

**21-Century Neologisms - Word-formative Strategies and Adaptation
(a Corpus Study of English and Bulgarian)**

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Abstract

This study focuses on some word-formative strategies used in 21-century newly coined English vocabulary and English borrowings in Bulgarian. The fast development of new technological products necessitated the coinage of new lexical units to name them. Following the definition, the term 'neologisms' is appropriately associated with new words or groups of words. The corpus of this study, however, consists of vocabulary which has already been included in the dictionaries of Standard English, and Bulgarian. This research tries to determine the processes of adaptation which the English borrowings undergo when they are adopted in the target language, as well as the whole word families created around the new word. Some loan words when they enter a foreign language begin to give rise to derived units. We claim that this technique helps the progress of the new vocabulary into the target language and its assimilation.

Keywords: *new words/ neologisms, zero derivatives, compounds, English, Bulgarian.*

1. Introduction

Contemporary society's social and political changes typically find their way into the languages at a particular point of time. It is possible to identify key trends in the methods for updating vocabulary by conducting a thorough investigation of the novel processes of modern linguistic evolution at the lexical level. In order to investigate lexical innovations in terms of revealing their linguistic and extralinguistic features, it is necessary to develop new methodological

foundations. The process involves determining the scope of their distribution and evaluating them in modern languages. As a result, the relevance of the present topic is constrained by the dispute surrounding research opinions in the field of current language studies regarding such an evolutionary phenomenon in language as creating new words and phraseological units. Most frequently a neologism is defined as a new word or phrase invented or constructed to name a new entity. In his definition Newmark (1988: 139) also incorporates new senses of already existing words. Sometimes the meaning of the newly coined lexical unit is not so obvious and the motivation used for creating the new word/ expression could be different.

Neologisms can be created in a variety of methods, but the most productive ones are compounding, derivation, analogy, abbreviation, and meaning transfer (Zhou 2016: 292). Newmark lists 12 different categories of neologisms in his "Textbook of translation" (1988: 141-149), along with collocations, pseudo-neologisms, and internationalisms. Neologisms either disappear quickly or gradually lose their novelty and become part of the standard language. The language of the mass media is where changes in today's social, political, and economic life reveal themselves most swiftly and clearly. The language used in media communication has evolved into a standard governing component that influences prevalent contemporary trends. In the language of the media, new words, figurative words and phrases, slang, and nonce words are created so quickly that no dictionary can and should immediately register them. In fact, there are tens of thousands of new terms that appear in the media each year across all languages. The corpus of this study, however, contains only newly coined units which have already been included in the dictionaries of Standard English and Bulgarian.

2. Theoretical framework

From a linguistic perspective, language change and evolution are unavoidable and natural linguistic occurrences (Hickey 2010). This

can be explained by considering language to be a social fact that is easily changed by social, political, and other occurrences, particularly those that have an impact on entire communities rather than just a few people (Bauer 2012; McMahon, McMahon 2013). Neologisms are referred to as “nonce words” by Crystal (2008: 329) because so few of the many neologisms that have been developed, modified, and altered survive. However, in this study we do not use the two terms interchangeably because a nonce word is a linguistic construction that a speaker either intentionally creates or unintentionally uses once. These nonce formations are not meant to be adopted by the community. A neologism is a new word or a new way to use a word that is not yet widely accepted, according to Durham (2018: 1). The corpus of this research contains lexical units which have survived their infancy for they are associated with an established, meaningful concept and a significant term for it.

In the last two years more than 200 new words and expressions were created in the context of COVID-19. A lot of research articles were dedicated to their formation and impact (Savoglu 2020; Aleksandrova 2021; Kruashvili 2023), interpretation (Thorne 2020; Cheshmedzieva-Stoycheva 2021a, b) and translation (Chalaya, Ghashim 2023; Guo 2023). It is impossible at present to prognosticate how long the Coronavirus-inspired neologisms would continue to be used after the post-pandemic period. This study does not focus specifically on new words related to the pandemic although the English corpus contains a few examples such as:

- (1) *super-spreader* ‘an event/ location where a significant number of people contract the same contagious disease’.
- (2) *vaccine passport* ‘a physical or digital document providing proof of vaccination against one or more infectious diseases (such as COVID-19)’.
- (3) *zoom* (as a verb) ‘to use Zoom video conferencing platform for work, school, and social gatherings’.

- (4) *WFH* (Work From Home) ‘An abbreviation used to describe remote work arrangements that became more prevalent during the pandemic’.
- (5) *remote learning* ‘the shift from in-person education to online learning for schools and universities’.

The process of creating new words differs between world languages according to how well-prepared the receiving language is to accept ready-made words and whole expressions into their word-stock. For instance, certain languages readily accept new words and idioms borrowed from other languages. Other languages resist the insertion of foreign words into their lexicon, viewing it as an intrusion and a danger to the purity of their linguistic structure. Instead, when borrowing new words and ideas those languages try to adapt the neologisms using internal morpho-phonemic and word-formative mechanisms. The trending role of neologisms in social media applications is on the way up and has gained energy. Examples of coined ICT and social media terms such as *screenshot*, *hashtag*, *selfie*, *Snapchat*, *share*, etc. have been integrated into Bulgarian after undergoing some assimilation.

The research design of this study is exploratory-interpretative. New combinations of words have been explored and investigated based on two corpora compiled from online and printed dictionaries. The English corpus contains 370 new words, while the Bulgarian corpus comprises 320 new words. As this paper focuses on English as a source language and Bulgarian as a target language, we have to point out that with time English has displayed high capacity to deal with globalization and technological innovations (Hundt, Mollin, Pfenninger 2017). It is often referred to as the "lingua franca" of the modern world because it is used as a common means of communication between people who speak different native languages in order to maintain the international relationship in business and economics, science and technology, media and Internet, education and diplomacy, etc.

All phenomena of lexical interference related to the process of borrowing can be defined as “the speaker’s attempt to reproduce with

the means of one language those patterns that s/he has learned in another language" (Haugen 1953: 384). Two types of lexical innovations are born in situations of language contact: 1. borrowed units; 2. native words. In turn, the borrowed units can be borrowed lexemes (assimilated and unassimilated) and calques (new formations - exact or approximate, and extensions - homonymous and synonymous). According to Haugen, in the first case, a phonemic copy of the foreign language model is created in the host language, and in the second case, a morphemic copy is created by replacing the foreign morpheme with a native one, which has an identical basic meaning, or a meaning suggested by the original.

Any kind of linguistic interactions between languages which cause semantic changes in the system are manifestations of "semantic interference". No doubt, borrowing words from other languages is a reflection of the dynamic nature of language and its ability to adapt to changing circumstances, cultural influences, and the evolving needs of speakers, and consequently, it is the reason for any transfer to take place further down the levels of the receiving language system. Borrowings and their derivatives form free and fixed collocations. These linguistic phenomena reflect the dynamic nature of languages and their ability to adapt and evolve over time and the analysis of loan linguistic units gives insight into changes in the system at all levels.

3. Data Analysis

English is one of the languages in which lexical units were borrowed and assimilated at the most due to historical reasons - trade expansion, wars, colonization, etc. Some researchers have calculated that the number of borrowed lexical units in the English language is more than seventy percent. Nowadays English is the main source language of the large array of international words borrowed in all European languages, including Bulgarian. English is indispensable to people who would like to communicate with the outside world, therefore it exerts an impact on the target languages and causes changes

that are of interest to linguists. The goal of this article is to focus on both the structure and meaning of English neologisms from the linguistic perspective and to compare and contrast them with those borrowed in Bulgarian. We also study what changes the new foreign words and word-forming elements undergo in processes of reception and assimilation. We explore the new English loan words in Bulgarian in all their linguistic aspects, considering their phonetic, morphological and semantic characteristics. We need to study not only the sources of borrowing as one of the means of vocabulary enrichment, but also the linguistic consequences of this process, the adaptation of borrowed lexical units and the influence of extralinguistic factors.

One of the linguistic consequences of borrowing at present is the existence of internationalisms, similar in sound and meaning in many languages, because they are borrowed simultaneously. They convey concepts that are important in the field of communication in science, politics, culture, etc. We try to reveal that the process of borrowing is a dynamic one and advances in two directions. On the one hand, it assimilates the new word changing its phonetic and morphological characteristics, on the other hand, the borrowed word becomes a source of a number of derivatives, forming a lexical cluster of words sharing the same root morpheme, e.g., BG *инфлуенсърка* 'a female influencer (n.)', *инфлуенсърски* 'influencer (adj.)', *инфлуенсърствувам* 'practicing influencing or exerting influence through social networks', *инфлуенсърство* 'the practice of quickly gaining popularity and influence in social networks. *инфлуенсърстване* 'the process of creating content and attracting followers in social networks', etc.

If we need to organize neologisms into the areas in which they generally occur, the most numerous groups are business and technology, sciences, informal/ slang language, working and banking, health, food and drinks, etc. The examples enlisted below are excerpted from two dictionaries: the Oxford English Dictionary and Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

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In group (a) Business and technology, we can include *dumbphone* 'the opposite of smartphone'; *video doorbell* 'a small security camera that connects to a doorbell, and that often has a microphone and speaker'; *supply chain* 'a chain of processes, businesses, etc.' The verb *greenwash* (coined by analogy with *eye-wash*) means '1. to make something seem more environmentally friendly than it really is; 2. to mislead (someone) by means of greenwashing.' This group also comprises words related to the virtual world such as

- *laggy* 'having a delayed or slow response affected by a lag;
- *deplatform* 'to remove a user from a mass communication medium (such as a social networking or blogging website)';
- *digital nomad* 'a person who works entirely over the Internet while traveling and has no permanent fixed home address.

Category (b) Sciences contains examples related to the natural environment around us, for instance:

- *dawn chorus* 'the singing of wild birds about sunrise especially in spring and summer';
- *atmospheric river* 'water vapor that flows through the atmosphere and presents a significant part of the global hydrologic cycle';
- *surface wave* 'an earthquake vibration propagated near the surface of the earth';
- *carbon sink* 'a natural place that has the ability to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere (e.g., a forest, ocean, etc.).

Informal/ slang language (group c) is the most varied category and it traditionally takes longer time for those words to become part of the standard language. With the help of the internet this time period is shortened, which increases the speed of adoption of slang words and informal language. Diversity of word classes is a characteristic feature of this group although adjectives outnumber the other parts of speech.

- *baller* (adj., informal) excellent, exciting, or extraordinary that is suggestive of a lavish lifestyle;

- *cringeworthy* (adj., slang) so embarrassing, awkward, etc. as to cause one to cringe;
- *lewk* (noun, slang) a fashion look that is a person's unique style;
- *yeet* (interjection, slang) used to express surprise, approval, or excited enthusiasm;

In group (d) Working and banking are subsumed some new economic terms describing new ways to deal with banks, sell products, make investments, etc.

- *unbanked* 'not having money in a bank';
- *underbanked* 'not using the full range of banking services';
- *gift economy* 'goods and services are given freely rather than sold or bartered';
- *side hustle* 'a supplementary job'.

The next category (e) Health is still a prominent topic due to COVID-19 and its consequences. Although three years have passed since its outbreak, new words are still coined or some health-related terms which have existed for years, enter common speech, and therefore qualify for dictionary entry. Traditionally it takes at least a few years for a new word to enter the dictionary, particularly when evidence shows it in frequent use by many writers. However, there are extraordinary cases when a new term immediately becomes part of common daily vocabulary. Such is the case with the language of COVID-19, including the word COVID-19 itself, which holds the record of having gone from coinage to dictionary entry more quickly than any other word, in a mere 34 days. As the pandemic story is not over, the need for more vocabulary to describe the policy and research developments connected to COVID-19 is still compelling. Because of the speed with which these new words become essential to communication, they are part of the dictionary updates in the last two years.

- *doomscrolling* 'the obsessive habit of scrolling through negative news of social media';

- *zoom bombing* 'joining a Zoom meeting without permission and causing disturbance';

The last category, we focus on, (f) Food and drinks is the most diverse in English because names of foods from around the world become familiar through menus, recipes, and cooking shows.

- *ghost kitchen* 'a mobile cooking facility used for creating food for off-premises consumption' (called also *cloud kitchen*, *dark kitchen*);
- *pumpkin spice* 'a mixture of cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, cloves, etc. commonly used in pumpkin pie';
- *oat milk* 'a liquid made from ground oats and water with calcium and vitamins';
- *chicharron* 'a fried piece of pork belly or pig skin, eaten as a snack'.

The abovementioned categories are illustrative of the spheres in which new words are created in English and Bulgarian. Our aim here is not to present an exhaustive classification of neologisms but to discuss the tendencies in the word-formative processes in the two languages. This paper is part of a larger project and focuses specifically on zero derivation and compounding.

3.1. Zero derivation

In linguistics, conversion is a way of word-formation, which is also called zero-derivation. The source word and the derivative coincide in their sound form and spelling and share a similar meaning but differ in the parts of speech they belong to, e.g., to like – a like (verb → noun), a text – to text (noun → verb). A new prepositional use of *because* can be observed in cases where it is not a conjunction and it is not part of the complex preposition *because of* 'by reason of'. The meaning can be interpreted as a way to convey a vague explanation about something. The meaning is polysemous due to the context, for instance:

- (6) The process works *because* science.

In example (6) the speaker says euphemistically “Don’t ask me about the technical details. I don’t want to delve into these overly specialized terms”. He/she tries to avoid long and complicated explanations.

(7) They left *because* reasons.

Example (7) is even vaguer to the listener(s). The speaker tries to dismiss the explanation altogether. This short statement says “I don’t feel like giving you any more information about this situation. You should accept the way it is”.

Another instance of conversion could be considered the noun *super-spreader* which is found originally to refer to a person who is highly contagious, capable of passing on a disease to many others. Later on it started to collocate with *event* to refer to a gathering of a significant number of people in which one infectious person infects many others, resulting in an unusually large outbreak at once. Beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, in which super-spreader events have been described in detail, superspreading has played a role in other outbreaks of diseases like the plague, cholera, and influenza.

New meanings are also added to already existing words. The metaphorical meaning of *thirsty*, which is widely used in Bulgarian to denote ‘showing a strong desire for something’, e.g., *жаден за знания* ‘thirsty for knowledge’, is used informally in English with the same denotation ‘craving for attention, approval, or publicity’, e.g., *I’d call him a man thirsty for reform*. This new use demonstrates how English speakers love to use metaphor to push words into new territories. New meanings motivated by metaphors can be traced in Bulgarian. For instance, Bg *зръб* lit. ‘back’ used for mobile phone cases, which cover only the back of the mobile phone. The correlation in Bulgarian is between the back of a person and the “back” of a phone, which is opposite to the display side.

A slang meaning in Bg is attached to *кифла* lit. ‘bun’, when it refers to a young woman who tries hard to look attractive using different cosmetic techniques, such as silicone lips, artificial eyelashes

and facial complexion, heavy make-up, bleached hair, provocative clothes and accessories. By analogy a male counterpart is coined, *кифльо*, a man who takes care of his good looks and behaves fastidiously. The suffix *-ля* associated with the feminine form of the word in Bg is replaced by the suffix *-льо* to coin the masculine counterpart. The same suffixation process is applied to the neutral *чехъл/ чехла* 'slipper' to form the offensive *чехльо* 'a henpecked husband', which in Bg originates from the saying *мъж под чехъл* lit. 'a husband under slipper'.

Due to its specifics in morphology zero-derivation is not a word-formative process in Bulgarian. Instances of coincidence in spelling can result from foreign word assimilation, e.g., *лед* 'ice' and *лед* 'LED' (Light Emitting Diode). Transliterating the foreign abbreviation has led to creating a homonym, which is used attributively although it is a noun phrase, e.g., *лед лампи* 'LED lamps', *лед крушки* 'LED bulbs', *лед лента* 'LED band', etc.

3.2. Compounds

Compounding is a word-formative process in which words are put together, the results is a new lexeme that does not denote two things, but one "and that is pronounced as one unit" (Wisniewski 2007: 4). In contemporary Bulgarian linguistic studies, authors often resort to the use of the international terms for a compound word, such as *composite*. For example, Baltova uses this term for compounds and defines them as "one-word linguistic units for nomination, the composition of which contains no less from two fully meaningful bases (or two roots)" (Baltova 2012: 223). The author also notes the ways in which roots in compound words are connected: "using a linking morpheme", "by immediately joining the two components" or "by a hyphen". The expansion of neologisms is a reflection of internationalization in the age of globalization, processes studied in detail by a number of Bulgarian researchers (Vakareliyska 2019; Todorova 2020; Bagasheva 2022, etc.).

Compound words can be classified into various categories based on their structure, formation, and meaning. Various linguists and scholars have contributed to the classification and analysis of compound words (Dressler 2006; Hilpert 2015; Booij 2019; Bauer 2020; Libben 2020; Bagasheva 2022). Dressler (2006: 43–44) enumerates a number of properties of compounds, e.g., non-separable, polysemous, noun–noun compounds, left-branching > right-branching, endocentric > exocentric, subordinate > coordinate, nominal vs. verbal vs. adjectival compounds, etc.

3.2.1. Endocentric compounds

The endocentric compounds combine a modifier and a head, and denote ‘a special kind of’. The verb *terraform* denotes a special kind of transformation of a planet, moon, etc. so that it is suitable for supporting human life. The meaning is a sum of the meanings of both source words ‘to form terra Lat. Earth’. Another neologism, quite culture specific is *makerspace* ‘a communal public workshop in which makers can work on small personal projects’. The meanings of the two source words are brought together and the joint meaning is put in a specific context related to the US community involvement. Regarding group activities, a new coinage is *crowdfunding*, whose meaning ‘obtaining needed funding from a large number of people’ could be derived from the meanings of the source words. The additional nuance of meaning of the compound, however, is really specific and is not contained in the denotations of the source words. The ‘crowd’ is a specific group of people, namely an ‘online community’. Analogically to *аутсорсинг* ‘outsourcing’, in Bulgarian *краудсорсинг* ‘crowdsourcing’ is borrowed. The literal meaning ‘using the resources of the crowd’ is also stylistically coloured to refer to an online community.

Due to fast progress of computer technologies new coinages are generated to meet the needs of naming recent developments. The term *teraflop* is used as a unit of measure for calculating computer speed equal to one trillion. The *flop* in teraflop stands for ‘floating-point operation’;

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tera- means 'trillion'. Computer speed characteristics are important to users as they are indicative of quicker computer response and better graphics for video games. Another term used as both a compound noun and a modifier to noun such as exploit, attack and software is *zero-day*. It referred to the number of days since new software was released to the public or software's vulnerability discovered by cybercriminals into a developer's computer before release. This new coinage is highly specialized to the sphere of computing, while the next one is considered a colloquialism with a comic effect. *Copyypasta* refers to data that has been copied and pasted repeatedly and thus spread widely online. The compound noun derives from two verbs, *copy* and *paste*, with a humorous ending influenced by the noun *pasta*. This ending, however, is the head and transforms the compound into a plural substantive, which has preserved the grammatical characteristics of the source noun.

As neologisms are representatives of the current state of society, the period of COVID-19 has generated a variety of anxieties formed by combining the meanings of the source words, e.g., *Iatrophobia* 'intense fear of doctors'. The word originates from *iatros*, the Greek word for 'healer', and *phobos*, which means 'fear'. *Nosocomophobia* is an intense, overwhelming fear of hospitals and comes from the Greek νοσοκομείον (*nosokomeion*), 'hospital' and φόβος (*phobos*), 'fear'. *Tomophobia*, the phobic fear caused by surgical procedures or medical intervention, originating from the Greek word *tomos* 'cut'.

The compounds in the Bulgarian dictionary of new coinages are almost entirely English borrowings, which follow three basic patterns:

- A phonemic copy (two/ three transliterated¹ or transcribed² root morphemes in juxtaposition)

¹ Transliteration is the process of converting written characters into a different alphabet.

² Transcription is the process of reproducing spoken words in writing. Foreign language transcription takes words spoken in one language and transfers them into a different written language.

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Compound	Gloss	Meaning
геймборд	gameboard	a portable surface marked for playing a game
геймтаблет	gaming tablet	a tablet specialized for playing games
бодикомбат	body combat	a total body workout
бизнескоуч	business coach	a professional who provides advice and feedback to corporate leaders
ролерблейдинг	rollerblading	the act of skating using rollerblades
гугълмобил	Google automobile	a Google car equipped with cameras to provide pictures for the application Google Maps
лапбук	lap book	an interactive collection of completed learning tasks related to a specific subject
салатбар	salad bar	a counter in a restaurant on which a variety of prepared salads are displayed
сендборд	sandboard	a board similar to a snowboard used to descend sand dunes
скрийнпротектор	screen protector	an additional sheet that can be attached to the screen of an electronic device and protect it against physical damage
смартбук	smartbook	a mobile device that has the functions of both a smartphone and a netbook

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сноубордкрос	snowboardcross	a snowboard competition in which four to six competitors race down
сноукайт	snow kite	an outdoor winter sport where people use kite power to glide on snow or ice
стрийтарт	street art	a form of artwork displayed in public on surrounding buildings, streets, trains
стрийтбол	streetball	a variation of basketball
стрийтденс	street dance	a style of dancing to hip-hop and other popular music originating among amateur dancers in cities
таймшит	timesheet	a piece of paper for recording the number of hours worked

These borrowings are phonemic copies of the originals, but some discrepancies arise in the process of transfer from the source language (English) to the target language (Bulgarian), which can lead to misunderstanding and confusion. The Bulgarian *геймтаблет* looks as a transcription of *gametablet* 'a prescriptive drug primarily used to prevent seizures', but in fact it is semantically related to *gaming tablet*. Another example, *гугълмобил*, could be wrongly associated with *google mobile*, a collection of Google applications that help support functionality across devices. However, it is really a blend of *Google automobile*, where the second source word is shortened, i.e., *auto-* is omitted. In the process of assimilation of *hoverboard* in Bulgarian some vowel variation is observed, for instance *ховърборд/ хувърборд/ хавърборд*.

Although a *лапбук* 'lapbook' can be confused with a laptop, it has no relation to computers. It is actually a book which contains learning tasks related to a specific subject. The compound *салатбар*

'salad bar' can be replaced by the more assimilated collocation *салатен бар*, where the suffix *-ен* has turned the noun *salad* into an adjective. The same word-formative suffix *-ен* is used to create an adjective related to the noun *стрийтбол*, e.g., *стрийтболен турнир* 'streetball tournament'. Suffixation as part of the assimilation process is used to form verbs from nouns, e.g., the suffix *-ирам* in *баркодирам* 'to barcode' derived from the noun *баркод* 'barcode'. The highly productive suffix *-аджия* in Bulgarian is used to form nouns denoting an agent instead of the English *-er*, e.g., *бийтбоксаджия* 'beatboxer/ a person who vocally imitates percussion sounds'. Some of the transcribed borrowings such as *бизнескоуч* 'business coach' have translated variants, *бизнес треньор*, which are used interchangeably.

- A morphemic copy (one transliterated/transcribed and one Bulgarian root morpheme (in some cases borrowed previously and assimilated))

Compound	Gloss	Meaning
уебография	webography	a bibliography published on the World Wide Web
сайтография	citography	a list of websites on a particular research topic
пиарология	PR studies	studying the mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics
стоунтерапия	hot stone therapy	a specialist massage that uses smooth, flat, heated basalt stones
видеомапинг	video mapping	the use of a virtual program to spatially map a 2D surface or 3D object
видеоревю	video review	the review provides an opinion on whether the video is good or not and why

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The number of nouns without a connecting morpheme, e.g., *стоунитерация* 'hot stone therapy', is greater compared to complex lexemes whose stems are joined by an interfix, e.g., *вебография* 'webography', *сайтография* 'citography'. The reason for this is due to the fact that in the composites of foreign origin, the connecting morphemes "o" and "e" that are typical for the Bulgarian language are either part of first source-word base, e.g., *видеомапинг* 'video mapping' or unnecessary, e.g., *стоунитерация* 'hot stone therapy'.

- A calque (two Bulgarian root morphemes in juxtaposition)

Compound	Gloss	Meaning
бебеносилка	baby carrier	a portable seat with a handle for carrying an infant
кучемат	dog feeder	an automatic pet feeder for feeding pets with a predetermined quantity of food
листорсмукачка	leaf blower	a machine that generates a current of air used to collect loose leaves and debris
видеобебефон	video baby monitor/ phone	a baby phone with a built-in camera
видеовизитка	video business card	a business card that combines the traditional print business card format with an LCD screen
видеобиблиотека	video library	an owned video channel brands can use to manage all their video content

We should specify that the bases of the complex nouns are either connected with an interfix (*листорсмукачка* 'leaf blower') or without a linking vowel (*бебеносилка* 'baby carrier', *кучемат* 'dog feeder', etc.).

3.2.2. Exocentric compounds

Exocentric compounds are compounds with an unexpressed semantic head (e.g., *paleface*) and they mostly refer to depreciative properties of people. Unlike endocentric compounds, they are not hyponyms of one of its elements, and thus appear to lack a head or perhaps to have a head (or 'centre') external to the compound itself. Some authors (Bloomfield 1935: 235; Gonda 1966: 83) use interchangeably the terms exocentric compounds with *bahuvrihi*. However, the original Sanskrit *bahuvrihi* compounds were adjectives not nouns, therefore they comprise only a subtype of exocentric compounds. As the term is used ambiguously in literature, we avoid using it here. Very few examples of exocentric compounds are found in the corpora used for this research.

Adjective-noun

This type combines an adjective (A) and a noun (N), which bear a single stress on the first element, and denote an entity which has the characteristics of A and N, e.g., *Bare-bones* apartment – basic, simple, minimal and essential elements of something; *His new apartment is pretty bare-bones. He'll need to get more furniture soon.*

Noun-noun

In this sub-type, the first element of the expression is a noun, but otherwise the type works in the same way as the adjective-noun type illustrated above.

Сегуей 'Segway' is a motorized personal vehicle consisting of two wheels mounted side by side beneath a platform that the rider stands on; *Сегуей не е моторно превозно средство и не попада под ударите на закона за движение...* 'A Segway is not a motor vehicle and does not fall under the traffic law...' Segway is a brand name and derives from *segue* "a smooth transition" plus *way*.

Бютиблендер 'beautyblender' is a sponge used in cosmetic procedures; *За да постигнете едновременно приятен блясък на кожата и руменина по бузите, (...) използвайте пухкава скосена четка и навлажнен бютиблендер.* 'To achieve both a pleasant glow on the skin and a blush

on the cheeks, (...) use a fluffy angled brush and a moistened beauty blender.'

Jackendoff (1975: 657) argues that there is no way for a non-speaker of English to guess the meaning of an exocentric compound. This seems to imply that the process by which these words are formed is not quite productive although there are some exceptions. If we analyze in detail *бютиблендер* 'beautyblender', we can define it as different from the electric mixing machine used in food preparation, which we associate with the lexeme *blender* and *beauty* is also something we would not expect to find in a blender. Therefore, the meaning of the compound can be interpreted only figuratively. The *blender* is a sponge used for mixing make-up and *beauty* is metaphorically related to the make-up.

Adjective-verb

As it typically happens in English, it can be difficult to tell whether the second element in this group of compounds is a verb or a noun, given the preference that English shows for conversion as one of the most productive ways of word-formation. The following English examples appear to be similar to those given above, but with a verb in the second element.

Greenwash 1 (verb): to make (something, such as a product, policy, or practice) appear to be more environmentally friendly or less environmentally damaging than it really is; 2: to mislead (someone) by means of greenwashing. Using the verb as a source, a noun is formed by conversion, *greenwash* denotes something (such as a claim or action) that is intended to make a product, policy, activity, etc. appear to be more environmentally friendly or less environmentally damaging than it really is.

Microtarget: to direct tailored advertisements, political messages, etc., at (people) based on detailed information about them (such as what they buy, watch, or respond to on a website). This neologism is borrowed in Bulgarian as a deverbal compound noun, *микротаргетиране* (also *поведенческо таргетиране*, *поведенческо*

рекламиране) to denote accordingly a process of targeting advertising messages in view of the tracked personal preferences and interests of users on the web.

Adjective-adjective

Deepfake is a characteristic of an image or recording that has been convincingly altered and manipulated to misrepresent someone as doing or saying something that was not actually done or said. The word is borrowed into Bulgarian in its transcribed version, *диѿнфейк*, and in most of the cases is used as a modifier to technology or video, e.g., *диѿнфейк технология*, *диѿнфейк видео*. Similarly to English, it is sometimes used as a noun in Bulgarian, e.g., *Диѿнфейк с Денков* (<https://news.bg/society/diypfeyk-s-denkov-ms-preduprezhdavache-sabira-i-lichni-danni.html>).

Verb-verb

Копинейст 'copypaste' is a process in which a piece of text is copied and subsequently pasted into the same text or another one. The word is borrowed with the same meaning and transcribed in Bulgarian. It hasn't undergone any assimilation and so far is used as an unchangeable lexical unit. Thus, it can be used as a noun to refer to the text which is copied and pastes and as a modifier to another noun, e.g., *копинейст поколение* 'copypaste generation', *копинейст култура* 'copypaste culture'. The two collocations regard the same phenomenon in our contemporary society to follow a template in almost every aspect of our lives. There seems to be something similar in far too many things that exist today and human creativity is lost due to technology.

The copypaste tool is widely used on the internet nowadays and this excessive use has provoked the coining of a distorted slang version of the word, *копѿпаста*. It refers to a block of text which is not only copied and pasted but it is done repeatedly by individuals over various online forums and social media sites. The new version is used as a jargonism in Bulgarian as well, for instance:

Нещо ме мързи да пиша и гледам да си служа колкото се може повече с *кони-пастата*... 'I feel lazy and I try to use *copy/pasta* as much as possible...'³

This neologism is not accepted both in Standard English and Bulgarian but in both languages it exploits the play on words developed by the paronymic relationship between the verb *paste* and the Italian *pasta*.

3.2.3. Copulative compounds

Only one copulative compound is attested in the English corpus of the study and none in the Bulgarian corpus. This type of compound is the 'sum' of what the first source word and the second source word denote, e.g., *sober-curious* 'experimenting with a period of not drinking alcohol'. The term comes from a title of a book, written by Ruby Warrington in 2019 and it is motivated by a curiosity of a sober lifestyle. It turned into a cultural movement of practising little or no alcohol consumption. In Bulgarian this movement is translated as *трезво любопитно движение* and the participants are defined as *трезво любопитни*, a literal translation of the original.

Conclusions

We have made an effort to highlight a few of the challenges involved in adapting the newly created words in a target language. The research has demonstrated that most of the borrowed words are transliterated or transcribed and then adapted using the grammatical markers of the corresponding language. Translating neologisms is apparently the most difficult task and it causes more problems than any other word in the source language. It influences the whole process of translation starting from understanding the meaning of the neologism, the reason for its creation, the way it was coined, ending with its

³ Translation is mine.

acceptance by the target language readership and its acknowledgment by the dictionaries.

In our study, we have demonstrated how the two compared languages – English and Bulgarian – deal with neologisms, how they address the problem of creating them and how borrowed neologisms are translated into Bulgarian in many different ways. Despite coming from different language families (Germanic and Slavic), English and Bulgarian have a lot in common when it comes to neologisms, more specifically internationalisms. The globalization of communication under the influence of the English language in the role of lingua franca leads to the unification of discourse norms, and hence affects the system-language norms. Internationalisms demonstrate the ways in which languages evolve and adapt to incorporate terms from other languages to meet the needs of global communication and exchange of ideas in various fields.

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