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Neologisms and their evolvement in contemporary Australian English

The Australian English has always been an amazing amalgamation of colourful words and expressions. This paper will delve into some new words that have found their way into Australian vocabulary illustrating the richness and fluidity of Australian English and, mainly, new neologisms connected with different foods will be taken into account in this paper.

Key words: Australian English; neologisms; vocabulary; cuisine and food; cultural events; COVID terms.

The language is always evolving and it is a living changing thing that adapt to the times and needs who use it. In this case, new neologisms are continuously being generated and may gain or lose popularity over time.

New words and phrases often arise to describe new phenomena, processes or language changes. When we consider Australian English, new words would typically have a cultural relevance to Australia. This could be words related to Australian politics, ecology, cultural events and etc. In this paper we would like to highlight new words appeared in such areas as cuisine (food), politics and cultural experiences. If a word or phrase has been created recently, it might not be officially defined as part of Australian English yet. Once a neologism gains a widespread usage, it can be added to dictionaries like the Macquarie Dictionary [4, 8] which is considered the authoritative source of Australian English.

For example, in the past some neologisms that have emerged include «*bushfire season*» – a phrase used to describe the period in which bushfires (wildfires) are traditionally expected to occur; or «*Aussie battler*» – a term of respect for someone who endures hardships and struggles but never gives up. These phrases all carry specific Australian cultural connotations.

The release of the 2nd edition of the Australian National Dictionary (AND) included more than 6000 new words and phrases appeared and lately recognized in Australian English (AE). The AND published by Oxford University Press Australia (OUP) and New Zealand and compiled at the Australian national University (ANU) is the 1st comprehensive update of the AND since 1988 that became an essential record of Australian culture and identity. As the chief editor Dr Bruce Moor mentioned that the AND shows

how Australian words tell us about the history, and importance, and values and how they have changed. «It is vital that these words be recorded. If language is a definer of nationhood and the character of a people, then this new edition illustrates what it means, in words, to be Australian» [6].

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It is crucial to say a few words about the peculiarities of the language and the term «Australian vernacular» refers to the unique variety of English spoken by Australians. The most fascinating aspects that are of great interest for us in terms of studying neologisms are the following:

- *vocabulary* – Australian English is famous for a great variety of slang and idiomatic expressions, for instance, «*bikkies*» for *biscuits/cookies*, «*barbie*» – for *barbecue*;

- *diminutives* – an Australian habit of shortening words and adding -o, -ie to the end, for instance, «*brekkie*» – for *breakfast*, «*sunnie*» – for *sunglasses*, «*sarvo*» – *this afternoon*, «*evo*» – *evening*;

- *rhyiming slang* – Australian English includes rhyiming slang, for instance, «*Captain Cook*» – for *look*;

- *cultural references* – many Australian words are really unique Australian words in different spheres, for example: *food* – «*vegemite*», *cultural phenomena* – «*bush doof*», *local flora and fauna* – «*wombat*», etc.

Australian neologisms, especially informal words ending in -ie, have probably contributed to their greater use in northern hemisphere Englishes, and perhaps to the increasing colloquialisation of English worldwide [8]. While constructing their own unique words for the things that still exist, Australians try to refresh the words by combining with other meanings:

- «*chiko roll*» – *an Australian deep-fried snack inspired by the egg roll and filled with beef, celery, cabbage, barley, carrot, green beans and spices*;

- «*damper*» – *a traditional Australian bread, historically prepared by swagmen, drovers, stockmen, it is baked in the coals of campfire or in a camp oven*;

- «*fairy bread*» – *a popular Australian children's treat consisting of buttered bread sprinkled with «hundreds and thousands» sugar balls*;

- «*lamingtons*» – *an Australian cake made of squares of buttercake or sponge cake coated in an outer layer of chocolate*;

- «*chook*» = «*chicken*»;

- «*prawns*» = «*shrimps*».

In this paper we are going to talk further about neologisms appeared in the sphere of food and drinks and some specific words that were previously

used only in Australian English and now their influence is spreading all over other countries [4]:

- *Sanger (sandwich) – I fancy a steak sanger and a glass of amber;*
 - *googs (an egg usually when offered as food to a child) – Come on, eat up your googy-eggs;*
 - *snag (any type of sausage prepared using beef, pork, garlic, onions);*
 - *smashed avo (avocado) – used in breakfast/brunch menus;*
 - *rat – undersized crayfish / lobsters – Although the pot was full of rats we did get a sized cray to put in the coffin;*
 - *fruit box (any juice drink packaged in a small cardboard carton) – The boy went to the deli to buy a fruit box;*
 - *chop chop – illegal tobacco traded on the black market [5].*
 - *Boston or Chelsea Buns – An iced raisin loaf – Our baker makes lovely Boston buns (without potatoes);*
 - *afters – a dessert;*
 - *scroggin – a mixture of nuts, chocolate and dried fruit for nibbling during a bushwalk – I've got no scroggin left, can I have some of yours? Now a person who is fond of good eating is also called so.*
 - *Belgium sausage – a large usually sliced thinly and eaten cold;*
 - *wheel meat – Belgium sausage is also known as «wheel meat» – Could I have wheel meat please?;*
 - *«cabana» – sausage like cabanossi – Cabana makes a great snack;*
 - *deconstructed coffee – a new type of coffee served with coffee, milk and water separate in order to mix to their own liking;*
 - *American tea – An afternoon tea party held to raise funds. Common in the mid-decades of 20 C. Usually involved small stalls selling homemade items such as knitting, cakes and sweets. Usually organised and patronised by women – Mrs Jones is having an American Tea next Saturday afternoon, to raise money for...;*
 - *«goon» – cheap cask wine – We'd better get some goon for the girls;*
 - *«bag of death» – the contents of a cask of cheap wine, usually red – How about a sample of your bag of death?*
 - *«box monster» – cask of wine – I had a night with the box monster.*
- There are also some specific food names, namely (they are not the neologisms, but they show some unique food vocabulary):
- *vegemite – a popular yeast-extract spread that is iconic in Australia;*
 - *Tim Tam – a brand of chocolate biscuit made by Arnott's;*
 - *Anzac biscuits – traditional sweet biscuits particular made on Anzac Day. These biscuits are made from rolled oats, sugar, plain flour, butter, golden syrup, baking soda and boiling water;*
 - *pumpkin scones – a variety of scone that is popular in Australia, made with mashed pumpkin;*

– *Lamington* – a type of sponge cake coated in chocolate and desiccated coconut.

Some food names have got new meanings, for example:

– «*rock lobster*» – is a marine cray fish and an Australian \$20 note (because of its red colour);

– «*pudding*» is used as any type of dessert – Would you like jelly for pudding?

Some other names of things with a meaning different from that outside of Australia:

– «*bed*» – a group of trees, usually of the same type, growing together – a bed of Huon pines;

– «*bluetongue*» – a small child as they are close to the ground in height – I see that family has got a couple of blue tongues. Those blue tongues are noisy (in British English – a disease that affects some farm animals, especially sheep and cows, in which the mouth and tongue of the affected animals turns blue);

– «*dixie*» – a small container (approx. 100 ml) of ice-cream (in British English – the southern states of the US that fought against the northern states during the American Civil War).

Australia's food is vibrant and multicultural. The love for food has ushered in an era of lexical borrowing from various cuisines. Words like «*poke bowl*» (a raw fish salad served as an appetizer in Hawaiian cuisine), and «*gochujang*» (Korean chilli paste) indicate Australia's growing culinary diversity as it is usually said that «English itself is a voracious word thief» [3].

Of course, traditionally young people have a tendency to bring into life new words and the Global Language Monitor (GLM) estimates that every 98 minutes a new word is created and in 2020 Dictionary.com recorded 15 000 updates and added 650 new words [7]. Since 2006 Australian people vote annually each December [2] for a new word having appeared in their language that made a valuable contribution to Australian English and there are several rules to be the winner among other words.

One significant area of new word development has been influenced by the rise of digital technology and social media. For example, words such as «*instaworthy*» or «*dox*» have found their way into everyday conversation. An «*instaworthy*» thing or event is aesthetically pleasing enough to be posted on Instagram. To «*dox*» is to publicly identify or publish private information about someone on the Internet. Perhaps, the most prominent role among the new words used in our daily language is devoted to hybrids – words that blend the sounds and meaning of two others like «*podcasts*» (*iPod and broadcast*), «*cronuts*» (*croissant and doughnut*) and «*flexitarian*» (*flexible and vegetarian*).

Definitely, the global pandemic has not just impacted our lives – it has also shaped our language. Terms like «*quarantine*», «*zoombombing*» and

«iso» (short for *isolation*) have become commonplace, illustrating how language evolves in response to world events:

- «quaz» – an informal abbreviation for «*quarantine*»;
- «Rona» – a slang term for «*coronavirus*»;
- «bubble» – in the context of Covid-19 this term becomes widespread almost everywhere and refers to «*a group of people, often a household*» [1];
- «Covid-normal» – a term for «*changes in everyday life that people stay to adopt as a result of the pandemic*».

In 2022 19 words and phrases were nominated to be the Choice Word 2022 such as «*skin hunger*», «*nepo baby*», «*yassify*», «*e-change*», «*spicy cough*», «*goblin mode*», «*bachelor's handbag*», «*teal*». The Committee consisted of Macquarie Dictionary Editors, Alison Moore and Victoria Morgan and Publisher, Melissa Kemble and David Astle, a writer and crossword maker, after a robust discussion of the shortlist, made a conclusion that the Word of the Year was agreed to be «*teal*». However, after a record-breaking number of votes and fervent online discussion from all walks of Australian life, the People's Choice Word of the Year 2022 was decided by Australia as «*bachelor's handbag*».

In conclusion, several trends may be identified in formation of new words in the Australian variety of the English language. The first one is abbreviation, often accompanied with fixation of a definitively non-standard variant of pronunciation. Words like «*sanger*» for sandwich and «*cabana*» for any cabanossi-like sausage follow this pattern. The second one is fixation of a free collocation as it acquires a set meaning, often in the context of generalizing a trade-marked or geographical names. The words that follow this pattern among the examples above are «*Lamington*», «*Tim Tam*», «*vegemite*», «*Belgium sausage*» and «*Boston buns*». They all convey the extended meaning of «something similar to this proper name».

Of course, it goes without saying that all collocations are really becoming widespread, and we should take into account that typically Australian slang words (or phrases) as «*bogan*» or «*flat out like a lizard drinking*» are worth remembering. From social media to the food scene and to global pandemic Covid-19, Australian English continuously evolves to encapsulate these changing paradigms. While these words provide a glimpse into a current socio-cultural landscape, it is worth mentioning that language never stands still. As our world continuously changes and evolves, so does the way we communicate – and Australian English is undoubtedly developed.

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