



COVID-19 and Words: An Appraisal

Dr. Bhanumathi Haran

Associate Professor

GFGC, Devanahalli.

Abstract

Languages evolve in general and the English language in particular with the covid crisis has given rise to the use of few words related to the pandemic. It is interesting to see how the English language during tiring times has come up with words and these words have been used by common man too.

The **key word** is Covid

The Oxford English dictionary made an extraordinary update to include COVID-19 and a few other words related to the pandemic. The dictionary's executive editor explained that an "exponential rise in usage of a single word in a very short period of time, and for that word to come overwhelmingly to dominate global discourse".

As Covid became the word of the year in 2019 some creative blends with the root 'covid' include: **covidiot (covid+idiot)**, someone who disobeys the guidelines to prevent the Covid-19; **covideo**, video games which help not to be bored during the pandemics, **covideo party** (online parties via Zoom or Skype), **covexit** (the strategy for exiting lockdown).

Further some papers did mention several compound adjectives such as **covid-infected (markets)**, **covid-induced (slumps)**, **covidrelated (data)**, **covid-stricken (firms)**, **covid-afflicted (state)** To refer to situations before Covid-19 and the situations after this disease is over in the future, the affixed forms like **pre-Covid**, and **post-Covid** have become common in use.

Other words that collocated with covid were **covid outbreak**, **covid shock**, **covid crisis**, **covid pandemic**, **covid cases**, **covid hit**, **covid lockdown**, **covid catastrophe**, **covid-19 calamity**, **covid-19 deaths**, **covid-19 restrictions**, **covid-19's spread**, **a covid-19 hospital**, **covid wards**, **covid-19 data**, **covid-19 news**, **a covid-19 committee**, **covid-19 patients**, **covid-19 taskforce** and **covid-19 hotspot**.

The new words that were coined with corona as were **corononomics** (a special economic system during pandemics), **cororhara** (coronavirus harassment),

coronopticon (apps to track the contacts of users); and compounds **corona-speak** (a skill of presenting news regarding the pandemics), **corona-chief** (a leader administering the handling of coronavirus), **coronabonds** (a bond between the struggling eurozone states) and **corona warriors** (people who worked day & night and frontline workers)

The words related with virus was used: **virus-fighting** (firms), **virus-imposed** (restrictions/ distance learning), **virus-related** (stoppages), **virus-control** (work).

The words **self-quarantine** and **self-isolation**, **Contact tracing**, **lockdown super-spreader**, **herd immunity** and the rest were widely used in 2019. Before 2020, **quarantine** meant isolating individuals, who were suspected as disease carriers for a limited duration to ascertain that they are infected after all. Today, it is a word that everyone seems to be familiar with. In India, people use interchangeably the words such as physical distancing, social distancing and quarantine.

The other blends such as **asinfodemic** (**information+epidemic**), **plandemic** (**planned+pandemic**; for some skeptics and conspiracy theorists, Covid-19 was a **planned pandemic**), and **twindemic** (**twin+epidemic**) was generously used.

Some of the medical vocabulary brought to very common use this year: such as **Masks** (**surgical, medical, three-layer**), **face-coverings**, **face shields**, **maskless**, **unmasked**, **anti-mask**: referring to people not wearing masks and **mask-shaming**: the act of shaming the person not using mask. **Sanitisers**, **PPEs**, **ventilators** **vaccines**, **shots**, or **jabs**, **RTPCR tests** and other medical terms were now widely understood.

Words related to E-learning, **blended learning**, **online learning**, **virtual school/class**, **WFH (Work from Home)** **workation**, **Zoom-ready**, **zoom-friendly**, **zoombombing**: hijacking and/or interrupting videoconferencing on the Zoom platform, **mute**, **unmute** and the rest are also widely used.

Conclusion

COVID-19- is indeed a global crisis and it has brought in greater changes in the health system of any country. But it has given the English language a number of new words and expressions. We have to wait see how much longer would the words related to COVID-19 remain in use after the post-pandemic era.

