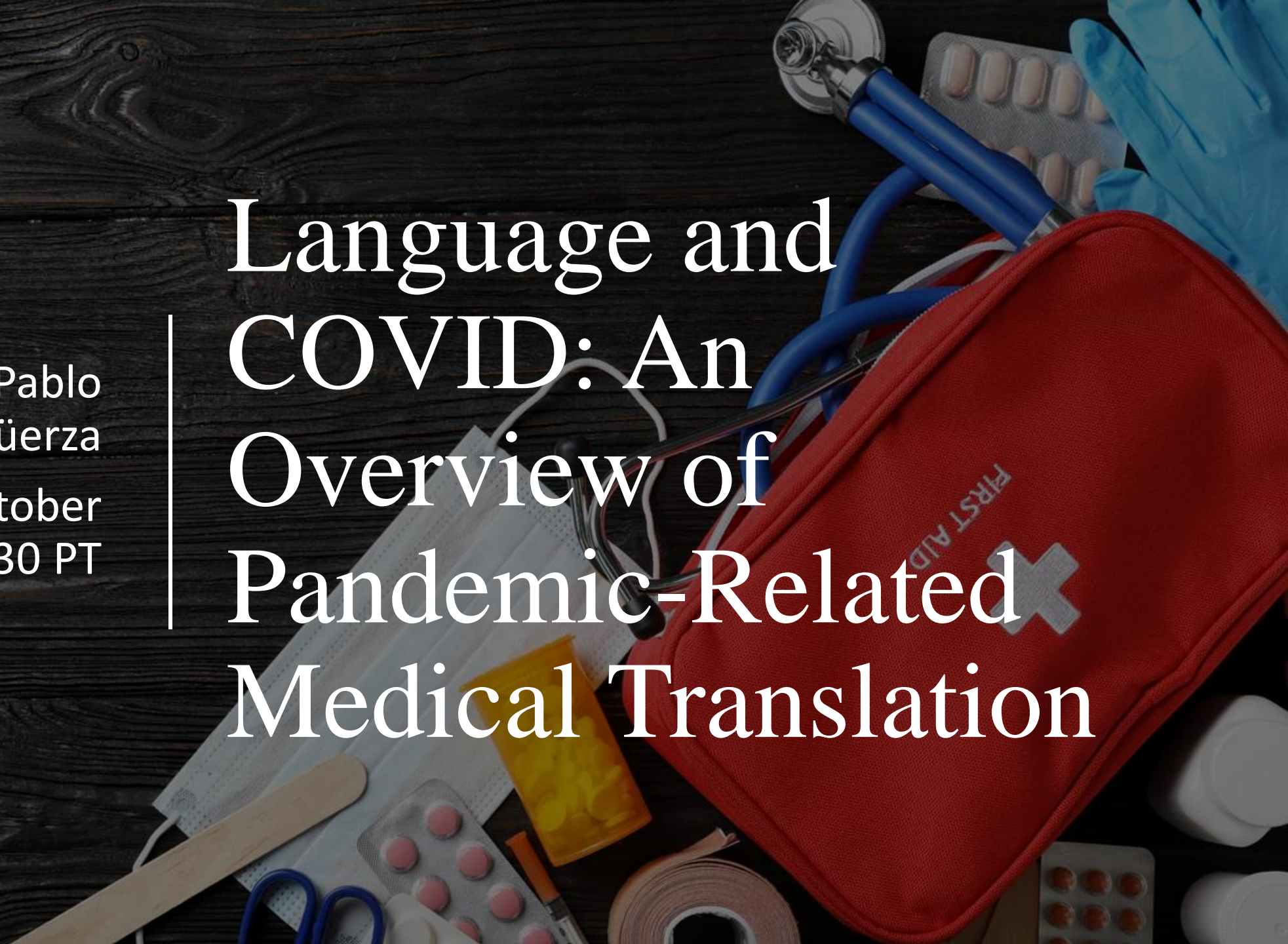


with Pablo  
Mugüerza  
Saturday, October  
15 at 08:30 PT

# Language and COVID: An Overview of Pandemic-Related Medical Translation



As you may know, I am a physician and medical translator. My first presentation was more oriented to my side as a physician, and the second to my side as a linguist. But if any medical emergency arises during either presentation...feel free to call ANOTHER physician: I have not practiced for many years.



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# For my presentation I have decided to address

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1) the gender, the pronunciation, and the capitalization of the terms COVID and SARS-CoV-2 in four different languages and


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2) the response from users of each of those languages in the form of term creation.



# HIV/AIDS: a precedent

To talk about the response of languages to a challenge such as a pandemic, we have a perfect precedent: HIV infection and one of its consequences, AIDS.



HIV made the jump from other primates to humans in west-central Africa in the early-to-mid 20th century.

AIDS was first recognized by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1981 and its cause—HIV infection—was identified in the early part of the decade.

It's sobering to reflect that we've been fighting the last big pandemic for four decades, and that more than 34 million people have died of it. Tuberculosis, largely forgotten in high-income countries, still causes around 1.4 million deaths per year. It was the biggest infectious disease killer before Covid-19 emerged, and will likely retain that designation when Covid-19 fades away.

# HIV/AIDS CONCLUSIONS

1. HIV/AIDS should only be written when referring to both entities at the same time (something very infrequent).
2. HIV is NOT a disease, but the name of a virus.
3. “HIV infection” is a disease, though mostly asymptomatic in treated patients.
4. “HIV infection” is communicable (mostly by fluids exchange, **but AIDS is not**).
5. Technically, AIDS is NOT even a disease: it is the late and advanced stage of UNTREATED chronic human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection.
6. Lexicalization is strongly encouraged, at least for aids.



# An investigation across 45 languages and 12 language families reveals a universal language network

In summary, we have established that key properties of the neural architecture of language hold across speakers of 45 diverse languages spanning 12 language families, and the variability observed across languages is similar to or lower than the inter-individual variability among speakers of the same language.

In spite of their shared features, languages do exhibit remarkable variation

En resumen, hemos establecido que las propiedades clave de la arquitectura neuronal del lenguaje se mantienen entre los hablantes de 45 lenguas diversas que abarcan 12 familias lingüísticas, y la variabilidad observada entre las lenguas es similar o menor que la variabilidad interindividual entre los hablantes de la misma lengua.

A pesar de sus características comunes, las lenguas presentan una notable variación

Source (August 2022): <https://go.nature.com/3Vg1Cq9>

# The gender of COVID and SARS-CoV-2 in English

Most English nouns have no gender

It is often stated as objective fact that Modern English has “no grammatical gender.” This is not, however, entirely true. Modern English does, in fact, have grammatical gender *to some extent*, but it is very limited compared to other Indo-European languages, and a noun’s grammatical gender usually corresponds to the natural gender of the person or thing to whom it refers.

Source: <https://bit.ly/3ECI7SG>



# The capitals of COVID and SARS-CoV-2 in English

What about capitalization? Should you write COVID in uppercase or lowercase letters? This depends who you ask!

The Modern Language Association (MLA), an important style authority, recommends all capital letters, COVID-19. The Associated Press agrees.

However, in some newspapers, like the New York Times and The Guardian, you will find only the C capitalized: Covid-19. The New Yorker loves to be difficult about matters of style, and their preference is for small caps: coVID-19.

Note that the word “coronavirus” is generally not capitalized.

Source: <https://ginsengenglish.com/blog/covid>

# The pronunciation of COVID and SARS-CoV-2 in English

NO doubts: /'kəʊvɪd/ and /ɛs-eɪ-ɑːr-ɛs-CoV-2/

The screenshot shows a web browser with multiple tabs open. The active tab is 'oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/pronunciation/english/covid'. The page displays the pronunciation of 'Covid' as a noun. The main content area includes the word 'Covid' followed by 'noun: pronunciation' and the phonetic transcription /'kəʊvɪd/. There are two audio icons for listening to the pronunciation. Below this, there is a section titled 'More help with pronunciation' which states 'You can practise your pronunciation with the Oxford iSpeaker.' and a link 'Find out more >'. On the right side, there is a 'Nearby words' section listing 'covey noun', 'Covid-19 noun', 'Covid noun' (highlighted), 'covidiot noun', and 'cow noun'. Below that is a 'More on pronunciation' section with links to 'Pronunciation Guide: British and American English' and 'Pronunciation Guide: American English only', and a note 'Improve your pronunciation with the Oxford iSpeaker'. The left sidebar features a Dell Technologies advertisement for the Inspiron 27 7710 All-in-One computer, priced at 1,199,00 €, with a 'Comprar ahora' button. The bottom of the browser shows a taskbar with a PDF file named 'Mecit, Shrum, Low....pdf' and a 'Mostrar todo' button.

DeepL x Real A x Covid x EM Covid x the ge x Covid x Most E x Yes, En x URL Sh x Do You x +

oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/pronunciation/english/covid

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Pronunciation of Covid noun in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary

**Covid** noun: pronunciation

**Covid** /'kəʊvɪd/

**Covid** /'kəʊvɪd/

More help with pronunciation

You can practise your pronunciation with the Oxford iSpeaker.

[Find out more >](#)

[Covid noun - see entry](#)

**Nearby words**

[covey noun](#)

[Covid-19 noun](#)

**Covid noun**

[covidiot noun](#)

[cow noun](#)

**More on pronunciation**

[Pronunciation Guide: British and American English](#)

[Pronunciation Guide: American English only](#)

Improve your pronunciation with the Oxford iSpeaker

Mecit, Shrum, Low....pdf

Mostrar todo x

# The gender of COVID and SARS-CoV-2 in French

Sur le genre de cette maladie, l'Académie française s'est prononcée en mai 2020.

On devrait donc dire *la covid 19*, puisque le noyau est un équivalent du nom français féminin *maladie*.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL `academie-francaise.fr/le-covid-19-ou-la-covid-19`. The page title is "Le covid 19 ou La covid 19" and the date is "Le 7 mai 2020". The article text explains that "Covid" is an acronym of "corona virus disease" and discusses the gender of the word "covid 19". It concludes that "la covid 19" is the preferred form because "covid" is a feminine equivalent of the French word "maladie".

**Le covid 19 ou La covid 19**

Le 7 mai 2020 Emplois fautifs

*Covid* est l'acronyme de *corona virus disease*, et les sigles et acronymes ont le genre du nom qui constitue le noyau du syntagme dont ils sont une abréviation. On dit ainsi *la* S.N.C.F. (*Société nationale des chemins de fer français*) parce que le noyau de ce groupe, *société*, est un nom féminin, mais *le* C.I.O. (*Comité international olympique*), parce que le noyau, *comité*, est un nom masculin. Quand ce syntagme est composé de mots étrangers, le même principe s'applique. On distingue ainsi *le* FBI, *Federal Bureau of Investigation*, « Bureau fédéral d'enquête », de *la* CIA, *Central Intelligence Agency*, « Agence centrale de renseignement », puisque dans un cas on traduit le mot noyau par un nom masculin, *bureau*, et dans l'autre, par un nom féminin, *agence*. *Corona virus disease* – notons que l'on aurait pu préférer au nom anglais *disease* le nom latin *morbus*, de même sens et plus universel – signifie « maladie provoquée par le *corona virus* ("virus en forme de couronne") ». On devrait donc dire *la covid 19*, puisque le noyau est un équivalent du nom français féminin *maladie*. Pourquoi alors l'emploi si fréquent du masculin *le covid 19*? Parce que, avant que cet acronyme ne se répande, on a surtout parlé *du corona virus*, groupe qui doit son genre, en raison des principes exposés plus haut, au nom masculin *virus*. Ensuite, par métonymie, on a donné à la maladie le genre de l'agent pathogène qui la provoque. Il n'en reste pas moins que l'emploi du féminin serait préférable et qu'il n'est peut-être pas trop tard pour redonner à cet acronyme le genre qui devrait être le sien.

**Recherche**

Par titre

Par rubrique

Par parution

**Rechercher**

# The capitals of covid and SARS-CoV-2 in French

Comme nous l'avons vu dans la déclaration de l'Académie française sur la diapositive précédente, en mai 2020, cette institution avait déjà lexicalisé le terme et n'utilisait pas de majuscules. Mais la réalité est qu'en 2021, il était plus courant de voir "covid" écrit avec une majuscule initiale.

As we saw in the statement from the French Academy on the previous slide, by May 2020, that institution had already lexicalized the term and was not using capital letters. But the reality is that by 2021, it was more common to see "covid" written with an initial capital letter.

# The pronuntiation of COVID and SARS-CoV-2 in French

NO doubts: /kovi'd/ and /sarscovddø/

Browser tabs: (1) Tweets más recientes / Twitter, Gustavo / Twitter, Nueva pestaña, Le covid 19 ou La covid 19 | Acad..., academia française le covid o la..., Prononciation de COVID-19: Coi...

URL: fr.forvo.com/word/covid-19/

Filtrer la langue et l'accent:

- ☐ Français 5
- ☐ Allemand 2
- ☐ Coréen 2
- ☐ Italien 2
- ☐ Lituanien 2
- ☐ Hongrois 1
- ☐ Luxembourgeois 1
- ☐ Japonais 1
- ☐ Finnois 1
- ☐ Tchèque 1
- ☐ Danois 1
- ☐ Turc 1

Pas satisfait ?  
[Demander une nouvelle prononciation](#)

Il y a un problème avec ce mot ?

Vous pouvez l'améliorer ? Votre accent est différent ? [Prononcez COVID-19 en Chinois](#)

Partager la prononciation de COVID-19 en Chinois: [f](#) [t](#) [m](#)

### Prononciation de COVID-19 en Français [fr]

Transcription phonétique: *ko.vid.diz.nœf*

**Prononcé par DannyBT** (Homme - Suisse)  
0 votes [Bonne](#) [Mauvaise](#) [Ajouter à mes favoris](#) [Télécharger en MP3](#) [Créer un rapport](#) [Suivre](#)

**Prononcé par FrenchMaleVoice** (Homme - France)  
0 votes [Bonne](#) [Mauvaise](#) [Ajouter à mes favoris](#) [Télécharger en MP3](#) [Créer un rapport](#) [Suivre](#)

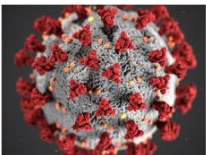
**Prononcé par Pat91** (Homme - France)  
0 votes [Bonne](#) [Mauvaise](#) [Ajouter à mes favoris](#) [Télécharger en MP3](#) [Créer un rapport](#) [Suivre](#)

**Prononcé par ThoMiCroN** (Homme - Canada)  
-1 votes [Bonne](#) [Mauvaise](#) [Ajouter à mes favoris](#) [Télécharger en MP3](#) [Créer un rapport](#) [Suivre](#)


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Guides - Événements

Événements



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# The gender of COVID and SARS-CoV-2 in German

In the German language, "der Virus" is used almost as often as "das Virus". This was recorded by the Digital Dictionary of the German Language.

But there are regional differences: In Austria, for example, "the virus" is used four times as often. The use of der or das also seems to depend on the type of virus.

According to the digital dictionary, the written language usually says "the computer virus". There is no scientific explanation for this.



The capitals of COVID and  
SARS-CoV-2 in German

In German, they write all nouns with a capital letter. Nouns are these words that describe a “thing” or a “person” as “das Auto” or “die Frau”.

# The pronuntiation of COVID and SARS- CoV-2 in German

/ˌko:vɪt'noɪ̯nt͡sɐ:n/

/sarskɔrɔnaviruszwai/

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL `forvo.com/word/covid-19/`. The page displays the title "COVID-19 pronunciation in German [de]". Under the title, there are two pronunciation entries:

- Pronunciation by DagmarB** (Female from Germany): 0 votes, Good, Bad, Add to favorites, Download MP3, Report, Follow.
- Pronunciation by Stusstrupp** (Male from Germany): 0 votes, Good, Bad, Add to favorites, Download MP3, Report, Follow.

Below the pronunciations, there is a "Translation" section with the text "Translation of COVID-19" and a "+ add translation" button. Further down, there is a "Guides - Events" section with an "Events" link. On the right side of the page, there are two advertisements: one for "Farnell" (SAVE 30% ON PRODUCTION SUPPLIES WITH MULTICOMP PRO) and another for "multicomp PRO".

# The gender of COVID and SARS-CoV-2 in Spanish

In June 2021, a Twitter user asked the RAE about the gender of this disease: el covid or la covid? This was the answer:

# The gender of COVID and SARS-CoV-2 in Spanish

The acronym "COVID-19", which gives its name to the disease, is normally used in the masculine form ("COVID-19") due to the influence of the genus of "coronaviruses" and other viral diseases ("Zika", "Ebola"), which take their name from the virus that causes them.

June 2021



# The gender of COVID and SARS-CoV-2 in Spanish

But the use of the feminine form ("la COVID-19"), as the WHO does in its Spanish pages, is justified because "disease" is the core of the acronym ("COroNaVirus Disease"). Both are considered valid.

Its lexicalization as a common noun with the form "covid", in lower case and omitting the numerical part of the acronym, follows the same pattern: "el/la covid".



# The capitals of COVID and SARS- CoV-2 in Spanish

In October 2022 all 3 possibilities are common for the disease: covid, Covid and COVID.

As for the virus, coronavirus is usually seen without an initial capital letter.

Please be very careful when translating, so that it is always clear when you are talking about the virus and when you are talking about the disease.



# The pronuntiation of COVID and SARS-CoV-2 in Spanish

In Spanish there are 6 words with more than 2 syllables ending in –id in Spanish:

Madrid

Valladolid

David

Ardid

Adalid

Áspid

# The response of English speakers

Whether you are **vaxxed**, **double-vaxxed**, or **unvaxxed**, the language relating to **vaccines** and **vaccination** permeated all of our lives in 2021. For lexicographers, it is rare to observe a single topic impact language so dramatically, and in such a short period of time become a critical part of our everyday communication.

However, the story of vaccines embedded in the English language is an old one which started at the end of the 1790s with the coinage of the word *vaccine*, followed soon after by words relating to opposition to vaccination, such as *anti-vaccinist*.

The word *vaccine* itself, already very common, more than **doubled** in frequency between September 2020 and September 2021

# The response of English speakers

**Caremongering:** solidarity and mutual aid; social altruism.

**Corona-snitch:** person who notifies the police to denounce the covididiot of the day.

**Dracula sneeze:** coughing in the elbow; coughing in the sleeve.

**Miss Rona:** no explanation needed.

**Moronavirus** = covidiot.

**Stay home:** confining oneself; staying at home; not going out.

**Tested pozzy (pozzi):** positive.

**Wuhan shake (foot shake):** footshake; toe touch; toe greeting.

**Fauci ouchie:** FAUCI-OUCHIE means "COVID-19 Vaccine.

**Covid arm:** an apparent side-effect of some Covid-19 vaccinations, where a temporary rash develops at the injection site

**Vaxxident:** an unfortunate incident that happens unexpectedly and unintentionally, typically related to vaxxination.

**Vaxdar:** a Gaydar for vaxxed people

**Jab or jag?:** Remember the Rubella vaccination at school? That was a jag. Jag' is correct. After all, the Scots invented medicine, so what we say goes.

Source: <https://bit.ly/3yv8y9i>

A large orange circle is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

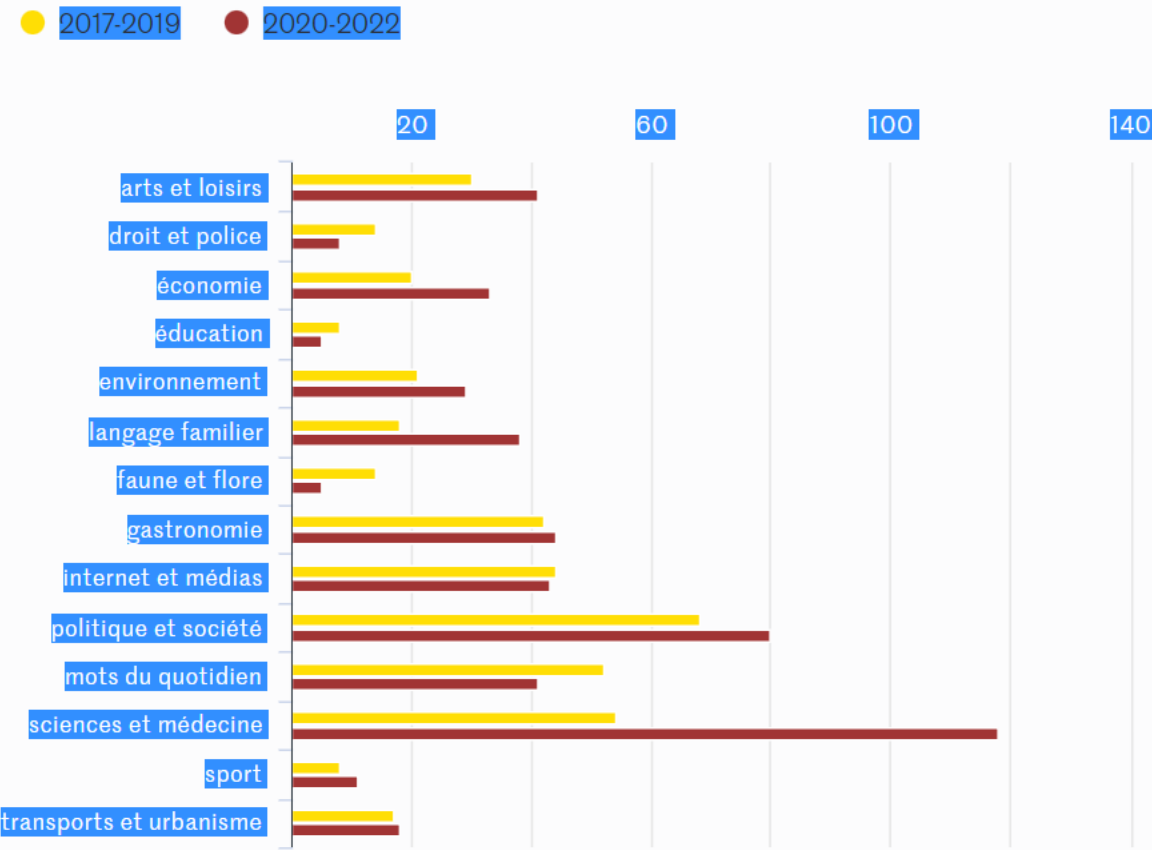
## The response of French speakers

The French for 'vaccine' is 'vaccin' (vak-san). Interestingly, in recent months, the word 'vaccin', when used on its own, has increasingly come to refer only to the inoculation against Covid-19, as if all other vaccines had disappeared.

Source: <https://bit.ly/3yullc2>



Evolution des nouvelles entrées (nouveaux mots ou nouveaux sens) dans les dictionnaires Larousse et Le Robert, par thème, par rapport à l'avant-Covid.



Une médicalisation lexicale en trois temps



# The response of French speakers

**Mélancovid:** Morosité causée par la pandémie de Covid-19

**Panachage vaccinal:** une stratégie vaccinale où les premières injections de la primo-vaccination se font avec des vaccins différents, le plus souvent issus de plateformes vaccinales distinctes

**Bélenophobie:** une phobie peur des aiguilles et des objets pointus.

**Fracture vaccinale:** fortes disparités géographiques et sociales.

**A la vaccinglinglin:** formé sur l'expression «à la Saint-Glinglin». Projection dans un avenir incertain où tout le monde sera vacciné, y compris dans les pays à faibles revenus.

**Inégalité vaccinale:** L'inégalité d'accès aux vaccins

**Ecouvillonner:** prélever un échantillon dans (une cavité naturelle) à l'aide d'un écouvillon.

Source: <https://bit.ly/3Ve5ilW>

# The response of German speakers

COVID and German language

In Germany, lexicographers at the Leibniz Institute for the German Language have compiled more than 1200 new words related to the coronavirus pandemic

# The response of German speakers

For example, *Coronamutationsgebiet* is an area where coronavirus mutations are widespread.

A *Geisterveranstaltung* (ghost event) is an event with no people in attendance, usually sports. Live music is allowed, provided the audience remains in their cars, at an *Autokonzert*.

*Mundschutzmode* includes "*Mund* for mouth, *Schutz* for protection and *Mode* as a term for fashion. So a literal translation would be mouth protection fashion," Stefanowitsch says.

But Germans have also referred to a *Gesichtskondom* — a "face condom," which he notes creates a "novel image" in your head. *Behelfsmundnasenschutz* would be an "improvised mouth nose protection."

# The response of German speakers

*Maulkorb*, or muzzle (bozal), is not on the list of new words. But people opposed to mask requirements are using the word muzzle in a new way: "to portray adherence to sensible public health measures as an act of submission under an authoritarian government," Stefanowitsch says. "So that's been a stroke of genius from their perspective."

Source: <https://n.pr/3Cog3ji>



# The response of German speakers

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In all honesty, "SARS-CoV-2" is the name of the new disease, but it is not easy to pronounce. The abbreviated form "Corona" has therefore quickly become established, which has led to a considerable risk of confusion with a well-known beer brand.

In fact, the brewing company has seen a drop in profits. This was certainly not only due to the fear of contracting the virus over a pint of beer, but was also due to the fact that production came to a standstill at various locations. Namely, where only stores and facilities belonging to the critical infrastructure were still open.

# The response of German speakers

But the abbreviation "Corona" didn't just get the beer producer into trouble. It also caused other neologisms such as "Corona-Krise," "Corona-Pandemie," and even "Corona-Virus." While the short forms "Corona-Krise" (instead of "Coronavirus-Krisen") and "Corona-Pandemie" (instead of "Coronavirus-Pandemie") simply make pithy catchphrases that have saved many a copywriter from a nervous breakdown in the face of frequently imposed character limits, the word bloom "Corona-Virus" caused (hopefully) maximum head-shaking among the editorial staff. But why, actually?

In fact, there are two ways to form compound nouns in German: by writing them together and by hyphenating them. So "Corona-Virus" shouldn't be a problem for the editorial office, should it? Yes it does.



# The response of Spanish speakers

## The use of “dosis”

The screenshot shows the official website for the COVID-19 vaccination strategy in Spain. The page is titled 'Estrategia de vacunación COVID-19' and provides information about the vaccination process. It features a timeline with four stages: Etapa 0 (December 2020), Etapa 1 (February 2021), Etapa 2 (June 2021), and Etapa 3 (June 2021). Each stage lists the groups of people who are eligible for vaccination.

**GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA | Estrategia de vacunación COVID-19**

INICIO PREGUNTAS Y RESPUESTAS VOCES EXPERTAS ENLACES

## Estrategia de vacunación COVID-19

Información oficial sobre la vacunación contra el nuevo coronavirus

DICIEMBRE 2020	FEBRERO 2021	JUNIO 2021	
<b>Etapa 0</b> DESARROLLO, AUTORIZACIÓN Y EVALUACIÓN	<b>Etapa 1</b> PRIMERAS DOSIS DISPONIBLES	<b>Etapa 2</b> MÁS DOSIS DISPONIBLES	<b>Etapa 3</b> VACUNA AMPLIAMENTE DISPONIBLE
	<b>Grupos prioritarios</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Residentes y personal en centros de mayores y de atención a grandes dependientes</li><li>Personal sanitario y sociosanitario de primera línea</li><li>Otro personal sanitario y sociosanitario</li><li>Grupos de dependencia</li></ul>	<b>Otros grupos prioritarios</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mayores de 80</li><li>Personas entre 70 y 79 y personas con condiciones de muy alto riesgo</li><li>Personas entre 60 y 65</li><li>Personas entre 66 y 69</li><li>Otro personal sanitario y sociosanitario</li></ul>	<b>Resto grupos prioritarios</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Personas entre 40 y 49</li><li>Personas entre 30 y 39</li><li>Personas entre 20 y 29</li><li>Personas entre 12 y 19</li><li>Personas entre 5 y 11</li></ul>

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ENTENDIDO

# The response of Spanish speakers

In May 2020 the first version of a glossary was ready, with more than 3200 entries from very diferente realms: virology, molecular biology, epidemiology, pharmacology, economics, sociology, microbiological tests, pneumology, protection equipments, and the colloquial register.

## twindemic

**1** {adj.} **dobledémico** (o dobledémica)

**2** {s.} **dobledemia**

Sinonimia (en): *double epidemic*.

Sinonimia (es): epidemia doble.

Concepto: sindemia (→ *syndemic*:2)

consistente en la suma de dos epidemias (o pandemias) concurrentes o secuenciales en una misma población.

- Aplicable al lema completo, en todas sus acepciones:

Sinonimia (en): *doubledemic*.



# MY FINAL CONCLUSION

In my opinion the users of these 4 languages were perfectly prepared for a tsunami like that of the covid pandemic, thanks to their centuries of existence and having faced numerous pandemics in that time. It is time to be extremely critical in our work and to do research in order to draw conclusions that will allow us to face new challenges of this kind...very soon.



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