

## NEOLOGISMS DURING THE CORONA CRISIS

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**Abstract:** The paper deals with neologisms created during the Corona crisis. It traces the linguistic ways in which they were formed. Corona crisis changed people's lives in many ways. As a result, new phrases entered everyday life. According to Algeo (1998), there are six "basic etymological sources for new words: creating, borrowing, combining, shortening, blending, and shifting" (Algeo 1998: 3). The neologisms that appeared during the pandemic are formed in three different ways: by affixation, by blending, by giving a new meaning to a word or phrase that already exists, or by created new coinages that did not used to exist before. Neologisms created by affixation include words like *covidise*, *covidee* (see Aleksandrova 2021), *coronate*. Blending is the source for the creation of coinages such as *coronagate* (a leak of scandalous information concerning a possible cure for the Corona virus), *quarantini* (any drink consumed in isolation during the corona crisis), *codiDate* (dating someone during the corona crisis), *quaranteams* (teams working in the conditions defined by the Corona crisis), *coronacation* (a vacation during the corona pandemic), *lexit* (an exit from the lock down), *covexit* (an exit from the covid pandemic), *coronials* (children conceived and/or born during the corona crisis), *covidivorce* (divorce during the corona crisis, mainly due to the high levels of stress and tension caused by isolation). Neologisms during the Corona crisis can also be formed by copying the pattern in which one neologism was coined and applying it to the new coinage, as is the case with *Coronagate*. Apart from the abovementioned, completely new coinages were created: *lock-down*, *social distancing*, *self-quarantine*, *Blursday*, to name but a few.

When these neologisms become established, a shift in their meaning is observed. The initial meaning develops further and hence the new coinage is found to be used with several meanings. An example of such cases is the newly created word *quarantini*. The urban dictionary defines *quarantini* as "A strong alcoholic beverage that is made when people are quarantined, or otherwise locked up or trapped in a location for an extended period of time. Traditionally made up of vodka, whiskey, or everclear. Must include some sort of hard liqueur. (urbandictionary.com)". In another article, *quarantini* is said to be "an easy Lemon Honey Martini with emergency vitamin C! (<https://thenovicechefblog.com/quarantini>)", the text being accompanied by a photograph showing a cocktail glass and a Vitamin C sachet. It can be suggested, therefore, that the presence of variation in the meaning of a neologism is a marker of its relative stability. Some of the neologisms created during the corona crisis seem to be used synonymously in certain contexts, as is the case with *quarantine* and *lock-down*.

**Keywords:** neologisms, corona crisis, media texts

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The paper aims to study the neologisms created during the Corona crisis. The linguistic mechanisms observed in their formation are affixation, blending, copying the pattern of another neologism, and creation of completely new coinages.

### 2. AFFIXATION

One of the ways for the formation of neologisms related to the Corona crisis, is affixation. Plag (2003) defines 'affix' as a bound morpheme that attaches to bases. In the following excerpt, *covidised* is formed from *covid*, an already established neologism, and the verb-forming suffix *-ise*:

Budget 2021-22: A gadget to reel **covidised** economy Power sector reforms will lead to healthy competition among various Discoms

Micro, small and medium enterprises MSMEs are the growth engines of any economy. India is no exception. <https://www.bizzbuzz.news/eco-buzz/budget-2021-22-a-gadget-to-reel-covidised-economy-781231>

In the next excerpt, a play on words is achieved by metonymic shift of meaning:

Вирус, бай-бай: Само 348 „**коронясаха**”

Само 348 са новите случаи на коронавирус у нас за последното денонощие от направените общо 3194 теста. Това сочат данните на Единния информационен портал, обновени в полунощ.

Починали са 48 души, а като излекувани са отчетени - 553 души.

Общо 6754 пациенти с коронавирус остават в болница, от които 662 са в интензивни отделения.

[https://lupa.bg/news/virus-bai-bai-samo-348-bdquokoronyasahardquo\\_116010news.html](https://lupa.bg/news/virus-bai-bai-samo-348-bdquokoronyasahardquo_116010news.html)

*Коронясам* means “to coronate”, “to crown”. According to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, “coronaviruses are named for the crown-like spikes on their surface. (www.cdc.gov)” Here the play on words comes from the ambiguity of the expression *коронясаха*: *on the one hand, it means “to get the crown”/“to be crowned”, while on the other hand, it means “to get the corona (virus)” / “to get coronated”*:

### 3. BLENDING

A big number of covid-related neologisms are formed by blending. Such is the case with the new coinage *quarantini*. It is formed by combining *quarantine* and *martini*. In the next excerpt, the word stands for a martini that is consumed when someone is isolated during the pandemic. The text is accompanied by a picture showing a cocktail and a Vitamin C sachet:

Meet the Quarantini – An easy Lemon Honey Martini with emergency vitamin C! It’s the most delicious way to boost your immunity. Quarantini and chill anyone?



( <https://thenovicechefblog.com/quarantini/> )

A slight shift of meaning of *quarantini* is possible. As the urban dictionary defines it, *quarantini* is “a strong alcoholic beverage that is made when people are quarantined, or otherwise locked up or trapped in a location for an extended period of time. Traditionally made up of vodka, whiskey, or everclear. Must include some sort of hard liqueur. (urbandictionary.com)”. In the next excerpt *quarantini* is found with that meaning:

The coronavirus pandemic has forced the closure of bars, restaurants and anything worth drawing a crowd of 10 or more.

But never fear: The “**Quarantini**” is here.

The increasingly important specialty cocktail is one that anybody can make at home: It’s the drink you make with what you’ve got in your cabinets or freezer, and is best enjoyed with whomever you’re cooped up with — or perhaps a neighbor in need.

<https://nypost.com/2020/03/17/heres-how-to-make-a-perfect-quarantini-while-stuck-at-home>

It can be suggested, therefore, that that the presence of variation in the meaning of a neologism is a marker of its relative stability

A vacation during the pandemic is called *coronacation*. It is a blend between *corona* and *vacation*, as exemplified in the following excerpt:

From DC to Europe: students share their “**coronacation**” experiences

From the beginning, 2020 has been a weird year for travel. As the year started back in January, few knew about the pandemic awaiting us in the near future. Travel plans started to form — plans for skiing in March, plans for Spring Break college trips, and plans for the annual beach trip for the most prepared vacationers. But come mid-March, all those plans were thrown into uncertainty by Covid-19.

Travel restrictions, lockdowns, rising unemployment, and public safety fears drove all but the most die-hard travelers to scrap or reconsider their plans. The majority of America has spent the last three-fourths of 2020 at home, adjusting to a world where we can't hug our own grandparents. For many people, the world shrank, as plane trips to Europe turned into road trips to the Shenandoah. But, through a worldwide pandemic, a global racial justice movement, and a turbulent national election, the most committed travelers found a way to escape the confines of their homes for more than a week. And some of them happen to be DC students.

<https://thewilsonbeacon.com/17655/magazine/from-dc-to-europe-students-share-their-coronacation-experiences>

The fact that in some cases it is in quotation marks and in others it is not is an indication for a variation in the neologism's stability. In the next excerpt, it is without the quotation marks, which means that the new coinage is felt as relatively established:

Best Things to do Getting you Through **Coronacation**

The newest high school memory: staying at home, even from school because of COVID-19. As we are still within the first week of quarantine, twiddling of thumbs and boredom is starting to take over. However, here is the ultimate guide of things to do while on coronacation. <https://erietigertimes.com/8871/covid-19/best-things-to-do-getting-you-through-coronacation/>

#### 4. COPYING THE PATTERN IN WHICH ONE NEOLOGISM WAS COINED AND APPLYING IT TO THE NEW COINAGE

When a certain expression appears in the media and becomes popular, new expressions copying its sound patterns are formed (see Aleksandrova 2019). This way, "the new coinages are associated with the initial expression and acquire something of its meaning (Aleksandrova 2019: 1161). An example of this way formed neologisms is *coronagate*. It follows the pattern of *Watergate*, an already well established and institutionalized expression, and acquire part of its meaning. In the following excerpt, *Coronagate* refers to the leak of scandalous information related to a potential cure for the Corona virus:

**Coronagate:** the scandal to end all scandals

I was going to title this essay "Hydroxychloroquine: does it cure CONS" — with the joke being CONS as an abbreviation for Credulous Official Narrative Syndrome. But people dying and losing their livelihoods worldwide for no good reason is not a joke. Coronagate is the political con job that promises to eclipse all others, even against stiff competition like Spycate.

Here's the bottom line: Dr Fauci and his institutional sponsors have known since at least 2005 that chloroquine — and its milder derivative hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) — inhibit coronaviruses like SARS from replicating in the body. They have withheld this important information from the public and failed to act on it when forming policy. Instead these besotted criminals have pushed experimental and expensive drugs, whilst having huge financial conflicts of interest.

<https://www.martingeddes.com/coronagate-the-scandal-to-end-all-scandals/>

#### 5. CREATING

According to Schmidt (2011), a newly created word „is also referred to as a (product of an) ad-hoc formation, constitutes a previously non-existent combination of existing morphemes (Schidt 2011: 73)". As he points out, „in contrast to the new word itself, the word-formation pattern according to which it was created is, as a rule, well known and transparent (ibid.)". Some of the most frequently observed covid-related neologisms are *lockdown*, *social distance*, *self-quarantine*. They are found in all types of texts. While these are already well-established and institutionalized, there are some newly created words that are not yet that stable. In the next excerpt, the word *Blursday* refers to a period of time when people have no idea what day it is because they blur together:

**Blursday:** How physics can shake you out of your pandemic slump

Now that we've ticked past the one-year mark of Covid-19 safety restrictions, the calendar is scrolling once more through the same holidays that punctuated the early pandemic. Yet again, curtailed Purim and St. Patrick's Day celebrations teed up a round of socially distant Passover Seders and virtual Nowruz, Easter and Ramadan gatherings. As the seasons slog on, it's easy to think of time as an arrow, beginning at birth and launching ever onward until death do us part. But many physicists have long begged to differ with that portrayal. Now, even we nonphysicists who have been stuck in seemingly endless lockdown loops are increasingly aware of a different sort of time.

French respondents reported experiencing a "slowing down of time," in a survey conducted March 31 to April 12, 2020. Since then, others have pointed out how days seem to run together in a merging of minutes dubbed "**Blursday**." Could it be that quarantine is revealing time's less linear and more authentic plastic, elastic nature?

<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/05/13/health/physics-space-time-wellness-sc/index.html>

## 5. CONCLUSION

The Corona crisis contributed to the creation of prolific number of neologisms. They are used in all types of situations and discourses, though not all types neologisms are used (and suitable for) all types of texts. While many are used mainly in everyday speech, only part of them can be found in serious press. A suggestion could be made that the more well established a neologism is, the more likely it is to be found in articles in the serious press.

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