DIGITAL ABBREVIATIONS AND NEOLOGISMS IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN: LINGUISTIC ECONOMY AND PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS

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Introduction

The rapid development of digital communication has significantly influenced contemporary language use. Social media platforms, messaging applications, and online communities have created new conditions for written interaction, encouraging users to communicate quickly and express ideas in a concise manner. As a result, abbreviations and neologisms have become common features of digital discourse.

In English, examples such as LOL (laughing out loud), BRB (be right back), and IDK (I do not know) demonstrate the tendency to shorten frequently used expressions. Russian digital communication shows similar processes through forms such as «спс» (спасибо), «пжлст» (пожалуйста), «лол» (LOL), and «имхо» (IMHO). These examples illustrate not only linguistic compression but also the adaptation of language to new communicative environments.

The purpose of this article is to compare the use of abbreviations and neologisms in English and Russian digital communication, focusing on their structural characteristics, linguistic economy, and pragmatic functions.

Materials and Methods

The research is based on a comparative descriptive analysis of representative English and Russian digital expressions and relevant linguistic literature. The analysis considers three aspects: word formation, communicative function, and contextual use.

The theoretical framework draws on Crystal (2008), who examines the linguistic characteristics of text messaging, and Baron (2008), who explores the relationship between digital technologies and language practices. Tagliamonte and Denis (2008) also demonstrate that online linguistic forms follow recognisable patterns rather than representing random deviations from standard language.

The study is theoretical and illustrative in nature. It does not involve an independently collected corpus or quantitative measurements.

Results and Discussion

1. Structural characteristics

Abbreviations and neologisms in digital communication are formed through several linguistic processes.

In English, common examples include initialisms such as LOL and BRB, clippings such as info (information), and informal spellings such as pls (please). Russian uses similar mechanisms, including «спс» (спасибо), «пжлст» (пожалуйста), and «инет» (интернет).

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A particularly interesting feature is the adaptation of English expressions into Russian. For example, LOL may appear as «лол», while IMHO is commonly represented as «имхо». Such forms demonstrate how borrowed expressions become integrated into another language through changes in spelling and pronunciation.

Digital neologisms also emerge through semantic shifts and the creation of new words. Expressions such as to google in English and «загуглить» in Russian illustrate how technological developments contribute to lexical innovation.

2. Linguistic economy

One of the main reasons for the popularity of abbreviations is linguistic economy. Users tend to reduce the length of messages while preserving their essential meaning.

This tendency is particularly noticeable in instant messaging, where communication often involves short exchanges and immediate responses. Crystal (2008) argues that text messaging has developed its own conventions and should be viewed as a distinctive form of language use.

However, shortened expressions are effective only when participants understand them. Unfamiliar abbreviations may create ambiguity, especially when they are used outside the communities in which they originated. Therefore, linguistic economy depends on shared knowledge and context.

3. Pragmatic functions

Abbreviations and neologisms perform functions beyond shortening written expressions. They can communicate emotions, establish informal relationships, and express the speaker's attitude.

For instance, LOL may indicate amusement or soften a statement, while English expressions such as OMG communicate surprise. Russian forms such as «лол», «кек» and «имхо» can similarly express reactions, irony, or personal opinions.

These expressions also contribute to the development of digital identities. Their use may indicate familiarity with particular online communities, age groups, or communication styles. Consequently, digital vocabulary reflects both linguistic adaptation and social interaction.

4. English-Russian similarities and differences

English and Russian digital communication demonstrate several common tendencies: shortening frequently used expressions, borrowing foreign vocabulary, creating new meanings, and adapting written language to informal interaction.

Nevertheless, the languages differ in how these processes are represented. English abbreviations often preserve Latin-letter forms, whereas Russian communication may use Cyrillic transliterations of English expressions. This adaptation can change their visual appearance and pronunciation while retaining their original communicative function.

The comparison demonstrates that digital language development is influenced by both universal communicative needs and language-specific structures.

Conclusion

Digital abbreviations and neologisms represent important features of contemporary English and Russian communication. Their development is connected with linguistic economy, technological change, and the need for rapid interpersonal interaction.

The comparison reveals that both languages use shortening, borrowing, and semantic innovation to adapt to digital environments. At the same time, differences in writing systems and linguistic structures influence how these expressions are formed and integrated.

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Abbreviations and neologisms should therefore be considered not merely informal deviations but dynamic linguistic resources. Their study provides valuable insight into contemporary language change, intercultural communication, and the relationship between technology and linguistic development.

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