

An analysis of new English words created during COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic affects almost all aspects of life, including social and language aspects. One of the phenomena of language change is the emerging of new words during COVID-19. Taken from a linguistic perspective, this research aims to analyze the new words created during COVID-19, to analyze their meaning of the new words, and how they affect human social life. The method used in this research is discourse analysis using a descriptive qualitative research design. The researchers collected these new English words from social media, books, articles, and news. Findings reveal that there are nineteen new English words created during COVID-19. These new words are now very popular on social media and are used in general conversation. In addition, it suggests that these new words have profoundly affected our social life and also the teaching and learning process of English.

Keywords: *COVID-19; English; Linguistics; New words.*

1. Introduction

As language has a close relationship with human society, it can change over time in its development. Language can change and develop because the meaning of certain phrases changes in the context of language use (Strongman, 2017). Therefore,

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language is not dead, but it changes and develops itself over time and everywhere.

In any case, there are many possible causes for a language to change. It can happen because of the adaptation of developments and changes in the social life system, such as education level, culture, social, and technology mastery (Harya, 2016). For example, the word ‘Television’. The word ‘Television’ had been coined circa 1900. Prior to that, no one used it because the television itself had not been invented. Only after it had been invented, people start using the word ‘television’ (Briggs & Burke, 2009). Also, ‘Selfie’ means somebody is taking a picture of himself. This word was accepted by the people and spread very quickly in 2013 (Shin, Kim, Im, & Chong, 2017). Those are some of the language changes due to technological development, and many other new words are also invented to describe things that did not exist before.

Moreover, one of the phenomena of language change from a linguistic perspective is also mentioned in research entitled ‘Neologism as a Linguistic Phenomenon in Mass Media Textbook with Reference to Translation’ by Yasin, Mustafa, and Faysal (2010). There are 10 coined new words explained in this research. They are ‘Podcasting’, ‘Blogging’, ‘Advertorial’, ‘Narrowcasting’, ‘Webcasting’, ‘Airchain’, ‘Filmstock’, ‘Newswire’, ‘Webcams’, and ‘Skype’. The process of coining these words begins with the creation of a website related to the words as well. After being coined, neologisms were always examined by the public and linguists to ensure their compatibility with the language.

Likewise, language can also change because of social phenomena happening lately. Since 2019, there has been a pandemic of Coronavirus Disease 2019, commonly known as COVID-19. The transmission of this disease is very fast from one country to another and it’s causing an outbreak in the world. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that this outbreak had constituted a public health emergency of international concern (Mahase, 2020). In Indonesia, the first case occurred in March 2020. At that time, the government immediately took action by requiring the public to comply with the COVID-19 protocol. Even the Indonesian Ministry of Health also stated the April 3rd, 2020 decree concerning guidelines for the implementation of social distancing on large scale for the acceleration of handling COVID-19 (Indonesian Ministry of Health, 2020, as cited in Abdulrahman, 2020).

Furthermore, this disease disrupts activities around the world. Until now, this pandemic has still not been over. It has not been over for months and it makes people frustrated. Everyone must stay at home to stop the transmission of this disease. Everyone works from home. Students also learn from home because their classes are conducted online. All amusement parks and shopping centers are closed (Nash & Geng, 2020). Everyone wears a mask when they are outside. However, everything has changed since COVID-19, including the linguistic area. This pandemic makes people innovate to make new words and terms. It raises several new words in English, such as covidiots, morona, quaranteam, and other words created because of this phenomenon.

The language change during the pandemic has also attracted enough attention in
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Indonesia. With each passing day, more and more new English terms are used in this pandemic. This is a good step to enrich Indonesian because several foreign languages are also absorbed into Indonesian. However, related to the importance of English in Indonesia, particularly in dealing with the Coronavirus pandemic, it is necessary to learn the English language related to the Coronavirus since English is a foreign language and not a national language or a second language in Indonesia. The problem is that most Indonesian people do not speak English well and sometimes they misunderstand the new terms. On the other hand, the information about the world crisis caused by a pandemic is mostly written in English. This research is intended to provide information related to language change in order to prevent the misunderstanding of new words by Indonesians who are not familiar with the words. As Khan (2013) claims, neologism or coining new words is an important tool for learning the variety of changes in the language. This research has the purpose of analyzing new words and their meanings relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Literature review

2.1. Language change

All-natural language changes and will influence all sectors of language use. Language change can be called a phenomenon in which permanent changes are made in the features and usage of the language over time (Nordquist, 2019). It proves that language does not die because it develops all the time. Language change is also unavoidable. It changes naturally, time by time.

Also, from the old generation to the younger generation, pronunciations develop, new vocabularies are coined or borrowed, morphology evolves, and the old meaning of a word is substituted. The difference between older speakers and younger speakers signifies the changes. Older speakers' terms portray the language they used when they were young, so the difference between that language and the way young generations speak now signifies the change of language (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). Furthermore, youth speech patterns sound strange to adults because they are not used to hear them. Sometimes new words or terms that are created are informal and not formal like a written language, so it might not yet be suitable for business letters. But that does not mean they are wrong or bad, and they are just newer (Birner, 2020).

Moreover, language change and development can occur internally and externally. The internal changes initially occur in the behavior of the speakers in their daily lives in adapting to each other. Then, along with a tendency to innovate or develop in familiar groups, followed by other changes in sequence, eventually making the language different from each other. Furthermore, the external changes are caused by the contact between one language and another language, because humans, as social beings, are interconnected or cultivated across nationalities in a country or the world (Harya, 2016).

2.2. Reason for language change

Language change and development of national, international, or ethnic languages are unavoidable. They are caused by cultural acculturation. It can happen when a speaker shifts to another place and gets an effect from a new society. Later on, there will be new dialects, newly coined words, and even the syntactic structure of the language also changed (Harya, 2016). It occurs naturally at a fast or slow time. Moreover, the speakers themselves may not even notice it.

Moreover, the language change process may be affected by many factors, including immigration, the value and status of the language in a particular community, and also language change may be determined by the educational opportunities of the next generation. Language change can also be influenced by opportunities to speak the same language, the influence of media on the language, and the opportunities to learn languages (Strongman, 2017).

Language change is also caused by the changing requirements of the people who use the language. New technology, experiences, and products need new words to refer to them efficiently and clearly. Consequently, the language will never stop changing and will always respond to the needs of the people who use it (Birner, 2020).

2.3. New English words created during COVID-19

New English words can be called neologisms. Neologism is a morphological process through which new words are formed in a language. Its purpose is to generate new words or word forms in a language. New words help identify any new phenomena, innovations, and how old ideas may occupy a whole new cultural context. The new words reflect the social and cultural conditions in the texts selected in the current research (Qaisar, 2015).

Furthermore, Wang and Wu (2017) state that neologism is the creation of new words or expressions in a language and the new meaning of an existing word or expression. Meanwhile, according to Crystal (2014), neologism or coinage is the creation of new words caused by conditions in the world that have changed into the conversation with people. As we experience today, we are in the pandemic of COVID-19.

Recently, new English words and terms related to COVID-19 have appeared in several social media, articles, news, books, and others. These new words are a part of the elements that make a language live and not die, and they help show the productive morphology of the language. They are describing the language of change (Janssen, 2011).

3. Method

This research used the descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative evidence enables researchers to analyze the human experience and provide useful exploratory insights about exploratory questions and implications (Williams, Boylan, & Nunan,

2020). It focuses on a deep understanding of the interaction between the analyzed concepts. Furthermore, the researchers focused on finding the meaning behind the word and understanding it to get the results.

Moreover, several approaches can be used to obtain the data in qualitative research. In this research, the researchers used a discourse analysis approach by Van Dijk (1988) that analyzed the language in written and spoken form related to its social context to get a clearer and systematic description of the content delivered. Specifically, the researchers used a descriptive discourse analysis. Descriptive discourse analysis is used to diagnose linguistic impairments and identify targets for intervention, using any knowledge that can be gained through observing elements of discourse that affect the client's ability to communicate (Bryant, Spencer, & Ferguson, 2016). Besides, discourse analysis itself can help us know how societies are united and sustained through our daily activities of speaking, writing, and using other modes of communication. It can also help understand why people interact with each other in the way they do and how people perceive reality differently and why they see it the way they do (Jones, 2012).

This research utilized internet sources, the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia, the Central Library of As-Syafi'iyah Islamic University, and other libraries in Jakarta to gather literature. This research was conducted from May to December 2020. The data were collected by finding new English words and terms created during COVID-19 from social media, such as Twitter, from the book "English Teaching Practices in Indonesia during COVID-19 Crisis" by Hasbi et al. (2020), and also from several websites and newspapers, including The New York Times, Vox, Pressherald.com, News 18, The Northwest Florida Daily News, SheThePeople, Labor Notes, TheGrio, KBZK Bozeman News, KCRA Sacramento, WGN-TV, Fox 4, The Guardian, EdexLive, ValueWalk, Phys.Org, Globalnews.ca, The Atlantic, Washington Post, Toledo Blade, The Philadelphia Inquirer, Ourcommunitynow.com, Healthline, Elemental, The BMJ, The Tribune, Deccan Chronicle, The Sydney Morning Herald, The Independent, STV Edinburgh, Trinidad News, Greenwich Free Press, The Tide, Fordham Ram, Berkeleyside, TechRound, The Columbian, Goss.ie, and Inside Science News Service.

The researchers used the documentation technique for this research. The data collection process began with searching for new words, phrases, and sentences created during COVID-19 in social media, books, articles, and news. After the data were obtained, the data were collected and saved in the form of a capture/screenshot. The next phase was data classification. In this phase, each piece of data was classified into the data table based on the source, with the aim that it will later be easier to analyze. In this research, the data were analyzed using content analysis techniques by Bengtsson (2016), which described and concluded the content of the words or terms obtained in detail. Furthermore, the data which had been classified into tables were analyzed for their form and meaning. In the next phase, the researchers analyzed the content for

themes and patterns. In the last phase, the researchers reviewed the results and made conclusions.

4. Findings

This research explored new English words that had been coinage during the COVID-19 pandemic. The classification of the new words was based on the word-formation processes. The researchers used the model of neologism presented by Wei Liu and Wenyu Liu in 2014. They classified the words into compounding, blending, affixation, acronym, conversion, and clipping (Liu & Liu, 2014). Moreover, compounding is the process of forming words by combining two or more word classes into one new form, blending is a process of forming words by combining two or more words by eliminating certain parts of the old word before being combined into a new word, affixation is the process of word-formation by adding word elements before or after the root or stem to produce a new word, acronym is the process of forming words by taking from the initial letter in each syllable which is arranged into an abbreviation of a term and the result can be pronounced as a word, conversion is the process of changing a word-class without changing the form of the word, and clipping is the process of forming a word by cutting off parts of the word itself.

These are new English words created during COVID-19 collected from a book, social media, news, and articles by the researchers:

Table 1

New words created during COVID-19.

Source	New words created during COVID-19
Book <i>"English teaching practices in Indonesia during COVID-19 crisis"</i>	COVID-19, Instaclass, WFH, New Normal, Self-Quarantine, Coronials, Zooming, Zoom-Bombing, Covideo Party, Coronacation, Rona, and Doom-Scrolling.
Twitter	COVID-19, Covidiot, Covident, Rona/The Rona, Self-Quarantine, WFH, Blursday, Quaranteam, Covexit, New Normal, Morona, Instaclass, Coronials, Zooming, Zoom-Bombing, Covideo Party, Doom-Scrolling, and Coronacation.
Articles and News	COVID-19, Covidiot, Rona/The Rona, Self-Quarantine, Iso, WFH, Blursday, Quaranteam, Covexit, New Normal, Morona, Coronials, Zoom-Bombing, Covideo Party, Doom-Scrolling, and Coronacation.

As shown in table 1, there were nineteen new English words created during COVID-19 collected by the researchers from a book, social media, news, and articles.

Some of these words are formal, and some are not formal. Each of these words was created to refer to a person, something, or even the name of the virus itself. These words were created because no term referred to the object before. These are the meanings or uses of new English words created during COVID-19:

1. COVID-19

COVID-19 stands for Coronavirus Disease 2019. It is a term for an infectious disease caused by a type of Coronavirus that was recently discovered and is currently a pandemic occurring worldwide.

2. Covidiot

Covidiot is a combination of COVID-19 and Idiot. It is used to refer to people who have ignored health and safety warnings or guidelines about this Coronavirus. It is usually used also to insult people who do not comply with regulations given by the government, such as not wearing a mask when they were in public places, not keeping their distance from others, and so on.

3. Covident

Covident is a combination of Coronavirus and obedient. It is the opposite of covidiot. It is used to call an individual who follows the government's security measures against the Coronavirus and follows laws and regulations that attach great importance to government guidelines.

4. Rona/The Rona

Rona is the informal short for Corona. People use the word ‘Rona’ instead of ‘Coronavirus’ to make it simpler and sometimes just for jokes.

5. Self-Quarantine

Self-quarantine is a public health practice used to protect the public by preventing contact with people who have or may have infectious diseases. This is one way to slow the spread of Corona and by staying at home and away from other people

6. WFH

WFH stands for work from home or working from home. During the pandemic, some jobs that can be done from home were given the policy of working from home only to reduce crowd levels. So people do not need to go to their office or workplace and do all their work from home only.

7. Blursday

Blursday is an unspecified day. During the pandemic schools and work are done from home. When being stuck at home for too long, people have no idea what day it is because they become blurred together so they call that day a blursday.

8. Quaranteam

Quaranteam is a combination of Quarantine and Team. It means the people you choose to live with during Coronavirus quarantine. A circle of friends together complies with health protocols and regulations related to the Coronavirus. They usually do activities together, such as video calling together or other activities without breaking the rules.

9. Covexit

Covexit is a combination of COVID-19 and Exit. It means the strategy for exiting the lockdown. This refers to the exit strategy undertaken by the government in response to the Coronavirus crisis.

10. New Normal

New normal is a scenario to accelerate the handling of COVID-19 in the health and socio-economic aspects. It is a new order to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic.

11. Morona

Morona is a combination of Moron and Coronavirus. It is used to insult someone as a moron who ignores or does not understand the safety guidelines to prevent the spread of corona. It is like another term for a Covidiot.

12. Coronacation

Coronacation is a combination of Coronavirus and Vacation. Classes and works were closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, but they still carry out their activities from home online. Holidays during the Coronavirus pandemic are called a coronacation by millennials.

13. Instaclass

Instaclass is a combination of Instagram and Class. It refers to the classes on Instagram. In this COVID-19 crisis, some teachers used several methods to teach their students online. Some of them are using Instagram in the learning process.

14. Coronials

Coronials is a combination of Coronavirus and Millennials. This term is used for babies who were conceived during the COVID-19 pandemic. People assume that this pandemic can lead to an increase in birth rates because married couples spend more time at home. So the new generation that will be born will be crowned as Coronials.

15. Zooming

Zooming refers to making video calls on a Zoom platform. Zoom is the most widely used video and audio conferencing platform for making video calls for online meetings and classes during pandemic COVID-19.

16. Zoom-Bombing

Zoom-Bombing refers to hijacking a Zoom video call. When conducting online meetings or classes on the Zoom platform, sometimes there are uninvited guests join the meeting and disturb or disrupt the meeting by displaying images or words that are obscene, harsh, or offensive.

17. Covideo Party

Covideo Party is an online party via video call. People want to hold a party to relieve their stress in this gloomy pandemic COVID-19. They hold a party with a video call with their friends and family. So they can still have a party together at their own home.

18. Doom-Scrolling

Doom-Scrolling is searching, reading frustrating news related to the pandemic. People keep scrolling down their smartphones for the unpleasant news regarding the COVID-19 pandemic on social media, news, and more.

19. Iso

Iso is a shortened word for self-isolation. This is the same term as self-quarantine which means a public health practice used to protect the public by preventing contact with people who have or may have infectious diseases.

In addition, when the word was formed, it also involved the word-formation processes. The followings are word-formation processes of new words created during COVID-19.

Table 2

Word-formation processes of new words created during COVID-19.

New word	Word-formation process	Description
COVID-19	Acronym	Coronavirus Disease 2019
Covidiot	Blending	Covid + Idiot
Covidient	Blending	Covid + Obedient
Rona/ The Rona	Clipping	Corona
Self-quarantine	Compounding	Self + Quarantine
Iso	Clipping	Self-Isolation
WFH	Acronym	Work From Home
Blurssday	Compounding	Blur + S + Day
Quaranteam	Blending	Quarantine + Team
Covexit	Blending	Covid + Exit
New normal	Compounding	New + Normal
Morona	Blending	Moron + Corona
Coronacation	Blending	Corona + Vacation
Instaclass	Blending	Instagram + Class
Coronials	(Multiple Processes) Blending + Affixation	Corona + Millennial + s
Zooming	Affixation (Multiple Processes)	Zoom + Ing
Zoom-bombing	Compounding + Affixation	Zoom + Bomb + Ing
Covideo party	(Multiple Processes) Blending + Compounding (Multiple Processes)	Covid + Video + Party
Doom-scrolling	Compounding + Affixation	Doom + Scroll + Ing

Table 3

Type of affixation of new words created during COVID-19.

New word	Root Word	Affix	Type of Affixation
Coronials	Corona + Millennial	S	Suffix
Zooming	Zoom	Ing	Suffix
Zoom-bombing	Zoom + Bomb	Ing	Suffix
Doom-scrolling	Doom + Scroll	Ing	Suffix

As shown in table 2, there are two acronym words, seven blending words, two clipping words, three compounding words, one affixation word, and four multiple processes words. The four multiple processes words are two compounding words with affixation words, one blending word with an affixation word, and one blending word with a compounding word. The most word-formation process is blending words and the least word-formation process is clipping words. Also in table 3, there are four words involved in affixation. Types of affixation in these four words are suffixes. It is the affix at the end of the word.

Furthermore, in the process of collecting these new words, the researchers found that these words are very popular on social media and are used in general conversation. They are also used by books, news media, and articles related to COVID-19. The spread of the new words was very fast, so the whole world also understood what was being said when someone mentioned the word.

5. Discussion

These new words were created because of the current situation in the world, namely the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, we live in an era where interaction is very easy, and technology is very sophisticated. Then new vocabulary words are easier to create and spread so that people use the words as official words and are understandable by others. As mentioned in the literature review, Crystal (2014) said neologism or coinage is the creation of new words caused by conditions in the world that have changed into the conversation with people. As we experience today, we are in the pandemic of COVID-19. Those new words were created because of the current conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic in the world and those words were finally used in conversations by people.

Thereupon, related to the word-formation processes, all types of word-formation processes were not fully involved in the creation of neologisms from the perspective of COVID-19 (Asif, Zhiyong, Iram, & Nisar, 2020). On the other hand, new English words collected in this research all involve word-formation. There are two acronym words, seven blending words, two clipping words, three compounding words, one affixation word, and four multiple processes words. Also, the most common word-formation that the researchers found was blending words, also known as portmanteau words. That is because the process of blending words is often used in advertising,

journalism, and the media functioning to arouse our attention. This marginalized area is becoming more and more popular, and it contains a lot of English usages (Mostafa, 2013). As a result, blending the words to make a new word seems to be a trend. Besides, creating a word with a blending process is also not that complicated and simple. Blending also includes combining two different forms to produce a new term. However, blending is usually achieved by taking only the beginning of one word and concatenating it to the end of another word (Yule, 2020). Furthermore, based on the rules of word formation, the combined part of the word can be the beginning, middle, and end of the word (Zaim, 2015).

Besides blending words, two clipping words found in this research are ‘Rona’ which is shortened from ‘Corona’, and ‘Iso’ which is shortened from ‘Self Isolation’. These two words are the result of the clipping process which is famous in some parts of the world due to the popularity of the word ‘Corona’ or ‘Coronavirus’. The speakers of Australian English frequently use ‘Rona’ instead of corona as one would say: I am in iso (self-isolation) because of rona (Levshina, 2020). Interestingly, clipping is commonly used for frequent words compared to less frequent words. During pandemic COVID-19, people started to shorten words in daily communication because language users follow the principle of least effort (Zipf, 1949, as cited in Bentz & Ferrer-I-Cancho, 2016). Moreover, the clipped word such as Rona is often extended from the coronavirus itself to the disease, pandemic, and the social crisis it has caused (Wild, 2020).

Another finding in this research shows that some of the words are informal and unsuitable for formal situations. This is because some of these words were created on some social media where the users are mostly the young generation. Sometimes it sounds weird, but that does not mean they are wrong, they are just newer. This confirms the theory that youth speech patterns sound strange to adults because they are not used to hearing them. Sometimes new words or terms that are created are informal and not formal like a written language, so it might not yet be suitable for business letters. But that does not mean they are wrong or bad, they are just newer (Birner, 2020).

However, as mentioned in the research findings, those new words are very popular on social media and are used as general conversation. They are also used by books, news media, and articles related to COVID-19. The spread of the new words was very fast, so the whole world also understood what was being said when someone mentioned the word. These new words are a part of the elements that make a language live and not die, and they help show the productive morphology of the language. They are describing the language of change (Janssen, 2011). The language has also changed with the times. With this COVID-19 pandemic, the language had also changed by creating new vocabularies. This is proof that language is not dead and will always live forever. Furthermore, Khan (2013) stated that neologism or coining new words is an important tool to study the variation or change in the language. By studying neologism, we learn where a word comes from, the invention of new things, how slang can be

initially accepted, the popularization of language, and the emergence of new technologies. New words must fill the gaps in language, and we are aware that neologism helps a language develop.

6. Conclusion

The results of this research show that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a change in human language and social life. The emergence of new words such as specialized terms and acronyms helps express people's feelings and opinions. It can be seen clearly that these words are very popular on social media and are used as general conversation. This all suggests that these words have been accepted by the community as people understand and use the new words during COVID-19 pandemic.

As this research focuses on linguistic change, particularly the process of word-formation to create new words, the results contribute to the development of language and linguistics related to the topic of neologism and new English words created during COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, the findings also add new knowledge for language learners, so that they understand new English terms which consist of prefixes and suffixes, and help learners indicate word-formation processes including blending, clipping, acronym, compounding, and others. Although many new words are found in this study, further research needs to be conducted in order to gain more new insights in regards to the COVID-19 situations with other data and with different research methods.

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