Neologisms in an Online Portal

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Abstract

Every year, thousands of neologisms, or new words, are coined. Most neologisms are compounds or derivations. Existing words used with a new meaning (for example, Dutch *slim* 'smart', often used attributively before a machine or device), new multi-word units (*urban gym*) and new loanwords (*frosecco*, *thighbrow*, etc.) are also treated as neologisms.

Not every neologism is widely used and the majority of new words will disappear. The more widely adopted or firmly rooted neologisms are often described in dictionaries, such as the *Algemeen Nederlands Woordenboek* (ANW), an online dictionary of present-day Dutch. Why are some new words adopted, while others are ignored? Is it necessary to register and describe neologisms that are likely to disappear, for example in a dictionary of neologisms? And what should a dictionary of neologisms look like?

In this paper I will present a pilot version of a new dictionary of Dutch neologisms. Firstly, I will explain how Dutch neologisms are created. Secondly, I will demonstrate why it is necessary to register and describe neologisms (including those that are not adopted in present-day Dutch) in an online dictionary portal. Then I will show how potential neologisms in Dutch can be detected with the aid of the computer tool Neoloog and through corpus analysis. Finally, I will examine the lemma structure of this special-domain dictionary of neologisms and discuss how it differs from the *ANW* in the way it describes neologisms.

Neologisms in Dutch

Introduction. Every year, thousands of neologisms are coined in Dutch. The majority of these new words are used for a short period of time, for example words representing trends or crazes, such as *wildbreien* 'to decorate public spaces with knitted fabrics'. This word was invented by Dutch writer Francine Oomen, but the phenomenon itself was an international trend. In English it is called 'yarn bombing'. *Wildbreien* was popular in the Netherlands for a short time, in 2010-2011, and when the trend became outdated, the word became outdated too, gradually disappearing. Not every neologism is widely used so many will disappear. The more widely adopted or firmly rooted neologisms are often described in dictionaries, for example in the *Algemeen Nederlands Woordenboek* (ANW), an online, corpus-based dictionary of contemporary standard Dutch. *Wildbreien* was in fact added to some online dictionaries of Dutch, such as *Van Dale* and the ANW, but it is expected to be removed from the ANW because it is seldom used now. It is a complex matter, because the word was very popular for a while and during that time it became more or less rooted, but it was only in use for a couple of years. Compared to other more rooted neologisms, for example *selfie*, which has been in use for over ten years now, this is a very short period of time. Still, just like *selfie*, *wildbreien* is a quite familiar word. Lots of other neologisms, however, are highly ephemeral.

The formation of Dutch neologisms. Before I go into the way neologisms should be described in different types of dictionaries, I will show how Dutch neologisms are coined. Most newly emerging Dutch words are compounds and derivations. Combinations of two existing words are very common, for example in compounds such as *toetsenbordkrijger* 'desktop warrior', a combination of *toetsenbord* and *krijger,* and *fluistervideo,* 'short video in which women talk with a whispering voice which is supposed to be very relaxing', also known in English and Dutch as *Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) video*. *Fluistervideo* is a combination of the Dutch words *fluisteren* 'to whisper' and *video* 'video film'. Many neologisms are a special kind of compound: they are also composed of two

words, but in the combining process parts of these words are deleted or part of one word is deleted. Examples of such words are *hangry* 'angry and hungry', *brotox* 'Botox for "bros" for men', and *glamping* 'glamorous camping'. This type of compound is very popular in both English and Dutch (and in Dutch, these are quite often English loanwords). We also treat them as compounds, although Dutch word formation is word-based, and sometimes these compounds consist of two bound morphemes. Such words are called *blends* or *portmanteau words* (cf. Meesters 2004), although these terms and their definitions are subject to discussion. In Dutch, we often call composite forms like this 'mixwoorden' (mix words). It depends on the words in the combination which elements are clipped; sometimes there is an overlap in sounds or letters and then this part is deleted, but that is not always the case. (It is not, for instance, in the well-known *brunch*.) Sometimes a shortened element used in a composite form is used in other neologisms as well, for instance *bro*(-) (in, for example, *bromance* 'intense, affectionate friendship between men; film focusing on such a friendship'), *fro*(-) (for example in *frosé* or *frosecco*) or *-zine* (for example in *digizine* 'online magazine' or *egozine* 'magazine devoted to one, usually famous, person').

Apart from composite forms, new words in Dutch are often derivations. A derivation is a word formation in which a free morpheme, a word, is combined with an affix, a bound morpheme, for example Dutch *verappen* 'to change something into an app; to derive an app from something' with the Dutch prefix *ver-* and the suffix *-en* (used to derive verbs in Dutch). Evidently, the English loanword *app* is already so rooted and established in Dutch that a verb can be easily derived from it. Derivations with the prefix *ont-* (in this use meaning 'undoing or reversing the action of a verb') are also quite common in Dutch neologisms, for example Dutch *ontspullen* and *ontrommelen*, which both mean 'to declutter'.

Some neologisms are not compounds but multi-word units, for example *urban gym* 'workout in public space, using trees, benches, bridges etc. as fitness equipment or fitness

gear'. Compounds in Dutch are always spelled as one word and never as two words, so *toetsenbordkrijger* 'desktop warrior' is a compound and *urban gym* is a multi-word unit.

For the last few years, the Dutch adjective *slim* has been used with a new meaning in a steadily growing number of word groups. The basic meaning of *slim* is 'intelligent; wise' (of people), but when used attributively before words denoting things such as technical devices or gadgets it has become the equivalent of English *smart* (as in *smartphone* etc.), meaning 'possessing intelligence; using apps, sensors, chips, etc.' or 'connected to the internet'. With this new meaning, *slim* is a neologism used to form word groups such as *slimme bikini, slimme koelkast* ('refrigerator') or *slimme speaker.*

So, not all neologisms are newly coined words; sometimes words we already know are used in a completely new way and are considered neologisms when used with this new meaning.

New loanwords are neologisms as well, for example words like *frosecco* 'prosecco mixed with ice cubes; frozen prosecco' and *thighbrow* 'skin roll created at the top and front of the thigh while someone is bending forward, sitting or kneeling'. (The pose in which this 'thighbrow' is created is a popular pose in pictures on social media.)

Quite often, neologisms resemble existing words, either because two words we already know are combined into a new compound, or because new words are coined by analogy with already known compounds: Dutch *hangoudere* 'elderly person who is hanging around, for example in a supermarket or in the street, doing nothing in particular' resembles the well-known *hangjongere* 'young person who is hanging around doing nothing in particular'. Dutch *nobudgetfilm* 'film produced without any budget' looks a lot like *lowbudgetfilm* 'low budget film'.

New words usually resemble or are formed from existing words: in most cases, the 'old' words are used to coin new ones. That is why neologisms are, in a way, always familiar.

This makes sense: if new words were nonsensical letter sequences, containing no familiar morphemes, it would be very hard to learn and remember them.

Neologisms in Dutch Dictionaries

As mentioned above, not all neologisms are widespread and the majority of them will never be added to a dictionary. It is quite difficult to predict which neologisms will become commonly used. Metcalf proposes a five-factor scale entitled FUDGE (2004), a test that predicts the success of newly coined words and the growth of a new word. The acronym FUDGE stands for Frequency, Unobtrusiveness, Diversity of users and situations, Generation of other forms and meanings and Endurance of the concept, and each new word can score a maximum of two points per letter. Lexicographers take these five factors into account when deciding which new words should be included in a dictionary. The FUDGE scale is not an objective, scientific instrument, but an aid. According to this test, new words should be regarded in the light of these five factors. A neologism should be used frequently (F). But how often exactly is 'frequently'? This is a complicated matter, but in any case the neologism must be used many times in various (online) sources. Because newspapers, magazines, etc. often use or copy messages from press agencies, it is also important to make sure the neologism concerned is used in different contexts. Secondly, a neologism should be unobtrusive (U) rather than conspicuous. To put it bluntly, the more 'boring' or familiar a new word looks (for example because it strongly resembles a word we already know), the more easily it will become rooted in the lexicon. Thirdly, a neologism should be familiar to a diverse group of speakers (young people, old people, artists, politicians, etc.) and applicable in various situations (D) (at home, among friends, at work). Fourthly, a neologism should easily generate new forms (for example new derivations or compounds) and meanings. For example, the verb *speeddaten* 'to go speed dating' has now acquired a new, generalized meaning. So speed dating is now possible in non-romantic settings as well, for example when

you are looking for a new job. Finally, a neologism should refer to an 'enduring' concept: new words regarding laws or other more or less official government affairs are usually likely to endure (provided that they are not too conspicuous). Sometimes media exposure helps: some neologisms spread rapidly after celebrities have used them, for instance in television shows. If a new word has a high FUDGE score (the maximum of 10 points), it is a sign that it is becoming more firmly rooted in the lexicon and it also means the word qualifies for inclusion in a dictionary, for example the ANW.

Algemeen Nederlands Woordenboek (ANW)

The ANW is an online, corpus-based dictionary of present-day Dutch which is exclusively designed for the internet, so no paper version is available. It fits into the modern, digital lexicographical setting and can be considered 'a complex, digital database with all kinds of information (semantic, conceptual, morphological, syntactic) on the lexical units of a language' (Sweep 2014). The ANW describes contemporary Dutch from 1970 onwards as it is used in the Netherlands and in Vlaanderen 'Flanders', the Dutch-speaking region in Belgium. When a Dutch word that is used in the Netherlands is added (for example *fysiotherapeut* 'physiotherapist'), its Flemish-Dutch counterpart (*kinesist* 'physiotherapist') is added as well. The ANW is the chronological successor of the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (WNT), a large historical dictionary of Dutch which describes the period from 1500 until 1976. However, the ANW is a synchronic dictionary, while the WNT is a diachronic dictionary. In 2001, lexicographers at the Instituut voor de Nederlandse Taal (INT) (the former Instituut voor Nederlandse Lexicologie 'Institute for Dutch Lexicology') started working on the ANW. From 2001 until 2005, a text corpus was built especially for the ANW and made suitable for lexicographic usage. This ANW corpus contains over 100 million words and consists of various types of text, including newspaper texts, literary works and specialized texts within various disciplines, for example law and medicine. The part of

this corpus that serves as a source for neologisms consists of Dutch and Dutch-Flemish newspaper texts and is updated constantly (see section entitled 'Neoloog'). The compilation of the dictionary itself started in 2006. The ANW is updated daily.

In the ANW, many neologisms are recorded. A word is considered a neologism if it was coined in or after the year 2000. Furthermore, a neologism is only added to the ANW if it is rooted in the lexicon, not if it is ephemeral. Although the ANW is a synchronic dictionary which does not provide etymological information (in contrast to the WNT, a historical dictionary), in the case of neologisms, a decision was taken to add a category *Etymologie* 'Etymology' to the lemma structure. This was done because, in the case of neologisms, user research (van Eerten 2018) showed that dictionary users are interested not only in the definition of a new word, but also in its morphological and etymological features. Besides, the etymology and morphology of neologisms are often quite clear: in many cases we know who has coined a word or who has made a neologism popular and in the case of derivations or compounds, the morphemes a neologism consists of are clearly distinguishable.

In the etymology section, information can be added about the neologism concerned, how it was coined and whether it is a loanword, a calque (a loan translation) or a word of Dutch origin. Other features which can be added are the person who coined the neologism (if known), the year of its first appearance and further, more general, details (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Etymologie
Aard herkomst
leenwoord

Vroegste datering
2010

add Periode opkomst
add Omstandigheden opkomst
add Oorspronkelijke betekenis
add Betekenis ontwikkeling
add Periode verdwijnen
add Omstandigheden verdwijnen
Ontlening
Brontaal
Engels

Vorm in brontaal
influencer

Betekenis in brontaal
idem

ETYMOLOGY SECTION IN THE ANW

So a large number of rooted or more established neologisms are added to the ANW, for

example *selfie* and *pastafarian*. However, over time, lexicographers of the ANW have started

to add more ephemeral neologisms as well, for example neologisms which fit into an

interesting morphological pattern of coinage. Furthermore, non-rooted new words are

sometimes added because they are typical of a certain era, for example the economic

recession in the Netherlands or Belgium, or the period of time in which a new Dutch or

Flemish government was formed. In other cases, new words resemble words we already

know, and precisely because of this familiarity, lexicographers sometimes decide to include

them in the ANW as they provide a clear example of how new words are formed.

Nevertheless, recording ephemeral neologisms in the ANW is not to be aspired to, because a

general dictionary of Dutch should only add the more rooted and widespread neologisms. On

the other hand, it would also be a shame if morphological patterns of coinage and other 'trends' in the formation of neologisms were ignored. In addition, journalists, students, researchers, etc. frequently contact the INT with questions about neologisms or ask us to help them with their research on neologisms, because neologisms are a very popular subject for study. For these two reasons, a specialized dictionary of neologisms is called for.

Neoloog

Before describing the pilot version of the dictionary of neologisms (*Neologismenwoordenboek*) itself, I will explain how potential neologisms in Dutch can be detected automatically with the aid of the computer tool Neoloog. Neoloog (2015) was designed especially for this purpose at the INT by computer programmers Jan Niestadt, Rob van Strien and Mathieu Fannee; it is for internal use only for the time being. Neoloog is an aid for lexicographers working on the ANW and the *Neologismenwoordenboek* (NW).

A corpus of Dutch newspapers is uploaded into Neoloog, consisting of the Dutch newspaper *NRC* and the Flemish-Dutch newspaper *De Standaard* as representatives of Dutch used in the Netherlands and in Flanders. This corpus is updated every month and the 'new words' in these – i.e. those detected by the computer as having appeared for the first time in one of these newspapers – are presented in Neoloog in the form of a list. Every word in this list can also be viewed in its context, by clicking on the tab 'Voorbeelden' (examples). Lexicographers first have to check the list manually, because not every word that is used in a newspaper for the first time is a neologism. Next, they have to mark the 'real neologisms' in the list as neologisms, by ticking the box 'neo' (Figure 2).

Figure 2

woord	lemma	freq	anw_status	neo	anw
			Kiezen ⌄	☐	☐
aduicanumab	aduicanumab	1		☐	☐
advies-organisatie	advies-organisatie	2		☐	☐
advocaten-dingetjes	advocaten-dingetje	2		☐	☐
advocatenregel	advocatenregel	2		☐	☐
afbouwmedicatie	afbouwmedicatie	1		☐	☐
afdelingsmail	afdelingsmail	2		☐	☐
afgeflapt	afflappen	8		☐	☐
afleverpakket	afleverpakket	2		☐	☐
afname/afnemend	afname/afnemend	3		☐	☐
afrofeministen	afrofeminist	2		☑	☐

Above table header: `2019 02 ⌄` — **neologismen:** — Bestand in bewerking — 3.932 rij(en) gevonden (uit ±185.605 rijen) — Toon 10 ⌄ rijen

THE TICKBOX 'NEO' IN NEOLOOG

After this screening, lexicographers can refresh the list to create a list just of neologisms and then automatically add new lemma entries in the ANW editor for the selected neologisms. In 2018, new features were added: while working in Neoloog, it is now possible to add the words marked as neologisms as new lemmas to the ANW and the NW, by clicking on 'Maak ANW artikelen aan' 'create dictionary entries'. This means that lexicographers working on the ANW or NW do not have to open the editor anymore to create new lemma entries. In addition to this, it is now also possible to add a short definition (so-called 'minidefinitie', 'mini-definition') and grammatical and linguistic information to the words marked as neologisms, such as 'woordsoort' (part of speech). These new functions are very useful, as the new option of pre-editing dictionary lemmas saves a great deal of time. To do this pre-editing, the lexicographer ticks the yellow box 'ANW voorbewerking AAN' (ANW pre-editing ON) (Figure 3).

Figure 3
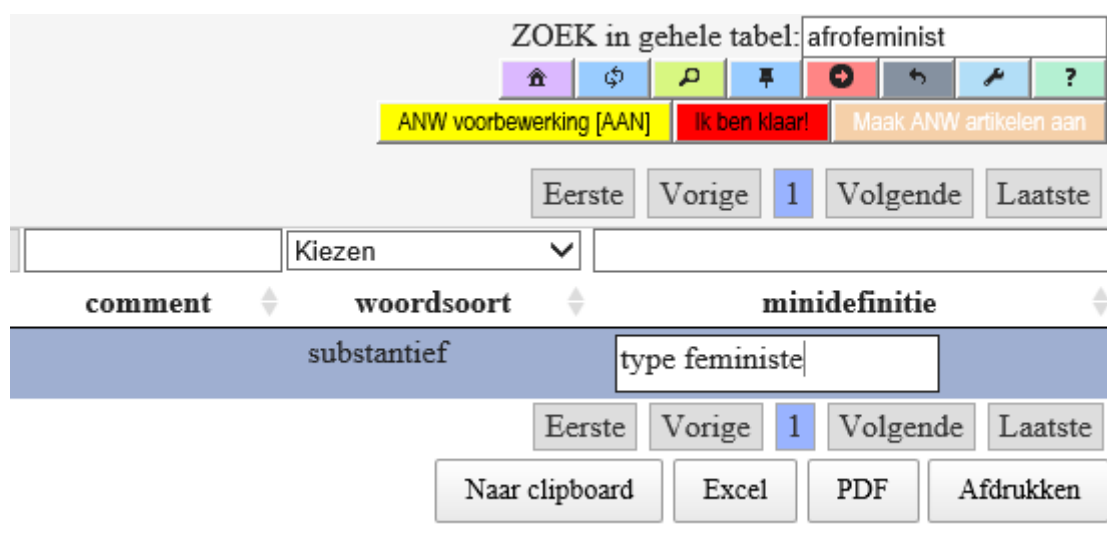
PRE-EDITING IN NEOLOOG

*Neologismenwoordenboek***: a Dictionary of Neologisms**

Introduction. As mentioned above, adding all neologisms to a dictionary like the ANW is

not desirable, because a lot of neologisms have a low FUDGE score and are ephemeral. They

could, however, very well be included in a specialized dictionary of neologisms. In 2018, I

started working on such a dictionary. It is called *Neologismenwoordenboek*, formed from the

Dutch words *neologisme* 'neologism' and *woordenboek* 'dictionary'. This

Neologismenwoordenboek (NW) includes not only all neologisms that have already been

recorded in the ANW, but also the ephemeral, non-rooted neologisms that had to be left out

of the ANW.

The editor. While working on the ANW or NW, lexicographers use the same editor.

(According to the OED, an editor is 'a program that permits the user to alter programs or to

alter or rearrange data or text held in a computer'.) This editor was designed especially for

the ANW, but it is also suitable for the NW. Using one editor for two dictionaries was

convenient as it saved us having to design the need to design a new editor. It also means that

the full structure of the ANW entry design can be used to edit neologisms in the NW. In the

menu 'Bewerk metadata' ('Edit metadata'; Figure 4), it is possible to mark a lemma as either

intended for the ANW (for example general, rooted words such as *tafel* 'table', *wandelen* 'to walk' and *vriendelijk* 'friendly'), or intended for the NW (for example *lokkoffer* 'suitcase which is placed somewhere as bait to lure possible thieves'). It can also be marked as intended for both the ANW and the NW (e.g. *tiny house* 'small, eco-friendly house') because some neologisms are so rooted and widespread that they belong in both the NW and the ANW, as mentioned earlier.

Figure 4

EDIT METADATA

In the editor, the differences between the lemmas are not very significant but they certainly become obvious in the online version. Not only did I decide to present the lemma structure in

the NW in a different way from in the ANW, I also had some new features added that are specifically useful to the NW and not to the ANW.

Online presentation. The online version and layout of the NW differ strongly from the ANW. This is done for a reason: user research shows (van Eerten 2018) that visitors of ivdnt.org are very interested in topics related to neologisms in general. For example, our weekly column 'Neologisme van de week' (neologism of the week) on our website[1] is very popular. It gives a short story about a new word, in which the word is defined and its etymology and morphology are elaborated, etc. The description always starts with the definition of the neologism concerned, for example *reducetarian* 'someone who is not living entirely like a vegetarian or vegan, but tries to eat less meat and other livestock products'. After this definition, further details are given, for example about the morphemes the word consists of, and some etymological information. To stay with our example, *reducetarian* is an English loanword consisting of the verb *to reduce* and the clipped element *-tarian* (used in *vegetarian*, etc.). If known, information is added about the person who first used the neologism or in which newspaper, magazine or blog it appeared for the first time; *reducetarian* was used in a newspaper article about the new food trends of 2019. If applicable, other words that resemble the neologism concerned are discussed as well. (*Reducetarian* is coined by analogy with *vegetarian*, *flexitarian*, etc.) The story is about 100 to 150 words. Because this column is very well read, I decided to design the NW in such a way that users are first presented with a short story about the neologism concerned, via which they can access the dictionary entry. The lemma structure in the NW resembles that of the ANW, but the categories are presented in a different order and using different names.

Categories of information in the *Neologismenwoordenwoordenboek*. In the NW the same categories of information are displayed in the lemma structure as in the ANW, namely:

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[1] www.ivdnt.org

- Woordsoort 'part of speech'

- Spelling en Flexie 'spelling and inflection'

- Uitspraak 'pronunciation'

- Woordvorming 'morphology'

- Bijzonderheden gebruik 'specific properties of usage; pragmatics'

- Semagram 'semagram; 'knowledge and concept representation'[2]

- Voorbeelden 'general examples'

- Combinaties 'possible combinations'

- Verbindingen 'fixed collocations'

- Spreekwoorden 'proverbs'

- Woordfamilie 'word family (such as compounds and derivatives)'

- Etymologie 'etymology' (which is only filled out in the ANW in the case of

  neologisms).

At the moment, only a pilot version of the NW is available. The website shows a list of

lemmas on the left and a search box on the right (Figure 5).

Figure 5

NEOLOGISMENWOORDENBOEK (pilot version)

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[2] 'the representation of knowledge associated with a word in a frame of slots and fillers'
(Moerdijk 2008); 'a representation of the concept of a word, especially used for nouns. It is a
list with relevant properties of the concept connected to a specific meaning' (Sweep 2014).

When a word is typed into the search box, a list of results appears. The neologism concerned can be opened by clicking on the word. The lemma is shown on the right and the structure of the lemma entry on the left (Figure 6).

Figure 6

LEMMA ENTRY IN NEOLOGISMENWOORDENBOEK

However, in some respects, the way in which the lemma is presented is different from that of the ANW. As mentioned earlier, in the online presentation, the actual word description is preceded by a short story about the neologism concerned. Underneath this short story is the definition of the word, followed by etymological information. So, contrary to the ANW, NW presents the category of etymological information not at the bottom of the lemma structure but at the top, since our dictionary users have proved to be very interested in the etymology of neologisms (van Eerten 2018).

Other information categories such as part of speech, spelling and inflected forms, relations to other words (such as synonyms, hyperonyms), morphology and pronunciation, will also be presented in a different way from in the ANW (Figure 7).

In the ANW, these categories are presented to the right of the lemma structure, and all the existing information within these categories is shown in full, often with a visually rather overwhelming, complex result. In the NW the information categories are grouped more

thematically and use tabs. The themes are *Betekenis* 'meaning', *Over het woord* 'about the word' and *Het woord in gebruik* 'the word in use'. The theme *Betekenis* consists of the tabs Semagram and Definitie 'word definition'. The theme *Over het woord* consists of the tabs Etymologie 'etymology', Spelling 'spelling and inflected forms', Uitspraak 'pronunciation', Woordsoort 'part of speech' and Woordvorming 'morphology'. The theme *Het woord in gebruik* consists of the tabs Woordfamilie 'word family; compounds and derivations', Voorbeelden 'general examples', Combinaties 'possible combinations', Verbindingen 'fixed collocations', Spreekwoorden 'proverbs' and Bijzonderheden gebruik 'specific properties of usage; pragmatics'. In this structure, in contrast to the ANW, the categories of information are clearly divided and classified and users can open categories if they want to. Furthermore, the description of the themes is in layman's terms, using only non-specialist words.

Extra features of the *Neologismenwoordenboek*. Some extra features have been added to the lemma structure and are exclusively used in the NW. Two features were added to the etymology section: 'Samenhangende woorden vorm' (comparable forms) and 'Samenhangende woorden betekenis' (comparable meanings) (Figure 7).

Figure 7

COMPARABLE FORMS AND MEANINGS

We use the first feature for neologisms that follow a certain morphological pattern, for example compounds with *lok-*. *Lokpuber*, for instance, consists of the words *lok-* 'to lure' and *puber* 'teen', denoting a teen who is employed by the police as bait, for example to test whether liquor stores are selling alcoholic drinks to teenagers under 18. Forming neologisms with *lok-* is very popular in Dutch, although not all of them become widespread. We use the

feature 'Samenhangende woorden betekenis' for neologisms that follow a more semantic pattern theme. For example, when a new word like *influencer* is described in the NW, words like *vlogger*, *blogger*, *it-girl* etc. can be added to this category, complete with links to these particular words.

Every so often, the INT produces an online mini-dictionary devoted to a special theme. So far, we have published 15 such dictionaries, including internet-related terms, of sports terms and selfie variations (called the Selfictionary, containing words such as *groufie* 'selfie of a group of people' or *smelfie* 'selfie of somebody who is smelling something which reeks' and *selfitis* 'habit of taking an overabundance of photos of oneself and posting them on social media'; *selfitis* is a mix word of *selfie* and the bound morpheme *-itis*, often used in medical terms denoting an inflammation). The lemmas in these online dictionaries are also added to the NW.

Conclusion

When describing modern Dutch in a dictionary, special attention needs to be paid to neologisms. Adding neologisms to a dictionary of contemporary Dutch is a complex matter. Before we can even look at their FUDGE factors, a decision should be made as to which words are considered to be neologisms at all. The ANW considers all new words from 2000 onwards to be neologisms. However, this lower time limit, set at 19 years ago, may need adjusting, because now, a neologism coined in 2000 is not so very 'new' anymore. The ANW is a long-term project and has no end date, so it may still change its policy regarding the criteria for the inclusion of neologisms in the dictionary. Since only the more rooted neologisms are added to a general dictionary of Dutch and many others are overlooked or neglected, it is necessary to design a dictionary specifically dedicated to Dutch neologisms. This specialized dictionary will also include the more ephemeral neologisms. In addition, it will list its neologisms in a different way from in the ANW. A pilot version of the

Neologismenwoordenboek is available, but revisions still need to be made, for example to the ordering and naming of the information categories and the overall online presentation.

In general, further research is needed into the way general dictionaries and specialized dictionaries should treat neologisms and how can lexicographers working on long-term general dictionary projects (such as the ANW) add neologisms from various periods of time.

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