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Research article

Semantic dominants of 2020 neologisms as a means of coding reality in the Russian language

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Abstract. The relevance of the research is explained by the insufficient studying of the phenomenon of repeating semes in neologisms of a certain time period in the aspect of the interpretative function of language. The purpose of the study is to analyze the semes in the semantic structure of the neologisms of the coronavirus era and to characterize the part of linguistic worldview in the crisis period. The research material included occasional words recorded in Russian media and thematically connected with one theme – the 2020 pandemic. The source of the research is “The Dictionary of Russian Language of Coronavirus Epoch.” The research was conducted within the framework of sociolinguistics with the method of componential analysis of semantics, word-building and context analyzes. In the process of the research, the thematic subgroups were identified; in each subgroup, the occasional nominations were revealed; the means of evaluation were determined (some productive bases – for compounds; word-building formants – for affixal derivatives), and a general interpretive seme was determined (based on the contextual meaning). Finally, the total number of the words connected with a semantic dominant was determined. These data are presented in the summary table which demonstrates the percentage of representation, and hence the degree of significance of each dominant in the process of language coding of reality. As a result of the study, the semantic dominants uniting the occasional words of different authors and demonstrating the typical assessments of COVID-19 are revealed; the degree of frequency of semantic dominants is determined. The novelty of the research is explained by the specifics of the conducted semantic analysis: for the first time, common semes reflecting the peculiarities of the emotional and mental state of the society are revealed on a significant homogeneous array of word-building derivatives.

Keywords: mass word creation, semantic dominants, neologisms, interpretive function, language, language coding, linguistic worldview, crisis period, Russian language

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Introduction

In 2020, the lexicon of a new subject area (let us denote this area as “COVID-19”) formed rapidly, within a few months, which indicates its high relevance. The phenomenon of unprecedented mass word creation in the period of

the 2020 pandemic has certainly drawn attention of linguists, especially specialists in contemporary linguistic processes.

Researchers focus primarily on formal, structural features of word-formation neologisms (occasionalisms) that appeared during this period. Such features include characteristic attributes of the new words of that time: word-formation models and methods (the majority of words are formed by composition – *koronaboyazn'* ‘corona-fear’, *kovidoisteriya* ‘covid-hysteria’, etc.) (Mineeva, 2020); the most frequent derivative bases (“system components”) of the key words in the “coronavirus era”: *kovid* ‘covid’, (*korona*)*virus* ‘(corona)virus’, *karantin* ‘quarantine’, etc. (Gromenko et al., 2020); the most popular word-formation components, such as *-bessia* ‘making angry’, *-fobia* ‘phobia’, etc. (Ridetskaya, 2021).

The international character of “pandemic word-formation” (N.A. Prokofyeva, E.A. Shcheglova) with its main entertaining function is also noted (Janurik, 2020). “The epidemic of fear”, according to researchers, was opposed by the “epidemic of laughter” (Kosmalska, 2020; Wolfer et al., 2020). In the vast array of game nominations, researchers identify both typical derivational models and means for language game and atypical ones (formation of a verb from a toponym: *uhankat'sya*; new affixoids: *-demia*, *-demik*, *-freniya*, etc.) (Marinova, 2021: 326, 335). Attempts have been made to systematically represent the result of collective word-creation in the form of semantic oppositions (Zelenin, Butseva, 2021), thematic groups of derivatives with a common derivative base (Gekkina, Kozhevnikov, 2021), etc.

In our opinion, the analysis of all these important linguistic features uniting “coronalexics” should be supplemented by the study of the semantics of its constituent words, formed both by the peculiarities of their word-formation structure and the semantic side of their generating context as a whole. With all the quantitative and structural diversity of neologisms created in 2020, their lexical meanings contain common semantic components connected not only with the pandemic and its consequences in the life of society, which is quite natural, but also with some typical assessments of the events which took place at that time.

The aim of the article is to present the analysis of common semes (semantic dominants) in the content structure of coronavirus-era neologisms, and on its basis to characterize the part of the language picture of the world in the crisis period.

Methods and materials

The research has been carried out in the framework of functional sociolinguistics with the methods of component semantic analysis, word formation and contextual analysis, with interpreting the lexical meaning of neologisms in the lexicographic work “Dictionary of the Russian language of the Coronavirus Epoch” (hereinafter referred to as Dictionary).¹ In total, over 3,500 units, recorded within one time period in the Russian media sphere and thematically related to one subject area – the pandemic of 2020 – were analyzed. The source of the research is the data of the Dictionary and the author's personal collection.

Structurally, “coronavirus” occasional words are word-formation derivatives: composite words, including analytical nominations of the *kovid-opasnost'*

¹ Priyomysheva, M.N. (Ed.). (2021). *Dictionary of the Russian language of the coronavirus epoch*. St. Petersburg: Institute of Linguistic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. (In Russ.)

‘covid-hazard’ type; mono-rooted affixal derivatives (*kovidiada* ‘coviadiada’, *psevdokarantin* ‘pseudocarantine’); contaminants (*koronomika* ‘corona + economics’), including international ones (*koronageddon* ‘corona + Armageddon’). In some cases, composite expanded nominations, synonymous for single-word nominations (e.g., *koronavirusnyi Armageddon* ‘coronavirus Armageddon’), were used. The overwhelming majority of neologisms express a decomposed concept and have a readable binary structure; the neologism semantics is motivated by the peculiarities of their composition. This is how the speakers (the authors of words) manifest their desire for a more precise, unambiguous expression of their attitude to the situation, eliminating ambiguity: the dismembered, two-part structure of an occasional word represents both the object of evaluation and the evaluation itself, which is usually the result of this object interpretation.²

The element of the structure of an occasional nomination, naming the object of evaluation, is one of the key words of the virus period: *kovid* ‘covid’, *koronavirus* (*korona*) ‘coronavirus (corona)’, *karantin* ‘quarantine’. The second, **interpretive element** is a noun, usually with a negative connotation. The quantitative composition of such interpretative elements is more than 100 lexical units, which in the language system correlate with the denotations of different subject areas (cf. *afera* ‘scam’, *baran* ‘ram’, *bul'on* ‘broth’, *kacheli* ‘swing’, *lovushka* ‘trap’, *makarony* ‘macaroni’, *mafija* ‘mafia’, *mif* ‘myth’, *pugalo* ‘scarecrow’, *pepel* ‘ash’, *Kharon* ‘Charon’, *feik* ‘fake’, etc.); nevertheless, it is possible to mention some common meanings of these interpretative elements, which, on the one hand, convey all the various moods of Russian people in the epidemic situation in 2020, and, on the other, reflect in this “polyphony” certain **typical** assessments of it.

In the course of the study, the following research procedures were carried out step by step:

1) among the new vocabulary of the covid period thematic subgroups were distinguished; in each subgroup the nominations (and their specific weight) of occasional character were identified;

2) in the word-formation structure of occasional new words the means of evaluation were determined (derivative bases – for compound words and contaminants; word-formation formants – for affixal derivatives);

3) we ascertained the general evaluative, interpreting semes (with the context meaning of the word taken into account);

4) the total number of lexemes containing the same semantic dominant was determined, which was reflected in the generalizing Table, demonstrating the percentage and, therefore, the degree of significance of the semantic dominant itself in the process of language coding of the reality during the crisis period.

Results

Here are the main results of the study.

I. Five main thematic groups (TG) of “covid” vocabulary, including various subgroups (TS), were identified.³

² This structural-semantic specifics of covid occasional words on the material of contaminants (blending) in Polish is noted in (Kuligowska, 2020: 118).

³ Of course, our classification of the “covid” vocabulary does not claim to be absolute, but in the main lines it agrees with the thematic classification of similar vocabulary in other languages, such as French, Polish, Czech (Belhaj, 2020; Cierpich-Kozieł, 2020; Polyakov, 2021).

II. Means of semantic dominants and their “material carriers” have been determined when analyzing the word-formation structure of the studied neologisms.

III. Semantic dominants (12 in total), uniting occasional words of different authors and demonstrating typical assessments of the situation, related to COVID-19, were identified on the basis of the semantic similarity of different structural elements (productive bases, word-formation affixes and affixoids), taking into account the integral contextual meaning of neologisms. Such dominants are ‘disorder’, ‘war’, ‘destructiveness’, ‘artificial nature’, ‘trial’, ‘uncertainty’, ‘deception’, ‘restriction of freedom’, ‘lack of common sense’, ‘mental disorder’, ‘fear’, ‘excessive discussion’.

IV. In the last stage of the study, the degree of frequency of semantic dominants was determined on the basis of quantitative data (Table).

Degree of frequency of semantic dominants in nonce words of the “Covid period”

No.	Seme	Scope of nominations, %
1.	‘deception’	17
2.	‘restrictions of freedom’	15
3.	‘mental disorder’	14
4.	‘trial’	10
5.	‘excessive discussion’	9.7
6.	‘banefulness’	7
7.	‘war’	6.6
8.	‘fear’	5.2
9.	‘artificial character’	5
10.	‘mess’	4
11.	‘lack of common sense’	3.5
12.	‘uncertainty’	3

Discussion

I. Let us consider the thematic composition of the 2020 new words. Below is the list of TGs, which include, along with the subgroups, the quantitative data for the study, namely: the number of units in each TS (as a percentage) and the number of unofficial, occasional nominations in each TS (as a percentage of the total number of units in a given TS). The latter indicator seems relevant, because any subgroup may also contain neologisms, which are quite official lexical units used in speech (kovid ‘covid’, *antikovid* ‘anticoVID’, *antikoronavirus* ‘anticoronavirus’, etc.). At the same time, individual TSs are predominantly or entirely composed of non-usual lexemes, which were the object of the present study.

TG 1. **“The virus that caused the pandemic. Disease”**. This group includes nominations of the virus (TS 1.1 – 2.8%), nominations of the disease, its varieties and consequences (TS 1.2 – 5.1%), nominations of actions, denoting the infection by the virus and the disease (TS 1.3 – 1.7%), nominations of people (sick, infected) (TS 1.4 – 1.7%).

The number of occasional words: TS 1.1 – 94%, TS 1.2 – 81.5%, TS 1.3 – 100%, TS 1.4 – 70%.

TG 2. **“Medical measures to cure disease and infection”**. This TG includes names of preventive and therapeutic measures (TS 2.1 – 3%), names of medical institutions (TS 2.2 – 3.4%), names of preventive means (TS 2.3 – 1.5%), names of vaccine and vaccination (TS 2.4 – 1.1%), names of therapeutic means and di-

agnostic techniques (TS 2.5 – 2.8%), nominations of people by their participation/non-participation in disease and infection control (TS 2.6 – 2.1%).

The number of occasional words: TS 2.1 – 72%, TS 2.2 – 28%, TS 2.3 – 20%, TS 2.4 – 64%, TS 2.5 – 27%, TS 2.6 – 84%.

TG 3. **“Pandemic”**. This TG is represented by the following subgroups: general names of the phenomenon (TS 3.1 – 2%), designations of concepts related to the spread of infection (TS 3.2 – 5.3%), designations of the period related/unrelated to the pandemic (TS 3.3 – 2.8%), names of people in terms of spread of infection (TS 3.4 – 0.6%).

Number of occasional words: TS 3.1 – 89%, TS 3.2 – 80%, TS 3.3 – 88%, TS 3.4 – 67%.

TG 4. **“Restrictive Measures”**. This group includes general names of self-isolation and restrictions (TS 4.1 – 10.8%), nominations of actions denoting observance/violation of the regime (TS 4.2 – 1.1%), assessment of the situation as a whole (TS 4.3 – 8.4%), designations of ideological differences between supporters of restrictive measures and their opponents (TS 4.4 – 0.9%), designations of consequences of the regime in the life of society (TS 4.5 – 2.8%), nominations of people by their relation to the regime (TS 4.6 – 7.4%).

The number of occasional words: TS 4.1 – 88%, TS 4.2 – 100%, TS 4.3 – 100%, TS 4.4 – 83%, TS 4.5 – 88%, TS 4.6 – 100%.

TG 5. **“Coronavirus Lifestyle”**. This TG includes designations of phenomena caused by the restriction regime in the everyday life (TS 5.1 – 8.7%), designations of new phenomena in the business and economic sphere (TS 5.2 – 6.7%), designations of new phenomena in the political sphere (TS 5.3 – 1.1%), designations of new phenomena in the sphere of education (TS 5.4 – 3%), designations of realities and conditions of “online life” (TS 5.5 – 10.5%), designations of people by their way of life, behavior in the viral period (TS 5.6 – 2%).

The number of occasional words: TS 5.1 – 99%, TS 5.2 – 93%, TS 5.3 – 100%, TS 5.4 – 36%, TS 5.5 – 78%, TS 5.6 – 100%.

In general, the number of unofficial nominations (80%) exceeds the number of official ones by about 4 times (for more details on the interpretation of this ratio, see: Marinova, 2021: 335), and some TSs are fully represented by nominations that have no official character, occasional in nature – in particular the subgroup that includes the designations of general evaluation of the situation related to COVID-19 and epidemic restrictions (TS 4.3).

II. From the point of view of the word-formation structure, as was mentioned above, the neologisms examined are both mono- and poly-rooted derivatives. In the latter (these are composites, contaminants and other game nominations formed from two derivative bases) the means of expressing the semantic dominant is one of the bases, and it is semantically not directly connected with the pandemic; cf, e.g., *feik* ‘fake’ and *feikovirus* ‘fake + virus’, *infeiktsiya* ‘fake + infection’ (seme ‘deception’); *kharon* ‘Charon’ and *kharonavirus* ‘Charon + virus’ (seme ‘destructiveness’); *kacheli* ‘swing’ and *karantin-kacheli* ‘quarantine + swing’ (seme ‘uncertainty’), etc. In occasional words, this stem (interpreting element) implements either the direct meaning of the derivative word, as e.g. *katastrofa* ‘catastrophe’ in the evaluative nomination *kovid-katastrofa* ‘covid-catastrophe’, or figurative one. Thus, in the neologisms *koronapokalipsis* ‘corona + Apocalypse’,

Koronaarmageddon ‘*corona* + *Armageddon*’, *koronaChernobyl* ‘*corona* + *Chernobyl*’ the derivatives following the initial component refer to figurative, symbolic meanings of lexemes expressing the same idea as the word *catastrophe* (*Apocalypse*, *Armageddon*, *Chernobyl*).

In some cases, the connection between the main idea inherent in the occasionalism and the choice of the interpreting element for its creation turns out to be associative. For example, the composite *kovid-pepel* ‘*covid-ashes*’ expresses the same eschatological idea as the above-mentioned neologisms, which is, apparently, due to metonymic transfer (action → result of action). The image is based on the association with the fact that the destructive processes during coronavirus pandemic will leave little behind, just as after a catastrophe only ashes are left behind.

Less gloomy associations are also possible. For example, the name *makaronovirus* ‘*macaroni* + *virus*’ recorded in the Dictionary ‘about the coronavirus as something fictitious, a trick’ refers to the stable expression *lapshu na ushi veshat* ‘*lit. put noodles on ears*’ ‘*to deceive*’; through the so-called ‘semantic involvement’ (Yu. Sorokin) the word *makarony* ‘*macaroni*’, belonging to the same thematic group as noodles, is understood in the same semantic field – deception. Cf. also a number of pejorative words *baranovirus* ‘*ram* + *virus*’, *baranovirusnyi* ‘*adjective ram* + *virus*’, *baranovirusnik* ‘*ram* + *virus* + *er*’, where the semantics of deception is expressed by the rude animal metaphor *baran* ‘*ram*’ ‘*a foolish man, who is wielded*’ (a synonym of this word in the argo is *loch* ‘*looser*’, hence *locho-pandemia* ‘*looser* + *pandemia*’).

Along with the derivative bases of Russian lexemes, which are various in thematic respect, the means of expressing the semantic dominant may be word-formation affixes and affixoids. Thus, the seme ‘*deception, artificial nature*’, expressed by the bases of such words as *feik* ‘*fake*’, *fuflo* ‘*crap*’, *sharlatanstvo* ‘*charlatanism*’, etc., is included in the semantics of the prefixes *kvasi* ‘*quasi*’, *psevd* ‘*pseudo-*’ (*psevdokoronavirus* ‘*pseudo-coronavirus*’, *kvasi-karantin* ‘*quasi-quarantine*’); the seme ‘*trial*’ is expressed by the suffix *-iad(a)*; cf. the same sense in the composition *kovidepopeya* ‘*covid-epic*’; the seme ‘*uncertainty*’ is expressed by the morphemes *nedo-* ‘*under-*’, *polu* ‘*half-*’ (*nedokarantin* ‘*under-quarantine*’, *polukarantin* ‘*half-quarantine*’); the sense ‘*restriction of freedom*’ is expressed by affixoids *krati(ya)* ‘*-cracy (-cracia)*’ (*kovidokratiya* ‘*covid* + *cracy*’), *-tsid -cide* (< *genocide*) – *karantinotsid* ‘*quarantinocide*’. The semantics of the affixoids *-freniya* ‘*-phrenia*’, *-frenik* ‘*-phrenic*’, *psikho-* ‘*psycho-*’ is set by one of the frequent semes in covid-neologisms – ‘*mental disorder*’ (*kovidofreniya* ‘*covidophrenia*’, *koronafrenik* ‘*coronaphrenic*’, *psikhovirus* ‘*psychovirus*’) – cf. the same seme in derivative words (*kovid-panika* ‘*covid-panic*’, *koronapsikhoz* ‘*coronapsychosis*’, *koronashizofreniya* ‘*coronaschizophrenia*’, etc.).

III. The semantic dominants in 2020 neologisms are **transversal, common** semes, which organize the “covid” lexicon with its key words, serving as the derivative base for derivatives of all TSs (*covid*, *corona*, *quarantine*, *pandemic*, *virus*, *vaccine*, etc.).

This can be seen from the fact that the same semantic dominant is characteristic of occasional words of different TSs. Thus, the seme ‘*mental disorder*’ is contained in the semantics of virus nominations (TS 1.1) and the disease itself (TS 1.2) – *zombovirus* ‘*zombie* + *virus*’, *psikhovirus* ‘*psycho* + *virus*’, *kovidonevroz* ‘*covid* +

neurosis’, *panikodemiya* ‘panic + pandemic’, *psikhopandemiya* ‘psycho + pandemic’, as well as in the semantics of nominations of people (TS 1.4): *koronazombi* ‘corona + zombie’, *koronapaniker* ‘corona + alarmist’, etc. The “eschatological” seme is actualized in unofficial pandemic nominations (TS 3.1): *koronakatastrofa* ‘corona-catastrophe’, *kovid-tragediya* ‘covid-tragedy’, *koronavirus-tragediya* ‘coronavirus-tragedy’; economic crisis caused by the pandemic (TS 5.2): *kovidokollaps* ‘covid-collapse’. It is mockingly played up in the expression *apocalypse cart* (about a grocery cart) (TS 5.1); see also one of the unofficial names of the virus itself (TS 1.1): *kharonovirus* ‘Charon + virus’.

IV. Let us analyze the identified semantic dominants.

The most frequent seme – (1) ‘**deceit**’ – is contained in the meanings of the individual author words expressing a general evaluation of the situation in 2020 and its various consequences (TS 4.3): *kovidafera* ‘covid + scam’, *koronafera* ‘corona + scam’, *korona-lovushka* ‘corona-trap’, *kovidomafiya* ‘covid + mafia’, *kovid-mif* ‘covid-myth’, *korona-mif* ‘corona-myth’, *fuflo-karantin* ‘foul-quarantine’, *koronashulerstvo* ‘corona-charlatanism’, *QR-sharlatanstvo* ‘QR-charlatanism’, etc. In the interpretation zone of these and similar words, the Dictionary contains the remark “in the speech of covid-dissidents”. However, as our observations show, the sphere of some of these lexemes is wider: it can be described as any media discourse containing analysis, interpretation or/and evaluation of events. See, for example, the title of an article posted on the portal of the analytical information agency *Rus pravoslavnyaya: Disclosure of the kovidafera: the head of Roszdravnadzor confirmed the falsehood of the statistics on mortality from COVID-19*⁴ (hereinafter the spelling and punctuation of the source are preserved. – E.M.).

In addition to TS 'General evaluation of the situation', nominations with the ‘deception’ connotation were also recorded in other groups, which indicates its ‘cross-cutting’ nature: both the pandemic situation as a whole and individual realities, concepts and objects connected with it were often perceived with distrust or even complete disbelief, with a sense of mass deception, misinformation, etc. Hence the semantic dominant 'deception' in such TSs as the names of the virus (TS 1.1): *feikovirus* ‘fake + virus’, *koronafeik* ‘corona+fake’, *fuflokovid* ‘crap + covid’, *fuflovirus* ‘crap + virus’, *fuflovir* ‘crap + vir’, *makaronovirus* ‘macaroni + virus’, *pseudokoronavirus* ‘pseudocoronavirus’, *baranovirus* ‘ram + virus’; disease designation (TS 1.2): *koronavirus infeiktsiya* ‘fake + infection’; vaccine designation (TS 2.4): *fuflo-privivka*, *fuflo-vaktsina* ‘foul-vaccine’; names of therapeutic agents (TS 2.5): *fufloferony* ‘foul + interferons’, *fuflofalinovaya maz'* ‘foul + falin ointment’, *fuflo-tabletki* ‘foul pills’, *fuflomitsin*, *fuflomitsinka* (foul + mycin); nominations of people by their participation/non-participation in disease and infection control (TS 2.6): *fuflomitsinshchik* ‘foul + mycin + er’, *fuflodemik* ‘foul + pandemic’; pandemic names (TS 3.1): *feikopidemiya*, *feikodemiya* ‘fake + epidemic’, *fuflopandemiya* ‘fake + pandemic’, *psevdoepidemiya* ‘pseudo + epidemic’, *pseudopandemiya* ‘pseudo + pandemic’, *psevdoepidemicheskaya vakkhanaliya* ‘pseudo + epidemic bacchanalia’, *lokhopandemiya* ‘foul + pandemic’; nominations of individuals by their relation to the restriction regime (TP 4.6): *baranovirus* ‘ram + virus’.⁵

⁴ Rusprav.tv. 2020, September 9.

⁵ Further, in the analysis of the other semes, for the sake of compactness, we will only indicate the TS number.

The idea of “deliberately deceiving the population for mercenary purposes”, which has been actively discussed in various mass media and even more actively in informal network communications, despite a warning from the highest Russian authorities to punish those who spread such things,⁶ is also conveyed by compound names: *Kovidnaya mafiya* ‘*Covid Mafia*’: *who earns money on our unhealthiness*;⁷ *About the kovidnaya afera* ‘*covid scam*’ (*why they treat us like fools*) (forum name⁸), etc. We can notice that the supporting components of composite names and interpreting elements of single-word names coincide – cf. *Kovidnaya mafiya* ‘*covid mafia*’ and *kovid-mafiya* ‘*covid-mafia*’; *kovidnaya afera* ‘*covid scam*’ – cf. *kovidafera* ‘*covid + scam*’, *korona-afera* ‘*corona-scam*’, etc. It is at the expense of the semantics of these lexemes, which have the seme ‘deception’ in their direct meanings (*afera* ‘*scam*’, *feik* ‘*fake*’, *sharlatanstvo* ‘*charlatanism*’, *shulerstvo* ‘*cheating*’, etc.) or secondary, derivative, often uncodified meanings (*lovushka* ‘*trap*’, *mafiya* ‘*mafia*’, *mif* ‘*myth*’, *fuflo* – in the argot ‘*deception*’), that the attitude of the text author to the situation and its participants (mistrust, skepticism, etc.) is conveyed.

The most active ‘building’ elements of new nominations were *fuflo* (as part of 16 occasional words) and *feik* (as part of seven occasional words). The activity of these lexemes as derivative bases (“system components of complex words”) is also noted in (Kozyrev, Chernyak, 2021: 217). The first of them is vulgarism, rather heavily charged with negative energy due to its low origin. It expresses the idea of deception as a part of occasional words in a harsh, aggressive form. Neglectful, though not as crude sounding, are new words with the component *feik*. Once a word with limited usage, in the last five years or so *feik* and its derivatives have gone beyond the environment that produced them, into media discourse, including political discourse. Apparently, this is explained not only by the constant “demand” of the public communication for new words and expressive means, but also by the demand for nominations that name such features of the post-truth era as distortion of facts, insincerity, untruthfulness, substitution of concepts, simulation, lack of truth, etc. It is no coincidence that a rich stratum of words with the semantics of deception has formed in contemporary sociopolitical vocabulary (more than 50 of them were recorded in print media as synonyms to *feik*) (Marinova, 2022: 110). Covid neologisms with the semantics of untruth fit into the general semantic field expressing the idea of mass information deception.

Seme (2) ‘**restriction of freedom**’, according to our data, comes next after the leading seme of deception. It is contained in the semantics of such neologisms as *kovid-byurokratizm* ‘*covid-bureaucratism*’, *kovid-genotsid* ‘*covid-genocide*’, *karantin-zatochenie* ‘*quarantine-prisoning*’, *karantin-kontslager* ‘*quarantine-concentration camp*’, *kovido-getto* ‘*covid-ghetto*’, *korona-diktatura* ‘*corona-dictatorship*’, *korona-kommunizm* ‘*corona-communism*’, *koronaperegib* ‘*corona-inflection*’, *koronaslezhka* ‘*corona-trace*’, *kovid-terror* ‘*covid-terror*’, *kovid-totalitarizm* ‘*covid-totalitarianism*’, *korona-totalitarizm* ‘*corona totalitarianism*’, *kovid-fashizm* ‘*covid fascism*’, *korona-fashizm* ‘*corona-fascism*’, *koronafederalizm* ‘*corona-federalism*’, *karantino-khunta* ‘*corona-junta*’, *koronatsarstvo* ‘*corona-*

⁶ For more details see: Stopkoronavirus.rf. (2020, April 27). *Supreme Court clarified the procedure for criminal prosecution for fakes about coronavirus.*

⁷ Tsargrad.tv. 2021, July 13

⁸ Yaplakal.com. 2021, October 25.

kingdom', *koronaekstremizm* 'corona-extremism' (TS 4. 3), *korona-diktator* 'corona-dictator' (TS 2.6), *korona-dzhikhad* 'corona-jihad' (TS 3.1), *kovid-terrorizm* 'covid-terrorism' (TS 3.2), *COVID-terrorist*, *korona-terrorist* 'corona-terrorist' (TS 3.4), *koronaekstremist* 'corona-extremist' (TS 4.6), etc.

As we see, the seme 'restriction of freedom' unites the lexemes of different TSs – from the characteristic of the situation as a whole (first of all, official restrictive measures) to the designation of people. This semantic dominant is mainly expressed in political vocabulary – words naming various, more often totalitarian regimes, repressive measures, mass violent actions, etc. See: *bureaucratism*, *genocide*, *ghetto*, *dictatorship*, *confinement*, *concentration camp*, *inflection(s)*, *surveillance*, *terror*, *totalitarianism*, *fascism*, *federalism*, *junta*, *extremism*, etc. In addition, the means of expressing the seme in some lexemes are suffixoids, as in the words *covidocide*, *quarantinocide* (cf. *genocide*), *coronacaust*, *quarantinocaust*, *pfizerocaust*⁹ (cf. *holocaust*), as well as *covidocracy*, *pandemiocracy*, etc.

Seme (3) '**mental disorder**' is common to many noun-based compounds created in the covid period, naming an unhealthy, unstable mental state or even a disease (*delirium*, *madness*, *depression*, *hysteria*, *neurosis*, *paranoia*, *psychosis*, *stress*, *schizophrenia*, *shock*, etc.). Semantics of these medical terms as part of neologisms is determinologized; such semantic component as deviation from normal mental behavior, state in the period of pandemic and restriction regime; absence of reasonable, balanced approach to the problem because of fear, uncertainty, etc., is brought to the fore. See: *kovido-nevroz* 'covid-neurosis', *koronastress* 'corona stress', *kovidoshok* 'covid shock', *koronashok* 'corona shock' (TS 1.2), *kovid-bezumie* 'covid madness', *kovidlo-bezumie* 'covid insanity', *korona-bezumie* 'corona insanity', *kovid-bred* 'covid delirium', *koronobred* 'corona delirium', *korona-depressiya* 'corona depression', *korona-isterika* 'corona hysteria', *kovid-isterika* 'covid hysteria', *korona-isteriya* 'corona hysteria', *kovid-isteriya* 'covid hysteria', *koronavirus-isteriya* 'coronavirus hysteria', *karantinoisteriya* 'quarantine hysteria', *koronoiya* 'corona + Paranoia', *kovidopsikhoz* 'covid psychosis', *koronapsikhoz* 'corona psychosis', *karantinopsikhoz* 'quarantine psychosis', *koronashizofreniya* 'corona schizophrenia', *koronashiza* 'corona schizo' (TS 4.3).

Affixoids also act as means of expressing the considered semantic dominant: the prefixoid *psikho-* 'psycho-', e.g. is used to denote the COVID-19 virus itself and the *pandemic* – *psikhovirus* 'psycho virus', *psikhokoronavirus* 'psycho coronavirus', *psikhopandemiya* 'psycho pandemic'; the suffixoids – *freniya* 'phrenia' and *-frenik* 'phrenic' ("splinters" of *schizophrenia*, *schizophrenic*) – in the words *koronafreniya* 'coronaphrenia', *kovidofreniya* 'covid phrenia' (TS 4.3), *koronafrenik* 'corona phrenic', *kovidofrenik* 'covid phrenic' (TS 4.6).

Along with the psychiatric terms, words of close semantics are used as derivatives: *kovid-trevoga* 'covid anxiety' (TS 1.2), *kovid-nastorozhennost'* 'covid-vigilance' (TS 4.3), also conveying the idea of a restless emotional state. A seme reflecting painful affection to something (e.g., discussion of pandemic-related topics), susceptibility to influence (mass panic, etc.), also becomes relevant. It is conveyed in such neologisms as *zombovirus* 'zombie + virus' (TS 1.1), *kovidomaniya* 'covid mania', *koronamaniya* 'corona mania' (TS 4.3), *kovidozavisimost'* 'covid addiction' (TS 4.5), *grechkomaniya* 'buckwheat addiction' (TS 5.1), *koronazombi* 'co-

⁹ From the name of the vaccine by the American company Pfizer.

rona zombie’ (TS 4.6), *zumbi* ‘*zoombi*’ – about people obsessed with communication through Zoom (TS 5.6), etc.

Seme (4) ‘**trial**’ – as we called the next semantic dominant, reflecting the peculiarities of precepting the events of 2020 in Russia. One of the neologisms contains a word that has become the name of the theme (*kovid-ispytanie* ‘*covid-trial*’); it is a generic term that unites different kinds of life difficulties, hardships, hard experiences and losses (cf. also *koronabedstvie* ‘*corona disaster*’, *mirovaya korona-napast* ‘*world corona-disaster*’).

Thus, difficulties in the economic and financial sphere were interpreted as crisis, force majeure; hence (*finansovyi*) *koronakrizis* ‘*financial corona crisis*’, *koronavirus-krizis* ‘*coronavirus-crisis*’, *virusokrizis* ‘*virus crisis*’, *virusmazhorneye obstoyatel'stva* ‘*virus-majeure circumstances*’, *koronamicheskii krizis* ‘*coronomic (cf. economic) crisis*’, *pandemiino-neftyanoi krizis* ‘*pandemic-oil crisis*’, *kovidno-valyutnyi krizis* ‘*covid-currency crisis*’ (TS 5.2). Some occasional words semantically close to the words specify the features of the crisis: stagnation, reduction of commodity-money turnover, lack of prospects for business, etc. – with the help of metaphorically reinterpreted usual words: *korona-blokirovka* ‘*corona blocking*’, *kovid-spyachka* ‘*covid hibernation*’, *karantinostoyanie* ‘*quarantine-stagnation*’, *korona-tonnel* ‘*corona tunnel*’, etc.

The whole pandemic situation is characterized in a similar way – *kovid-krizis* *kovidlo-krizis* ‘*covid crisis*’, *karantinokrizis* ‘*quarantine crisis*’, *karantino-jekstrim* ‘*quarantine extreme*’ (TS 4.3) – and its various *karantinno-jekstremal'nye* ‘*quarantine extreme*’ consequences. One of the images connected with the comprehension of the events is the image of the hardest prolonged trials, similar to those that became the subject of depiction in the world epic. This is how the *kovid-epopeya* ‘*covid+epic*’, *koronaepopeya* ‘*corona + epic*’, *koronavirusno-krizisnaya epopeya* ‘*coronavirus crisis epic*’ appeared; cf. also: *kovidiada* ‘*covidiad*’ (an allusion to Homer's epic *The Iliad*). The metaphor of the natural element was also relevant; see, for example, the title: *In the funnel of the koronashtorm* ‘*corona storm*’,¹⁰ as well as *koronastikhiya* ‘*corona disaster*’, *korona-uragan* ‘*corona hurricane*’, *korona-tryasenie* (cf. *zemletryasenie*) ‘*coronaquake from earthquake*’, etc.

Seme (5) ‘**excessive discussion**’ is realized in ‘covid’ words, which specifically reflect the idea of excessive information ‘noise’, which has taken over almost entirely media discourse in connection with crisis events in the world. In the novel by V. Pelevin, published in the summer of 2020, this idea is ironically presented in the interpretation of the covid by one of the characters: “It is a bad flu with good PR”.¹¹ Indeed, the media discourse of the “covid” period is marked by a kind of “obsession” with this topic among journalists and bloggers, and the mass consciousness was mainly seized by reflections and worries about the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic and its consequences. And both manifestations of excessive interest in the pandemic have become the object of reflection by journalists them-

¹⁰ Interfax.Ru. 2020, April 13.

¹¹ Pelevin, V.O. (2020). *The invincible sun* (p. 695). Moscow: Eksmo Publ. A similar ironic attitude to the new infection reflects the English slang expression that has become a meme: *It's just the flu bro* (Thorne, T. (2020). #CORONASPEAK – the language of Covid-19 goes viral. Retrieved November 10, 2020, from <https://language-and-innovation.com/2020/04/15/coronaspeak-part-2-the-language-of-covid-goes-viral>).

selves: *The flywheel of **pandemiobesie** ‘pandemiotism’ is spinning and growing like a cancerous tumor. Propaganda has now turned on the sowing of panic and intolerance...¹²; The media is stirring up **kovidomaniya** ‘covid mania’...¹³*, etc.

The negative reaction to a kind of obsession with the covid theme is reflected in many neologisms. These neologisms use both long-established means (*azhiotazh* ‘excitement’, *bum* ‘boom’, *likhoradka* ‘fever’, *sensatsiya* ‘sensation’, *skandal* ‘scandal’, *shum* ‘noise’, etc.) and new means (*khaip* ‘hype’). Here is a far from complete list of the neologisms: *korona-azhiotazh* ‘corona excitement’, *korona-bum* ‘corona boom’, *karantinovyi bum* ‘quarantine-boom’, *lokdaun-bum* ‘lockdown boom’, *korona-likhoradka* ‘corona fever’, *kovid-sensatsiya* ‘covid sensation’, *kovid-skandal* ‘covid scandal’, *koronaskandal* ‘corona scandal’, *koronakhaip* ‘corona hype’, *koronashum* ‘corona noise’ (TS 4.3), *ZOOM-bum* ‘ZOOM-boom’ (TS 5.5), etc. See also the borrowed neologism *infodemiya* (<English infodemic), used, as a rule, with the definition *massovaya* ‘mass’ – about **excessively active** spread of information about coronavirus infection, often unverified, unreliable.

However, the affix *besi(ye)* (and its pair *-bes* in personal nouns), which is attached to the bases of the “current moment” key words, compete with the above interpretative lexemes (from *excitement* to *hype*): *kovidobesie*, *koronavirusobesie*, *virusobesie*, *koronabesie*, *karantinobesie* (TS 4. 3), *karantinobes*, *korona-bes(ik)*, *kovidobesy*, *virusobes* (TS 4.6), *vaktsinobesie* (TS 2.4), etc. In covid words, the affix *-besiye* may emphasize different shades of meaning: from excessive enthusiasm for discussing news, rumors, etc. related to the pandemic (*vertoletobesie* (from *vertolet* ‘helicopter’), about the hype surrounding the so-called “helicopter” payments) to almost aggressive, fanatical obsession with various preventive measures and means (*perchatkobesie* (from *perchatka* ‘glove’), *maskobesie* (from *maska* ‘mask’). The syncreticity of the semantics of the formant *-besiye* is also noted in (Dyagileva, 2021: 317–318).

Seme (6) ‘**destructiveness**’ was formed as a stable semantic dominant as a result of precepting situation associated with the spread of covid and the introduction of restrictions as tragically dangerous for humanity, threatening a large-scale catastrophe, which is realized with the help of derivative lexemes *apokalipsis* ‘apocalypse’, *postapokalipsis* ‘post apocalypse’, *Armageddon*, *katastrofa* ‘disaster’, *kollaps* ‘collapse’ ‘severe crisis, threatening the collapse of the state’ (BED¹⁴), *krakh* ‘crash’, *pepel* ‘ashes’, *tragediya* ‘tragedy’ and others, used for building neologisms, and is supported by the overall context of the phrase. See: *The world needs to rise from the “kovid-pepel” ‘covid ashes’ like the Phoenix and politicians need to reopen the borders*¹⁵. Here is a list of nominations united by this “eschatological” seme: *kovid-apokalipsis* ‘covid apocalypse’, *koronavirus-apokalipsis* ‘coronavirus apocalypse’, *karantinoapokalipsis* ‘quarantine apocalypse’, *koronaarmageddon* ‘corona Armageddon’, *kovid-katastrofa* ‘covid catastrophe’, *korona-krakh* ‘corona crash’ (TS 4.3), *kharonovirus* ‘Charon virus’,

¹² Yabloko. Volgograd Oblast. 2020, October 17.

¹³ Smolenskaya Pravda. 2020, May 16.

¹⁴ Big Explanatory Dictionary. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <http://gramota.ru/slovari/dic/?word=%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%BC%D0%B0%D0%B3%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%BD&all=x>

¹⁵ Tilzit.info. 2020, October 13.

apokalipticheskii virus ‘apocalyptic virus’ (TS 1.1), *koronaopasnost* ‘corona hazard’ (TS 1.2), *korona-katastrofa* ‘corona-catastrophe’, *kovid-tragediya* ‘covid tragedy’, *koronaChernobyl* ‘corona Chernobyl’¹⁶ (TS 3.1), *kovidoopasnost* ‘covid hazard’ (TS 3.2), *post-COVID-apokalipsis* ‘post-COVID apocalypse’, *postkovidnyi zombi-apokalipsis* ‘post-covid zombie apocalypse’ (TS 3.3), *kovid-kollaps* ‘covid-collapse’ (TS 5.2), etc. Some lexemes are international, e.g. *koronapokalipsis* (< English *coronapocalypse*), *koronakalipsis* (< English *coronacalypse*), *koronageddon* (< English *coronageddon*) (Alyeksyeyeva et al., 2020: 205). In Russian, these contaminants become a kind of model for various structural variations of the name (cf.: *koronapokalipsis* and *korona-apokalipsis/korona-apokalipsis*; *koronakalipsis* and *kovidokalipsis*).

Seme (7) ‘war’ unites a group of occasional words, conveying the speakers’ attitude to the circumstances of the pandemic as a struggle with a dangerous, deadly enemy against whom one must defend oneself and fight back. Hence such nominations as *korona-voina* ‘corona-war’, *kovidonosnaya voina* ‘covid+ous (cf. victorious) war’, *kovid-osada* ‘covid-hostage’, *kovid-front* ‘covid front’, *korona-front* ‘corona front’ (TS 4.3), *kovid-vrag* ‘covid enemy’, *koronaobraznyi vrug* ‘corona-shaped enemy’, *kovid-voiska* ‘covid army’, *korona-razrushitel* ‘corona destroyer’ (TS 1.1), *korona-Gitler* ‘corona-Hitler’ (TS 1. 2), *COVID-marshal*, *korona-general* ‘corona general’, *kovid-soldaty* ‘covid soldiers’ (TS 2.6), *kovid-ugroza* ‘covid threat’, *koronaugroza* ‘corona threat’, *koronavirus-ugroza* ‘coronavirus threat’, *koronaataka* ‘corona attack’, *kovid-udar* ‘covid strike’, *korona-udar* ‘corona strike’ (TS 3.1), *kovid-bastion* ‘covid-bastion’, *kovid-voiska* ‘covid soldiers’, *koronapobeda* ‘corona victory’, *kovid-podkreplenie* ‘covid suppression’, *kovid-soprotivlenie* ‘covid resistance’ (TS 3.2), *kovid-podpol'e* ‘covid underground’ (TS 4.4), etc. These and similar designations implement the metaphor of war, which is presented in any political discourse (Baranov, Karaulov, 1994; Flusberg et al., 2018; Chudinov, 2001), but this time the image of enemy is associated not with some political force to be opposed, but with a disease, an infection¹⁷ (Balashova, 2020; Kozlovskaya, 2021). At the same time, the sphere of the war metaphor expands at the expense of contexts reflecting confrontation within society (between “skeptics” and “sididomers” (“those who are sitting at home”), *antimasochniki-besperchatochniki* ‘anti-mask and anti-glove warriors’ and “maskers”, etc.). Hence the expression *masochnye voiny (bitvy, batalii)* ‘mask wars (battles)’. But perhaps the most unexpected is the image of fierce confrontation in the discourse on vaccine development in various countries, e.g: *Voina vaktsin* ‘the war on vaccines’ is increasingly taking place on political, informational fronts...¹⁸ See also *vaktsinnaya voina* ‘vaccine war’, *gonka vaktsin* ‘vaccine race’ (cf. *arms race*).

Seme (8) ‘fear’ in neologisms of the covid period, as far as composite words are concerned, is set by the semantics of such interpretative elements, which in the language system are direct designations of this state: *boyazn* ‘fear’,

¹⁶ Cf. the same image in the metaphorical nomination China’s Chernobyl used in the British press (Nerlich, B. (2020). *Metaphors in the time of coronavirus*. Retrieved October 10, 2020, from <https://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/making-science-public/2020/03/17/metaphors-in-the-time-of-coronavirus/>).

¹⁷ Pong, B. (2020). *How we experience pandemic time*. Retrieved November 19, 2020, from <https://blog.oup.com/2020/07/how-to-experience-pandemic-time/>

¹⁸ *Novosti Rossii*. 2020, November 29.

koshmar ‘nightmare’, *panika* ‘panic’, *strast* (colloquial ‘horror, fear’ (BED)), *triller* ‘thriller’ (about what causes a sense of fear), *starukha* ‘old woman’ (figurative ‘about death as a source of fear’), as well as affixoid – *fobia* ‘-phobia’, which is again in demand in the situation of an infectious epidemic (researchers note the composite word *kholerofobiya* ‘cholera phobia’ even in the 19th century (Dyagileva, 2021: 310)).

In most cases, the analyzed means were actively used to denote (and characterize) the pandemic situation as a whole, cf.: *karantinoboyazn* ‘quarantine fear’, *kovid-koshmar* ‘covid nightmare’, *koronakoshmar* ‘corona nightmare’, *panikodemiya* (feikovirusa) ‘panic pandemic’ (of fake virus), *kovid-panika*, *kovid-panikerstvo* ‘covid panic’, *koronapanika* ‘corona panic’, *karantinopanika* ‘quarantine panic’, *kovid-starukha* ‘covid old woman’, *kovid-strasti* ‘covid horrors’, *koronastrasti* ‘corona horrors’, *kovid-triller* ‘covid thriller’, *koronatriller* ‘corona thriller’, *kovid-uzhas* ‘covid horror’, *korona-uzhas* ‘corona horror’, *kovidofobiya* ‘covid phobia’, *koronafobiya* ‘corona phobia’, *pandemiofobiya* ‘pandemic phobia’, etc. (TS 4.3). To denote people with various kinds of fears and phobias (from the fear of not wearing a mask to the fear of wearing one), the word *paniker* ‘alarmist’ was activated, see: *koronapanikery* ‘corona alarmists’ (cf. also *korona-besnye panikery* ‘corona feared alarmists’), *kovid-panikery* ‘covid alarmists’ (TS 4.6), *nabor panikera* ‘the alarmist’s kit’ (TS 5.1); the formant – *fob* ‘phobe’ was also frequent: *vaktsinofob* ‘vaccine + phobe’, *maskofob* ‘mask + phobe’ (TS 2.6), *koronafoby* ‘corona phobe’, *kovidofob* ‘covid phobe’ (TS 4.6), etc.

Occasional lexemes with the semantic dominant under consideration were also found among numerous (over 60) denotations of the coronavirus COVID-19, and the means of expressing the semantic dominant are different in comparison with the new words in other TSs: *pugalovirus* ‘scarecrow virus’, *koronamonstr* ‘corona monster’, *koronachudovishche* ‘corona beast’, *koronad'yavol* ‘corona devil’.

The seme (9) ‘artificial nature’ is close in contents to the most frequent semantic dominant – the seme of deception. In any case, the nominations containing the ‘artificiality’ seme reflect notions that quite logically follow the beliefs of a certain part of the Russians in mass deception, large-scale manipulation through everything connected with the pandemic – from the appearance of the coronavirus COVID-19 (*korona-igra* ‘corona-game’, *koronakvest* ‘corona quest’, *korona-spektakl* ‘corona performance’, *koronashou* ‘corona show’, *koronavirus-shou* ‘coronavirus show’) to the restriction regime (*karantinotsirk* ‘quarantine circus’) and the development of an anti-covid vaccine (*the conspiracy of vaccinators*). The interpreting elements in the composite words are mostly thematically homogeneous – they are terms from the sphere of art, which, however, have a long tradition of usage in social and political discourse figuratively and disapprovingly (see the *performance*, *circus*, *show*, etc.). These are the so-called theatrical metaphors or, more broadly, game metaphors).

We included into the same group of occasional words the nominations *kovid-zagovor* ‘covid conspiracy’, *koronazagovor* ‘corona conspiracy’, *koronakoalitsiya* ‘corona coalition’, etc., reflecting a very popular interpretation of the events of 2020 in the spirit of the conspiracy theory. In addition, it is worth mentioning here the internationalism of *Plandemiya* (< English Plandemic, the name of the film by D. Martin and J. Mikovits). In Russian and other discourses, the word,

denoting a pandemic, at the expense of the interpreting element *plan-* (“pandemic according to plan, the planned one”) expresses its negative assessment, explaining what is happening by the world conspiracy of interested business elites. See, e.g. *All of this is taking place against the backdrop of the artificial Plandemiya of Convid-19 and during a struggle between fractions who just want to control humanity, with fractions who want to kill most of us...*¹⁹ (the highlighted word combination is one of many examples of the connection of two semantic dominants: ‘artificial character’ and ‘deception’).

Seme (10) ‘**disorder**’ is expressed primarily in those nominations which include the usual designations of the absence of order. This is the lowered word *bardak* ‘mess’ and, on the contrary, the book word *khaos* ‘chaos’, which has the secondary meaning ‘extreme disorder’ (BED). The sense that the natural, habitual order of things was disrupted during the pandemic gave rise to such nominations as *kovid-khaos*, *kovidlo-khaos* ‘covid chaos’, *koronakhaos* ‘corona chaos’, *koronavirus-khaos* ‘coronavirus chaos’, *kovid-bardak* ‘covid mess’ (TS 4. 3), *karantinno-ekonomicheskii bardak* ‘quarantine-economic mess’ (TS 5.2); *pandemiino-rasovyi khaos* ‘pandemic-racial chaos’ (TSe 5.3); cf. also *koronavirusia* (from *katavasia* – colloquial ‘turmoil, bustle, disorder’ (BTS)).

To convey this idea, other nouns were also used as derivatives, the semantics and use of which were associated with a situation of mass social disorder – see: *bul'on* ‘broth’, *Maidan*, *revolyutsiya* ‘revolution’, *turbulentnost'* ‘turbulence’ (from *turbulent* ‘characterized by disorderly, chaotic movement’ (BED), etc.). Their meanings are metaphorically reinterpreted as part of the composites *COVID-bul'on* ‘COVID-broth’, *koronavirus-maidan* ‘coronavirus maidan’, *koronaturbulentnost'* ‘corona turbulence’. See, e.g.: *Washington Post* writes of a possible famine, recalling the results of the 1918 epidemic...²⁰; *The Guardian* says the same, adding unemployment to the *COVID-bul'on* ‘Covid broth’...; *Korono-revolutsiya* ‘Corona revolution’: office plankton drifts home. However, the months-long experience of quarantine... may completely overturn ideas about office work.²¹

Seme (11) ‘**lack of common sense**’ is most clearly seen in composite and compound nominations, including the words *absurd*, *glupost'* ‘stupidity’, *marazm* ‘marasmus’ (referring to the stupidity, absurdity of something): *kovidoabsurd*, ‘covid absurd’, *koronagrupost'* ‘corona stupidity’, *karantinobesnye gluposti* ‘quarantine stupidity’, *koronamarazm* ‘corona marasmus’ (TS 4.3). These occasional words convey in a rather expressive form (see also *koronadurka* (korona ‘corona’ + *durka* ‘argot Psychiatric Hospital’) the aversion to the pandemic situation, characteristic, rather, of covid dissidents. The same idea in some contexts was also expressed by the corresponding lexemes, the most popular of which was probably the word *idiocy*. For example: *Why should we fumble for future scenarios when we should simply stop this idiocy now and get on with our lives as we did a month ago... We are afraid to die of the coronavirus and we are not afraid of the koronadurka.*²² Along with *idiot* and *idiotism*, it is also part of numerous forms that negatively characterize the behavior of people during the pandemic

¹⁹ Continentalist. 2020, May 18.

²⁰ Continentalist. 2020, April 27.

²¹ Newsbot.press. 2020, March 16.

²² Russia24.pro. 2020, April 18.

(*kovid-idiotism* ‘*covid-idiotism*’, *korona-idiotism* ‘*corona idiotism*’, *kovidiotstvo* ‘*covidiotism*’, etc.), as well as individuals themselves, who are characterized by inadequate, reckless behavior from the perspective of the speaker (*kovidoidioty* ‘*covid idiots*’, *koronaidioty* ‘*corona idiots*’, *kovidoidiety* ‘*covid idiots*’ and the most common, international *covidioty* (< English *covidiot*).

There are also less expressive designations that contain the seme, e.g. the word *karantinologika* ‘*quarantine logic*’, which ironically denotes the absence of something that is expressed by one of the derivatives (*logic*). The atypical compatibility of derivatives in this occasionalism was nevertheless possible: it conveys the perception of the inconsistent, contradictory nature of the series of measures introduced in March 2020 because of the pandemic.

At the same time, the lack of common sense, if we recall the situation when the restriction regime was introduced in the spring of 2020, was often blamed on the *covid dissidents*, *anti-maskers* and other covid skeptics, who put themselves and others in mortal danger by refusing to comply with elementary epidemiological requirements. The occasionalism *antikورونا-bezumtsy* ‘*anticorona madmen*’ refers to this anti-coviddissident discourse. It should also be noted that the word *kovidioty* ‘*covidioty*’ referred to representatives of both opposite ‘camps’ of the time: those who obediently complied with all necessary protective measures under pandemic conditions and supported the regime of restrictions, and those who refused to follow any requirements to combat coronavirus infection. That is, the word ended up in the vocabulary of both covid-dissidents and covid-believers.

We identified seme (12) ‘**uncertainty**’ in neologisms *nedokarantin* ‘*under-quarantine*’, *polukarantin* ‘*semi-quarantine*’ (TS 4.1), *karantin-kacheli* ‘*quarantine swing*’, *kovid-neopredelennost* ‘*covid uncertainty*’ (TS 4.3), *nedokovid* ‘*under covid*’ and *nedokoronavirus* ‘*under-coronavirus*’ ‘about a disease not confirmed by a test’ (TS 1.2). The same seme is realized in the expanded nominations *antikovidno-krizisnaya neopredelennost* ‘*anticovid-crisis uncertainty*’ and *nedokarantinnye mery* ‘*under-quarantine measures*’ (TS 4.1). The means of expressing the seme are the prefix *nedo-* ‘*under*’ (in the word *nedokarantin* ‘*under-quarantine*’ it emphasizes the idea that the regime of restrictions introduced in connection with the pandemic, unofficially called quarantine, was not in fact restriction regime, which was widely discussed in the period from March to June 2020); the prefix *polu-* ‘*half*’ (expressing the same idea – see *polukarantin* ‘*half-quarantine*’); derivative words (in composites) – *kacheli* ‘*swing*’ (figuratively – about some unstable life situation or changing situation) and *uncertainty* (the name of the seme itself). Among the game nominations we find *karantikuly* ‘*quarantine + vacations*’ and *koronikuly* ‘*corona + vacations*’ – the hybrid nature of these words is isomorphic to self-isolation regime, combining both quarantine measures and vacation. See also: *karantin-kotoryi-nekarantin* ‘*quarantine-which-is-not-quarantine*’, *gibridnyi karantin* ‘*hybrid quarantine*’.

Nominations with this semantic dominant do not contain sharp negative evaluation and speech aggression, which is characteristic of some of the above-mentioned groups (e.g., with semes 1, 3). And even the nomination of the *HZ regime* ‘*who knows regime*’ (about the same period of limitations) is perceived as a witty joke, including the abbreviation – “the emblem of militant agnosticism”²³, which has long been a meme in the network culture.

²³ Pelevin, V.O. (2017). *Numbers* (p. 30). St. Petersburg: Azbuka Publ.

Conclusion

For the final conclusion, meaningful are both the composition of the identified semes (all of them reflect rejection of the situation, its interpretation and evaluation from the position of negation) and the data on the most frequent semantic dominants which allow to present sentiments which prevailed in Russian society in the covid period. However, it should not be excluded that the negative ideas and emotions reflected in the “covid” vocabulary were partly caused and supported by the media, whose common practice in recent decades has been, unfortunately, to pay close attention to bad news, exaggerate and disseminate them. In the case of covid, bad news was provided to the media on a daily basis. At the same time, among the numerous disturbing, frightening and often contradictory messages, a positive discourse stood out – a healthy popular humor, manifested among others in a multitude of humorous, witty nominations reflecting the new realities and conditions of human life (bezUMie ‘withoutMINDness’, apocalyptic cart, alarmist’s kit, etc.).

In general, the conducted study reveals the specifics of language functioning during the crisis period in the life of society. On the one hand, the process of nomination of the most relevant concepts and realities is actualized, the growth of both usual and occasional neologisms is noticeable; on the other hand, the interpreting function of language, responsible for comprehension and awareness of what is happening, is activated. In the flow of lexical innovations, the most relevant meanings become a way, a form of linguistic coding of reality. Since this process has national specifics, in the future it seems advisable to determine the composition of the transversal semantic dominants on the material of new words in other languages, as well as to compare the results obtained with the results of similar studies carried out on the neological process of the subsequent period – the period of vaccination and life under QR-code.

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Семантические доминанты новообразований 2020 года в аспекте кодирования действительности в русском языке

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Аннотация. Актуальность исследования объясняется недостаточной изученностью феномена сквозных сем в новообразованиях одного временного среза с точки зрения интерпретирующей функции русского языка. Цель – проанализировать такие семы, выявленные в семантической структуре неологизмов коронавирусной эпохи, и охарактеризовать фрагмент языковой картины мира в кризисный для него период. Материалом исследования является окказиональная лексика, зафиксированная в российской медиасфере и тематически связанная одной предметной областью – пандемией 2020 года. Источник исследования – «Словарь русского языка коронавирусной эпохи» (проект ИЛИ РАН). Исследование выполнено в русле социолингвистики с использованием методики компонентного анализа семантики, словообразовательного и контекстного анализ. В ходе исследования выделялись тематические подгруппы; в каждой подгруппе выявлялись номинации окказионального характера; определялись средства выражения оценки (производящие основы – для сложных слов, словообразовательные форманты – для аффиксальных дериватов) и устанавливалась общая интерпретирующая сема (с учетом контекстного значения слова). На последнем этапе определялось общее количество лексем, связанных той или иной семантической доминантой. Данные представлены в обобщающей таблице, демонстрирующей в процентном соотношении долю представленности и в то же время степень значимости самой семантической доминанты в процессе языкового кодирования фрагмента действительности. В результате выявлены семантические доминанты, объединяющие окказионализмы разных авторов и демонстрирующие типовые оценки ситуации, связанной с COVID-19; определена степень частотности семантических доминант. Новизна исследования обусловлена спецификой проведенного семантического анализа: впервые на значительном гомогенном массиве словообразовательных дериватов выявляются общие семы, отражающие особенности эмоционального и психологического состояния русскоязычного общества.

Ключевые слова: массовое словотворчество, семантические доминанты новообразований, интерпретирующая функция языка, языковое кодирование, языковая картина мира, кризисный период, русский язык

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