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NEOLOGISMS AND MORPHOLOGICAL INNOVATION IN MEDIA COVERAGE  
OF THE IRAN–USA CONFLICT

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**Abstract**

*This study aims to observe neologisms and morphological innovation in media coverage of the ceasefire between Iran and the U.S. It mainly focuses on how newly created lexical forms help in political and ideological representation in current media discourse. Media normally produces new words, mix languages and adapted words from other languages to describe ongoing events and influence public perception especially in political crises and political pressure. The main purpose of this study is to identify the types of neologism that have been created in the media coverage of the conflict between Iran and the USA. This research employed a qualitative approach to analyze morphological innovations and media discourse. It collected data from internationally recognized media platforms namely, BBC News, Al Jazeera, Reuters, and The Guardian. The current study examines news headlines, online media content and published articles related to the conflict that contain newly invented lexical forms. The research bases its analysis on word-formation processes that include compounding, blending, clipping, derivation, acronym and semantic change. The findings of this study reveal that lexical forms that are produced as the result of Iran-U.S. conflict function not only as morphological innovation but also these neologisms serve as discursive instruments that frame diplomatic relations, international negotiations, regional conflicts, and diplomacy. The study is significant because it contributes to the fields of Morphology, and Media Discourse to show the relationship between word formation and ideological representation in contemporary media coverage.*

**Keywords:** Neologism, morphology, word formation processes, Iran-U.S. conflict.

**1. Introduction**

Political, social, technical and cultural developments play a crucial role in shaping and reforming language. The occurrence of neologisms is an important linguistic phenomenon which helps in creating new words, expressions and already existing words that achieve new meanings especially in specific contexts (Umar & Mustafa, 2026). Media discourses help enriching the language by creating new lexical forms and vocabulary, and spreading them through news organizations to describe ongoing international issues (Sheikh & Mustafa, 2024). Yule (2020) states that speakers and institutions produce new vocabulary items to convey information and to communicate with the help of word formation, which is the creative process in morphology. Neologisms not only describe linguistic phenomena but also serve as a communicative tool that influence public interpretations, opinions and ideological views particularly in current news journalism.

Media discourse creates and expands lexical creativity through political conflicts and diplomatic crises. In the times of global clashes and tensions, journalists describe geopolitical circumstances with the help of innovative lexical items, political labels and condensed form of communication for international audience (Ahmed et al, 2024). Media discourse that normally comprised compounds, acronyms, derivations, blends and semantic change immediately after clashes, agreements and diplomatic discussions and then these word processes gradually

become part of modern vocabulary. Kerremans (2015) claims that neologisms occur speedily in media communication because the media helps as a main channel for introducing and spreading new lexical forms. Likewise, Allan and Burridge (2006) claim that political and conflict-related discourse often produces emotionally charged and ideologically loaded vocabulary intended to effect audience perception. These linguistic innovations imitate not only creativity but also power relations, institutional ideologies, and cultural attitudes rooted within political communication.

The Iran–U.S. conflict represents a central geopolitical event that attracted extensive international media attention and shaped a highly dynamic discursive environment. News coverage connected to the conflict comprised discussions of diplomacy, military escalation, sanctions, regional security, cyber conflict, and nuclear consultations. In reporting such events, media organizations often employed innovative lexical choices and newly coined expressions to frame political actors and international affairs. Expressions associated with de-escalation, proxy clash, digital conflict, and diplomatic initiative often appear in distorted or innovatively modified forms inside news discourse. According to Crystal (2000), global political procedures contribute meaningfully to lexical expansion because media organizations constantly adapt language to represent new realities and ideological concerns. Therefore, the language used in media coverage of the Iran–U.S. conflict offers a valuable site for observing the connection between morphology, discourse, and political representation.

Media discourse, political communication and ideological representation are widely studied fields but comparatively limited attention has been given to morphological innovation in war-related news reporting. Earlier studies have mainly focused on transitivity, framing, propaganda, or ideological discourse analysis, while the role of neologisms and word-formation processes in creating political meanings remains unexamined. Research on warfare and conflict discourse has revealed that media language contributes meaningfully to influencing ideological descriptions and public understanding (Richardson, 2007). However, there is still limited research examining how recently formed lexical items function ideologically within media coverage of diplomatic conflicts such as the Iran–U.S. conflict. Therefore, this research emphasizes the requirement to examine morphological innovations in media discourse to understand how these lexical innovations contribute to framing political representations and ideologies.

Therefore, the present study aims to analyze neologisms and lexical innovation in media coverage of the conflict between Iran and the U.S. The research also focuses on examining the categories of neologisms appearing in selected news reports and investigate the morphological processes involved in their formation. Moreover, the study also focuses on how political meanings and ideological representations are created through lexical innovations within media discourse. The study aims to observe how language plays a role as a strategic instrument in portraying clashes, diplomacy, patriotism, international relations and warfare by focusing on the connection between morphology and media discourse.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to morphology, media discourse and linguistic studies. The study also helps in understanding how the role of word-formation processes in contemporary political and media discourse and it also helps in interpreting ideological framing formed through neologisms. The research contributes to the body of literature to highlight the connection between morphology and political communication. Furthermore, this study provides an understanding of how media discourse influences public perception of current global happenings with the help of lexical novelty. This research provides

an opportunity to students, observers and researchers in linguistics by demonstrating the importance of morphology in media discourse analysis, political communication studies.

This study is based on the theoretical framework of morphology and word formation theories, most importantly the theory proposed by Yule (2020), which categorizes of word formation processes for example: compounding, blending, clipping, derivation, acronyms, borrowing and coinage. These word-formation processes provide a framework for distinguishing and classifying neologisms in news coverage discourse. This research analyze the structural formation of neologisms as well as their ideological functions in media coverage of the conflict between Iran and the U.S.

### **1.1 Research Objectives**

- To identify the types of neologisms and morphological innovations appearing in media coverage of the Iran–U.S. conflict.
- To examine how these neologisms construct political meanings and ideological representations within media discourse on the Iran–U.S. conflict.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

- What types of neologisms and morphological innovations appear in media coverage of the Iran–U.S. conflict?
- How do these neologisms construct political meanings and ideological representations?

## **2. Literature review**

The study of neologisms and morphological innovation has attained increasing importance especially in contemporary linguistics because social, political, cultural and technological developments are the main factors in construction of language. Neologisms are defined as newly created lexical forms or existing lexical items that have acquired new meanings especially within specific communicative contexts. Yule (2020) states that word formation is the one of the most flexible processes in vocabulary expansion because it permits speakers and organizations to produce lexical items that reproduce evolving realities and altering social realities. Morphological innovation therefore performs a central role in language development, mainly in media discourse where quick communication needs brief, expressive, and eye-catching lexical forms. Likewise, Crystal (2000) claims that international political and technological expansions expressively accelerate lexical change because societies continuously need new vocabulary to define emerging events, ideologies, and communicative practices.

Researchers of morphology have generally observed the processes through which neologisms are shaped and assimilated into language. According to Bauer (1983), morphological processes i.e. compounding, derivation, acronyms, clipping, semantic change and borrowing contribute to the creative and productive nature of language by permitting the creation of new lexical items appropriate to specific communicative needs. Katamba (1993) states that morphology is related not only with the structural formation of words but also shows the relationship between lexical forms with their meaning. So, this connection becomes prominent in news and political discourse, where lexical items bring ideological meanings. Political consciousness, emotional responses and public understanding are affected by newly created lexical items. Constantly, the study of neologisms not only covers structural linguistic analysis, but also is linked to ideology, discourse and representation.

Media discourse has been an important area for development and expansion of neologisms. News institutions do not just report events but also shape perception through vocabulary, framing strategies and discursive interpretations. Journalists normally use new lexical forms to define geopolitical activities, direct audience attention and position them ideologically during the time of political clashes, war and international crises. According to Richardson (2007),



media text mostly uses lexical strategies that affect reader's interpretation of political activities, warfare and power relations. Therefore, his point of view proves that neologisms do not function only as linguistic novelty but also serve as ideological and influential tools in media discourse.

Some studies have discovered the connection between conflict discourse and lexical innovation. Investigation on conflict reporting and political crisis communication shows that periods of unpredictability often produce fast lexical creativity and the development of politically charged terminology. Kerremans (2015) clarifies that contemporary digital media accelerates lexical innovation because online reporting and social media platforms quickly circulate newly formed terminologies among international audiences. Similarly, Allan and Burrige (2006) claim that political and conflict-related discourse commonly produces emotionally charged language intended to affect public opinion, create national identity, and strengthen ideological representations. Expressions related to war, agreements, negotiation, cyber clash, and nationalism are often converted into innovative lexical forms that gain meanings beyond their literal meanings. These studies propose that neologisms are thoroughly related to media framing and political representation within war discourse.

Current studies on conflict discourse have increasingly highlighted the significance of lexical modernization in modern media communication. According to Klymenko and Shevchenko (2023), media reporting of the Russia–Ukraine war confirmed that war reporting produces widespread lexical creativity, including blends, semantic neologisms, acronyms, and politically charged vocabulary. Their study found that media-created vocabulary commonly reflected ideological opposition, nationalism, and identity creation. Likewise, studies of global political crises have revealed that media organizations progressively employ reduced forms, hybrid lexical constructions, and semantic innovation that rapidly become established in public discourse. These results are mainly appropriate to the Iran–U.S. conflict because similar geopolitical pressures and diplomatic narratives produce circumstances for morphological innovation and ideological framing within global media reporting.

Lexical innovation in political journalism is not accidental; instead, it is deliberately connected to institutional interests, political agendas, and audience positioning. Through frequent lexical choices and innovative vocabulary, media organizations shape how audiences understand political actors, international clashes, and diplomatic affairs. Consequently, the examination of neologisms within media coverage can expose underlying ideological assumptions and discursive techniques rooted within news commentary.

While numerous studies have examined media discourse, political communication, and word formation, comparatively limited research has specifically examined neologisms and morphological modernization in media coverage of the Iran–U.S. conflict. Framing theory, propaganda investigation, transitivity, and overall discourse analysis in political journalism have been main topics in prevailing literature. There is still an important gap in examining how innovative lexical forms contribute to ideological representation and political meaning-making within conflict-related media discourse. This study fills that gap by joining morphological analysis with discourse-oriented methodologies to study how media-produced neologisms shape political and ideological representations in coverage of the Iran–U.S. conflict. The current study contributes to contemporary research in morphology, media linguistics, and political discourse analysis by examining both structural and ideological aspects of lexical innovation.

### **3. Methodology**

This research uses a qualitative research approach to analyze neologisms and morphological innovations in media coverage of the Iran–U.S. conflict. A qualitative approach is suitable for this study because it focuses on understanding linguistic forms, meanings, and ideological depictions in media discourse instead of numerical measurement. The study aims to examine how newly created lexical items are formed and how they play a role within political news reporting. Qualitative morphological analysis enables a greater insight into the connection between language, media, and ideology in modern political communication (Creswell, 2014).

#### **3.1 Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework of the study is mainly grounded in Yule’s (2020) theory of word-formation processes. Yule clarifies that new words are formed through processes such as compounding, blending, derivation, clipping, acronyms, borrowing, and coinage. These types of word formation processes are used in the present study to examine and analyze neologisms that are present in contemporary media reporting of the conflict between Iran and the U.S. This theoretical framework helps examine how news institutions produce newly formed lexical items to describe diplomatic negotiations, international relations, conflicts, and military tensions. Media institutions actively create social and political meanings with the help of linguistic choices, they do not only describe political events. This framework is significant for the contemporary study because neologisms are viewed not as linguistic structures but also influence public perception of war, negotiations, and international affairs because these neologisms serve as ideological tools. The study provides an opportunity to examine both lexical and ideological dimensions of neologisms created by media discourse.

#### **3.2 Data collection**

The research extracted data from well-known news institutions i.e. BBC News, Al Jazeera, Reuters, and The Guardian. These news organizations are chosen because they offer wide global political coverage and signify different editorial views. The research uses a purposive sampling technique to select around 20–30 related news reports, headlines, editorials, and published articles associated with the Iran–U.S. conflict. Purposive sampling permits the researcher to choose texts according to their research objectives and include examples of newly formed lexical items (Palinkas et al., 2015).

The data collection procedure involves carefully reading the selected media texts and identifying and classifying lexical items that exhibit neologistic or morphologically innovative features. Special attention is given to headlines, frequent political terminologies, and war-related vocabulary because these sections often contain innovative and ideologically loaded language. The recognized lexical items are extracted and classified according to their morphological formation, including compounding, blending, derivation, acronym formation, and semantic innovation.

### **4. Data analysis**

This section analysis the media coverage related to the Iran–U.S. conflict reveals that global media organizations commonly used neologisms and morphological innovations to describe political conflicts, negotiations, military tension, sanctions, and international relations. The selected reports from BBC News, Al Jazeera, Reuters, and The Guardian use various word-formation processes, including compounding, blending, derivation, acronym formation, clipping, and semantic shift. These lexical innovations functioned not only as morphological tools for explaining complex political realities but also as ideological strategies that shaped audience’ interpretations of the conflict and wider diplomatic relations.

**Table-4.1 Word formation processes in the media coverage related to the Iran–U.S. conflict**

Expressions	Word formation processes	Structural formation	Contextual meaning	Ideological function
ceasefire diplomacy	Compounding	ceasefire + diplomacy	Diplomatic negotiations during a ceasefire	Frames harmony efforts intentionally
War-fatigue	Compounding	war + fatigue	Public exhaustion caused by prolonged conflict	Humanizes citizen suffering
proxy-war tensions	Compounding	proxy + war + tensions	Tensions arising from indirect geopolitical conflict	Highlights instability and uncertainty
nuclear flashpoint	Compounding	nuclear + flashpoint	Situation with potential for military escalation	Creates anxiety and seriousness
cyber-retaliation	Compounding	cyber + retaliation	Digital responses to cyberattacks	Emphasizes contemporary conflict
Iranomics	Blending	Iran + economics	Economic issues associated with Iran	Highlights the economic dimensions of political conflict
Infowar	Blending	information + war	information-based political conflict constructed through media	Emphasizes information warfare and propaganda
de-escalation	Derivation	de + escalation	Reduction of military tension	Frames negotiation positively
post-strike diplomacy	Derivation + Compounding	post + strike + diplomacy	Diplomatic efforts following military action	Suggests diplomacy as a means of conflict management
sanctions-driven crisis	Derivation + Compounding	sanctions + driven + crisis	Crisis resulting from economic sanctions	Critiques the consequences of sanctions policies

IRGC	Acronym	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps	Iran's military organization	Emphasizes institutional authority and military influence
JCPOA	Acronym	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action	International nuclear agreement involving Iran	Represents diplomatic negotiation and international cooperation
Demo	Clipping	demonstration → demo	Community protest or political congregation	Reflects informal and concise media language
Intel	Clipping	intelligence → intel	Security or army information	Creates brevity and efficiency in reporting
Flashpoint	Semantic Shift	existing word with extended political sense	Region or situation vulnerable to conflict	Highlights geopolitical risk and tension
Containment	Semantic Shift	existing political expression with new usage	Strategy to limit the influence of a state	Reflects geopolitical control and strategic intervention
Standoff	Semantic Shift	existing lexical form with political significance	Prolonged political or military deadlock	Reflects diplomatic tension and confrontation

Table-4.1 highlights that media coverage of the Iran–U.S. conflict broadly produces various word-formation processes to create political meanings and ideological representations. In these processes, compounding appeared most often through words such as “ceasefire diplomacy,” “war-fatigue,” “proxy-war tensions,” “nuclear flashpoint,” and “cyber-retaliation.” These compounds combine political, military, and expressive ideas into brief lexical forms that explain complex geopolitical certainties while instantaneously influencing audience perception. For example, “nuclear flashpoint” formed a sense of seriousness and fear by relating diplomatic pressures with possible military escalation, while “war-fatigue” highlighted emotional sufferings of civilians affected by extended conflict. It also shows that blended words such as: Iranomics, infowar etc. were created through combination of political and technical ideas to create innovative and outstanding vocabulary. In current political communication, these blends reflected the influence of economic discourse and war related information. Moreover, derivations e.g. de-escalation, post-strike diplomacy and sanctions-driven crisis framed political issues as processes of political cooperation and conflict management. On the other hand, acronyms for examples: IRGC and JCPOA showed that institutional and diplomatic terms changed into political labels through media discourse. These political labels also emphasize power and official identity. The examples of clipping i.e. demo,

intel showed the effect of multimedia diffusion and rapid news communication. Furthermore, words for examples: flashpoint, containment and standoff demonstrated semantic shift and also acquired geopolitical connotations within the context of conflict between Iran and the U.S. These lexical items also framed international relations as tense, insecure and intentionally planned. So, the table showed that lexical innovations not only linguistic phenomenon but also serve as an ideological tool that influence public perceptions of war, negotiation, diplomacy, power relations and global politics in media discourse.

### **5. Findings and discussion**

The findings of this research revealed that media coverage of the conflict between Iran and the U.S. widely used neologisms and lexical innovation to describe political conflict, war, negotiation and international relations. BBC News, Al Jazeera, Reuters, and The Guardian news reports illustrated that reporters mostly used newly created lexical forms and advanced political terms to define complex international realities and affect public perception. The analysis also showed that identified word-formation processes that contains compounding, blending, derivation, acronym, clipping, and semantic change. These lexical innovations functioned not only as communicative tools, but they also shaped audience views of the conflict and international pressure because these also served as ideological tools.

The main finding of this research is the occurrence of compounding in current media discourse that is the leading word formation process. For example, terms like ceasefire diplomacy, war-fatigue and proxy-war tensions appeared more commonly in news discourse reports and headlines. These examples of compounding easily understood by audiences and they combined several political and emotional connotations into short lexical forms. Yule (2020) claims that compounding is one of the processes in morphology that allows speakers and journalists to extensively create new lexical terms that reproduce constantly varying political and social realities. In the context of Iran-U.S. conflict, emotional and ideological meanings were reinforced through compounds. Expression such as nuclear flashpoint formed a sense of anxiety and urgency by linking diplomatic pressures with military intensification. In political journalism, these compounds also showed that they perform both descriptive and persuasive functions.

Expressions like Iranomics and infowar are the results of the blending process which reflect the productive and flexible nature of morphology in political reporting. The word Iranomics occurred by the fusion of Iran and economics, referred to economic situations and sanctions linked to political pressure of Iran. Similarly, word infowar comes as the result of information and war. This expression showed the role of digital information warfare and political conflict in international relations. According to the Allan and Burrige (2006), these types of neologisms appear in the periods of conflict and disasters because these neologisms explain realities and strengthen ideological meanings. This research supports this idea by showing that how blending contributed to depictions of geopolitical events.

Another significant finding is the occurrence of derivational processes in the Iran-U.S. conflict reporting. Innovative expressions like de-escalation, post-strike diplomacy and sanctions-driven crisis show that prefixes were mainly used to describe political representations, for example: prefix (de-) in de-escalation suggested a reduction or reversal of aggression, framing political discussions as efforts to reinstate peace and harmony. The repeated use of such words indicate that war remained ongoing and vital careful management. So, the findings of this study reveal that derivational forms play a significant role in framing ideology within the media coverage of the conflict between Iran and the U.S.



Acronyms i.e. IRGC and JCPOA appeared commonly in the examined media texts. IRGC stands for Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, functioned as a recognizable political and military marker associated with Iran's regional power and security discourse. Correspondingly, JCPOA stands for Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, this abbreviation became a symbol of nuclear diplomacy and international negotiation. Crystal (2000) concludes that in political and media communication, acronyms shorten long terms and provide an efficient form of reference. Acronyms not only examples of morphological innovation but also reinforced the institutionalized nature of political discourse especially in examined media coverage reports. Clipping appeared as a less common morphological process as compared to others. In examined media discourse, clipping examples are demo for demonstration and intel for intelligence. These examples emphasized brevity and immediacy because clipping reflected the influence of digital coverage and rapid spread of news communication. Clipping reinforced less ideological concentration in comparison with compounding, semantic shift or derivations. But these forms of clipping still proved that media discourse disseminates language for accessibility and rapid audience comprehension.

One of the important findings of this research is to examine the role of semantic shift in contemporary political media discourse. Lexical items such as: containment, standoff and flashpoint reinforced geopolitical connotations within media coverage of the conflict between Iran and the U.S. These semantic shifts prove that media organizations intentionally redefined existing words to construct political metaphors and affect readers' perception of international relations.

Overall, the findings of this research prove that neologisms and lexical innovations are the leading characteristics of media coverage of the conflict between Iran and the U.S. Journalists produced concise yet ideologically loaded expressions to frame diplomacy, conflict, international relationships and negotiation with the help of word formation processes i.e. compounding, blending, derivation, acronym formation, clipping, and semantic change. So, the discussion reveals that through the usage of lexical innovations, media language does not simply report political events but it actively constructs meanings and ideological interpretations. Thus, in modern international news journalism, the present research emphasizes the association between morphology, media discourse, and political communication.

## **6. Conclusion**

This research examined neologisms and lexical innovation in media coverage of the Iran-U.S. conflict and also focused on how these morphological innovations helped shaped meanings and ideological interpretations in modern media discourse. The findings of this research showed that innovative vocabulary was used to report war, conflict, diplomatic negotiation, military tensions and regional unpredictability by international media institutions. Journalists produced concise and communicative vocabulary that described complex geopolitical realities with the help of processes i.e. compounding, blending, derivation, acronym formation, clipping, and semantic shift, while simultaneously shaping public perception of international events (Yule, 2020; Kerremans, 2015).

The analysis showed that compounding was one of the most prominent and important word-formation processes in the media reports. Lexical items e.g. ceasefire diplomacy, proxy-war tensions and nuclear flashpoint combined numerous political and emotional connotations into single lexical items intensified representation of war and diplomacy. Lexical forms such as Iranomics and infowar are blended forms created through the word-formation process of blending reflected the ongoing influence of war-related information and economic discourse

especially within contemporary political media communication. Likewise, de-escalation and post-strike diplomacy are the derivational forms created through the process of derivation that framed diplomatic discussions. 'IRGC' and 'JCPOA' are the acronyms that strengthened political and organizational authority, while clipping appeared less commonly but term such as demo and intel proved that the effect of speedy digital coverage and reflected communication styles. Moreover, lexical terms like containment, flashpoint and standoff revealed how political meanings change within conflict discourse from existing lexical items (Bauer, 1983; Katamba, 1993; Yule, 2020).

Representations of authority, negotiation, regional uncertainty, and international relations are shaped by lexical choices in investigated media reports (Richardson, 2007). Emotional and ideological associations influenced audience perception of the Iran–U.S. conflict through the vocabulary items linked with military intensification, sanctions, and geopolitical opposition (Allan & Burrige, 2006). The findings showed that media discourse constructs social realities through morphological items and ideological framing. The research also emphasizes the significant connection between morphology and media communication (Yule, 2020).

Finally, the research contributes to the fields of morphology, media discourse analysis and political linguistics by offering a comprehensive analysis of word formation processes within reliable political media texts (Yule, 2020). It provides a deeper understanding of how neologisms and newly created lexical items function in current conflict reporting and showing the importance of newly formed lexical items in influencing ideological interpretations especially within global news coverage (Kerremans, 2015; Klymenko & Shevchenko, 2023). This research also offers a contemporary application of morphological theory in political and media discourse. Future research may examine neologisms and morphological innovation in further international conflicts or crises, digital media discourse to better understand the developing connection between language, media and ideology in international communication.

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