Cringeworthy: A Corpus Approach to How the Word 'Cringe' is Used in Media

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'Cringe' sana omaa mielenkiintoisen paikan Englannin kielessä, sillä sitä pystyisi käyttämään sekä predikaattina että adjektiivina lauseessa. Vaikka muutos on tuore, sanaa käytetään puhekielessä sekä adjektiivina että predikaattina. Tämän muutoksen voi nähdä sekä kirjoitetussa verkko kirjoituksessa että puhekielessä. Internet on antanut kielelle mahdollisuuden kehittyä nopeasti.

Tämä tutkimus pyrkii tutkimaan sanan muutosta mediassa korpusavusteisen diskurssi tutkimuksen avulla, käyttäen viimeiseltä kymmeneltä vuodelta materiaalia, vuodesta 2010 vuoteen 2021. Korpus-avusteista diskurssianalyysia käyttäen, seuraten sosiolingvistisiä ja internet lingvistiikan periaatteita, tämä tutkimus pyrkii tutkimaan myös sanan käyttöä mediassa, sekä diskursseja, joissa sitä käytetään. Lisäksi tutkimus seuraa sanan tarkoituksen muutosta.

Tutkimuksen tulokset näyttävät, että sanaa 'cringe' oli käytetty enemmän ajan kulkiessa, sekä että sitä oli alettu käyttämään myös adjektiivina enemmän 2012 vuoden jälkeen, jolloin sitä käytettiin huomattavasti enemmän yleisesti. Datasta näkyi myös, kuinka 'cringe' oli osana monenlaisia diskursseja, kuten poliittisissa, uskonnollisissa sekä terveyteen liittyvissä diskursseissa. Omat kokemukset olivat isoin osa diskursseja. Semanttisia muutoksia datasta ei voitu todistaa, mutta yhteys puhekielen ja mediassa käytetyn kielen leksikaaliseen muutokseen 'cringe' sanan kohdalla pystyttiin toteamaan.

Asiasanat – Keywords
Corpus linguistics, syntax, semantics, media, language use, discourse analysis, cringe

Säilytyspaikka – Depository

Muita tietoja – Additional information

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1   Introduction

Mass media has given the study of language change an extensive amount of easily accessible data, and thanks to the Internet it has become ever easier to access the vast amounts of data available around the world. The ways in which we use language changes with the language we consume on media, from print media or cinema, or on the Internet's platforms with other users, where words can achieve status in mere hours (Crystal, 2011: 57). Access to the infinite amount of information and language has enabled a rapid language change on different Internet platforms. Communities that are built on these platforms, such as Tumblr, become the spawning grounds for language development on the Internet (Crystal, 2011: 58). In 2010 alone 600 new expressions, or neologisms, were noted in Twittonary, an online dictionary collecting utterances connected to Twitter, a microblogging and social networking platform (Crystal, 2011: 36, 59). These communities are additionally often multilingual spaces, where any language can develop, with languages often mixing in the hands of users to create meanings in both tongues. As languages such as English change, it comes to question how other language spaces in traditional media, here defined as news media, scriptwriters for visual media, or any such printed media, handle these changes. Many traditionally printed newspapers have either partly or fully changed to publish their news online, and most fictitious and scientific writings are written on the computer.

Meaning changes can be found in everyday communication, be that in face-to-face communication or on new age communication platforms online. The word 'cringe' has started gaining usage on a wide variety of platforms. As Merriam-Webster defines the word, it is "to recoil in distaste", "to shrink in fear or servility", "to behave in an excessively humble or servile way", "to draw in or contract one's muscles involuntarily (as from cold or pain)", or "a cringing act" as a noun (Merriam-Webster.com n.d.), but in observations it is commonly used as either the psychological feeling of discomfort, the recoiling 'cringe', or often in a descriptive form, describing action or a noun. This disconnect between the dictionary definition and the common usage of a descriptive form oft seen in Internet language became as to why this topic was chosen for the thesis. This specific thesis is dedicated to the diachronic study of the often-used word 'cringe' in written media, and how in record the usage of it has changed from 2010 to 2021. The study uses corpus linguistics as a method to gather instances of 'cringe', a corpus, from multiple already existing mediacentric English-language corpora. The use of 'cringe' will be examined by applying sociolinguistic and discourse analytic methods. The main research questions for this thesis will then be:

1. How much has the word 'cringe' been used in written media from 2010?
2. How have the syntax and semantic properties of the word 'cringe' developed throughout the years in media?
3. What are the discourses surrounding the word 'cringe'?

2 Theoretical framework

This chapter introduces the theoretical frameworks behind the study, including sociolinguistics, Internet linguistics, corpus linguistics, and corpus-assisted discourse studies. Corpus-assisted discourse analysis will be the method used in the analysis of the material gathered and will be elaborated on in chapter 4. Methodological framework.

2.1. Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistic study places the emphasis on the social aspects of language, such as how identities are formed through language, or how language shapes our surroundings. Sociolinguistics focuses on these aspects behind language change, known as linguistic variables (Crystal 2006: 359), and how these aspects of life are in turn affected by the language surrounding them. Another key term in sociolinguistics is 'speech communities', groups of people drawn together by one or more reasons (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2014: 63), as culture is often reflective of the language surrounding it and vice versa. Sociolinguistics has now however broadened its view from speech communities to sociolinguistic systems to understand discourse (Blommaert, 2010: 41). New developments in technologies affect the use of language additionally, and the use of language with these technologies can change how the linguistic units are understood (McCulloch, 2019: 236). Sociolinguistics also explores how language establishes social contexts and enforces them, and how different users of the language differ in the use of their language.

Sociolinguistics itself has many approaches, such as 'traditional sociolinguistics' or 'interactional sociolinguistics', which view sociolinguistic study from different perspectives (Baker 2010: 2). Some subscribe to variationist approaches to change, employing theories of lexical diffusion and models to their studies (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2014: 110-117). Other sociolinguists view language in contexts such as media and conduct discourse analysis. Linguistic change is considered to

originate from social factors, as with the creation of pidgin or creole languages in situations where languages interact with each other considerably (Bailey & Durham, 2020; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2014: 117). The culture and discourses surrounding the word 'cringe' will thus be of special interest in this thesis, in addition to the sociolinguistic elements on the expanding platforms of the Internet.

2.2. Internet linguistics

Internet linguistics studies emerging linguistic styles of the Internet, and the different facets of language that develop on the Internet. These linguistic changes come from the users, and thus often show both first and second language speakers influence in the development. New platforms, such as instant messaging or messaging boards, are now the spawning pools of new Internet language (Crystal, 2011: 58). Changes like abbreviation or other shortening techniques to accommodate for character limits are an example of how Internet users adapt the languages they use (Crystal, 2011: 45). Internet linguistics views the Internet itself as a corpus of sorts, flowing with new linguistic knowledge and being updated constantly. The Internet as a self-refreshing corpus and its contents are studied usually through four main lenses: sociolinguistics, education, stylistics, and applied linguistics. As the field has developed, the Internet has been viewed differently depending on the location being studied, for example treating the Twitter brand's page as "a microblogging platform that permits users to send and receive text-based posts" (Crystal, 2011: 36). Hence, the language produced on the Internet can be studied from many different angles, with this thesis focusing on the sociolinguistic aspect of Internet linguistics.

As the materials of study, the contents of the corpus, have been either first published on the Internet, or have later been transferred to the web, this study should be considered as an Internet linguistic study of the language used on the Internet. Additionally, there is an interest growing of whether the written text of media reflects the Internet English use of the word, which based on anecdotal evidence skews towards using the word purely in a descriptive mode, describing action or nouns. This relationship between linguistic modes will be subject for further familiarizing and research in the future.

2.3. Corpus linguistics

Corpus linguistics is a relatively new branch in the field of linguistics, and it studies language based on real life language use examples. A corpus (plural corpora) is a large collection of language, stored on a computer server for use (Baker, 2010: 5). Corpus linguistics can be viewed as both a theory and a methodology, as it can both open new viewpoints into language use and be used as a tool to study language by frequency. Corpora are assembled around key concepts, such as career language use or national language use, and as such require considerable amounts of work to complete. The contents of a corpus as such are usually gathered from large amounts of linguistic data, such as commercial magazines or scientific journals of a specific subject. Corpora can be used in many different methods, such as in a lexical typological methodology with the goal of finding antonyms (Paradis in Juvonen & Koptjevskaja-Tamm, 2016: 131, 136), or in studying colexification by using the Bible (Östling in Juvonen & Koptjevskaja-Tamm, 2016: 157). Many corpora are also kept up to date by corpus linguists, like the corpora from which this study's corpus was retrieved. The data used in this thesis was gathered by searching 'cringe' in four corpora, and the results of the search were then gathered into a common folder to form the 'cringe' corpus.

2.4. Corpus-assisted Discourse Studies and Analysis, CADS

Discourse will in this thesis be understood as any piece of language, which contains more than one sentence, and the meanings beyond the sentences (Thornborrow & Wareing, 1998: 240, Martin & Rose 2003: 1 in Partington et al., 2013: 2), with discourse analysis being understood as studying language in use to understand the organisation and meanings behind the language (Brown & Yule 1983: 1 in Partington et al., 2013: 2). Corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) view language as communicative discourse which incorporates the use of corpora in the analysis of discourse (Partington et al., 2013: 10). It mixes qualitative methods with quantitative and statistical methods to study types of discourse, and usually helps in gaining a larger picture of discourse. The major difference between traditional corpus linguistics and CADS is how they treat their corpora respectively; corpus linguistics treats corpora as 'black boxes', not focusing on individual data points instead focusing on the larger collection, while CADS again incorporates qualitative methods to understand the data further (Partington et al., 2013: 12-13). It should also be noted that CADS has no language politics attached to it, language politics here meaning views on tradition and language policies, and there are many ways to how one manages their data (Partington et al., 2013: 10). The aim of CADS is to understand the underlying attitudes of the texts, or those that they end up conveying, from a neutral stance.

3   Context of the study

This chapter will acknowledge the contexts surrounding the thesis. First it will address the reasons for the choice of topic, and then go further into detail on the aims of the research and the research questions. Later in the chapter the material collected for the analysis will be discussed.

3.1. Language use on Internet platforms: Tumblr and Contrapoints

As the language used on the Internet is malleable, the word 'cringe' has been one of the words subject to meaning change on forums and chatting functions. As Internet accessibility has become wider in the 21st century, pre-established languages such as English became dominant languages in Internet spaces. Websites such as Tumblr, another microblogging site, are good examples of when language users from different linguistic backgrounds come together to discuss common interests, forming grounds for language development. Example studies using these websites as resources would be the study of the semantic change of 'cheeky' (Bailey & Durham, 2020) or the study of styles in Twitter language use (Crystal, 2011: 37-56) These communities of interest are where words are created, and old ones gain new meanings. Personally, I participated in many different groups of interest on Tumblr from early to mid-2010s, and I experienced many different styles of English within these spaces. These personal experiences within these linguistic spaces lead to me developing my interest in language change later in life.

The idea for the study of the word 'cringe' came from a video by the video essayist Natalie Wynn, known on her platform Youtube as Contrapoints. Her video, which was posted on the 10th of May 2020, was about the cultural phenomenon of cringe and the discourse around it, and her essay had interesting linguistic sidenotes complimenting it. While this thesis will concern language change and popular language entering use in media, other studies touching on the cultural impact of 'cringe', or further study into traditional language use and internet language on these platforms should be considered.

3.2. Media, from news to cinema

Different media have always been held to a different linguistic standard than common speech, as often they affect the way the public views the issue of the text with the language. It has also been

noted that the language used in publications has been held to a higher standard as to promote proper ways of using the language, as with the newspaper publications of Great Britain for example. Hence if any specific linguistic items or elements are featured in media, an amount of common understanding has been set on the character of the linguistic item, and how it can be used in proper written language.

3.3. Research questions and the aim of the study

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the use of 'cringe' in language, as a part of a larger plan to research the topic. Media language is an important part of wider language use, and as there was a gap in the research regarding the cultural and linguistic phenomenon of 'cringe' in media language with data ready in English language corpora already, the topic of the thesis was decided without trouble. The topic of 'cringe' and its usage will be something that will be studied further in the future and can hopefully help answer questions surrounding 'cringe' as a linguistic item and as the psychological and social phenomenon. To accomplish this, these research questions were chosen.

3.3.1.   How much has the word 'cringe' been used in written media from 2010?

Differences in the amount of usage 'cringe' has enjoyed along the years can give insight into what factors have influenced its development, such as specific incidents or larger movements within the linguistic spaces the data consists of. The trends behind the use of language can then be identified to compare the development of different words within the same contexts and spaces.

3.3.2.   How have the syntax and the semantic properties of the word 'cringe' developed throughout the years in media?

The syntaxical changes in the use of 'cringe' are of special concern alongside the usage of it. While the word has in my personal observations retained its semantic properties, there is a chance that the word could have acquired new meaning present in the data. As the culture around the language and users changes, new developments may come about.

3.3.3.   What are the discourses surrounding the word 'cringe'?

The contexts surrounding the samples are also indicative of the culture surrounding the use of 'cringe'. As 'cringe' has negative connotations, the discourses that contain 'cringe' by extension must have a component of negativity in them. Identifying which discourses use

'cringe' will help us understand which discourses contain negativity and can perhaps help us understand who uses the word, at least in the sample contexts.

The answers to these questions can help us to understand how much the popular use of 'cringe' has penetrated the media sphere. Examining the discourses surrounding 'cringe' could especially help us understand where and how media uses negative connotations.

3.4. Word classes in the study

Most grammars recognize eight classes of words: nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections (Crystal, 2006: 242). This study will focus on verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Changes in the syntax-semantics interface, where 'interface' should be understood as both in a technical sense where the structural configuration and meaning are targeted and in a methodological sense as the theoretical comparison between syntactic and semantic models (Gianollo et al., 2014: 1), are often studied. An example of using the interface being with the word 'most' and studying its gain in use as a quantifying determiner in contrast to its superlative adjective use (Gergel in Gianollo et al., 2014: 101). Adjectives and adverbs will be referred to as descriptors, as both are used to describe other parts of the sentence and will be analysed together. The reason behind the grouping is the scarcity of data on both classes.

3.5. The materials

A new corpus of 600 samples of the word 'cringe' was created for the purposes of this thesis. The samples were collected from four pre-existing English-language corpora: the News on the Web (NOW), the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the TV Corpus, and the Movie Corpus (English-Corpora.org n.d.). The largest of the four NOW has over 15 billion words searchable, contrasting with the Movie Corpus' 200 million words. In the process of gathering the samples into the new corpus, the dates of publishing and original publishing platforms of the samples were collected additionally. Publishing dates vary from 2021 in the articles to as early as the 1970s being represented with movie scripts. Many of the samples had been collected from online sources, but traditional newspapers and scripts are also represented in the corpus heavily, with even transcribed news broadcasts having a showing in the material. Out of the 600 collected, previously the first 300 legible instances were chosen for the study, 75 from each of the four

corpora, but as data proved to be sparce before the 2000s the focus of the study shifted to examining media language in the 2010s and onwards. This stripped the sizeable set of 300 instances to a sensible 205. The legibility of the instances was intentionally left vague for the study as to keep to the integrity of the study, but 14 instances had to be left out of the main study for either being unclear in the usage of the word, or presenting 'cringe' as a noun, as was seen in some cases. These outliers will be briefly discussed afterwards in their own chapter.

4   Methodological framework

CADS was chosen as the method of analysis, as it combines the quantitative data analysis methods of corpus linguistics with the qualitative examining of discourse analysis, fitting the needs of the study perfectly. To elaborate on why this method suits the objectives of this study, the corpus will be examined through statistical means to examine the amount of use 'cringe' has had in the 2010s, and to examine where the data has come from, while discourse analysis will be employed to examine the discourses and contexts the word inhabits. The data will be examined using only this method, as the research questions do not demand further inquiry into the material.

There have been multiple other studies that have used CADS, such as when studying the use of the Finnish word 'kansa' on a Finnish communication forum, using both discourse studies and corpus linguistics to see what discourses surround the word, and what meanings are imposed on the word (Johansson et al. 2018: 97). Another example would be a dissertation with the study of transcribed data to examine language discourses in Japanese Finnish groups concerning immigration and ideologies (Lehto, 2018: 32), and another would be studying the discourses around poverty on forum platforms to bring insight to social exclusion (Lehti et al. 2020: 9). All of the studies mentioned above used the multi-methodological framework CADS provides.

CADS was hence chosen for this study to accompany the statistical element of the thesis, and to further explore the discourse surrounding the use of the word 'cringe' throughout the years, but specifically throughout the 2010s after the cutdown on data used, as during these times the word had much more frequency in the data. Fortunately, from anecdotal experience with some data backing, the 2010s were the time the word saw a dramatic increase in its use.

5   Analysis and results

This chapter will reveal the results of the analysis conducted. As mentioned earlier, out of a total of 600 collected samples, the first eligible 205 instances from 2010 to 2021 were used for the study, as originally the scope of the study extended further than 2010, but due to insufficient material the original pool was pruned. The main data analysed for the thesis will show developments concerning descriptors in the use of 'cringe'. Singular instances of 'cringe' were additionally left out of the main analysis, as their intention was left too vague to be counted as either or of the two main categories. In addition, in two instances of TV news broadcasts being transcribed, the presented 'cringe' was interpreted as a noun. These instances will be discussed briefly in a separate section at the end of this chapter.

5.1. 'Cringe' usage from 2010 onwards
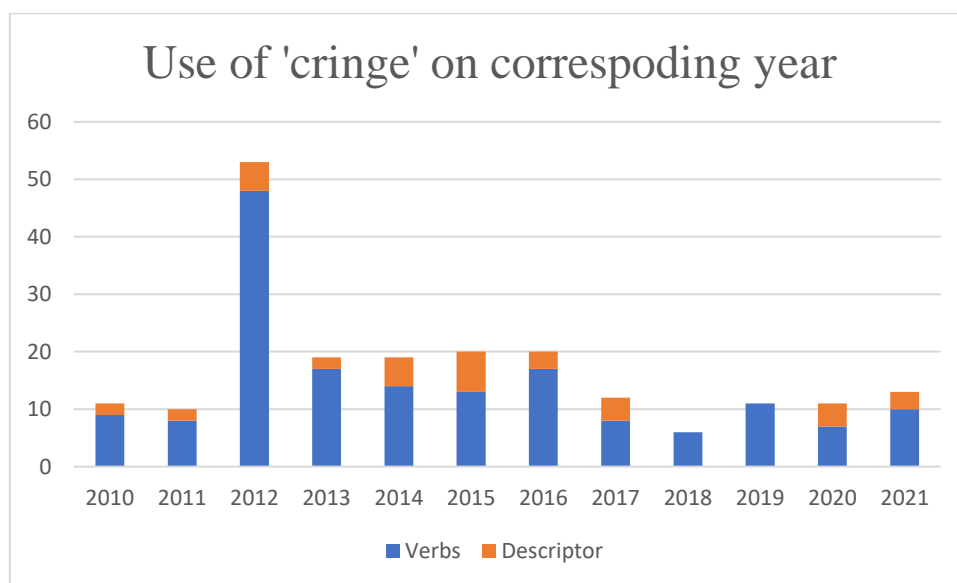
The instances of 'cringe' in the collected sample, with blue pillars representing verbs and orange pillars representing adjectives and adverbs as descriptors.

The results show that 'cringe' has had consistent amounts of use in the last decade, with a sudden spike of use in 2012, afterwards dropping in use but with a stable amount of use through 2013 to 2016. The spike of 2012 coincides with the popularity of microblogging sites such as Tumblr or Twitter, latter of which was even present in the dataset, and the overall popular media production increasing at the time. 'Cringe' would see the peak of its descriptive form use in 2015, though data shows that it has been used previously consistently. An interesting observation of the material

shows that 'cringe' in the function of a verb is often used as a secondary part of the predicative, in tandem with the preposition 'to', and though it was most often used as an adjective, cases of 'cringe' being used as an adverbial were present in the corpus. Additionally, 'cringe' was often presented as an exclamation. 2018 and 2019 also have no instances of 'cringe' being used as a descriptor, though this development could be explained by the overall limited number of instances present in the analysed part of the corpus. It should be noted that the examples where 'cringe' is used as a descriptor, it is most often used to negatively highlight the object of the sentence. This of course should have been expected, as the traditional verb form portrays feeling negatively of something.
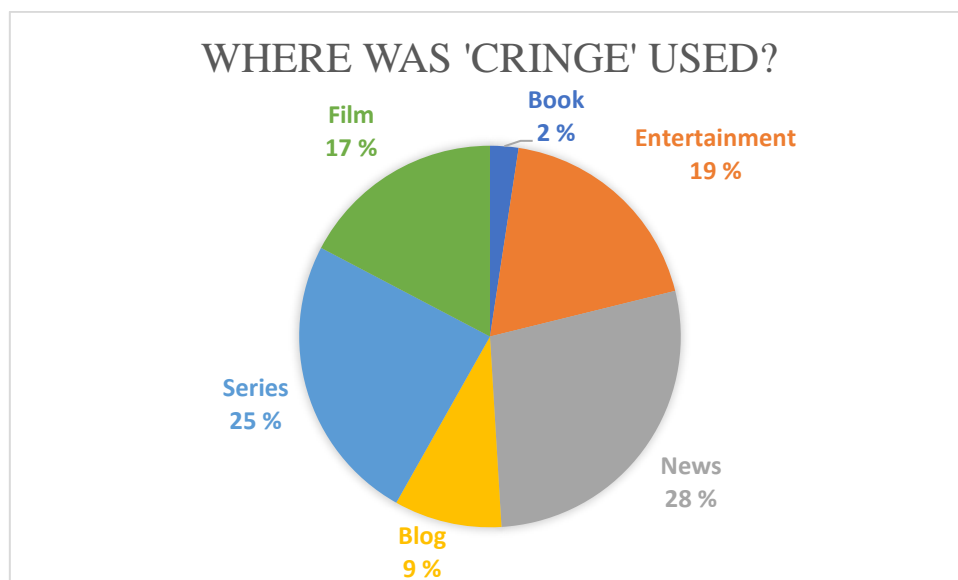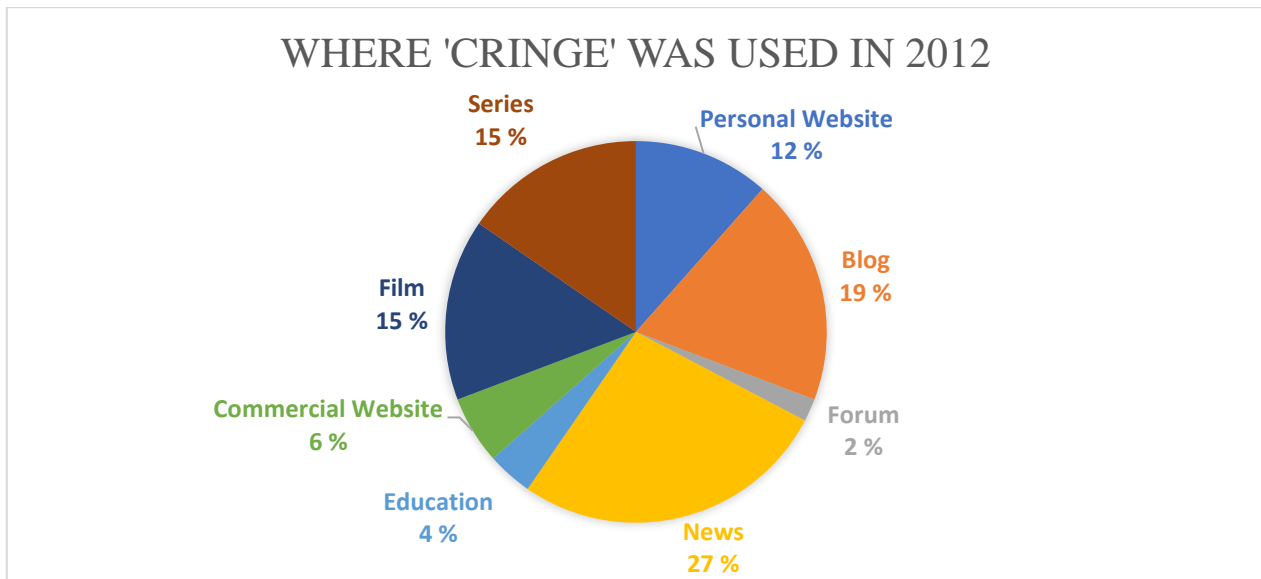

A breakdown of where 'cringe' was used between 2010 and 2021.

When examining the origins of the data, the presence of 'cringe' in media language is evident. 'Entertainment' in this case is classified as commercial magazines, commercial sites and other sites meant for entertainment use, with news sites covering the 'News' section. Both had their presence enhanced by comments on their respective pieces of writing, though only making a noticeable minority in the data, with many articles and opinion pieces using 'cringe'. Blogging and microblogging are also represented visibly on the chart, with half of the instances occurring in 2012. Books are a special mention, with 5 instances representing 2% of instances out of the 205. The presence of 'cringe' in both 'Film' and 'Series', meaning serial shows in this case, can be explained by the way that data was selected for analysis from the corpora, as the same amount of data was selected from all four, disproportionately favouring both categories. It should thus be noted that 'cringe' had more instances in both the COCA and NOW corpora.
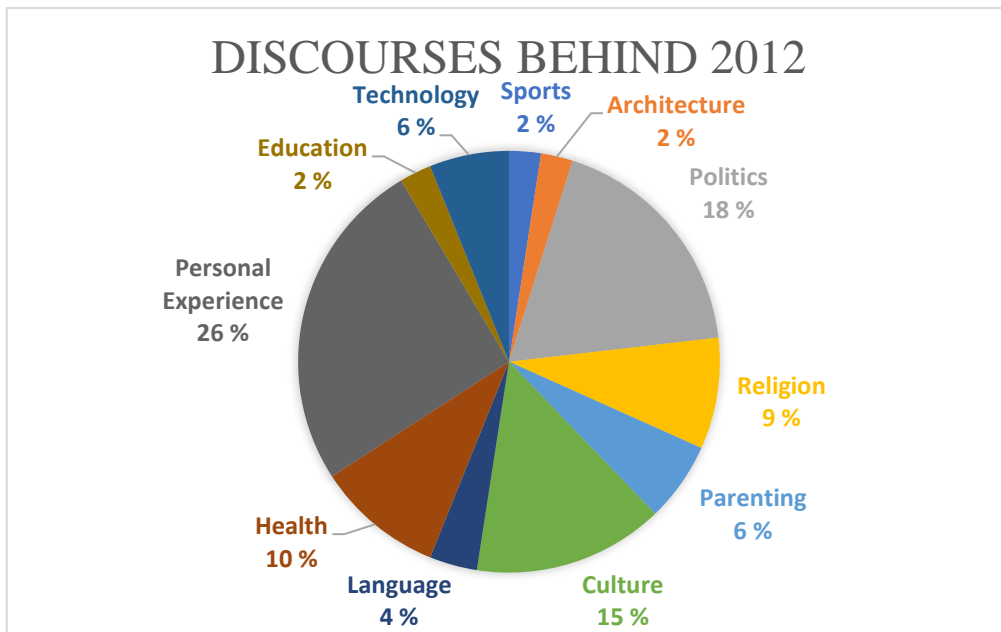
Though the findings support the initial idea of there being a correlation between the Internet English version of 'cringe', used as an adjective or a descriptor, and English used in media, the data shows that the correlation between the two is quite minimal, with the traditional verb form showing much more prevalence. The presence of descriptors is nonetheless apparent.

5.2. The 2012 spike

A more thorough breakdown of the platforms and places where 'cringe' was used in 2012.

As 2012 was an outlier in the gradual growth of 'cringe', and as it can be broken further down to where these instances of language have come from, a more thorough look into the data was performed, with interesting results. Though the data had been designed to feature all four of the major corpora equally, COCA and especially NOW had more presence gathered in 2012. As seen on the chart, 'Film' and 'Series' account for only 30% of the occurrences, with a significant prominence of 'Personal Websites' and 'Blogs', or popular media, which were separated from each other for further clarity. While they are separated, both sets had very similar styles in their writing, with 'Personal Websites' representing named individuals and their personal microblogs. 'Commercial websites' was also separated from the singular 'Forum' present in the data alongside 'Education' for clarity. 'Education' being presented in the chart was an unexpected occurrence, though not impossible as both instances were gathered from COCA, the Corpus of Contemporary English, which included most of the instances of blogging additionally.

DISCOURSES BEHIND 2012

- Technology 6 %
- Sports 2 %
- Architecture 2 %
- Politics 18 %
- Education 2 %
- Personal Experience 26 %
- Religion 9 %
- Parenting 6 %
- Health 10 %
- Language 4 %
- Culture 15 %

Many of the datapoints had multiple discourses that could be interpreted.

In addition to examining where the data for the spike came from, further analysis into the discourses surrounding 'cringe' was conducted. As most datapoints could be understood as having multiple discourses surrounding 'cringe', many of them are represented in more than one discourse in the graph. A good example of this would be the instances of conservative, or otherwise 'anti-left', discourses having mentions of religion in all their instances. This is the factor to why religious discourses have a prominent showing in the data, though other discourses concerning religion were also present, such as the only 'Forum' instance concerning the lack of theists. The political discourses overall had a strong conservative presence, but neutral instances discussing elections and voting were also present in the sample. Instances categorized as cultural discourses had overlap with conservative narratives also, but had their main presence in discussing culture, such as the arts or community. Parenting and health narratives were often discussed in tandem, with minimal overlap with conservative discourses. Technology and health were also linked together noticeably. It is personal experiences however that have the most showing in the use of 'cringe', focusing on the distain felt by the speaker considering other discourses present in the instance, such as with political discourses and anger against the other side. Thus, the relationship between 'cringe' adjacent words and political speech would be another interesting topic for research.

5.3. The data left out from the main analysis

The results showed that 'cringe' has had a consistent low amount of use in the last century, with a slow uptick in its use of through the last three decades. Prior to the 2012 activity spike, the usage of 'cringe' as an identifier had first been published in 2003, with it gaining more use after 2009. Data prior to 2009 was noticeably sparce, so a decision was made to exclude those instances as mentioned previously. This affected all the corpora, though most affected were COCA and the Movie corpus. Some instances were additionally left out as mentioned earlier, being presented as nouns. As these instances were so limited and outside of the scope of the thesis, they were excluded from the analysis. Their presence does raise further questions though, and their presence in language in general could be studied further.

6   Discussion and conclusion

As the data shows, 'cringe' has entered media language at least partially. There has been a slight uptick in the use of the word 'cringe' in media, and the uptick has coincided with the assimilation of parts of Internet language in the language used in media writing. Though 'cringe' only has a modest showing in its use as a descriptor, its presence shows that there has been diffusion between Internet English and media language. Most instances were in more casual settings but works of writing have indeed been published containing the word 'cringe'. The instances where a more casual style of writing is employed show the lexical change 'cringe' is going through in spoken and Internet language, though it mainly still retains its semantic properties, being used to imply something's disdainfulness when used as a descriptor. The study of discourses surrounding 'cringe' also shows that it occupies many different narratives and topics, from bad parenting to political thinking. This could be interpreted to mean that 'cringe' is not a part of any specific discourse. The data analysis provided positive answer to most research questions, excluding possibly the semantic change mentioned in question 2.

Though the findings were found to positively reinforce previous assumptions on the matter of 'cringe's behaviour in media language, the results should be valuated against other similar studies on language behaviour between two styles of language. This thesis has limitations in its size and the material analysed, as circumstances changed the scope of the thesis as it was being written. In addition, due to my inexperience with the theory and methodology employed the analysis of the

material might be found insufficient considering the scale of the thesis. This thesis also does not use the words 'cringey' or 'cringeworthy' in its analysis, as though both resemble the use of a descriptive 'cringe', the thesis focused on 'cringe' specifically. The addition of the two adjectives 'cringey' and 'cringeworthy' could have provided different results, and should be examined either with 'cringe', or independently. Additional studies on the effects of Internet language on the media language used by more traditional platforms for language should also be conducted to contrast the results found in this thesis for us to further understand the topic. Additionally, for the sake of comparison the word 'cringe' should be studied further in different contexts, such as in singular language spaces such as Tumblr.

In closing, 'cringe' has been used in Internet language for a few years now extensively, proven by the spike in its use in the microblogging communities. And though some of these language communities have dissipated or moved to other platforms, 'cringe' continues to see use as both a verb and as a descriptor. 'Cringe' will most likely see its use increase in media adjacent discourses in the coming years as the younger internet-savvy generations enter media domains. 'Cringe' won't belong to any specific area of discourse, instead being applied to anything from politics to health.

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