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# New Words Related to the Covid-19 Pandemic in Japanese

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## Abstract

The term "new" in this study does not refer to a literal new meaning that previously existed in Japanese but to words that may have existed but gained popularity in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. This paper is written to discuss and classify new words that appear based on aspects of the meaning and origin of the term used. This study is a qualitative study with a descriptive method. The data are new words and phrases related to the COVID-19 pandemic sourced from Asahi online/digital newspaper. The data collection method is purposive sampling, The data were analyzed with the basic meaning and form of the word using an interactive analysis model. In results, this study shows that new words that have emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are derived from loanwords, the combination of loanwords and original Japanese words, and a composition of words that already exist, but creates a special meaning in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In conclusion, new words regarding the covid-19 outbreak are owned by the language of their respective countries and depend on the handling of covid-19 in that country. In Japan, new words in loan form also have popular Japanese native terms. Vocabulary in Japanese related to covid also contains a combination of original Japanese words and loan words.

*Keywords:* words; phrases; Covid-19

## 1. Introduction

Language's arbitrary nature [1][2] makes it very dynamic and developing, and it is inextricably linked to the various social and situational contexts in which it is used. Language development can take the form of units such as words, groups of words, clauses, and sentences, which can be expressed both orally and in writing.

At the beginning of 2020, the world community was hit by an outbreak of coronavirus (covid-19). Covid-19 has become a pandemic and has spread throughout the world without exception. The situation surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, which has developed into an international issue, has resulted in a variety of public discourses, giving rise to a large amount of vocabulary related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The vocabulary developed initially from the term "English as an international language," and was then translated into various languages throughout the world, resulting in the development of new vocabulary in each country, including Japan and Indonesia. This is consistent with Poedjosoedarmo's [3] assertion that the process of language change can be traced back to both internal changes in the grammatical system and external changes brought about by the influence of other languages.

From the simple explanation above, it is clear that there is a connection between the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic and the emergence of numerous new terms that are understood and used by the public to identify, anticipate, and comprehend the dangers of the corona virus's spread. Until now, these words have been deeply ingrained in the public consciousness. Then society elevates it to a point where it is almost always mentioned and discussed.

In this paper, we will discuss some of the new terms that have emerged as a result of the spread of COVID-19 and how they describe both form and meaning. When it comes to new words in Japanese, it has been discovered that this language tends to have a variety of loanwords and to have original terms.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the origins of words or vocabulary associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, the characteristics of the formation of a new term in various contexts of global social situations can be seen. As a result, the researchers hope that this research will aid in the future development and expansion of knowledge about new words related to covid-19 in the field of language.

## 2. Method

This is a qualitative study, which means that it generates descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words about the characteristics of individuals, circumstances, symptoms, and specific groups that can be observed [4]. Thus, a descriptive method is used in this study to explain the subject of study, namely the Japanese vocabulary(words) associated with covid-19. The popularity and exclusivity of forms, terms, and definitions associated with the covid-19 pandemic are used as selection criteria.

The data for this study comes from a collection of vocabularies that became popular or emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic and were sourced from the Japanese online newspaper asahi.com throughout 2020. This vulnerable time period was chosen because it coincides with the first year of the emergence of a pandemic, creating a contrast with the emergence of numerous new words. The data are presented as exposure to vocabulary data that corresponds to the research objectives. Observation and data collection techniques were used in this study. The observation technique is carried out directly, without the use of an intermediary to acquire data. The data collection process begins with the filtering of documents from data sources in the form of written data pertaining to a variety of language terms used during the Covid-19 pandemic as material for research analysis. Understanding the context of the vocabulary used requires comparing the data to a dictionary [5][6] and reading the vocabulary as a whole in sentences. Data are recorded and presented in tables in accordance with the research indicators. The data analysis technique used is one based on interactive modelling [7].

## 3. Discussion

The results of observation and analysis of the data indicate that the vocabulary and phrases associated with the pandemic in Japanese are derived from foreign vocabulary (loanwords), a combination of loanwords and native Japanese words, and native language terms that provide a more precise meaning specification. Table 1 below contains the following data.

Table 1. data on new words in Asahi's digital newspaper

No	Words/Vocabularies	Meaning	Type
1.	コロナウイルス ( <i>Korona Uirusu</i> )	Corona Virus	Loanword
2.	新型コロナウイルス ( <i>Shingatakoronauirusu</i> )	Covid-19	Loan words & native words
3.	社会的距離 ( <i>Shakaiteki Kyori</i> )	Social distancing	Native word

No	Words/Vocabularies	Meaning	Type
4.	ソーシャル・ディスタンス ( <i>sousharu disutansu</i> )	Social distancing	Loanword
5.	身体的 距離の確保 ( <i>shintaiteki kyouri no kakuho</i> )	Physical Restrictions (distancing)	Native word
6.	大規模社会制限 ( <i>daikibo shakai seigen</i> )	Large-scale social restrictions	Native word
7.	緊急事態宣言 ( <i>kinkyuu jitai sengen</i> ). 活動制限 ( <i>katsudougentei</i> )	State of emergency / Activity restrictions	Native word
8.	自宅待機 ( <i>Jitaku Taiki</i> )	Stand by at home ( <b>self isolation</b> )	Native word
9.	消毒液 ( <i>Shoudoku Eki</i> )	Hand Sanitizer	Native word
10.	在宅勤務 ( <i>Zaitaku Kinmu</i> )	WFH	Native word
11.	免疫力 ( <i>Meneki Ryoku</i> )	Immunity	Native word
12.	新しい生活様式 ( <i>atarashii seikatsu youshiki</i> )	New lifestyle/ New Normal	Native word
13.	ニュー・ノーマル ( <i>nyuunoomaru</i> )		Loanword
14.	ワクチン ( <i>wakuchin</i> )	Vaccine	Loanword
15.	モデルナ製ワクチン ( <i>moderuna-sei wakuchin</i> )	Moderna vaccine	Loan words & Native word words

The term Covid is an abbreviation for Coronavirus Disease; however, because this is a new term that does not exist in the Japanese language, the loan word コロナウイルス (*Korona Uirusu*) is used. However, for covid-19, which is a novel coronavirus variant, the term 新型コロナウイルス (*Shingatakoronauirusu*) is used. This term is described in the original Japanese language as 新型 (*shingata*). This term is used as the primary title in the Asahi digital

newspaper data's information menu regarding the development of COVID-19 information. It is illustrated in the image below.



Figure 1. Use of 新型コロナウイルス terms in online/digital newspaper

COVID-19's spread has altered people's lives and perspectives. Daily life as usual is no longer possible. As a result, individuals must adapt their lifestyles and adopt new habits.

Social distancing is one of the steps necessary to prevent and control COVID-19 virus infection. To begin, the World Health Organization (WHO) coined the term "social distancing" in response to the coronavirus pandemic. In fact, the term 'social distancing' is defined in sociology as 'social restrictions,' whereas during the current covid-19 pandemic, 'social distancing' means maintaining a physical distance. As a result, the term refers to physical separation.

In Japanese, the term has remained unchanged. Throughout history, the loan words ソーシャル・ディスタンス (*sousharu disutansu*)/social distance or ソーシャル・ディスタンシング (*sousharu disutanshingu*)/social distancing have been used. The katakana-written words are taken from the English language. Indeed, the new word chosen does not have the intended meaning. However, as a result of the pandemic emergency situation, this new form of the word is becoming increasingly popular, particularly among the mass media.

In Japanese, the new term is referred to as 社会的距離の確保 (*shakaiteki kyori no kakuho*). This new term is a direct translation into Japanese of the term social distancing. The following is an example of a sentence that was discovered.

新型コロナウイルス対策で、政府が緊急事態宣言の対象を全都道府県に広げて外出自粛の徹底を呼びかける中、「ソーシャルディスタンス（社会的距離の保持）」というカタカナ語が注目されている。

*Shingata koronairusu taisaku de, seifu ga kinkyū jitai sengen no taishō o zen todōfukuken ni hirogete gaishutsu jishuku no tettei o yobikakeru naka, sōsharudisutansu (shakai-teki kyori no hoji)' to iu katakana-go ga chūmoku sa rete iru.*

As the government expands the scope of emergency declarations to all prefectures and calls for thorough refraining from going out as a countermeasure against the new coronavirus, the Katakana word "**social distance**" is drawing attention.

(Sumber: <https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASN4K64JVN47PLBJ001.html>)

According to the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare of Japan's website [2], the new term for the current situation is 身体的距離の確保 (*shintaiteki kyori no kakuho*). However, it appears as though this new term has not gained widespread acceptance in Japanese society.

政府の専門家会議が示した「新しい生活様式」は、身体的距離の確保や「3密」の回避、外出を控えることなどを例示した。

*Seifu no senmonkakaigi ga shimeshita `atarashī seikatsu yōshiki' wa, karada-teki kyori no kakuho ya `3 mitsu' no kaihi, gaishutsu o hikaeru koto nado o reiji shita.*

The "new normal" presented by the government's expert meeting exemplifies securing physical distance, avoiding "san mitsu", and refraining from going out.

<https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASN5956D8N58UTFL01G.html>

At the moment, it is referred to as a new way of life, dubbed the new normal. This new term is widely used throughout the world, including Indonesia. However, the term ニュー・ノーマル (*nyuu noumaru*)/new normal is not widely used in Japan, owing to the fact that the majority of Japanese do not understand what the term means. There is some use of new normal absorption words in the data, but this vocabulary is limited to a term in brackets that describes the original phrase's explanatory content. In Japan, a new term has been coined, namely 新しい生活様式 (*atarashii seikatsu yōshiki*), which translates as "new normal."

新しい生活様式、ヒトとして大丈夫？

*Atarashī seikatsu yōshiki, hito to shite daijōbu?*

**New Normal**, okay as a human?

(Sumber: <https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASN5Q6CRMN5CULZU02C.html>)

私たちがこれから迎える新たな日常（ニューノーマル）を生きるヒントを、各界のパイオニアたちに聞きます。

*Watashitachi ga korekara mukaeru aratanaru nichijō (nyūnōmaru) o ikiru hinto o, kakukai no paionia-tachi ni kikimasu.*

We will ask pioneers in various fields for hints on how to live the **new daily life (new normal)** that we are about to welcome.

(<https://www.asahi.com/and/serialstory/newnormal/>)

In response to the global coronavirus pandemic, lockdown measures have been implemented in several countries, including China, Melbourne, Australia, Catalonia, Spain, Danang, Vietnam, and Indonesia, as well as several cities in other countries. Lockdown refers to a situation in which residents are prohibited from entering a location due to an emergency. In practice, governments in various cities around the world have completely closed off access to the economy, trade, and other services, preventing residents from leaving their homes or obtaining extremely strict supervision or permits that make entering and exiting the house difficult.

In Japanese, the word that has almost the same meaning as lockdown is called 大規模社会制限 (*daikibo shakai seigen*). In Japan, this new word is not used. However, the Japanese government issued a declaration of a state of emergency in several cities, namely, the new word 緊急事態宣言 (*kinkyū jitai sengen*). The declaration is in line with the PSBB in Indonesia. In summary, the comparison of the meanings of new words between Indonesian and Japanese in the above covid-19 adopted from English is in the table below.

コロナ禍による**緊急事態宣言**が出ていた5月7日発売の文芸誌「新潮」6月号（新潮社）の巻頭を飾り、いち早い文学からの応答として、おそろしいほどに現実を見通していた。

*Korona-ka ni yoru kinkyū jitai sengen ga dete ita 5 tsuki 7-nichi hatsubai no bungei-shi 'Shinchō' 6 tsuki-gō (Shinchōsha) no kantō o kazari, ichihayai bungaku kara no ōtō to shite, osoroshī hodo ni genjitsu o mitōshite ita.*

It was the beginning of the June issue of the literary magazine "Shincho" (Shinchosha) released on May 7, when **the state of emergency** was declared by Corona, and as a response from the earliest literature, the reality was terrifyingly foreseen.

(Sumber: [https://www.asahi.com/articles/DA3S14733406.html?iref=pc\\_ss\\_date\\_article\\_](https://www.asahi.com/articles/DA3S14733406.html?iref=pc_ss_date_article_)

#### 4. Conclusion

The global COVID-19 outbreak continues to be extremely concerning and is causing human suffering. The issue is that its spread is unstoppable and that everyone is unaware of the corona virus's origins. If you examine the new terms for covid-19 described above, it appears as though they are not yet complete and are still a bit confusing in terms of comprehension and application to people affected by covid-19, as the grouping is still uncertain and subject to change. As a result of experts constantly investigating new terms related to covid-19 that are still developing, new terms frequently appear and disappear.

However, this type of research model is critical and beneficial, particularly in the field of sociolinguistics, because it will highlight language variations in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the context of the Covid-19 outbreak, numerous new words appear and spread among people worldwide, and their pronunciation varies according to their respective countries' languages. These new terms are not only used by certain groups of people, such as experts, but also by everyday people. That is, the general population will become accustomed to effectively using these new words. This is because everyone is affected by the pandemic and is communicating their concerns to one another. The following are some points to consider regarding new words derived from the sample data in this paper. 1. New terms referring to the covid-19 outbreak are owned by their respective countries' languages and are dependent on how covid-19 is handled in that country. 2. In Japan, borrowed words retain their original Japanese names. 3. The Japanese vocabulary for covid contains both native Japanese and loan words.

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