

東亞報紙英文社論中 COVID-19 的 術語和討論

白班哲明*

中國醫藥大學

摘要

這個時代最大的新聞之一是 COVID-19。研究著眼於社論中對 COVID-19 的討論，然而尚未對用於命名 COVID-19 的術語進行研究。本研究的主要目的是找出東亞（日本、韓國、台灣）英文社論中用於命名 COVID-19 的術語。第二個目的是查看討論的問題。我建立了一個包含 2021 年 3 月 1 日至 4 月 4 日（ $n=90$ ）和 2021 年 10 月 1 日至 11 月 4 日（ $n=88$ ）之間發表的 178 篇社論的語料庫。社論來自以下網站的：(a) 《朝日新聞》（日本）、(b) 《韓國先驅報》（韓國）、(c) 《台北時報》（台灣）。社論使用過的七個術語來命名 COVID-19，其中三個術語：Pandemic（ $\text{freq} = 0.48$ 每 1,000 字）、COVID-19（頻率 = 0.36 每 1,000 字）和 COVID-19 Pandemic（頻率 = 0.28 每 1,000 字）三份報紙都用過。雖然《台北時報》沒有使用過的任何其他術語，但《朝日新聞》和《韓國先驅報》都使用過四個其他術語（Coronavirus、Coronavirus Pandemic、Novel/New Coronavirus、Novel/New Coronavirus Pandemic）。有 68 篇社論至少使用了一個術語。然而，絕大多數（ $n = 60$ ）並沒有關注 COVID，只是使用術語來表示當前時代。在關注 COVID-19 的社論中，醫療保健（ $n = 4$ ）是主要關注點。研究發現，不僅在三份報紙中，而且在社論內部，都使用了多種術語來命名 COVID-19。該研究提供了有關東亞英文報紙討論 COVID-19 時使用的術語的見解。它表明 Pandemic 和 COVID-19 Pandemic 是命名 COVID-19 時最常用的術語，顯示了人們如何關注 COVID-19 大流行。

關鍵詞：COVID-19、社論、英文報紙、日本、韓國、台灣

* 中國醫藥大學通識教育中心專案助理教授

Terms and Discussion of COVID-19 in English Editorials from Newspapers in East Asia

G. Benjamin White*

China Medical University

Abstract

One of the biggest news stories of this era has been COVID-19. While studies have looked at the discussion of COVID-19 in editorials, there have not been studies on the terms used to name COVID-19. The main purpose of this study was to find the terms used to name COVID-19 in English editorials from East Asia (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan). A second purpose was to look at the issues discussed. I built a corpus of 178 editorials published between March 1 and April 4, 2021 (n = 90) and October 1 and November 4, 2021 (n = 88). The editorials were taken from the websites of (a) *The Asahi Shimbun* (Japan); (b) *The Korea Herald* (South Korea); and (c) the *Taipei Times* (Taiwan). The editorials used seven terms to name COVID-19, with three terms: Pandemic (freq = 0.48 per 1,000 words), COVID-19 (freq = 0.36 per 1,000), and COVID-19 Pandemic (freq = 0.28 per 1,000 words) used by all three. While the *Taipei Times* did not use any additional terms, both *The Asahi Shimbun* and *The Korea Herald* used four additional terms (Coronavirus, Coronavirus Pandemic, Novel/New Coronavirus, Novel/New Coronavirus Pandemic). There were 68 editorials that used at least one term. However, the vast majority (n = 60) did not focus on COVID, only using the terms to identify the current era. Of the editorials whose focus was on COVID-19, Health Care (n = 4) was the main focus. The study found that there were a variety of terms used not only among the three newspapers but also inside of the editorials, to name COVID-19. The study gives insights as to the terms used when discussing COVID-19 in English newspapers from East Asia. It shows that Pandemic and COVID-19 Pandemic are the most preferred terms used when naming

* Project Assistant Professor of Center for General Education, China Medical University

COVID-19, showing how the focus is on the pandemic aspects of COVID-19.

Key words: COVID-19, Editorials, English Newspapers, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan

1. Introduction

The worldwide pandemic, COVID-19, was first reported to WHO at the end of December 2019 (WHO, "Coronavirus disease Q&A"). WHO classified "coronavirus disease (COVID-19) [as] an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus" (WHO, "Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)," par. 1). The severity of COVID-19 compelled governments all over the world to deal with the outbreak. Many locations went into lockdown, requiring people to remain at home. These lockdowns caused massive impacts on both the local and global economies, as well as people's well-being (Daniel; Gong; Juanola; Kim; Kyodo News; Sasak et al.; Soon; Uhlmann).¹

Newspapers became an important source of information on the pandemic. An issue discussed early in the pandemic was the connection between access to too much information on COVID-19 and mental health. Sasaki et al. recommended people "limit the frequency and amount of access they have to television and Web media to obtain information about COVID-19" (502). They specifically recommend this due to the increase in anxiety over the pandemic.

This study is connected to the second medium (web media) and specifically focuses on the coverage of COVID-19 in English newspapers from East Asia. Specifically, I focused on the daily editorials published in the newspapers. Editorials are interesting as they are "a newspaper or magazine article that gives the opinions of the editors or publishers [;] also: an expression of opinion that resembles such an article" (Merriam-Webster). Editorials are written to drive public opinion and can also offer suggestions as to the best course of action to take on a particular topic (Langley; The Guardian, "Opinion;" Times-Dispatch Staff).

Editorials offer interesting topics of study. Editorials from English newspapers in East Asia offer even more interesting topics as these newspapers are published in countries where English is a foreign language. The availability of English newspapers in East Asia shows English's long history of globalization (Crystal; Pennycook). Interestingly, outside of Fox and White ("First-person pronoun"), there has been little research into editorials from English newspapers in East Asia. Much of the literature on editorials focuses on English newspapers outside of East Asia (Amma, Breeze; Ojo; Osisanwo).

¹ Unless page numbers are given, paraphrase comes from the general idea of the entire source.

Fox is an interesting study as it investigated the tone of editorials dealing with COVID-19 from English newspapers in four East Asian countries (China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan). My study follows a similar investigation completed by Fox. However, there are two major differences. First, I removed China and Hong Kong from the study and added Japan. Japan, along with Korea and Taiwan, has higher press freedoms than China and Hong Kong, meaning the newspapers will have more freedom in reporting on COVID-19 (Reporters without Borders). Second, the main focus of the study was on the terms used when naming COVID-19 in the editorials. How writers name COVID-19 (e.g., COVID-19 or Coronavirus Pandemic) is missing in the literature. Identifying how COVID-19 is named in global newspapers can help show differences in the use of language around the world.

1.1. Research Questions

This study was completed to answer the following questions:

1. What terms did the editorials use to name COVID-19?
2. How did the use of terms change between editorials published in March 2021 and October 2021?
3. What was the focus and tone of the editorials that discussed COVID-19?

2. Literature Review

2.1. COVID-19

Throughout this paper, I will use COVID-19 to identify and name “the disease caused by a new coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2” (WHO, “Coronavirus disease Q&A,” What is COVID-19?). Any reader of news since the first reports of COVID-19 to WHO knows that other terms are, and have been, used to name the disease (WHO, “Coronavirus disease Q&A”). COVID-19 comes from WHO’s early name of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Dong et al.; WHO, “Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)”). It has also been known as Coronavirus, Novel (New) Coronavirus Disease 2019, Wuhan Virus, and China Virus (Masters-Waage et al.; Sasaki et al.). The last two names (Wuhan Virus, China Virus) led to issues of xenophobia and anxiety over the disease (Chao; Sasaki et al.). They also do not follow the recommendations of WHO, which argued against using geographic locations when naming diseases due specifically to problems of

xenophobia and other issues (WHO, “WHO issues best;” see also Masters-Waage et al.).

I used English newspapers from three East Asian countries (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan) for the corpus. As a result, I first made a note of the English names used by the governmental health departments in these three countries for COVID-19. Interestingly, they only used COVID-19 and Coronavirus when discussing COVID-19. They did not add Novel/New or Pandemic to the names (Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare; Taiwan Centers for Disease Control).

2.2. Editorials

Editorials are an interesting genre for study since they “get things done using language” (Hyland, *Genre and Second* 1). Again, Merriam-Webster defines them as “a newspaper...article that gives the opinions of the editors” (n.p.). Singh and Singh liken editorials to the discussion section of a research article in that they do not produce evidence, but instead look at it critically. They emphasized that the job of an editorial is to give an opinion (381-2). Editorials are unique in that they do not have a byline; instead they are the “opinion of the paper” (Adjei 64; see also Merriam-Webster). They are used to offer the newspaper’s opinions on a topic. They also suggest changes that should be made (Langley; Times-Dispatch Staff). Importantly, they must be based on facts. As The Guardian editor, C. P. Scott stated (qtd. in The Guardian, “Opinion”), “comment is free...but facts are sacred.”

There is a question as to the audience and readers of these English editorials. They are all written in a foreign language (i.e., English) in the three countries (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan) where they are published. As a result, the first people that come to mind are foreign residents and other people interested in the country. However, editorials are meant to move public opinion. It can thus be questioned how much influence these English editorials have on a country’s government (Langley; Times-Dispatch Staff).

2.3. COVID-19 and Editorials

As expected, editorials from the beginning of what would become the COVID-19 pandemic took an alarming view of the situation (Fox, 1863-69; Osisanwo, 65-7, 76-7). Fox also found that alarming views “did not decline when the crisis abated” (1869). In addition, Osisanwo found that editorials

around the world “largely set the agenda on the negative representation of the disease” (76). Due to the nature of COVID-19, Osisanwo found that the editorials encouraged people to follow and support the health departments in defeating the disease (73). Earlier, Fox also found these views in the English editorials from Asia, a sense of support for the government in their fight against COVID-19 (1869-70).

Fox analyzed six English newspapers from four Asian countries. The analysis showed something very interesting in the editorials from China and Taiwan after “the initial crisis [had] abated.” (1870). At this point in COVID-19, the *Taipei Times* took the opportunity to “[criticize] the Chinese government” (1870). Editorials from China, on the other hand, used the opportunity to attack the US (1870). This was probably due to the anti-China rhetoric coming out of the US at the time (BBC News). Fox concluded that this was done to give a sense of nationalism to the readers while at the same time showing support for the government in its handling of the situation (1870).

This alarming nature and the criticism of other countries in the editorials are probably why Sasaki et al. recommended that people be careful with the amount of news and information they read about COVID-19. The fear and confusion over COVID-19 could lead to mental health issues. Outside of mental health issues, there were also problems of discrimination against Asians around the world due to the virus’s origins (Chao; Masters-Waage et al.). These issues show how important it is to ensure that opinions found in editorials are based on facts and look at the issue critically (The Guardian, “Opinion;” Singh and Singh).

2.4. English Newspapers in East Asia

The corpus for this study came from the editorials published in English newspapers in East Asia, which I have already defined as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Fox also used newspapers from South Korea and Taiwan, along with those from China and Hong Kong. The problem is that, unlike China and Hong Kong, the three countries I have chosen share several similarities that are unique in Asia. They are all multiple-party democracies with freedom of the press (Freedom House; Reporters Without Borders). Freedom House gave scores to Japan (96), South Korea (83), and Taiwan (94) that rated them as free. After these three, the next highest Asian nation was India (67, partial free). The scores range from 1 (not free) to 100 (free).

Reporters Without Borders also rated the countries high on press

freedoms. The rankings went from Norway (no. 1) being the most free to Eritrea (no. 180) being the least free. South Korea (no. 42) was the highest of the three countries, with Taiwan (no. 43) next and Japan (no. 67) slightly lower. For comparison, Hong Kong (no. 80) and China (no. 177) were farther down in the rankings, lower than even Mongolia (no. 68) and Timor-Leste (no. 71).

The takeaway from both Freedom House and Reporters without Borders is that the newspapers chosen for my study will be more free with their editorials than newspapers in other Asian countries (cf. Fox). It is unclear how Reporters Without Borders deals with the foreign language press in terms of ratings. It is likely that they are included, as any laws or regulations covering the native language press would seem to also cover any foreign language press. Based on the information provided by the newspapers, nine of the 13 English newspapers published in East Asia are connected to a native-language parent news site.

Japan ($n = 5$) and South Korea ($n = 5$) both have two more English newspapers than Taiwan ($n = 3$). As expected, not all of the newspapers would work for the study. I found five issues with many of the newspapers ($n = 10$) that meant they could not be used for the corpus. These newspapers: (a) were behind a paywall ($n = 2$); (b) did not publish an editorial ($n = 1$) or published them infrequently ($n = 2$); (c) used translated editorials ($n = 2$); (d) were focused on business or international news ($n = 2$); and (e) published multiple editorials every day ($n = 1$). This left three newspapers, one in each of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

3. Material and methods

3.1. Corpus

As discussed above, my search revealed 13 English newspapers in East Asia. However, only three newspapers could be used for the study. These were Japan's *The Asahi Shimbun*, South Korea's *The Korea Herald*, and Taiwan's *Taipei Times* (see Table 1 for corpus information). Both *The Asahi Shimbun* (*The Asahi Shimbun*, Japanese) and the *Taipei Times* (*Liberty Times*, Chinese) are connected to a newspaper that publishes in the native language of the country. Unlike those other two, *The Korea Herald* is an independent newspaper.

Each newspaper has a regular publication schedule for editorials. The *Taipei Times* publishes an editorial daily (Monday-Sunday), with *The Asahi*

Shimbun publishing editorials Monday to Saturday. *The Korea Herald* publishes editorials during the workweek (Monday-Friday). However, during the second data collection period (Period B), *The Korea Herald* did not publish an editorial on two Mondays.

The daily editorials had similar word counts among the three newspapers. However, during both data collection periods *The Asahi Shimbun* published several longer editorials. This resulted in the newspaper having the highest word count, even higher than the *Taipei Times*, which published 10 more editorials over the two data collection periods.

Table 1. Corpus

Newspaper	Editorials				
	Day	N	Word Count	Average	Quote
Data Collection Period A (March 1 - April 4)					
<i>The Asahi Shimbun</i>	M-Sa	30	21,594	719.80	103
<i>The Korea Herald</i>	M-F	25	17,480	699.20	59
<i>Taipei Times</i>	Daily	35	20,013	571.80	122
Total	N/A	90	59,087	656.52	284
Data Collection Period B (October 1 - November 4)					
<i>The Asahi Shimbun</i>	M-Sa	30	23,050	768.33	105
<i>The Korea Herald</i>	M-F ^a	23	16,090	699.57	17
<i>Taipei Times</i>	Daily	35	20,242	578.34	112
Total	N/A	88	59,382	674.80	234

Note. Day (Day editorial was published); M-Sa (Monday - Saturday); M-F (Monday - Friday); Daily (Monday - Sunday); Quote (Number of direct quotes removed from the editorials).

^a During Data Collection Period B, *The Korea Herald* did not publish an editorial on the first two Mondays of the data collection period.

3.2. Instrument

AntConc (Anthony) was used to search the corpus for the list of terms used to name COVID-19. These were: COVID, Coronavirus, Pandemic, Novel, and New. The last item was added as it is a synonym for Novel. I did not include virus or illness in the analysis, as these are generic terms that could apply to any virus or illness, as opposed to the terms above, which were all tied directly to COVID-19.

3.3. Procedure

I collected the data in two periods. The first (Period A) was from March 1, 2021, to April 4, 2021 (5-weeks). The second (Period B) was from October 1, 2021, to November 4, 2021 (5-weeks). This gave me two snapshots of the use of the terms between early and late 2021. Other researchers (Fox; Osisanwo) who have investigated editorials have only collected data over one period of time. Fox collected data between January 1 and June 30, 2020 (1860). Osisanwo collected data between January 1 and March 31, 2020 (64). While the time is longer, they both took items from the beginning of the pandemic. In this study, the data is captured at two points in time from 2021, over a year after the first reporting of the virus to WHO (“Coronavirus disease Q&A”). Much of the discussion over the name has come after this first six-month period (e.g., Masters-Waage et al.).

During both periods, I visited the websites of the three English newspapers and found the daily editorial. I copied the editorial headline to a Google Sheets (Spreadsheet) and the text of the editorials to Google Docs (Document). After copying the editorials, I removed any items enclosed in quotation marks and replaced them with <QUOTE>. These could include a phrase (e.g., “surveillance area”) or a direct quote (e.g., “a monster has escaped from Pandora’s box”). It is important to remove direct quotes from the corpus, as the focus is on the writers and their choice of words, not outside sources (see Hyland, *Metadiscourse*, 45-60; see also Table 1 for the number of quotes removed).

After all of the editorials had been copied, I printed them to read. This reading was to ensure that all of the quotes had been removed. In addition, I was looking for any additional terms that could be used to name COVID-19. This reading resulted in no additional terms. After ensuring the corpus was ready, I downloaded the Google Docs as text files for use in AntConc. The corpus was searched for the terms. The results of the search were downloaded and added to spreadsheets for data analysis.

After the first analysis was completed, I isolated the editorials that used at least one term connected to COVID-19. I read all of these editorials again to discover if they: (a) were discussing COVID-19 specifically; or (b) were just using a term to discuss the current era. I gave those that had a COVID-19 specific discussion an additional coding based on the issue being discussed in regards to COVID-19.

3.4. Data Analysis

All of the terms found from AntConc were sorted into different categories based on the format of the terms. This included the terms being used alone (e.g., COVID-19) or with more than one term (e.g., COVID-19 Pandemic). After this was completed, I found the raw numbers for each of the categories and used these to find the frequency of use per 1,000 words.

My reading of the editorials that used at least one term for COVID-19 resulted in four codings (i.e., issues). These were: (a) Economy and COVID-19; (b) Health Care and COVID-19; (c) Travel and COVID-19; and (d) Non-COVID-19 Issue. The last coding was for any editorial that had used at least one term connected with COVID-19, but the main issues being discussed in the editorial were not COVID-19 specific.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Terms Used to name COVID-19

Table 2 shows the overall frequencies for the seven ways COVID-19 was named in the editorials. *The Asahi Shimbun* had the highest frequency of use (frequency [freq] = 1.77), with the *Taipei Times* having the lowest (freq = 1.09). In regards to the terms, Pandemic was the most frequent (freq = 0.48), with COVID-19 next (freq = 0.36). The least frequent way was Coronavirus Pandemic (freq = 0.03).

Of the seven terms used in the editorials, only three were used by all three newspapers: COVID-19 (freq = 0.36), Pandemic (freq = 0.48), and COVID-19 Pandemic (freq = 0.28). The *Taipei Times* did not use any additional terms, with *The Korea Herald* (Coronavirus, Coronavirus Pandemic) and *The Asahi Shimbun* (Coronavirus, Novel/New Coronavirus, Novel/New Coronavirus Pandemic) both using additional terms. In the case of Novel/New, Novel was the preferred term. However, in the data analysis Novel and New were combined as they are synonyms.

Table 2. Overall Frequencies for Terms

News	CO	Cor	P	COP	CorP	NCor	NCorP	Total
AS	0.45	0.04	0.54	0.25	0.00	0.20	0.29	1.77
KH	0.24	0.18	0.63	0.15	0.12	0.00	0.00	1.31
TT	0.37	0.00	0.30	0.42	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.09
Total	0.36	0.07	0.48	0.28	0.03	0.08	0.11	1.41

Note. News (Newspaper); AS (*The Asahi Shimbun*); KH (*The Korea Herald*); TT (*Taipei Times*); Frequencies per 1,000 words; CO (COVID-19); Cor (Coronavirus); P (Pandemic); COP (COVID-19 Pandemic); CorP (Coronavirus Pandemic); NCor (Novel/New Coronavirus); NCorP (Novel/New Coronavirus Pandemic).

^a Includes us of COVID without 19.

Overall, *The Asahi Shimbun* and *The Korea Herald* preferred to use Pandemic when naming COVID-19, with the *Taipei Times* preferring COVID-19 Pandemic. As can be seen, the term Pandemic was important for the three newspapers. A look at the health departments in the three countries shows that they all use COVID-19 and Coronavirus on their English websites, without the use of Pandemic (Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare; Taiwan Centers for Disease Control).

COVID-19 seems to be the best term to use when discussing the pandemic. Not only is it used by the health authorities (e.g., Taiwan Centers for Disease Control), it is also the shortest of all of the terms discovered in this study. *The Asahi Shimbun*, on the other hand, used the lengthy name Novel/New Coronavirus Pandemic in its editorials. Again, the corpus for the editorials were from the online editions of the newspaper, but they all have a paper edition. Due to the limited space in the paper, it would seem that they would use fewer words to name COVID-19 (see White, *Self-Mention Use* 84, for a discussion on the issue of word counts in academic writing).² In the next section, I will expand on the use of the longest term for COVID-19 in *The Asahi Shimbun*.

Research on the specific terms used to name COVID-19 is missing in the literature. Much of the literature on the news aspects of COVID-19 only looks at differences in the reporting or tone of the news article or editorial (Fox; Osisanwo). Fox would have offered interesting insights into the use of terms as the corpus included newspapers in both more press freedom countries (South Korea, Taiwan) and less press freedom countries (China, Hong Kong). The aspects of the specific names used for COVID-19 would have also added to the discussion by others over the naming of the virus in the early stages of COVID-19 (Dong et al.; Masters-Waage et al.).

² For example, the weekday paper edition of the *Taipei Times* is 16 pages long. Only one page is devoted to the opinion section, with the newspaper's editorial contained in one column.

This is important as the names used to name viruses and pandemics can have political or social consequences (Chao; Dong et al.; Masters-Waage et al.). For example, around the 100th anniversary of the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic, there was an increase in research looking at different aspects of that pandemic. One area of study was on the term used to identify the pandemic (i.e., Spanish Flu). The consensus seems to be that the pandemic is misnamed (Phillips 801; Tsoucalas et al. 23). Similar research into COVID-19 is likely in 2119, and I expect the names used for the pandemic will be studied.

As a result, I find it interesting that more research has not looked specifically at the terms used globally when discussing COVID-19. Many of the early names did not follow WHO’s (“WHO issues best”) recommendations and led to issues of racism and anxiety over the COVID-19 (Chao; Dong et al.; Masters-Waage et al.; Sasaki et al.). There is also the idea of a consistent name to help in global research into COVID-19 (Dong et al.).

4.2. Differences Between Data Collection Periods

Table 3 shows the differences in frequencies between the first data collection period (Period A; March 1-April 4, 2021) and the second (Period B; October 1-November 4, 2021). Overall, the frequencies for the use of terms were similar between the two periods (freq = 1.40 vs. 1.41). Individually, only The Korea Herald had an increase in frequencies (freq 1.09 vs. 1.55), with the other two newspapers showing a decrease. The Taipei Times (freq = 1.20 vs. 0.99) had a bigger decrease than The Asahi Shimbun (freq = 1.85 vs. 1.69).

Table 3. Changes in Frequency Between Data Collection Periods

AS	CO	Cor	P	COP	CorP	NCor	NCo rP	Total
Mar 1- April 4	0.46	0.09	0.46	0.19	X	0.32	0.32	1.85
Oct 1- Nov 4	0.43	X	0.61	0.30	X	0.09	0.26	1.69
KH	CO	Cor	P	COP	CorP	NCor	NCo rP	Total
Mar 1- April 4	0.06	0.23	0.57	0.11	0.11	X	X	1.09

Oct 1- Nov 4	0.44 a	0.12	0.68	0.19	0.12	X	X	1.55
TT	CO	Cor	P	COP	CorP	NCor	NCo rP	Total
Mar 1- April 4	0.25	X	0.45	0.50	X	X	X	1.20
Oct 1- Nov 4	0.49	X	0.15	0.35	X	X	X	0.99
Total	CO	Cor	P	COP	CorP	NCor	NCo rP	Total
Mar 1- April 4	0.27	0.10	0.49	0.27	0.03	0.12	0.12	1.40
Oct 1- Nov 4	0.45 a	0.03	0.47	0.29	0.03	0.03	0.10	1.41

Note. Data collected in 2021; AS (*The Asahi Shimbun*); KH (*The Korea Herald*); TT (*Taipei Times*); Frequencies per 1,000 words; CO (COVID-19); Cor (Coronavirus); P (Pandemic); COP (COVID-19 Pandemic); CorP (Coronavirus Pandemic); NCor (Novel/New Coronavirus); NCoRP (Novel/New Coronavirus Pandemic); X (Term not used by newspaper); Higher frequency in **bold**.

^a Includes us of COVID without 19.

Two interesting findings stand out in this analysis (see Table 3). The first is in the preferred term used to name COVID-19. While *The Korea Herald* used the same preferred term for both data collection periods (Pandemic), *The Asahi Shimbun* changed from preferring both COVID-19 and Pandemic (March-April) to Pandemic alone (October-November). The *Taipei Times* also changed from COVID-19 Pandemic (March-April) to COVID-19 alone (October-November). The second interesting finding was that *The Asahi Shimbun* did not use Coronavirus alone during the second data collection period.

Even though *The Asahi Shimbun* did not use Coronavirus alone in October-November, they did use the longer term Novel/New Coronavirus Pandemic. It is interesting that *The Asahi Shimbun* chose this longer term for COVID-19. Not only does it use the most letters, it was not used by Japan's health ministry, which used COVID-19 and Coronavirus on its English webpage (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare).

As this study was a corpus-only study, I did not send emails to the editors to ask for their guidelines in writing COVID-19 editorials. The

longer term used in *The Asahi Shimbun* in their editorials can also be seen in other sections of the newspaper. On the main webpage (www.asahi.com/ajw), there is a link to the newspaper's "COVID-19 Update" page, which reads, "Visit this page for the latest news on Japan's battle with the *novel coronavirus pandemic*" (*The Asahi Shimbun*, emphasis added). The term is also used in a news story from August 31, 2022 ("Japan warms to frozen foods," par. 1). For some reason *The Asahi Shimbun* finds this term useful when discussing COVID-19.

It is interesting to find differences between the two periods in the use of the terms. The other studies that looked at this issue (Fox; Osisanwo) only looked at a period of time and also did not focus on the use of terms in the editorials. One difference between the two periods, as well as the overall findings in the variety of terms used, could be connected to the idea in English of avoiding repetition (Schultz par. 2). This seems to be shown by the use of multiple terms inside of the same editorial when naming COVID-19.

4.3. Breakdown of Editorials

After finding the terms that were used to name COVID-19, I decided to follow others (Fox; Osisanwo) in looking at the focus of the editorials that specifically dealt with issues surrounding COVID-19. I realized quickly that my assumption that the editorials would be focused on COVID-19 was wrong. Of the 178 editorials collected for the corpus, only 68 (38.2%) used at least one term to name COVID-19. Of these 68 editorials, only eight (11.8%) were editorials whose main discussion was over an issue dealing with COVID-19. The other 60 editorials (88.2%) were on other issues and only used a term for COVID-19 to identify the current era.

Table 4. Breakdown of Focus of Editorials that used Terms Connected to COVID-19

Newspaper	No.	Main Focus of Editorial			
		Economy	Health Care ^a	Travel	Non-COVID
Data Collection Period A (March 1 - April 4)					
<i>The Asahi Shimbun</i>	13	0	2	1	10
<i>The Korea Herald</i>	8	0	0	0	8
<i>Taipei Times</i>	12	0	0	1 ^b	11
<i>Total</i>	33	0	2	2	29
Data Collection Period B (October 1 - November 4)					
<i>The Asahi Shimbun</i>	15	0	2	0	13
<i>The Korea Herald</i>	7	1	0	0	6
<i>Taipei Times</i>	13	1	0	0	12
<i>Total</i>	35	2	2	0	31
Total Data Collection Period A and Period B					
<i>Total</i>	68	2	4	2	60

Note. No. (Total number of editorials that used at least one term for COVID-19); Non-COVID (A term for COVID-19 was used, but the editorial was not focused on COVID-19).

^a Includes discussion on lockdowns and policies to limit the spread of COVID-19.

^b Also discussed vaccination policy, but classified as Travel since most of the editorial's focus was on this issue.

My percentage of editorials (11.8%) was close to Osisanwo, who only found 47 editorials (12.9%) out of a potential of 364 editorials that discussed COVID-19 (64). On the other hand, Fox, in the first six months of 2021, found between 57 and 163 editorials published in six newspapers that discussed COVID-19 (1860). However, it is not known if, unlike this study that only focused on editorials directly discussing COVID-19, any editorial that used a term connected to COVID-19 was included. In addition, Fox included three newspapers from Hong Kong and China, with 163 editorials coming from the newspaper in Hong Kong (1860). Both of these regions had a much worse time with COVID-19 than the three included in this study (Fox 1862; Johns Hopkins).

Focusing on the eight editorials from this study with a specific focus on issues relating to COVID-19, *The Asahi Shimbun* had the most (n = 5), with the *Taipei Times* having two, and *The Korea Herald* only having one editorial. Overall, the main issue being discussed in these eight editorials was Health Care (n = 4), with issues around the Economy and Travel having two editorials each (see Table 4). Not one issue was discussed among all three. As such, a comparison will be made between the issues that were discussed in more than one newspaper. These were: Travel and COVID-19 (*The Asahi Shimbun*, *Taipei Times*) and the Economy and COVID-19 (*The Korea Herald*, *Taipei Times*).

Taking Travel first, *The Taipei Times* published “Travel bubbles and vaccine rollouts” on March 13. The editorial is classified as Travel since the vast majority of the article deals with tourism. *The Asahi Shimbun* published “Travel subsidy to boost tourism must not derail anti-virus efforts,” on March 30. There were four sentences in the editorial from *The Asahi Shimbun* and five from the *Taipei Times* with a term naming COVID-19.

These two editorials show the differences between the situation in Taiwan and Japan at the time (Johns Hopkins).³ *The Taipei Times’s*

³ Johns Hopkins (<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu>) maintains a historical database of COVID-19 cases and deaths worldwide. The data for March 30, 2021 shows that Taiwan (n = 1,023) was remarkably lower than South Korea (n = 103,087) and Japan (n = 472,241). In fact, Japan reported 2,087 new cases (double the number of total cases in Taiwan) on the same day. On November 4, 2021 (the last day of data collection), the database showed that while Taiwan (n = 16,429) had increased in the number of cases, they were again remarkably lower than South Korea (n = 375,463) and Japan (n = 1,723,068).

editorial dealt with an international travel bubble with Palau, whereas *The Asahi Shimbun's* editorial dealt with a domestic travel program (see below for excerpts).

[A] ...measures to stimulate demand for travel similar to usual steps to pump up the economy when it is in bad shape until the **new coronavirus** is fully brought under control. [Japan]

[B] But the fact is that new **COVID-19** cases have been surging in some prefectures...since the government lifted its state of emergency for hot-spot areas. [Japan]

[C] The effects of new variants of the virus on the overall **COVID-19** situation have yet to be analyzed adequately. [Japan]

[D] To be eligible for the new tourism promotion program, a prefecture needs to have an infection situation that is not worse than being in Stage 2, which denotes new cases are growing but only gradually and is the second lowest in the four-level **COVID-19** alert system. [Japan]

[E] Taiwan and Palau have been discussing a **COVID-19** travel bubble, with officials on Tuesday saying that details might be worked out as soon as this month. [Taiwan]

[F] Taiwan and Palau have weathered the **pandemic** quite well, but neither is immune to the spread of the virus. [Taiwan]

[G] As people are still entering Taiwan on a regular basis...there will be a risk as long as the **pandemic** lasts. [Taiwan]

[H] Taiwanese love to travel...but they have happily transitioned to domestic travel since the start of the **pandemic**. [Taiwan]

[I] [Australia and New Zealand] have been vigilant in their **pandemic** measures, but their experiences have shown that the disease can strike quickly if a country lets its guard down for even a moment. [Taiwan]

Looking at the tourism discussion in these two editorials, one can see that while the newspapers believed tourism was possible, they also believed attention needed to be paid to ensure the health and safety of the population. *The Asahi Shimbun* (excerpts A-D) and the *Taipei Times* (excerpts F-G and I) both reported on the problems with the travel plans. Again, the difference is that *The Asahi Shimbun* was given an opinion on a domestic travel plan while the *Taipei Times* was discussing an international travel bubble.

Different from Fox and Osisanwo, these editorials show criticism of the government's handling of COVID-19. Fox and Osisanwo both found that early in the pandemic, editorials took the role of encouraging support for the government. However, this is not the case here. For example, *The Asahi Shimbun* shows an alarming tone in the discussion of the new tourism program. The editorial points out that COVID-19 cases have not stabilized (excerpts A and B) and that the effect on Japan of new strains is not well known (excerpt C).

This finding of criticism could be due to the passage of time. These editorials were published long after the initial COVID-19 outbreak (WHO, "Coronavirus disease Q&A"). As Fox and Osisanwo took editorials from the very start, there seemed to be a need to ensure that people supported the government. By March 2021, the situation had reached a point where *The Asahi Shimbun* felt the need to tell the government that while tourism was important for Japan, stopping COVID-19 was more important.

Unlike *The Asahi Shimbun*, the *Taipei Times* takes a less alarming view and is only giving the government important items to consider (excerpts G and I) before allowing people to travel in and out of Taiwan. There are probably two reasons for this lower alarm. First, Taiwan had yet to deal with any major outbreaks of COVID-19 (Johns Hopkins; Staff Writer). Second, the *Taipei Times* supports the government and probably does not want to be too critical of its policies (Brindle 7; White, "First-person pronoun" 8).

These excerpts also show that even in the same editorial, different terms were used. In the case of *The Asahi Shimbun*, the newspaper used New Coronavirus (n = 1) and COVID-19 (n = 3), while the *Taipei Times* used COVID-19 (n = 1) and Pandemic (n = 4). The frequent use of Pandemic by the *Taipei Times* seems to show that they wanted to emphasize the global nature of COVID-19 and what that means for international travel. Osisanwo also found a high discussion of the pandemic aspect of COVID-19 in editorials (66). The use of New by *The Asahi Shimbun* is interesting, as *The Asahi Shimbun* used Novel, so it is difficult to know why the writers of this editorial used New instead of Novel (*The Asahi Shimbun*, "Japan warms to frozen foods" par. 1).

Moving to the editorials that dealt with the Economy and COVID-19, the *Taipei Times* published "Economy still faces headwinds" on November 1, with *The Korea Herald* publishing "Means to get votes: [Democratic Party of Korea] presidential candidate pushes for COVID-19 relief to all people" on November 3. For their November 1 editorial, the *Taipei Times* had only four sentences with a term used to name COVID-19. In contrast, *The Korea*

Herald had 12 sentences. Excerpts showing the use of terms connected with COVID-19 are below.

[J] Lee Jae-myung, the ruling Democratic Party of Korea's presidential candidate, is pushing for **COVID-19** relief payments to everyone. [Korea]

[K] When he was Gyeonggi governor, he defied the decision by the government and the party to restrict Chuseok holiday **coronavirus** relief to the bottom 88 percent income bracket.... [Korea]

[L] Lee raised an issue of **COVID-19** relief just four days after stepping down as Gyeonggi governor on Oct. 25 to focus on his presidential campaign. [Korea]

[M] He said late last month that **COVID** relief payments should be 1 million won or more per capita a year, adding that about 500,000 won has been dispensed [*sic*] so far. [Korea]

[N] The party has a reputation for trying to use **pandemic** relief to give itself an advantage in elections. [Korea]

[O] Most people believe the country's first **COVID-19** relief payment to every household propelled its landslide in the 2020 general election. [Korea]

[P] Starting this month, the nation eased its **COVID-19** curbs, backed by the share of its fully vaccinated population topping 75 percent. [Korea]

[Q] If the government can find the money to do so, it would be wise to concentrate relief on poor self-employed businesses hit hardest by the **pandemic**. [Korea]

[R] Lee says he will push the party to squeeze a **COVID** relief budget from the government's budget for next year during the parliamentary session.... [Korea]

[S] The current administration has piled up debt through an array of cash welfare programs including **pandemic** aid. [Korea]

[T] With inflation concerns mounting, central banks in major economies are moving to pull back liquidity that was increased to respond to the economic impact of the **COVID-19 pandemic**. [Korea]

[U] He defined a **pandemic** relief to the whole nation as an urgent issue for the party to tackle. [Korea]

[V] Private consumption remained lackluster and contracted 5.49 percent year-on-year, due to a local **COVID-19** outbreak that emerged in the middle of May. [Taiwan]

[W] The commission blamed the **COVID-19 pandemic** for the decline, saying that investments by multinationals have slowed down markedly. [Taiwan]

[X] ...to reach US\$852 billion, recovering more than 70 percent of last year's losses stemming from the **pandemic**. [Taiwan]

[Y] ...but it deserves attention, especially while the nation's economy remains resilient amid the **pandemic**. [Taiwan]

Once again, the editorial from *The Korea Herald* shows criticism of the government that was absent from Fox and Osisanwo. *The Korea Herald's* criticism is directed toward both the government and the presidential candidate of the ruling party. Excerpts K, N, Q, and S express strong opposition to the COVID-19 relief payments, which *The Korea Herald* believes are being used to gain votes. Again, it appears that due to the time that has elapsed from the initial outbreak of COVID-19, the editors of *The Korea Herald* believe that criticism can be leveled at the government's handling of COVID-19. There appears to be less need to cultivate a sense of nationalism and support for the government (Fox; Osisanwo). This can be seen well in the excerpts, where *The Korea Herald* is discussing where the money should go (excerpt Q) and how all of these payments are increasing South Korea's debt (excerpt S).

Similar to the discussion over Travel (above), in the case of the *Taipei Times*, the editorial's general tone does not criticize the government. Instead, the *Taipei Times* warns readers of potential problems with the economy as a result of COVID-19. The *Taipei Times* (excerpts U and W) blames COVID-19 for the issue rather than the government while at the same time expressing optimism (excerpts X and Y).

Again, these excerpts show the use of more than one term when discussing COVID-19. *The Korea Herald* used COVID/COVID-19 (n = 6), COVID-19 Pandemic (n = 1), Pandemic (n = 4) and Coronavirus (n = 1), with the *Taipei Times* using COVID-19 (n = 1), COVID-19 Pandemic (n = 1), and pandemic (n = 2). It is also worth noticing the higher use of terms in the editorial from South Korea compared to the one from *The Asahi Shimbun* and the two from the *Taipei Times*. Almost half of all the excerpts from this section came from *The Korea Herald*. Fox found that the editorials from South Korea (including *The Korea Herald*) "were the most inward-looking" (1869).

It is likely due to *The Korea Herald's* negative attitude toward the relief payments in the editorial that they used terms connected with COVID-19 more often than the other three editorials discussed in this section (Fox; Osisanwo). Additional textual analysis of all the excerpts revealed that only

the term Relief (n = 8) was used more than once with any of the COVID-19 terms (see Excerpts J-O, R, and U). Again, it appears that the editors wanted to emphasize the connection between the relief payments and COVID-19 to stress their negative attitude toward the use of these payments to help in the upcoming presidential election. It can also be concluded that *The Korea Herald* did not support Lee Jae-myung for president. Again, as Brindle found, the political stance of a newspaper will influence the reporting of news (9-17). This could lead to a more negative stance in regards to the government's handling of COVID-19 (see also White, "First-person pronoun" 8; Uhlmann).

Osisanwo found that "newspaper editorials unusually converged to negatively represent an issue – COVID-19 – because it is largely negatively viewed by all" (76). Earlier, Fox found the editorials took an alarming tone in their discussion (1863-69). My study seems to follow these conclusions. In the case of tourism, both editorials had the view that the travel programs were important but at the same time called for caution in their implementation. This can be seen quite well in the headline from *The Asahi Shimbun*, "Travel subsidy to boost tourism must not derail anti-virus efforts," with 'must' being used. As Hyland discussed, 'must' is a booster which strengthens the argument of the writer (*Metadiscourse* 52-3). In this way, *The Asahi Shimbun* is not allowing for discussion over its point that tourism is second to stopping COVID-19. Issues around debt and personal spending are also viewed negatively, as they have an effect on the overall economy (CRS; Kim). Both the *Taipei Times* and *The Korea Herald* have a negative view on the economy in regards to COVID-19. However, each took a different approach, with the *Taipei Times* having a more general view on the economy and *The Korea Herald* focusing on the issue of relief payments being used to gain votes for the upcoming 2022 presidential election (Yonhap).

One of the reasons for the lack of editorials connected directly to COVID-19 might be the data collection time. By March 2021, all three countries had been living with COVID-19 for some time (Fox; Johns Hopkins; see also Footnote 7). In addition, it was not until May 2021 that Taiwan went into a semi-lockdown situation where schools were closed and many people worked from home (Soon). By the second data collection period, Taiwan had opened, and both South Korea and Japan, while still having issues, were not as bad as earlier in the year (Gong; Johns Hopkins; Kyodo News; see also Footnote 7). Overall, Taiwan has fared much better than East Asia and the world with COVID-19. Based on Johns Hopkins's data for April 19, 2022, the total number of cases and deaths in Taiwan

(37,710 cases and 854 deaths) dwarfed both Japan (7,436,434 cases and 29,104 deaths) and South Korea (16,583,220 cases and 21,520 deaths).⁴

Another reason for the lack of editorials specifically discussing COVID-19 from this study and others (Fox; Osisanwo) could be connected to the idea discussed by Sasaki et al. They stated that “too much exposure to the media is known to be associated with greater fear and worry and poorer mental health in a health crisis” (501). They recommended “that people...should limit the frequency and amount of access they have to television and Web media to obtain information about COVID-19” (502). While it might seem far-fetched, there is a possibility that the editorials from the English newspapers decided to focus on other aspects of life other than just COVID-19.

5. Conclusion

The main finding of this study was that the three newspapers shared three terms when naming COVID-19 (COVID-19, Pandemic, COVID-19 Pandemic). Overall, the most preferred terms were Pandemic and COVID-19 Pandemic, emphasizing the pandemic aspect of COVID-19 (WHO, “Coronavirus disease (COVID-19);” Johns Hopkins). In addition, while the *Taipei Times* only used these three terms, *The Asahi Shimbun* and *The Korea Herald* used four additional terms (Coronavirus, Coronavirus Pandemic, Novel/New Coronavirus, Novel/New Coronavirus Pandemic).

Interestingly, the vast majority of the editorials that had used a term to name COVID-19 were not specifically discussing COVID-19. Due to the global news at the time, I had assumed that the main focus would have been on COVID-19. One of the strengths of this study is that any editorial using a term connected to COVID-19 was taken for the analysis and not just specific editorials dealing with COVID-19. Through this method, I found that over

⁴ Even taking the populations of the countries into consideration, Taiwan is still the lowest in East Asia in terms of cases and deaths. Taiwan has a population of 23.57 million people, South Korea has a population of 51.7 million people, and Japan has a population of 124.7 million people (CIA). Taiwan’s May 13 case numbers would equate to just over 82,000 in South Korea and just under 200,000 in Japan (based on differences in population numbers). After May 13, Taiwan saw a big increase in cases, but Johns Hopkins does not have data on the specific numbers (see Staff Writer). As of November 21, 2022, Johns Hopkins only has the number of cases and deaths for Japan, with both South Korea and Taiwan showing 0 in both categories.

the 10 weeks of data collection, the focus of the editorials was on other issues and not specifically COVID-19 (see also Osisanwo 64).

It is important to not only study the discussions of COVID-19 in newspaper editorials (e.g., Fox), but also the terms used when naming COVID-19. It is interesting that the second part is missing from the literature. The ways that writers interact with their readers offer important insights into language use (Brindle; Breeze; Hyland, *Metadiscourse*; White, *Self-Mention Use*). Part of this interaction will be on the choice of terms used when naming COVID-19. Again, COVID-19 seems to be the best term to use as it is the shortest term for the virus. However, as this study showed, additional terms are also used when discussing COVID-19 and the current era. While Pandemic alone does fit the health crisis the world has faced, it is also generic and could mean any pandemic.

My analysis also showed that there was a variety of terms used not only among the three newspapers but also inside of the specific editorials. It has expanded on the earlier studies into editorials and COVID-19 as neither Osisanwo nor Fox specifically discussed the terms used to name COVID-19.

5.1. Limitations

Not included in this study was an analysis of the Japanese edition of *The Asahi Shimbun* or the *Liberty Times* (*Taipei Times's* parent newspaper) as to their discussions of COVID-19 and the terms used to name it. Again, *The Korea Herald* is independent, so a comparison with its parent newspaper is not possible. This leads to an interesting study, comparing the native language editorials with the English ones. This type of study could find differences in both the terms used to name COVID-19 along with differences in the focus of the COVID-19 editorials (see Dong et al., and Masters-Waage et al. for a discussion on issues around the global names for COVID-19).

Additionally, I only compared the newspapers in three countries and not newspapers inside of the same country. For example, Taiwan has two main English newspapers, the *Taipei Times* and *The China Post*, which are on opposite sides of the political debate in Taiwan (Brindle; White, "First-person pronoun"). Brindle found differences between the two newspapers in their reporting of the 2014 Sunflower Student Movement protests in Taiwan. The words used and the tone of the articles were influenced by whether they supported (*Taipei Times*) or opposed (*The China Post*) the student protests. It is possible that, given the political stance of the

newspaper (for or against the government), there might be differences in the terms used along with the focus of the editorials using the terms. Nonetheless, the main goal of this study was to gain insight into differences in the use of terms for COVID-19 in East Asia as a whole, rather than just within one country. In addition, not all of the English newspapers in East Asia frequently offer self-written (i.e., non-translated) editorials, making it difficult to create a corpus.

A final limitation was the lack of a survey among the editors of the three newspapers. Unlike *The Guardian*, none of the papers publish their style guides (“*Guardian and Observer*”). While a survey would have added to the discussion on the use of terms, as a corpus linguist, I am most comfortable looking at the text to find meaning. The variety in the use of terms, some with low frequencies, might point to the editorials being written by different members of the newspaper staff over the course of the data collection periods. This could mean that there was no specific style guide for writing editorials at the time of COVID-19.

5.2. Pedagogical Implications

One of the biggest pedagogical implications of the study is showing how editorials from English newspapers can be useful resources for the EFL classroom. Not only are editorials useful for helping students distinguish between objective and subjective information, but they can also be used to help students write better because they demonstrate how opinions and conclusions are formed. Furthermore, by using editorials from various countries, students will be able to find differences in how news and events are reported. As this study showed, there were differences in the preferred terms for naming COVID-19 in the three newspapers. This could lead to classroom discussion as to the best ways to name or identify the items and events in the news. Specifically, in a classroom discussion of COVID-19, teachers could also bring in WHO (“WHO issues best”) to discuss how the current and past names for COVID-19 fit with WHO’s recommendations for naming new diseases. This is in addition to an overall ability to have students discuss news and events in English (Brindle; Fox; Ojo; Osisanwo; White, “Comparison of English Editorials”).

5.3. Historical Record

In addition to the implications discussed above, there is also the matter of historical record. As a student of history, it will be interesting to see how this era is discussed in the future, along with which term or terms are used when naming COVID-19. Even before COVID-19, there was an increase in research and discussion on the 1918 Spanish Flu Pandemic. One interesting finding from the research and discussion is that the term Spanish Flu is still used to name the pandemic, even though there have been questions raised as to the appropriateness of the term (Phillips 801; Tsoucalas et al. 23). Currently, there are discussions occurring in some parts of the world over the handling of COVID-19 (e.g., Juanola; Uhlmann). However, it will be many years before a clearer picture will form around COVID-19, in both the best term to use when naming the disease and the issues surrounding COVID-19.

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Address for correspondence

G. Benjamin White
Center for General Education
China Medical University
No. 100, Sec. 1, Jingmao Rd., Beitun Dist.
Taichung City 406040
Taiwan

whitegben@gmail.com

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