriptive-qualitative design in analyzing the morphological structures of the neologisms during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this study involves textual analysis to determine the morphological processes that encompass the formation of new words. The data used in analyzing the morphological structures of COVID-19-related neologisms are five (5) Internet articles that introduce the new terms created because of the corona virus outbreak. These articles were published in the months of March, April and May 2020.Findings reveal that most of the neologisms are nouns. The common morphological process involved in the formation of new words are compounding, blending and affixation. Moreover, majority of the neologisms follow the compound structure of the free and bound morphemes. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the neologisms formed during the COVID-19 pandemic reveal the morphological processes and the morphemic structures of the neologisms follow the general structures of English vocabulary specifically on the combination of free and bound morphemes.

1. Introduction

The emergence of neologisms has always been an interesting phenomenon as it demonstrates the dynamism of language. Neologism or newly coined words, expressions, or usage (Nordquist, 2019) manifests the capability of a language to undergo and sustain change (Ahmad, 2000). The changes in a language through new word formations occur according to the situations that people face. In other words, the addition of newly formed words and expressions are due to the significant use of the people in a particular community on a particular time.

Presently, the world is experiencing a global public health hazard brought about by the new coronavirus disease called COVID-19. This pandemic has afflicted millions of people and claimed thousands of lives of those contracted this highly contagious disease. As this outbreak caused a tremendous impact on the health system of different countries, it has also changed the usual operations in education, business, governance, tourism, and almost all aspects of human lives. The wave of fear, worry and uncertainty in the society triggers the development of new terms and expressions that better express or describe the situations people. Consequently, neologisms related to the corona virus pandemic are formed and their emergence became exponential due to the prevalence of social media.

This study argues that the neologisms that emerge during the COVID-19 pandemic reveal the morphological processes that formed the new words. It further claims that the morphemic structures of the neologisms follow the general structures of English vocabulary. These arguments are supported by the model of neologism presented by Krishnamurthy (2010) and the morphological processes by Murray (1995).

The neologism model of Krishnamurthy consists of three components. The first component of neologism is word formation which involves processes that are based on compounding, blending, affixation, coinage, and acronym. Morphemes are minimal units of words that carry complete meaning. The second component of this model is borrowing. Speakers use terms from other languages that do not have equivalent in the target language. According to the context and situation the speakers borrow a sentence or a single word to make communication effective. Borrowing is one of the tools that integrate new words into a particular language's stock of vocabulary. The third component is lexical deviation. Lexical deviation tends to produce a neologism which refers to the process of creating new words by applying the existing rules of word formation based on the principle of generalization." Rey (1995) argued that newly born sentences and words cannot be recognized as a neologism, simply such as "combination of phonemes cannot be called neologism. All neologisms fall between word and phrase, a specific field which he calls the specific domain of lexicology (Asif, Zhiyong, Iram & Maria Nisar, 2020)

This study also explores on the morphological processes involve in the formation of neologisms. Morphology is a study of word structure in linguistic field. It is a process to study the word-formation across or within a language. The process of word- formations is based on rules that reflect specific patterns in the way words are formed from smaller units and how those smaller units interact in speech or in written form. A morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit of language and therefore the smallest unit of grammatical function. A morpheme may stand on its own or sometimes it needs to combine with at least one other morpheme to form a word (Devlin, Jamison, Matthews, & Gonnerman, 2004).

There are morphological processes that are involved in the formation of new words according to Shahlee and Mustaffa (2019). The first process is compounding whereby two or more roots or free morphemes are combined to produce a new word. The second process is reduplication. In this process, a free morpheme is repeated or duplicated to form a new word such as bye-bye, ping-pong or hocus-pocus. The third one is the process of borrowing which entails adopting words from one language are used in another with or without some phonological and autographic changes. Affixation is the fourth process of word formation. This involves the use of affixes such as prefix, infix, or suffix to form new words.

Another popular morphological process is conversion. This fourth type means a word changes its morphemic status without overt addition to its form. For example, the word google which is a verb is converted to a noun Google referring to the search engine on the Internet. The fifth process of word formation is abbreviation. This is a shortened form of a written word or phrase used in place of the whole word or phrase. The sixth one is acronym in which all the words that combine in a title are shortened to only the initials or first few letters of each word. The seventh process is clipping which occurs when a multi syllabic word is shortened by subtracting one or more of the syllables. Another is blending process which happens when two or more morphemes are combined after at least one of them is shortened or some part of the syllables between the two are joined. The ninth morphological process is onomatopoeia. The morpheme indicates the sounds involved in the meaning of that morpheme. Such morphemes are also known as echoisms as in the word bomb which becomes boom. Lastly, the antonomasia occurs when a personal name, a place name or a brand name adapts a new meaning.

Guided by the foregoing concepts, it is therefore the aim of this study to explore on the morphological structures of the neologisms during the corona virus outbreak.

2. Literature Review

A recent investigation on the emergence of neologisms due to the COVID-19 outbreak was conducted by Asif, Zhiyong, Iram, and Nisar (2020). Their study focused on the linguistic analysis of neologism related to Coronavirus (COVID-19). The conduct of this study was founded on the three components of neologism, i.e. word formation, borrowing, and lexical deviation based on model of neologism of Krishnamurthy (2010).

The data were collected from articles, books, Oxford Corpus, social media, and five different websites and retrieved from January 2020 to April 2020. Findings revealed that with the outbreak of COVID-19, the majority of the people on social media and state briefings, the word-formation is utilized in the form of nouns, adjectives, and verbs. The abbreviations and

acronyms are also used which are related to the current situation of COVID-19. The study of Asif, Zhiyong, Iram, and Nisar (2020) has a significant bearing on the present study as both deal with the neologisms during the corona virus pandemic. However, their study did not analyse morphemic structures of the neologisms found the different corpora. Hence, this present study conducts further structural analysis on the new words formed during this outbreak.

Prior to corona virus pandemic, Shahlee and Mustaffa (2019) also conducted a study that aims to examine the neologisms used by youth on social networking platforms in terms of morphological process and word class. Data were collected from a group of students majoring in English at one of the local university in Malaysia. 90 neologisms were identified and captured through several social networking platforms. Findings revealed that youth tends to create new words by using acronym process. Moreover, most of the neologisms formed are verbs. This study, however, did not look into the morphological structures of the neologisms. Hence, this study intends to investigate on the word formation of the new terms in addition to the morphological processes used to create the words.

3. Methodology
This study utilizes the descriptive-qualitative design in analyzing the morphological structures of the neologisms during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this study involves textual analysis to determine the morphological processes involved in the formation of new words. The data used in analyzing the morphological structures of COVID-19-related neologisms are five (5) Internet articles that introduce the new terms created because of the corona virus outbreak. These articles were published in the months of March, April and May 2020.

The process of generating the data on the morphological structures of the neologisms during the COVID-19 pandemic follows the three-stage process below:

Phase 1 – Identification of the Neologisms
This phase involves the identification of the neologisms that emerge during the outbreak of the corona virus. During this phase, the researcher searched for Internet articles that introduce the new terms created during the pandemic. There were five (5) articles from which the neologisms were identified. These terms were then tallied and the definitions of the terms were also determined based on how they were used in the context of the pandemic.

Phase 2 – Analysis of the Morphological Processes
  This phase is on the analysis of the morphological processes involved in the creation of the neologism. The classification of the neologisms based on the morphological processes followed the model of Shahlee and Mustaffa (2019). The researcher determined whether the words were formed through compounding, blending, affixation, conversion, abbreviation, acronym, clipping, onomatopoeia or antonomasia.

Phase 3 – Analysis of the Morphological structures of the Neologisms
        During this phase of data-generation, the researcher determined the morphological structure of each neologism. The free and bound morphemes were determined. Then, the morphological structure of the words were classified as simple, complex or compound.

4. Results and Discussion
This section presents the result of the analysis conducted on the morphological structures of the COVID-19-related neologisms. Table 1 presents the result of the analysis to answer problem number.

Table 1: Neologisms that emerge during the COVI-19 pandemic

Neologism	Part of Speech	Meaning
blursday	Noun	This is an unspecified day because of lockdown's disorientating effect on time.
coronageddon	Noun	This refers to a near-certain, end-of-times condition created either by the actual COVID-19 virus or the massive social, financial and political devastation generated on the back of global hysteria.
coronapocalypse	Noun	This means the end of the world because of corona virus.
coronnials	Noun	This term refers to the generation born during or after the pandemic.

covid-19	Noun	This is a new name for a new disease, coined as an abbreviated form of coronavirus disease 2019.
covideo party	Noun	This includes online parties via video conferencing platforms such as Zoom or Skype.
covidiot	Noun	This term is coined by joining two words 'covid' and 'idiot'which refers to those who do not follow physical distancing rules and other precautionary measures.
locktail	Noun	This means an alcoholic beverage one sips at home during the quarantine period.
ncov	Noun	This is an abbreviation for 'novel coronavirus.'
new normal	Noun	This refers to a new way of living and going about people's lives, work and interactions with others.
PUI	Noun	This acronym stands for 'Person under investigation' which refers to someone who manifests the symptoms of corona virus and is still under observation for being a probable COVID case.
quaranteams	Noun	This refers to the online teams created during lockdown to help other people deal with changing work circumstances.
quaranteens	Noun	This term is used to refer to those who are born during the quarantine period and will be stepping into teenage in 2033-34
quarantini	Noun	This refers to an alcoholic beverage one sips at home during the lockdown.
rona	Noun	This term is the shortened form of corona.
social distancing	Noun	This term means the act or state of being physically distant from other people to avoid contracting or spreading the corona virus.
super-spreader	Noun	This is an individual who is highly contagious and capable of transmitting a communicable disease to an unusually large number of uninfected individuals.
contact tracing	Verb	This means the practice of identifying and monitoring individuals who may have had contact with an infectious person as a means of controlling the spread of a communicable disease.
covexit	Verb	This means the act of going out or making an exit during lockdown.
doomscrolling	Verb	This means obsessively searching and reading depressing pandemic-related news.
self-quarantine	Verb	This means to refrain from any contact with other individuals for a period of time (such as two weeks) during the outbreak of a contagious disease usually by remaining in one's home and limiting contact with family members
zoombombing	Verb	This refers to the unwanted disruption caused by an individual while people are conversing on Zoom, a video conferencing platform.

As shown in the table, there are twenty-two newly created terms brought about by the corona virus outbreak. As can be ascertained, majority of the newly created words are nouns such as COVID-19, PUI and coronnials. This result implies that new terms emerge in order to have a name for a specific thing or experience. One example is COVID-19 which is coined from coronavirus disease 2019. Since this is a new disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus, this neologism emerge. The other neologisms that are also nouns are used to name a person, a state or a thing.

It can also be noted from the table above that a number of new terms are verbs such as covexit, doomscrolling and zoombombing. These terms vividly describe the usual activities that people commonly do during the outbreak. This implies that any new situation or phenomenon requires specific terms to refer to the actions or experiences of the people. This result proves that indeed, nouns and verbs belong to the open class of words since new words can be added every day.

In terms of the morphological processes, Table 2 reveals that eight process were involved in the creation of the neologisms.

Table 2: Morphological processes involved in the creation of neologism

Morphological Process	Neologisms
Compounding	blursday, doomscrolling, new normal, zoombomb, contact tracing, covideo party, social distancing,
Blending	coronageddon, coronapocalyose, covexit, covideo, covidiot, quaranteens, quaranteams
Affixation	Doomscrolling, coronnials, self-quarantine, social distancing, super-spreader,
Conversion	contact tracing, social distancing
Abbreviation	COVID-19, nCov
Acronym	PUI
Clipping	rona
Onomatopoeia	quaranteens, quaranteams

Findings reveal that among the morphological processes, compounding, blending and affixation are commonly used. An example of compounding is the word doomscrolling which is a combination of two free morpheme namely, doom and scroll. It can also be noted that in the foregoing word, the bound morpheme -ing is added, making it as an example of affixation. A number of words were also formed through blending or combining two words into one such as coronageddon from corona and Armageddon.

In terms of the morphological structures of the neologisms, findings reveal that majority of the new words are compound words while there are only few simple and complex words. These results are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Morphological structures of the neologisms

Neologism	Morphemes/Affixes		Form
	Free	Bound	
Rona	Rona		Simple
nCov	nCOV		Simple
PUI	PUI		Simple
blursday	Blur- -day	-s-	Complex
coronnial	Corona-	-nial	Complex
quaranteams	Quaran (tine)- -team-	-s	Complex
quaranteens	Quaran (tine)- -teen-	-s	Complex
doomscrolling	Doom- -scroll-	-s- -ing	compound
zoombombing	Zoom- -bomb-	-ing	Compound
coronageddon	Corona- (arma)-geddon		Compound
coronapocalypse	Corona- -apocalypse		Compound
covexit	Cov- -exit		Compound
Covid-19	Covid- -19		Compound
covideo	Covid- -video		Compound
covideo party	Covid- -video party		Compound
covidiot	Covid-		Compound

	-idiot		
locktail	Lock- -tail		Compound
new normal	New normal		Compound
Social distancing	Social Distanc(e)-	-ing	Compound
quarantini	Quaran (tine)- -(mar)tini		Compound
self-quarantine	Self- -quarantine		Compound
Super spreader	Super Spread-	-er	compound

It can be ascertained from the table that there are fifteen compound neologisms. These new words are formed by combining two free morphemes into one terminology. Some of the examples of compound neologisms are words such as covidiot, covidio, locktail and new normal are combinations of two free morphemes. On the other hand, there are only four complex words such as coronial, quaranteams, and quaranteens and three simple words namely, rona, ncov and PUI. These results reveal that the neologisms are composed of meaningful units embodied in the free and bound morphemes following the general structures of English vocabulary.

5. Conclusion

The morphological investigation on the neologisms that emerge during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that the newly created terms are content words, namely nouns and verbs. These neologisms provide specific terms to refer to the actions or experiences of the people during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the common morphological processes involved in the creation of these lexical items include compounding, blending and affixation. These processes manifest the dynamism of a language as new words are added into the vocabulary through various methods. Further, findings revealed that most of the neologisms have compound morphological structures while only few are of simple and complex structures. Hence, it can be said that the morphemic structures of the neologisms follow the general structures of English vocabulary specifically on the combination of free and bound morphemes. This study on neologisms has therefore shown the vitality of the English language through the formation of new words as influenced by the circumstances of people. However, it has to be noted that the data of used in the analysis is limited to only five Internet articles. Hence, it is recommended that a corpus-based morphological analysis may be conducted to obtain a more in-depth view of the morphological structures and processes involved in the creation of newly coined words.

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