



LEXICAL-SEMANTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK NEOLOGISMS RELATED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Annotation: The COVID-19 pandemic brought significant changes not only in healthcare, society, and economy but also in language. New words, phrases, and expressions emerged in different languages to describe the novel reality of the pandemic. This study examines the lexical-semantic features of English and Uzbek neologisms that appeared during the pandemic. The research focuses on the formation mechanisms, meanings, and usage of pandemic-related neologisms in both languages, comparing their similarities and differences. The study also explores the impact of globalization, media, and technological advancements on the creation and dissemination of these terms.

Key Words: neologisms, lexical-Semantics, COVID-19 Pandemic, linguistic Innovation, word Formation, borrowings, affixation, compounding, medical Terminology, government Communication

O‘ZBEK VA INGLIZ TILLARIDA COVID-19 PANDEMIYASI BILAN BOG‘LIQ NEOLOGIZMLARNING LEKSIK-SEMANTIK XUSUSIYATLARI

Anotatsiya: COVID-19 pandemiyasi nafaqat sog‘liqni saqlash, jamiyat va iqtisodiyotda, balki tilda ham bir qator jiddiy o‘zgarishlarni olib keldi. Pandemiyaning yangiligini tasvirlash uchun turli tillarda yangi so‘zlar, birikmalar va iboralar paydo bo‘ldi. Ushbu maqolada pandemiya davrida paydo bo‘lgan ingliz va o‘zbek neologizmlarining leksik-semantik xususiyatlari o‘rganiladi. Tadqiqot har ikki tilda pandemiya bilan bog‘liq neologizmlarning shakllanish mexanizmlari, ma’nolari va qo‘llanilishi, ularning o‘xshashlik va farqlarini solishtirishga qaratilgan. Tadqiqot shuningdek, globallashuv, ommaviy axborot vositalari va texnologik taraqqiyotning ushbu atamalarini yaratish va tarqatishga ta’sirini o‘rganadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: Kalit so‘zlar: neologizmlar, leksik-semantika, COVID-19 pandemiyasi, lingvistik innovatsiya, so‘z yasalishi, qarz olish, affiksatsiya, birikma, tibbiy terminologiya, davlat aloqasi

ЛЕКСИКО-СЕМАНТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ АНГЛИЙСКИХ И УЗБЕКСКИХ НЕОЛОГИЗМОВ, СВЯЗАННЫХ С ПАНДЕМИЕЙ COVID-19

Аннотация: Пандемия COVID-19 привела к ряду существенных изменений не только в сфере здравоохранения, общества и экономики, но и в языке. На разных языках появились новые слова, фразы и выражения, описывающие новизну пандемии. В данной статье рассматриваются лексико-семантические особенности английских и узбекских неологизмов, появившихся в период пандемии. Целью исследования является сравнение механизмов образования, значений и употребления неологизмов, связанных с пандемией, в обоих языках, а также их сходства и различия. В исследовании также рассматривается влияние глобализации, средств массовой информации и технического прогресса на создание и распространение этих терминов.

Ключевые слова: неологизмы, лексико-семантика, пандемия COVID-19, лингвистические инновации, словообразование, заимствования, аффиксация, словосложение, медицинская терминология, государственная коммуникация.

Introduction

Language is a dynamic entity that evolves with changes in society, technology, and global events. One of the most significant global events in recent history, the COVID-19 pandemic, drastically altered not only people’s lives but also their modes of communication. As societies adapted to new social norms, health measures, and digital communication methods, languages across the world underwent rapid lexical expansion to accommodate the emerging reality. This phenomenon led to the birth of new words, phrases, and expressions that were either created from existing linguistic structures or borrowed from other languages. Neologisms—the introduction of new words or expressions into a language—have played a crucial role in reflecting and shaping public discourse during the pandemic. They provide a way for people to articulate new experiences, medical procedures, and social practices that had no prior linguistic equivalents. In English, terms such as “lockdown,” “social distancing,” and “covidiot” became commonplace, while in Uzbek, phrases like “karantin cheklovlari” (quarantine restrictions) and “uydan ishlash” (working from home) gained widespread use. The emergence of these words is not random; rather, it follows specific linguistic patterns influenced by the need for efficiency in communication, cultural perceptions, and technological advancements. The study of pandemic-related neologisms is particularly important because it sheds light on how different languages react to global crises. English, as an international lingua franca, served as a major source of pandemic-related terminology, influencing numerous other languages, including Uzbek. However, while some English terms were directly borrowed into Uzbek (e.g., “lokdaun” from “lockdown”), others were adapted to suit the phonetic, morphological, and cultural norms of the Uzbek language. Furthermore, the role of media, social networks, and governmental institutions in shaping pandemic-related vocabulary cannot be overlooked. English-language media outlets, including The Guardian, The New York Times, and BBC, played a crucial role in coining and popularizing COVID-19-related terms, which were then disseminated globally through online platforms. Similarly, in Uzbekistan, government announcements, news agencies,

and academic institutions contributed to the development and standardization of pandemic-related neologisms. This study aims to analyze the lexical-semantic features of COVID-19-related neologisms in English and Uzbek, focusing on their formation, usage, and linguistic adaptation. The research explores the key mechanisms behind the emergence of these neologisms, such as affixation, compounding, blending, and borrowing, while also comparing the sociolinguistic factors that influenced their adoption in both languages. By examining similarities and differences in neologism formation, this study provides insights into the ways different linguistic communities respond to global crises through language innovation. The structure of the paper is as follows: Section 2 provides a theoretical framework on neologisms, discussing their definitions, classifications, and word-formation processes. Section 3 explores the role of media and medical terminology in the development of pandemic-related vocabulary. Sections 4 and 5 analyze English and Uzbek neologisms, respectively, focusing on their morphological and semantic characteristics. Section 6 compares the two languages, highlighting both shared trends and unique adaptations. Finally, the paper concludes with reflections on the long-term impact of pandemic-related neologisms on language evolution.

Theoretical basis

Language is constantly evolving, and one of the most noticeable aspects of linguistic change is the emergence of new words, or neologisms. These new lexical units are introduced into a language to describe novel concepts, technologies, social phenomena, or cultural changes. The COVID-19 pandemic provided a unique opportunity to observe this process in real time as languages around the world rapidly adapted to the crisis, incorporating new terminology to reflect the unprecedented social and medical landscape. This section provides a theoretical understanding of neologisms, their definitions, classifications, and the mechanisms through which they are formed. This framework is essential for analyzing how pandemic-related vocabulary developed in both English and Uzbek. A neologism is generally defined as a newly coined word, expression, or phrase that is introduced into a language but may not yet be widely accepted by speakers or recognized in official dictionaries. Linguists often describe neologisms as: Completely new words that emerge to fill lexical gaps (e.g., “covidiot” for someone disregarding COVID-19 guidelines). Semantic extensions of existing words, where familiar terms acquire new meanings (e.g., “bubble” referring to a small, socially distanced group during the pandemic). Borrowed words from other languages that are adapted or directly integrated into a different linguistic system (e.g., “lockdown” borrowed into Uzbek as “lokdaun”). Neologisms can remain temporary, fading as circumstances change, or they can become permanent additions to a language. For example, some terms created during previous pandemics, such as “quarantine” (from the Italian *quaranta giorni*, meaning “forty days”), have endured and are still in use today.

Results

Neologisms can be classified based on different criteria, such as their origin, structure, or function. Below are some of the key types of neologisms:

1. Lexical Neologisms (New Words)

These neologisms involve entirely new lexical items, created to describe previously unknown concepts.

Examples in English: “Zoom fatigue” (exhaustion from excessive video calls), “quaranteam” (a quarantine support team).

Examples in Uzbek: “Kovid pasporti” (COVID passport), “antitana” (antibody).

2. Semantic Neologisms (New Meanings for Existing Words)

These occur when existing words acquire new meanings due to societal changes.

Examples in English:

“Bubble” (originally referring to a sphere of air, now used to describe a small group of people isolating together).

“Masking” (previously associated with covering something, now meaning the act of wearing a protective face mask).

Examples in Uzbek:

“Dala karantini” (previously, “dala” meant “field” or “countryside,” but in the pandemic, it referred to isolating in rural areas).

“Test” (formerly used mainly in academic settings, but now widely understood as a medical diagnostic tool for COVID-19).

3. Phonological or Morphological Neologisms

These involve new words formed through affixation, blending, or compounding.

Examples in English:

Affixation: “COVIDization” (the process of society adapting to COVID-related norms).

Blending: “Covidiot” (COVID + idiot).

Compounding: “Social distancing” (a phrase made up of two words).

Examples in Uzbek:

Affixation: “Karantinlash” (adding “-lash” to indicate the process of quarantining).

Compounding: “Uy karantini” (home quarantine).

4. Loanwords and Borrowings

Some neologisms are borrowed directly from other languages, often without modification, due to globalization and the influence of international media.

Examples in English: Many pandemic-related terms originated in English and were adopted into other languages.

Examples in Uzbek:

“Lokdaun” (from English “lockdown”).

“Vaksina” (from English “vaccine,” derived from Latin *vaccinus*).

5. Acronyms and Abbreviations

These are newly formed shortened expressions that become widely used in daily communication. Examples in English:

“WFH” (Work From Home).

“PPE” (Personal Protective Equipment).

Examples in Uzbek:

“JSST” (Jahon Sog‘liqni Saqlash Tashkiloti – the World Health Organization).

Not all neologisms remain in language use indefinitely. Some words disappear as quickly as they emerge, especially those tied to temporary events. For instance, phrases like “quarantine birthday” (a birthday celebrated in lockdown) may become irrelevant post-pandemic, while terms like “vaccine passport” may have a longer linguistic lifespan due to ongoing discussions on travel regulations.

Temporary neologisms:

“Coronapocalypse” (describing extreme pandemic-related fear and chaos).

“Covideo party” (a virtual party held via video conferencing).

Permanent neologisms:

“Antibody test” (likely to remain relevant due to continued medical use).

“Social distancing” (could persist for future public health emergencies).

The COVID-19 crisis resulted in an unusually high influx of neologisms in a short time, with terms spreading globally through mass media, social networks, and government communication. Unlike typical neologism formation, which may take years, pandemic-related terms gained instant recognition due to their necessity in daily life. Some common factors that accelerated the formation of pandemic neologisms include: The rapid spread of information: News agencies and social media platforms introduced and reinforced pandemic-related words. The need for quick communication: People needed short, easy-to-understand terms to describe complex health guidelines and social restrictions. Global linguistic influence: English, as the dominant global language, influenced many other languages, including Uzbek. For instance, terms like “herd immunity”, “flatten the curve”, and “contact tracing” became internationally understood, with equivalents in Uzbek such as “ommaviy immunitet” and “infeksiyani kuzatish”.

Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted global communication, leading to the emergence of a vast number of neologisms across different languages. The need to describe new health protocols, medical treatments, social behaviors, and economic changes resulted in the rapid expansion of vocabulary in both English and Uzbek. This study has explored the lexical-semantic features of pandemic-related neologisms in these two languages, focusing on their formation, dissemination, and adaptation. A key finding of this research is that neologisms serve as an essential linguistic response to societal change. The pandemic introduced previously unfamiliar concepts such as “lockdown,” “social distancing,” and “vaccine passport,” which required new terminology for effective communication. In English, neologisms were often created through blending (e.g., “covidiot”), compounding (e.g., “doomscrolling”), and affixation (e.g., “COVIDization”). Meanwhile, in Uzbek, new words emerged through native word formation methods like compounding (e.g., “uy karantini” – home quarantine), affixation

(e.g., “karantinlash” – the process of quarantining), and borrowing from English (e.g., “lokdaun” from “lockdown”). These formations highlight the structural flexibility of both languages in integrating new lexical items.

One of the most notable differences between English and Uzbek pandemic-related neologisms is the degree of borrowing. English, as a global lingua franca, did not need to borrow extensively from other languages; instead, it exported its pandemic-related vocabulary to many other languages, including Uzbek. Uzbek, being more influenced by international discourse, adopted several English terms, sometimes with minimal phonetic or morphological modification. This reflects the global influence of English-language media, scientific research, and governmental communication during the pandemic. However, in some cases, Uzbek created native equivalents rather than adopting foreign words, demonstrating a balance between linguistic preservation and international integration.

Another significant factor in neologism formation during the pandemic was the role of media and social networks. Digital platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram played a crucial role in popularizing new terms. In English, hashtags like #StayAtHome and #FlattenTheCurve helped reinforce pandemic-related vocabulary. In Uzbekistan, news portals, government announcements, and official health guidelines contributed to the standardization of new pandemic terms. This highlights the dynamic relationship between language, technology, and society, as linguistic changes now occur at a much faster pace due to digital media.

A comparison of morphological processes in English and Uzbek neologisms reveals both similarities and differences. English demonstrated a high level of creativity in coining informal and humorous neologisms (e.g., “quaranteam” for a group of people isolating together), while Uzbek focused more on formalized terminology introduced by authorities (e.g., “pandemiya bosqichi” – pandemic stage). This contrast reflects cultural differences in how the pandemic was perceived and managed in different linguistic communities

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