

The Linguistic Status Of Education-Related Neologisms And Their Relation To Adjacent Lexical Categories

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Abstract

This article examines the linguistic status of education-related neologisms and distinguishes them from adjacent lexical categories. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between neologisms, new words, terminological neologisms, new terms, nonce formations, borrowings, calques, internationalisms, and professional vocabulary. The study combines chronological, lexicographic, corpus-based, discursive, semantic, normative, institutional, and social criteria. It argues that an educational neologism cannot be identified solely by formal novelty or absence from dictionaries. Its status depends on nominative need, repeated use, distribution across independent sources, semantic stability, adaptation to the language system, and gradual normalization.

Keywords: educational discourse, neologism, new term, nonce formation, borrowing, calque, professional vocabulary, normalization.

Introduction

The concept of a “new word” alone is insufficient for determining the linguistic status of education-related neologisms. Units that have recently entered a language, have been newly formed, or have acquired a new educational meaning do not necessarily possess the same linguistic status. Some are accepted by a broad speech community, some become precise designations for scientific or professional concepts, whereas others remain restricted to a single author, text, or communicative situation.

For this reason, an educational discourse neologism must be distinguished from a new word, a terminological neologism, a new term, a nonce formation, a borrowing, a calque, an internationalism, and professional vocabulary. Such differentiation requires the combined consideration of time, meaning, sphere of use, distribution, recurrence, adaptation, and normalization. A classification based on only one feature may lead to the inclusion of occasional formations, translation errors, unstable variants, or long-established professional expressions among neologisms.

English theories of neology treat a neologism not only as a completed and stable lexical unit but also as a unit undergoing formation. H.-J. Schmid explains the development of a new lexical item through the stages of creation, entrenchment, and conventionalization within the speech community. A new formation may initially satisfy a single communicative need, but repeated use gradually stabilizes its form and meaning and moves it closer to the common lexical system (Schmid, 2008).

This approach identifies the intermediate position of a neologism between a nonce formation and a normalized lexeme. Nevertheless, Schmid primarily focuses on the entrenchment of a lexical unit in individual cognition and collective usage. The rapid normalization of specialized educational terms through official documents, standards, textbooks, and digital platforms is not treated as a separate institutional mechanism.

The purpose of this article is to define the linguistic status of education-related neologisms, clarify their relationship with adjacent lexical categories, and establish a comprehensive set of criteria for identifying them in educational discourse. The analysis relies on theoretical interpretation, comparative description, lexicographic verification, corpus-based observation, and contextual-semantic analysis.

Literature Review and Methodology

A new word is a broader and more neutral concept than a neologism. It may include all previously unrecorded forms and meanings that appear during a particular period. A neologism, however, is a unit whose novelty is still perceived by the language community and which has moved beyond the limits of an isolated individual occurrence.

Accordingly, every neologism may initially be a new word, but not every new word develops into a neologism. A one-time authorial formation, an accidental error, an unsuccessful translation, or a temporary label used within a narrow group should not be classified as a neologism merely because it appears formally new. This distinction is particularly important when educational materials are selected from electronic platforms and social media, where unstable, hybrid, and short-lived formations frequently occur.

M.T. Cabré Castellví, R. Estopà Bagot, and C. Vargas Sierra distinguish specialized neologisms from general-language neologisms and associate the emergence of new terms primarily with the need to designate new scientific and professional concepts. They differentiate between units created for naming and those produced for stylistic effect, as well as between spontaneously formed and deliberately planned terms (Cabré Castellví, Estopà Bagot, & Vargas Sierra, 2012).

This classification is useful for explaining the origin of educational units introduced through public administration, academic research, curriculum development, and pedagogical practice. However, the movement of a specialized term across different genres of educational discourse and its possible transition into general vocabulary are not examined in sufficient detail. Therefore, a terminological neologism should be evaluated not only according to its connection with a specialized concept but also according to its novelty, recurrence, and distribution.

A terminological neologism and a new term are closely related but not completely identical concepts. A new term is a designation proposed or recently introduced to express a new concept in a particular field of science or professional activity. A terminological neologism is a specialized unit that still retains a perceptible degree of novelty, recurs in professional communication, and is in the process of entering an established terminological system.

Thus, a new term may remain at the stage of a proposal, project, recommendation, or authorial variant. To qualify as a terminological neologism, it must occur in several independent sources and be sufficiently understandable to specialists. Conversely, a recently introduced term may become normalized so rapidly that it loses its novelty. In that case, it remains historically identifiable as a new term but may no longer function synchronically as a neologism.

P. Štekauer distinguishes neologisms from nonce formations and notes that a nonce formation may be structurally compatible with productive word-formation rules. Its exceptional character is determined not necessarily by grammatical irregularity but by the communicative situation and the degree of acceptance by the language community (Štekauer, 2002).

A nonce formation is created to satisfy a particular speech need, is strongly dependent on its context, and is not expected to be reused. A neologism may also originate from an individual act of word formation, but it possesses the potential to spread to the speech of other users. Štekauer's approach provides a detailed account of their word-formational distinction; however, it does not offer a complete practical procedure for separating these units through dictionaries, corpora, official documents, and educational texts.

Lexicographic and corpus data are therefore particularly important in identifying neologisms. A. Rodríguez Guerra identifies chronological and lexicographic criteria as two of the most frequently used principles in dictionaries of neologisms. The chronological criterion establishes whether a unit emerged within a defined period, while the lexicographic criterion determines whether it is present in previously selected reference dictionaries (Rodríguez Guerra, 2016).

Nevertheless, absence from a dictionary cannot be treated as absolute proof of neological status. An old professional word, a dialectal form, or a low-frequency unit may also be absent from a general dictionary. Consequently, the lexicographic examination of educational neologisms must be supplemented by the analysis of their temporal and generic distribution in corpora, academic publications, official documents, textbooks, media texts, and digital platforms.

M. Haspelmath defines a borrowing as a lexical unit accepted into one language on the basis of a unit from another language. A calque, by contrast, is created when the formal components or semantic structure of a source-language unit are reproduced through the resources of the recipient language (Haspelmath, 2009).

A recent borrowing that retains a sense of novelty may function as a borrowed neologism. However, a fully integrated unit that entered the language long ago cannot be classified as a neologism merely because it is of foreign origin. Similarly, not every calque is new. A calque may have been created during an earlier period and become an ordinary lexical unit through prolonged use. Borrowing and calquing therefore indicate the origin or formation of a unit, whereas neologism denotes its status within a particular historical period.

An internationalism is a unit used in several languages with a similar form and a common conceptual meaning. Such units are often disseminated through science, technology, administration, and education. Internationalisms may overlap with borrowings, but the two notions differ in scope. Borrowing describes the

relationship between a donor and a recipient language, whereas internationalism refers to the presence of a similar unit in multiple languages.

An international term may acquire neological status if it has recently entered a particular language, even when it has a long history in other languages. At the same time, international distribution does not automatically make a unit normative or appropriate. Its meaning, pronunciation, spelling, grammatical adaptation, and relationship with a national equivalent must be evaluated separately within educational terminology.

Professional vocabulary includes formal and informal units used by members of a profession in their everyday occupational communication. G.S. Mustaeva, B.S. Saidivalieva, and G.B. Ataeva emphasize the fluid boundary between professional vocabulary and terminology. Terms are generally precise and officially recognized designations, whereas professional units are more closely associated with practical communication (Mustaeva, Saidivalieva, & Ataeva, 2022).

This distinction is also relevant to education. A unit widely used by teachers, methodologists, administrators, or digital platform operators may not yet possess the status of an official term. The cited scholars mainly focus on stylistic and functional differences between terms and professional expressions. The role of frequency, cross-genre distribution, and lexicographic registration in transforming a professional expression into a neologism requires further examination.

In Uzbek linguistics, Sh. Rahmatullayev identifies “the colouring of novelty” as a central feature of a neologism and distinguishes general-language neologisms from individual speech neologisms. The appearance of a new unit does not immediately grant it neological status because novelty is relative and may disappear over time (Rahmatullayev, 2006).

This interpretation prevents the identification of a neologism solely on the basis of its date of creation and draws attention to the linguistic perception of users. However, the colouring of novelty may be subjectively assessed. It should therefore be supported by verifiable indicators, including the date of texts, first attestation, frequency, dictionary status, recurrence in independent sources, and use by different social and professional groups.

M.B. Nizomova relates the development of pedagogical terminology to social need, communication among participants in education, and pragmatic functions. Pedagogical terms not only designate knowledge but also organize, explain, direct, regulate, and support interaction in the educational process (Nizomova, 2026).

This perspective provides a basis for studying educational neologisms in relation to their actual communicative functions. Nevertheless, the criteria distinguishing a terminological neologism from a new term, borrowing, calque, temporary professional label, and nonce formation are not integrated into a single classification. This gap necessitates a multi-criteria method for selecting educational neologisms.

The study applies descriptive, comparative, chronological, lexicographic, corpus-based, contextual, semantic, discursive, and functional methods. The status of a unit is evaluated through its date of emergence, nominative function, dictionary registration, recurrence, distribution across genres, semantic stability, institutional recognition, and adaptation to the recipient language.

Results and Discussion

The Russian school of neology also emphasizes the temporal relativity of neologisms. N.Z. Kotelova argues that a neologism must be identified in relation to a specified period and a defined set of sources. Her approach combines a chronological boundary, absence from earlier dictionaries, and occurrence in contemporary texts (Котелова, 1978).

This principle is useful for determining the initial date and reference sources of an educational discourse corpus. However, the effectiveness of a dictionary-based approach depends on the frequency with which dictionaries are updated. Units associated with digital education may spread rapidly through media and online platforms while entering explanatory dictionaries much later. Absence from a dictionary is therefore a necessary indicator in some cases but cannot function as an independent and decisive criterion.

A.G. Lykov describes a nonce word as a context-dependent unit created during the speech process, generally not reproduced and not intended to become part of the common language norm. He distinguishes a neologism as a word at an early stage of historical lexical development from a nonce formation that belongs to a particular communicative situation (Лыков, 1976).

This distinction treats time and the prospect of future use as central features. Yet contemporary digital communication may allow a unit coined by one individual to be reproduced by thousands of users within a

short period. Its initial nonce character does not prevent it from later becoming a neologism. The status of such a unit must therefore be reassessed according to its subsequent dynamics.

The analysis demonstrates that no single criterion is sufficient for distinguishing educational neologisms from adjacent categories. A reliable classification requires the following interrelated criteria.

The **chronological criterion** determines whether a unit first appeared or began to be actively used with a new meaning during the period established for the study. A clear chronological boundary is necessary because novelty is always relative to a particular historical stage.

The **nominative criterion** establishes whether the unit designates a new educational concept, process, instrument, participant, relationship, method, or institutional phenomenon. A formally new unit that does not satisfy a genuine naming need may remain an expressive or occasional formation.

The **lexicographic criterion** compares the registration of the unit in earlier and contemporary general, specialized, terminological, and electronic dictionaries. Dictionary inclusion may indicate normalization, but dictionary absence cannot independently prove novelty.

The **corpus criterion** identifies frequency, first attestation, contextual distribution, and changes in activity over time. It helps distinguish systematic recurrence from an isolated occurrence and reveals whether a unit is spreading or disappearing.

The **discursive criterion** determines whether the unit has moved beyond a single author or text into several genres, including academic, instructional, methodological, official, journalistic, and digital communication. Cross-genre movement is a significant indicator of stabilization.

The **normative criterion** examines whether the new unit is adapting to the spelling, pronunciation, grammar, word formation, and combinability rules of the recipient language. Stable spelling and grammatical integration strengthen its potential for normalization.

The **institutional criterion** considers the occurrence of the unit in educational institutions, legal documents, standards, curricula, textbooks, official recommendations, and digital learning platforms. Nevertheless, a single occurrence in an official document is insufficient; the unit should also be observed in other independent sources.

The **social criterion** evaluates whether a unit is understandable only to a narrow professional group or is recognized by teachers, students, administrators, researchers, parents, journalists, and other participants in educational communication.

The **semantic criterion** determines whether a new unit has a precise and stable meaning and whether it avoids unnecessary duplication of an already established designation. Semantic instability, uncontrolled variation, or excessive synonymy may hinder normalization.

The relationship between a neologism and adjacent categories should therefore be viewed as multidimensional rather than mutually exclusive. A single educational unit may simultaneously be a borrowing, an internationalism, a professional expression, and a terminological neologism. These categories describe different aspects of the same unit.

For example, the notion of borrowing identifies foreign origin; calque identifies a particular mechanism of reproduction; internationalism indicates distribution across languages; professional vocabulary specifies the environment of use; and terminological status reflects specialization. Neological status, however, is established independently through time, perceived novelty, recurrence, distribution, semantic stabilization, and normalization.

The results also show that the status of a lexical unit may change. A nonce formation can become a neologism if it is repeatedly reproduced. A terminological neologism can lose its novelty and become an established term. A professional expression can enter official terminology, while an initially active borrowing may become obsolete if the corresponding concept disappears or a more convenient equivalent becomes dominant. Accordingly, a static classification is insufficient for educational neology. Each unit must be examined as part of a dynamic continuum extending from individual creation to collective recurrence, institutional use, structural adaptation, semantic stabilization, and eventual normalization or disappearance.

Conclusion

An education-related neologism is a lexical unit that emerges from the need to designate a new or newly interpreted concept in education, retains a perceptible degree of novelty, moves beyond a single individual

occurrence, begins to recur in several sources and genres of educational discourse, and undergoes adaptation and normalization within the language system.

A new word is its broad initial designation; a terminological neologism is its specialized form; and a new term is a designation proposed or recently introduced into a terminological system. A nonce formation is an individual and context-dependent creation. Borrowing, calque, and internationalism indicate origin, formation, or cross-linguistic distribution, whereas professional vocabulary refers primarily to the environment of use.

These categories do not exclude one another. They describe different linguistic, chronological, structural, functional, and social characteristics of a lexical unit. Neological status must therefore be determined separately through chronological limitation, nominative need, lexicographic verification, corpus recurrence, cross-genre distribution, semantic stability, institutional recognition, social intelligibility, and adaptation to the recipient language.

The combined use of these criteria makes it possible to distinguish a genuine educational neologism from a temporary innovation, individual formation, translation error, long-established borrowing, or narrowly professional label. Such a multi-criteria approach increases the reliability of educational neologism corpora and provides a consistent basis for subsequent structural-semantic, sociolinguistic, and communicative-pragmatic analysis.

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