

THE EMERGENCE AND FUNCTIONING OF ENGLISH NEOLOGISMS IN CONTEMPORARY COMMUNICATION (2023–2026)

ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ВИНИКНЕННЯ ТА ФУНКЦІОНУВАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКИХ НЕОЛОГІЗМІВ В СУЧАСНОМУ КОМУНІКАТИВНОМУ ДИСКУРСІ (2023–2026)

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This article investigates the emergence, structural characteristics, and communicative functions of English neologisms that have entered public discourse during this period. The study aims to identify the principal mechanisms of neologism formation, determine the factors contributing to their dissemination, and examine their role in contemporary communication.

The research employs a combination of descriptive, structural, semantic, and discourse analysis methods. The corpus of the study comprises neologisms collected from contemporary English-language media, social networking platforms, online dictionaries, and digital corpora. Particular attention is paid to lexical items associated with artificial intelligence, digital communication, environmental issues, and evolving socio-cultural trends. The analysis demonstrates that compounding, blending, clipping, affixation, abbreviation, semantic shift, and borrowing remain the most productive word-formation processes. Furthermore, the findings reveal that digital communication has become the primary environment for the creation, rapid dissemination, and stabilization of new lexical units.

The study also highlights the pragmatic functions of English neologisms, emphasizing their role in facilitating efficient communication, expressing emerging concepts, constructing social identity, and reflecting speakers' attitudes toward technological and societal change. Many of the analyzed neologisms exhibit considerable semantic flexibility and are characterized by a high degree of contextual dependence, illustrating the dynamic nature of present-day English vocabulary.

The findings contribute to a better understanding of current lexical processes and demonstrate the close relationship between language evolution and contemporary communication practices. The results may be applied in lexicological, sociolinguistic, and discourse studies, as well as in translation practice and the teaching of English as a foreign language. The research also provides a foundation for further investigations into the long-term development and standardization of English neologisms in the rapidly evolving digital era.

Key words: lexical innovation, digital communication, social media, word formation, contemporary English, language evolution.

У цій статті досліджуються виникнення, структурні особливості та комунікативні функції англійських неологізмів, що увійшли до публічного дискурсу протягом зазначеного періоду. Мета дослідження – виявити основні механізми утворення неологізмів, визначити фактори, що сприяють їхньому поширенню, та проаналізувати їхню роль у сучасній комунікації.

У дослідженні використовується поєднання методів описового, структурного, семантичного та дискурсивного аналізу. Корпус дослідження складається з неологізмів, зібраних із сучасних англомовних ЗМІ, соціальних мереж, онлайн-словників та цифрових корпусів. Особлива увага приділяється лексичним одиницям, пов'язаним зі штучним інтелектом, цифровою комунікацією, екологічними проблемами та мінливими соціокультурними тенденціями. Аналіз показує, що складання, поєднання, скорочення, афіксація, аббревіація, семантичний зсув та запозичення залишаються найпродуктивнішими процесами словотворення. Крім того, результати дослідження показують, що цифрова комунікація стала основним середовищем для створення, швидкого поширення та стабілізації нових лексичних одиниць.

В даній роботі також висвітлюються прагматичні функції англійських неологізмів, підкреслюючи їхню роль у сприянні ефективній комунікації, вираженні нових понять, формуванні соціальної ідентичності та відображенні ставлення мовців до технологічних і суспільних змін. Багато з проаналізованих неологізмів демонструють значну семантичну гнучкість і характеризуються високим ступенем контекстуальної залежності, що ілюструє динамічний характер сучасного англійського лексикону.

Отримані результати сприяють кращому розумінню сучасних лексичних процесів і демонструють тісний зв'язок між еволюцією мови та сучасними комунікативними практиками. Ці результати можуть бути застосовані в лексикологічних, соціолінгвістичних та дискурсивних дослідженнях, а також у перекладацькій практиці та викладанні англійської мови як іноземної. Дослідження також створює основу для подальших досліджень щодо довгострокового розвитку та стандартизації англійських неологізмів у епоху стрімкого розвитку цифрових технологій.

Ключові слова: лексичні новоутворення, цифрова комунікація, соціальні мережі, словотвір, сучасна англійська мова, еволюція мови.

Introduction (relevance of the problem). The pace of human development, constant interactions with other nations and spheres, the need to engage with people from different backgrounds and with different linguistic realities, and the varied relationships between speakers necessitate certain changes in language, which, in turn, reflect the surrounding reality of the modern world. Vocabulary is constantly changing, evolving, experimenting and responding to the needs of speakers. Lexical composition is the first to react to changes: neologisms emerge that reflect the realities of life. The main source of vocabulary expansion is the formation of new words through the use of various word-formation methods. The emergence of new words is always an unpredictable process and one that requires attention to the extralinguistic reality of the worldview.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The formation of neologisms is a natural and positive process, as it signifies that the language is evolving, and that people are noticing and accepting the changes taking place in modern society. Undoubtedly, the emergence of new lexical units is impossible without the influence of cultural, historical, social and political conditions. This area of research has attracted the interest of scholars such as L. Barkhudarov, Yu. Zhluktenko, V. Zabolotkina, Yu. Zatsnyi, K. Kovtun, L. Omelchenko and T. O. Pakhomova [1].

In the current context of globalisation, the spread of new ideas and perspectives, and the influence of innovation, the English language, like other languages of the world, is experiencing a certain neological breakthrough. Over the last decade, two editions of the Barnhart Dictionary have been published. They have recorded around 10,000 new words and meanings. For a word to be included in Barnhart's dictionary of new words, it must have been recorded in use for at least one year. On average, 800 new words appear in the English language each year; therefore, researchers aim not only to record the emergence of new words, but also to investigate the rate at which they appear, the reasons behind their emergence, and the spheres of human activity in which they occur. In the field of neology, there are many unresolved issues, both theoretically and practically [2]. The following areas of research remain relevant: when a word can be included in a dictionary, whether new dictionary entries should be created for each word and its derivatives, and whether to take into account.

The main objective of the article is to investigate the formation of neologisms as a means of reflecting the changes taking place under the influence of socially significant stages in the development of society, such as globalization, computer literacy and media literacy.

Presentation of the main material. New knowledge, experience and trends in the development of science and technology cannot exist without the creation of new words. Neologisms reflect the emergence of new aspects of intangible culture and the creative process at a time when a particular culture or people is developing. Neologisms denote something new, a previously unknown concept, object, branch of science or profession, but using existing word-formation mechanisms. Nowadays, new words are going viral due to their widespread use by social media users [3].

An important aspect of researching a word's origin and frequency of use is its sphere of usage. A distinctive feature of neologisms is that they are difficult to record, as they may appear in specific situations, exist for a certain period of time, reflecting a particular sense of satisfaction, dissatisfaction, or the public's emotional reaction to changes [3]. They may remain as occasionalisms and subsequently be forgotten due to a decline in interest in a particular topic within society. If a neologism gains popularity, people use it, but depending on the context of use. A word may remain in the target language as a loanword or if a suitable equivalent can be found.

In translation practice, when it is difficult to find a suitable equivalent, a number of techniques are used: transliteration; transcription; calquing; descriptive translation or explication. A neologism goes through several stages of socialisation (acceptance by society) and lexicalization (becoming established in the language). If the topic is relevant to society, the word quickly passes the stage of becoming established, as it is used in everyday communication, especially when it concerns discussions of topics significant to the global community [4].

The process of neologism formation in English-language media discourse between 2024 and 2026 reflects the deep integration of artificial intelligence into everyday life and the transformation of social interactions.

The most dynamic group is the vocabulary associated with technological neologisms, given the challenges of the AI era, as well as generative models and synthetic content. The rapid development of generative technologies has given rise to words used to describe artificial content and new types of interaction (*slop* – low-quality content generated by neural networks; *clanker* – a derogatory term for AI, chatbots or robots; *chatfishing* – the use of AI to conduct correspondence on dating apps on behalf of a human) [4].

Internet culture and social media (TikTok, X, Instagram) are the main breeding ground for the contemporary slang of Gen Z and Gen Alpha (*rage bait* –

content created to deliberately provoke anger in the audience in order to boost reach, Word of the Year 2025 according to the Oxford English Dictionary; *aura farming* – the artificial cultivation of a cool image or authority; *brainrot* – low-quality content that literally “melts the brains” of users) [5].

The field of mobile communications (social media) has been expanded to include the following idioms: *iFinger* – a term referring to the finger we deliberately keep clean while eating so that we can use our smartphone or tablet; *digital detox* – a period of taking a break from social media when you’re tired of it and want to spend time in the real world rather than the virtual one; *catfishing* – embellishment; communicating online makes you want to embellish aspects of your life or your self-description; *phone-yawn* – contagious action, the phenomenon where one person takes out their phone to check the time, and everyone else starts doing the same; *text-walk* – texting whilst walking; *instafamous* (Instagram + famous) – famous on Instagram; *textpectation* – the moment when you’ve sent a message and are eagerly awaiting a reply, constantly glancing at your phone screen; *textrovert* – a person who prefers messaging apps to face-to-face conversation; *googlable* – something that can be found on search engines [5].

A lot of neologisms are connected with well-being and lifestyle (*parasocial* – a one-sided emotional connection between a user and a blogger, celebrity or even an AI, Word of the Year 2025 according to the Cambridge Dictionary; *scroll fatigue* – a feeling of cognitive exhaustion caused by prolonged scrolling through a news feed; *bed rotting* – passively lying in bed for long periods to cope with stress; *burnt toast theory* – a psychological concept suggesting that a minor setback such as burnt toast actually saves you from a greater misfortune) [6].

Everyday life has been also enriched by the following neologisms:

- *staycation* (a holiday at home, a word formed from ‘stay’ + ‘vacation’, meaning a holiday or break spent in your own city or country; in other words, you don’t travel, so you save money);

- *frenemy* (neither a friend nor an enemy, refers to someone who pretends to be a friend but is actually an enemy);

- *helicopter parent* (refers to parents who keep a close eye on their child’s every move, the aim of such parents is to make sure that everything is alright with their child);

- *bridezilla* (a combination of the words “bride” and “Godzilla”. This term is used to describe brides who, while preparing for their wedding, become overly demanding, fussy and irritable);

- *me time* (time for oneself; this phrase refers to time spent purely on oneself, you need to switch off your phone, computer and laptop and allow yourself some time to rest and relax) [6];

The morphological structure of neologisms from 2023 to 2026 reflects speakers’ desire for linguistic economy, expressiveness and a playful style. Major neologism word-formation patterns include:

- blending (merging of parts of two or more words into a single unit). *Coolcation* (cool + holiday) – a holiday in cold countries;

- clipping (shortening of a full word to a brief, emotive form). *Delulu* (from “elusional” – out of touch with reality. *Inspo* (from “inspiration”) – a source of inspiration;

- compounding (combination of two full words into a single lexeme). *Tradwife* (traditional + wife) – a housewife blogger. *Taskmasking* – the pretence of being productive at work;

- abbreviations and acronyms (creating new terms from the first letters of phrases). *NER* (*Neither Employed nor Retired*) – people of pre-retirement age are not currently employed [7].

Semantic shifts are also widely used, whereby old words take on a fundamentally new meaning under the influence of digital trends (for example, the word “cooked” used to refer to prepared food, but in 2025–2026 it became a slang synonym for a complete personal breakdown or fiasco).

Neologisms span almost all areas of life. The vocabulary of the English language is enriched both through borrowings from other languages and through internal linguistic mechanisms, which must be understood in order to translate a particular neologism accurately.

Translating neologisms presents its own challenges, as no dictionary, given the current pace of development in information and communication systems, can keep up with recording all the neologisms that emerge. Sometimes the translator is aided by context, knowledge of the constituent parts of the neologism, and an understanding of how modern English neologisms are formed. However, quite often this proves insufficient, and a translator who lacks extralinguistic knowledge cannot translate a particular neologism adequately. It is worth also noting that not all societies develop at the same rate, which may mean that the target language may not yet have an equivalent for a particular neologism [2].

Conclusions. Thus, neologisms enrich the lexical composition of a language and thereby confirm the dynamic nature of its development. Neologisms do not clutter the language; they merely enrich it and encourage a deeper study of these lexical units and the reasons for their emergence. Neologisms cur-

rently meet the communicative needs of speakers. Not all neologisms are recorded in dictionaries, as it takes several years to track the active and current usage of words and phrases. The emergence of new words reflects the expansion of speakers' worldview, changes in reality, needs, relationships, desires and the means of realizing their own desires.

Among the categories of neologisms mentioned, a large proportion relates to areas such as everyday life, social media and the latest technologies. This indicates that people's lives and the changes within them are always a priority, regardless of changes in various spheres of activity. People remain at the centre of change and influence the world around them. New spheres, sectors and interrelationships are emerg-

ing, which means that the language will continue to acquire new words that will require stages of socialisation. The most common areas where neologisms arise are those where innovations can be directly observed, namely the latest modern technologies and new and significant events taking place in society [7].

However, there are many areas of research in neology that require more detailed analysis, new approaches, and an investigation into linguistic and extralinguistic causes and influences. Prospects for further research in this area lie in a more detailed study of idiomatic neologisms. Another pressing issue is the creation of dynamic electronic dictionaries that would record neologisms in real time, taking into account data from corpus studies.

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