THE WORDS OF COVID-19: Bulgaria

hearth
(Огнище)

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Abstract:

The word hearth was used during the COVID-19 pandemic to describe the increase of infected people in a given locality. The word has figuratively meaning and it represents the burning fire of the infection. The word is loaded with negative connotations and it is used by journalists in media publications and by representatives of the National Operational Headquarters in Bulgaria in official statements.

Думата "огнище" е използвана по време на пандемията COVID-19, за да се опише увеличаването броя на заразените хора в дадено населено място. Думата има преносно значение и представлява "разгарящият се огън на инфекцията". Думата е натоварена с негативна конотация и се използва от журналисти в медийни публикации и от представители на Националния оперативен щаб в България в официални изявления.

Etymology:

Огнище [ognishte] – hearth

Meaning of the word hearth in Bulgarian.

Значение на думата огнище

мн. огнища, *ср.*
1. Място, където се пали огън. *Пламъкът на огнището осветяваше цялата стая.*
2. *Прен.* Бащин дом, родна къща.
3. *Прен.* Място, където се разпространява нещо. *Просветно огнище. Гнойно огнище.*
4. Място, където е горял огън. *Където е горял огън, винаги остава и огнище.*

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Meaning of the word hearth in English.

1. A place where a fire is lit. The flame of the hearth illuminated the entire room.
2. Figurative language - metaphore: Father's home, native house.
3. Figurative language - metaphore: A place where something spreads. Enlightenment hearth. Purulent outbreak.
4. Proverb: A place where a fire was burning. Where there is a fire, there is always a hearth.

Cultural specificity:

Synonyms of the word 'hearth' in Bulgarian.

Синоними на думата огнище [ognishte]

(същ.) оджак, огън
(същ.) пожар, пожарище
(същ.) дом, домакинство, семейство, кът, домашен кът, къща, жилище, покрив
(същ.) средище, център, централа

Translation of the word hearth in English.

fireplace; hearth
(център) centre, seat; мед. focus (pl foci)
ОГНИЩЕ на лула bowl

http://www.onlinerechnik.com/

Problematization:

The nominative function of the word ‘огнище’ [ognishte] according to the online dictionary in Bulgarian is a hearth.

From phycological and social standpoints the meaning and connotation of the word “hearth” are positive. From a medical point of view, the connotation of the word “hearth” is negative and the synonym is a *purulent outbreak*.

The connotation is also negative if we talk about natural disasters, such as fires.

During the pandemic of COVID-19, the hearth has a negative connotation and the use of the word ’hearth’ is in a new context. The context is not only medical but the situation is complicated and it includes social, psychological, economic, and other dimensions.

The social, psychological, economic dimensions of the “hearths” are a result of institutional, media and public communication at the beginning of the crisis with COVID-19 in Bulgaria. Politicians, statesmen and journalists try to describe the more clearly the situation. They prefer to put emphasis on the enlarging of the infection using the figurative meaning of the word hearth which people can decode very easily.

Communication strategies:

The synonym of the word “hearth” in a social context is a 'cluster'.

The use of the cluster is a part of scientific terminology and it is a synonym of hearth or outbreak and it refers to the distribution of COVID-19 and infection in a specific place or space: village, city, town, quarter, fabric, hospital, business building, etc.

The word hearth is an example of how the sense of words is changing depending on the strategic communication or in situative context use.

Subversion:

The word ‘hearth’ in the epidemic of COVID-19 is used as a result of the application of figurative language. The hearth is a rhetorical/stylistic figure: the synecdoche which is a kind of metonymy or a metaphor. The word is used to refer to the spread of the epidemic at the local or regional level, indicating places not only in Bulgaria but also in other countries.

Metaphors, in particular metonymy and synecdoche, intensify when new words are created, but they are not intended to reduce tension or euphemisms, but to enhance them. The change is a result of different factors: socio-cultural, political, medical, media, etc. Finally, the meaning is radically completely new or opposite meaning.

The poem “Farewell” written by the poet Hristo Botev, Bulgarian Renaissance, 1878.

Положителна конотация

Христо Ботев „На прощаване“ 1878 г., България е под турско владичество

та сърце, майко, не трае

да гледа турчин, че бесней

над бащино ми огнище:

Positive connotation

Hristo Botev "Farewell" 1878, Bulgaria is under Turkish rule

that heart, mother, does not last

to watch a Turk that rages

over my father's hearth:

The positive meaning of the word ‘hearth’ is on the metonymy: father's hearth and it is associated with a home, family, patriarchy.

Discussion:

The word ‘hearth’ occurs in the following variants in publications on the sites of online media in Bulgaria:

The meaning of the word ‘hearth’ in the context of COVID-19 is extended. The aim is to name/nominate neighborhoods, districts, quarters, cities, villages, countries, regions, continents etc.

Examples:

- New hearths of COVID-19 as a result of the return of Bulgarian migrants / seasonal workers from the Netherlands and Italy in their native places/villages. There are new COVID-19 hearths in the Plovdiv and Kustendil regions.

Hearth of the infection in certain quarters with Roma population.

Examples:

- Hearth of infection in Roma quarter “Filipovtsci” in Plovdiv.

- A new hearth of infection of COVID-19 at the region/quarter “Faculty” in Sofia;

Hearth in certain places in social terms: homes for the elderly.

Examples:

- Hearth of COVID-19 in a home for the elderly in the village of Dobri dol.

- Hearth of COVID-19: another 33 positive samples in a home for the elderly in Ruse.

- Hearth of COVID-19 in the Vidin region.

Hearth in certain places in the medical sphere: hospitals.

- New 165 and new outbreaks around Plovdiv. 10 employees of the "Ambulance" in Ruse are under quarantine because of an infected colleague.

- Fireplace with COVID-19. Did a paramedic spread the infection in the Shumen region?

- Boom of infected medics in Sliven - is there a hearth of COVID-19.

- Hearths in certain places and enterprises; Hearth with COVID-19 in Smolyan: At least 60 infected in a car parts factory. And variant “Hearth with COVID-19 COVID-19 in Smolyan: there are ten injured”; New hearths with COVID-19 and infection among Bulgarians and Romanians workers in Germany;

- Regional and geopolitical plan, economic: tourism: New hearths with COVID-19 in Greece near the border with Bulgaria;

In both places live and work mostly foreigners. A slaughterhouse in North Rhine-Westphalia has infected more than 400 people, including Bulgarians and Romanians, and more than 70 people in Neukölln, Berlin. Here are the new foci of coronavirus.

- Global conclusions: Are new hearths of COVID-19 dangerous?

- National Operational Headquarters - two new hearths with COVID-19 in Sarnitsa and Samokov.

“Hearths with COVID-19” is used in the headlines or subheadings of publications/articles. The titles of the articles mention exactly the geographical names and areas, the number of the infected people and the professional engagements in the "Emergency".

Negative connotations for those who returned to Bulgaria are avoided, seasonal workers and migrants in European countries are used.

Negative connotations are avoided when naming Roma’s populated quarters, mentioning that some have returned from European countries where they have resided and there have been no attempts to discriminate or create ethnic tension.

References/Further Readings:

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