

The Structural and Semantic Features of English Mass Media

Neologisms from Perspective of Psycholinguistics

Gege Wang

Jiangxi Normal University, Nanchang 330200, China.

Abstract: This study is of great significance for understanding the formation and understanding mechanism of new words in English mass media, and also provides a reference for the application of psycholinguistics in vocabulary research.

Keywords: Psycholinguistics; Mass Media; Neologisms; Structural Features; Semantic Features

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The emergence of mass media neologisms is closely tied to the rapid development of technology and the ever-changing nature of society. With the advent of the internet and social media, information spreads faster than ever before, and new ideas and concepts emerge at an unprecedented rate. As a result, the media needs to constantly innovate and come up with new words and phrases to capture the attention of their audience and convey complex ideas in a concise and accessible manner.

1.2 Research Purpose and Questions

With the rapid advancement of technology and the increasing influence of mass media, new words are constantly being created to describe new concepts, phenomena, and trends. Therefore, it is important to examine the characteristics of these neologisms in order to gain a deeper understanding of their linguistic and cognitive processes.

The research questions that will be addressed in this study include:

1. What are the structural features of English mass media neologisms?
2. How do English mass media neologisms impact language and communication?

1.3 The Significance of Research

Firstly, understanding the structural and semantic features of neologisms in mass media helps us to comprehend the ever-evolving nature of language. Secondly, studying mass media neologisms allows us to explore the cognitive processes involved in language production and comprehension. Furthermore, understanding the structural and semantic features of mass media neologisms is essential for effective communication. Lastly, the study of mass media neologisms can have practical implications for language teaching and learning.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Origin and Formation of Neology Terminological Basis

The origin and formation of neology is a crucial topic in the study of linguistics and psycholinguistics. Neologisms refer to newly coined words or expressions that emerge in a language. They can be created through various processes such as borrowing, derivation, compounding, blending, and abbreviation. Understanding the terminological basis of neology is essential for analyzing the structural and semantic features of English mass media neologisms.

The formation of neologisms can be influenced by several factors. One important factor is social change. As society evolves and new concepts and technologies emerge, the need for new words arises. For example, with the development of technology, words like

"internet," "blog," and "selfie" have become common in everyday language.

Another factor that contributes to neology is language contact. When different languages come into contact, words from one language can be borrowed and integrated into another language. This process is known as lexical borrowing and has resulted in the adoption of words such as "sushi," "karaoke," and "feng shui" into the English language.

Derivation is another common process in neology. By adding affixes to existing words, new words with different meanings can be created. For instance, the addition of the suffix "-gate" to words like "Watergate" and "Climategate" has become a common way to indicate a scandal or controversy.

Compounding is also widely used in the formation of neologisms. It involves combining two or more words to create a new word with a different meaning. Examples of compound neologisms include "cyberbullying," "selfie stick," and "fake news."

Blending is a process that involves combining parts of two words to create a new word. This often occurs when two words become commonly used together and are eventually blended into one word. Examples of blended neologisms include "brunch" (breakfast + lunch) and "motel" (motor + hotel).

Abbreviation is another method of creating neologisms. By shortening words or phrases, new words are formed. For example, "text" (short for "text message") and "app" (short for "application") are common abbreviations used in modern language.

2.2 Classification of Neologism

Neologisms, as newly created words or phrases, play a significant role in reflecting the dynamic nature of language. They emerge in various domains, including mass media, which is a major source of neologisms in contemporary English. The classification of neologisms is crucial in understanding their structural and semantic features.

One way to classify neologisms is based on their formation processes. Neologisms can be formed through derivation, compounding, blending, borrowing, acronymization, or conversion. Derivation involves adding affixes to existing words to create new forms, such as "unfriend" (formed by adding the prefix "un-" to the word "friend"). Compounding combines two or more words to form a new word, like "brunch" (a blend of "breakfast" and "lunch"). Blending involves merging parts of two words to create a new word, as seen in "smog" (a blend of "smoke" and "fog"). Borrowing involves adopting words from other languages, such as "sushi" from Japanese. Acronymization refers to creating a word from the initials or letters of a phrase, like "LOL" (laugh out loud). Conversion involves changing the part of speech of a word without modifying its form, such as "to Google" (using the noun "Google" as a verb).

Another way to classify neologisms is based on their semantic categories. Neologisms can be categorized into lexical neologisms and semantic neologisms. Lexical neologisms introduce new words into the vocabulary, while semantic neologisms involve the creation of new meanings for existing words. For example, the word "tweet" originally referred to the sound made by birds but has now gained a new meaning as a verb related to social media.

Furthermore, neologisms can be classified based on their frequency of use and acceptance. Some neologisms become widely adopted and integrated into the language, while others remain limited to specific contexts or subcultures. The classification of neologisms helps in understanding their linguistic characteristics, usage patterns, and cultural implications.

2.3 Lexical Meaning of The Word

The lexical meaning of a word refers to its basic, dictionary definition. It is the meaning that is associated with the word in isolation, without considering its context or usage. Understanding the lexical meaning of words is crucial for effective communication and language comprehension.

In the context of neologisms in mass media, the lexical meaning of a newly coined word plays a significant role in conveying the intended message and capturing the attention of the audience. These neologisms often emerge to describe new concepts, technologies, or social phenomena that have not yet been widely recognized or established in the language.

The lexical meaning of a neologism can be derived from various sources. It may be formed by combining existing words or morphemes, creating a compound or a blend. For example, the term "infotainment" combines the words "information" and "entertainment" to describe media content that combines news and entertainment elements. Another example is "staycation," which combines "stay" and "vacation" to refer to spending time off from work at home or within one's local area.

Additionally, the lexical meaning of a neologism can also be created through the use of metaphor or analogy. For instance, the term "viral" is used to describe content that spreads rapidly and widely on the internet, drawing a parallel with the way a virus spreads in the body.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Mass Media: Characteristics and Functions

Firstly, mass media is characterized by its wide reach and accessibility. It has the ability to transmit information to a large number of people simultaneously, regardless of geographical boundaries. This allows for the rapid dissemination of news and other forms of media content. Additionally, mass media is highly accessible, as it can be easily accessed through various technological devices, such as smartphones and computers.

Secondly, mass media serves several important functions. One of the primary functions is to inform the public about current events and provide news coverage. This helps individuals stay informed and knowledgeable about local, national, and global affairs. Mass media also acts as a platform for entertainment, offering a wide range of content, including movies, TV shows, and music. Moreover, mass media serves as a tool for advertising and marketing, enabling businesses to promote their products and services to a large audience.

Furthermore, mass media plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and influencing social and cultural trends. It has the power to shape public discourse and influence public opinion on various issues, such as politics, social justice, and environmental concerns. Mass media can also contribute to the formation of cultural identities and the dissemination of cultural values.

3.2 Structural Features of Mass Media Neologisms

Mass media neologisms exhibit unique structural features that differentiate them from traditional words in the English language. These structural features play a crucial role in the formation and understanding of these newly coined terms.

Firstly, mass media neologisms often involve the combination of existing words or the modification of existing words to create a new term. This process, known as compounding, allows for the creation of catchy and memorable words that can quickly become part of the public lexicon. For example, the term "infotainment" combines the words "information" and "entertainment" to describe a type of media content that blends news and entertainment.

Secondly, mass media neologisms frequently employ truncation or abbreviation to create shorter and more concise terms. This is particularly evident in the use of acronyms and initialisms. For instance, the term "LOL" (laugh out loud) originated from internet communication and has now become widely used in various forms of media.

Thirdly, mass media neologisms often involve the creation of portmanteau words. A portmanteau is a linguistic blend of two or more words, where parts of the words are combined to form a new term. For example, the term "Brangelina" combines the names of the Hollywood actors Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, representing their celebrity couple status.

Furthermore, mass media neologisms may also involve the adoption of foreign words or phrases into the English language. For example, the term "karaoke" originated from Japan and has now become a common term in English to describe a form of interactive entertainment.

4. Research Methodology

Firstly, a corpus of English mass media neologisms will be compiled from various sources, such as newspapers, magazines, and online media platforms. The corpus will include a diverse range of neologisms, covering different domains and topics within the mass media context.

Next, the structural features of the neologisms will be analyzed. This will involve examining their word formation processes, such as affixation, compounding, and blending. The frequency of different structural patterns will be calculated to determine the most common ways in which neologisms are formed in the mass media.

Furthermore, the semantic features of the neologisms will be investigated. This will involve analyzing the meanings and connotations associated with the neologisms. Semantic analysis methods, such as collocation analysis and semantic field analysis, will be used to identify the semantic associations and patterns present in the neologisms.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, intercoder reliability tests will be conducted. This involves multiple

researchers independently coding a subset of the data and comparing their results. Any discrepancies will be resolved through discussion and consensus.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study have implications for both linguistics and mass media studies. From a linguistic perspective, understanding the structural and semantic features of mass media neologisms contributes to the knowledge of language evolution and creativity. It also sheds light on the relationship between language and society. From a mass media studies perspective, the analysis of these neologisms provides insights into the role of language in shaping public opinion and influencing societal discourse.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the understanding of English mass media neologisms and their linguistic characteristics. It highlights the importance of considering both the structural and semantic aspects of these neologisms in analyzing their functions and effects in mass media communication. Further research can delve deeper into the psycholinguistic processes involved in the creation and reception of these neologisms, as well as their impact on language change and social dynamics.

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