Linguistic Shifts Caused by COVID-19 Epidemic in Twitter

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Abstract

This study focuses on the most noticeable phenomena, the emergence of new words and phrases, and examines and discusses its implications. The primary objective is to detect these shifts, and then to place them in Krishnamurthy's Neologism paradigm for analysis. Almost thirty lakes tweets sent between January and May of 2020 make up the dataset, which undergoes qualitative and quantitative analysis. The findings demonstrate that these adjustments served as means of adjusting to the widespread changes in people's ways of living and that the influence of social media was crucial in their rapid dissemination.

Keyword: Neologism, paradigm, quantitative, qualitative,phenomena

Introduction

Social isolation, travel restrictions, self-quarantine, and company closures are only some of the ways that the pandemic epidemic of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) has altered societal structures throughout the globe. Many individuals are unable to discuss these events in person, but many do so on social media sites like Twitter.As the coronavirus has spawned new words, phrases, and idioms in English and other languages, it supports the idea that language is more malleable than rigid. This is an example of what is known as a "neologism," and it is often the outcome of the exploration of new aesthetic, scientific, or technological territories. A worldwide crisis is to blame for these shifts. So, language only serves as a conduit, encompassing social and interpersonal processes that pass knowledge from one generation to the next.

The first is, why do people keep coming up with new names for coronaviruses? How come certain words and phrases have caught on so rapidly? The purpose of this study is to record and analyse the evolution of language in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, with special focus on the genesis and dissemination of any new jargon that may have evolved in this setting. Around 3 million tweets will make up the dataset, which will be culled from the Twitter API between January and May of 2020. Krishnamurthy's neologism theory is used to describe the findings (2010).

Literature Review

There has been a recent emergence of a coronavirus-based respiratory ailment that poses serious worldwide public health concerns. World Health Organization has classified the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic a Public Health Emergency of International Concern as of January 30, 2020. Over 380,000 people have lost their lives to COVID-19 as of June of 2020. About 6.5 million cases have been reported worldwide (WHO, 2020).

Not only have the fields of economics and medicine seen remarkable growth, but so has the field of communication, and that's just in terms of the various linguistic facets that make up the field. As language is a malleable idea, it adapts to different situations by producing new words and expressions and altering the way others, more typically used in the social, psychological, or medical sciences, are put to use. There is also an increase in language as a result, with the general public being able to tell the difference between an epidemic and a pandemic, or a quarantine from a complete absence of people.

Communication between people is an integral part of language, and this is how knowledge is passed on from one generation to the next. As a synthesis of concepts, it invents and creates new words on

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the fly to meet the requirements of various conversational contexts. In this way, the public is taking charge of the evolving "national discussions," injecting its own set of vibrant, creative expressions into the voids left by the official narrative and eloquently expressing its own experiences of being on lockdown.

Many people are taking their offline social life online as a result of social isolationist policies that have led to the cancellation of events and conferences, the closing of schools and institutions, and the need of many firms having their workers work from home. More and more people are turning to social media for not just knowledge but also companionship as the discourse around COVID-19 continues to develop. As a result, social media like Twitter has become an integral part of the social and technical infrastructure that enables us to maintain connections even in times of crisis (Chen and Lerman, 2020).

Newly coined words are called neologisms. According to Jansen (2005), a neologism is a linguistic category that shows the elements of lexical change. As previously unexplored areas of study emerge, such as computer science, they may give birth to novel methods of articulating previously understood notions (user-friendly, software, floppy disk). Neologism, as added by Crystal (2001), is the basis for newly coined words that gain acceptance in a given speech community at a given moment.

New situations, as argued by Ben Zimmer (2020), need for novel terms of expression. With each significant event, a slew of new words emerge as people seek better ways to describe it. Paton (2020) notes that it is unusual for lexicographers to see the rapid ascent in popularity of a single word in such a short time, and for that phrase to eventually come to dominate worldwide speech to the exclusion of almost all others. Since the COVID-19 is so pervasive in the medical lexicon, it has become the dominant topic of conversation throughout the world.

Methodology

Around 30lakestweets were randomly picked and collected using the Twitter search API between January 2, 2020 and May 15, 2020, and a second collection of tweets was chosen at random by the researchers. The dataset was constructed with Twitter as its key platform and main data source. Please use #covid19, #coronavirus, #covid-19, or the phrase coronavirus in any tweets relating to the current coronavirus pandemic. Data is further analysed by humans to filter out irrelevant information and anything published in languages other than English.

In light of Krishnamurthy's neologism theory, the findings are addressed (2010). Word creation, borrowing, and lexical variation all play a role in this process. Word creation is the process through which new words are added to a language, whereas affixation comprises lexical variety. Or, when a term or phrase from one language is utilised in another, it is called "borrowing" (Longman, 2010).

Results and Discussion

We gathered the information shown below after finishing the quantitative investigation. The number of times COVID-19 was mentioned with and without a hashtag every day is shown in Figure (1).
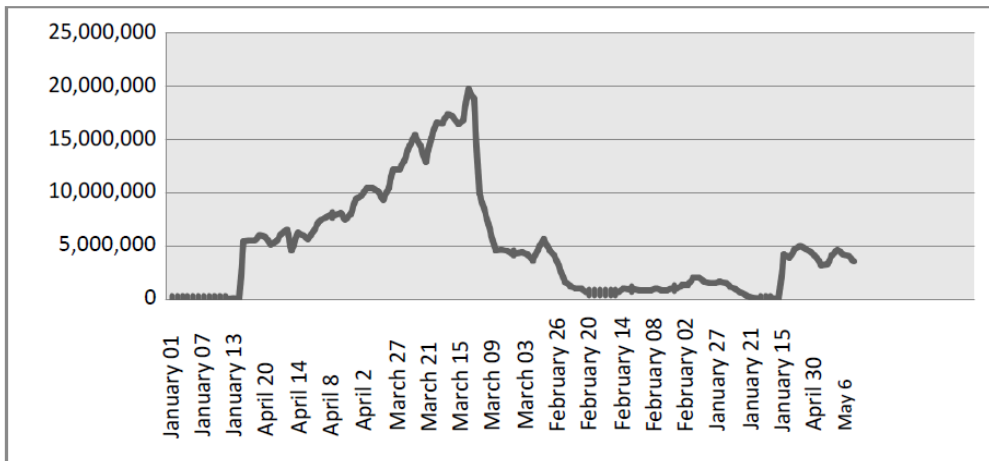
Figure (1): Number of COVID-19 mentions on Twitter between January, 01 and May, 15, 2020.

By tallying up the most popular phrases used in tweets about COVID-19, both inside the tweets and as hash tags, we were able to identify a collection of current buzzwords. There are three main ways that language is changing: (a) by borrowing, (b) through the creation of new words, and (c) through lexical deviation. Wordplay (puns, nicknames, and clichés) are prevalent in the parts that follow (1-3). After eliminating any words that were spoken fewer than 1000 times, we picked the top 10 phrases that were particularly popular in each category.

Table(1):Words and phrases from COVID-19 have been borrowed and used.

	TrendingTerm	Frequency	Usageandexample
1.	Clinicaltrials	114,647	Clinical trials are research studies that utilise human volunteers to test the effectiveness of a novel approach to the diagnosis, treatment, or management of a medical condition. *"FirstCOVID-19vaccinetoundergo**clinicaltrial** in China found tobesafe&able to generatean immuneresponseagainstcoronavirusinhumans, basedontheresultsofapreliminarytrial."*
2.	Contacttracing	26,159	Finding and learning more about others who may have come into contact with an infected individual is called "contact tracing," a public health practise. *"NHS **contacttracing** systemnotexpected tobe fullyoperating untilSeptember.Really,yougotta laugh.Whatabunch ofclowns."*
3.	Contagious	34,816	Diseases that may be passed from one host to another by casual contact are called infectious.

			*"Thisisa highly**contagious**disease!Contracting itmaynotkillyou,butyoucould infectand kill othermorevulnerablepeople. Selfish!! #StayHomeSaveLives"*
4.	Epidemic	144,208	Rapid disease transmission is known as an epidemic.
			*"Lesson-don'tgamblewithpeople'slives.Go with trustedcorepublichealthprinciplesof**epidemic** control.Moveearly&lockdown notneeded oris short."*
5.	Immunity	92,003	The function of the immune system is to prevent foreign invaders like germs and viruses from causing damage.
			*"EarlyresultsfromModerna'svaccinetrial suggestthevaccinehasthepotentialto givepeople **immunity**againstcovid-19.Butwe can'tdraw conclusionsfromaPhaseItrial,withdatafrom onlyeightparticipantsso far."*
6.	Pandemic	1,066,513	For an outbreak to be considered a "pandemic," it must be felt all across the globe.
			*"Stilltrying to makesenseofthefactthatwedon't haveenoughfaceshieldsforhospitalsdealingwith a **pandemic**butwedohaveenough forpolice?? makeitmakesense"*
7.	Quarantine	785,961	When an infectious illness or pest infestation is suspected, authorities may impose a quarantine to restrict the movement of people and products.
			*"MomsaysI can'tcomeoutandplaybecauseI'm stillin**quarantine**.#BurrowingOwls"*
8.	Self-isolation	122,563	To prevent the transmission of the coronavirus, those who have it or are suspected of having it should stay in isolation at home.
			*"Lookingatthenewsandwonderingif puttingourselvesinto**self-isolation**forthenext twenty yearsisn'tsuch a badidea."*

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9.	Socialdistancing	287,422	Social distancing, or "physical distancing" in the context of public health, refers to the practise of establishing emotional distance from others in settings other than the home.
			*"ThousandsofAmericans,likemymom, were unabletoattendthefuneralsoffriendswhodied fromCOVID-19outofrespectfor **social distancing** guidelines."*
10.	Vaccine	427,554	An infectious illness may be prevented with the use of a biological preparation called a vaccination.
			*"Thereisno medicine,no**vaccine**forthepandemic butCARDIOandRESPIRATORYphysicaltherapy techniqueshvgdresultsin evencriticalpatients wheremedicineandventilatorscan'twork."*

The top ten borrowed words from other languages or jargon are shown in Table (1). Once the general public had a better understanding of the differences between medical terminology like "isolation" and "quarantine" and "epidemic" and "pandemic," they began using these terms correctly. This is not a brand-new linguistic trend; similar examples were noticed during the SARS and Swine Flu pandemics of the early 2000s and the late 2010s, respectively (Chew and Eysenbach, 2010).

Table(2):Cut COVID-19 phrases and their applications.

	Trending Term	**Frequency**	**Usage and example**
1.	Coronacation	7,523	**Corona**+**vacation** As the pandemic's isolationist policies have rendered school and work moot, people celebrate by taking time off.
			*"Day77 ofsocialdistancing:unofficiallastdayof schoolfortheboys.Wehaveenjoyed schooltime together.Itwasfarmorepleasantthanweexpected inMarchwhen**#coronacation**began."*
2.	Covexit	6,368	**COVID**+**exit** A covexit is a way to escape the safe zone.
			*"Ican'twaitto **COVEXIT**theRonalockdown!!"*

3.	Covidient	13,904	**COVID+obedient** The term "covidient" refers to someone who has taken the government-mandated precautions against contracting COVID-19.
			*"Bea**Covidient**,followtherules,stayin&stay safe!Sending lovetoall**Covidients**outin there!"*
4.	Covidiot	85,724	**COVID+idiot** To act carelessly while confined is to be a covidiot.
			*"BREAKINGPolicebreakuphugeLondonstreet partyasof100sof **covidiots**ignorelockdown #Brent"*
5.	Covidivorce	62,010	**COVID+divorce** During a lockdown, couples may find themselves in such close quarters that the relationship becomes strained, leading to a term coined to describe the situation: covidivorce.
			*"Howmanycouplenowspendingsevendaysa weektogetherwilldiscoverthey'renotreally compatible,andendin**CoviDivorce**?"*
6.	Morona	10,026	**Moron+corona** the mental condition of a person whose behaviour is abnormal because of the coronavirus pandemic.
			*"Iamsearchingforsuitableland tobuild adetentioncenterfortheRSS guysasIfeel**Morona** ismoredangerousthan Corona"*
7.	Pandumbic	4,881	**Pandemic+dumb** In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, a covedient adheres to all public health recommendations.
			*"Couldn'tpossiblyhavepredicted that!Ifonly theyhad realfacts&datato helpmake an educateddecision.**#Pandumbic**"*

8.	Quaranteens,coronials, coronababies	12,717	**Quarantine+teenagers** **Corona+millennials** Those born during the Corona Outbreak are known as Coronials or Coronababies and will develop into Quaranteens.
			*"So willallthebabiesborn 9monthsafterthese quarantines be called **coronababies**? #coronapocolypse"*
			*"According tothreeteststoday,mywife's pregnanttheyWARNED usthiswouldhappen, America!**#quaranteens**"*
9.	Quaranteams	3,615	**Quarantine+teams** A Quaranteam is a collection of players who form a united front in the event of a server shutdown.
			*"ifwe'reallgonna form **Quaranteam**s,weneed**Quaranteam** names"*
10.	Trumpdemic	2,251	**Trump+pandemic** Users have criticised Trump's late response to the COVID-19 outbreak, claiming that his inaction contributed to the rapid spread of the epidemic throughout the United States.
			*"Whenwasthelasttimeyou talkedaboutthe**#trumpdemic**?115,000deadAmer icansand nowyou justignoreit? That'snotgoing toget youre- elected.Ipromiseyouthat."*

Table 2 displays how eloquently people have come up with new terms to represent novel circumstances. The World Health Organization (WHO) has given this unique coronavirus the name COVID-19, which is an example of word construction in and of itself, being a clipped compound: The letters CO, VI, and D are all abbreviations of other words: corona, virus, and disease, respectively. The year 19 denotes the beginning of the pandemic.

Table(3):Unique COVID-19 idioms resulting from lexical experimentation.

	Trending Term	Frequency	Usageand example

1.	**Skeleton crew**	8,541	The minimum number of people needed to run a business or an organization
			Due to the financial problems of the company, the office will be run with a skeleton crew for the foreseeable future.The Covid-19 emergency means that we will run the buses with a skeleton crew until further notice.
2.	**Add insult to injury**	6,221	act in a way that makes a bad situation worse
			To add insult to injury, many news outlets are blaming minority communities for having higher rates of chronic disease which makes them more susceptible to COVID-19
3.	Coronacuts	94,873	When barbershops are closed or when one must step in as the family's hairdresser due to a quarantine, the term "corona-cuts" is used to describe the practise of cutting one's own hair.
			*"Newclippers- newhaircuts.Weboth stilllooka bitrougharoundtheedges. **#Coronacuts"***
4.	Covid-19(lbs)	25,764	This term makes light of the fact that persons under quarantine tend to put on weight.
			*"Hasanyoneelsegained the**Covid 19 lbs** staying athomedoingnothing alldayeverydayforthelast 2months!?"*
5.	Doomscrolling	42,181	It's glued-to-the-screen obsession with the newest epidemic updates that prevents us from doing anything else.
			*"So,whenyoufinallyforceyourselftoaccomplishsomethi ngafterhoursof **doomscrolling**,remember thatyou'reactuallydoinga revolutionaryact*."

6.	ElbowBump	19,577	When two persons greet one another informally, they may bump elbows. With the recent COVID-19 epidemic, this greeting once again gained popularity.
			*"SomethingthatI'mfindingverystrangeatthe momentisnotshakinghandswith people. Idon't likethenew"**elbowbump**"atall. Iliketoshake peoples'handsanditseemsstrange nottodoit."*
7.	KungFlu	58,321	One anonymous White House official first popularised the nickname "Kung-Fu" to describe the deadly coronavirus. Although it was meant as a jest, it was met with harsh criticism for a number of reasons anyhow.
			*"TrumptriedtostokehateagainstAsianssaying WuhanVirus,ChineseVirus, and**KungFlu.**"*
8.	MileyCyrus	2,859	In Cockney rhyming slang, "coronavirus" has been replaced with the name of the pop singer.
			*"Aftermuchdebatewithqualified academics(i.e. mymatesinthepub)ithasbeen decidedthatthecorrectCockneyrhyming slangforCorona Virusis**MileyCyrus**."*
9.	MissRona	81,682	Like the virus itself, Miss Rona is a villain that doesn't mess around.
			*"Alotofthingswouldn'thavehappenedthisyearif **missrona**wasn'taround"*
10.	QuarantineandChill	102,358	Those who have been confined with their families may be doing a lot of "Netflix and Chill"-style activities together. In order to make it seem less like a government order and more like a personal decision, this term is often employed.
			*"Ontoday'sepisodeof**quarantineand chill**...I cleaned allofmy shoesAthleticshoes"*

The examples of lexical variation shown in Table 3 are often humorous uses of language. The latter two groups observed were less prevalent in tweets from healthcare institutions and conferences than

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the first. In recent years, the proliferation of social media and weblogs has tremendously facilitated the dissemination of new idioms and catchphrases. Ronald Carter (1999), in his widely referenced paper on linguistic innovation, argues that verbal play is frequently performed for funny reasons, in part to bring people closer together, and in part to challenge the "normal" perspective of things. Later, he argues that creative language has a functional purpose beyond its aesthetic value.

5. Conclusion

Coronavirus has had a profound impact on our way of life in just three short months. Because of this, many companies have shut down, and our workdays have changed drastically. This new lexicon has become an efficient shorthand for discussing the effects of the coronavirus on our daily lives, the effects of lockdown procedures, or even just making light of the issue and having a little fun with it. The recent influx of metaphors, neologisms, and lexical innovations shows that linguistic creativity is fundamental to language, forever reshaping how we engage with the world.

People are better able to express their concerns about the worst health crisis in generations thanks to the expansion of their vocabularies. It acts as "social glue" in the sense that it unites people around shared cultural understandings. Conversations help people feel closer to one another when they don't have the opportunity for regular social contact.

It's possible that the increased digital connectivity of modern society is a key component in the spread of coronavirus terminology. We rely heavily on social media sites that can be accessed instantly. Now that so many people are linked together online, it is easier for someone to start using a new word and have it become popular outside their immediate circle of friends and family.

The way in which people gather together to debate the problems and possibilities given by the new conditions is reflected in the ways in which they utilise language creatively during times of social or civic upheaval. As the spread of the coronavirus continues, it will be crucial that you are able to understand the terminology being used to describe it.

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