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Change(s) in Vocabulary(/ies) – Hungarian and Romanian Lexical Phenomena During COVID

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Abstract. The COVID-19 epidemic caused not only an unprecedented crisis in our lives but also changes in our language use and word formation habits: this new disease and its cures have naturally led to the emergence of new concepts and names. In 2020, more and more words or phrases related to the COVID-19 epidemic appeared in the public sphere as a result of COVID-related publications issued by the World Health Organization, regulations issued by the authorities of the countries, news in the press, and endless debates in the social media. This study examines the lexicalization processes and semantic shifts generated by the COVID epidemic, as we aim to examine professional and colloquial developments in pandemic-inspired terminology. We analyse the changes that have taken place in the Hungarian and Romanian language environment, while also taking into account the English language elements as a background reference. Among the most notable lexico-semantic phenomena, we have identified word coinages, changes of meaning, and varied word formation techniques which have fostered the processes of lexicalization and neologism creation, revealing an impressive linguistic dynamic at the level of public discourse.

Keywords: COVID-19 terminology, semantic changes, lexical phenomena, Hungarian language, Romanian language

1. Introduction

To meet the needs of a rapidly changing social reality, each language employs a wide range of strategies to create new linguistic elements and generate new meanings, such as borrowing words from other languages to denote an emerging objective reality or concept (loan words), creating new words using the resources of our own language (mainly combination and derivation), or changing the meaning of existing words (semantic changes such as narrowing of meaning or broadening of meaning). As a result, the number of neologisms is constantly increasing, and thus languages are gradually changing, according to their internal laws and/or under the influence of other languages. The COVID-19 epidemic caused not only an unprecedented crisis in our lives but also changes in our language use and word formation habits. In addition to the enrichment of medical jargon and the common use of technical words, everyday language has been enriched with colourful and creative expressions from its own sources, as a result of creativity. The linguistic cavalcade has manifested itself first in the definition of the name of the disease. Severe atypical pneumonia caused by the unknown 2019-nCoV virus until the outbreak is listed under several provisional names (Chinese coronavirus, COVID, SARS COV 2, the new type of coronavirus, the novel coronavirus), although the WHO report officially named it COVID-19. The acronym is derived from the lexemes *corona*, *virus*, and *disease*, and the number *19* refers to the year in which the first cases were detected.

2. Aims, methods, and corpus construction

This study examines the lexicalization processes and semantic shifts generated by the COVID epidemic, as we aim to examine professional and colloquial developments in pandemic-inspired terminology. In the light of the *technolect* (i.e. medical language) and *digilect* (i.e. language of social media) generated by the pandemic, we analyse the changes that have taken place in the Hungarian and Romanian language environment, while also taking into account the English language elements as a background reference. We do not intend to undertake a quantitative, comparative analysis of the three languages since the specific agglutinative arrangement of English, the frequency of monomorphic words, the prevalence of suffixing, and word formation with other morphemes provide relatively considerable flexibility in the formation and transformation of words. The Hungarian language also offers a wide range of possibilities in this respect, as the Hungarian language also uses agglutination, as a result of which the words carry a complex meaning in a condensed form, as well as creative words reflecting a linguistic invention (*maszk* ‘mask’ – *antimaszker* ‘anti-masker’, *maszkozik*

'masquerade'). In contrast, the Romanian language is an inflected language, expressing grammatical relations by conjugation, derivation, and by changing the stem, and a limited number of suffixes can be used. This may also explain the fact that there are fewer new creations in the Romanian language area and more calque translations or loanwords.

The data collection process consisted of compiling a corpus of a total of 240 Hungarian terms related to the pandemic, which were grouped into subcategories, i.e. vocabulary related to symptoms, testing, vaccination, etc. The Hungarian terms were matched with their English and Romanian terms, using online media as their sources: e.g. index.hu, hu.euronews.com, portfolio.hu, maszol.hu, digi24.ro, realitatea.ro. The Hungarian corpus was collected from online sources, and during our empirical research it was divided into two main parts. The first part consists of the vocabulary related to the pandemic, which appeared on the official online (Hungarian and Romanian/Transylvanian) websites, namely: koronavirus.gov.hu, korona.rmdsz.ro. These official websites have been launched in order to provide up-to-date and reliable information related to the pandemic. The other part mainly includes COVID vocabulary and digilect units from the social media, focusing on the linguistic examination of two informative Facebook pages: one of them was created by a biochemist living in Transylvania, who posted regular briefings about the COVID (facebook.com/sziszi), while the other Facebook posts were written by a Hungarian doctor (facebook.com/koronasmesek), both being reliable sources regarding the disease and its vocabulary. The corpora were also compared with a recently published glossary (Veszelszki 2020).

As the aim of the research is to examine the linguistic globalizing effect of the pandemic, we observed the "contagious" emergence of English loan words in the Hungarian and Romanian texts. The main aspects of the analysis of the corpus are the phenomenon of loanwords and calques and the examination of the contact phenomena and the transfer phenomena between the professional language registers and the common language. We highlighted the emergence of specialized terms in the common language, focusing on the non-analogical changes of denotational meaning, comprising the classical quartet of specialization, generalization, metonymy, and metaphor and emotive meaning change: pejorative change and melioration (cf. Geeraerts 2009).

We have hypothesized that the normative language version largely contains loan elements and calques, while the everyday written and spoken language uses set in motion several linguistic inventions. Our second hypothesis is that the Transylvanian language version has fewer creative linguistic elements, and due to the contact effect of the Romanian language, other phenomena have also surfaced.

3. Analysis of the corpus

The corpus was collected and categorized according to the aforementioned research objectives.

3.1. Analysis of the Hungarian corpus

In the case of the Hungarian-language corpus, we encounter various word formation techniques, but at the same time the process of generalization can also be observed. According to Tamás (2014), the role of specialized terms is to make communication more efficient and faster. The emergence of specialized language is generated by specific communication needs (Kurtán 2003), but, similarly, due to specific needs, words and phrases brought about by the necessity of understanding the epidemic and the new situation appear with incredible speed. At the same time, domain-specific neologisms are much more permanent than colloquial neologisms (Vargáné 2016: 181). According to Heltai, although the elements of the specialized language are part of the common language, the existence of common language competence does not mean that we also have professional language competence (Heltai 2006: 37).

As a result of the pandemic, a large number of linguistic elements have been transferred from a specialized domain to the common language in a very short time, and became widely used. It is characteristic of the situation that some of the terms are provided with explanations, mainly in official statements and announcements. These represent the normative language version and accordingly seek to apply consistent terminology. In these statements, we encountered less jargon than on the analysed Facebook pages, and they often provide conceptual explanations. Facebook pages launched for educational purposes offer extremely rich material related to new terms. The comments also contribute to this, where we also encounter their abundant presence. Here, however, we can already observe great variability. Compound words are mainly grouped around concepts such as *epidemic*, *infection*, *contact*, *COVID*, *quarantine*, *symptom*, *immunity*, *vaccination*, *virus*, and so on. Another noteworthy phenomenon is the spelling of the terms, where we frequently come across the preserved foreign spelling (e.g. *PCR kit*), source-language and Hungarian spelling can be mixed (e.g. *post-covid szindróma* 'post-covid syndrome'), some terms often appear in phonetic transcription (e.g. *reverz* 'reverse'), but inconsistencies are also common, for example, related to PCR tests (*real-time PCR*, or *RT-PCR*).

A very interesting phenomenon is the emergence of the emotional charge of the terms, which indicates the process of de-terminologization and generalization. Abbreviations and acronyms (e.g. *koronavírus IgM/IgG gyorsteszt* 'coronavirus IgM / IgG rapid test') are common and are sometimes accompanied by explanations.

The Hungarian word *nyájimmunitás* 'herd immunity' has been markedly enriched with emotional charge during the pandemic. The emerging negative emotional charge or pejoration is clearly due to the role of the epidemic in initiating social processes and psychological effects (virus denial, anti-vaccination, etc.).

Another phenomenon is linked to the specialized lexemes that have been transferred into everyday language, i.e. the process of generalization. The most striking change in the vocabulary of everyday language is certainly the emergence of medical jargon terms. As indicated, these do not occur primarily in official news appearing on government websites but mainly in posts on social media pages or in informative articles in the press. They are also used in comments in online social media discourses. These terms and expressions are characterized by formal constancy; they are used in their original form in everyday speech. Their adoption and use intend to serve the accurate transmission of medical/biological concepts and to provide more reliability and convincing force to the information. They are used not only in press articles but also in everyday language when commenting on online social media sites, which indicates how important online social media users consider the use of terms in a given situation. These lexemes reveal much more about the changes in the vocabulary during the epidemic than the words of the former group, as these terms – although previously known to non-specialists as well – were mainly part of the communication in the specialized domain. Of these, we would like to highlight the following words as the most important lexemes of the pandemic: *járvány* 'epidemic', *fertőzés* 'infection', *immunitás* 'immunity', *vakcina* 'vaccine', *teszt* 'test', *vírus* 'virus'. The vocabulary of the epidemic has been expanded with the help of suffixes and prefixes or compound words.

Broadening of meaning can be identified in the case of lexemes that have become more frequently used in everyday language and show a change in meaning. The Hungarian word *járvány* 'epidemic' has clearly been used by non-specialists as well, but its concept has changed and expanded during the pandemic. It can be encountered mainly in compound words such as: *járványkommunikáció* 'epidemic communication', *járványkezelés* 'epidemic management', or *járványgörbe* 'epidemic curve'.

The lexeme *fertőzés* 'infection' can be found in several compound words and phrases such as: *fertőzőképes* 'infectious', *újrafertőződött* 're-infected', *fertőzési láncolat* 'chain of infection', *igazolt fertőzés* 'confirmed infection', *aszimptomatikus fertőzött* 'asymptomatic infected', *fertőzés reprodukciós rátája* 'reproductive rate of the infection'. Word-for-word translation can be further observed in the characterization of infectious individuals, for instance, the English term 'superseeders' translated into *szuperterjesztő*.

Lexemes related to immunity (*immunitás*) can be found in several compound words and phrases such as *immunválasz* 'immune response', *immunaktiválódási folyamat* 'immune activation process', *immunizálás* 'immunization',

immunizálódott 'immunized', *természetes immunitás* 'natural immunity', *nyájimmunitás* 'herd immunity'. Most of these forms narrow the meaning, thereby bringing a more precise term into the everyday language. The examples above also show the expansion of the vocabulary through derivation and composition. Terms belonging to the domain of digilect can also be observed, mainly in the comments on the Facebook pages, such as *fotel immunológus* 'armchair immunologist', and due to the uncertainty related to the meaning of some terms, accumulation of words and redundancy can be encountered: *immunvédettség* 'immune protection'.

The Hungarian lexemes *oltás* and *vakcina* 'vaccination' are synonyms and have been an important part of epidemic communication from the beginning. New lexemes and neologisms have appeared, which are frequently the results of calque translations, mainly of English terms: 'vaccine sceptics' = *oltásszkeptikus, vakcinaszkeptikus*, 'vaccine tourism' = *oltásturizmus/vakkcinaturizmus*, 'vaccination committee' = *oltásbizottság/vakcinabizottság*, 'vaccination precaution' = *oltásóvatosság/vakcinaóvatosság*, 'vaccination critic' = *oltáskritikus/vakcinakritikus*, 'vaccination campaign' = *oltáskampány*, 'vaccination centre' = *oltásközpont/vakcinaközpont*. These relate to different areas of epidemic communication: organization or logistics (procurement, transport, shortage, centre, quantity, tourism), research, production (development, technology), information flow (campaign, news), attitude (for or against). In connection with vaccination, it is worth mentioning the evolution of the verb *olt* 'vaccinate'. While in Hungary the normative language version accepted the verb *oltakozik* 'get vaccinated', the Transylvanian language version primarily prefers the *oltat/beoltat* 'get vaccinated' versions, and there is also the lexeme *oltogató* 'vaccinating', which refers to the person who vaccinates those who have previously registered for vaccination (*oltásra regisztráltak*). Other word combinations containing the lexemes *oltás* and *vakcina* have become common in everyday language usage: *oltási platform* 'vaccination platform' (where you can register for vaccination in Romania), *emlékeztető oltás/vakcina* 'booster vaccination', *oltási folyamat* 'vaccination process', *oltási helyek* 'vaccination sites', *oltási időpontok* 'vaccination dates', *oltottsági szint* 'vaccination level', *hagyományos vakcina/oltás* 'conventional vaccine', *új generációs vakcinák/oltások* 'new generation vaccines', *oltásra/vakcinára jogosult* 'eligible for vaccine'. Some terms can be found both in the form of phrases and compound words such as *oltási kampány – oltáskampány* 'vaccination campaign', *oltási terv – oltásterv* 'vaccination plan', *oltási stratégia – oltásstratégia* 'vaccination strategy', *oltási napló – oltásnapló* 'vaccination diary'.

Testing is also a central issue during a pandemic, so its concept has expanded, and a number of words derived from the lexeme *tesztelés* have enriched the everyday language: *antigén teszt* 'antigen test', *molekuláris teszt* 'molecular

test', *tesztalany* 'test subject', *PCR teszt (pozitív/negatív)* 'PCR test' (positive, negative)', *teszteredmény* 'test result', *rapid-/gyorsteszt* 'rapid test', *újratesztelés* 'retest', *koronavírus teszt* 'coronavirus test', *covid teszt* 'covid test', *diagnosztikai teszt* 'diagnostic test'.

The meaning of the word *vírus* 'virus', a central element of a pandemic, has also changed due to its many derived and compound forms, and, although it is a collective term, it has become equivalent to the word *koronavírus* 'coronavirus'. The appearance of specialized terms in the common language was mainly related to the process of testing: *vírusszám* 'virus number', *vírus koncentráció* 'virus concentration', *vírustartalom* 'virus content'. However, recent research has led to new concepts, so the meaning of the virus has expanded, and we already know about *mutáns vírusok* 'mutant viruses', *brit/dél-afrikai/brazil vírusvariánsok* 'British / South African / Brazilian virus variants'. They also have scientific names, in the form of acronyms, but in everyday language simpler and easier-to-remember versions are preferred. There are other word combinations related to the word *vírus* 'virus': *vírusellenzők* 'virus deniers', *vírushívők* 'virus believers', *vírusterror* 'viral terror', and, using the power of humour, such forms and synonyms have been created as: *mindmeghalunk vírus* 'we all die virus', about which *önképzett vírusszakértők* 'self-trained virus experts' or *fotelvirológus*ok 'armchair virologists' (classified as a digilect) can write on social media.

As in Romanian and English, the word *kontakt* 'contact' loses its neutrality and expands its meaning through the processes of word formation and word composition: what has so far largely referred to relationships, now refers to the possible contacts with infected people: *közösségi/utcai kontaktok* 'community/street contacts', *kontaktuskutatás* 'contact research', *kontaktvizsgálat* 'contact testing'.

The meaning of the *karantén* 'quarantine' lexeme has also expanded. *Karantén* 'quarantine' (or *vesztegzár* 'lockdown' / *járványügyi elkülönítő* 'epidemiological isolation' / *elszigetelés* 'isolation') was used to prevent the spread of an infectious disease, which, although present in everyday language, has been supplemented in the current situation by a number of new conceptual features: *intézményes karantén* 'institutional quarantine', *hatósági karantén* 'official quarantine', *házi karantén* 'home quarantine'. These terms were also explained on the official page of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, indicating that the meaning of these new elements may not have been clear for everybody. The conceptual circle of quarantine also included elements such as *karanténkötelezett (személy)* 'quarantined (person)' or a whole range of digilects collected by Veszelszki: *karantének* 'quarantines', *karantini* 'quarantiny', *karanténbébi* 'quarantine baby', etc., which provided some help to cope with the difficulty of the situation with the stress-relieving effect of humour. However, it is probable that these fashion words will be forgotten relatively soon, as they will no longer be needed. The concept of quarantine also includes certain loan elements, internationalisms,

such as the term *lezárás* 'lockdown', for which no proper Hungarian translation has been found, or the lexeme *izoláció*/*izolálódás* 'isolation', which has so far been primarily used to describe psychological situations in human relations. Quarantine also resulted in the emergence of other expressions: *tavaszi otthonülés* 'spring home sitting', *fizikai/társadalmi távolságtartás* 'physical/social distancing', and variations of their use indicated the uncertainties related to them. The Hungarian word *társadalmi távolságtartás* was created as a calque translation of the English term 'social distancing', but it soon became clear that it did not cover the given concept, and therefore *fizikai távolságtartás* 'physical distancing' has been used in official forums.

We have identified a number of linguistic elements that have already been present in the common language but have undergone a narrowing of meaning due to the epidemic: regarding the word *maszk* 'mask' and expressions related to its wearing, we can talk about narrowing of meaning because during the epidemic it mainly applied to the medical mask or equivalent masks. We can observe linguistic creativity in some of the words derived from it (*maszkozás* 'masking', *maszkellenes* 'anti-masker', *maszkviselés* 'mask wearing').

Words and phrases grouped around the term *korona* 'corona/crown' have become narrower as a result of the pandemic, and the word combinations have specific meanings: *koronavírus* 'coronavirus', *koronavírus-diagnosztika* 'coronavirus diagnostics', *koronavírus-szekvencia* 'coronavirus sequence'. Expressions belonging to the category of digilects add more colour to the category: *koronamizéria* 'corona misery', *koronacirkusz* 'corona circus', *koronaposzt* 'corona post'.

It is a common linguistic phenomenon that new words have also appeared in the Hungarian language – transfer phenomena can be observed in forms that we took over from the English language due to the pandemic. Typically, the English terms were accompanied by their translation; in many cases, the translation and explanation were given in brackets in the press or social media: *flattening the curve* (laposítsd a görbét), *lockdown* (lezárás). As mentioned before, calques are also characteristic such as: *koronaszkeptikus* 'coronasceptic', *nyájimmunitás* 'flock immunity', *antigén* 'antigen', *antitest* 'antibody', *veszélyeztetett csoport* 'vulnerable group', *oltási rizikó* 'vaccination risk'.

At the same time, the acronyms deserve special attention, especially the evolution of the word COVID, which is the only true neologism in the vocabulary of this pandemic. It is mainly characterized by spelling uncertainty (*Covid/covid/kovid*). The neologism *covid* was easily integrated into the Hungarian everyday language, both in derived and compound forms, and new expressions were soon formed: *enyhe covid* 'mild covid', *covid pozitív* 'covid positive', *covid mutációk* 'covid mutations', *ex-covid-os* 'someone who already had covid', *covid oltáskönyv* 'covid vaccine book'. At the same time, the changing forms in English

also indicate the process of changes in Hungarian: for example, from 'long-covid' and 'long hauler' the translation of the first expression appears in Hungarian as *hosszú-covid*.

Although we have not analysed the spelling aspects of the pandemic vocabulary, it is clear that we encounter very careless, frequent spelling inconsistencies and ignorance on social media sites. However, this is not surprising because the priority of the language used in comments and social media sites is to be clear and correct enough for comprehension. The positive aspect is the enrichment and dynamic change of the language as a result of the epidemic.

3.2. Analysis of the Romanian corpus

Regarding the Romanian-language corpus, there is a wide range of word formation possibilities, the most common techniques of word formation being the transfer of specialized terms into the everyday language, abbreviations and derivation, but loan words, transfer phenomena, calque translations, and contact phenomena are also worth mentioning.

The most outstanding phenomena include the processes of terminologization/specialization and de-terminologization/generalization. In this period, by far the most widely used neologism is *carantină* 'quarantine'. According to the explanatory dictionary of the Romanian language, it is derived either from the Russian language or from the French word *quarantaine* or the Italian word *quarantina*, and it basically defines the period of isolation.[1] However, according to *Merriam Webster*, the French or Italian etymology is more likely.[2] The other most common neologism is *coronavirus* 'coronavirus', of English origin. *COVID* (in connection with which some languages using multi-gender forms of nouns seem hesitant, e.g. *le* or *la covid* in French) has not even been included in the explanatory dictionary of the Romanian language.[3]

The process of de-terminologization, or generalization, has had a significant effect on the language. During the coronavirus epidemic, a number of specialized terms from medical jargon started to be used in official publications and the press, more than those already used during previous epidemics, such as *autoizolare* 'voluntary isolation', *asimptomatic* 'asymptomatic', *pacientul zero* 'patient zero', *igienizare* 'hygienization', *cazuri de infecție locală* 'local infection cases', *cazuri de import* 'imported cases', *focar* 'outbreak site', *triaj* 'triage', *caz suspect* 'suspect case', *caz confirmat* 'confirmed case' – and they have become widespread.

De-terminologized lexemes caused by the coronavirus epidemic include *super răspânditor* 'superseeder', *virusul SARS CoV-2 '*SARS-CoV-2 virus', *test*

1 https://dexonline.ro/definitie/carantina.
2 https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/quarantine.
3 https://dexonline.ro/definitie/COVID.

COVID-19 'COVID-19 test', *test PCR* 'PCR test', *masca FFP1* 'FFP1 mask', *masca FFP2* 'FFP2 mask', *centre de vaccinare drive-through* 'drive-through vaccination centres', *doza de rapel* 'booster vaccination', *coronavirus* 'coronavirus', *noul coronavirus* 'the new coronavirus'.

From the lexemes that have already been present in everyday language and have become more frequently used, the following can be considered the most important: *probă* 'sample', *test* 'test', *purtător* 'virus carrier', *virus* 'virus', *asimptomatic* 'asymptomatic', *comorbiditate* 'comorbidity', *rinoree* 'runny nose', *simptom* 'symptom' *simptomatic* 'symptomatic', *asimptomatic* 'asymptomatic', *incubație* 'incubation', *cefalee* 'headache', *congestie* 'nasal congestion', *mialgie* 'muscle pain', *dispnee* 'dyspnoea', *terapie intensivă* 'intensive care unit' or 'intensive care'.

The word for vaccine in Romanian is *vaccin* (plural *vaccinuri*), which is the basis of many derivatives:

– with suffixes: *antivaccinare* 'anti-vaccination', *Rovaccinare* – the abbreviated name of the organizational platform that handles the vaccination;

– by the creation of abbreviations and acronyms: *Registrul Electronic Național de Vaccinare (RENV)* 'National Electronic Vaccination Register';

– as a basis for phrases and compound words: *vaccinosceptic* 'vaccine-sceptical', *contacții vaccinați* 'vaccinated contacts', *persoane nevaccinate* 'non-vaccinated people', *campania de vaccinare împotriva COVID-19* 'vaccination campaign against COVID-19' *strategia pentru vaccinarea împotriva COVID-19 în România* 'vaccination strategy against COVID-19 in Romania', *centre de vaccinare fixe şi mobile* 'fixed and mobile vaccination centres', *eligibil pentru vaccinare* 'eligible for vaccination', *doze de vaccinare* 'vaccination doses', *planul european pentru monitorizarea siguranței vaccinurilor împotriva COVID-19* 'the European plan for the safety monitoring of COVID-19 vaccines', *isteria vaccinării* 'vaccine hysteria';

– with contraction: instead of *doza de vaccin 1* 'first dose of vaccine' / *doza de vaccin 2* 'second dose of vaccine'; only *doza 1* / *doza 2* 'first dose/second dose'; instead of *doza de rapel* 'booster dose', only *rapel* 'booster'; instead of *etapa de vaccinare I, II, III* 'stage I, II, III of vaccination', only *etapa I, II, III* 'stage I, II, III' are used.

Thematically, the lexemes that have already been present in everyday language, and have become more frequently used, belong to the following categories:

– related to immunity (*imunitate* 'immunity', *imunizare* 'immunization', *imunogenitate* 'immunogenicity', *imunitate în masă* 'herd immunity', *răspuns imun* 'immune response', *infecție naturală* 'natural infection');

– related to mask wearing (*mască* 'mask', *mască medicală* / *chirurgicală* 'medical' / 'surgical mask', *sfaturi de purtare a măştii* 'mask wearing tips');

– language units belonging to the semantic system of infection: *dezinfectant* 'disinfectant', *dezinfectare/igienizare* 'disinfection/hygienization', *răspândire*

'spread', *răspândire comunitară* 'community spread', *transmisibil* 'contagious', *contaminare* 'infection', *triaj* 'triage', *letalitate* 'lethality', *mortalitate* 'mortality', *incidență* 'incidence', *prevalență* 'prevalence', *pozitivat* 'positive case', *transmisibilitate* 'transmissibility', *conduită sanitară* 'health behaviour', *stare de urgență* 'state of emergency';

– terms indicating the occurrence of cases: *caz suspect* 'suspicious case', *caz confirmat* 'confirmed case', *focar* 'focal point', *cazuri de infecție locală* 'local infection cases', *cazuri de import* 'imported cases', *primul caz* 'first case', *cazul zero* 'case zero', *pacient zero* 'patient zero';

– general terms for treatment or prevention: *medicație* 'drug treatment', *automedicație* 'self-medication', *termometrizare* 'thermometry', *termoscanare* 'thermal scanning'.

Some of the terms which have remained within the framework of the specialized domains and have not been transferred into the everyday language appear in government publications, but more rarely in the press, such as *ARN-mesager* 'messenger RNA', *seroprevalență* 'seroprevalence', *pacient paucisimptomatic* 'paucisymptomatic patient', *farmacovigilență* 'pharmacovigilance', *zoonotic* 'zoonotic', and, of course, they also include internationally accepted abbreviations used in medical discourse (*ESI* / *Emergency Severity Index*, in Romanian *Indicele de severitate de urgență*; *BP* / *blood pressure*, in Romanian *tensiune arterial*, or *TA*; *O2 Sat* / *oxygen saturation*, in Romanian *nivelul de saturație a oxigenului în sânge*; *PEFR* / *Peak Expiratory Flow Rate*, in Romanian *debit expirator de vârf*, or *DEV*).

Another feature of the Romanian corpus is the process of semantic specialization; in many instances, we could identify morphological changes and conversion phenomena in the case of words and expressions already existing in the language, which developed new, specialized shades of meaning. The constantly changing reality determines the frequency and the combination or derivation possibilities of certain words. For example, the verb *a carantina* 'to quarantine' generated from the noun *carantina* 'quarantine' has become widely used. The verb *a se carantina* was previously missing from general dictionaries but is now used both in everyday language and jargon: e.g. *pacienții sunt carantinați*, or *pacienții se carantinează* 'the patients are quarantined'. As a result of the epidemic, a masculine version of the originally neutral noun *contact* 'contact' also appeared: *un contact* / *doi contacți* instead of *un contact* / *două contacte*, meaning 'contact person' in both cases).

Language units that fall into the semantic domain of testing also show unusual derivation or conversion processes. Thus, such unusual forms as *pozitivare* 'positivity', *pozitivări* 'positivities', *pozitivitatea testului* 'test positivity', or synonymous series appeared: *Testul COVID-19* 'COVID-19 test', *test PCR* 'PCR test', *test Real-Time PCR (RT-PCR)* 'Real-Time PCR (RT-PCR) test', *Testul RT-PCR SARS-CoV-2* 'RT-PCR SARS-CoV-2 test' – all denoting the PCR test or

partial synonyms such as *test diagnostic* 'diagnostic test', *test anticorp Covid 19* 'COVID-19 antibody test', *test rapid* 'rapid test', *test rapid immunocromatografic* 'rapid immunochromatographic test', *test serologic* 'serological test', or *test serologic de identificare a anticorpilor anti SARS-CoV-2 IgG şi IgM* 'SARS-CoV-2 IgG and IgM antibody serological test', and *RT PCR multiplex* 'multiplex Real-Time PCR test', including shortening of lexemes and acronyms, and the synonymous *test ARN viral SARS-CoV-2 şi Influenza A/B* 'Combined Influenza and COVID-19 PCR test' forms.

We have found lexemes that are not the result of translation or derivation but rather represent cases of coinage from the Romanian phonetic and morphological inventory. In the specialized language of emergency medicine, a noun has appeared that is entirely a specific linguistic creation, the noun *isoletă*, which denotes a special stretcher used to transport patients. The lexeme *isoletă* comes from the verb *a izola* 'isolate' and the suffix *-etă*, probably added the same way as in the case of other means of transport *motocicletă* 'motorcycle', *bicicletă* 'bicycle', or *trotinetă* 'scooter'. Interestingly, unusual linguistic creations also appeared in Romanian, such as the form *virusologie* 'virusology', which, however, could not displace the previous form *virologie* 'virology'. Another linguistic oddity of the moment is the term *criza de coronavirus*, which literally means 'coronavirus crisis'. Normally, in Romanian, the word *criză* 'crisis' means the absence of something, it means a deficiency (e.g. *criză de medicamente* 'lack of medicine'). In this case, paradoxically, in semantic terms, *criză de coronavirus* refers to a critical situation caused by the coronavirus, although in a strict sense it would mean its absence.

COVID-19 is a new word created by an abbreviation and comes from the English language (Coronavirus Disease), denoting a disease caused by a virus that appeared in 2019. In Romanian, *SARS-CoV-2* is synonymous with *COVID-19*, although COVID-19 stands for the disease, while *SARS-CoV-2* is the officially accepted name for the disease-causing virus (SARS stands for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, while CoV is derived from coronavirus, and 2 indicates that we are talking about a second version of the virus).

A phenomenon of broadening of meaning has also emerged, such as in the phrase *pandemie globală* 'global pandemic'. It is well known that the meaning of the noun *pandemic* in itself means a global epidemic. It is also incorrect to use *un pacient a contractat virusul* 'a patient has contracted the virus' instead of *un pacient a contactat virusul* 'a patient has contacted the virus': here the interchange of the verbs *contacta* 'contact' and *contracta* 'contract' causes confusion. Contradictory wordings are also emerging, such as *o creştere spectaculoasă a numărului deceselor* 'a spectacular increase in the number of deaths', which associates the adjective with a positive meaning *spectacular* 'spectacular' with an increase in mortality.

If in Hungarian derivation and formation of compound words are the two most common word formation methods (cf. Keszler 2000, Lengyel 2000, Ladányi 2007), in Romanian borrowings and the calque translation of English words is also frequently encountered in our corpus: for example, *aplatizarea curbei* 'flattening of curve', *Coronapocalypse* or *apocalipsa corona* 'Corona apocalypse', *Rona/(ko)rona*, *downshifting* (slowing down the spread of the disease), *quarantini* (alcoholic drink mixed during the quarantine), or *lockdown*, which has also been transferred to the Romanian vocabulary without any change.

Some language units have been translated into Romanian from English or French through word-for-word translation. The following examples have become widespread in everyday language: *primele cazuri* 'first cases', *coronasceptic* 'coronasceptic', *cordon sanitar* 'cordon sanitaire', *imunitate de turmă* 'herd immunity', *condiții medicale preexistente* 'pre-existing medical conditions', *coridor umanitar* 'humanitarian corridor', *Program de achiziții de urgență pandemică* 'Pandemic Emergency Purchase Program (PEPP)'. We can also find such translations among digilects, e.g. *bombardier de viruşi* 'virus bomb'.

A significant number of acronyms can be found in the Romanian corpus. The words *carantină* and *coronavirus* are common bases for compound words and word-merging neologisms: *COVID-19, pneumonie atipică severă 2019-nCoV* 'Severe atypical pneumonia 2019-nCoV', *focarul COVID-19* 'COVID-19 outbreak', *sindromul respirator din Orientul Mijlociu (MERS)* 'Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)', *Sindromul Acut Respirator Sever (SARS)* 'Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)', *covidiot* 'covidiot', *ARN viral SARS-CoV-2* 'SARS-CoV-2 viral RNA', *covizi* 'covid patients', *anticovid* 'anti-covid', *noncovid* 'non-covid', *#staiacasă* '#stayathome', *glovoist/glovoistă* 'courier delivering food', *INSP (Institutul Național de Sănătate Publică)* 'National Institute of Public Health', *Anestezie şi Terapie Intensivă (ATI)* 'Intensive Care Unit', *Direcția de Sănătate Publică DSP* 'Public Health Department', *Organizația Mondială a Sănătății (OMS)* 'World Health Organization (WHO)'.

With regard to the Romanian corpus, it can be stated that most word formation processes were related to the terms *covid, coronavirus, quarantine*, and *vaccine* – most of the new units were formed with these words. It is likely that these linguistic units are the most important and most common at the level of public discourse at the time of the epidemic, so by slightly nuancing the principle of the law of synonymic attraction, we can state that these lexemes have proven to be most important to the linguistic community. Therefore, most synonyms and most derivatives were generated by these (at the beginning of the epidemic, the concepts of *coronavirus* and *quarantine* had a leading role in the public discourse, while at the present phase of the epidemic the concept of vaccination has come to the fore).

The linguistic units that are considered lexical innovations due to the new social and health situation generated by the epidemic are roughly the same in Hungarian and Romanian, and most of them are borrowed from English (COVID-19, Remdesivir), or they are word-for-word translations (*novel coronavirus / új koronavírus / noul coronavirus, physical distancing / fizikai távolságtartás / distanțare fizică, contact tracing / kontaktkutatás / depistarea contacților*, *comorbidity/társbetegség/comorbiditate*, *cytokine storm / citokin vihar / furtună de citokine*). However, there is also a significant proportion of already existing words that have gone through meaning changes (*asymptomatic/tünetmentes/ asimptomatic, social distance / társadalmi távolságtartás / distanțare socială, frontline / frontvonal / prima linie, community spread / közösségi terjedés / răspândire comunitară, isolate/elkülöníteni/izola, coronavirus/koronavírus/ coronavirus, crisis/válság/criză*).

Hungarian–Romanian language interactions and contact phenomena have already been studied (see Benő 2004, Benő–Péntek 2003, Péntek 2007, Benő–Péntek 2020). We do not intend to carry out a comprehensive study; nevertheless, we must note that the number of loan words has increased in the 20th century. This applies to lexical borrowings and to phrases and terms translated from Romanian. The interesting thing about a pandemic is that these vocabulary changes can be observed in real time. It can be seen that there is minimal impact of Romanian on the Transylvanian Hungarian language version. The epidemic has led to the birth of various acronyms (e.g. names of institutions). These are generally not translated in press and everyday communication, such as DSP (*Direcția de Sănătate Publică* 'Public Health Department').

There are minimal differences between the Hungarian normative language version and the Transylvanian language version in terms of pandemic vocabulary. As already mentioned, the effects of the Romanian language can be detected in the first part of the compound word referring to the PCR test: the Romanian term uses the English word *real-time*, while in the Hungarian texts we find the abbreviation *RT*. In the Transylvanian language version, however, the longer version occurs more often: *real-time PCR test*. The acronym *SARS-CoV-2* for the coronavirus is also noteworthy, which is not used in the Hungarian language versions (perhaps due to the sound symbolism behind the utterance of such an acoustic unit in Hungarian), but it is often used in the Romanian language.

As a gap-filling lexeme or semantic void, we can mention the word *izoleta*, which refers to the special, closed stretcher and is widespread in the Transylvanian language version, in oral communication and on online social media sites. In the official forums, *elkülönítő* 'isolation unit' is used, which, however, does not carry the meaning of the term (closed, capsule-like, patient-carrying stretcher). The Hungarian normative language version tried to introduce the term *izolációs kapszula* 'isolation capsule', a word-for-word translation of the English term.

However, we can see a significant difference in the field of digilects. The creative language inventions brought to life by the pandemic were collected by Veszelszki (2020) in a dictionary. These appeared, and some of them spread, mainly on social media pages, posts, and memes. However, in everyday communication, speakers soon seem to distinguish the new linguistic elements whose use is indeed important, gap-filling, informative, and they tend to neglect and forget the less relevant ones. There is even less interest in these *hapax legomenon*-like expressions, or nonce words, in the Transylvanian language version.

4. Conclusions

It can be noticed that the creation of terms and lexicalization processes are not only available in the domain of specialized languages: a new disease and its cures naturally lead to the emergence of new concepts and names. Ordinary people have had to interpret the new vocabulary of a whole new reality overnight: this includes not only a plethora of medical terms but also terms used in sociology and psychology such as *social distance*, *prevention*, *isolation*, *observation*, or *monitoring*, which have become part of our everyday life. In addition to the newly created terms, new meanings, extended meanings, changes in meaning, or new lexemes with prefixes and suffixes nuance the processes of lexicalization, revealing an impressive linguistic mobility at the level of public discourse. During the communication generated by the epidemic, an extremely wide and heterogeneous audience found itself in a position to incorporate into their vocabulary new, often unknown concepts, lexemes, and linguistic creations whose meanings were either unknown or slightly different. In the COVID jargon used in everyday language, we can find nicknames, slang terms, abbreviations, and puns. Although we were unable to measure the degree of understanding and interpretation, we noticed how (apparently) speakers incorporated these units with great ease into their use of language. This is evidenced by our research on various forums and social media platforms. The only question is what will remain in the active vocabulary of everyday or professional language use after the epidemic and what will prove to be an occasional language creation, a *nonce* word.

Everyday speech is the type of communication that is most closely related to the dynamics of daily life and the events or experiences in which the speakers are involved. The specificity of these events and experiences is less reflected in certain components of discourse, such as morphology, syntax, or textual organization devices, but it can easily be located in vocabulary, as the lexicon is the most versatile area in the structure of a natural language. Perhaps this is the reason why the coronavirus pandemic managed to populate lexicons with interesting words and phrases, which are a resourceful domain to be approached and analysed by linguists.

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