

კოვიდ-19 პანდემიის გავლენა ქართულ ენასა და კომუნიკაციაზე

The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Georgian Language and the Way We Communicate

დიანა დიასამიძე

თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი

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წინამდებარე კვლევა მიზნად ისახავს ქართულ ენაში კოვიდ-19 პანდემიით გამოწვეული ცვლილებების შესწავლას. კოვიდ-19-მა გავლენა იქონია ცხოვრების სხვადასხვა სფეროზე, ენის ჩათვლით. კორონავირუსის გავრცელებამ მრავალი ახალი ტერმინის შექმნა განაპირობა, რომლებიც ახლა ჩვენი ყოველდღიური ლექსიკის ნაწილია. ამასთან, კვლევის მიზანია ქართულ ენაზე კოვიდ-19 პანდემიის სოციალური გავლენის შესწავლა. კვლევა ეფუძნება თეორიებს, რომლებიც შეისწავლის ახალი ცნებების შექმნას, ენაში არსებული სიტყვების სემანტიკურ ცვლილებას, ნეოლოგიზმების ზრდასა და კოვიდ-19-თან დაკავშირებული სიტყვებითა და ფრაზებით ლექსიკონების შევსებას. ენის დინამიური ბუნება ამკარა ხდება გლობალური გამოწვევებისადმი საზოგადოების ადაპტირებისა და რეაგირების ფონზე. წინამდებარე კვლევა ხაზს უსვამს სოციალური ცვლილებების როლს, მათ შორის სოციალური დისტანციისა და “ლოკდაუნის” (დროებითი ჩაკეტვა), ენობრივი გამომსახველი საშუალებებისა და საკომუნიკაციო ფორმების ჩამოყალიბებაში. გარდა ამისა, ჩვენ განვიხილავთ ცალკეული სიტყვებისა და ფრაზების მნიშვნელობების გაფართოების საკითხს. კოვიდ-19-ის გრძელვადიან შედეგებზე დაკვირვებით მნიშვნელოვანია იმის განსაზღვრა, პანდემიით გამოწვეულმა ენობრივმა ცვლილებებმა გააგრძელეს თუ არა არსებობა პანდემიის შემდგომ პერიოდში. პანდემიის დროს ენაში დამკვიდრებული სიტყვებისა და ფრაზების შესწავლის საფუძველზე, კვლევის ანალიზი აერთიანებს გამოკითხვისა და CMC-ის (Computer Mediated Communication) მონაცემებს, რათა გვაჩვენოს

ლინგვისტურ ტენდენციებზე პანდემიის გავლენა. კვლევა ხაზს უსვამს ქართული ენის ადაპტაციის უნარს გლობალური მოვლენების საპასუხოდ. ისეთი მეთოდოლოგიები, როგორებიცაა CMC და ონლაინ გამოკითხვა, გვიჩვენებს სოციალური მედიის როლს ახალი სიტყვების დამკვიდრებაში,

კვლევის შედეგები გვიჩვენებს კოვიდ-19-ის მიერ გამოწვეულ სოციალურ თუ ლინგვისტურ ცვლილებებს. ენობრივი გამონათქვამებისა და კომუნიკაციის ფორმების შესწავლის საფუძველზე, კვლევაში განხილულია პანდემიასთან დაკავშირებული ნეოლოგიზმები. ენობრივი სიახლეები ხშირ შემთხვევაში ინგლისური ენიდან მომდინარეობს, რადგან იგი საერთაშორისო ენას წარმოადგენს. ონლაინ გამოკითხვის შედეგებმა აჩვენა, რომ კოვიდ-19-მა ცვლილებები გამოიწვია არა მხოლოდ ისეთ სფეროებში, როგორებიცაა ეკონომიკა, პოლიტიკა, ჯანდაცვა, არამედ ლინგვისტიკაშიც. კვლევა ცხადყოფს კოვიდ-19 პანდემიის ხანგრძლივ გავლენას ქართულ ენაზე.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: კოვიდ-19, პანდემია, ქართული ენა, ნეოლოგიზმები

Keywords: COVID-19, Pandemic, Georgian Language, Neologisms

Introduction

Not only had the global COVID-19 pandemic reshaped the world people live in but it had also left a lasting impact on language. The Comprehensive English-Georgian Online Dictionary, curated by Margaliti and constantly updated by its editorial team, is no exception to this linguistic transformation. Recent additions to the Comprehensive English-Georgian Online Dictionary include essential terms such as "coronavirus," "COVID-19," and "lockdown". (The Comprehensive English-Georgian Online Dictionary, 2010). In response to the pandemic's linguistic impact, this study explores the changes observed in the Georgian language, specifically focusing on the newly incorporated terms related to COVID-19.

This research aimed to underline the extent of the pandemic's influence on various aspects of life by questioning participants about its impact on language. A particular focus was placed on investigating whether COVID-19 had led to linguistic changes in the Georgian language.

Interestingly, all respondents recognized the appearance of neologisms in the Georgian language post-pandemic, often borrowing from the international language, English.

The study underscores the Georgian language's capacity to adjust to societal changes and integrate novel concepts in response to unprecedented global events. It addresses questions such as: How has the COVID-19 pandemic socially influenced the Georgian language,

particularly in relation to societal changes like lockdowns and social distancing? What observable linguistic expressions and communication patterns have emerged as a result? What are the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the processing of the Georgian language? Can we observe persistent linguistic changes over time, and if so, how have they evolved?

Which words and phrases have gained popularity in the Georgian language due to the pandemic? Through the analysis of questionnaires and Computer-Mediated Communication, how can we understand the adoption and integration of these pandemic-related terms into everyday language use?

Theoretical framework

1.1 Changes in the language

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, societal systems have been affected by the profound changes (The British Academy, 2021). Covid-19 has contributed to the development of new concepts. Given its seriousness and long-term consequences, the above-mentioned disease prompted a rapid increase of vocabulary invention. Subsequently, new words, phrases and metaphors appeared in various languages including Georgian. According to Chikobava (2008), language is a changing phenomenon. It serves the society as a tool of communication, means of exchange of ideas and mutual understanding. He considers that this reveals one side of the social nature of language, however the other side is no less important – language is necessary for the existence of society.

When a word is newly introduced in the language, it is often difficult to determine whether it belongs to the core vocabulary or not, because it is difficult to decide in advance whether the word will become established in the language or not. Basic lexical foundation of the language includes all the basic words, not those that accidentally enter the language and soon disappear, but those that have been selected by the language for centuries (Chikobava, 2008). Interestingly, due to social factors, language changes.

1.2 Old words new meaning (Semantic shift) or new prominence

“COVID-19 is certainly an agent of culture change and some of these changes are reflected in the way that certain words have shifted their meaning to suit the pandemic situation” (Mweri, 2021, p.41). Example of such words or phrases discussed by Mweri (2021):

“The word lockdown is a compound word made up of two free lexical morphemes or a lexeme containing two or more potential stems. It is a prison protocol used to block people, information or cargo from leaving an area. When put under a full lockdown people are not allowed to move and may not enter or exit a building or rooms within the said building or area. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the term lockdown underwent some form of semantic shift and has been used in relation to mass quarantines and not in the traditional sense of the word as explained above. The term

lock down has therefore become a common vocabulary used in day-to-day conversations” (p.8).

Other words/phrases which underwent some form of semantic shift: contact tracing, epidemic vs. pandemic, screening, quarantine vs. isolation etc. (Mweri, 2021, p.8).

1.3 A rise in Neologisms

According to the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia, “neologism“ refers to newly appearing words or expressions (in Greek “neos”-new; “logos” -word). Every new event, new subject, new form of life is the reason for the emergence of new words. It leads to the emergence of new words, or neologisms in the language.

Jefwa Mweri in his article *CoronaVirus Disease (COVID-19) Effects on Language Use: An Analysis of Neologisms* (2021) discusses some innovations in language lexis and meaning by examining neologisms in the wake of the emerging and now trending COVID-19 pandemic. His study analyses words whose meaning has changed (semantic shift) in the wake of COVID-19 and those which have gained prominence or currency during that period.

There are several theoretical approaches to the issue of neologism – historical, structural, etymological and lexicography. Mweri (2021) mentions that the historical approach considers time as the basic criteria and because of that defines neologism as any word whose origin is currently in the memory of the generation of its users. Stylistic theory defines neologism as a word which is stylistically marked by the newness in their usage in the language. Etymological one interprets that neologisms consist of words already existing in a language but have developed new meaning recently. And the lexicography theory defines neologisms as words which have not been included in current dictionaries (Mweri, 2021).

It is an interesting endeavour to investigate the established trend and nature of neologisms that have emerged during the pandemic.

1.4 En richment of dictionaries and corpora with corona virus related words/phrases

Dictionaries regularly incorporate new variations of existent words and add new terminology. Consequently, because of the social factors caused by COVID-19, lots of dictionaries added many words from 2020 to the present. As mentioned before, language is a changing phenomenon (Chikobava,2008), therefore, new terminologies are added to the dictionaries and corpora (collection of texts). Casper Grathwohl (2021), president, Oxford Languages, looking back on 2020 and says:

“I’ve never witnessed a year in language like the one we’ve just had. The team at Oxford were identifying hundreds of significant new words and usages as the year unfolded, dozens of which would have been a slam dunk for Word of the Year at any other time. It’s both unprecedented and a little ironic—in a year that left us speechless, 2020 has been filled with new words unlike any other.”(Oxford University Press, 2020)

Words and meanings added to Oxford Learner’s Dictionary in May 2020: “contact tracing”, “COVID-19”, “corona”, “covidiot”, “hand gel”, “hand sanitizer”, “health professional”, “hot zone”, “nCoV”, “self-isolate”, “self-isolation”, “self-quarantine”, “social

distance”, “work from home”, “panic buying”, “patient zero”, “herd immunity”. For instance, “panic buying” is defined as the act of buying large quantities of everyday items such as food, fuel, etc. because of concerns about them running out or prices rising. “Covidiot” is defined as a person who annoys other people by refusing to obey the social distancing rules designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (Oxford University Press, 2020).

Coronavirus corpus was invented and it contains about 1.5 billion words of data in approximately 1.9 million texts from January 2020 to December 2022. It is designed to be the definitive record of the social, economic, cultural impact of the corona during this time (English-Corpora.org, 2020).

Georgian National Corpus does not include texts which consist of the words/phrases related to COVID-19. There are words such as “mask”, “isolation”, “booster” and so on, however they carry different meanings (Georgian National Corpus, 2024).

As for The Comprehensive English-Georgian Online Dictionary, new words are added on the website: “coronavirus”, “COVID-19”, “lockdown” and so on. One example would be: “the country is in coronavirus *lockdown*, *lockdown* restrictions” (The Comprehensive English-Georgian Online Dictionary, 2024).

Therefore, the COVID-19 influenced different dimensions of human life (The British Academy, 2021). Language is no exception to this matter. The impact of the pandemic gives us reasons to discuss the changes in the Georgian language that have been undergoing since 2020. There are a lot of new words which were invented during the coronavirus crisis, and they are now integrated into our everyday vocabularies. This social crisis allows us to widely describe the phenomenon that has never been experienced before regarding Georgian Language. Thus, the objective of the research is to study:

1) The social influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Georgian language, with the focus on how societal changes, such as lockdowns, social distancing, have shaped linguistic expressions and communication patterns.

2) Lasting effects of COVID-19 on the Georgian Language processing, examining whether these changes persist over time.

3) What kind of words/phrases are popularized by the pandemic, investigating the adoption and integration of these terms into everyday language use via analyzing questionnaires and Computer-mediated Communication.

Methodology

This research uses Computer-mediated Communication (then CMC) and quantitative methods in order to analyze how the Georgian language has been able to adapt to the changes caused by COVID-19. Generally, CMC offers access to the overwhelming amount of data. For the research, only the online posts, which were published on the social platform, Facebook, by Georgian people, were analyzed. The process aimed at revealing the different contexts when and how the words related to COVID-19 were used by Georgians. Moreover, an Online

questionnaire was conducted to collect data about the words that have been emerged into the Georgian language since 2020 to the present. The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions to reflect how and what kind of words appear in Georgian after COVID-19. The questionnaire provided respondents with a brief explanation of the purpose of the research, a polite request to fill in the questionnaire fully and honestly, a short outline of what the questionnaire would cover and how long it would take to complete, and the promise of anonymity and confidentiality.

Additionally, because the COVID-19 crisis has developed rapidly and some of the words associated with the crisis are themselves new, some dictionaries have made an unscheduled update for words connected with the pandemic. Some of the terms are new to the dictionaries, others have revised definitions (The Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Oxford Learner's Dictionary).

Data

During the COVID-19 pandemic, dictionaries experienced significant updates to incorporate new words related to the global crisis. The Comprehensive English-Georgian Online Dictionary is actively engaged in this process, regularly adding new entries, and enhancing definitions (The Comprehensive English-Georgian Online Dictionary, 2010).

To investigate the active usage of words, abbreviations, and terms by Georgian society since the pandemic, an online questionnaire was conducted. A total of 20 respondents participated, answering questions related to the pandemic's impact on various fields such as economics, politics, health care, and education. Additionally, respondents were asked to reflect on whether COVID-19 caused a change in the Georgian language and to recall words frequently used during the pandemic. Respondents expressed the belief that the Georgian language underwent changes due to the pandemic, with the emergence of new words. A curated list of frequently used words during the COVID-19 pandemic in Georgian was compiled.

Furthermore, all respondents acknowledged the appearance of neologisms in the Georgian language post-pandemic. English, considered the "donor" language, played a significant role, with many neologisms related to COVID-19 borrowed from English due to its international status.

Social media emerged as a vital platform for the adoption of new words, terms, and expressions. It facilitated the widespread usage of words such as "stay at home," "working from home," "incubation period," "community spread," "self-isolation," and "self-quarantine." Notably, words related to coronavirus were employed in diverse contexts, showing the flexibility of language.

Result analysis and Discussion

During the Covid-19 pandemic, numerous dictionaries added new words to their lists. Comprehensive English-Georgian Online Dictionary is not an exception. The editorial team of the Comprehensive English-Georgian Online Dictionary is constantly updating the dictionary, adding new entries, refining, and improving the definitions as well (The Comprehensive English-Georgian Online Dictionary, 2010).

According to the Comprehensive English-Georgian Online Dictionary, the following words

have been added recently:

coronavirus *noun*

[kə'raʊnəvaɪrəs]

1. ბიოლ. კორონავირუსი (*Orthocoronavirinae*);
2. საუბ. 1) კორონავირუსი, კოვიდ-19-ის გამომწვევი ვირუსი;
2) კორონავირუსი, კოვიდ-19.

Figure 1: coronavirus

COVID-19 *noun*

[ˌkəʊvɪdnaɪn'tiːn]



(coronavirus disease 2019-ის აბრევ.) მედ. კოვიდ-19, კორონავირუსული დაავადება 2019 (სასუნთქი გზის ინფექციური დაავადება, რომელსაც კორონავირუსის ერთ-ერთი შტამი იწვევს).

Figure 2: COVID-19

lockdown *noun*
[ˈlɒkdaʊn]



1. დროებითი ჩაკეტვა, "ლოკდაუნი"; შესვლა-გამოსვლის ან თავისუფალი გადაადგილების აკრძალვა (შენობაში, რაიონში, ქალაქში და ა.შ.); the college went on lockdown because of the incident მომხდარი ინციდენტის გამო კოლეჯი ჩაკეტა; to impose a one-week lockdown on the city ქალაქში ერთკვირიანი "ლოკდაუნის" შემოღება; ქალაქის ერთი კვირით ჩაკეტვა; to relax [to tighten] the lockdown "ლოკდაუნის" შერბილება [გამკაცრება]; the country is in coronavirus lockdown ქვეყანაში კორონავირუსის გავრცელების გამო "ლოკდაუნია" გამოცხადებული;

2. ამერ. პატიმრების მკაცრი იზოლაცია საკნებში (ციხეში დაწესებული უსაფრთხოების დროებითი ზომა);

3. კომპ. ლოკდაუნი, ქსელის შეზღუდვა (უსაფრთხოების მიზნით ქსელში უნებართვო შეღწევის დაბლოკვა);

! lockdown restrictions "ლოკდაუნის" შემოღებისას დაწესებული შეზღუდვები.

Figure 3: lockdown

ლოკდაუნი	Lockdown
კლასტერი	Cluster
ბუსტერი	Booster
დისტანცია	Distance
პანდემია	Pandemic
PCR ტესტი	PCR Test
ვირუსი	Virus
იზოლაცია	Isolation
სადეზინფექციო ხსნარი	Disinfectant Spray
კარანტინი	Quarantine
პირბადე	Mask
ვაქცინა	Vaccine

Table 1: frequently used words during the COVID-19

Social media has been playing a vital role in the adoption of new words/terms and expressions. Thanks to social media, we are familiar with words and phrases such as "stay at home", "working from home", "incubation period", "community spread", "self-isolation", "self-quarantine", and many more. One of the most interesting factors is that the words/expressions related to COVID-19 have been used in different contexts.

See the usage of the words related to the COVID-19 in different contexts used by Georgian people on social media:

ჩვენ ერთი კლასტერი ვართ	“We are one cluster” – 2020
შეგვყარა ძველი კლასტერი არასრული შემადგენლობით	“We merged the old cluster with an incomplete composition” – 2020
მაღლივის კლასტერი	“Maghliivi cluster” – 2020
მონიტორინგის კლასტერი	“Monitoring cluster” – 2020
ბრეგაძეების კლასტერი	“Bregadze cluster” – 2020
ერთი სადარბაზოს კლასტერი	“Single Entrance Cluster” – 2020
მეზობლების კლასტერი	“Cluster of neighbors” – 2020

Table 2.1: “კლასტერი/Cluster”

კოვიდი არ არის განაჩენი	“Covid is not a verdict” – 2021
კოვიდი დამიდასტურდა	“I have been diagnosed with Covid” – 2021
კოვიდი ვრცელდება	“Covid is spreading” – 2020
კოვიდი დავამარცხე	“I beat Covid” – 2020/ 2021
კოვიდგადატანილი	“Someone who carried/passed Covid” – 2020/2021
კოვიდი დაბრუნდა	“Covid is back” – 2021
კოვიდ დადებითი	“Covid positive” – 2020

Table 2.2: “კოვიდი/ Covid”

კარანტინი ტურისტულ სეზონზე	“Quarantine during the tourist season” – 2020
კარანტინი სოფელში	“Quarantine in the village” – 2020
კარანტინში ყოფნის დროს	“While in quarantine” – 2020

Table 2.3: “კარანტინი/ Quarantine”

ლოქდაუნი ქვეყანაში - 2020 20 ნოემბერი	„Lockdown in the country” – 2020
საქართველოში დიდი ლოქდაუნი მოსალოდნელი აღარ არის	“A big lockdown is no longer expected in Georgia” – 2020
სრული ლოქდაუნი არ იგეგმება	“A complete lockdown is not planned” – 2020

ორშაბათიდან, ქვეყანაში გამოცხადდეს	შესაძლოა, ახალი ლოქდაუნი	“A new lockdown may be announced in the country” – 2020
როგორ ხელოვანების	აისახა ცხოვრებაზე	ქართველი ლოქდაუნი? “How did the lockdown affect the lives of Georgian artists?” – 2021

Table 2.4: “ლოქდაუნი/ Lockdown”

Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic has undeniably left a lasting impact on the Georgian language, influencing the way people communicate and express themselves. The rapid outbreak of the virus has triggered significant changes in societal systems, leading to the emergence of new terms and phrases related to the pandemic. The study examined various aspects of this linguistic transformation.

The theoretical frameworks that have been explored include the creation of new concepts, semantic shifts in existing words, the rise of neologisms, and the enrichment of dictionaries with COVID-19-related terminology. The dynamic nature of language, as highlighted by Chikobava (2008), becomes evident as society adapts and responds to unprecedented events like a global pandemic.

Through the analysis of words like “lockdown,” “cluster,” “booster,” and “quarantine,” it became clear that not only have these terms become part of everyday vocabulary but they have also undergone semantic shifts to suit the pandemic context. The integration of these terms into the Georgian language reflects the adaptability of language to societal changes.

The research employed methodologies such as Computer-mediated Communication (CMC) and online questionnaires to examine the linguistic shifts in response to COVID-19. Social media, in particular, played a crucial role in the adoption of new words.

The results of the online questionnaire reinforced the idea that COVID-19 has brought about changes not only in various fields like economics, politics, health care, and education but also in the Georgian language itself. Respondents acknowledged the appearance of neologisms and observed shifts in linguistic patterns.

In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into the societal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Georgian language. The continuous evolution of language in response to external factors is evident, emphasizing the importance of linguistic analysis in understanding the dynamics of communication. As we navigate the ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic, linguistic scholars and researchers will continue to explore the lasting effects on language and communication.

Research limitation

In an effort to explore the impact of the COVID-19 on the Georgian language, we undertook an examination to determine whether words specifically related to COVID-19 have been integrated into Georgian corpora. However, the results of this investigation revealed that the texts of the corpora do not incorporate the vocabulary, phrases, or terms associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study is not strictly quantitative because it does not consider the whole range of words/phrases/terms related to COVID-19. Rather, it focuses on the selective exploration.

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ავტორის შესახებ:

დიანა დიასამიძე არის ივანე ჯავახიშვილის სახელობის თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტის ლექსიკოგრაფიის სამაგისტრო პროგრამის სტუდენტი. ასწავლის ინგლისურ ენას სკოლაში. დაინტერესებულია ლექსიკონების შედგენასთან დაკავშირებული საკითხებით.

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სამადლობელი:

უსაზღვროდ მადლიერი ვარ ჩემი ხელმძღვანელის, სოფო თოთიბაძის, ღირებული შეხედულებების, მხარდაჭერისა და უკუკავშირისათვის, რამაც დიდად შეუწყო ხელი ჩემს პიროვნულ და პროფესიულ ზრდას.

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