

INNOVATIVE WORD-FORMATION PATTERNS IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

The article examines innovative word-formation patterns in contemporary Russian, with a focus on neologisms emerging in media, digital communication and computer-related discourse. On the basis of classical Russian derivational theory and recent research on active processes, the study systematises productive mechanisms such as affixal innovations, compressive models (clipping, acronymy, blending) and hybrid Anglo-Russian formations. Following E.A.Zemskaya's understanding of word formation as a special type of linguistic activity, the paper interprets neological derivation as a sensitive indicator of socio-cultural change. Empirical generalisations are drawn from descriptions of derivational neologisms in dictionaries and scholarly works on key words of the epoch, media neologisms and computer terminology.

Keywords: Russian language, word formation, neologisms, blends, clippings, borrowings, media discourse, innovations.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary Russian linguistics, word formation is viewed not only as a subsystem of grammar but also as a dynamic mechanism that reflects the changing linguistic picture of the world. Following E.A.Zemskaya, derivation may be interpreted as the activity of speakers who exploit the formal resources of the language to create new lexical units and meanings [3. 24]. Classical descriptions of Russian derivation in the works of N.M.Shansky, L.I.Nemchenko, V.N.Musatov and Zemskaya herself emphasise the relative stability of affixal and compositional patterns. At the same time, numerous studies of active word-formation processes and neologisms by N.S.Valgina, M.A.Lykov, M.A.Krongauz, N.V. Shishikina and others reveal zones of accelerated change within this subsystem.

METHODS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The study employs a combination of descriptive, structural-semantic, comparative and quantitative methods (applied to published data), as well as corpus-based and contextual analysis.

The theoretical framework is grounded in classical Russian derivational studies, where word formation is interpreted as a system of types and models linking base and derivative. Zemskaya defines word-formation type through the regular correlation of the meanings and structures of the base and the derivative, emphasising that "the meaning of the base motivates the meaning of the derivative" [2, 64]. Important contributions belong to N.M.Shansky (word-formation nests and rows), V.N.Nemchenko (systemic description of suffixal and prefixal patterns), V.N.Musatov (morphological and phonological constraints).

Research on the dynamics of word formation since the late 20th century focuses on active processes and derivational neologisms. N.S.Valgina analyses shifts in productivity of suffixes, the expansion of colloquial and expressive models and the penetration of conversational derivation into public communication [1, 13]. A.G.Lykov pioneered the systematic study of occasional word formation, treating occasionalisms as a special zone of lexical experimentation that reveals latent possibilities of derivational patterns [4, 42].

RESULTS

1. Affixal and affixoid innovations

One of the most visible areas of innovation is the development of new affixal patterns and affixoids that concentrate semantic fields typical of late modernity: market relations, technologies, media and entertainment. Following Zemskaya's idea that derivational activity "organises the lexical system around productive semantic centres" [2, 72], many authors note the special role of words such as *krizis*, *brand*, *blog*, *Internet* as derivational attractors [5, 90]. For example, derivatives like *антикризисный*, *кризисник*, *брондовый*, *брондирование*, *блогер*, *блогерство*, *заблогить*, *интернетизация*, *интернет-зависимый* demonstrate both the productivity of traditional suffixes (-ный, -ник, -ер, -ство, -ить, -ция) and the emergence of affixoid-like elements (анти-, интернет-).

N.Samylicheva shows that derivational activity of affixes attached to keywords of the epoch makes it possible "to identify the specifics of the linguistic picture of the world of the modern language" [6, 48]. The high frequency and semantic centrality of such bases explain the proliferation of complex derivatives: *антикризисный пакет*, *антикризисник*, *дизайнерский*, *задизайнерить*, *перезапуск*, *перезагрузка* in business and media texts. At the same time, evaluative and expressive suffixes (-чик, -енък-, -уха, -ища) remain actively involved in colloquial innovation (*креативчик*, *позитивчик*, *ржачка*, *уотненько*).

2. Compressive word-formation: clippings, acronyms, blends

Another cluster of innovations relates to compression of linguistic form. Studies of modern Russian media and everyday communication emphasise the growing role of shortened and blended units as markers of speed, informality and group identity. Clippings such as *универ* (*университет*), *смарт* (*смартфон*), *фандрайзинг* → *фандрайз*, *док* (*доктор*, *документ*) coexist with acronyms like ЕГЭ, ВИП, СММ, МОМО and hybrid spellings (*лайк*, *репост*, *коммент* → *лайкать*, *репостнуть*, *закомментить*).

Blending (контаминация) produces expressive and often playful neologisms: *гламурь* (*гламур* + *тусовка*), *политтехнология* → *политтусовка*, *инфоцыган* (*информация* + *цыган*), *кавидиван*, *ковидиот* in the context of the pandemic. Analyses of Russian blends underline their dual nature: they satisfy the need for compression while simultaneously increasing expressivity and evaluative load.

Table 1. Innovative word-formation mechanisms in contemporary Russian media discourse

Word-formation method	Structural pattern	Typical examples (attested in research)	Dominant functions
Affixal derivation	Base (often a “keyword”) + suffix/prefix	брэндовый, кризисник, блогерство, интернетизация, антикризисный	Conceptual structuring, categorisation
Affixoids / combining forms	Semi-bound elements + Russian morphology	веб-дизайнер, инфопродукт, медиаобраз, логоцентричный, нетикет	Naming new domains, terminologisation
Clippings	Truncated base	универ, смарт, док, комп, препод	Economy, informality, in-group code
Acronyms	Initial components of multiword units	ЕГЭ, ВИП, СММ, МЧС, РАНХиГС	Bureaucratic and professional compression
Blends (контаминации)	Overlapping segments from two bases	инфоцыган, ковидиот, политтусовка, русофобия → русофобчик	Expressivity, evaluation, humour
Hybrid Anglo-Russian derivatives	English base + Russian affixation	лайкать, загуглить, репостнуть, стриминг, фейковый	Integration of borrowings, colloquial innovation
Zero derivation / conversion	Change of part of speech without overt marking	гуглить, креатив, дизлайк → дизлайкнуть	Functional expansion, verbalisation
Graphic / orthographic innovation	Non-standard spelling, Latin–Cyrillic mixing	4то, kruto, prewved, рунет, лайк, хейтер	Identity, playfulness, internet style

3. Hybrid Anglo-Russian models and computer neologisms

A particularly productive and socially salient sphere of innovation is computer and internet terminology. Abbas and Humud, analysing Russian computer neologisms, demonstrate that borrowings enter the language both as intact lexical units (browser, chat, spam) and as bases for Russian derivational patterns (чаты, заспамить, забанить, лайкать, загуглить, апдейтнуть). This confirms Ulukhanov’s observation that units of the word-formation system are defined not only by origin but by their ability to participate in productive derivational models. Studies of key words of the epoch show that Anglo-American borrowings like бренд, тренд, рейтинг, имидж, пиар have become such keywords and display high derivational activity: брендовый, брендинг, ребрендинг, трендовый, рейтинговый, пиарить, пиарщик.

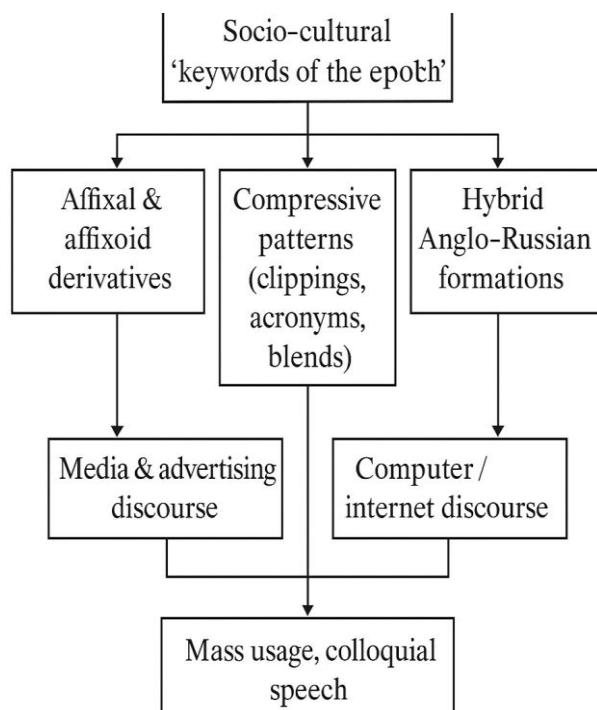


Figure 1. Interaction of innovative word-formation mechanisms in contemporary Russian

DISCUSSION

The results confirm the general thesis of Zemskaya's word formation as activity: innovative derivation is not a marginal phenomenon but a core mechanism by which speakers adapt the lexical system to new realities. Affixal innovations and affixoids demonstrate the flexibility of the Russian derivational system: while the inventory of basic affixes remains largely stable, their combinatorial possibilities and semantic ranges expand, especially in combination with socially salient bases. This corresponds to the observations of N.S. Valgina about the "intensification of derivational processes in zones of semantic and stylistic tension" [1, 25]. Compressive and hybrid patterns demonstrate a strong orientation toward economy and globalisation. Clippings, acronyms and blends drastically reduce the length of linguistic units, but they also increase the density of social and evaluative meaning, functioning as markers of group identity, irony or scepticism.

CONCLUSION

Innovative word-formation in contemporary Russian represents a coherent and multi-layered system of mechanisms that respond to socio-cultural change, technological development and transformations of communicative practice. Affixal and affixoid innovations, compressive patterns and hybrid Anglo-Russian formations operate on a common theoretical basis described in classical derivational studies, but their current activation creates new zones of productivity linked to keywords of the epoch and to specific discourse domains.

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