

THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF CORONAVIRUS

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The article is devoted to the analysis of new words and phrases that come to dominate global discourse and have made their way into language as a result of the pandemic. The aim of the study is to determine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the formation of a special layer of the «coronavirus» language of the current moment, the appearance of neologisms included in the event context. The novelty of the research lies in the fact that the analysis of the pandemic realities is carried out by taking into account the famous typology of cultural dimensions developed by Geert Hofstede. The article also deals with extralinguistic conditions for creating new lexical units and examines the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on linguistic reality. It also highlights the cultural characteristics of the perception of certain peoples of the new reality, notes the differences in response to changes and prohibitions during the ongoing pandemic. The main research methods are the descriptive method, the comparative method, the analysis of lexical definitions. The sources were articles on Internet sites, WhatsApp, the social network Instagram, Tweeter. Each period of serious breakdown leads to a change in the vocabulary and socio-cultural realities.

Keywords: *coronavocabulary, neologisms, coronaspeak pandemic, cultural dimensions.*

Introduction

The coronavirus pandemic is a global phenomenon, an extraordinary event on a global scale that swept over the lives and thoughts of all mankind. The coronavirus pandemic disrupts the usual rhythm of life and sets a new vector for cultural development. There is a transformation of existing forms, systems, traditions, values, behavioral patterns, as well as the emergence of new

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phenomena that did not exist in the culture before. The coronavirus pandemic is changing the mentality of nations, exposing national and cultural differences and priorities.

Culture is a collective sense of consciousness that influences and conditions perceptions, a set of values, attitudes, beliefs, norms and behaviors. Cultural values shared by the people that shape individual behavior determine the opposite reactions of societies to the coronavirus. In the modern world, we are in the same train carriage, but we all have a separate "cultural compartment".

Differences in the strategy of responding to the crisis caused by the pandemic are determined by the national and cultural characteristics of countries and peoples, the degree of society's tolerance to uncertainties, the way of responding to unfamiliar situations, etc.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to deliver the message about the fact that one should stay at home and maintain social distancing, cited a metaphor from the famous ancient Indian epic. In his speech, he noted the "containment line" (called "Lakshmana Rekha" in Indian culture) and asked citizens to adhere to this line. A cultural metaphor that is familiar and understandable to all residents of the country, regardless of ethnic or religious differences, has achieved a result that could not have been achieved by very weighty arguments.

It is interesting to consider the context of the pandemic through the prism of Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010).

Individualism - Collectivism

In countries for which individualism is characteristic, the legal aspects of regulating life activity prevail over the moral ones. In individualist societies such as the United States, Britain and other English-speaking countries, there are pockets of strong resistance to World Health Organization recommendations and measures on such things as wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, and temporarily closing businesses. People are free to choose whether to group or split. Since the main values of individualist countries are: respect for human rights, the high value of one's own opinion, internal freedom, it is natural to see the resistance of the citizens of these countries to the quarantine rules (demonstrations, clashes with law enforcement agencies, etc.).

In countries where the emphasis is on group well-being, they tend to stick together under all circumstances. They comply with restrictive public health measures.

In a collectivist society with a strict social structure and clear division into social groups, there are mechanisms based on such concepts as shame, dignity of the family or surname, “face preservation”, which can stimulate compliance with control measures, making government actions more effective.

For example, in patriarchal China, a country with a collectivist culture, the younger unconditionally obey the elders. The government is the “senior”, and the subjects are the “junior”, therefore, if the government decides that strict quarantine measures are needed, then it should be so (Pocepcov, 2020). In China, the government adopts emergency powers and restrictions on personal freedom, which are carried out with great precision because they promise the collective good of the people.

There is a tendency of transformation of individualistic societies into collectivist ones and vice versa. In regions where the threat of the infectious disease was higher, societies became more collectivist to counter these threats. The low level of interaction with strangers is more typical of collectivist societies, and the tendency to be more localized and oriented towards close contacts of people from a close circle reduced social confusion, and therefore served as an important protection against infection, slowing the spread of the virus. In contrast, individualistic societies relied less on stable patterns of social interaction, which made the infection more likely.

Power Distance

In cultures with a low power distance, there is a strong sense of mutual commitment between all its members (Austria, Denmark, USA, Germany). In these cultures, people are distinguished by a high level of trust in state institutions. Citizens are accustomed to performing public duties and are more likely to do as their leaders ask.

Accordingly, in Germany, people follow the instructions carefully, partly because they believe that the state will do everything in the best possible way. So, for example, in Dusseldorf, a couple got married in an auto cinema. The guests who remained in the cars watched what was happening on the stage on the radio, and having heard the cherished "yes" from the bride and groom, they began to honk together, thus congratulating the newlyweds without violating the rules of restrictions (Vanner, 2020).

In a society with a high power distance, there is no such unwritten social contract. For example, in Italy, people are more likely to act according to their own understanding, because they do not really count on the effectiveness of state structures. The authorities often neglect a significant part of their population and suppress them by force. So the President of the Philippines ordered to shoot at quarantine violators (Prezident Filippin, 2020).

On masculinity and femininity

According to Hofstede's (2010) definitions, feminine are considered to be those cultures in which the importance of interpersonal relationships, cooperation, concern for others, and a desire for mutual understanding prevail. In his opinion, in high masculinity societies, work tends to be very important to people, gender roles are clear, a tendency towards an aggressive communicative style and to the use of force and loud words prevails, and work takes priority over other aspects of a person's life, such as family and leisure.

The police can also be aggressive and use physical force. There may be increased vigilance in response to corona discharge. During the time of the coronavirus, people are more likely to accept and support a certain degree of state violence. This will make them feel safer. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson posted a muscular message on Facebook, noting that the country has to fight with an *invisible killer, criminal, robber*:

If this virus were a physical assailant, an unexpected and invisible mugger, which I can tell you from personal experience it is, then this is the moment when we have begun together to wrestle it to the floor and so it follows that this is the moment of opportunity. ("Boris Johnson,"2020)

"In cultures like France, the United States and the United Kingdom, where freedom is considered an inalienable right, governments use the metaphor of war to shape their COVID-19 messages that unites all measures. Even the British royal family calls World War II comparable to the coronavirus crisis. In cultures where military incursions are not the norm, perhaps a reference to war may justify restricting personal freedoms - whether it is restricting movement, identifying and tracking those infected, or limiting the availability of products and services to only what is needed." (Rol' kul'tury, 2020).

President of the United States of America Donald Trump compared the coronavirus pandemic to a war with an invisible enemy:

I would like to begin by announcing some important developments in our war against the Chinese virus ... We'll be invoking the Defense Production Act, just in case we need it. In other words, I think you all know what it is, and it can do a lot of good things if we need it. ("Remarks by President Trump", 2020)

I want all Americans to understand: we are at war with an invisible enemy, but that enemy is no match for the spirit and resolve of the American people ... It cannot overcome the dedication of our doctors, nurses, and scientists —And it cannot beat the LOVE, PATRIOTISM, and DETERMINATION of our citizens. Strong and United, WE WILL PREVAIL! (emphases in original). (Wicke & Bolognesi, 2021)

In feminine societies, the use of force is not considered good. Pressure should be gentle and good intentions emphasized. In Holland, for example, the government tries not to use the metaphors of "war", to apply fines as the maximum punishment for violating the rules of social distancing. Tracking apps are voluntary and are likely to remain so.

Uncertainty avoidance

The Uncertainty Avoidance Index describes how well people can cope with anxiety, expresses the degree to which members of society feel uncomfortable due to uncertainty, unpredictability.

The future always remains unknown, although people have tried to predict it for centuries. Depending on this parameter, cultures can be divided into two types - with high and low levels of uncertainty avoidance.

In cultures with a high level of uncertainty avoidance (Greece, Portugal, France) in a situation of ambiguity, people constantly experience stress and a sense of fear (Andreeva & Balobanova, 2011).

In such cultures, there is a high level of aggressiveness. Representatives of cultures with a high degree of uncertainty avoidance are distinguished by low

tolerance for ambiguity and risk taking, rejection of deviations from the norm in behavior, having secured themselves with a set of written instructions, formal rules and laws that give certainty to their lives.

In cultures with a low level of uncertainty avoidance (Denmark, India, Ireland, Netherlands, Singapore, USA, Finland, Sweden), people are more inclined to take risks in unfamiliar conditions, because they are characterized by lower levels of stress and fear. With a low level of fear of uncertainty, people are dissatisfied with the excessive organization of life and the excess of rules and regulations. In such societies the belief prevails that there should be as few rules as possible, in everything one should rely only on oneself (Hofstede et al, 2010).

Representatives of these cultures more easily perceive the unpredictability of life, they are not afraid of incomprehensible human actions and the novelty of ideas, they are tolerant of everything new and unusual, they highly value enthusiasm, initiative, and willingness to take risks.

Uncertainty avoidance is stressful in the face of the unknown. It can be assumed that the sale of detergents, toilet paper, sanitizers is directly related to the avoidance of uncertainty, which is most acutely manifested during the epidemic. In societies that avoid uncertainty, the rituals of separation and purification are much stronger. In societies tolerant of uncertainty, there may be a risk of negligence. In such countries, the state tries not to restrict its citizens too much so that life can go on as usual, thereby allowing the virus to develop. This was the case, for example, in the Netherlands, Great Britain and Sweden. In the first two cases the virus quickly forced the country to take more stringent measures. Nevertheless, the Dutch and English went out in large numbers, and the Swedish children went to school as usual.

Countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States and China with a lower Uncertainty Avoidance Index feel comfortable in incomprehensible situations, in contact with people with whom communication is fraught with latent or immediate danger. Countries with a higher score, such as France, Italy, Armenia, Russia have a greater need for certainty of the future, so they expect more support from governments to help overcome the growing level of anxiety. So, for example, in Armenia, due to the geopolitical and historical specifics, the people are better prepared for restrictions, hardships, crisis, etc.

Countries that have not experienced serious hardships, wars, restructuring, etc. (USA, Australia, Canada) have much stronger feelings of panic than, for

example, post-Soviet countries that have survived famine, war, exile, etc. It is common to have supplies for a rainy day.

From the first days of the pandemic, Australians rush to stock up on essential goods as if the Apocalypse is coming tomorrow. Mostly purchased with toilet paper. The hashtags *#toiletpapergate* and *#toiletpapercrisis* have appeared on the Australian Twitter segment. The nation's largest supermarket chain *Costco* - limited toilet paper sales to one pack per hand, and employees at *Tamworth Big W* had to call the police over a customer who attacked them for failing to buy toilet paper (McPhee & Bedo, 2020).

We are at #Costco. It's a madhouse. Every cart has like survival essentials and the guy at guest services said every Costco in Hawaii is completely sold out of toilet paper. One guy is stocking up on margaritas and he's who I really want to have nearby when #coronavirus hits. (Kimberly, 2020)

The Japanese even started stealing toilet paper from cafes and the owners had to put locks on them.

The world is diverse and unique with many people, cultures, styles, smells and colors. Global quarantine has captured the whole world in its grip, forcing people to isolate themselves from the outside world and submit to universal measures of protection against the virus, at the same time revealed a certain national specificity of the fight against coronavirus or "pandemic culture" revealing the character of the country and the mentality of the people.

If in Russia, before the quarantine, local residents stood in line for flour and buckwheat, in Holland, queues lined up in local coffee shops. In France, famous for its confectionery, the first thing they did was to buy up sweets, and in conservative Britain, tea.

As the flower business, which is the hallmark of Holland, is suffering huge losses, locals have organized a national movement to support it, buying and sending bouquets to friends, relatives, schools and nursing homes.

In countries such as Spain and Italy, people who are accustomed to close communication with each other in the streets, in cafes and restaurants, make up for it by going out onto the balconies and talking to each other across the street or by arranging balcony discos.

In collectivist countries, where the concept of personal space is practically absent (India, Greece, Armenia), employees of banks, pharmacies and

supermarkets draw squares or numbered circles to maintain a safe distance in line.

In East India, West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee even made an unscheduled visit to a local market to draw circles herself and explain the concept of social distancing to residents.

The form of greeting has changed, which also differs from culture to culture. For example, in Sweden they greet their elbows, in Armenia - with fists, in Italy - with their feet, etc.

The language of Covid-19

As is well known, one of the main reasons for the emergence of new words or neologisms in a language is the “birth” of new realities and concepts, for which new linguistic units are needed. Often the reason for the appearance of neologisms is a certain event of a local or global scale, which had a significant impact on the life of a particular country or countries around the world.

The coronavirus pandemic has spawned a huge number of new terms, both serious and not so, in order to describe the difficulties associated with the isolation. The *Oxford English Dictionary* team recently conducted a corpus analysis to find out how the Covid-19 pandemic affected the language, drawing on English-language sources from around the world. As you might expect, the analysis showed a colossal increase in the frequency of mentions of the words *coronavirus* and *Covid* over the past few months. It also shows that in March 2020, twenty top keywords were associated with *coronavirus*, with the top five being *Covid-19*, *pandemic*, *distancing*, *coronavirus*, and *self-isolate* (McCullough, 2020).

A new term has appeared in English - *Coronaspeak*, that is, a language associated with the coronavirus epidemic. According to Tony Thorne, British linguist and lexicographer and consultant at the King's Center for Contemporary Language, *Coronaspeak* is the new pandemic language that can help the public understand the crisis unfolding in the world, but it can also increase stress and confusion if people are unable to deal with it (“#CORONASPEAK, 2020”). He marks three stages in the development of the language of the era of the coronavirus or *Coronaspeak*. Thus, the first stage was marked by the "medicalization of our everyday vocabulary", during the second stage people began to invent their own words to define and describe the new reality in which they found themselves; the third stage was associated with institutional discourse, namely with the language that is used by the

government and representatives of various public institutions in a pandemic to build strategies for creating a “new world” and verbalizing a new way of life (ibid.).

Thus, the impact of the pandemic has also been felt on language, since the conceptualization of new phenomena requires new words and expressions: *coronadose*: overdosing on bad news; *panicdemic*: the consequences of coronadosing; *gen-c*: the generation born during the time of covid-19; *quarantime*: the (slow and unpredictable) passage of time in isolation; *coronababies* / *corona boomers* / *coronials* / *quaranteens*: generation born after December 2020 and who will become teenagers in 2033-2034; *corona chicken/coronahoarder*: a person who buys toilet paper, sanitizers, etc.; *isobeard*: when you're in isolation due to coronavirus and can't be bothered shaving anymore; *a coronacrew/quaranteam*: people one chooses to live with during the quarantine; *armchair virologists*: those who have no professional training in medicine but feel confident enough to talk about COVID-19 as if they had the expertise; *covidiot* / *corona clown*: someone who stockpiles toilet paper and flouts physical distancing rules to sunbathe in the park; alternatively, someone who goes to the park so they can take photos of people in the park and shame them for being in the park; *coronacation*: cessation of study or work due to the pandemic, viewed as a holiday; *corona break*: a period of confinement envisaged as a short holiday. Another way of conceptualization is the occurrence of new meanings in already existing words. Thus, for example, *elbow bump n.* (at ELBOW n.): “(a) a blow with or to the elbow; an injury resulting from this; (b) (now) a gesture (usually of greeting or farewell) in which two people lightly tap their elbows together as an alternative to a handshake or embrace, esp. in order to reduce the risk of spreading or catching an infectious disease.”; *social isolation, n.*: “The state of having little or no contact with other people; (b) (now) esp. a condition in which an individual lacks social connections or has no access...”; *self-isolation*: (a) dates back to the 19th century when it belonged to the sphere of political studies and economics and meant ‘isolationist nations’. (b) (now) self-isolation came to mean “staying at home” (Golds, 2020).

Becoming a key milestone in the history of mankind in the 21st century, the coronavirus pandemic is already being used as a reference point in time. So in English the abbreviation *BC/AC* (*Before Christ* / *After Christ*), acquired a new meaning: *Before Coronavirus/After Coronavirus*, therefore the world was divided into *before* and *after* and will not be the same.

Analogies of a large-scale ongoing pandemic with the biblical Armageddon and the Apocalypse or the Jewish Holocaust produce such neologisms as *Coronageddon*, *Coronapocalypse*, *Coronacaust* (Borrelli, 2020).

Having become one of the most talked about concepts in the media, social networks and in private conversations, coronavirus gave rise to the slang name of the virus "*Miss Rona*".

And for those who have no time to write long messages, new types of pandemic emoticons come to the rescue. *Folded hands emoji*, *medical mask emoji*, and *germ emoji* all became more popular during the pandemic. Terms related to social distancing have emerged, such as *virtual happy hour*, *covideoparty*, *quarantine* and *chill*.

Here are some more examples of *coronatermins* in English: ***covidials***: babies born in an expected baby boom in late 2020; ***Quarantipple***: a drink taken while in quarantine; ***Zoom-bombing***: hijacking a Zoom meeting; ***Zumping*** breaking up on Zoom; ***Doomscrolling***: the act of consuming a large quantity of negative online news at once. Life under the corona has meant that it's even harder to peel our eyes away from our phones and computers, constantly refreshing our feeds for the latest news about the pandemic; ***Coronasomnia***: is described as the interference of sleep due to the pandemic; ***Zoom mom***: is a mother or woman who spends a lot of time using Zoom for work, their children's school, or simply to chat with their friends who are also staying at home; ***Quaranteam /coronacrew***: a small group of people you agree to socialize with during lockdowns and social distancing; ***Coronacut***: questionable style some people end up sporting when they must do their own hair maintenance at home, etc.

During the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, many entrepreneurs applied for trademark registrations with the ubiquitous, super popular pandemic phrases and found the opportunity to produce T-shirts, hoodies and caps with the slogans about the coronavirus: ***Corona Virus Survivor -2020; I Survived Covid-19 And All I Got Was This Lousy T-shirt, Corona Busters; We Tested Positive; Relax, I Have Antibodies !; Hug Me I Have Antibodies; My Cough Isn't from The Virus; Hug Me I'm Vaccinated, Proudly Vaccinated; Social Distancing Club*** etc.

From the examples above, you can see that most of them have the inspiring character of *Coronavirus survivor*. However, there are also xenophobic inscriptions - ***Coronavirus: Made in China***.

Companies around the world are changing their images and slogans to promote safety and unity during a pandemic. For example, the fast food chain KFC decided to temporarily abandon the slogan "*It's so tasty that you lick your fingers*", which has been used for more than half a century (10 Innovative Covid-19 Campaigns 2020). McDonald's Brazil posted an image of its iconic logo on its Facebook page, with its iconic golden arches spread apart. The Coca Cola Company placed a billboard in Times Square showing its trademark with increased letter spacing. The logo is accompanied by the words "*Staying apart is the best way to stay connected*". The Starbucks logo now features a mermaid wearing a face shield and Nike's motto is "*Don't Do It*".

Conclusion

The analysis testifies to the reflection in the language of a global and unprecedented phenomenon, the memory of which, most likely, will remain in history. In general, the names that have arisen or updated during the pandemic of a new coronavirus infection act as socially significant and information-rich nominative units necessary for orienting people, regulating relations between them and adapting to changed life circumstances.

The study of such vocabulary allows us to get an idea about the mentality of a modern person, about the specifics of collective psychology, expressed in lexemes that convey the direct perception of the phenomenon by participants in the discourse.

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Նարինե Հարությունյան

Հոդվածը նվիրված է համաճարակի հետևանքով անզլերենում ի հայտ եկած նոր բառերի և արտահայտությունների վերլուծությանը, որոնք այսօր համաշխարհային խոսույթում գերիշխող դիրք են գրավում:

Հետազոտության նպատակն է ուսումնասիրել COVID-19 համաճարակի ազդեցությունը «կորոնավիրուսային» լեզվի հատուկ շերտի՝ «կորոնավիրուսային» նորաբանությունների ձևավորման վրա: Հետազոտությունը նոր է այն առումով, որ համաճարակի լեզվի վերլուծությունն իրականացվում է Գիրթ Հոֆսթեդի սահմանած մշակութային պարամետրերի հայտնի տիպաբանության հիման վրա: Հոդվածը նաև անդրադառնում է նոր բառային միավորների ստեղծման արտալեզվական պայմաններին, ուսումնասիրում է COVID-19-ի բռնկման ազդեցությունը լեզվական իրականության վրա, ինչպես նաև ընդգծում է որոշ ժողովուրդների կողմից այս նոր իրականության ընկալման մշակութային առանձնահատկությունները, նշում փոփոխություններին արձագանքելու տարբերությունները:

Հետազոտությունը կատարվել է նկարագրական, համեմատական և բառարանային սահմանումների վերլուծության մեթոդների կիրառմամբ: Ուսումնասիրության աղբյուր են ծառայել՝ համացանցային կայքերը, Instagram և Tweeter սոցիալական ցանցերը:

Բանալի բառեր՝ «կորոնաբառապաշար», նորաբանություններ, «կորոնախոսույթ», համաճարակ, մշակութային պարամետրեր: