

Neologisms and their Functions in Critical Discourse

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New lexical items can be key elements in the constitution of discourse in the sense of Critical Discourse Analysis (Teubert 2010, Partington et al. 2013). A neologism may have discursive and communicative weight during a specific moment or within a defined timeframe. For example, amid the pandemic German witnessed an influx of new terms related to Covid, many carrying immediate significance in public conversations and contributing to the depiction of key knowledge structures (Storjohann & Cimander 2022). The contributions of new words in the construction of a discourse are understood as discourse functions. Neologisms introduce new ways of thinking by embodying novel conceptual knowledge and influencing collective thought processes. They play a crucial role in distinguishing emerging social practices by clarifying vague concepts and laying the groundwork for further lexical innovation, e.g. through word formation. Within crises-related discourse, neologisms become fundamental in shaping linguistic reality, acting as pivotal nodes within a structured network. They have the potential to expose ideological content and cultural values, as these terms can highlight key issues in debates. Terms such as *Cancel-Culture*, *Wokeness* and *Greenflation* capture a range of views and beliefs in societal dialogues across ideological, cultural, and political spectrums. However, when neologisms are documented lexicographically, their roles in discourse are not specified.

This paper aims to demonstrate how the key aspects highlighted by new vocabulary are systematically documented in a recently developed dictionary. The novel approach adopted integrates specific elements of discourse lexicography, capturing aspects such as “die Gebundenheit des Wortschatzes in topikalischen, sprecherbezogenen, textlichen, zeitlichen und funktionalen Hinsichten” (translates as “the relevance of vocabulary in topical, speaker-related, textual, temporal, and functional respects”), as highlighted by Kämper (2006: 350). Some content also prompts users to delve into complex connections within the lexicon, moving beyond single headwords. This new resource allows users to access discourses by using a reverse approach where one can find all new terms associated to a particular discourse. For instance, journalists frequently inquire, “What are the latest terms related to the energy crisis?” Conversely, the paper will also show the capacity to amalgamate these individual lexeme-specific insights into summarised discourse depictions. This involves providing an outlined overview of the discourse associated with various neological keywords, such as the Bundestag election campaign in 2021, the U.S. election in 2020, climate crisis, energy crisis, and the Ukraine war. This interplay between information specifically attributed to single lexemes and broader linguistic knowledge spanning multiple lexemes highlights the relationship between neologisms and (critical) discourse. Clearly, the novel neologisms resource is not a conventional discourse dictionary; rather, it seeks to transcend the constraints of previous lexicographical methods.

Currently under examination is the lexicographic integration of discourse and the evolution of neologisms. The shifts in discourse patterns are intricately connected to alterations in paradigmatic structures between neologisms and other pivotal terms. Identifying the central themes and key terms that are paradigmatically similar within a public discourse has become more accessible through vector-based word embedding models (Kupietz et al. 2018, Fankhauser & Kupietz 2019). For instance, the term *Energiekrise* (energy crisis) has become a prominent focal point in critical discourse intertwined with the Ukraine war since 2021. It frequently intersects with other recent crises, forming clusters of terms that encompass various facets of the *Covid-Krise* (Covid crisis), *Chipkrise* (chip crisis), *Gaskrise* (gas crisis), *Versorgungskrise* (supply crisis) and *Klimakrise* (climate crisis). Indeed, many new words that

have emerged since 2020 can be sorted into these interconnected groups, showcasing specific additions to the vocabulary. While Bubenhofer (2022) employed the word embedding approach to identify central themes, recurring motifs, cognitive frameworks, narratives, and arguments, this paper explores whether new methods can be utilised for lexicographic objectives.

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