

**RLMSEE-2020****The Russian Language in Modern Scientific and Educational Environment****ACTIVE PROCESSES AT THE JUNCTION OF WORD-  
FORMATION AND MORPHOLOGY IN INTERNET  
COMMUNICATION**

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**Abstract**

The paper demonstrates the significance of computer-mediated discourse as an object of linguistic research. The author points out the ability of this discourse, on the one hand, to reflect the latest trends in the development of the national language and, on the other hand, to influence its current state and development. It is noted that there are units and categories in the Internet language that are difficult to interpret unambiguously both due to their ambiguous/uncertain nature and to the theoretical, methodological and philosophical reasons. We point out that specific features of such units need to be determined as a means that would facilitate research in related areas. A number of linguistic phenomena at the junction of word formation and morphology are identified and characterised. Some cases of syncretism of the word-formation and morphological means are noted. The issue of the relationship between speech anomalies and language development processes is discussed; attention is also drawn to units whose grammatical semantics is in conflict with their lexical meanings and/or the meaning they form. Specific difficulties arising in qualification of new derivatives as parts of speech are indicated. The descriptive method is cited as the principal method that meets the local objective of the research; attention is paid to the techniques for collecting linguistic material on the Internet.

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*Keywords:* Internet language, Internet communication, morphology, modern Russian language, transient language phenomena, word formation



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## 1. Introduction

The relevance of research into the language of the Internet, also referred to as "seteyaz" (webspeak) in Russian (Tyurin, 2019), Internet discourse, computer-mediated discourse, verbal means of digitally-mediated communication / Internet communication (respective terms will be used as synonyms further in this article) have been repeatedly emphasised in many philological papers. There is a number of reasons why this linguistic phenomenon has gained much attention from researchers (Barkovich, 2017; Gritsenko & Demidova, 2018, Lomakina & Nelyubova, 2018; Petrukhina & Dedova, 2019).

### 1.1. Internet language as a reflection of current trends in the development of the national language

The Internet discourse is a sphere of communication that is known to be relatively poorly regulated by the language norm, that is why it can reflect many trends in the development of the Russian national language promptly and in a fairly objective way. Moreover, since this discourse is a largely public system, it allows the "innovation processes in the Russian language" (Petrukhina & Dedova, 2019) to be brought to the "observable zone" (Golev, 2011). When combined with the use of computer-based information processing tools, this greatly facilitates the formation of a representative empirical base for research. Barkovich (2017) emphasizes the important role of digitally-mediated discourse in improving the empirical resources for linguistic research. Some authors also note that recourse to digitally-mediated texts can facilitate not only the collection of the facts, but also getting an insight into the essence of the facts being analysed. Many linguists, in particular, note that the study of Internet discourse helps to establish the features of spoken language (Dezi, 2019) and even oral communication (Troshina, 2017). Balakina, who considers "electronic written discourse" in terms of text structuring mechanisms, defines it as a "specially prepared traditional discourse", the recourse to which makes "many of the processes theoretically described" quite "obvious" (Balakina, 2016). We believe this may well be the case when describing and interpreting units of morphological, word-formation and other language levels.

### 1.2. Internet language as a new language subsystem

In parallel to the ideas presented above, numerous works clearly show that at this stage, the Internet discourse is more than just a "mirror of language trends". (Kolokoltseva & Lutovinova, 2012) present in modern Russian (Gladkaya, 2017). In fact, it is gradually developing into a relatively independent system with its specific units, principles, functioning regularities, etc. By drawing phenomena from the "traditional discourse" zone into its orbit (Balakina, 2016), the "seteyaz" adapts them to its own goals and objectives, which, in turn, can be associated with the features of language consciousness and cognitive processes that are identified in the context of the Internet language (Ionova, 2016). Such phenomena are considered in sufficient detail in the theory of speech genres. In particular, some papers are focused on the transformation of diary genres: (personal) diary → blog diary → blog - public space (Kochetkova, 2016), essay: traditional essay → Internet essay (Kukueva, 2019), autobiography: autobiography as a genre of official business style → biographical Internet text (Voloshina, 2013).

Some interesting changes of a structural and functional nature have been recorded in the field of syntax, namely in the system of parenthetical structures / linking words (Tyurin, 2019), etc. However, "it is still too early to analyse electronic texts in isolation from traditional texts" as, for example, Balakina believes (2016).

### **1.3. Internet language from a perspective of its impact on the national/literary language**

Irrespective of how much independent the Internet discourse is as a system, its ability (at least potential) to influence the speech practice of native speakers of modern Russian and, as a result, the language system as a whole, is practically indisputable. Researchers point out the ability of Internet discourse to transform «the landscape of modern speech» (Bragina, 2019). Our contemporaries' active involvement in the processes of digitally-mediated communication, the weakened ability of some of them to switch over "speech registers", the emerging perception (primarily among young people) of the Internet discourse as an authoritative source of speech, cannot but contribute to the expansion of its characteristic units into the literary language. However, one cannot but agree with those researchers who believe that this process should not necessarily be qualified as something negative or destructive (Petrukhina & Dedova, 2019). The prospects of using the Internet discourse as a reservoir for the development of modern Russian literary language certainly underscore the relevance of studying the first of the above-mentioned phenomena.

All of the above also fully applies to forum discourse as a type of Internet discourse. This particular type of discourse has served as a source of empirical material for our study.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Today's Russian language often contains phenomena that cannot be clearly defined in the framework of one of its specific categories. The problem of ambiguous description, systematization and classification of linguistic facts is undoubtedly a matter of linguistic theory. It arises from researchers' adherence to the ideas of a particular linguistic school in relation, for example, to the status of participles and adverbial participles (an independent part of speech vs a verb form), differentiation of composites and nouns in combination with single appositions, synchronic and diachronic methods of word formation, recognition/non-recognition of the flexion method and/or determination of its place in the system of word derivation methods, etc.

Of more interest to us, however, are the essential features of such units arising from the specifics of language as a living and developing system.

## **3. Research Questions**

In the texts of Internet forums, among other things, one notes non-standard units that can be considered in relation to different levels of the language, and in particular some units that are at the junction of word formation and morphology. It is difficult to provide qualification of such language phenomena for a variety of reasons. However, resolving the issue of their status and clarifying their essential nature will make it much easier to conduct research in related areas.

The phenomena that have been the subject of our research are, to a large extent, language/speech anomalies that can be identified both as important objects and as valuable tools for linguistic research based on available sources (Pochtar, 2016; Radbil, 2007).

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify, describe and systematise linguistic phenomena that are related at the same time to the morphological and word-formation levels of the language and that also make it difficult to study other linguistic phenomena, first of all word-formation neologisms, which is due to a somewhat uncertain nature of such phenomena. The purpose of this study is to identify, describe and systematise linguistic phenomena that are related at the same time to the morphological and word-formation levels of the language and that also make it difficult to study other linguistic phenomena, first of all word-formation neologisms, which is due to a somewhat uncertain nature of such phenomena.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The issue of choosing tools that are adequate to the new linguistic object - computer-mediated discourse - is repeatedly addressed by researchers (Barkovich, 2017; Petrukhina & Dedova, 2019). We believe that in our case, despite the innovative nature of the empirical material under study, the stated aim of our research makes it possible to mostly rely on the descriptive method, which represents a classical methodological paradigm and is expressed through specific observation, generalisation, systematisation/classification techniques.

However, the methods used for collecting empirical material in the Internet merit a separate discussion. Petrukhina and Dedova, pointing to the fact that "so far, there are no scientifically based methods for formulating search queries" (Petrukhina & Dedova, 2019), highlight two main approaches to the selection of language facts to be used in studying Internet texts: corpus-based and browser-based. In general, while giving a reasonable preference to sample formation on the basis of national corpora (in particular, the National Corpus of the Russian Language), researchers note that this approach may not produce the necessary results when studying new derivatives, since such units often remain unrecorded in national corpora. Searching for material based on browsers, despite some spontaneity and variability, on the contrary, seems more justified in this case (Petrukhina & Dedova, 2019).

The material for our study was obtained by using browser search, or more precisely, as a result of direct access to at least 13 Internet forums. The search was mostly manual, and in the automated part of our search we used data search systems on respective websites, which are notably imperfect in many forums. We give an approximate number of resources surveyed due to the fact that in some cases, in our opinion, the formal and actual boundaries of these resources do not quite coincide.

For example, the nn.ru platform contains at least 7 forums that are formally represented as part of the "Real Estate" thematic branch; however, based on the quantitative and qualitative composition of forum users and a number of other features, we tend to view them more as sections of one forum. We have deliberately chosen for the study several forums with a focus on different topics ("Cars", "Cruises", "Real Estate", "Pets (cats, dogs)"), which contributes to more objective conclusions.

## 6. Findings

As a result of our analysis of texts published on Russian Internet forums, we have identified several groups of units whose morphological anomalies make it difficult to qualify and systematise them in terms of word formation.

First of all, let us look at the morphological category of the participle. Our analysis of the units in this category was based on a widespread understanding of the participle in Russian linguistics as a special verb form rather than a separate part of speech (Russian Grammar, 1980). In accordance with this understanding, in the texts of Internet forums we qualified as abnormal the newly derived participles that have no corresponding verb forms in the language system (in the literary language, in commonly used layers of the vernacular language, in the speech system of a particular forum/thematic group of forums): *логично <...> поднять какой-нибудь Линукс - например Убунту. <...> У нас **обУбунчен** весь дом* (<http://mauforum.ru>, 06.07.2010) (here and below, after the link to the forum from which the quote originated, we give the date of publication of the material on the respective website) – *обУбунчен* (← \**обУбунчить/обУбунтить*) ← *Убунта*; *спускалась по ней* (down the stairs. – *E.Tsch.*) *на причал - ещё не **отзаборенный!*** (<https://riverforum.net>, 06.11.2018) – *отзаборенный* (← \**отзаборить*) ← *забор*; *на всю голову **матизонутая** :-D а что делать?! авто обязывает* (<http://www.e1.ru/talk/forum/read.php?f=176>, 09.07.2016) – *матизонутая* (← \**матизонуть*) ← *Матиз* (a model of a Daewoo car).

(By way of a slight departure from the logic of our reasoning, we would like to make one interesting (in our opinion) observation concerning participles: despite the relatively frequent occurrence of various abnormal participle forms, not a single fact of using so-called "future participles" (participles formed from perfect verbs with the help of present-day suffixes) has been revealed in our material, while, for example, Voyvodich (2016), giving a detailed description of this group of units, argues that the Internet is the main sphere of their functioning at present.

Adverbial participles (considered here, like participles, to be special verb forms) are much less likely to show such anomalies (which is largely due to the insignificant representation of this morphological category among forum non-usual units): The Internet user 1: *ОКУНИВШИСЬ с головой*. The Internet user 2: *Оль, да хоть забританившись или **одевоширившись** и **ориенталившись*** (<http://mainecoon-forum.ru>, 31.08.2012) – *одевоширившись* (← \**одевошириться*) ← *девоширский (рекс)* (cat breed); *ориенталившись* (← \**ориенталиться*) ← *ориентал* 'Oriental cat'. The creation of non-usual adverbial participles in the above context is a reaction to a typo that was made by an Internet user in writing the set expression *окунуться с головой* 'to fully devote oneself to something' (→ *окунуться с головой*), which actualised in the mind of another user the non-usual verb *окунуться* 'to get a Maine Coon cat'.

Similar processes can be observed in the field of comparative degree forms: non-usual forms of comparative and superlative degree (mainly for adjectives) are created when there are no corresponding positive forms in the system: *Я сова <...> ложусь <...> часа в два. Но Лион **совее*** (<http://mainecoon-forum.ru>, 28.05.2014); *Мордаха все взрослее и **кунее** становится* (<https://mauforum.ru>, 13.07.2020) – *кунее* 'showing more traits typical of a Maine Coon cat'.

It should also be noted that there is a whole group of non-usual adjectives that seem to have been formed by including grammatical affixes in the new derivatives in parallel with word-formation affixes: *не могу сказать где кормят лучшие, теплее или **запеканистее*** (<https://riverforum.net>, 15.08.2016) – *запеканистее* ← *запекан(ка)* + [*-ист* + *-ее*]). In our opinion, however, this does not fully address the issue of the composition of the word-building formants involved. Of particular interest from this perspective are synthetic superlatives with the prefix *наи-*, where the position of the traditional grammatical suffix (*-эйш/-айш/-и*) is occupied by the word-formative morpheme: *У моих родителей собака **самая наидворняжистая** дворняга* (<http://mainecoon-forum.ru>, 13.05.2015).

The units (both adjective and verbal) of all the above groups are characterised by a weakened formal derivation capacity and often have a strong semantic motivation, which is imparted by the noun present in the context: *это теперь новый бренд, **алабаистей** всех **алабаев*** (<http://cao.borda.ru>, 06.02.2014) – *алабаистей* ← *алабай* (a dog breed); *Вы подтверждаете, что все про Фубак было **словоблудием**, и что вы это писали **словоблуждая** <...>. Да?* (<http://forum.tsg-mechta.ru>, 16.01.2011) – *словоблуждая* ← *словоблудие*, cf. usual *словоблудствовать* (engage in phrasemongering). The latter example can also be interpreted as a composite derived from the combination of the words: *слово* + *блуждая/блуждать*.

Such units can be found from time to time in template constructions with a contact arrangement of a prepositive noun and, accordingly, a postpositive adjective. Here are some examples: *Для чего это нужно? Чтоб **игрушка поигрушестей** была?* (<http://mainecoon-forum.ru>, 21.01.2015); *конечно же **мем, мемстее** не бывает* (<http://mauforum.ru>, 21.02.2014); *Так чем Ваша **каланча каланчовее** той каланчи?* (<http://www.nn.ru/community/biz/realty>, 14.03.2017).

This kind of template and some other manifestations of deviation from the norm and antinorm are also implemented on a regular basis when creating degree forms of comparison based on usual (literary and extra-literary) units: *и создал он **Самый Питомниковый Питомник** со скромным названием Империл Кун* (<http://mainecoon-portal.ru>, 01.05.2015); *Пьезорлзжиг мне тоже посоветовали, он **менее ломучий**, чем автомат* (<http://www.nn.ru/community/auto/woman>, 19.07.2015) – bookish form of comparative degree + colloquial lexeme, etc.

The above adjective and participle forms, while having some noticeable structural and – in part – semantic specific features, differ insignificantly in stylistic and pragmatic terms from the forms stemming from word-formative neologisms, as well as from non-normative forms of usual units, in performing an expressive and emotional evaluation function in the context. Cf.: *Да ладно! Я такая. Среди моих **особаченных** друзей (не азиатчики) все такие!* (<http://cao.borda.ru>, 28.10.2014) – *особаченный* ← *особачиться* ‘to buy a dog’ (*не все имеют возможность **особачиваться** за 30 тысяч* – <http://cao.borda.ru>, 30.07.2015); *Я почему-то был уверен, что эти суда будут **обалконены*** (<https://riverforum.net>, 13.09.2019) – *обалконены* ← *обалконить* (*А Толстого то не собираются **обалконивать*** – <https://vodohod.com/club/forum>, 23.08.2018).

The syncretism of morphological and word-forming means (however, more traditional than in the previous case) occurs in connection with the implementation of the flexion method of word-formation (according to Nemchenko), where one system of flexions is replaced by another. For the purposes of this article, we will not examine in detail all of the formal, semantic and other transformation options: we

described them earlier (Tschenikova, 2017). We will only note the division of flexional new derivatives into two main groups, which is essential in the context of our research. The first group consists of words that, in our opinion, can undoubtedly be qualified as a result of the derivative system's functioning. These are mainly new derivatives through which the lacunas that occur in the lexical system are filled, and the play of words is realized in the "gender – sex" categories: *Сначала ест такс (он самый голодный)* (<http://dogs-forum.ru>, 12.10.2012); *Ты, я и царевич-лягушк?*))) (<http://mainecoon-forum.ru>, 31.01.2016). Animal names occupy a prominent place in this group. It should be noted that some other researchers have also pointed to extensive creation/reflection of animal names in the Internet language in terms of language lacunae (Golev & Falomkina, 2020).

The units in the second group represent a variety of stylistic modifications and, as a result, tend to the field of grammatical variation: *Да в курсе! Шутк!!!)*) (<http://www.nn.ru/community/auto/main>, 15.04.2017); *Иногда, изредка такое бабушко даже проникает на форум. И тогда тушите свет!* (<https://riverforum.net>, 01.08.2016). The lack of traditional word-forming affixes in words like *шутк*, *бабушко*, combined with slight differences in the semantics of the derivative and producing words, gives some researchers reason to regard such units as exclusively grammatical (morphological) or even as tools of a spelling play. By drawing parallels with stylistically marked suffixes (cf. e.g. *баба* ‘бабушка’ – *бабка* и *бабушка* – *бабушко*), we believe it is possible to qualify at least some of such units as word-formative derivatives, but we do acknowledge that additional criteria need to be developed to distinguish them from morphological phenomena.

The problem of distinguishing between objects having a linguistically close form also arises when dealing with substantives such as *малявкин*, *лентяйкин*: *лентяйкин мну :-D* (<http://www.e1.ru/talk/forum/read.php?f=176>, 19.03.2013). At first glance, all units of this type are perceived as elements of word-formation chains of the type *лентяйка* → *лентяйкин* (possessive adjective) → *лентяйкин* (noun), created as a result of the use of the flexion method / substantivation. However, there is a sufficient number of new derivatives in the Internet that do not have (and sometimes, according to the rules and laws of the Russian literary language, cannot have) any correlated possessive adjectives: *праздничные атрибуты деньрождюлькина одетые на пару минут, колпачок на пару секунд – быстро скинул* (<http://mainecoon-forum.ru>, 23.05.2015). The existence of such units calls into question the correctness of the definition of the word formation method for the words of the first group (*лентяйкин*, *малявкин*, etc.).

Yet another noteworthy group of new derivatives includes the units whose grammatical semantics is in conflict with the semantics of the words from which they are derived, with their own lexical meanings and/or – more broadly – with the meaning they form: *мимикрировал под среду и слился с фоном. я сначала искал нашел белую игрушку, приняв ее за котенка, и только потом обнаружил запартизаненого кота* (<http://mainecoon-forum.ru>, 04.10.2014). Thus, in this context, a passive participle denotes a feature based on an action performed by the defined object/subject itself (by a cat, in this case) rather than an action directed at the object.

Even more typical in this respect are possessive adjectives, which are created on the basis of inanimate nouns: *выдано <...> задание: Елочку нарядить. А чегой-то игрушки ёлкины на антресолях лежат, далекооооо* (<http://mainecoon-forum.ru>, 26.12.2014) – *ёлкины* ← *ёлка* (new year

tree); *"Гамов" день в Самаре* (<https://riverforum.net>, 31.08.2012) – *Гамов* ← *Гама* (the name of the cruise company); *Теперь нужно немножко подравнять коллачьи края и может быть, при необходимости стереть кисовы уши* (<http://mauforum.ru>, 10.12.2009) – from the recommendation for working with a photo editor. While in some contexts including such units, a slight element of personification is noticeable, it is rather absent in some others: *Матизова подвеска, это что-то... А когда ещё с утраца в мороз не прогретые амортизаторы, ну это вообще пипецум* (<http://matizclub.net>, 11.02.2015) – *Матизова* ← *Матиз (Matiz)* (model name of a Daewoo car). Certainly, the use of such units mainly within comic contexts does not allow for their establishment in the language system as standard means of communication; however, since they have been reproduced in speech on a regular basis in the course of the recent years, regular monitoring of usage trends is required for this type of units.

The anomalous form of a number of new derivatives creates some difficulties in terms of determining to what part of speech they belong.

First of all, let us note the communicative acronyms that are typical of computer-mediated discourse. As a variety of abbreviation, these units formally belong to nouns; however, they have a pronounced modal and/or process-related semantics, implementing an atypical role for nouns in a sentence: *Так и было задумано, кяп* (<https://riverforum.net>, 20.06.2018) – *кяп* ← *как я понимаю* ‘as I see it’; *Ожская пристань, ЕМНИП, зимовала в Трубеже* (<https://www.infoflotforum.ru>, 28.04.2013) – *ЕМНИП* ← *если мне не изменяет память* ‘if my memory doesn't fail me’; *это какая-то ошибка на сайте агента, кмк* (<https://riverforum.net>, 15.09.2018) – *кмк* ← *как мне кажется* ‘it seems to me’.

Some questions also arise in relation to composites created by pure addition without the participation of connective principal members and at the same time incorporating components that stem from different parts of speech (numerals and adjectives, numerals and nouns, etc.): *На первый-перегонный рейс Белинского?* (<https://riverforum.net>, 14.04.2015); *Лучше не заезжать вообще в Цветы, УК плохая, ЖКХ дорогая, жители злые-наглые-непонятно кем избалованные, магазины идиотские* (<http://www.nn.ru/community/house/cvety>, 13.10.2016) – this example also reflects the problem of separating a word from a word combination, which, in any case, lies outside our research focus; *Надеюсь, никто не думает, что заводчик – это ясновидящий или волшебник, способный по мановению волшебной палочки на сутки-двое-трое-неделю сделать из смертельно больного котенка визуально здорового?* (<http://mauforum.ru>, 09.11.2015).

Similar problems may arise in the analysis of composite combinations; however, the presumed part-of-speech identity of a new derivative does not always coincide with that of the words from which they were produced: *А вот если вязки собак, которых "хочет пипл", белых, огромных, тихих, какихужполучатся, это саоферма* (<http://cao.borda.ru>, 16.06.2015). Thus, in the example above we would rather refer the new derivative *какихужполучатся*, which was produced from pronouns, particles and verbs, to the group of adjectives.

## 7. Conclusion

In recent years, the language of Runet, the Russian sector of the Internet, has definitely become a significant object of linguistic research. As one of the systems that are (relatively) little regulated by the



literary norm, it extensively reflects various linguistic anomalies, including the syncretism of morphological and word-formation tools, the controversial combination of grammatical and lexical/verberal semantics within a single language unit, fuzzy boundaries between an occasional word and a word-combination, etc. The presence of such anomalies, on the one hand, complicates the linguistic research process and, in particular, by posing significant problems in the classification of new derivatives. On the other hand, such anomalies help to reveal the trends in the development of the language system.

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