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ABBREVIATION IN ENGLISH INTERNET COMMUNICATION

Abstract

The present article deals with the use of abbreviations on the Internet today. It has analysed literature sources focusing on the essential aspects of the word formation process, particularly neologisms. It has identified communication characteristics with the help of modern digital technology and their main aspects of evolution in the online environment. The research materials include information on the different types of abbreviations and the peculiarities of their formation. The article provides the primary classification of shortening in English and the basic principles of new word production.

The article considers some abbreviations standard to different segments of the Internet – social networks, YouTube, and messengers. It also highlights the importance of youth communication in developing online language, particularly slang and various contractions. The materials aim to differentiate abbreviations according to their form and function in communication. The research provides a complex understanding of using abbreviations to speed up information exchange by employing text messages, emails, street signage, etc.

The research defines the formation of abbreviations and new words as the collective creativity of Internet users and their creative approach to offline communication.

Keywords: *word formation, abbreviations, online communication, slang, neologisms.*

1. Introduction.

Language is a dynamic phenomenon that is sensitive to social and cultural processes. Words form attitudes to events and phenomena, creating a linguistic portrait of an epoch. The rapid development of digital technology led to the need to produce new words to convey new ideas, notions, and technical inventions accurately.

According to Bloom, "Language converts human imagination to reality, making human culture and science possible. Of the eight critical transitions in life on Earth, language is the most recent" (Bloom, 2000, pp. 1–6).

The worldwide Internet network aims to simplify people's lives by speeding up different operations in the workplace and daily life. The new information culture has dramatically changed the spread of information and formed a specific language environment characterized by richness and space-saving while delivering a message.

Long words and word combinations are replaced by the initial letters of words, and only part of them is pronounced, so abbreviations occur. Among the most common contractions of the English-speaking segment of the Internet can be highlighted the following: LOL (laughing out loud), BTW (by the way), IMHO (in my humble opinion), PLS (please), PPL (people), MSG (message), BFF (best friends forever), HAND (have a nice day), YOLO (you only live once), DWBH (don't worry, be happy), EOS (end of story), F2F (face to face), etc.

Judge highlights that "many of today's abbreviations were well known before the Internet became integrated into contemporary society." The author provides some vivid examples (TGIF, KISS, BS, AWOL, ASAP, SWAK, VIP, TLC, and acronyms such as CD) and comments on them. He writes that they "have developed an additional meaning during our lifetime" and calls them "linguistic shortcuts" (Judge, 2011, pp. 30–31).

According to Bula, "Practice points out that the meaning of the new shortened words is not always clear. This explains the necessity of investigating the main ways and patterns of shortening, their arrangement and classification, application in teaching, and correct usage in everyday speech" (Bula, 2005, p. 199).

The present article considers using different abbreviations and their functions on the Internet.

2. Literature Review.

Kravchuk researches the structural-semantic classification of English abbreviations and their place in the English word formation system. The author also provides an essential historical background of initialisms and acronyms, reminding that "The word initialism first occurred in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1899, the first acronym was only included in 1943" (Kravchuk, 2016, pp. 62–64).

According to the Grammarly Blog, "Americans love to abbreviate things and create acronyms. This is not new; for instance, in World War 2, there were WACs and WAVES: Women's Army Corps and Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service. The war is referred to as WW2 or WWII, and the United States of America is regularly written as the USA" (Grammarly, 2024 URL: https://www.grammarly.com/blog/10-trending-internet-slang-acronyms/).

According to Lymar (2021), "From the beginning of the 21st century, the English language is experiencing a "neological boom" that confirms the constant change of language and its modernization." She goes on further, "Abbreviation (or shortening) serves as a kind of word-forming, the result of which is the emergence of new types of shortenings that serve for fixation new or renewed lexical units, such as the names of political parties, public organizations, establishments, etc." (Lymar, 2021, p. 256).

Green (2015) provides essential information on changes that have taken place in English over time.

Mustafa (2015) characterizes the contribution of the Internet to everyday communication and focuses on different contractions in English, including abbreviations.

Bula (2005) considers any type of shortening as a productive way of word formation in modern English. The author emphasizes that producing new words is not chaotic and has settled patterns.

Creese (2014) provides a study on word formation trends among young internet users, which lead to the creation of new words, including abbreviations of different types. The author focuses mainly on word formation methods such as blending and compounding.

Algeo (1977) considers acronyms as blended words, providing strong arguments.

3. Aim and Objectives.

The article aims to consider different types of abbreviations in various spheres of online communication and define the features of each case. The following materials will help us understand word-formation conventions in producing new words to exchange thoughts, ideas, emotions, and points of view online.

4. Methodology.

The *comparative analysis* method was used during the research to compare complete word forms with their shortened forms. Also, an attempt was made to identify the trends of shortening words and word combinations.

The *historical method* made it possible to observe the gradual development of shortening words in online communication.

5. Results.

The use of various contractions stems from the so-called golden standard for the number of characters in a text message, which is 160. This number of letters is believed to be enough to express most thoughts (Milian, 2009, pp. 1–3).

Twitter's messages also had a character limitation due to its roots in vehicle dispatch. Herbert Judge reminds us that Twitter's first name was "Status," which was a program to control rental bikes and cars: "Building on the foundation for standard text messages, a tweet reserved up to 20 characters for the username and allowed up to 140 characters for the message" (Judge, 2011, pp. 1–3). With time, the need to express more ideas using fewer characters occurred. Under Bloom, "The increasing complexity of life and human knowledge placed increasing demands on language, which responded to those demands" (Bloom, 2000, pp. 1–6).

Tamara Green calls a language a "social product," drawing attention to the changes in the structure and meaning of words over time. Like no other, English allows one to understand its gradual and complex changes over the past centuries (Green, 2015, pp. 2–3).

Mustafa characterizes the contribution of the Internet to everyday communication: "The existence of the Internet has opened up a new platform of communication that fulfills the social life of the people nowadays. People communicate more through social networking such as Facebook (FB), Twitter, Instagram, Instant Messaging (IM), Skype, E-mail, and Chat-room. The communication is chosen online as the process becomes faster, easier, and more convenient" (Mustafa, 2015, pp. 7–8).

Different types of abbreviations contribute to simplifying online speech by producing new word forms. Thus, the issue of applying abbreviations lies in word formation in English. According to Grammarly, "The purpose of abbreviations is to make communication more efficient by using smaller words" (Grammarly, 2024 URL: https://www.grammarly.com/blog/types-abbreviations/).

Simply, "An abbreviation is just a short version of a longer word or a phrase." For example, an *ad* is an abbreviation of an *advertisement* (Grammarly, 2024 URL: https://www.grammarly.com/blog/types-abbreviations/). Using shorter words to express complex notions saves time while communicating and creates a more up-to-date language that reflects different aspects of modernity.

Under Bula, the "process of increasing word stock is not chaotic. There are certain rules, patterns, and ways of word formation," and she defines shortening as a "productive and active way of word formation in modern English" (Bula, 2005, p. 199).

There are three main ways to form abbreviations: clipping, acronyms (also known as alphabetism), and blends (the Cambridge Dictionary, 2024 URL: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/word-formation_2).

Linguists also define two more specific types of abbreviations: contractions (e.g., I am – I'm, he has – he's) and textese – online slang (e.g., *LOL* – laughing out loud; *IDK* – I don't know; *ASAP* – as soon as possible) (Rice University website, 2024 URL: https://www.ruf.rice.edu/~kemmer/Words04/usage/slang_internet.html).

It is reasonable to consider each type of abbreviation and how they are formed, with further analysis of their role in Internet communication and the online environment in general.

Bula states that in most cases, "As a rule, clipping follows the syllabic principle of word division. It produces new words in the same part of speech. The bulk of curtailed words are constituted of nouns. Verbs are rarely shortened (e.g., *rev* from to *revolve*). Shortened adjectives are very few and mostly reveal a combined effect. Shortening and suffixation (e.g., *comfy* from *comfortable*, *imposes* from *impossible*" (Bula, 2005, p. 199).

Clipping is applied to shorten a word by one or more syllables and has four distinctive types, depending on which part needs to be shortened. It is reasonable to describe this conception in more detail.

The most common way of shortening words is the so-called *final clipping*, the meaning of which lies in the shortening of the first part of a word, whereas the first part remains the same (e.g., *vegetarian – veg*; *cabriolet – cab*; *photograph – photo*; *biology – bio*; *discotheque – disco*, etc.).

The sense of *initial clipping* lies in shortening the initial part of a word, whereas the rest remains the same (e.g., *motorbike – bike*; *hamburger – hamburger*; *caravan – van*; *telephone – phone*; *omnibus – bus*, etc.).

The next type of shortening words is called medial clipping. It preserves the middle part of a word, but the first and second parts are shortened (e.g., *refrigerator – fridge*; *influenza – flu*; *prescription – script*).

Finally, complex clipping deals with shortening a compound word by keeping and merging its initial parts (e.g., *permanent wave – perm* (only the first part of the compound word remains, and the rest is clipped); *public house – pub* (only the initial of the first part remains); *navigation certificate – navicert* (the final parts of both words were clipped and then blended); *grandmother – grandma* (both clipping and blending).

The critical difference between clipping and abbreviation is that clipping suggests shortening words by omitting syllables. In contrast, a typical abbreviation forms a word by using the initial letters of a longer name to create a new word with the same meaning as the initial name.

The critical nuance of abbreviations is that after them, a full stop can be used (e.g., *January – Jan.*). Clipping does not include a complete halt (Langeek website, 2024 URL: https://langeek.co/en/grammar/course/1312/clipping-and-hypocorism).

The next type of abbreviation is an acronym, which the Cambridge Dictionary defines as a "type of abbreviation formed when the initial letters of two or more words are combined to produce consonant and vowel sequences found in words" (the Cambridge Dictionary website, 2024 URL: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/abbreviation).

Acronyms are often used in text and verbal communication to save time. They replace lengthy titles or save space when a character is limited, like in social media ads or outdoor signage.

Acronyms are typically pronounced as words. Examples include RAM (random access memory) and radar – radio detection and ranging. It makes sense to provide more acronym abbreviation examples, such as NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), PIN (Personal Identification Number), NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), scuba (Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus), radar (Radio Detection and Ranging), and zip code (Zone Improvement Plan code).

There is a sub-group of acronyms called *initialisms*, usually pronounced separately. Some of the most common initialisms are the following: FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), UFO (Unidentified Flying Object), CEO (Chief Executive Officer), HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language), MBA (Master of Business Administration), and FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) (the Collins Dictionary website, 2024 URL: https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/initialism).

Acronyms can also be used as brand names or names of institutions (e.g., FedEx – Federal Express; NASA – National Aeronautics and Space Administration; OPEC – Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries; BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa). The provided words are all initialisms as they are read as words.

Blending is a significant process for creating new words. According to Gries, blending means forming a new word by combining parts of at least two other source words, where either one is shortened, and there is some phonemic or graphemic overlap of the source words (Gries, 2004, p. 639).

Enarsson defines different blends: blends with overlapping, clipping, clipping at morpheme boundaries, blends with clipping and overlapping, and syntagmatic blends (Enarsson, 2006, pp. 12–15).

An example of *blending with overlapping* is the pattern where "the final part of the first word overlaps the first part of the second word. The overlap can be one phoneme or several". An example can be given the language of the word, which is the result of blending the word's slang and vocabulary. Some examples of the blending of this type can be provided: cinema with the meaning of "film for adults" (*sin + cinema*), celebrity with the definition of "famous criminal" (*cell + celebrity*), car tune as "musical cartoon" (*cartoon + tune*).

Blends with clipping do not include overlapping. One part (sometimes more) is omitted in this group of words. One of the most common patterns is where the "one is to keep the whole part of the first word and the last part of the second word," as in the words (e.g., *foodoholic = food + alcoholic, fanzine = fan + magazine*).

There are also a few alternative forms of blends with clipping: *Eurasia = Europe + Asia* (the whole second word is kept and only the first part of the first word is used); *brunch = breakfast + lunch, smog = smoke + fog* (both words are clipped, the first part of the first word and the second part of the second words are used); *agitprop = agitation + propaganda, aldehyde = alcohol + dehydrogenatum* (the combination of the first parts of the words or all the elements) (Enarsson, 2006, pp. 4–8).

According to Algeo, acronyms are blended words that include clippings (Algeo, 1977, p. 50). However, Enarsson disagrees and considers acronyms a separate form of word formation. For example, the term Oxbridge is a blend created by combining Oxford and Cambridge. Blending can sometimes evolve into compounding, as evidenced by the word landscape, borrowed from the Dutch language, and later produced new blends like cityscape, inscape, offscape, and others (Enarsson, 2006, pp. 24–25).

The single word *scape* was also made from the word landscape. In this regard, any derived word formed employing the morpheme scape is a compound, not a blend. Also, blending can give morphemes new meanings (e.g., *radiocast, telecast, sportscast,* and *newscast* have given the word *cast* the meaning of *broadcast*).

Blends with clipping and overlapping are the combination of the two sub-types of blending: *Californication = California + fornicate, suspose = suspect + suppose, Hungarican = Hungarian + American,* motel = motor + hotel (Algeo, 1977, pp. 51–52).

Enarsson says *syntagmatic blends* "represent combinations of words that occur next to one another in the speech chain." Often defined as blends, the words from this group can be identified as *contractions,* and "In most of these cases, the first word ends with the same sound or sequence of sounds as the second word begins with" (e.g., *Chicagorilla = Chicago + gorilla*, *radarange = radar + range*) (Enarsson, 2006, p. 7).

Contractions are one of the essential elements in English that is taught even to elementary school students. Here are some contraction abbreviation examples: cannot – can't; could have – could've; it is – it's; he has – he's; I will – I'll; Dr. – doctor; February – Feb.; Avenue – Ave; apartment – apt.

One of the most recent additions to the classification of abbreviation is online slang or textese. Over the years, internet users have created numerous slang terms. Though most cannot be pronounced, they are still called acronyms. These terms were first developed to save time and keystrokes and are generally written in lowercase (e.g., *troll* – a person who deliberately stirs up trouble; *newbie* – a new user; *FAQ* – frequently asked questions or a list of frequently asked questions with answers; *hijack* – go offtopic. Done commonly by newbies in forums; *lurker* – one who reads an email list or a message board but does not participate in the discussion) (Rice University website, 2024 URL: https://www.ruf.rice.edu/~kemmer/Words04/usage/slang_internet.html).

The idea of textese stems from the necessity of speeding up typing time on computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices. As a result, users can exchange messages faster and effortlessly – for example, the letter *U* can be used instead of typing the word you.

Research has revealed that "text" covers any type of message sent via laptop, phone, email, social media, etc. Despite being a separate type of abbreviation, in some cases, it has features of other sub-types, such as initialisms (e.g., *irl* – *in real life*) and contractions (e.g., *bc* – *because*). Moreover, this abbreviation sometimes produces new words by combining letters and numbers based on sounds (e.g., *gr8* for *excellent*). It is important to note that there are no strict rules regarding the formation of such words, so usually, most users just copy what they see on the internet and then use it in their following messages. There are some textese abbreviation examples provided: LOL (laugh out loud), btw (by the way), IMO (in my opinion), IDK (I don't know), wat (what), bc (because), wknd (weekend).

Creese studied word formation trends in the web-based corpus of youth language called "webcoyn," focusing on blending and compounding. The research analyzed texts from websites targeted at young people or created by them. These included independent teen blogs, online youth magazines, corporate pages for teen TV shows, and websites for popular youth franchises. In total, 2452 potential new words were found, of which 24 were identified as actual new words and added to seven dictionaries. Some examples of these new words are "fav" for favorite, "teenhood" for the period of being a teenager, and "OMG" for "Oh my God" (Creese, 2014, p. 21).

Communication on social networks has its own set of abbreviations, such as DM (direct message), RT (retweet), and others. One of the most popular platforms for video creators, YouTube, has its own words as well (e.g., AMA – ask me anything; ASMR –

autonomous sensory meridian; challenge; collab – collaboration; hype beast – a person who buys expensive clothes; diss track – a song where a YouTuber criticizes other YouTubers; haul – a YouTuber shows what they have bought; mukbang – when a YouTuber eats something live on camera; prank – a draw caught on camera).

A popular messenger and marketplace, Instagram, also has specific words used by its audience. For example, TBT – throwback Thursday; OOTD – outfit of the day); foodporn – a hashtag for a photo with delicious food; WCW – woman crush Wednesday; MCM – man crush Monday; POTD – photo of the day; IG – the short form of Instagram; F4F – follow for follow.

Also, there are many short forms in which one letter or number means the entire word: 2 – to/too; 4 – for; B – be; C – see; R – are; U – you; Y – why; 2moro – tomorrow; 2nte – tonight. (12 Journal, 2024 URL: https://p12.com.ua/journal/view/internet-vocabulary-sleng-abreviaturi-skorochennya).

6. Discussion.

The provided materials enable to make conceptual summarizing.

The formation of new words does not depend on the varieties of English and is the result of the typical online environment such as Facebook, Twitter, and many more. Under the influence of social media, the English language has been reshaped in many ways, and now, there is a range of new norms, not only on social media but the internet in general. Some words can change their meaning in the online environment. Social media can be depicted as "a rich playground for experimenting" that will continue changing the language in the future.

The offline language has also been affected, especially among youngsters, due to their creativity and the absence of editing or proofreading posts. This has led to the transformation of communication processes, making them faster and more precise. The language has been enriched by many new words and symbols that reflect the present public discourse and its latest tendencies.

Using new words depends on the period – every decade gives impetus to form new words or gives new meanings to familiar words. The reason for this lies in actual social life processes, political events, and the development of technology.

It is important to note that the creation of new words is not influenced by the different varieties of English, such as American, British, or Australian English. This process should be considered as a form of linguistic creativity. The primary data source used to study word formation is written language extracted from printed materials and websites (Szymanek, 2005, pp. 429–430).

In his discussion, Foster highlights how the internet and social media platforms have created new words. Blogs, tweets, Facebook posts, and LinkedIn profiles have significantly transformed English. Foster emphasizes the dominant role of English in the context of social media, which has drastically impacted communication processes, changing the way people speak and write in English. As a result, the exchange of information in this new environment has been transformed, and the language has been enriched by many new words and symbols that reflect the present public discourse (Foster, 2021, p. 48).

Social media content created by the general public is generally unchecked for proper use of the English language. This has led to new trends in word formation and language usage. Social media has notably appropriated existing vocabulary, such as "wall," which now refers to a social media profile's homepage. Other examples include "tablet" (portable screens), "troll" (users who make unreasonable comments for attention), "stream" (steady data flow), and "catfish" (users pretending to be someone else). Beyond that, the internet has

led to many new words that now can seem usual (e.g., *unfriend, selfie, fleek, emoji*). Many new words were brought from the social media space to daily speech. Some of these neologisms have been put into the Oxford Dictionary. One such word is the acronym *YOLO* which means "You only live once," the compound words like *Craptacular* (remarkably poor or disappointing) and *amazeballs* (extremely good or impressive; excellent) (Language Service Direct website, 2024 URL: https://www.languageservicesdirect.co.uk/social-media-changing-english-language/).

It should be said about the recent social media trend of "identifying high-profile couples by combining their first names to form a blend word" (e.g., *Brangelina*, which is a mix of the names *Brad* and *Angelina*).

Also, there are such acronyms like *LOL* (Laughing Out Loud), *DM* (direct message), *FOMO* (fear of missing out), *TBT* (throwback Thursday), *OMG* (*OMG is the written abbreviation for 'Oh my God!',* used primarily in emails and text messages.), *TXT* (abbreviation for *text*), *GR8 (*abbreviation for *excellent), M8* (abbreviation for *mate), L8R* (the acronym for *later,* sometimes used in text messages and emails.), and many others.

According to a study conducted by Samsung and led by Professor John Sutherland at University College London in 2015, 86% of the participants were convinced that modern teenagers and young adults use a completely different language on social media. Sutherland suggests that the emergence of emojis might be the next stage of language and communication (Daily Mail website, 2015 URL: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3063505/Generational-language-gap-seismic.html)

7. Conclusions.

Language is a constantly evolving phenomenon influenced by social and cultural processes in society. Through words, we form attitudes towards events and phenomena, creating a linguistic portrait of an era. With the rapid development of digital technology, there has been a need to produce new words to convey new ideas, notions, and technical inventions accurately.

The Internet has made our lives easier by speeding up various operations in work and daily life. This has led to a new information culture that has significantly altered how information spreads and created a language environment characterized by brevity and efficiency in delivering a message.

It has been observed that the significance of newly shortened words is not always easily understandable. Therefore, studying the primary methods and patterns of shortening, their organization and categorization, usage in education, and appropriate application in daily conversations is essential.

It has been stated that youth language is a critical element in producing new words. It can be considered a part of youth creativity, with the help of which newly formed words can serve as cultural markers. Different types of word formation are used in youth speech, and teenagers use these types of producing new words unconsciously. Combining words aims to express the needed state or a peculiarity of a phenomenon or event and make speech faster without losing information.

Also, the formation of new words as a linguistic phenomenon has been defined as collective creativity because we know very little about the exact authors of new words. In contrast, there is a clear understanding of the whole process. Many examples of producing new words have been shown, along with their definitions.

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Анотація

У статті досліджується використання абревіатур в мережі Інтернет. Проаналізовано літературні джерела, в яких висвітлені основні аспекти словотворення, зокрема неологізмів. Надається характеристика спілкування за допомогою сучасних цифрових технологій та встановлюються основні причини еволюції мови в онлайн-просторі.

Матеріали дослідження містять інформацію щодо різних типів абревіатур та особливостей їх утворення. Надається базова класифікація скорочень та принципів утворення нових слів.

Розглядаються абревіатури, характерні для різних сегментів Інтернету – соціальних мереж, ютубу, месенджерів тощо. Висвітлюється роль спілкування в молодіжному середовищі в розвитку інтернет-мови, зокрема інтернет-сленгу та різноманітних скорочень. Матеріали статті виконують диференціацію абревіатур відповідно до способу їх утворення на функції в процесі комунікації.

Стаття надає комплексне уявлення про використання абревіатур з метою пришвидшення обміну інформацією шляхом текстових повідомлень у месенджерах, електронних листах, вуличних вивісках тощо.

Створення абревіатур і нових слів загалом у процесі дослідження були визначені колективною творчістю користувачів мережі "Інтернет" та творчим підходом до вербального спілкування офлайн.

Ключові слова: *творення слів, абревіатури, онлайн-спілкування, сленг, неологізми.*