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Neologisms in English marketing discourse: semantic and word-formation features

Неологізми в англійському дискурсі маркетингу: семантичні та словотвірні особливості

Summary. *The paper deals with neologisms in English marketing discourse, exploring their semantic and word formation aspects. The analysis of the chosen data employs a range of methods, including synthesizing and analyzing data, sampling language material, employing a comparative approach, utilizing descriptive methods, conducting component analysis, and examining word formation patterns. Analyzed is the essence of marketing discourse from a linguistic perspective, aiming to define and analyze linguistic innovations used in marketing communication, along with examining word formation techniques employed in the changing English marketing discourse. A definition of marketing discourse through the lens of linguistics is given. By semantic criteria, the selected 67 neologisms were distributed into 7 thematic groups: Brand Management, Commerce, Online Shopping, Advertising, and Marketing Strategies and Tactics. Analyzing the frequency of neologisms within each thematic group, the paper reveals that Commerce dominates with 33%, followed by Marketing Strategy (24%), Advertising (16%), Brand Management (16%), and Online Shopping (11%). The paper analyses the word formation means utilized in coining neolexemes under consideration and proves that new lexemes in marketing discourse are rendered by compounding (52%), blending (25%), affixation (10%), multiple word formation processes (3%), regressive affixation and abbreviations constituting the smallest share (about 1.5% each). The study of neologisms in English marketing discourse provides valuable insights into the dynamic intersection of linguistic innovation and strategic communication. The conducted analyses offer a comprehensive understanding of neologisms' formation, evolution, and functioning in modern marketing discourse.*

Key words: *marketing discourse, neologism, semantic, thematic groups, word formation.*

Анотація. *У статті розглядаються неологізми в англomовному маркетинговому дискурсі, досліджуються їхні семантичні та словотвірні аспекти. Для аналізу відібраних даних використано низку методів, серед*

яких синтез та аналіз даних, вибірка мовного матеріалу, порівняльний підхід, описовий метод, компонентний аналіз та дослідження словотвірних моделей. Проаналізовано сутність маркетингового дискурсу з лінгвістичної точки зору, визначено та проаналізовано мовні інновації, що використовуються в маркетинговій комунікації, а також розглянуто словотвірні прийоми, що застосовуються в постійно мінливому англійському маркетинговому дискурсі. Подано визначення маркетингового дискурсу крізь призму лінгвістики. За семантичним критерієм відібрані 67 неологізмів було розподілено на 7 тематичних груп: бренд-менеджмент, комерція, маркетингові стратегії та тактики, інтернет-шопінг та реклама. Проаналізувавши частотність неологізмів у межах кожної тематичної групи, ми виявили, що домінує сфера комерції (33%), далі йдуть маркетингові стратегії та тактики (24%), реклама (16%), бренд-менеджмент (16%) та інтернет-шопінг (11%). У статті проаналізовано словотвірні засоби, які використовуються для творення досліджуваних неолексем, і доведено, що нові лексеми в маркетинговому дискурсі утворюються шляхом словоскладання (52%), телескопії (25%), афіксації (10%), множинних словотвірних процесів (3%), регресивної афіксації та абрєвіації, які становлять найменшу частку (близько 1,5% кожен). Вивчення неологізмів в англійському маркетинговому дискурсі дає цінну інформацію про динамічний перетин лінгвістичних інновацій та стратегічних комунікацій. Проведений аналіз пропонує комплексне розуміння формування, еволюції неологізмів та їх функціонування у сучасному маркетинговому дискурсі.

Ключові слова: маркетинговий дискурс, неологізм, семантичний, тематичні групи, словотвір.

Introduction. Each language is a perpetually changing and dynamic structure that experiences alterations and advancements as time progresses. To effectively capture diverse transformations and highlight innovations, it is crucial to introduce new words. The primary method for enriching vocabulary is the creation of neolexemes within the native language.

Neologisms often originate with particular practical aims, fulfilling communication requirements within a specific context and timeframe. Advancements in science and technology bring new lexis that denote experience, practices and phenomena into existence. Arising from deliberate communicative intentions, these neolexemes develop within diverse discourses, marketing discourse being one of particular interest to linguists. They reflect changes in marketing strategies and processes, thus shaping the philosophy behind marketing communication which is paramount in developing and raising brand awareness. Communication in marketing is always a two-way process that takes place via multiple communication channels, such as press, TV, the radio and the internet, and inevitably results in the influx of new coinages.

Marketing discourse being the object of study of P. Kotler, K. Keller, P. Skalen, M. Fougere, M. Fellessen and other scientists in the field of marketing has received little to no coverage in linguistics. Such domestic and foreign linguists as V. Bialyk, L. Guilbert, B. Kortmann,

A. McMahon, P. Newmark, Yu. Zatsnyi, A. Yankov and others conducted research into the problems of neology in the English language. Linguists are increasingly paying attention to a new and quite promising area of studying various aspects of neology and neologisms, marketing discourse appears to have been paid little attention to, which is why the study of new lexis in this domain is relevant.

The paper aims to look into the essence of marketing discourse and suggest its definition from a linguistic viewpoint; to study linguistic innovations used in marketing communication by scrutinizing their semantic features as well as analyze the word formation techniques used in coining new words in the ever-changing English marketing discourse.

Methodology. The study was conducted on the material collected by continuous sampling of the most popular English online magazines on economics and business such as The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, The Associated Press, The Economist, The Guardian, and Chicago Tribune. The material under study is represented by 67 neologisms. The linguistic study of the selected data is based on the utilization of the following methods: synthesis and analysis, sampling of language material, comparative method, descriptive method, the method of component analysis, and word-formation analysis.

Results and Discussion. Our prior investigations of the term “discourse” resulted in understanding that it encompasses a number of distinct thematic types of discourse, such as media discourse, political discourse, legal discourse, military discourse, medical discourse, economic discourse, business discourse and others. In turn, each of these discourses may consist of narrower discourses, for example, business discourse, which is the “oral or written expression of the mindset and values that characterize the world of business, conveyed through a variety of practices and thematically related texts that cover a broad range of business topics, and analyzed within their broader socio-economic contexts” [10, p. 39]. Business discourse includes “finance discourse”, “advertising discourse”, “marketing discourse”, etc. In our paper, we will look into the concept of the latter.

According to the definition coined by American Marketing Association, marketing is “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” [6]. Organizations focus on the needs of their target markets and develop marketing programs to reach consumers by a combination of techniques called the marketing mix including Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical environment.

Consequently, the examination of marketing can be approached from several perspectives. Firstly, marketing can be viewed through the lens of

consumption, where the emphasis lies in identifying and understanding prospective customers, comprehending consumer choices and exploring how organizations can impact these choices. Secondly, marketing can be interpreted as a form of management discourse, concentrating on the strategic management of organizations with a marketing orientation. Thirdly, marketing can be understood as an unreplaceable part of brand discourse due to the reliance of the latter on market research to test advertising concepts or campaigns. It is of paramount importance in establishing brand recognition and the creation of a favorable perception of a product or service. For instance, a company could employ advertising to link its brand with specific values or lifestyles, aiming to enhance its appeal to potential customers. Finally, marketing can be considered through the lens of place or position in the marketplace, where the focus is on creating an efficient sales process via different distribution channels.

The major elements of marketing communications are as follows: 1) participants (a brand or a company sending messages, on the one hand, and customers, on the other hand); the scope of participants can be expanded by including customer's employees, media representatives, government agencies, etc.; 2) places of contact: a company should make sure that a potential customer can hear about the brand as often as possible (in a store, on the street, in public transport, at home while watching a TV program, etc.); with an increase in online communication, business owners should focus on e-marketing; 3) types of activities, including encoding and decoding information; these include transmitting a message in the form of a text, an image, video, and audio, and its perception by the recipient.

The main elements of marketing communications may vary; they are chosen depending on the stage of the product life cycle, the nature of a product, and financial capabilities.

Marketing discourse, like other dynamic discourses, is intensively exposed to the influx of new lexis. Neologisms can be defined as either newly created lexical units or existing lexical units that acquire a new meaning. Their popularity in the average environment leads to their active use in mass media and commercial contexts. Professors P. Kotler and K. L. Keller define marketing communication as the process of producing, distributing, and exchanging goods and services that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large [12]. For marketing communication to be effective, the target audience's needs, preferences, and cultural background must be understood. This understanding is essential for adapting marketing messages to different cultural contexts and ensuring their effectiveness.

In our study, **marketing discourse** is viewed as the oral or written expression of the mindset that characterizes the world of marketing, conveyed through a variety of practices and thematically related texts that

cover marketing strategies and tactics, branding and brand management, advertising, consumption, distribution and other marketing-related issues, and analyzed within their broader socio-economic contexts.

A prominent linguist P. Newmark defines neologism as existing lexical units that acquire a new sense and newly created lexical items [14]. In this paper, neologisms are defined as words or word combinations that are presently innovative in both structure and meaning, carrying a newly acquired sociocultural importance. Essentially, neologisms encompass not just recently coined words in terms of both structure and meaning but also the existing linguistic units whose meanings have transformed due to changes in discursive attribution.

In the marketing dimension, where language is of key importance for the formation of consumer perception, neologisms are particularly active. A term remains a neologism as long as it is perceived as new by a native speaker. Neologisms within marketing discourse serve the purpose of describing novel phenomena, objects, and events, similar to their role in everyday language.

According to L. Guilbert, a new term is analyzed from three perspectives [7]:

1. From the perspective of its form, a neologism is considered a linguistic sign encompassing both its meaning and the way it is expressed. Changes occur simultaneously in the process of forming new lexemes, whether these alterations pertain to the term's morphology or its semantics.

2. From the viewpoint of semantics, emphasizing that neological formations primarily result from a combination of more fundamental elements present in the language, rather than being a minimal unit of meaning on their own. The creation of a new unit is thus a consequence of the relationship among these essential elements.

3. From the perspective of its functioning, the development of a neologism is inseparable from the discourse entity that creates it, integrated into the societal context.

In studying the semantic features of neolexemes used in marketing discourse, the selected neologisms can be divided into several thematic groups:

TG Brand Management. Examples of neolexemes are *paradesence* = an intrinsic quality of a product that promises to satisfy multiple contradictory consumer desires; *masstige* = 1. the impression of exclusivity in goods that are affordable for many people, 2. (of goods) produced by a luxury brand but intended for the mass market [5]; *orange-collar* = a worker who wears an orange safety vest while working [5]; *ghost brand* = a once-famous brand name that remains on sale but is no longer successful in the mainstream; *brandscape* = the brand landscape;

the expanse of brands and brand-related items (logos, ads, and so on) within a culture or market [1], etc.

TG Commerce consists of such neologisms as *clone town* = a town or neighborhood characterized by a central shopping district primarily comprised of chain stores, resulting in a homogenized appearance akin to shopping areas found in numerous other towns [1]; *Gray Thursday* = the official day when Christmas shopping begins (formerly known as Thanksgiving) [International Business Times]; *Ikea effect* = increased feelings of pride and appreciation for an object because it has been self-made or self-assembled [1]; *kiddydrome* = a large department store that specializes in children's goods; *trolleyology* = the study of how the contents of a person's shopping trolley show something about that person's behaviour or personality [5], etc.

TG Online Shopping. Examples of neolexemes are *O2O* = a business strategy that draws potential customers from online channels to make purchases in physical stores [9]; *Sofa Sunday* = the Sunday after Thanksgiving, when people relax at home and purchase goods online or on TV; *Cyber Monday* = the Monday after Thanksgiving, when people take advantage of fast Internet connections at work to purchase goods online; *m-commerce* = business transactions conducted on the internet using a mobile phone [5]; *v-commerce* = automated transactions conducted via computer or telephone using voice commands, etc.

TG Advertising includes the following new words: *advertecture* = advertisements posted on the walls of buildings [1]; *billboard liberation* = an alteration of a billboard or another form of advertisement that changes the message of ads [1]; *ghost sign* = a remaining image of a previous commercial sign painted on the side of a building; *roach bait* = a marketing message delivered by an actor posing as a regular person with the intention of having that message passed along to many other people; *sponsored wedding* = a wedding in which some or all of the costs, products, or services are provided by local businesses in exchange for exposure or publicity, etc.

TG Marketing Strategies and tactics neolexemes include *betamax* = to push a superior product out of the market by providing better marketing for an inferior product; *omni-channel marketing* = a customer-centric approach that integrates all channels, delivering a unified and consistent brand experience across physical stores, apps, and websites [3]; *neuromarketing* = the process of researching the brain patterns of consumers to reveal their responses to particular advertisements and products before developing new advertising campaigns and branding techniques [5]; *pinkwashing* = using support for breast cancer research to market products, particularly products that cause cancer; *sharewashing* = a deceptive marketing strategy aimed at positioning the company as one based on the principles of sharing services, etc.

The pie chart below (Fig. 1) represents the frequency of the thematic groups:

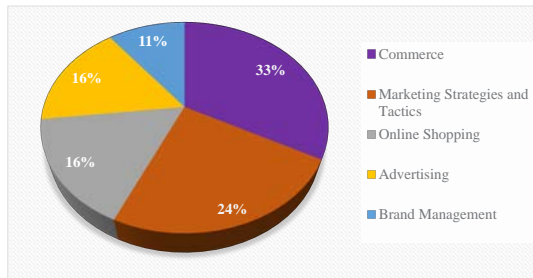


Fig. 1. Frequency of neologisms in marketing discourse by thematic groups

According to the pie chart, the majority of neolexemes in marketing discourse (22 new lexical units accounting for 33%) emerged in TG Commerce which is followed by TG Marketing Strategy (16 neologisms, or 24%), TG Advertising and TG Brand Management (each consisting of 11 neologisms and each accounting for 16%) with TG Online Shopping being the smallest group (7 new words, which make up 11%).

The act of generating new vocabulary is undoubtedly linked to word formation. Alongside borrowing, word formation impacts the English lexicon by enhancing and expanding it. Various methods of word formation include onomatopoeia, reduplication, regressive affixation, abbreviation, affixation, compounding, blending, conversion, etc.

In his book “A Textbook of Translation”, P. Newmark scrutinizes twelve types of neologisms dividing them into existing lexical items with new senses (words and collocations) and new forms, which include new coinages, derived words (including blends), abbreviations, collocations, eponyms, phrasal words, transferred words (new and old referents), acronyms (new and old referents), pseudo-neologisms, internationalisms [14, p. 150]. K. Ahmad discusses three types of neologisms depending on the method of formation: 1) neologisms formed by adding and combining elements (word compounding, affixation, blending (lexical contamination, word-hybrid, abbreviation, splicing); 2) neologisms formed by reducing word elements (word shortening, reverse word formation or regressive affixation, truncation); 3) neologisms formed independently of additions and reductions of word elements (semantic changes, borrowings, change of part of speech or conversion, new formations) [2].

According to B. Kortmann, word formation processes can be divided into two groups: high productivity and low(er) productivity.

High productivity methods are affixation (prefixation and suffixation), compounding, and conversion; low(er) productivity methods include shortening (clipping, regressive affixation, blending, alphabetism, and acronymy) and other processes [11]. Highlighting the productivity of word formation processes, A. McMahon argues that affixation and compounding are the most productive techniques in English, with conversion, blending, clipping, back formation and acronyming being less productive [13].

In the paper, we applied a hybrid of Ahmad's and Kortmann's typologies adding a multiple word formation processes category that combines two other processes, for example, abbreviation + compounding or blending + conversion, etc.

Table 1 offers a systematic view of word formation processes in neologisms in marketing discourse.

Now we will take a closer look at some examples of the aforementioned word formation processes.

Compounding. The concept of compounding involves forming a new word by combining two or more existing words, resulting in a new meaning. This compounding process is regarded as the most effective method of word formation in English. Moreover, it is characterized as a recursive process, meaning that a compound noun functions as a single lexical unit (noun), and compounding can be iterated. Patterns of compounding processes are provided as follows: 1) N + N = N (spring + spotter = *springspotter*); 2) N + N: *Sofa Sunday, Ikea effect*,

Table 1

**Word formation processes observed in neologisms
in marketing discourse**

| Word formation process | Neologism examples | Number of occurrences |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Compounding | springspotter, Sofa Sunday, Green Monday, CNN effect, legislated nostalgia, etc. | 35 |
| Blending | murketing, killboard, advertecture, advermation, prankvertising, etc. | 17 |
| Affixation | unboxing, recessionista, showrooming, recommerce, demall, etc. | 7 |
| Multiple word formation processes | m-commerce, v-commerce, omnichannel marketing, gator | 4 |
| Conversion | betamax, showroom | 2 |
| Regressive affixation | webroom | 1 |
| Abbreviations | O2O | 1 |

nag factor, retail leakage, critter label, etc.; 3) **Adj. + N**: *Green Monday, Green Monday, Super Saturday, tribal marketing, dynamic commerce, etc.*; 4) **Past Part. + N**: *sponsored wedding, legislated nostalgia*; 5) **Acronym + N**: *CNN effect, NASCAR effect*.

Blending. Blends are lexical units created by the 'fusion of fragments' of two or more lexical units or 'merging' the reduced part of one with the full form of another word. Blending can be viewed as an independent method of word creation, combining elements of both word composition and form composition. According to V. Bialyk, the primary mechanisms in this process include stem contraction (common in word composition) and abbreviation (distinctive in form composition). Blending, as a form of word formation, represents a universalization process, where the semantics of a word combination are condensed into a single lexical unit [4, p. 48]. Patterns of blending processes found in our study include: 1) **ab + cd > ad** (a 'fusion' of the initial fragment of the first word (a) with the final fragment of the second word (d)): *advermation* (advertisement + information), *advertecture* (advertisement + architecture), *factomercial* (fiction+commercial), *murketing* (murky+marketing), etc.; 2) **ab+cd>abd** (a 'fusion' of a full form of the first word (ab) with the final fragment of the second word (d)): *prankvertising* (prank + advertising), *killboard* (kill + billboard), *kidfluence* (kid + influence), etc.; 3) **ab + cd > acd** (a 'fusion' of the initial fragment of the first word (a) with a full form of the second word (cd)): *advergame* (advertisement + game), *neuromarketing* (neuroscience + marketing), *paradessence* (paradoxical + essence), etc.

Affixation. This word formation process is also called derivation. It is a productive way of word-formation with a help of prefixes and suffixes. In the selected neologisms the following affixes were observed: 1) prefixes **de-** (*demall*), **re-** (*recommerce*), **un-** (*unboxing*); 2) suffixes **-ology** (*trolleyology*), **-ista** (*recessionista*); **-ing** (*showrooming*); 3) a combination of prefix **de-** and suffix **-ation** (*defictionalization*).

Multiple word formation processes. The analysis of the selected neologisms showed three different mixes of word formation processes: 1) **abbreviation + compounding** (*m-commerce, v-commerce*); and 2) **affixation + compounding** (*omnichannel marketing*); 3) semantic change + conversion (*gator*). The latter first appeared in 1884 as a colloquial shortening of *alligator* [15]. As a neolexeme in marketing discourse, it means 'to display a company's ad when a person visits a rival company's website'.

Conversion. This word formation process is also known as transposition, when a word changes its grammatical category. The only pattern of this type of word formation process found in the neolexemes under consideration is **N →V**: *betamax, showroom*.

Regressive affixation. Regressive affixation is also known as back formation. It is regarded as a word formation process wherein a new term

conveying novel information is created by clipping the affix from the derivative word. The analysis of the sampled neologisms showed only one pattern of this type of word formation process: *webroom* (verb) ← *webrooming* (noun).

Abbreviations. Although abbreviations are common in the English economic lexicon, they appeared to be scarce among the new marketing lexemes. The only example found is a letter-numerical abbreviation *O2O* = a business model that uses online resources to drive consumers into a company's offline locations.

The pie chart below illustrates the frequency of neologisms in marketing discourse by word formation processes (Fig. 2):

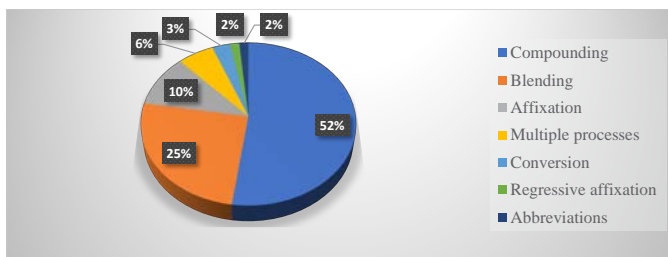


Fig. 2. Frequency of neologisms in marketing discourse by word formation processes

As the pie chart shows, the prevalent process of formation of neolexemes in marketing discourse is compounding (35 lexical units accounting for 52%), followed by blending (17 lexical units that make up 25%). These are followed by affixation (7 lexical units that make up 10%), multiple word formation processes (4 lexical units that make up 6%), conversion (2 neologisms accounting for 3%), regressive affixation and abbreviations constituting the smallest share (about 1.5% each).

Conclusion. The present findings confirm that the issue of marketing discourse had little reflection in linguistic literature and is subject to comprehensive studies. We define it as the oral or written expression of the mindset that characterizes the world of marketing, conveyed through a variety of practices and thematically related texts that cover marketing strategies and tactics, branding and brand management, advertising, consumption, distribution and other marketing-related issues, and analyzed within their broader socio-economic contexts.

By semantic criteria, the selected neologisms were distributed in 5 thematic groups: Commerce (33%), Marketing Strategy (24%), Advertising (16%), Brand Management (16%) and Online Shopping (11%).

The analysis of the word formation techniques used in creating the neolexemes in English marketing discourse shows that compounding dominates (52%), followed by blending (25%), affixation (10%), multiple word formation processes (6%), conversion (3%) with regressive affixation and abbreviations having the smallest share (about 1.5% each).

Therefore, the data obtained in our research disharmonizes with A. McMahon's statement about compounding and affixation being dominant word-forming mechanisms in terms of neologisms used in marketing discourse. The study also partly disagrees with B. Kortmann's findings asserting affixation, compounding, and conversion to be the most productive word formation processes. In our case, it is compounding and blending that prevail. Our further research will be devoted to other discourses in which neolexemes are formed, in particular advertising, finance, management, etc.

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