

Adding neologisms to the Hebrew online dictionary *Rav-Milim*

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Abstract

This paper describes the process of finding Hebrew neologisms and adding them to the online dictionary *Rav-Milim*. The editorial board of the dictionary uses different methods to find such neologisms: computerized corpus analysis, crowdsourcing (suggestions from users), and tracking new terms in the media and in official announcements by the Academy of the Hebrew Language. We discuss the criteria and methodology for adding new words to the dictionary, with emphasis on the decision-making process of labelling foreign words (mainly from English) as neologisms in Hebrew. Various kinds of neologisms have been added to the dictionary in recent years: new technological terms, including terms for new tools and appliances (רחפן, *rachfan*, ‘drone’); internet and social media slang; terms that have emerged in recent years in media coverage of news events; terms that have arisen in recent general discourse regarding new concepts (מזון-על, *mezon-al*, ‘superfood’); new military terms; neologisms added by the Academy of the Hebrew Language, some of which are the equivalents of existing loanwords. Most of these types of neologisms include loanwords, and statistical findings will detail how many foreign words have been borrowed from English as opposed to other languages.

Our dictionary is a practical, descriptive tool rather than an etymological documentation project. Therefore, new words in the dictionary are, in general, not indicated as such, though we do note whether a neologism has been formally suggested by the Academy of the Hebrew Language. These neologisms are linked to earlier loanwords with the same meaning.

Rav-Milim has also added new meanings to existing entries. New technological meanings have emerged in words like ענן (*anan*, 'cloud'). In other cases, existing terms have been replaced with new ones due to considerations of political correctness in contexts such as gender and disability.

Keywords

neologisms, Hebrew, foreign words, internet slang