

A Morphological Investigation into Lexical Innovation and Neologisms within Post Pandemic Crisis English

Lt Dr.S. Nithya¹

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Languages, Karpagam Academy of Higher Education, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. E-mail: snithyacbe@gmail.com, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5143-2661>

Abstract: The pandemic of COVID-19 provoked a sudden change in the English language, which resulted in the appearance of a large number of neologisms that mirror the changing social, cultural, and communicative practices. The paper analyzes the lexical innovation under post-pandemic English in the morphological context, how the new coins were coined, and the classification of the new coins. A set of 80 neologisms was anchored on various sources, including social media, news, blogs, and online dictionaries. These lexical items are identified as 5 broad morphological processes by the study based on a qualitative and partially quantitative system of analysis that encompasses the following processes, including compounding, blending, affixation, acronyms, and conversion. The findings indicate that the most common processes are compounding (24) and blending (27.5) processes, meaning that individuals tend to use the available lexical units to create meaningful processes most effectively. The proportion of affixation is 17.5%, and acronyms and conversion are 12.5% in the dataset, respectively. The analysis also provides an understanding that numerous neologisms have highly emotional and sociocultural overtones, which reflect the experiences of society in the pandemic. The paper comes to the conclusion that English of the post-pandemic era is morphologically productive and adaptable; the significance of language as a dynamic tool to respond to crisis situations in the world is emphasized.

Key Words: neologisms, morphology, lexical innovation, post-pandemic english, word formation, sociolinguistics

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Introduction

Language, being a socio-cultural phenomenon, is dynamic and changes at a very fast rate in response to changes in the socio-cultural processes, particularly during the global crises. The COVID-19 pandemic can be characterized as one of the most important modern phenomena that instigated the linguistic change worldwide. As the societies adjusted to the new times, with lockdowns, social distancing, and reliance on the digital world, English saw the greatest influx of lexical innovation/neologisms. Such recently coined words as "covidiot," "doomscrolling," and "quarantine" are not only innovatively produced words but also reflect the psychological, social, and cultural life of individuals during the time of the pandemic. The studies have found out that this kind of lexical innovation is normally inspired by the need to describe new experiences and everyday global events (Karanevych et al., 2023).

The importance of studying neologisms is that can help portray a shift in the language as it evolves and provide an insight into the shifting trends in communication. Neologisms are a language marker of social change and can give a clue of how speakers conceptualize and respond to crises. Research on the subject matter has revealed that neologisms related to COVID-19 usage are no longer a casual usage but rather a subset of the media discourse, political discourse, and even digital communication (Ivanov et al.,

2023). Additionally, the prevalence of the terms in social media has enhanced the magnitude and made the use of the terms natural in different language communities (Muzani & Lotfie, 2024).

Although the research on language in the context of the pandemic is swelling, a gap in research has been observed in the studies that specifically look at the morphological processes that underlie such lexical innovations. Although a number of researchers have studied semantic changes and discourse-level meanings of neologisms (Un et al., 2024), limited research has done a systematic classification of the structural rules of blending, compounding, affixation, and clipping that aid neologism formation. This discrepancy shows that a more detailed morphological analysis that could help to understand how new lexical units are formed and incorporated in modern English should be considered better.

The given research seeks to fill this gap by doing an in-depth morphological analysis of English neologisms after the pandemic. The purpose of the research is three-fold: to find out the new lexical units of the COVID-19 crisis, to categorize these neologisms according to the morphology processes that are known and to discuss the linguistic patterns according to which these neologisms are made and used. The paper is added to the overall information about the development of language during the crisis and accentuates the part of morphology in the development of modern English.

The paper will be organized in the following way. Section 1 provides an introduction to the research topic, states the objectives and explains why it is important to study the subject of the post-pandemic lexical innovation. Section 2 provides a review of the literature on neologisms, lexical innovation and morphological processes, and establishes the research gap. Section 3 outlines the research methodology, such as data collection, sample selection and analytical framework which is applied in the classification. Section 4 is the data analysis and discussion section that will discuss the distribution and patterns of neologisms with tables and figures to support the discussion. Section 5 gives a summary of the major findings obtained in the analysis. Lastly, Section 6 closes the research by indicating significant insights, implications and future research directions.

Literature Review

The majority of the neologisms are usually believed to be new words or words that lexical items are produced or new words that are new as well in a given socio-cultural context. This phenomenon of creating such new forms and meanings more broadly is called lexical innovation and is usually induced by the necessity to describe new experiences or phenomena. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a distinctive linguistic situation that promoted the rapid and massive innovation of lexicon, leading to the creation of a plethora of neologisms in various fields (Karanevych et al., 2023). These words not only enriched the vocabulary of English but also reflected the experience of the people and their attitude to the world, which was in a crisis never before.

Much of the literature has been carried out with respect to the use of neologisms to capture the pandemic-related realities. Research has demonstrated that new terms can be highly emotional and evaluative, with some negative and positive sides of the experience of the pandemic being captured by new terms (Novikova & Suima, 2025). Neologism was also discovered to be powerful tools of social-political discourse, where also contribute to the formation of a narrative and how the population is formed (Ivanov et al., 2023). This demonstrates the poly-functionality of lexical innovation which is poly-functional both linguistically and sociocultural. Of considerable significance has been the media discourse in terms of the spreading and normalizing of the neologisms. The studies have found that lexical items are introduced and disseminated majorly via the news media and other forms of digital communication media hence helping

to incorporate them in the daily language usage (Linok et al., 2025). Morphological analyses of the content of the media also demonstrate that these neologisms can frequently be exposed to known patterns of word construction and therefore, speakers can easily understand it and borrow it (Eid et al., 2024). The dynamism of the language development due to the world events reminds us of this interrelation of the media and morphology.

Theoretically, the morphological processes, such as derivation, compounding, blending, and clipping, are crucial in the formation of the neologisms. The speakers can create new words by combining the already existing elements of language in new ways through the processes. This has been observed especially in the social media space, where morphological creativity is encouraged whereby the users actively engage in the experimentation of language so as to come up with new expressions and slangs (Muzani & Lotfie, 2024). Along with this, a correlation between semantic change and morphological innovation has been emphasized, suggesting that new meanings and new forms are often co-created at both times when a language is changing (Un et al., 2024).

The similarities in the construction of the neologisms and the crisis in different linguistic and cultural contexts still uphold the universality of the neologism construction in the period of the crisis (Novikova & Suima, 2025). The analyses of political talk and conflict situations show that lexicon innovation is not a pandemic-related phenomenon but a universal phenomenon connected with significant socio-political change (Tepla, 2024; Shawish, 2025). These analyses imply that there are general patterns in the construction of words and that language is adaptable in adapting to the dynamic realities. The importance of documenting neologisms so that one can learn more about them in creating the language and vocabulary in the contemporary world is also discovered by lexicological studies (Raet, 2024; Tallarico et al., 2025).

In addition to the significance of their language, neologisms have been discovered to have psychological and cognitive meaning to the language users. The lexico-grammatical innovations can transform the perception of people and their interpretation of events and have the potential to influence the emotional responses and communicative behavior (Chen & Stepanov, 2025). The relevance of studying neologisms as complex phenomena with more than just structural implications and broader socio-cultural and psychological implications is also emphasized by this aspect.

The fact that a large amount of literature is currently available on the analysis of neologisms within the context of pandemic and crises, leaves a significant gap in the methodical research of the morphology of post-pandemic lexical innovations in English. Although the issues related to semantic, sociolinguistic and discourse aspects have been discussed in the previous studies, no work has gone into the details of exploring the internal structure and mechanics of the production of these new lexical items. This shortcoming will restrict a deeper analysis of how language structural changes will be in the context of rapid change.

In this way, the study will help fill this gap and provide a comprehensive morphological study of neologisms that have emerged during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Having sorted out these lexical objects by the well-known mechanisms of word formation and having examined their structural forms, the work will provide the history of the morphological theory and a deeper insight into how the English language is changing nowadays.

Methodology

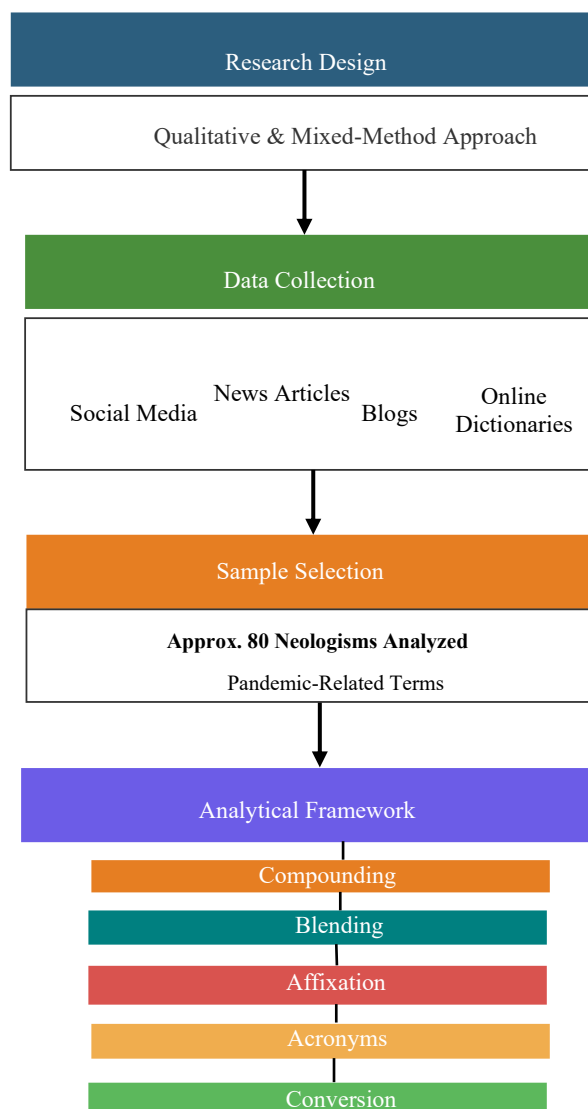


Figure 1: Research Methodology Framework for Morphological Analysis of Post-Pandemic Neologisms

The systematic image of the methodology of the research conducted in this study provided in figure 1 describes the ramifications of carrying out an analysis of lexical innovation in post-pandemic English. It begins with the research design, which is through a qualitative and mixed-method approach, to offer depth of description as well as rigor of analysis. It follows this by data collection, where neologisms will be collected through the use of different sources such as social media, news, blogs, and online dictionaries to gain the usage of language in the modern and original context. The stage of the sample selection reveals the identification of about 80 pandemic-related neologisms according to their relevance and morphological clarity. Finally, the context of the analysis dwells on the above lexical items and categorizes them as major word-formation processes, including, but not limited to, compounding, blending, affixation, acronyms, and conversion. Its method is systematic and coherent, as figure 1 demonstrates, which makes it possible to analyze the morphological patterns in new English words in detail.

Research Design

In this paper, the research design of the qualitative research with a slight touch of selective quantitative research design will be used to provide a comprehensive study of the post-pandemic English as regards lexical innovation. The qualitative approach is particularly suitable for exploring the structural and situational peculiarities of neologisms, as it allows examining linguistic patterns and the word-forming process in greater detail. In the meantime, there is not much quantitative analysis to establish the frequency and distribution of different morphological categories. Such an ambivalent method provides the richness of a description and clarity of analytical interpretation of the data.

It is predominantly descriptive and analytical, and it is interested in the way newly coined lexical items indicative of morphological creativity emerged during and after the COVID-19 crisis. The work will be merged with the interpretation of the classification, which will help introduce a systematic understanding of the process of neologism creation and its role in contemporary English use.

Data Collection

To create variety in the data and ensure its authenticity and relevance to this research, different sources of original and current data were employed. The primary sources of linguistic innovation, namely, social media (primarily, Twitter and Reddit), are extremely dynamic and user-oriented. These channels are good breeding grounds for new lexicons' emergence and dissemination due to their informality and interactive nature.

Additionally, news reports from credible online media sources were analyzed to document how the neologism varies from informal to more formal and standardized contexts. The blogs and online forums were no exception, as were more likely to capture personal experiences and the use of creativity in language during the pandemic period. Additionally, the meanings, origins, and acceptability of the selected neologisms were verified using online dictionaries and lexical databases.

Words that emerged or gained greater prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath were incorporated into the data collection process to ensure the use of words pertinent to the research objectives.

Sample Selection

Approximately 80 neologisms were chosen to take a closer look at them. The sample size is neither too big nor too small, as it is recommended to be 50-100 lexical items; therefore, it can be deep and representative. The following criteria were used to sample:

- The word should have surfaced or become popular in the pandemic time.
- It has to demonstrate some positive indications of lexical innovation.
- It must be relevant to social, cultural, or communicative changes in regard to COVID-19.
- A morphologically structured word should be used.

Caution was also noted, with equal coverage of examples across different disciplines such as health communication, social behavior, digital interaction, and political discourse. This will make the dataset more effective at reflecting the diversity of English use once the pandemic is over.

Analytical Framework

The study is based on the proven principles of morphological theory, which is aimed at classifying neologisms based on the processes of their word formation. All the lexical items of the dataset are analyzed and categorized as one of the following morphological types:

- **Compounding:** Creation of new words through the combination of two or more lexical units that are independent (e.g., doomscrolling)
- **Blending:** two words together with the purpose of creating a new lexical unit (e.g., covidiot).
- **Affixation:** The prefixes and suffixes are added to the already existing words, and this gives rise to new meanings.
- **Acronyms:** Words that are made of the first letter of a phrase (e.g., WFH - Work from Home).
- **Conversion:** A transformation of a word grammatically, but not in its form.

Each category is classified based on the characteristics of its structure, its occurrence and significance. The framework also considers the semantic implications and uses in context to provide a holistic understanding of lexical innovation.

The study under the impact of such systematic grouping will reveal the most frequent morphological patterns and emphasize the significance of the processes of word formation in the formation of post-pandemic English.

Data Analysis and Discussion

In this paper, a list of about 80 neologisms that emerged during and after the COVID-19 pandemic is presented. It is divided into categories that identify the most prevalent morphological processes and the ways in which this new lexical material indicates linguistic creativity and social-cultural accommodation. The results show that English after the pandemic is highly innovative, especially in informative and digitally mediated communication settings.

Classification of Neologisms

The neologisms obtained were systematically grouped into the five most important morphological operations: compounding, blending, affixation, acronyms, and conversion. The classification shows that some processes are more effective at producing new lexical items in crisis circumstances than others.

Table 1: Distribution of Neologisms by Morphological Process

Morphological Process	Number of Words	Percentage (%)	Example Words
Compounding	24	30%	doomscrolling, lockdownlife
Blending	22	27.5%	covidiot, quarantini
Affixation	14	17.5%	pre-pandemic, post-COVID
Acronyms	10	12.5%	WFH, PPE
Conversion	10	12.5%	to quarantine (verb), to Zoom
Total	80	100%	—

The data indicate in table 1, that the most dominant process is compounding (30%), followed by blending (27.5%). This means that speakers like confusing lexical units that already possess, or parts of

words, to create meaningful phrases within a short period of time. Though affixation remains significant, it is not as prominent, meaning that prefixation and suffixation are not as significant as more creative processes like blending.

Morphological Patterns

The review shows that there are some significant morphological patterns:

- Simple, straightforward compounding is prevalent because of its ease. The terms "doomscrolling" (doom + scrolling) and "lockdown life" are successfully applied to combine two meaningful units to characterize the new way of doing things.
- The phenomenon of blending is a most linguistically creative one. "Covidiot" (COVID + idiot) and "quarantini" (quarantine + martini) are jokingly, socially satirical, and emotive terms.
- The affixation is more likely to reinforce the time- or context-related senses, i.e., post-COVID or pre-pandemic, referring to the time- and perception-related shifts.
- Acronyms are effective in communication, especially in professional and medical contexts (e.g., WFH, PPE).

And conversion exemplifies functional flexibility, in which nouns are turned into verbs (e.g., to Zoom, to quarantine), as well as the dynamism of the English grammar.

These tendencies indicate that the need to be quick, explicit, and expressive is what morphological productivity in the pandemic is driven by.

Semantic and Functional Implications

Besides the structure, the neologisms possess good semantic characteristics:

- Anxiety / uncertainties Anxiety and uncertainty manifest themselves in numerous emotionally colored words, in particular negative words (e.g., doomscrolling).
- Humorous coping (e.g., quarantini), i.e., psychological adaptations, is one of the neologisms coined.
- There are practical uses by others, especially in business communication (e.g., WFH).

This type of emotional, social, and functional synthesis of meaning shows that lexical innovation is not a structural phenomenon and is based on human experience.

Sociolinguistic Influence

It is also revealed that the digital communication platforms were important in hastening the lexical innovation. Conciseness, innovation, and rapid sharing are encouraged by the social media contexts and consequently make them the ideal places to coin neologisms. As a result:

- Informal language reigns in innovation.
- Adoption is rapid throughout the world.
- Words are cross-cultural and linguistic.

It is also through the media that neologisms become acceptable, and cease being a slang term and become popular.

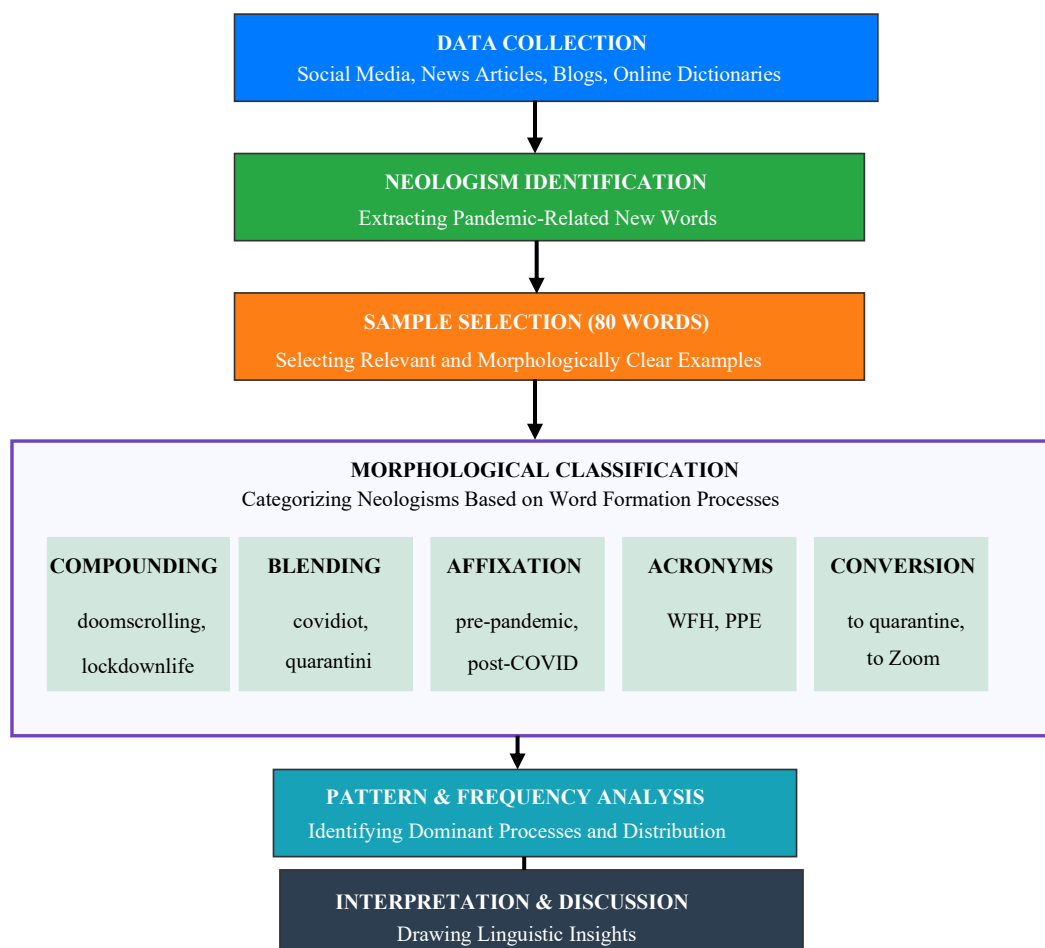


Figure 2: Morphological Analysis Flow of Post-Pandemic Neologisms

Figure 2 illustrates how the morphological study was done systematically, and it was applied in this research. It begins with collecting data from different language sources and identifying and selecting useful neologisms. The lexical items are then categorized into different morphological processes, including compounding, blending, affixation, acronyms, and conversion. Such classification, as illustrated in figure 2, allows the patterns and frequency distributions to be established and a resultant interpretation to be drawn to provide meaningful linguistic information. The scheme underscores the methodological and time-based nature of the analytical model, ensuring clarity and consistency in the research on lexical innovation in the post-pandemic period.

Findings

Considering the example of 80 neologisms formed after the pandemic, we can highlight certain trends in word formation and usage, enabling us to observe the dynamism of modern English. Among the morphological processes found, compounding is by far the most prevalent, accounting for 30% of the dataset, followed by blending at 27.5%. Combined, these two processes account for over half (57.5%) of the total number of lexical elements analyzed, demonstrating a strong tendency to combine existing linguistic units to form new meanings. The productivity of the components of affixation and acronyms are 17.5 and 12.5, respectively, which are rather low but still high.

The lexical evolution of the pandemic can be regarded as one of the most crucial, as the acute need to designate the new experience and the alteration of social practices led to the rapid expansion of the lexicon. The emergence of words related to health, remote work, digital behavior, and emotional states is an indicator of language transformations in response to global crises. It is not only rapid but also innovative, as the use of new words becomes very widespread within a relatively very short period.

The other interesting discovery of the study is the significant contribution of the media and the internet in the innovation of lexical innovation. Social media platforms are among the biggest venues for the creation and propagation of neologisms, as can be easily distributed among various users. News media and Internet sources also promote these terms and become a norm and standard, creating a distinction between colloquial use of the words and standard language.

The second significant finding is that in the case of lexical innovation, informality is predominant. Most of the neologisms under analysis have an informal, humorous, or expressive nature as dynamic since digital communication is conversational. The specified trend assumes that users of the language will be more inclined to attend to relatability and emotional expression, and less to formal linguistic forms, in crisis contexts. Altogether, the findings demonstrate that post-pandemic English is morphologically prolific under the influence of digitalization and the shift to informal and creative language use, contributing to English's flexibility in a dynamically evolving world.

Conclusion

This paper provides a long, in-depth analysis of lexical innovation in English following the pandemic and of how the language is evolving to capture events never experienced before. The findings indicate that the most fruitful processes of word formation are compounding (30%) and blending (27.5%), which together constitute more than half of the data set under analysis. Affixation and acronyms and conversion comprise 17.5 and 12.5, respectively, and neither morphological strategy is predominant, but both are creative. The results emphasize the relevance of neologisms as structural features and expressions of sociality, as reveal emotional responses and behavioral shifts alongside changes in communication patterns during the pandemic. The digitality and informality of the words only emphasize the fact that social media plays an even greater role in accelerating the rate of lexical innovation and spreading all over the globe. In linguistic terms, the study finds that English is highly adaptable and morphologically flexible in times of crisis. These discoveries help develop an overall understanding of language development and the contribution of morphology to the formation of modern words. This work can be further developed in future studies, depending on the amount of multilingual data to be used, the use of computational linguistic tools, and cross-cultural differences in the formation of neologisms. These directions would offer more information on the dynamics of lexical innovation all over the world.

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