

Semantic change and word formation during Covid-19 in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

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This study explored the semantic change and word formation of the English language terms used during the Covid-19 pandemic in the Philippines. There were 50 words selected from the memorandum and executive orders of the national and local government units and those from news reports posted online on social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). These words were analyzed using the components of the neologism framework proposed by Krishnamurthy (2010) on the word formation, borrowing, and lexical deviation and that of Crowley and Bown (2010) for semantic change. The results of the study revealed four types of semantic change (i.e., widening, narrowing, semantic shift, and bifurcation), and the newly discovered words were categorized into compounding, acronym, and conversion.

Keywords:

Covid-19; language change;
semantic change;
terminologies; word variation

This study provides implications that in times of crisis (such as the Covid-19 pandemic), Filipinos tend to create and recreate words within a context easily understood by the community to establish clear communication.

1. Introduction

More than nine million and counting are affected worldwide by the Covid-19 disease. In the Philippines, figures almost reached 40 thousand, with more than a thousand deaths and a little more than ten thousand recoveries. More than the majority of the world has not flattened the curve and experts have not seen any effective medicine floating on the horizon to combat the pathogen, let alone a cure or a vaccine. Leaders of different nations scuttle to find ways to contain the virus. Even the rich, the most advanced, and highly technological countries find it hard to minimize the damage caused by this invisible foe. In fact, they have more infections than the Philippines. Because of the health risks brought by Covid-19, the semantics of words used in government information campaigns and policies are crucial to combat the pandemic.

Semantics is the technical term used to study word meaning (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). However, this semantics provided different perceptions from various levels of society given the linguistically diverse background and literacy level of Filipinos that transcends how they cope during this pandemic. These differing interpretations of the technical meaning of the words provided are called semantic change, specifically defined as the change in the concepts associated with a term and the innovations that change the meaning of words (Crowley & Bown, 2010). For instance, private and government sectors have imposed on people strict compliance with the protocols in their business transactions as a response to how they understood these government policies and information drives. This is manifested in the protocols established by the tourism, hospitality, and food industry to name a few. In contrast, some responded adversely with panic, anxiety, and confusion due to the unclear understanding of the

policy imposed. News from all over the country featured individuals who panic buying, face mask hoarding, and exhibiting psychological stress at the onset of the pandemic (Scott, 2020).

However, it can be observed that in the long run, people have shown to thrive with all the government orders and policies in a way that new systems of processes have been embedded in their daily affairs, which are termed as the “new normal” and new language formation (semantic change) continue to emerge from the continuous effort of the people to understand and cope during this pandemic within the context of their varying situations. Business and education, for instance, diverted to online processes. Social distancing and wearing face masks became the standard while in public places. Those who did not seem to understand the language used in the policies and announcements created a meaning that is sometimes humorous in effect. With all these situations, it is clear that along with the redirection of the usual activities done in the past is their influence on the sociocultural aspect of Filipino lives.

In this regard, the researchers wanted to determine the semantic change and new word formation used during this Covid-19 pandemic. This study aimed to raise the level of awareness on how Filipinos cope with the language they understood and used during this pandemic and to provide some insights as to how these perceived language influence language change and formation in the context of the local speech community.

The study culminated with an information drive to reach out to the intended government office and population who will benefit most from the research study. The researchers also hoped to be able to contribute to strengthening the capacity of the country to manage any national and global health risks such as this Covid-19 pandemic as part of the attainment of sustainable development goals on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all across age groups (SDG #3).

2. Theoretical basis

This study used the usage-based approach with modification in classifying and determining the language change of the terminologies related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The types of semantic change classified by Crowley and Bower (2010) and the components of neologisms proposed by Krishnamurthy (2010) were the theories. However, modifications were added to suit the available data.

Semantic change

There are many types of semantic change. The first classification was identified by Crowley and Bower (2010) while the second set was identified by Traugott (2017). Changes in meaning are classified by Crowley and Bower (2010) into the following types: narrowing, broadening, bifurcation, or shift. First, narrowing happens when a word refers to only part of the original meaning. Second, broadening (also called widening) occurs when a word refers to a change in meaning that might result in a word processing additional meanings while retaining the original meaning. The third type is bifurcation which occurs when a term acquires another meaning that relates to the original meaning. This is also called semantic shift. The fourth type is split where the original meaning of a word is lost, and it acquires a new meaning.

Furthermore, Traugott (2017) mentioned the classifications of semantic change. The types of semantic change are metaphorization, metonymization, pejoration, amelioration, narrowing, and generalization. First, metaphorization refers to the conceptualization of one thing in terms of another. The second type is metonymization which refers to the association that usually occurs in terms of contiguity (e.g., board for the governing body). This is also called metonymy, which occurs when a word’s meaning changes and includes other senses that are not originally present but are closely associated with the word’s previous meaning. The third

type is pejoration, an association of a term with a negative meaning. This is also called degeneration, which takes place when the sense of the word has a negative assessment or concept in the minds of the users. Fourth is amelioration, which occurs when there is an association with a positive meaning. In other words, amelioration, also called elevation, is a shift of meaning with an increasingly positive value judgment. Fifth, narrowing refers to the restriction of meaning similar to the category identified by Crowley and Bowers (2010). Finally, Traugott (2017) used the term “generalization” to refer to broadening. This refers to the extension of meaning. In this study, the types mentioned by Crowley and Bowers (2010), Traugott (2017) were used to analyze the memos of the government agencies responsible for the Covid-19 pandemic protocols posted on the three social media platforms.

There have been many approaches used in investigating semantic change. Most reviewed studies used a corpus to collect data (e.g., Jatowt & Duh, 2014; Giulianelli, 2019; Neuman, Hames, & Cohen, 2017; Tanno, 2017). There were studies dealing with Arabic, such as Mahfouz (2015). In this regard, the present study would consider the memos of the government and other agencies responsible for the Covid-19 pandemic guidelines and implementation as corpus through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

First, Giulianelli (2019) used Devlin’s (2019, as cited in Giulianelli, 2019) neural language model in analyzing the lexical semantics change analysis with contextualized word representations. Using the data from the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA), this study used the usage-based approach in natural language processing where the following steps were followed. First, the words of interest were chosen. Second, the contextualized representations for all the uses of the target words were collected. Tran (2020) also pointed out that contexts were fundamentals in acquiring the meaning of words. Results of the study showed evidence of narrowing, broadening, and metaphorization in the interpretation of words which were also identified by Traugott (2017). These results were attributed to technological innovations, cultural transitions, and changes and happenings in the subcategorization frames of nouns and verbs. On the contrary, this study would modify this approach in selecting words from the mentioned memoranda.

Besides, a case study on semantic change in historical data was conducted by Neuman et al. (2017). This study analyzed the single-word “sin” construction using the Kollback-Leibler divergence measure to quantify its semantic change. However, this approach only applies to computational linguistics and quantitative data analysis.

Tanno (2017) also investigated the subjectification process by focusing on the discursive strategy in the grammaticalization of the Japanese connective, ‘datte’ (i.e., but/because). This study adopted historical pragmatics and used speech-based written texts named gesaku ‘vulgar’ literature and kyogen, also called kabuki theatrical scripts. Further, Tanno (2017) revealed that Nihon Kokugo Daijiten (NKD), the most comprehensive dictionary, was used to represent the 1970s. Representing the later periods in the 2000s, 140 modern novels in digital format were selected from the two online digital archives such as Aozora Bunko ‘Blue Sky Library’ and Denshi Bungei-kan ‘The Japan P.E.N. Club’ Digital Library. Four types of corpora were also part of the data. These are Taiyo ‘Sun’ Corpus (opinion articles) and Kindai Joei Zasshi (Modern Women’s Magazine). The findings of this study revealed that there was a shift in the meaning of the Japanese connective, *date*, that shifted from the meaning. This semantic change was attributed to the avoidance or mitigation of face-threatening force. This study is similar to the present study in terms of using a dictionary and corpus to verify the data sources gathered from the memoranda.

Further, Jatowt and Duh (2014) investigated the methods of studying and visualizing the changes in the meaning of words over time and proposed a framework that explored semantic change at the lexical level, contrastive pair level, and sentiment orientation. Anchored on the sociolinguistic theory that explained the changes in the word meaning through social circumstances and their corresponding variations over some time, Jatowt and Duh (2014) used Google Books' dataset from 1800 to 2009. In addition, the data from Google Books were supplemented with the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA). This study suggested that computational methods based on corpora such as Google Books and COHA are important in automatically discovering exciting phenomena. Also, Jatowt and Duh (2014) proposed a visual analytics framework that contributed to the discovery and visualization of lexical change through these levels in individual words, word pairs, and sentiment orientation. The present study would also use the Covid-19 Corpus to validate the collected words from the memoranda and establish inter-rater reliability.

Moreover, the studies of Mahfouz (2015) focused on the Arabic language. Mahfouz (2015) explored the semantic change of Arabic words after the January 25, 2011, Revolution in Egypt to find evidence of the semantic shift in wording during and after the said revolution. Using the Egyptian newspapers and social sites used by the pro and anti-revolution activists, this study gathered the data in the following steps: (i) cite as many representative uses of a word as possible and provide a definition or definitions of the word, (ii) give the current usage of the word in the standard Egyptian Arabic, and (iii) determine the word shift. The findings of this study provided evidence of widening. However, the terms had a primary meaning in the revolutionary diction which is different from the meaning found in the dictionary. These steps are beneficial in the methods of the study but there would be modifications to be made.

Word formation

Krishnamurthy (2010) proposed the neologism framework on word formation, borrowing, and lexical deviation. Specifically, Krishnamurthy (2010) categorized the word formation processes into compounding, blending, affixation, coinage, and acronym.

Delahunty and Garvey (2010) provided the various types of word formation such as compounding, conversion (also called functional shift), coining (coinage), abbreviation/acronym, blending, and borrowing. First, compounding is the combination of two or more words or two or more roots where none of which can be bound morphemes. Second, the creation of new words without references to the existing morphological resources of the language which are not solely the sounds of the language (e.g., googol). Third is an abbreviation that occurs when the existing words are shortened to create other words that are informal versions of the original words (e.g., prof for professor). An alternative abbreviation is an acronym where only the first letter of the words is written or spoken (e.g., UN for United Nations). Fourth, blending occurs when the remaining parts of two or more words are joined to create a new word (e.g., smog for smoke and fog). Finally, borrowing happens when a word that originally belonged to one language is copied into another (e.g., the Spanish word, ranch is used in English).

Kupayeva (2015) identified the specific features of derivations of Orhon's inscriptions of their semantic aspect and assessed the productivity and activity of word-formation patterns in compounding and suffixation. This study illustrated semantic changes in word formation such as intensification, extension of meaning, metonymic change, metaphor, etc.

The second component is borrowing. According to the context and situation discussed by Krishnamurthy (2010), the speakers borrow a sentence or a single word to make

communication effective. As a result, borrowing is a tool that develops a vocabulary of a language. However, there was no instance of borrowing in the data except for lexicons that originated from Philippine English, like back riding and colorum vehicle.

Finally, the third component of the theoretical framework is lexical deviation. Lexical deviation tends to produce neologism, which refers to the creation of new words where existing rules (of word formation) are applied with generalization. In this study, language variation was used instead since the terminologies were not considered deviants but lexical alternants.

Asif, Zhiyong, Iram, and Nisar (2021) explored the linguistic analysis of neologism. The data consisted of Covid-19 terminologies from articles, books, Oxford corpus, Twitter representing social media, and five different websites accessed from January 2020 to April 2020. The results of this study demonstrated the frequently used word formation in nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Acronyms were predominantly used in these sources such as PPE (personal protective equipment) and PUI (person under investigation). Asif et al. (2021) concluded that new words were created due to the crisis of the coronavirus outbreak throughout the world and new words have been frequently used throughout the history of epidemics. On the contrary, the sources of data in the present study were gathered from March 16, 2020, to June 30, 2020, when the enhanced community quarantine was announced by President Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines. The terminologies were also contextualized in the Philippine setting.

Moreover, the lexicographers reviewed and discovered new words from academic journals, pop culture sources, and user suggestions. Some new words included Covid-19, shelter in place, asymptomatic, PPE, and social distancing (Dictionary, 2020a).

According to Belvez (2021), the manner in which new language changes and gives rise to new varieties is an occurrence in all languages. She added that there are different kinds of varieties such as regional varieties or dialects, educational and social varieties or sociolects, subject matter or registers, medium or mode of discourses, altitude or style, and interference of second language varieties. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been words with related meanings but the choice of words varied. For instance, the word social distancing is used interchangeably with physical distancing (PR Newswire, 2020). As a verb, social distancing means to maintain a safe or appropriate distance from other people, especially to slow the spread of a contagious illness or disease (PR Newswire, 2020), while in the glossary of Coronavirus corpus (2020), social distancing refers to the increase in the amount of physical separation between people to help prevent the spread of a contagious disease.

However, in the Oxford English Dictionary (Price, 2020), social distancing was originally an attitude rather than a physical term that refers to the aloofness or deliberate attempt to distance oneself from others socially. Now, social distancing is understood as keeping a physical distance between ourselves and others. On the contrary, Burgos (2020) differentiated the meanings of social and physical distancing as social distancing occurs when one is isolated from society, while physical distancing is away from other people. Hence, this is an example of language variation depending on the dictionary, usage, and context.

Another article from Coronavirus corpus (2020) had a glossary to help navigate the pandemic vocabulary. Some terminologies included coronavirus, pandemic, asymptomatic, social distancing, contact tracing, lockdown, quarantine, and self-isolation. Moreover, Rosenzweig (2020) mentioned that new words and phrases became part of the mainstream lexicon, such as the following: quarantines, quarantini, zoom bombing, antibuddies, coronacation, and super-spreader but few of these terms are used in the Philippine context.

Lastly, the dictionary.com, as reported in Dictionary (2020b), listed new words created because of the coronavirus. Some of these words included pandemic, asymptomatic, quarantine, sanitizer, contact tracing, frontline (i.e., a frontline worker, health care and other essential often public-facing jobs), lockdown, essential, PPE, social distancing, etc. The lexicographers updated the online dictionary twice yearly to document the extensive language change (ibid.).

In the Philippine context, there have been professors from De La Salle University - Dasmariñas (DLSU-D) and the University of the Philippines (UP) in collaboration with the University of San Carlos for translations who had the dictionaries of Covid-19 terminologies. Locally, researchers from the Cebu Normal University, Dr. Bacalla (2020), also presented the list of Covid-19 jargon and registers, including the medical terms in a multilingual context.

First, DLSU-Dasmariñas faculty, Dr. Christian George Francisco, completed the “Covid-ictionary” which is a compilation of 150 terms popularized during the Covid-19 global health pandemic in collaboration with the illustrator, Mr. Sherwin Maestro. This project began as a URO-funded research and he planned to publish it as a pictiography (De La Salle University, 2020).

Second, Romualdo (2020) reported that Prof. Eilene Antoinette G. Narvaez of the UP Diliman worked with Google for the Filipino terms related to Covid-19 as “Isang Gabay sa mga Salitang Kaugnay sa Covid-19” launched on August 28, 2020, at <https://diksyonaryongcovid19.com> as part of the *Buwan ng Wika*. This dictionary also consisted of Cebuano translations and definitions made by Hannah Marie Aranas from the University of San Carlos.

Third, the Cebu Normal University Dr. Bacalla (2020) presented the Covid-19 jargon and registers. Together with her research team, they were working on a dictionary of the 80 terms related to the coronavirus with corresponding translations in Filipino and English.

Few studies in the Philippines that were presented during the virtual international conferences that dealt with Coronavirus terms such as language choice (Quinto, 2021), jargon (Sioco, 2021), Cruz, Endriga, Santiago, Abrigo, and Manrique (2021) on the words associated with the pandemic. None of these had focused on the semantic change from the memorandums in social media platforms. These studies only focused on the etymology and translations in the dictionary and glossary of Covid-19 terminologies, jargon, and registers. None of these studies dealt with the language change that resulted in the creation of new vocabularies brought by the pandemic and included social media, radio broadcasting, and technology transfer through videos on YouTube in disseminating helpful information for public consumption. Instead, these reviewed projects only focused on printed media and websites for publication and dissemination to the Filipino community. This study then aimed to fill this research gap.

This study analyzed the types of language change from the Covid-19 terminologies used in the Philippines. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions: (i) What is the semantic change in the terminologies used during the Covid-19 pandemic? and (ii) What are the new Covid-19 terminologies evident in the data?

3. Methodology

This study used a qualitative research method by distributing a survey questionnaire through Google Forms to determine the semantic change and word formation during the Covid-19 pandemic based on the collected 50 words from the memos and social media posts. Specifically, a textual analysis was used in collecting English terminologies from memos and executive orders posted on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter using the usage-based approach by including the entire sentence where the terminologies are found. Then, the interview questions

were prepared using the Google form and distributed to the informants' Facebook messenger accounts and personally to the few informants to gather data. Since the topic is the Covid-19 pandemic, the informants were Filipinos.

There were various data sources: memos and executive orders from the Local Government Units (LGUs) and social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter where the Covid-19 terminologies were found from March 16, 2020 - June 30, 2020. Since the selection of words was based on the inclusion criteria, gathering the data was done each time the newly-formed words appeared in the mentioned social media platforms and memos weekly. The data were screenshot and uploaded in the Google Drive folder and words were listed in Excel file for the coding and creation of the infographic.

3.1. Gathering of data

These were the steps in gathering the data. First, the English terminologies of interest taken from the memos and posts of LGUs on social media platforms such as FB, Instagram, and Twitter were collected from March 16 - June 30, 2020.

These were the criteria for selecting the terminologies. First, the term should appear in the memo or executive order at least twice in the memos and executive orders and should be evident on the three social media platforms on the same date it was posted on Facebook. Second, the term was verified whether it appeared in the Coronavirus corpus (2020), a 200-million-word corpus of articles on coronavirus which is updated every day and on the websites of Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) and the Department of Health (DOH). To access the Coronavirus corpus, the researchers logged in to englishcorpora.org and clicked the Coronavirus corpus which brought us to the main interface. It has the List option that displays the searched words with their corresponding frequency. Its Chart option shows the total frequency of the word per country and year, which is very helpful in comparing the existence, meaning, and frequency of the term. Furthermore, to access the DOH and IATF websites, the researchers simply went to the websites to search the terms. Other terms (phrasal terms) not found in the dictionary and corpora were operationally defined. If the English term was not available yet in the said corpus, the term would be a contribution to the corpus building and would be listed in a separate table. Second, the researchers went over the Coronavirus corpus, and to these websites every day in two weeks for the additional use of the terms with different context. Third, the definition of the selected terms from the memos and executive orders was done by considering the left and right context and these were verified in Cambridge dictionary (2020) app dated 2020 and dictionary.com to ensure whether the word has undergone semantic change or it is a new word as of March 16, 2020 to June 30, 2020. The coding was laid through Excel where the English terms were placed on the rightmost column, and the meanings of each term were placed in rows. Fourth, the researchers determine the classification of the terms whether the term undergoes semantic change or it is a new word. Next, two verifiers were hired to check the accuracy of the researchers' identified meaning and classification. These two verifiers were licensed language translators and have been publishing research on language and linguistics.

3.2. Treatment of data

The terminologies were collected, coded, analyzed, and tabulated based on the types of semantic change classified by Crowley and Bowern (2010), Traugott (2017). Specifically, the emerging themes were identified and clustered to create themes and interpreted and narrated with extracts from the informants' answers. Reflections were also done in clustering the emerging themes.

Lastly, the coded data were verified by the researchers and inter-rater who graduated with a Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics. Then, coding disagreements were resolved through the virtual meeting and discussions among the researchers and inter-rater. For public consumption, the results of the study were also disseminated through a webinar invitation organized by the Office of the Extension and Community Involvement of the College of Arts and Sciences-Main Campus.

4. Results and discussion

These are the results of the study on the language change of the Covid-19 terminologies including the newly discovered words absent in the Cambridge dictionary (2020).

4.1. Semantic change

Table 1 shows the types of semantic change evident in the memorandums. The data imply that during the lockdown from March 16 - June 30, 2020, words had undergone semantic changes caused by Filipinos' coping mechanisms to make the language dynamic and creative. Based on the results, it can be seen that words change their meaning as they are used during the Covid-19 pandemic. This confirms the finding of Jatowt and Duh (2014) that meanings change over time because of social circumstances. The pandemic made people produce another meaning of the existing English terms to contextualize their undertaking especially based on the need. For example, the term "quarantine", which is a period of isolation for 40 days based on the dictionary, but in this study, it refers to only 14 days as this period is deemed by the Philippine medical experts to be sufficient to recover from non-severe Covid-19 symptoms.

In addition, the semantic change could be attributed to the influence of varieties of English where one concept can have many lexical alternants. Being an archipelago, the Philippines has many micro-cultures that influence the particular local community's conceptualization of words. For instance, the Covid-19 term "back riding" is often used among Filipinos, particularly among Cebuanos (one cultural group), to refer to motorcycle riding with a passenger. In a standard lexical description (referencing Cambridge dictionary, 2020), back riding is collocated with horse, such the term "horseback riding". However, since the Philippine culture does not have contextualization of horse as a transport either in public, personal, or sports events; hence, the alteration of the meaning of "back riding". The term "back riding", in fact, has immensely become popular among Cebuanos with the popularity of motorcycles as the main mode of transportation to escape the congested traffic of the locality. This evidence of semantic change could imply that the choice of words could reflect the nature of the first language of Filipinos and their ethnolinguistic background. The findings on semantic change confirmed the previous studies on the evidence of narrowing and semantic shift as in Giulianelli (2019). However, only the semantic shift was evident in the data of Tanno (2017). This further supports the claim of Tran (2020) that contexts are important in acquiring the meaning of words.

Compared to local studies, Cruz et al. (2021) had similar results concerning shifts in the meaning of words due to how words were used in social media and mass media.

Table 1

Semantic change of Covid-19 terminologies

Types of Semantic Change		f	Sample Words
Semantic Change	narrowing	1	Quarantine
	semantic shift	1	social distancing
	widening	1	Travel pass
	bifurcation	1	Back riding (from horseback riding)

Below are the extracts of the types of semantic change as reflected in the memos:

Extract 1: Narrowing

(1) *"Identify appropriate human resources which may aid the national government in conducting intensive contact tracing, assessment, and monitoring of PUMs and PUIs, as well as in the issuance of Certificate of Completion of 14-Day Quarantine through their Local Health Units (LHUs)." -(IATF, March 20, 2020).*

This definition of quarantine is also applied to communities having a high rate of Covid-19 infections.

Extract 2: Narrowing

(2) *"On 30 April 2020, Executive Order (E.O.) No. 112, s. 2020 was issued imposing an Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) in high-risk geographic areas of the Philippines and a General Community Quarantine (GCQ) in the rest of the country from 01 to 15 May 2020."*

'Quarantine' is defined as an original 40-day period of detention or isolation imposed upon ships, persons, animals, or plants on arrival at a port or place when suspected of carrying some infectious or contagious disease (Dictionary, 2020a).

In the Philippines, however, placing those infected, suspected, or exposed to the Covid-19 virus and inbound travelers in quarantine is only until 14 days. Evaluation for further recommendations is done after 14 days.

Extract 3: Semantic Shift

(3) *"In accordance with the directives of the IATF-EID resolution on social distancing to minimize the possible transmission of the virus, applicants who have no urgent need for consular services, including those with confirmed passport appointments, are requested to defer their visits to these Consular Offices until the community quarantine period ends." (DFA, March 2020).*

The US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health (May 2020) defines social distancing as the distance in communication engagement while physical distancing is keeping people physically away from each other by at least two meters.

At the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, social distancing was used to prevent people from engaging in large group gatherings that call for social engagement, such as parties, conferences, classes, etc. In the Philippines, however, social distancing has been used even at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic to mean physical distancing to remind people to keep their distance from each other to prevent the spread of the virus, as in this case.

Extract 4: Widening

(4) *"The Joint Task Force Covid Shield (JTF CV Shield) has bared the simplified process of securing travel pass as it relaxed some security protocols in areas under the general community quarantine (GCQ)." (Philippine News Agency, June 2, 2020).*

The term "travel pass" has been used to refer to the legal document authorizing international travelers who aim to travel to a country for leisure or business. This term had not been used in the Philippines as the country does not require this document from international travelers because a passport and visa would suffice until the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic when the government imposes restrictions on non-essential activities to prevent the spread of Covid-19 virus.

However, the term has expanded its definition to not only refer to the document that authorizes international travelers but also to the locals traveling outside of their province and for the purpose not only for leisure or business but most importantly for the essential undertaking.

Extract 5: Bifurcation

(5) “*Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade said they cannot allow **back riding**, even between married couples, adding that the issue is ensuring that the driver and passenger keep enough space from each other to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease.*” (CNN Philippines, June 3, 2020).

In the Philippines, the context of **back riding** refers to taking another person to ride together in the same motorcycle where this person sits at the back of the driver who can be a relative or a passenger. This term could be taken from a similar context of horseback riding where the rider literally rides on the back of the horse.

To synthesize, this study provided evidence of narrowing, semantic shift, widening, and bifurcation as types of semantic change that unfolded in the English language in the context of the Philippines during the Covid-19 pandemic. The circumstances of Covid-19 pandemic push the Filipino people on a national and local level to recreate the existing ones so as to put descriptions of their actions and deliberately express their needs.

4.2. Newly-discovered words

The data in Table 2 demonstrated the newly discovered words in the memo with the following word formations: compounding, acronym, and conversion.

The predominance of compounding in the present study reflects how Filipinos have creatively coined words to be more specific in their language and become more easily understood, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic where it has been crucial to communicate clearly to avoid confusion and eventually alleviate the transmission of Covid-19 virus. As pointed out by Sato (2019), the learning experiences made a difference and became deep when these were based on the person’s world of meaningful action. Hence, the sprouting of new words was anchored on the actual experiences of Filipinos during this pandemic time.

This result supports the news article of Romualdo (2020) on word formation, claiming that a wealth of linguistic creativity has not yet entered the dictionaries but reflects the role of novel language as a coping mechanism. Tran (2020) also argued that contexts are fundamental for learners to acquire the word’s meanings.

The predominance of acronyms in the present study confirms the study of Asif et al. (2021) on the linguistic analysis of neologisms where acronyms were frequently used. This circumstance can be attributed to the power of using keyword or phrases to represent lengthy terms. It has been common knowledge that people only remember the keyword and not long words or phrases; hence, long terms are shortened into acronyms to be easily remembered. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Philippine authorities are pushed to use acronyms to ensure that longer words and phrases need to reach and be understood to include all the people with and without proper education. Hence, the use of acronyms has become evident to provide descriptions of people, regulations, and circumstances. For instance, the acronym “APOR” which means “Authorized Person of Authority” refers to a member of the family who is allowed to go out to buy the family’s essential needs as very limited individuals are allowed to go out during the lockdown. This type of neologism is another manifestation of the Filipinos’ creativity of the English language defined by their needs.

The presence of compounding in the data also supports the study of Kupayeva (2015) in assessing suffixation and compounding as productive ways of forming words of Orhon inscriptions. This productivity in word formation is associated with creativity as intoned by Romualdo (2020) stating that "... there is a wealth of linguistic creativity that has not yet entered the dictionaries but reflects the role of novel language as a coping mechanism, ... the ones with a stronger chance of sticking around post-pandemic are those that describe lasting behavioral changes". This statement very well hints at the idea that compounds are common words in English and are expanded creatively through derivations to emphasize meaning not covered by the existing English term during the Covid-19 pandemic. Another example of this linguistic creativity is the term "tracer" which is derived from the compound term 'contact tracing' to refer to a person who conducts the tracing of Covid-19 virus transmission in individuals. Further, it is derived from the term "tracing" which is a noun form of the verb "trace," thereby referring to a person. The entire term "contact tracer" has never been used in any other English-speaking country but only in the Philippines.

Table 2

Newly discovered words

New Words	f	Sample Words
Compounding	10	home quarantine, mass testing, physical distancing, new normal, social distancing, granular lockdown, hard lockdown, total lockdown, backriding, travel pass
Acronym	7	APOR, ECQ, MECQ, GCQ, MGCQ, ILI, LSI
Conversion (Functional Shift)	2	frontliner (n) from frontline (adj.), contact tracer (n.person) from contact tracing (n)

These are the following extracts:

Extract 6: Acronym

(6) *"Ensure that the personnel comprising the skeletal workforce of the Exempt Entity, or the authorized personnel, are appropriately considered as **Allowed Persons Outside of Residence (APOR)** in accordance to prevailing governmental issuances and guidelines."* (IATF, April 20, 2020).

Most newly-discovered words are classified as new word creation in an acronym form. These acronyms are defined in the memoranda from the national and local government, government agencies, and IATF.

For instance, the acronym 'APOR' means Allowed Person Outside Residence refers to a person who is authorized to go out from home either because he/she has a quarantine pass or possesses document/s that allow him/her to do so.

In the past health outbreaks in the Philippines, the term 'allowed person' only referred to health and government authorities that had direct involvement in resolving those outbreaks.

Also, the acronyms ECQ (Enhanced Community Quarantine), MECQ (Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine), GCQ (General Community Quarantine), and MGCQ (Modified General Community Quarantine) are the quarantine descriptions used to label the level of limitations for the movement and transportation of people, the strictness of the regulation for the operating industries, the provision for food and essential services, and the presence of uniformed personnel to enforce community quarantine protocols.

Extract 7: Acronym

(7) “Cebu City will be placed under an **enhanced community quarantine (ECQ)** again due to a high rate of coronavirus infection.” (*Inquirer.net*, June 16, 2020).

There was the use of the term ‘community quarantine’ during the 2017 dengue epidemic in the Philippines but there was no classification made as to the level of limitations.

Extract 8: Compounding

(8) “If the Department of Health (DOH) will have its way, the persons to be included in the “**mass testing**” for the new coronavirus disease (Covid-19) starting on April 14 would only be those who are vulnerable because of their advanced age or existing ailments and those who had been exposed directly to the contagion and are showing symptoms”. (*CDN*, April 4, 2020).

The term ‘*mass testing*’ is a new Philippine compound word. The word ‘mass’ (adj) refers to a large number (in this sense, the number represented by people), and ‘testing’ (n) is defined as the means by which the presence, quality, or genuineness of anything is determined which in this case refers to testing for the possible presence of Covid-19 virus to a particular person.

The Philippine health experts clearly defined this as the widespread tests of Covid-19 suspected cases, such as to persons under investigation and monitoring, health workers and other frontliners (Madarang, 2020) as in this case.

The term ‘testing’ was used only during the 2017 dengue epidemic in the country.

Extract 9: Compounding

(9) “President Rodrigo Duterte has earlier said that he could not allow motorcycle **back riding** because strict physical distancing cannot be observed.” (*Panay News*, June 23, 2020).

The term ‘back riding’ (noun) is the derivational word of the already existing Philippine language backride (verb) and backrider (noun-the person). The term ‘back’ refers to the location of the rider in reference to the driver.

Thus, the compound typically means riding at the back. The term means the act of taking another person who can be a relative or a passenger to ride together in the same motorcycle. This word has surfaced during the Covid-19 pandemic as the Department of Transportation tries to warn motorists about the danger of spreading Covid-19 disease through back riding.

Extract 10: Conversion

(10) “Based on the operational guidelines updated and approved by the Inter- agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases and as part of the implementation of the Enhanced Community Quarantine in the entirety of Luzon, the following among others shall be considered health and emergency **frontline** workers-public health workers, private health workers, health workers and volunteers of the Philippine Red Cross.” (*DOH*, March 24, 2020).

The term **front liner (n)** is a Philippine English word from its derivational word ‘frontline’ (adj) which relates to or is involved in the forefront of any action, activity, or field (Dictionary, 2020a). The addition of *-er* from the word ‘frontline’ to form the word ‘front liner’ shifts the function to a noun which now means a person who is directly involved in the forefront of any action, activity, or field. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic in the Philippines, the front line refers to anyone with direct involvement in mitigating the pandemic, such as medical personnel, police, military, those working to distribute essential goods, etc.

5. Conclusions & recommendations

The main objective of the present study is to analyze the language innovations in the Philippine context that are caused by the language need during the Covid-19 pandemic. This specifically examines the semantic change of the English terms and new word formation found in the memos and announcements of the Local Government Unit (LGU) that are posted in social mediate sites (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) from March 16 - June 30, 2020.

The results of this study clearly displayed that the meaning of words changes inevitably to provide a description of the current circumstance. The Covid-19 pandemic pushed Filipinos to contextualize their needs to express themselves to ensure clarity in communication and alleviate the spread of Covid-19 virus. Further, the ethnolinguistic factor in the change of meaning is also evident in the semantics of Covid-19 terms. The Philippines, being an archipelago, comprises a micro-culture that influence its definition of words to describe the local context. The formulation of new words, which is dominantly on compounding, acronym, and conversion is another manifestation of the creativity of Filipinos in their attempt to be understood clearly and easily and ensure that the language used is within the experiences of the Filipinos.

The findings of this study provide implications of the importance of the meanings of the Covid-19 terminologies and how these perceived meanings influence the language change and formation of the local speech community. Specifically, the study hopes to suggest the following:

1. A video clip which is Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) material on the Covid-19 terminologies with their meaning defined in the dictionary and meaning defined by the researchers may be prepared and uploaded to Facebook and YouTube channels to demonstrate the technology transfer of this research project.

2. A webinar to be facilitated by the CTU Guidance counselor may be organized for the debriefing and dissemination of the results of the study to the informants.

3. Collected Covid-19 terminologies not yet found in the online dictionaries and Coronavirus Corpus could be donated to the authors of the dictionaries and developers of the said corpus for additional vocabulary and corpus-building purposes.

4. The Covid-19 terms may also be translated and disseminated for public consumption through radio broadcasting, news articles and on the website.

5. Orthography for standardizing Philippine English and words with multiple meanings may be the topic of further research projects.

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