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NEO-CLASSICAL NEOLOGICAL FORMATIONS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

*Dedicated to the memory of my
mother Veselinka Milojević*

Abstract
The aim of the paper is to analyze English neologisms focusing on the classical and neo-classical elements and patterns actively used in contemporary English word-formation. A comprehensive wordlist of English neologisms has been analyzed and active, ever-present use of classical and neo-classical formatives and patterns has been exemplified.

Key words: neologism, word-formation, assimilation, loan words, calque, neo-classical formations

As the saying goes, *'The Greeks had a word for it.'*

1. INTRODUCTION (CONCEPTS AND METHODOLOGY)

The **aim** of the paper is to focus on English neologisms containing neo-classical (i.e. Greek and Latin) elements. For that purpose, newly coined English words have been selected from the *Oxford Dictionary of New Words* (OUP, 1997). The words have been analyzed from the point of view of their structure and word-formation pattern. We have hoped to prove that the classical and neo-classical elements have been and continue to be the source of building new words in the English language.

Neologism is a new word or expression. New words can be formed according to the productive word-formation rules of English where the variety of morphological word-forming processes enables us to create countless new words, such as: *best-seller, VCR, rat-race, mouse potato*. This is the most frequent but certainly not the only way to form neologisms. Some neologisms are formed on the basis of the structural pattern of another language (*calques,* i.e. translation loans as a result of literal translation from another language, e.g. the word *gospel* comes from an Old English compound: *good + spell,* which is a direct translation of the elements of Latin *bona annuntiatio*, which itself is a translation of the old Greek ευαγγέλιον (adapted in Latin as *evangelium* or *evangelion*: 'good message'); sometimes neologisms are simply borrowings from another language (e.g. some words that were once new imports from the Latin language: *street, pound, mint, wine, monger, cup*).

Calque (translation loan) is a word or expression that is a result of literal translation from another language. The input parts of a new word are English but the word-formation pattern is taken from another language (as in the example *gospel* already quoted). The English word *chain-smoker* is a literal translation of the German word *Kettenraucher* (but it is interesting that *chain-drinker* is not a loan, it is a word formed by analogy). Another example of a whole expression, which is translation loan is *it goes without saying* which is a literal translation of the French expression '*cela va sans dire*'.

Loan words or borrowed words are words taken over and modified in their sound shape, written form, morphological shape and meaning to the standards of the English language. This modification is referred to as **assimilation** (total or partial).

Up to 70% of the English vocabulary consists of loans and only 30% of the words are native. The explanation is that this process of borrowing and assimilation has been widespread over centuries, and the words which were once loans and felt as new are now felt as native (e.g. *wall, street, cheese, mutton, table, chair, facet*).

A distinction can be made between the **source of borrowing** and the **origin of borrowing**. For example, the word *moustache* is imported from French (source of borrowing), but can be traced via Italian and Spanish to Modern Greek μουστάκι, and ultimately Old Greek μυστάξ (origin of borrowing).

Assimilation is not always an imperative. There are words, which instead of being assimilated drop out of the language. Whether a word stays or disappears depends on a number of factors. These factors are predominantly pragmatic: **hypostatization,** i.e. requirement of existence (this means that a word will not be formed to denote a non-existing item, quality or action) and requirement that a word should denote not only something that is real but also namable (**namability requirement**); whether a new word stays or disappears also depends on the attitude of the speech community towards it. The forming of a new word can be **blocked** due to the existence of another form (e.g. we can not form the word *unbig because of the existing form *small*). Beside these **pragmatic factors** there are some purely **linguistic ones** such as: phonological (e.g. the form *livelily is blocked due to phonological reasons), **morphological** (e.g. *polynational is blocked because of the rule which says that a Greek prefix is not to be combined with a Latin base, so only *multinational* is acceptable).

When they first come into language the words are felt as something new. This is how speakers see them, so this feeling of newness is vital for the definition of a neologism. However, this feeling of something 'new' may also suggest only a **new use of an existing word** (e.g. *terrific*, that comes from Latin *terrificus* meaning 'frightening' means 'super' in modern informal English).

There is a basic difference between neologisms and nonce words, these latter are coined *ad hoc* and *ex tempore* to meet some immediate need but are unlikely to stay in the language whereas neologisms are institutionalized and they become part of the vocabulary and are listed in a dictionary.

The **classical languages** have been a **rich source** of many words in English. Here are some examples from the oldest layer of Latin borrowings: *wall, street, mile, cheap, mint, kitchen, cup, dish, pepper, cherry, butter, plum, chalk, pitch, pipe, church, bishop.* Further examples of Latin loan words taken over in the period of Christianization are the following: *abbot, altar, anthem, candle, canon, disciple, hymn, martyr, mass, pope, priest, psalm, temple, balsam, school, master, verse, meter, notary.* A great flood of Latin and Greek words came with the Revival of Learning and in that period the classical element was major. It is said that 'for a time the whole Latin vocabulary became potentially English'. Many Latin words came via French, and many Greek words came through Latin into French and then into

English. Here are some examples of the classical borrowings: *specimen, focus, arena, album, minimum, complex, nucleus, alibi, ultimatum, extra, insomnia, deficit, ego, opus, referendum, bacillus, formula*; Greek words expressed new ideas like: *philosophy, ethics, esthetics, epistemology, axiology, geometry, astronomy, zodiac, grammar, affix, syntax, logic, category, rhetoric, poetry, comedy, tragedy, prologue, dialogue, alphabet, drama, chorus, theory, orchestra, museum.* Here are some more Modern English words that come from the classical languages. One can say *athenaeum* instead of *library* (the Greek goddess of wisdom and arts gave to us the English word *athenaeum* meaning 'library, a reading room or a literary or scientific club'); also, the word *trochal* meaning 'resembling or revolving like a wheel' comes from Greek *trokhos* 'wheel', from *trekhein* 'to run'. The word *mantic* (adj.) meaning 'of or relating to divination' from Greek *mantikos*, from *mantis* 'prophet', from *mainesthai* 'to rage' has the root which ultimately goes back to Sanskrit and that is also the source of words such as: *mind, mental, mention, mantra, automatic, mania, money, praying mantis, monument, music, and amnesia.* The modern English word *threnody* (n.) meaning 'a song of lamentation for the dead' comes from Greek *threnoidia*, from *threnos* 'lament' + *oide* 'song'; the root of this word is also the forefather of such words as: *ode, tragedy, comedy, parody, melody, and rhapsody.* The modern English word *stratocracy* meaning 'government by the military' comes from Greek *stratos* 'army' + *-cracy* 'rule, government'; ultimately from IndoEuropean root *ster-* 'to spread' and it is the source of such words as: *structure, industry, destroy, street, and stratagem.* Further example of English words from Greek: *theanthropic* 'having the nature of both God and human' comes from Greek *theanthropos* 'god man', from *theo-* 'god' + *anthropos* 'man'.

Neo-classical formations are called neo-classical because they are created wholly out of stems existing in the classical languages and therefore could be taken for Latin or Greek, but they were unknown to ancient Greeks and Romans. Such formations can be found in many spheres of knowledge and human activities, and the coinage of scientific, technical, scholarly, commercial, and political terms is quite frequent in contemporary English (e.g. *cryptography, laryngograph, megazoo, technophobe, nanotechnology*). Here, as an example of a neo-classical formation analyzed, is the modern English word *alexia* (n.) 'a neurological disorder marked by the loss of ability to read words, also called 'word blindness' comes from Greek: *a-*

which is a Greek prefix for negation, 'not' + Greek *lexis* 'speech', from *legein* 'to speak', confused with Latin *legere* 'to read' + Latin *–ia* 'disease'; ultimately from Indo-European root *leg-* 'to collect' that resulted in other derivations such as: *lexicon, legal, dialogue, lecture, logic, legend, logarithm, intelligent, diligent, sacrilege, elect, and loyal.* One more example of a neo-classical formation: modern English word *synesthesia* or *synaesthesia* (n.) meaning: 1. 'a sensation felt in one part of the body when stimulus is applied to another part, e.g. visualization of a colour on hearing a sound', and 2. (in literature) 'using an unrelated sense to describe something e.g. warm sounds or fragrant words' comes from two Old Greek elements: prefix *syn-* (συν-) and the noun *aesthesis* (αίσθησις) 'sensation or perception'; ultimately from the Indo-European root *au-* 'to perceive' from which other words such as: *audio, audience, audit, obey, auditorium, anesthesia, and aesthetic* are derived. The English word *anagnorisis* (n.) 'the moment of recognition or discovery' comes from Latin, from Greek *anagnorizein* 'to recognize or discover'; ultimately from the Indo-European root *gno-* 'to know' that is the ancestor of such words as: *know, can, notorious, notice, connouisseur, recognize, diagnosis, ignore, annotate, noble, and narrate.* Here are some more contemporary borrowings and coinages based on the Greek and Latin elements and model: *chroma, chromatic, cinematograph (kinematograph), kaleidoscope, microscope, horoscope, photography, telephone, bicycle, aeroplane, dynamo, euthanasia, post mortem, prima facie, prima vista, in vitro, in vivo, psychology, psyche, psychiatry, neuron, neurology, atom, nitrogen, hydrogen, aerosphere, hemisphere, economy, cosmetic, antiseptic, pedestrianism*. Also some Greek prefixes were adopted, e.g. *anti-* 'against', *hyper-* 'beyond', 'over', *hypo-* 'under', *arch-* 'chief', *dia-* 'through', *hemi-* 'half', *homo-* 'same', *mono-* 'single', *pan-* 'all', *poly-* 'many', *pseudo-* 'false', *syn-*, *sym-* 'with', *tele-* 'at a distance'; also some suffixes, e.g. *–ism* and *–ology*.

2. NEOLOGISMS (SOURCES FOR NEW WORDS)

As for neologisms, there are six basic sources for new words: creating, borrowing, combining, shortening, blending, and shifting. Each of these has important subtypes. **Creating** a word means to make it out of nothing, not exploiting already existing words or patterns; sometimes creating can take the shape of so called imitative, echoic, or onomatopoeic words (e.g. *KODAK,*

whiz, or *zoom*). **Borrowing** words from another language is another source for neologisms. English has borrowed words extensively over centuries and this tendency is ever present in contemporary English. **Combining** is the most productive source of new words. Combining proliferates compounds and derivatives. New formations exploit traditionally established prefixes and suffixes but new affixes and new senses of old ones often develop, e.g. the prefix *para-* is an element appearing in loan words from Greek, where it meant 'beside' (e.g. *paradigm, paragraph*); on this model it is also used with the meanings: 'near', 'beyond', 'aside', and sometimes implying 'alteration', 'modification' (e.g. *parapsychology*). *Strato-* has developed a new meaning: it refers not to clouds but to things used in the stratosphere (e.g. *strato-suit, stratocruiser*). *Tele-* in *teleprompter*, does not suggest 'distance' as in television but 'a device showing television performers what to say'. The suffix *–genic* has changed its meaning (it formerly meant 'produced by light') and now it means 'good as a subject for photography' as in: *mediagenic, photogenic, radiogenic, telegenic*. There are suffixes created by decomposing a word, like *-thon* (the ending from *marathon*) used in formations like: *jokethon, talkthon, walkathon*. Another type of combining to produce neologisms is **compounding** and its output are compounds (they are combinations of at least two potentially free word-parts), e.g. *antibody-positive, gyrohorizon.* There are suffix-like compounds, e.g. *megalomania, egomania, nyphomania, Leonardomania.* There are also prefix-like compounds, e.g. *teleshopping, telebanking, teleworker, tele-education, teledemocracy, telemarketing*, *telecentre*. Classical compounds also occur among neologisms, e.g. *chemosphere, magnetosphere, technophobia.* There are neologisms which are produced by **shortening**, e.g. *micro(wave), disco(theque), gyro(copter), cyborg* (from *cybernetic organism), memo(randum), psycho(path), cinema(tograph), A.M. < ante meridiem. P.M. < post meridiem*. **Blending** is another word-formation process which is quite prolific in forming neologisms, e.g. *thriathlete < thriath(on) + athlete*. Some of these formations are humorous: e.g. *foolosopher < fool + philosopher, sexpert < sex + expert*. There is blending with the clipped second element, e.g. *monokini < mono + (bi)kini.* Examples for blending with both elements clipped include the following: *avionics < avi(ation) + (electr)onics, globflation < glob(al) + (in)flation, soperatic < soap(opera)+(op)eratic.* Shifting or **conversion** is the process by which the English shifts the forms into new ones. Shifting refers to the shift in grammar or in meaning. Shift in grammar means that a word shifts

from one use to another, e.g. noun to verb: *veto* n. > *veto* v., *contact n.* > *to contact v.* The shift of meaning is also very common and it comprises a specialization of meaning, metonymy or metaphor (e.g. *virus* having the new meaning of a 'self-replicating computer program').

3. CLASSICAL ELEMENTS IN ENGLISH NEOLOGISMS: DATA ANALYSIS

The examples to be analyzed have been taken from *The Oxford Dictionary of New Words* (OUP, 1997). We have read the dictionary from cover to cover and here is a comprehensive list of the examples of neologisms involving classical and neo-classical elements. The examples are presented in alphabetical order. The information given comprises the part-of-speech meaning of the word, its denotative meaning, and its word-formation pattern; the origin of the word elements is also suggested.

adhocracy n. a flexible organizational system designed to be responsive to the needs of the moment; the word has been formed from the phrase *ad hoc* 'formed or arranged for a particular purpose; not planned in advance', ultimately from Latin meaning 'to this'; word-formation process applied is that of composition.

annus horribilis n. a dreadful year; a modern Latin phrase, modeled on the established *annus mirabilis* 'a remarkable or auspicious year'; analogical formation used as deliberate juxtaposition with *annus mirabilis* but also used alone.

antichaos n. another name for *complexity theory*; formed by prefixation from Greek 'chaos'; note some other neological formations using the 'chaos' element: *chaotic dynamics, chaoticist, quantum chaos, quantum chaology.*

kinesiology n. a therapeutic technique in which physical conditions are diagnosed using tests which identify imbalances in muscle strength, and treated using touch; compound word using Greek roots *kin(ein)* 'to move', set in motion + *logia* 'speech, discourse, thought'. There are also two other new formations related to this word: *applied kinesiology*, and *kinesiologist.*

aquacise n. and v. physical exercise carried out in shallow water; to practice aquacise; formed by blending (Latin *aqua* 'water' + *exercise*).

autostereogram n. an image, generated by a computer, consisting of a pattern of dots and lines which are perceived as three-dimensional;

compound word using: *auto* (from Greek *autos* 'self') + *stereo* (from Greek *stereos* 'solid') + *gram* (an element occurring in loan words from Greek where it meant 'something written, drawing').

bi-media (also written **bimedia**), adj. involving, or working in, two of the mass communication media (especially radio and television) at one time; the noun for this concept is **bi-medialism** or **bi-mediality**; rarely, the adverb **bi-medially** is also seen; *bi-* is learned borrowing from Latin meaning 'twice', 'two'; it is used in the formation of compound words (e.g. *bifacial*).

bio- a prefix meaning 'life' occurring in loan words from Greek (e.g. *biography*; in this model it is used in the formation of compound words, e.g. **bioluminescence**, **bio-diesel**, **bio-diversity**, **bioreactor**, **biosphere**, **biospherian** n., **biotech** (short for **biotechnology**), **biotechnician**, **bio-techniques**, **biotechnical**, **biotecture** (the word is the result of blending: *bio* + (*archi*)*tecture*).

cyber- (from Greek *kyber(net)es* 'steersman', *kybern(an)* 'to steer') the first element of a wide variety of terms relating to computer-mediated electronic communication, such as electronic mail and the Internet; here are some neologisms containing this element: **cyberspace, cyberspatial, cyberpunk, cyberpunkish, cybernaut, cyberart, cyberartist, cyberbrain, cyberculture**, **cybercafé**, **cyberdelia**, **cyberdelic**, **cyberfeminism**, **cyberfeminist**, **cyberhippies**, **cyberlawyer**, **cyberlaw**, **cyberphobia**, **cyberphobic**, **cybersurfer**, **cybersex**, **cybersuit**, **cyberworld**, **cyberish**.

dyspraxia n. a disorder marked particularly by impairment of the ability to co-ordinate motor movements, and now associated with difficulties in reading and spelling; from Greek *dys-* 'bad, difficult' and –*praxia* from Greek *praxis* 'action'; the people suffering from dyspaxia are described as **dyspraxic**.

Ecstasy n. (also written *Ecstacy*, *ecstacy*, or *ecstasy*) is a hallucinogenic drug; from Greek *ekstasis* 'displacement, trance'; this neological formation has been obtained through metaphoric transfer.

Euro-sceptic n. means a person who is sceptical about the value of closer connection with Europe and adj. of, pertaining to, or characteristic of *Euro-sceptics*; **Euro-scepticism** is another nominal derivative form; a compound word involving the element *sceptic* from Latin *scepticus*, from Greek *skeptikos* 'thoughtful, inquiring'.

heptathlon n. an athletic contest, usually for women, consisting of seven different events; a modification of **pentathlon**, in which the Greek

prefix *hepta*, 'seven' is substituted for the Greek prefix *pente,* 'five'; *athlon* is the Greek for 'contest'.

homophobia n. fear or dislike of homosexuals and homosexuality; formed by adding the Greek suffix –*phobia*, meaning 'fear' or 'dislike', to the first part of *homosexual*, the word-formation type being that of blending. The formation is objectionable since it is fully homonymous with *homophobia* meaning 'fear of men'.

hydrospeeding n. a sport in which participants, wearing helmet, flippers, and padded clothing, launch themselves down rapids holding on to a float; formed with the combining form *hydro-* (a learned borrowing from Greek meaning 'water' used in the formation of compound words, e.g. *hydroplane*, *hydrogen* 'having to do with water').

hyper- combining form from the Greek prefix *huper-* 'above, beyond'; there are the following neologisms involving the *hyper* element and used in reference with computing: **hypermedia**, **hypertext**, **hyperlinks**, **hypertextual**, **hypertextually**, **hyperlinked**, **hyperfiction**, **hyperfictional**, **hyperzine** (a blend of *hyper + (maga)zine*).

mega adj. very large or important, on a grand scale, great; from the Greek *mega* 'great'; the adjective was formed because the highly productive combining form *mega-* was sometimes written as a free-standing element as in *mega star*; the word forming process is that of conversion or functional shift; mega is the first element in a number of compounds and blends, e.g. **megapixel**, **megabase**, **megacells**, **megazoo**, **megabook**, **megahit**, **megarich**, **megasmash**, **megastardom**, **megabudget**, **megaevent**, **megamodel**, **megafirm**, **megamerger**, **megaproject**, **megamarket**, **megacarrier**, **megatrend**, **megastore**, **megachurch**, **megastate**, **megaplex**, **megadump**, **megadose**.

multiculti adj. (also written *multi-culti*) means multicultural or of or relating to *multiculturalism* or *multiculturalists*; n. **multiculturalism**; a *multiculturalist* – the word is an abbreviation and alteration of *multicultural*; there are other neological formations with *multi-* like **multigym**, **multimedia**, **multi-speed** adj.

mythopoetic adj. in the U.S. denotes an approach to self-understanding employing activities such as storytelling, poetry reading, and enactment of ritual; the word is a compound built of Greek elements; this usage represents a new development of sense of the established adjective *mythopoeic* 'myth-making'.

nano- combining form used as the first element in compounds relating to the building of devices or substances on a molecular scale; *nano* comes from the Greek *nanos*, 'dwarf', and it is used in English as a combining form in terms indicating measurement meaning 'reduced by a factor of one thousand million', as in *nanometer* or *nanosecond*; this combining form has acquired the looser sense of 'relating to molecular proportions'; here are some neological formations including *nano*: **nanotechnology**, **nanotechnologist**, **nanomachines**, **nanomachinery**, **nanofabrication**, **nanostructures**, **nano-technological**, **nanocomputers**, **nanotech**, **nanocrystal**, **nanotube**, **nanoscale**, **nanophase**, **nanocomposite**.

retro- n. a style or fashion that goes back to the past; a movement to revive past styles; adj. reviving the past, retrospective; *retro* has a long history in English word formation where it was used in combination with Latin roots (e.g. *retrograde*) and having the meaning 'backwards'; in the eighties and nineties compounds such as **retro-chic**, **retro-culture**, and **retro-rock** were coined.

techie n. an expert in or enthusiast for technology, especially computing; a diminutive form of *technician*.

techno adj. of popular music, making heavy use of technology; n. a style of popular music with a synthesized, technological sound; *techno* can appear as the second element of compounds: **ambient techno** and **raga-techno**; *techno*, used on its own is a shortening from such compounds as *techno-pop* and *techno-rock*.

techno- combining form used as the first element of many compounds relating to the use of advanced technology and computing; e.g. **technophobe**, **tecnophile**, **technofear**, **technobabble**, **technospeak**, **technostress**, **technofix**, **technoindustrial**, **technohippy**, **technojunkie**, **technowizard**, **technothriller**, **technoporn**, **technosex**, **techno-pop**, **techno-rock**, **techno-soul**, **technoshamanism**.

tele- prefix used as the first element of compounds relating to telecommunications, e.g. **telecomputer**, **telematics**, **teleshopping**, **telebanking**, **telecommute**, **telework**, **telecommuters**, **televillage**, **tele-education**; **teleputer** is a blend: *tele*(vision) + *com*(puter).

transgenic adj. relating to an organism which contains inheritable genetic material which has been artificially introduced from another organism; Latin *trans-* is used here as a prefix.

The analysis of the neologisms presented shows that that there are output words representing all kinds of word-formation processes: **composition** (e.g. *kinesiology*), **derivational composition** (e.g. *kinesiologist*), **prefixation** (e.g. *antichaos*), **suffixation** (e.g. *homophobia*), **blending** (e.g. *teleputer*), **shortening** (e.g. *multiculti*), **metaphoric transfer** (e.g. *Ecstasy*), **analogical formation** (e.g. *annus horribilis*). The analysis of English neologisms also shows abundant use of classical and neo-classical elements and patterns in contemporary English word-formation.

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НЕОКЛАСИЧНИ НЕОЛОГИЗМИ У САВРЕМЕНОМ
ЕНГЛЕСКОМ ЈЕЗИКУ

Сажетак

Циљ рада је анализа енглеских неологизама, са фокусом на класичне и неокла-
сичне елементе и обрасце који се активно користе у грађењу речи у савременом енг-
леском језику. Примери су анализирани у укупном броју, онако како су евидентира-
ни у *Оксфордском речнику нових речи*, а приступ је системски. У раду се показује да
су и данас класични језици, својом лексичком грађом, непресушни и активни извор
нових речи у енглеском језику.

Кључне речи: неологизам, грађење речи, асимилација, позајмљенице, калк,
неокласични неологизми