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German Corona-related neologisms and their lexicographic representation

1 Introduction

Between January 2020 and July 2021, many new words and phrases contributed to the expansion of the German vocabulary to enable communication under the new conditions that evolved during the Covid-19 pandemic. Medical and epidemiological vocabulary was integrated into the general language to a large extent. Suddenly, some lexemes from general language were used with very high frequency, while other words were used less often than before. These processes of language change can be studied in various ways, for example, in corpus linguistics with respect to the frequency or emergence of certain words in certain types of texts (e.g. press releases vs. posts in social media), in critical discourse analysis with respect to certain participants of the discourse (e.g. vocabulary of Covid-19 pandemic deniers),¹ or in conversation analysis (e.g. with respect to new verbal interactions in greetings and farewells). The rapid expansion of vocabulary has notably affected also lexicography as a discipline of applied linguistics.

General language dictionaries or terminological dictionaries have quickly reflected on how the German lexicon evolved during the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, new entries have been added to *Digitales Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache*, a comprehensive synchronic general language dictionary of German, such as *Coronaparty*² ‘a privately organized party held during the corona crisis, bypassing the coronavirus containment measures’. New senses were also recorded, such as the ‘highest school-leaving certificate based exclusively on school achievements already achieved [. . .] without taking final examinations’ attributed to the noun *Durchschnittsabitur* which has the older meaning ‘university entrance qualification with a mediocre, average final grade point average’. Duden publishing house with its extensive monolingual online dictionary on contemporary German, *Duden online*, added new entries like *Covid-19*³ focusing on spelling variants (*Covid-19* in general and mostly *COVID-19* in technical language) and grammatical information (e.g. in the entry *Coronavirus*:⁴

1 See Wengeler/Roth (2020) for several studies on the corona discourse and also Weinert (2021).

2 <https://www.dwds.de/wb/Coronaparty> (last access: 10 June 2022).

3 <https://www.duden.de/suchen/dudenonline/Covid-19> (last access: 10 June 2022).

4 <https://www.duden.de/suchen/dudenonline/Coronavirus> (last access: 10 June 2022).

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in terminology mostly neutral gender: *das Coronavirus*, in everyday conversation outside of terminology also masculine gender: *der Coronavirus*). Regarding technical lexical items, for example, the German *Bundessprachenamt* ('Federal Language Bureau') published an online dictionary, *Coronavirus Terminology in German, English, French, Dutch, Polish, Russian, Spanish*, comprising 18,490 terms (e.g. *akute respiratorische Erkrankung* 'acute respiratory infection', *Bewegungsprofil* 'movement profile').

The following sections, however, will focus on the ways in which a German neologism dictionary project has chosen to capture and document lexicographic information in a timely manner. Both challenges and advantages arise from lexicographic practice "at the pulse of time". The *Neologismenwörterbuch* is presented as an example that lends itself well to such a discussion because its subject (neologisms) is characterized as new, innovative, and constantly changing.

2 German neologisms and neologism dictionaries

New words emerge in the German language all the time, but not all of them are neologisms. Being a morphologically productive language, many new compounds or derivations are used only once; and such nonce words are not lexicalized. Neologisms, on the other hand, are defined here as lexical units or senses/meanings that emerge in a language community over a specific period of time of language development, which (a) diffuse, (b) are generally accepted as language norms, and (c) are perceived by the majority of speakers as new for some time (cf. Herberg et al. 2004: XII). There are some indicators for the acceptance of a neologism in German: its increasing overall frequency, its distribution in many different text types/genres, and its use in many different discourses. Other indicators tell us how far the process of lexicalization of new words has developed (cf. Lemnitzer 2010: 69):

- Pragmatic criteria: A neologism is no longer written in quotation marks, hedge words (e.g. *sogenannt* 'so-called') are not used any more, and distancing phrases (e.g. *wie man heute sagt* 'as we say today') are abandoned.
- Grammatical criteria: The gender of nouns is invariable; a full conjugational paradigm for verbs has developed.
- Word-formation criteria: A neologism is used as first and second component in an increasing number of compound nouns; a borrowed neologism is combined with indigenous lexemes in word-formation products.

According to the definition given above, some time (possibly a couple of years) must pass before a new word can be classified as a neologism, and it will only continue to be part of this word class for some time (possibly a couple of years) before it is no longer perceived as new. This notion directly impacts the lexicographic description of these lexemes in neologism dictionaries, which are defined as specialized reference

guides focusing on the description of meaning and usage of such lexemes in a specific language which became part of the vocabulary of that language at a certain time (cf. Barnhart/Barnhart 1990; Lemnitzer 2010; Wiegand 1990 for more details). There are some (neologism) dictionaries that only record neologisms retrospectively, that is after their lexicalization. The *Neologismenwörterbuch* is a typical, corpus-based example of this type of dictionary, Quasthoff (2007) is another. Other neologism dictionaries, like *Die Wortwarte*, record neologisms at their “moment of birth” (cf. Lemnitzer 2010: 67) before they are fully lexicalized, but are nevertheless accepted parts of the lexicon.

Regarding the remarkably quick extension of the German lexicon during the Covid-19 pandemic, that is, in a relatively short time span of less than two years, the second type of neologism dictionaries can continue expanding its list of entries according to established criteria of lemma inclusion. The other, retrospective type of neologism dictionary, however, cannot react directly to the expansion of the lexicon, as lexicographers do not know yet whether the new lexemes, phrases or senses/meanings will become generally established parts of the lexicon after some time.

3 User needs and lexicographic responses

Many people around the world noticed new words emerging in their languages in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, including internationalisms like *corona*, *Covid-19*, *social distancing* as well as other language-specific ones. Journalists, teachers, staff of medical or political institutions, etc., reacted to the general interest in these new lexical items and soon started to publish glossaries with definitions and/or some encyclopedic information. As early as March 2020,⁵ several daily newspapers (e.g. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Rheinpfalz*), news magazines (e.g. *Der Spiegel*), radio stations (Bayerischer Rundfunk, Deutschlandfunk), and news programmes (Tagesschau) in Germany offered corona glossaries with information on neologisms, medical terminology, etc., to their audience (cf. Möhrs 2020). Many of these are still available online (June 2022), and some have been updated since then. In addition, several scientific organizations and other public institutions began to publish (online) terminological resources (e.g. *Corona-Glossar* by the Helmholtz Association of Research Centres, or the above-mentioned multilingual terminological Corona database by

⁵ In Germany, the first attested infection with the SARS-CoV-2 virus was registered on 27 January 2020, and by the middle of March 2020, infections were registered in all federal states. General information on the Covid-19 pandemic in Germany can be found in *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung* (2021).

Bundessprachenamt). Finally, some individuals utilized social media to call for collaboration regarding the collection of corona words.⁶

The first German dictionary project which quickly reacted to the challenge of offering information on those words from the medical and epidemiological contexts that suddenly were of general interest was *Digitales Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache* (DWDS). By the middle of March 2020, the *DWDS-Themenglossar zur COVID-19-Pandemie* ('Thematic glossary on the covid-19 pandemic') was published,⁷ and it has since been updated continuously.⁸ Duden publishing house updated their online dictionary on contemporary German extensively in August 2020, and then more Corona neologisms were added regularly.⁹

In the following sections, more information is given on how the *Neologismenwörterbuch* ('Neologisms Dictionary') project at IDS Mannheim reacted to the unprecedented expansion of the German lexicon with new lexemes, phrases and meanings related to the pandemic.

4 The *Neologismenwörterbuch*

4.1 General remarks

The *Neologismenwörterbuch* covers new words and new senses or meanings established since 1991. New entries are compiled continuously, and the reference guide is published online as part of the dictionary portal OWID (Online-Wortschatz-Informationssystem Deutsch, 'Online information system on the German lexicon') of the Leibniz Institute for the German Language at Mannheim.¹⁰ In this dictionary project, the editorial interpretation (evaluation of print and online media) is combined with a quantitative corpus-linguistic method¹¹ to extract candidates for

⁶ See, for example, the threads of tweets by Nadja Hahn, <https://twitter.com/nadjasnews/status/1334517401359015936> (December 2020), or Lara Fritzsche, <https://twitter.com/larafritzsche/status/1304330059935895552> (September 2020) (last access: 10 June 2022).

⁷ <https://www.dwds.de/themenglossar/Corona> (last access: 10 June 2022).

⁸ At the same time, DWDS had included new corona-related entries to its comprehensive general language dictionary of contemporary German and had updated several entries regarding the corona pandemic. For examples, see above.

⁹ According to a private communication by Kathrin Kunkel-Razum, editorial director of Duden dictionaries, in October 2021.

¹⁰ For the decades of 1991–2000 and 2001–2010, print dictionaries are also available (Herberg/Kinne/Steffens 2004; Steffens/al-Wadi 2015). The lexicographic concept for these volumes goes back to the late 1980s (cf. Heller/Herberg/Lange/Schnerrer/Steffens 1988; Kinne 1989) and 1990s (cf. Herberg 1997 and 1998).

¹¹ For further information on the editorial and corpus-linguistic methods applied to detect potential neologisms for the *Neologismenwörterbuch* cf. Klosa/Lüngen (2018).

inclusion into the dictionary (semi-)automatically. The *Neologismenwörterbuch* contains entries on:

- single words, e.g., *Spam* ('spam'),
- multi-word expressions, e.g., *Generation Facebook* ('age group of young people for whom the Internet and, in particular, communication via social networks are a matter of course'),
- new word formation elements e.g., [*. . .*]holic (used to form nouns denoting someone who is very intensely involved with something, resembling an addiction to something).
- new senses of existing words in German, e.g., *texten* ('to text').

Since its first online publication in 2005 and for the next 15 years, new and comprehensive entries were regularly uploaded to the dictionary by the end of each year. Full entries in the *Neologismenwörterbuch* comprise information on etymology, orthography, pronunciation, meaning, usage, grammar, word formation, encyclopedic information, illustrations, as well as frequency and emergence in the corpus. In 2020, a new type of a more concise entry structure was established for all the words that do not need more extensive information because, for example, no pragmatic restrictions apply to their use. As such, they offer details on grammar, orthography, meaning, word formation or etymology as well as the decade of emergence. These entries are uploaded in thematically related groups on a monthly basis (e.g. April 2021: agriculture, July 2021: crime, September 2021: fashion).¹² The latest inclusions, covering terms used in agriculture, crime or fashion, illustrate how new words often center around a specific new subject. By providing such thematically related bundles of new items users get a compact overview of recent lexical-semantic developments within a specific area.

The *Neologismenwörterbuch* offers different lists of lemma groups¹³ as well as a thematic search¹⁴ and other extended search options¹⁵ for both lemma types. For example, for any neologism dating back to a specific decade (1991–2000, 2001–2010, or 2011–2020), all new phrases, every new word formation element, or all neologisms assigned to the domain of sports, medicine, or fashion, etc., can easily be found.

¹² For an overview see <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/kurzartikel.jsp> (last access: 10 June 2022).

¹³ See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/wortartikel.jsp> for different lemma groups (last access: 10 June 2022).

¹⁴ See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/gruppen.jsp?grp=1> for thematic search option (last access: 10 June 2022).

¹⁵ See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/suche/index.jsp> for extended search options (last access: 10 June 2022).

While dictionary users thus already had many options to access extensive information on neologisms that are accepted parts of the German lexicon in *Neologismenwörterbuch*, the dictionary – according to its definition of a neologism (see above) – however, did not offer any information regarding new words that are not fully lexicalized yet. Therefore, users of the dictionary were often not able to obtain details on words that were particularly conspicuous at a particular time in a specific discourse, thus raising questions concerning their meaning, correct spelling, etc. This, however, did not imply that the lexicographers had not already collected these words with some preliminary information in a list of candidates for inclusion in an internal database. Consequently, the *Neologismenwörterbuch* project started to publish a list of monitored words (*Wörter unter Beobachtung* ‘Monitored Words’¹⁶) in March 2020. All entries in this list consist of lexical units that emerged since 2011, for which only time will tell whether they will diffuse and manifest as language norms. For each of these words, only a (preliminary, rough) explanation of meaning is given, and usage is illustrated by one or two corpus citations, wherever relevant, there are hyperlinks to more encyclopedic information (e.g. in Wikipedia) and the date of recording the word is noted. When items from this inventory are described in either comprehensive or concise entries, they are removed from the list, which is updated quarterly.

By the middle of April 2020, the first corona-related neologisms were included in this online collection of monitored words to react quickly to the sudden demand for information on meaning and usage of new words in the context of the pandemic. Around 30 entries on words such as *Contacttracing* (‘contact tracing’), *Coronababy* (‘child conceived during exit and contact restrictions in Covid-19 pandemic (in home quarantine)’ and ‘child of a Covid-19 patient’), or *zoomen* (‘to communicate and work with Zoom® video conferencing software’) were published. Soon it became obvious that the number of Corona-related neologisms would exceed the number of other monitored words by far, so a separate list on the Corona-related vocabulary¹⁷ was published at the end of April 2020 (with a little over 60 entries). Since then, this list (see Figure 1 with the entry on *No-Covid-Strategie*, ‘no Covid strategy’, i.e. ‘concept aimed at slowing down or containing the Covid-19 pandemic as completely as possible through appropriate measures (e.g. pushing the infection figures to zero and thus creating virus-free zones)’ was updated every fortnight between April and June 2020 and from then on, on a monthly basis. In October 2021, the list included more than 1,800 Corona-related neologisms, and still, more than 700 candidates in an internal database awaited lexicographic description and inclusion into the online index.

¹⁶ See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/monitor.jsp> (last access: 10 June 2022).

¹⁷ See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#> (last access: 10 June 2022).

OWID

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Maskenpfeiler | Mix-and-Match-Imprfung | Manduschenzentral |
| Maskenregel | MNB | Mutationsgebiet |
| Maskentragedisziplin | MNS | Mutationslage |
| Maskentrottel | Mobilarbeit | Mutationspuffer |
| Maskenvermeidungssesser | mobiles Arbeiten | muten |
| Maskenverstoß | Mobilitätsbeschränkung | mütend |
| Maskenverweigerer | Modellregion | |

N

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Nach-Corona-Welt | Netflixparty | No-Covid-Plan |
| Nach-Corona-Zeit | Netzstreik | No-Covid-Strategie |
| Nacktnase | ne | |
| Nahweh | Ne | |
| nasaler Schnelltest | Ne | |
| Nasenbohrertest | Ne | |
| Nasenpimmel | Ne | |
| Nasenpimmler | Ne | |
| nationale Gesundheitsreserve | Nic | |
| nationale Reserve | Nic | |
| Gesundheitsschutz | Nie | |
| nationale Teststrategie | Nie | |
| negativgetestet | Nie | |
| Negativgetesteter | NM | |
| Negativtest | No | |
| Negativtestung | No | |
| Nerzvirus | | |

Konzept, mit dem die Coronapandemie durch geeignete Maßnahmen (z.B. Drücken der Infektionszahlen auf Null und damit Schaffung virusfreier Zonen) möglichst vollständig gebremst bzw. eingedämmt werden soll

Wissenschaftler präsentieren "**No-Covid-Strategie**" [Überschrift] Die Infektionszahlen auf Null drücken, Grüne Zonen einrichten und neue Fälle konsequent eindämmen – mit dieser Strategie wollen 13 renommierte Wissenschaftler die Corona-Pandemie bezwingen. (www.br.de; datiert vom 19.01.2021)

Erfasst: Januar 2021

O

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|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Öffnungsdebatte | Öffnungswunsch | Onlineproctoring |
| Öffnungsdiskussion | OIDA-Regel | Onlinesemester |
| Öffnungsdiskussionsorgie | Online-Afterworkparty | Onlinestunde |
| Öffnungshektik | Onlinebühne | Onlinetermin |
| Öffnungskonzept | Onlinedemo | Onlineunterricht |

Figure 1: Extract from the dictionary index “Neuer Wortschatz rund um die Coronapandemie” (‘New vocabulary around the Covid-19 pandemic’) in the *Neologismenwörterbuch*.

Generally, (semi-)automatic retrieval of neologism candidates (see above) in the Deutsches Referenzkorpus – DeReKo (‘German Reference Corpus’) of IDS¹⁸ was used to detect candidates for the list of new vocabulary around the Covid-19 pandemic. In

¹⁸ See <https://www.ids-mannheim.de/digspra/kl/projekte/korpora/> (last access: 10 June 2022).

addition, the IDS corpus tool cOWIDplus Viewer¹⁹ and its newer version OWID-plusLIVE²⁰ were deployed, giving access to RSS-feeds of thirteen German online newspapers and magazines in weekly updates. The editorial collection of candidates through press reading and, for example, browsing the daily Twitter trends, was continued as well and several other glossaries and lists of Corona-related words (see above) were evaluated systematically. Finally, many dictionary users participated by sending their suggestions for new words to be included via an online form in the *Neologismenwörterbuch*.²¹

Dictionary users were informed on the expansion of the list via the IDS newsletter *IDS aktuell*²² (published quarterly). Progress on the compilation of the index is also recognizable by the date of recording given at the bottom of each entry (cf. Figure 1: Erfasst: Januar 2021, ‘Added: January 2021’). Furthermore, users learn about the status of the list as work-in-progress by a very short introductory text on the website. For the first time in its history, the team working on *Neologismenwörterbuch* also started to publish a number of shorter lexicological studies on the IDS web page²³ concerning words and specific word groups with special significance within the corona discourse (e.g. *Social Distancing*, *Maske* ‘face mask’, *Lockdown* and *Shutdown*), in which readers are referred to the index of Corona-related vocabulary where appropriate. In the following section, some examples from this list are discussed to illustrate the lexicographic challenges from expanding the IDS neologism dictionary “at the pulse of time”.

4.2 News words

In Germany, as soon as the first vaccine for SARS-CoV-2 was found and officially approved, the vaccination campaign started (in January 2021), with specific groups of people being prioritized over others for medical reasons. Some people were dissatisfied with this solution and experienced a feeling of resentment, called *Impfneid* (‘vaccine envy’), which was recorded in *Neologismenwörterbuch* as a typically coined neologism following the German compounding rules (verb *impf[en]* ‘to vaccinate’ + noun [*der*] *Neid* ‘envy’) in January 2021.²⁴ This feeling then led some people to try to

19 See <https://www.owid.de/plus/cowidplusviewer2020> (last access: 10 June 2022)/.

20 See <https://www.owid.de/plus/live-2021/> (last access: 10 June 2022).

21 See <https://www.owid.de/wb/neo/mail.html> (last access: 10 June 2022).

22 See <https://www.ids-mannheim.de/aktuell/presse/newsletter/> (last access: 10 June 2022).

23 See <https://www.ids-mannheim.de/sprache-in-der-coronakrise/> (last access: 10 June 2022).

24 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#impfneid> (last access: 10 June 2022).

be vaccinated before their turn. These people are referred to as *Impfdrängler*²⁵ or *Impfvordrängler*²⁶ ('vaccination tailgaters'), for which, yet again, typical new compounds were recorded in the dictionary in January 2021. Still, as Figure 2 illustrates, both words were in use only a short period of time (January to May/June 2021), as by July 2021 enough vaccines were available nationwide and prioritizing immunization was no longer necessary. Thus, both words seem to be short-lived lexemes which may probably not meet the criteria for neologisms to be included in *Neologismenwörterbuch* in the end (see above), but which are (a) justifiably part of a list of words still monitored, and (b) might well be candidates for a specialized dictionary on the corona discourse, as the topic of vaccination is lexically very rich in German and characterized by quite different discourse participants (e.g. opponents and proponents of vaccination, experts and laypeople).

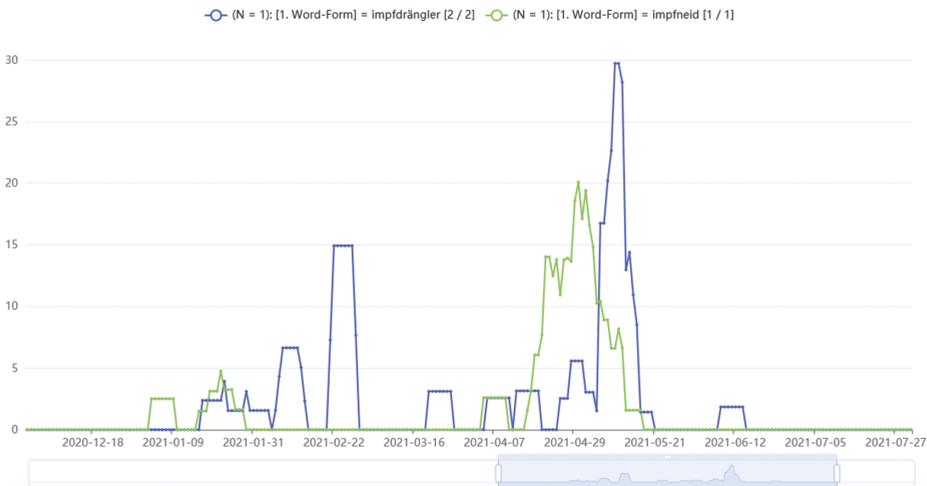


Figure 2: Relative frequency of *Impfdrängler* ('vaccination tailgater') and *Impfneid* ('vaccination envy') in RSS-feeds of 13 German online newspapers and magazines between December 2020 and July 2021.²⁷

4.3 New senses

New senses for long-existing lexemes can be attributed to the corona discourse less often than new words and phrases. One example is the German abbreviation 3G, originally denoting the third generation of mobile telecommunication networks

²⁵ See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#impfdraengler> (last access: 10 June 2022).

²⁶ See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#impfvordraengler> (last access: 10 June 2022).

²⁷ Source: "OWiDplusLIVE", see <https://www.owid.de/plus/live-2021/> (last access: 10 June 2022).

(also called *UMTS*). In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, however, this abbreviation refers to two different notions:

- a) three circumstances that should be avoided during the Covid-19 pandemic to avoid an increase of infections: *geschlossene Räume* ('enclosed spaces'), *Gedränge* ('crowding') and *Gespräche ohne Abstand* ('conversations without distance'),
- b) three groups of people with special health status who pose a low risk of infection in terms of contracting the SARS-CoV-2 virus: *Getestete* ('tested persons'), *Geimpfte* ('vaccinated persons'), *Genesene* ('persons recovered from Covid-19').

Both senses are illustrated in the entry on *3G*²⁸ in *Neologismenwörterbuch* (recorded in June 2021). Since September 2021, the expression *2G*²⁹ is used to refer to only two groups, namely vaccinated or recovered persons. By now, both abbreviations are already part of numerous German compounds (cf. Figure 3). Only the future will tell whether the new senses of *2G* and *3G* will possibly be used with a wider reference to methods of fighting an epidemic caused by any virus.

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| "Stay home"-Sticker | 200er-Inzidenz | 3G-Modell |
| "Stopp Corona"-App | 200er-Notbremse | 3G-Nachweis |
| "Wir bleiben zuhause"-Sticker | 2G | 3G-Regel |
| 1-2-3-Regel | 2G-Modell | 4-Tage-R |
| 15-km-Beschränkung | 2G-Option | 50-Neuinfektionen-Marke |
| 15-km-Grenze | 2G-Optionsmodell | 501Y.V2 |
| 15-km-Radius | 2G-Regel | 50er-Inzidenz |
| 15-km-Regel | 2G-Regelung | 50er-Marke |
| 15-km-Regelung | 30-Sekunden-Regel | 7-Tage-R |
| 15-Minuten-Regel | 3G | |

Figure 3: Extract from the list of neologisms around the Covid-19 pandemic in *Neologismenwörterbuch* showing compounds with *2G* and *3G*.³⁰

4.4 New uses

Another interesting example is the word (*der/das*) *Coronavirus* (noun, masculine or neutral gender), which has been attested in German since the 1980s in the context of AIDS research. Since then, the use of the word shows strong conspicuities in that

²⁸ See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#3g> (last access: 10 June 2022).

²⁹ See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#2g> (last access: 10 June 2022).

³⁰ See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#> (last access: 10 June 2022).

it does not continuously occur with approximately the same frequency or with a continuously increasing or decreasing tendency in the texts of the “German Reference Corpus – DeReKo”, but it shows two prominent frequency peaks, namely in the years 2003 and 2013 (cf. Figure 4). The significantly more frequent occurrence of *Coronavirus* in 2003 is due to the SARS infection wave discussed at that time, and the high rate in 2013 is due to quite a few known MERS cases at that time. Of course, a next, much more significant peak will show for the years 2020 and 2021. This word is thus a good example of how current events of the day affect the frequency with which words are used. For *Neologismenwörterbuch*, however, the term *Coronavirus* itself is not a suitable candidate for inclusion as, on the one hand, it had been attested long before the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and, on the other hand, the dictionary does not cover any periods earlier than 1991 (see above).

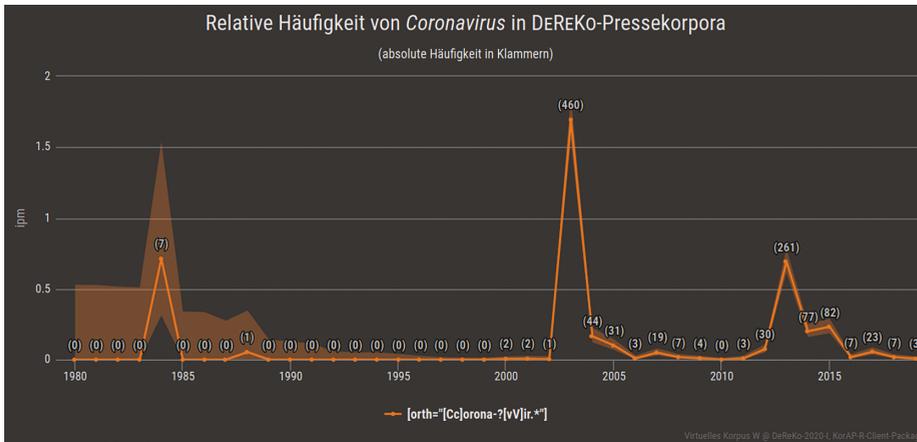


Figure 4: Relative frequency of *Coronavirus* in the “German Reference Corpus – DeReKo” between 1980 and 2019 (with absolute frequency numbers in brackets).³¹

In contrast, the noun *Corona* as an abbreviation of *Coronavirus* is documented in *Neologismenwörterbuch* with a short entry³² with three different senses (“the SARS-CoV-2 virus”, “the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2, i.e. Covid-19”, “the Covid-19 pandemic and the crisis caused hereby”) and other lexicographic information. In this case, the editorial team argued that there is no need to monitor the word further because of its frequency and communicative relevance.

³¹ Graph by Mark Kupietz, project “Ausbau und Pflege der Korpora geschriebener Gegenwartssprache” at IDS Mannheim, see <https://www.ids-mannheim.de/digspra/kl/projekte/korpora/> (last access: 10 June 2022).

³² See <https://www.owid.de/artikel/408108> (last access: 10 June 2022).

Finally, the entry of the noun (*das*) *Homeoffice* with its two senses ‘workspace at home’ and ‘working from home’ illustrates how new uses originating in the Covid-19 pandemic led to the revision of existing entries in *Neologismenwörterbuch*. *Homeoffice* in both senses is widely used in German since the mid-1990s, but the aspect of using modern telecommunication channels to do so was added to the definitions in July 2020 and new phrases like *im Homeoffice arbeiten* (‘to work from home’) or the synonym *Heimbüro* ‘home office’ now supplement the entry due to their increased frequency in the Covid-19 pandemic.

Over all, the list of new words and expressions around the Covid-19 pandemic in *Neologismenwörterbuch* contains predominantly single word entries (e.g. (*das*) *Autokonzert*³³ ‘live performance of an artist, music group, or the like, where the audience listens to the music over a special radio channel while sitting in their car’) and not more than 10% are multi-word expressions (e.g. (*die*) *Generation Corona*,³⁴ ‘age group of young people particularly affected by the economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, who have poor prospects of a successful start to their working lives due to the crisis’). More than 90% of the new lexemes are nouns (e.g. (*der*) *Maskomat*³⁵ ‘vending machine (in front of a store) where individually packaged masks can be purchased’). Some adjectives (e.g. *postpandemisch*³⁶ ‘concerning the period after the Covid-19 pandemic’) and (very few) verbs (e.g. *teamsen*³⁷ ‘to communicate, work, hold classes, etc., over the Internet using the Teams® video conferencing software’) make up for the rest.

Most of the German corona-related vocabulary is formed following German word formation rules, i.e.:

- compounding, e.g. *Doppelmutante*³⁸ (‘(presumably) highly contagious variant of SARS-CoV-2 virus with two genome alterations’), from *doppelt* ‘double’ + (*die*) *Mutante* ‘mutant’,
- derivation, e.g. *downlocken*³⁹ (‘to restrict economic and social activities (to contain an epidemic)’), derived from (*der*) *Lockdown* + suffix *-en*,
- abbreviation, e.g. *Delta*⁴⁰ (‘(presumably) highly contagious mutation of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which was detected for the first time in India’), from (*die*) *Deltavariante*.

33 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#autokonzert> (last access: 10 June 2022).

34 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#generation-corona> (last access: 10 June 2022).

35 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#maskomat> (last access: 10 June 2022).

36 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#postpandemisch> (last access: 10 June 2022).

37 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#teamsen> (last access: 10 June 2022).

38 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#doppelmutante> (last access: 10 June 2022).

39 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#downlocken> (last access: 10 June 2022).

40 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#delta> (last access: 10 June 2022).

Only 5–10 % of the words on the list are English loanwords (e.g. (*das*) *Weaning*,⁴¹ ‘slow weaning of an intensive care patient from mechanical ventilation’). Compounding is the predominant word coining process (over 90%), while derivation or abbreviation are used only in a few cases (for examples see above).

While the relation between single word and multi-word entries in *Neologismenwörterbuch* as a whole is roughly the same (90%: 10%) and the proportions of parts of speech are similar as well (nouns: 83%, verbs: 8%, adjectives: 3 %, other: 6 %), the *Neologismenwörterbuch* as such contains approximately 61% of words that are formed in German, while 39% are loanwords. Those neologisms that are formed in German are compounds (70%), derivatives (21%), or abbreviations (9%). One reason for the deviation of the numbers for the corona-related neologisms in the list from the data of *Neologismenwörterbuch* as a whole is that the corona-related neologisms are still monitored. Thus, whole synonyms clusters are part of the inventory, for example:

- *Coronateststation*,⁴² *Coronateststelle*,⁴³ *Coronatestzentrum*,⁴⁴ *COVID-19-Teststation*,⁴⁵ *COVID-19-Teststelle*,⁴⁶ *COVID-19-Testzentrum*,⁴⁷ all denoting a mobile walk-in or drive-in facility for people to be tested for a possible infection with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, or
- *Immunitätsausweis*,⁴⁸ *Immunitätsnachweis*,⁴⁹ *COVID-19-Ausweis*,⁵⁰ *Covidpass*,⁵¹ *digitaler Impfpass*,⁵² *grüner Pass*,⁵³ all designating an official document confirming the immunity of a person with respect to the SARS-CoV-19 virus.

As of October 2021, it remains unclear which lexeme of each group will eventually be the most dominant term and thus the most eligible candidate to be entered into the reference guide, while the less frequent lexemes are only treated inclusively under the corresponding qualified headword. For the lexicographic catalogue of monitored words of *Neologismenwörterbuch*, the general rule applies that semantically transparent compounds or derivatives are explained in the dictionary, rule of

41 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#weaning> (last access: 10 June 2022).

42 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#coronateststation> (last access: 10 June 2022).

43 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#coronateststelle> (last access: 10 June 2022).

44 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#coronatestzentrum> (last access: 10 June 2022).

45 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp# covid-19-teststation> (last access: 10 June 2022).

46 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp# covid-19-teststelle> (last access: 10 June 2022).

47 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp# covid-19-testzentrum> (last access: 10 June 2022).

48 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#immunitaetsausweis> (last access: 10 June 2022).

49 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#immunitaetsnachweis> (last access: 10 June 2022).

50 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp# covid-19-ausweis> (last access: 10 June 2022).

51 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp# covidpass> (last access: 10 June 2022).

52 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp# digitaler-impfpass> (last access: 10 June 2022).

53 See <https://www.owid.de/docs/neo/listen/corona.jsp#gruener-pass> (last access: 10 June 2022).

thumb that is also less strictly applied for comprehensive and concise entries. The deviations in the data will be studied more closely in the future, when the development of usage and its manifestation can be examined in the IDS corpus data in more detail.

5 Conclusion

Neologism dictionaries seem to be predestined to react quickly to recent and possibly rapid developments of the lexicon of a given language, as it is their objective to cover new lexemes and phrases, a phenomenon naturally associated with change. However, this can only be the case if the dictionary in question aims at documenting new words close to their moment of creation, taking into account the risk that some of the neologisms recorded may only be short-lived. In contrast, retrospective neologism lexicography runs the risk of offering details about new words at a time where the needs of users for this information have decreased and the words in question may no longer be considered as novel. In a situation like the Covid-19 pandemic, where the lexicon of languages around the world (including German) has expanded to a large extent in a very short amount of time and the usage frequency of some words has changed perceptibly in contrast to former times, this question has accumulated even greater importance. In this study, the solution found for *Neologismenwörterbuch* of IDS was demonstrated, i.e., by offering both types of information in one online reference work. On the one hand, fully described neologisms in comprehensive entries are being compiled for words that emerged in German in a specific period of time of language development (the 1990s, the 2000s, the 2010s, the 2020s) and which have diffused and are now generally accepted; and on the other hand, some headwords are still monitored and are being collected, receiving only brief and essential semantic specifications.

Work in the *Neologismenwörterbuch* project exceeded lexicographic practice by additionally offering corpus-based, evidence-based research results on neologisms around the Covid-19 pandemic to the public. The editorial team regularly published short essays on specific word groups (between April 2020 and August 2021) and got into contact with dictionary users by email correspondences based on an online word proposal form as part of the dictionary. The editors also gave many interviews to newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV stations⁵⁴ that followed the developments and the emergence of new coinings around the Covid-19 pandemic with great interest. Besides regular continuous editorial work, all these activities meant additional

⁵⁴ See <https://www.ids-mannheim.de/aktuell/presse/online-presse/> for the press review of IDS, last access: 10 June 2022.

workloads for a rather small team of lexicographers,⁵⁵ but which helped raising the general awareness for the lexicographical work at IDS and for the usefulness of reliable, up-to-date dictionaries, making it worthwhile to immerse in lexicography “at the pulse of time”.

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