



THE ROLE OF NEOLOGISMS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY TERMINOLOGY

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Abstract. *This paper examines the critical role of neologisms in shaping and advancing modern specialized terminology. As society, science, and technology evolve at an unprecedented pace, new concepts, objects, and processes constantly emerge, creating a lexical gap. Neologisms—newly coined words or phrases—serve as the primary linguistic mechanism to fill this gap, driving the expansion and precision of terminological systems across fields such as information technology, biotechnology, economics, and social sciences. This study analyzes the main pathways of neologism formation (including borrowing, semantic shift, compounding, and abbreviation), their journey from creation to institutional acceptance, and the challenges inherent in their integration. The paper concludes that neologisms are not merely a byproduct of change but a fundamental, dynamic force in structuring contemporary knowledge, ensuring that language remains a viable and precise tool for expert communication and innovation.*

Keywords: *Neologism, Contemporary Terminology, Lexical Innovation, Semantic Shift, Borrowing, Standardization, Language Dynamics.*

1. Introduction. Language is a living, dynamic system whose most vibrant and responsive layer is its lexicon. The relentless progression of human civilization in scientific, technological, social, and cultural domains continuously generates novel realities that demand linguistic expression. These new expressions are known as neologisms (from the Greek *neos*, 'new', and *logos*,



'word' or 'speech'). They represent the forefront of lexical innovation and are indispensable in the formation and modernization of terminology—the structured system of specialized terms used within a specific field of knowledge or professional practice. From "artificial intelligence" and "cryptocurrency" to "sustainable development" and "genomic editing," contemporary terminology is fundamentally built upon and renewed by the constant influx of neologisms. This paper explores the multifaceted role of neologisms in this developmental process, arguing that they are the primary engine for terminological growth, precision, and adaptation. A neologism is broadly defined as a newly formed word, compound, or phrase that is in the process of entering common use but has not yet been fully accepted into the mainstream language. It is crucial to understand that "newness" is a transient state. The journey of a neologism can be visualized as a continuum:

1. Creation/Protologism: The word is coined, often by an individual or within a very small community (e.g., a researcher naming a new discovery).
2. Propagation/Prelogism: The term gains traction within a specific discourse community (e.g., a scientific field, online forum, or industry).
3. Acceptance/Neologism: The word achieves broader recognition and usage beyond its point of origin, becoming a candidate for lexicalization.
4. Lexicalization/Codification: The term is recorded in authoritative dictionaries, style guides, and standardized glossaries, ceasing to be a neologism and becoming a stable part of the lexicon (e.g., laser, robot, software).

The primary catalysts for neologism creation are socio-cultural change and technological innovation. The digital age, in particular, has exponentially accelerated this process, with global media and the internet serving as powerful vectors for the rapid creation and dissemination of new terms.

Neologisms that feed into terminology are generated through several key linguistic processes, summarized in the table below.

Mechanism	Description	Examples in Contemporary Terminology
Borrowing (Loanwords)	Direct	



adoption of words from other languages. Algorithm (from Arabic, via Medieval Latin), Avatar (from Sanskrit), Angst (from German, in psychology).

Semantic Shift/Extension Assigning a new, specialized meaning to an existing word. Cloud (computing: remote data storage), Virus (computing: malicious software), Stream (media: continuous data transmission).
Compounding & Blending Combining two or more existing words/word parts. Biotechnology (compound), Malware (malicious + software), Webinar (web + seminar), Brexit (Britain + exit).

Acronyms & Initialisms Forming words from the initial letters of a phrase. LASER (Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation), COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019), API (Application Programming Interface).
Derivation from Proper Nouns A brand or person's name becomes a generic term. Google (to search online), Xerox (to photocopy), Kafkaesque (surreal bureaucratic complexity).

Complete Coinage Creating a novel word without existing linguistic roots. Quark (physics), Kodak (brand name), Sputnik (Russian for "satellite," entering global lexicon).

Neologisms perform several indispensable functions in the development of precise and functional terminology:

1. **Filling Lexical Gaps:** The primary function is to provide a label for a genuinely novel concept for which no word previously existed (e.g., internet, blog, quark).

2. **Ensuring Precision and Unambiguity:** In technical fields, ambiguity can lead to critical errors. Neologisms allow for the creation of specific, single-meaning terms. For instance, in computing, byte, RAM, and firewall have precise definitions distinct from any pre-existing general words.

3. **Enhancing Economy of Expression:** Neologisms, especially acronyms and blends, allow complex ideas to be communicated efficiently. Using LIDAR is far more economical than repeatedly saying "Light Detection and Ranging system."



4. Reflecting Conceptual Evolution: When an existing concept evolves, semantic neologisms can mark the new nuance. The expansion of "memory" from a human cognitive faculty to a computer's data storage component is a key example of terminology adapting to technological context.

The institutionalization of a terminological neologism typically follows a recognizable path:

1. Creation & Niche Use: The term is coined and used within a specialized community (e.g., in a research paper or patent).
2. Spread & Validation: The term gains legitimacy through use in peer-reviewed journals, conferences, industry publications, and influential media.
3. Codification & Standardization: The term is formally defined and included in specialized glossaries, standards documents (e.g., ISO, IEEE), and eventually, general-purpose dictionaries.

Conclusion. Neologisms are the lifeblood of contemporary terminology. They are the fundamental mechanism through which language adapts to the frontiers of human knowledge and innovation. From filling essential lexical gaps to ensuring precise, economical, and internationally coherent communication among specialists, neologisms play a constitutive role in building and updating the terminological frameworks of every modern discipline. Their study, therefore, is not merely an exercise in tracking linguistic fashion but is central to understanding how we structure, disseminate, and advance specialized knowledge itself. As technological and social change continues to accelerate, the dynamic interplay between neologism creation and terminological development will remain a critical and defining feature of our linguistic and scientific landscape. The conscious and thoughtful management of this process—balancing innovation with clarity and standardization—is a key task for terminologists, linguists, and expert communities worldwide.



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