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LEXICAL INNOVATIONS OF COVID-19 PERIOD: STRUCTURAL AND LINGUOPRAGMATIC ASPECTS

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The aim of this article is to research the properties of lexical innovations emerged during 2020–2021, the years of the global pandemic COVID-19, and the aspects of meaning of new phenomena they nominate. The study is based on the procedural apparatus of structural and pragmatic linguistics. The data used are taken out from online versions of English quality and mass newspapers, magazines, online dictionaries (oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com, dictionary.cambridge.org, collinsdictionary.com, merriam-webster.com, urbandictionary.com, dictionary.com). The results characterise the frequency of word-formation morphological models, comprising word-composition, blending and shortening.

The paper focuses on innovations with the lexical items "coronavirus", "Covid-19", "epidemic / pandemic", "quarantine", "Zoom" functioning as a structural component in a series of structurally similar lexical units. The frequency of this structural component is explained by newly coined items semantics, which is connected with the relevant referent accepted by the society and most adequately understood, as it conveys a specific content about the realities of life. The meaning of such a word-formation constituent is easily predicted on the basis of its semantic structure. The article singles out the specific features of using the analyzed lexical innovations to refer to referents of various spheres in the English media discourse of 2020-2021 are identified and investigated. The research proves that innovations in question function in the English media discourse to realize a number of strategies. In the studied research the role of the selected lexical innovations of Covid-19 period in the implementation of strategies for organizing Modern English media discourse were taken into consideration: informative-interpretative, evaluative and attention drawing.

Keywords: lexical innovations, COVID-19, word-formation morphological models, media discourse, strategies.

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ЛЕКСИЧНІ ІННОВАЦІЇ ПЕРІОДУ COVID-19: СТРУКТУРНИЙ ТА ЛІНГВОПРАГМАТИЧНИЙ АСПЕКТИ

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Метою цього дослідження є вивчення особливостей лексичних інновацій, що з'явилися протягом 2020-го року, року глобальної пандемії COVID-19, та аспектів нових явищ, які вони позначають. Дослідження базується на процедурному апараті структурної та прагматичної лінгвістики. Використані дані взято з онлайн-версій англійських якісних та масових газет, журналів, онлайн-словників (oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com, dictionary.cambridge.org, collinsdictionary.com, merriam-webster.com, urbandictionary.com, dictionary.com). Результати визначили продуктивність морфологічних моделей творення лексичних інновацій (з-поміж яких було виокремлено словоскладання, телескопію та скорочення).

У роботі розглянуто інновації, у компонентному складі яких є повнозначне слово ("coronavirus", "Covid-19", "epidemic / pandemic", "quarantine", "Zoom"), що повторюється в серії структурно однотипних лексичних одиниць. Частота повторення такого елемента із зміцненням тільки за ним позначенням якогось прийнятого суспільством явища життя з конкретним значенням найбільш адекватно осмислюється та використовується для передавання конкретного змісту про реалії дійсності, оскільки прогноуються за допомогою його семної структури. Так було виявлено та досліджено особливості застосування виокремлених лексичних інновацій на позначення референтів різних сфер в англійському медійному дискурсі 2020–2021 років. У процесі дослідження було розглянуто значення виокремлених лексичних інновацій, що виникли в період COVID-19, у реалізації стратегій організації сучасного англійського медійного дискурсу: інформаційно-інтерпретаційної, оцінки та привернення уваги.

Ключові слова: лексичні інновації, COVID-19, словотвірні морфологічні моделі, медійний дискурс, стратегії.

Introduction of the issue. Every year the team of expert lexicographers of Oxford English Dictionary [15] find out and publish a word or phrase that has become the one of cultural significance by examining in detail the themes that were a focus for the language, monitoring and analysing language corpora. So, the Word of the Year 2016 was "post-truth", 2017 – "youthquake", 2018 – "toxic", 2019 – "climate emergency". However, everything changed in 2020, the year when a single word couldn't be summed up. A lot of unpredictable risks of social, economic, and political life including the medical, transportation, agricultural, environmental, tourism sectors as well as the quick usage of new technologies to support remote working and living for more than 219 countries and territories around the world emerged during 2020 – 2021. In the new global world, the problem of the COVID-19 pandemic has become a central issue for depicting the

most demonstrable referents via new lexical units concerning it in the media discourse.

Current state of the issue. There have been a number of studies involving the newly popular lexemes related to the COVID-19 pandemic itself and the socially distanced character of human contact and communication since the beginning of 2020. Questions have been raised about the process of word-formation of neologisms related to Coronavirus (Babeliuk O. A., Didukh L. I. [4]; Bondarenko O. M. [5]; Ervina SM. Simatupang [8]; Krans [10], Lawson, [12]; Asif Muhammad, Zhiyong Deng, Iram Anila, Nisar Maria [3]; Vesna T. V. [19]), the frequency of the ways of their formation and the new cultural phenomenon of their representation in the English media discourse (Sandyha L. O., Ruban L. M., Svyrydiuk T. V., Shevchenko L. O. [17]; Bryan Lim [6]; Puhak, [16]), the links of new words with social, cultural factors and human

personality (Alyeksyeyeva I. O., Chaiuk T. A., Galitska E. A. [2]; Krapivnyk H. [11]; Katermina V., Yachenko E. [9]).

The outline of unresolved issues brought up in the article. However, much of the research on new lexemes in the language up to now has been descriptive in nature.

Aim of research. This paper will review the research conducted on structural types of word-formation models according to which the lexical innovations, which refer to new concepts of human life during the global COVID-19 year, are formed. The major objective of this study is to investigate the derivatives of morphological word-formation models, when the generating base is combined with word-formative means. There are two primary aims of this study: 1) to investigate the lexical innovations of COVID-19 period in terms of their mostly frequently used elements and ways of word formation; 2) to ascertain the investigated lexical units' application to referring to the spheres of reality in the English media discourse of 2020–2021.

Materials and Methods of research. Data for this study were collected from online versions of English quality and mass newspapers, magazines ("New York Times", "USA Today", "The Economist", "The Guardian", "Financial Times", "The Economic Times", "The Sydney Morning Herald") and online dictionaries (oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com, dictionary.cambridge.org, collinsdictionary.com, merriam-webster.com, urbandictionary.com, dictionary.com). The material was analysed with the help of both qualitative and quantitative methods as well as a semantic, contextual-interpretative and linguopragmatic ones. The study uses qualitative analysis in order to gain insights into lexemes "coronavirus", "Covid-19", "pandemic", "quarantine", "Zoom" so as to find the frequency with which the analysed lexical units appear in media texts.

Results and discussion. A total of 254 samples were taken from media issues and include such lexical units as "coronavirus", "Covid-19", "epidemic / pandemic", "quarantine", "Zoom". A feature of modern English-language units of communication is a certain constant component (either in the prepositive and postpositive positions), considered as a linguistic representation of reality, and traced in a series of analogical innovations formed on the example of a specific constituent word-formation model, for example: N + N (covid +N), Adj. + N (Adj. + covid). After collection, the samples were analysed from two points of view: the word-formation process that supply the language with the number of new lexical units and the spheres of reality that the analysed units are implemented in the process of constructing English media discourse.

The process of constructing the new lexical units is represented by morphological models, within which we distinguish word-composition, affixational derivation, blending, and shortening. These word-formation models are constructed on the principal of the elementary in its structure word-formative means that is combined with the certain constant component.

From the point of view of the analyzed lexemes application to referring to the spheres of reality, we distinguish the following groups they nominate:

- people by their characteristic feature, affiliation to a group of devotees and their way of living, e.g.:

coronator (coronavirus + terminator) [18], *coronextra* (coronavirus + extra) – "a person who takes rather extreme precautions against the coronavirus often to unintentionally comedic effect" [13], *coronic* – "a person who has contracted coronavirus" [18], *coronaroamers* – (coronavirus + roamers) – "selfish knob heads flouting isolation rules as they think the rules don't apply to them" [14], *corona moaner* – "the whinger" [13], *corona-uber* (coronavirus +

Uber) – "people who can't wait and want to get infected" [18], *coronaververse* – "the name given to human society in a post Covid-19 world" [18], *coronatinis* – "people who are microsocializing in an extended virtual happy hour" [15];

covidient – "a person who strictly follows the directives and orders of the government during the coronavirus outbreak" [18], *covidol* (Covid-19 + idol) – "someone who is the ideal citizen by practicing social distancing during covid-19" [18], *covid muncher* – "low lifes who want covid: they enjoy covid parties and hang out with people who've tested positive for covid" [18], *covidiot* – "a person who ignores guidelines and rules on public safety around COVID-19, unnecessarily hoards supplies, etc" [15], *covidate* (covid + moderate) – "a person who behaves moderately during this pandemic" [18], *coViddy* – "a person who is acting out irrationally of fear of exposure to the COVID-19" [18], *covid-truthers* – "skeptics and conspiratorialists" [7];

quarantrolls (quarantine + trolls) – "people who take to social media to vent spleen about their incarceration" [18];

zoombie – "a person who becomes the living dead by spending all day on video conferences, especially on Zoom" [18], *zoombomber* – "a disruptive individual" [1], *zoomsman* – "groomsmen who is unable to attend the wedding in person but joins via a zoom call, usually carried about by another groomsman" [18];

- people by their group affiliation and age, e.g.:

coronababies – "the children born or conceived during the pandemic" [14], *coronakids* – "one result of restlessness spousal intimacy" [18], *coronallennial* (coronavirus + millennial) [18], *coronial* – "someone who was born around the time of the covid-19 pandemic" [13];

a Covid – "a child born or conceived during the pandemic" [15], *covidial* – "the generation of children born between November 2020 and June 2021 as a result of the infamous Covid-19

lockdowns" [18], *Gen-C* – "the generation born during the time of Covid-19" [18];

quaranteen – "a teenager in the time of the covid-19 lockdown / the generation born in the time of COVID-19" [18];

zoomer – "the fast-paced upbringings members of Generation Z, characterized to have due to the fast advances in technology and culture that has been happening around them as a result of the interconnectivity of the American and Global populations because of the ubiquity of internet-connected smart phones and social media" [18];

- people by their spheres of activity, e.g.:

quaranteam – "a group of people who create a social circle during the COVID-19 pandemic, prohibiting interaction with others";

- social life realia, e.g.:

corona corridor – "an area that people are allowed to travel through to reach a particular destination as the COVID-19 lockdown measures are gradually eased" [18], *coronaspeck* – "weight gained during lockdown as a result of eating more than usual because of working from home" [13], *rona* (*Miss Rona / Aunt Rona*) – "often used in a playful or ironic way to refer to COVID-19, especially when commenting on more relatable, humorous challenges of social distancing during the pandemic" [15], *depressorona* (depression + coronavirus) [1];

coronasplaining – "similar to 'mansplaining', when someone who doesn't know very much about a topic lectures others" [18], *coronalingus* – "sex during the Coronavirus time of social distancing" [18], *coronapocalypse / coronageddon* – "end of the world due to rising COVID-19 infections" [13; 18], *coronavision* – "problems with eyesight that began or worsened during the period of the covid-19 pandemic and lockdown" [15], *coronadose* – "obsessively scrolling for updates on the pandemic even there's no good news"[14], *coronacocooning / coronacuffing* – "sheltering in place or wrapping oneself in the comforts of home to avoid getting

or spreading a coronavirus infection" [18], *coronawashing* (coronavirus + whitewashing) [18], *coronancellations* (coronavirus + cancellations) [13], *corona-testing*, *coronarave* – "laying music and dancing around your house after you've drunk yourself into a Coronavirus-related stupor" [15], *coronavirus outbreak*, *novel coronavirus (nCoV)* – "a coronavirus that has not previously been detected or reported" [14], *viral load* – "a measurement of the amount of a virus that is present in a person, an organism, or a particular environment" [1];

covidivorce – "the process of ending a marriage as a consequence of the couple spending a large period of time together in lockdown during the covid-19 pandemic" [13], *covideo party* – "online parties via Zoom or Skype" [18];

epidemic / pandemic (the pandy) – "a widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community or geographic area" [18], *plandemic* – "a planned pandemic" [18], *infodemic* – "a proliferation of diverse, often unsubstantiated information relating to a crisis, controversy, or event, which disseminates rapidly and uncontrollably through news, online, and social media, and is regarded as intensifying public speculation or anxiety" [15], *pandemic proposal* – "a marriage proposal that happens just because one is stuck alone for so long" [7], *twindemic* (twofold / double + pandemic) – "the dual threat of a severe flu outbreak on top of the COVID-19 pandemic in the fall and winter of 2020" [15], *spendemic* – "a sudden tendency for people to spend money, usually on unnecessary things" [14];

quarantimes (quarantine + times) – "life and politics in times of the coronapandemic" [18], *quarantees* (quarantine + guarantees) [14]; *quarantough* (quarantine + tough) [13]; *quarantine shaming* – "posting of videos etc of people flouting social distancing guidelines" [13];

zoom-room – "the one corner of the home that is kept clean for video conferences" [7], *zoomwear / zoomdressing* (*zoomshirts / zoomjackets / zoomties*) – "a style of dressing that involves wearing clothes suitable for the office above the waist and casual clothing below the waist" [18];

- activity, e.g.:

coronarave – "playing music and dancing around one's house after one's drunk oneself into a coronavirus-related" [1];

quarantoning – "the activity that takes away the guilt from comfort-eating and Netflixing" [7], *quaranstreaming* – "binge viewing during quarantine" [18];

zumping – "the ending a relationship during a Zoom call" [13], *zoombombing / zoom raiding* – "the act of joining a meeting on the Zoom videoconferencing platform without having been invited, with the aim of disrupting it, often by posting inappropriate content" [15];

- technical society development, e.g.:

quarantinderen – "to use Tinder (an American geosocial networking and online dating application that allows users to anonymously swipe to like or dislike other profiles based on their photos, a small bio, and common interests) while in quarantine" [15];

- phenomena of economic, scientific, informational, social, financial spheres, e.g.:

corona-waltz – "maneuvering around other people in public, like a dance, to avoid getting too close to them" [14], *corona-dodge* – "physically avoiding others out in public so as not to contract the virus" [14], *coronalusional* – "suffering from disordered thinking as a result of or during the COVID-19 crisis" [7], *coronanoia* – "a thought process or fear driven reaction to Covid19, many times to the point of irrationality and/or delusion" [18], *coronacoma* – "for the period of shutdown, or that deliciously long quarantine sleep" [18], *corona-crisis / coronacation* – "cessation of study or work due to the pandemic, viewed as a

holiday" [13], *coronavoid* (coronavirus + void) – "empty streets due to coronavirus" [15];

covexit – "the process of easing the restrictions on public life imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic" [7], *long covid* – "a condition in which people who have had the covid-19 virus continue to have symptoms and feel unwell for a long time" [1]; *covidalliances* – "a volunteer-powered nonprofit coalition bringing together best-in-class expertise across science, technology, and policy in a coordinated response to COVID-19" [1], *covember* – "a project when people stop shaving during the outbreak in order to donate saved money";

pandemiquette – "social etiquette during a pandemic – no handshaking, coughing into the elbow etc." [18];

self-quarantine – "the act of refraining from any contact with other individuals for a period of time – in the case of COVID-19, two weeks – to observe whether any symptoms of the disease will arise after potential exposure" [7], *quarancuts* – "cutting your own hair (especially necessary when people are quarantined while barber shops and salons are closed for an extended period of time" [18];

- features (and products) of modern life, e.g.:

coronortunity (coronavirus + opportunity) – "the opportunity created by the pandemic to do what one usually doesn't have time for" [13], *coronaclosed* (coronavirus + close) [1], *BC/AC* – "the new epochs of the 21st century: Before Corona and After Corona" [18], *coronavirusing* / *coronered* – "when everyone else in your house has Covid-19 but you (so far)" [7];

COVID Clean – "so clean that the COVID-19 virus can't survive" [1], *COVID Cut* – "when, after weeks of desperation and closure of your favorite barber shop/hairdressers, you, or your significant other, grab a pair of scissors or shaver and do the best you can" [14], *covid toe* – "a rash or red swelling on the

toes, thought to be a symptom of the covid-19 virus" [13];

quarantini (quarantine + martini) – "a drink specially created to get through the social distancing period (quarantini is a general term for any beverage consumed at home during the lockdown)" [13], *quarantipple* – "a drink taken while in quarantine" [1], *quarantrends* – "fashion, food and lifestyle" [14], *quarantech* (quarantine + technologies) – "apps and gadgets that help while away time indoors" [1], *quarantips* (quarantine + tips) – "a guide to caring for our PHYSICAL and MENTAL wellbeing throughout Covid-19" [13].

The next step of the current research comprised the procedures aimed at determining the features of the use of the analysed lexical units in the English media discourse organization. The studied lexemes, as components of the English media discourse that models reality, illustrate their targeted use in the process of organizing messages about the emergence of new realia. This procedure is based on the use of contextual interpretation and establishes the author's intention in implementing media discourse strategies as a set of language techniques and applying lexical innovations.

In the studied research three strategies were taken into consideration: informative-interpretative, evaluative and attention drawing.

The current study found that the cases of usage of such lexical units as "coronavirus", "Covid-19", "epidemic / pandemic", "quarantine", "Zoom" and their derivatives implement mainly the informative-interpretative strategy of the messages content organization. This strategy is realized within at least two major respects: the tactic of informing and the tactic of appealing to authorities – reputable experts, specialists, officials. The information-interpretation strategy is represented in new lexemes that indicate people either by their characteristic feature and affiliation to a group of devotees and their way of living

(e.g., Is your "**quaranteen**" giving you a hard time about social distancing (as mine was)? Have them watch the news for one hour (or more). My college freshman's attitude completely changed after watching coronavirus coverage on TV. (collegiateparent.com, March 2020)); or spheres of their activity (e.g., **Quaranteams**, therefore, are not simply a convenient idea because they let people see their friends and family. Isolation poses serious health risks – both physically and mentally – that social bubbles can help alleviate while improving social well-being and quality of life. (theconversation.com, 17 June 2020).

The function of new lexemes within the mentioned above strategy is also aimed at informing the reader about the newly emerged concepts, phenomena and features of scientific world (e.g., In May, the term "**Covid toe**" was increasingly discussed as a possible symptom of the coronavirus. The condition, which involves chilblain-like lesions appearing on the feet, is one of several skin conditions currently being investigated as potential signs of Covid-19. (independent.co.uk, 15 July 2020)); informational (e.g., The 2019-nCoV outbreak and response has been accompanied by a massive '**infodemic**' – an over-abundance of information – some accurate and some not – that makes it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it. (who.int, 2 February 2020)); economic, financial (e.g., Call it a **spendemic**. "I've bought an area rug, a coffee table, prints for the walls, a mirror and plants," says Jackson Isaacson, 27, who estimates he's spent nearly \$4,000 since self-isolating due to the novel coronavirus outbreak a month ago. (nypost.com, 20 April 2020)); social spheres of reality (e.g., Nick Jones pointed out that just trying to keep up with the changes and run a business at the same time was challenging enough for most employers. However, with the conversation turning gently towards

'**covexit**', and some on-site work still taking place, it's not too early for employers to start planning ahead. (gregglatchams.com, 24 April 2020); As public health officials look to fall and winter, the specter of a new surge of Covid-19 gives them chills. But there is a scenario they dread even more: a severe flu season, resulting in a "**twindemic**". ... The concern about a twindemic is so great that officials around the world are pushing the flu shot even before it becomes available in clinics and doctors' offices. (www.nytimes, 16 August 2020).

In the following examples the formation of a negative assessment takes place with the help of lexical innovations that nominate designation of disbelief in success, in a better future, humiliation, contempt, contempt, anxiety, condemnation, irony, sarcasm: Couples whose marriages are fraying under the pressures of self-isolation could be heading for a "**covidivorce**". (nytimes.com, 27 March 2020); Exhausted. Shattered. Consumed. If you are working and socialising from home by way of video conferencing, you might have felt that way. Have you noticed your idle body feel oddly spent by the end of virtual gatherings, as if overwhelmed and deprived at once? We are turning into **Zoombies**. (Financial Times, May 14, 2020).

The attention-drawing strategy is based on the lexical innovations position arrangement to describe the new phenomenon, represented by a new lexeme with the help of the following techniques: commentary, detailization and comparison, as in the given example: There's still a debate whether "**coronnials**" include babies born during the pandemic. If they're conceived prior to quarantine, do they still count? Do we really want to ask people when they were conceived? We might as well include all the babies born in 2020 in the "**coronnials**" generation since some are practically born wearing face shields. (esquiremag.ph, 17 April 2020).

Conclusions and research perspectives. The research proves that the COVID-2019 has affected not only the person's life from the purely medical point of view, but absolutely all spheres of human activity and the society, as well. Therefore, there appeared a lot of phenomena that turned out to be new and unexpected in modern society. That is why, it became necessary not only to show the process of new words formation used to denote new nominations, but also to show how the analyzed lexical innovations, as the components of Modern-English media discourse that simulates reality, correlate with the relevant referents in this variety of discourse.

Thus, the study identified word-formation models that create lexical innovations related to Covid-19 pandemic; established areas of their application to denote various realia; identified the features of their use for the implementation of such strategies in organizing Modern English media discourse as: informative-interpretative, evaluative and attention-drawing. Future work of new lexemes that appeared in the language as the result of Covid-19 could also consider a comparative study of structure, semantics and pragmatics of lexical innovations.

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