

LEXICAL CREATIVITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY: TRENDS AND MECHANISMS OF CONTEMPORARY WORD FORMATION*Khoshimova Madinabonu Khakimjon qizi**Lecturer, Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages,
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The relevance of studying 21st-century lexical creativity is determined not only by the quantitative parameters of the growth of the neological inventory, but also by qualitative changes affecting the boundaries between oral and written forms, between the national and the global, and between the word proper and graphically marked units (hashtags, nicknames, memes, etc.). The aim of this article is to describe the key trends and mechanisms of contemporary word formation in the Russian language functioning in the conditions of digital communication.

Keywords: neologisms, Anglicisms, hybrid formations, expressive derivation, compounding and contamination, Internet communication, digital communication.

Lexical creativity in the 21st century represents one of the most dynamic zones of the contemporary language system. Social, technological and cultural transformations associated with globalization, digitalization and the mediatization of communication bring about intensive lexical renewal, the emergence of new word-formation models and the activation of peripheral derivational mechanisms. Under these conditions Russian demonstrates a high degree of adaptability: on the one hand, it preserves invariant structural properties, and on the other hand, it responds promptly to the challenges of the time, creating new means of nomination and expression [1; 4].

Contemporary lexical creativity cannot be described exclusively within the framework of the traditional word-formation paradigm focused on systemic relations between root, affixes and stems. Researchers emphasize the need to take into account cognitive, pragmatic and discursive factors that determine the choice of particular models [2; 3]. The focus shifts to the linguistic personality of the user, who actively constructs an individual and group vocabulary, as well as to the media environment in which new formations are fixed and disseminated.

Karaulov introduces the concept of a linguistic personality as the totality of its verbal-semantic, cognitive and pragmatic levels, which makes it possible to regard lexical creativity as a form of realizing personal strategies of self-expression and self-identification [2]. Kubryakova, in turn, stresses the cognitive nature of word formation, treating it as a mechanism of conceptualizing and categorizing experience [3]. As a result, contemporary lexical creativity is viewed not only as a formal-morphological, but also as a cognitive-discursive procedure.

Anglicisation and hybrid formations

One of the most obvious trends in 21st-century lexical creativity is the anglicisation of the lexicon and the formation of hybrid derivational models. English-language roots are incorporated into the Russian word-formation system and assimilated by means of traditional affixes: лайкать, дизлайкать, репостить, стримить, шеймить, буллить, хейтить, etc. [1; 4]. Assimilation also affects nominal formations: блогер, стример, геймер, хейтер, инфлюенсер, айтишник, эсэмэщик. In such cases we observe the “superimposition” of Russian morphology on a foreign root base, which allows us to speak of a hybrid word-formation system.

It is important to note that Anglicisms are not limited to direct borrowings: they become the basis for secondary derivation, including expressive and colloquial ones: дизлайк, диз, лайкос, репостик, шеймер, хейтерство, etc. In this way a tendency is realized toward the integration of borrowings into the lexical and word-formation subsystems of Russian [4].

Colloquial and expressive derivation

Contemporary colloquial and online communication demonstrates the high productivity of expressive suffixes and formants traditionally associated with diminutive and evaluative semantics: -к-, -очк-, -юшк-, -онечк-, as well as “rubber” (highly elastic) verbal suffixes: -нуть, -ануть, -ону- and others [1]. As a result, units such as видосик, постик, мемчик, кофеёк, сериальчик, скринануть, загуглить, зашеймить, заспойлерить arise. Such formations perform an important function of stylistic marking of the text, setting an informal, playful or ironic tone of the utterance.

Expressive derivation often relies on the model of a one-off occasional formation; however, a part of such units becomes fixed in usage and passes into the category of stable colloquial words. Here we see the mechanism of the conventionalization of occasionalisms, well described in the works of Zemskaya and her followers [1].

Compounding and contamination

Compounding and various forms of contamination (blends) are becoming one of the leading means of naming new realities. Widespread are formations such as киберспорт, фастфуд, нейросеть, инфопространство, медиаобразование, смарт-дом, фейк-ньюс. They are characterized by a high degree of semantic compression: a complex fragment of reality is “folded” into a compact form [3; 6].

Contamination-based formations (blends) are particularly typical of media discourse and Internet communication: word fusions such as путингология, ковидло, смузификация, фудшеринг, as well as set phrases of the type диванный эксперт, офисный планктон, etc. These units demonstrate the interaction of word formation and language play, which is emphasized in the studies of Gridina and other authors analyzing Internet communication [5].

The digital environment stimulates the emergence of grapho-morphological innovations: the mixing of Cyrillic and Latin, the use of emoji and special symbols within words, hashtagging (#читаю, #горжусь, #это нормально) and so on. Such units occupy a borderline position between word and text, yet they participate in the formation of stable patterns: #люблю+X, #ненавижу+X, #мнеэтонадо, etc. [5].

From the standpoint of classical word formation such phenomena are difficult to describe; however, functionally they act as means of secondary nomination, marking evaluation, stance and the communicative intention of the author.

Affixation remains the leading mechanism of lexical creativity, while we observe both the preservation of the productivity of traditional models and the rethinking of the semantics of individual formants. Verbal suffixes -ить, -овать, -нуть are actively attached to borrowed bases (гуглить, лайкать, репостнуть, тестировать), and nominal suffixes -к-, -щик, -ость serve to form names of persons and abstract properties: айтишник, эсэмэщик, креативность, кликабельность [1; 4].

Of particular interest is secondary word formation based on already assimilated borrowings: блогер — блогерство, стример — стриминг, лайк — лайкос, хейт — хейтик, etc. Here we can see a tendency toward the deep integration of foreign elements into the Russian derivational system.

Conversion, that is, the transition of a word from one part of speech to another without external formal changes, becomes especially noticeable in the 21st century. We observe the transition of nouns into verbs (лайк — лайкать, дизлайк — дизлайкать), adjectives into nouns (токсичный — токсик, чёрный — чёрнуха), proper names into common nouns (гугл — гуглить) [3]. Conversion contributes to the economy of linguistic means and increases the dynamism of the lexical system.

Abbreviation and acronymy

Abbreviation and acronymy also show high productivity: ЕГЭ, ОГЭ, СММ, КРП, NFT, ИИ, etc. A number of abbreviations become the basis for further word formation: егэшник, айтишник, эсэмэщик, пиарщик. Thus abbreviations cease to be merely shortened forms and turn into full-fledged derivational bases [4].

Twenty-first-century lexical creativity performs a complex of functions that go far beyond the strictly nominative. First, it has an important identificational function, marking belonging to a particular community, generation, professional or subcultural group [2]. Second, new words actively serve the expressive-evaluative sphere, allowing speakers to express their attitude in a concise and vivid manner: токсик, кринговать, кринжовый, зашкварный, годный, etc. [4].

Third, contemporary lexical creativity is closely connected with the playful and creative functions of language: through language play new models of behaviour are constructed, and ironic and self-ironic strategies of communication are formed [5]. Finally, lexical creativity in the digital environment performs a metatextual function: hashtags and memetic formulas organize navigation through texts, structure the information space and set interpretive frames.

The trends and mechanisms of 21st-century lexical creativity considered above testify to the high adaptability and resourcefulness of contemporary Russian. Despite a significant number of borrowings and hybrid formations, the Russian word-formation system demonstrates stability: new units are, as a rule, formed according to existing models, and foreign elements undergo stages of morphological and semantic integration.

Lexical creativity in the digital age does not destroy but, on the contrary, confirms the structural integrity of the language, while at the same time expanding its expressive possibilities and reflecting the dynamics of cultural and historical development. Promising directions for further research include quantitative analysis of neologisms, the study of their frequency and conventionalization, as well as comparative studies that make it possible to identify common and specific features of lexical creativity in different languages [1–6].

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