



ENGLISH LEXICOLOGY

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*Neologisms of the 21st Century: How the Internet Is Changing the Lexical
Composition of the Language*

Abstract: *This article examines lexical changes in modern Russian under the influence of internet communication. Based on the analysis of texts from the digital environment, typical models of neologism formation, their thematic groups, and frequency of use are identified. The study defines the main trends in updating the lexical composition of the 21st-century language. Quantitative and qualitative characteristics of new lexemes are presented, as well as their place in the language system discussed.*

Keywords: *neologisms, internet communication, digital discourse, borrowings, word formation, lexical changes, internet language.*

Introduction

The linguistic system is constantly updated under the influence of external and internal factors. One of the most powerful triggers of lexical change in the 21st century has been the Internet—as a platform for communication, news, creativity, and self-expression. Neologisms emerging in this environment not only reflect changes in reality but also shape new speech practices.

The relevance of this study stems from the need to describe and systematize new lexical units appearing due to digital communication. The purpose of this paper is to identify and classify internet neologisms, determine productive models of their formation, and analyze their linguistic features.



Literature Review

Neologisms have long been a subject of linguistic analysis, notably in the works of E. A. Zemskaya, V. V. Lopatin, and T. M. Nikitina. Contemporary research (Shargina, 2021; Kuznetsova, 2022; Panova, 2024) focuses on the specifics of internet vocabulary, noting its expressiveness, creativity, and adaptability. These sources emphasize the roles of borrowing, wordplay, metaphorization, and memes in neologism formation.

Methods

- Corpus analysis: data collected from digital platforms (VK, Telegram, YouTube, news websites);
- Content analysis: identification and classification of 500 neologisms recorded from 2010 to 2024;
- AntConc software was used to analyze context and frequency;
- Typology: morphological, semantic, and pragmatic classification;
- Sources: neologisms.ru, LangLib, electronic dictionaries, linguistic publications.

Discussion

The results confirm that internet communication plays a central role in lexical change. Borrowings account for over half of the neologisms identified, highlighting the dominance of English-speaking digital culture. Hybrid words and derivatives based on Anglicisms are especially noteworthy (e.g., “stream” → “overstream,” “stream oneself”).

Neologisms serve not only a nominative function but also expressive, identity-building, and sociocultural functions. Many move from colloquial use into media discourse and eventually into standard lexicon.

Conclusion

The internet has a systemic influence on the lexical makeup of the Russian language. Neologisms of the 21st century demonstrate dynamic development, thematic variety, and creative word-formation models. Studying them is crucial for understanding the evolution of vocabulary and for informing linguistic standardization and teaching practices.



Future research may focus on the pragmatic potential of internet neologisms, their stylistic classification, and interaction with language norms.

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