



UNMASKING COVID-19 VOCABULARY



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ABSTRACT

Indubitably, the outbreak of COVID-19 has not only created a global health crisis amongst the nations but also infected the world with powerful vocabulary. It is a convulsion of nature bringing unheard of changes to the social, economic and educational fabric. The current thematic paper throws light on unmasking the whirl of unfamiliar words and phrases brought out by COVID-19, and the principal aim is not to isolate our future generations from comprehending the richness of the new vocabulary. Further, it is suggested that teachers and parents can boost the linguistic proficiency among students by inculcating the right spirit in learning the appropriate English vocabulary.

KEYWORDS

COVID-19, powerful vocabulary, unmasking, health crisis, unfamiliar words and phrases

RESEARCH PAPER

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to grow at an alarming rate, resulting in numerous infections and fatalities across the globe. The impact on education has been devastating, with UNESCO reporting that over 1.5 billion students had been affected due to school closures in 165 countries as of 26 March 2020; this is more than 87 percent of all registered students. Over 63 million teachers and large numbers of education support personnel have also been affected by the pandemic. Given these unprecedented developments, the COVID-19 crisis has become an education crisis (WHO, 2020). Yet, education did not stop.

Today's children are global citizens and the next generation caregivers, teachers, scientists, and doctors. Any crisis presents the opportunity to help them learn, cultivate compassion and increase resilience while building a safer and more caring community (UNICEF, 2020). It's useful to understand relevant terms and other concepts during a time of health crisis.

In classroom, the achieving students possess the most sufficient vocabulary (Mofareh, 2015). Teaching vocabulary is a crucial aspect in learning a language as languages are based on words (Thornbury, 2002). Recent research indicates that teaching vocabulary may be problematic because many teachers are not confident about the best practice in vocabulary teaching and at times do not know where to begin to form an instructional emphasis on word learning (Berne & Blachowicz, 2008). The world is being flooded with perhaps unfamiliar words and phrases in coverage of COVID-19, the newly discovered coronavirus.

Previous Studies

There is currently little or no literature on COVID-19 in relation to educational studies. The only literature available is directly related to medical studies (Chinazzi et al., 2020; Hopman, Allegranzi, & Mehtar, 2020; Kraemer et al., 2020; Wu & Mc Googan, 2020; Vadrevu RM (2020); Zu et al., 2020). Harsha Raju (2020) analyzed the challenges e-teaching and its limitations; Sintema (2020) observed dropout rates in pass percentage in Zimbabwe.

The world is being flooded with perhaps whirl of unfamiliar words and phrases in coverage of COVID-19, the newly discovered coronavirus. The coronavirus pandemic has quickly expanded our vocabularies. Vocabulary words must be taught and learned in context. Learners need to see how the word is used. Children and young people should understand basic vocabulary about coronavirus disease (COVID-19). However, COVID-19 has become a catalyst for educational

institutions worldwide to search for innovative solutions in a relatively shortest period of time (Gloria, 2020). Thus, a humble attempt has been made in this direction to unmask the vocabulary emanated from COVID-19 to boost the linguistic proficiency among students.

Vocabulary	Description
Asymptomatic	Showing no symptoms of a particular disease.
Contact tracing	Identifying and monitoring people who may have come into contact with an infectious person. In the case of COVID-19, monitoring usually involves self-quarantine as an effort to control the spread of disease.
Containment phase	Steps introduced to prevent the virus from spreading for as long as possible, such as identifying early cases and trying to establish who the infected person has been in contact with.
Corona	The word <i>corona</i> means 'crown'. The scientists who in 1968 came up with the term coronavirus thought that, under a microscope, the virus they were looking at resembled a solar corona: the bright crown-like ring of gasses surrounding the sun that is visible during a solar eclipse.
Corona virus	In the past decades, several new diseases have emerged in new geographical areas, with pathogens including Ebola, Zika, Nipah, and coronaviruses (CoV). Recently, a new type of viral infection has emerged in Wuhan City, China (Kuldeep et al (2020)). The word is an abbreviation of coronavirus disease, and the number 19 denotes the year in which it erupted. The disease began in December 2019. The new name was announced on February 11 by the World Health Organization (WHO).
Droplets	The spray produced when people cough or sneeze, and which can spread diseases like COVID-19 - Health care personnel wear protective clothing to guard against the disease carried in droplets when infected people sneeze or cough.

Epidemic	A widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time.
Flattening the curve	This is the ideal towards which all administrations and agencies are working. All epidemic outbreaks can be projected on a graph sheet as a sinusoid. It has a stage of exponential rise, and then the numbers begin to decline. Flattening the curve is the attempt to stem the exponential growth. Health care facilities, hand washing and social distancing are all attempts at flattening the curve.
Hand washing / Hand hygiene	Hand hygiene is a way of cleaning your hands that reduces harmful bacteria on them and stops the spread of harmful germs. It is recommended that we wash our hands regularly using soap and water. It is suggested to sing the <i>'Happy Birthday'</i> song twice while washing your hands – this takes 20 seconds.
Incubation period	The time from a person's first exposure to a disease to the time when symptoms develop.
Infodemic	This word, a combination of information and epidemic, refers to an excessive availability of information (mostly false) which makes a solution even more difficult. COVID-19 infodemic was transmitted rapidly through social media platforms. With so much information all around, it has become difficult to distinguish between truth and misinformation. In the future, health organizations will have to factor the infodemic angle into their programmes too, to prevent the spread of panic.
Index Case	An index case is the first documented case of an infectious disease in a population. A related term is patient zero – a person identified as the first to become infected with an illness or disease in an outbreak.

Isolation	The process of segregating infected people from the rest of the healthy population.
Lock down	This is an emergency situation, usually imposed by an authority, when it is considered that a person is safer within his home, building or area. There are restrictions on movements beyond certain areas.
Mask	A piece of cloth that fits over the nose and mouth to protect other people from the wearer's germs and/or the wearer from germs in the air - The World Health Organization recommend that people should not wear masks unless they may be carrying COVID-19 (to protect other people) or are caring for anyone suffering from COVID-19 (to protect themselves).
Novel coronavirus.	Scientists used the word <i>novel</i> to distinguish the new form of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) currently making people sick from previous types of coronaviruses (such as SARS and MERS). Because it is a novel virus that no one has previously been exposed to, that means no one has had a chance to build immunity.
Pandemic	A disease becomes a pandemic when it spreads across countries and continents. It could be considered an epidemic on a global scale.
Panic buying	Panic buying has been rife amid the global spread of the novel coronavirus, with consumers around the world stockpiling goods like hand sanitizer, canned foods and toilet paper, resulting in empty shelves, and both supply and demand shocks.
PCR Test	Test that detects viral particles in blood or other body fluids. (PCR = polymerase chain reaction)
Quarantine	The process of isolating people who are asymptomatic, but might be in the “window period”. This would mean that

	<p>although they are not manifesting any signs of sickness, they may be carriers of the virus. Quarantine is isolating such people for a specific duration, during which either the infection might manifest itself and they can go into treatment and isolation, or there may be no infection at all. After quarantine, the person can join the normal population without fear of spreading contagion. Quarantine can be in a special facility, which is used for keeping travellers coming from infected places, or it could be a self or home quarantine, where the person cuts off ties with the outside world.</p>
Self-quarantine	<p>Self-quarantine is where you restrict your movements to avoid contact with other people within your home and in social situations for a period of time – it recommended 14 days.</p>
Respiratory hygiene	<p>These are measures to prevent infection such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Covering your nose or mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and getting rid of the used tissue in a waste bin and wash your hands.• Coughing or sneezing into the inner elbow (upper sleeve) rather than into the hand, if no tissues are available.• Keeping contaminated hands away from the mouth, eyes and nose.• Washing your hands after:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose- having contact with possible contaminated objects or materials such as table tops, smartphone, remote controls.

SARS-CoV2	This is the official name of the virus which is responsible for COVID-19. Earlier, it was referred to as novel coronavirus 19. The International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses announced the term SARS-CoV2 on February 11, 2020. SARS stands for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, and this virus is genetically very similar to the SARS virus which caused the 2003 outbreak.
Social distancing	It means avoiding social contacts, given that the virus spreads from person to person, and the best way to stem the spread is to cut contact with others. The recommended social distance between two people is one meter. It also encompasses the lockdown that people are going through.
Super spreader	Person infected with a virus etc who transmits or spreads it to an unusually large number of people.
Surge	A sudden increase in cases of people infected with COVID-19.
Vaccine	A vaccine is something that would be given to a healthy person to prevent them from being infected with a disease such as the COVID-19 disease caused by the new coronavirus.
Viral shedding	The period of time after the virus has replicated in the host and is being emitted.
Ventilator	A device that delivers air into the lungs through a tube that is placed into the mouth or nose and down into the windpipe.
Zones Red/Orange and Green	The Red, Orange and Green Zone classification is based on factors such as the number of novel coronavirus cases, the doubling rate of Covid-19 cases, and the extent of testing and surveillance. Red Zones have a high number of cases and a high doubling rate, Orange Zones have comparatively fewer cases and Green Zones have not had any cases in the last 21

	days.
Zoonotic	Describing a disease that can be transmitted from animals to humans.

In addition to this, some terms are hard to distinguish from others and out of hubris and confusion people use them interchangeably and incorrectly. Some such words are detailed below:

Words often confused	Explanation
Epidemic versus Pandemic	An epidemic is a temporary prevalence or rapid spread of a disease, occurs on a community or regional level, whereas, a pandemic is an epidemic that has spread over a large area and has become prevalent throughout an entire country, continent, or the whole world.
Flu versus COVID-19	The COVID-19 shares many similarities with the flu, there are several differences between the two. While flu symptoms are typically rapidly onset and can take 1-4 days to develop, COVID-19 symptoms can take up to 14 days to appear and may not appear at all. The two illnesses share symptoms such as fever, cough, and fatigue. However, <i>shortness of breath</i> is a major symptom to look out for with COVID-19.
Quarantine versus Isolation	Isolation and quarantine are practices used to prevent exposure to people who have or may have a contagious disease. However, while isolation separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick, quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.
Respirator versus Ventilator	A respirator is a face mask that seals around the mouth and filters out particles from the air before they are

	breathed in. An N95 respirator filters out 95 percent of tiny test particles. A ventilator is a machine that moves air in and out of the lungs in the case that a patient is having trouble breathing on their own.
Vaccines and anti-virals	A vaccine is something that would be given to a healthy person to prevent them from being infected with a disease such as the COVID-19 disease caused by the new coronavirus. On the other hand, an anti-viral is a type of medicine, or therapeutic, that would be given to try and treat a person who is infected with a viral disease - such as COVID-19. Anti-virals cannot treat diseases caused by bacteria, and antibiotics cannot treat diseases caused by viruses.
Virus versus Bacteria	Although bacterial and viral infections may cause similar symptoms, they are dissimilar in many other ways, including the way they respond to medications. Most bacteria are harmless, and some actually help by digesting food, destroying disease-causing microbes, fighting cancer cells, and providing essential nutrients. Most viruses on the other hand, do cause disease with certain viruses attacking cells in the liver, respiratory system, or blood. Unfortunately, antibiotics are not effective against viruses.

Conclusion

Schools and teachers play a vital role in inculcating the right spirit in learning the appropriate vocabulary. Sharing accurate information and science-based facts about COVID-19 will help diminish students' fears and anxieties around the disease and support their ability to cope with any secondary impacts in their lives. Parents can also become partners in this endeavour.

Since teachers are tasked with teaching language, vocabulary ends up getting a small amount of attention in the classroom. Regardless, we must remember that vocabulary is at the center of language teaching and learning. In fact, research linking reading comprehension to vocabulary

knowledge has shown that a reader must know 98% of the words in a text to process and comprehend the text independently (Hu and Nation, 2000).

As people around the world are taking precautions to protect themselves, their families and their communities from coronavirus disease (COVID-19) it's also important that children can continue to learn, and that they can do so in an environment that is welcoming, respectful, inclusive, and supportive to all.

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