A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL CLIPPING ON SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

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Abstract: *This study examines word shortening, or lexical clipping, in social media communication. The study classifies how these reduced forms are created and why they are used using data from TikTok and Instagram. The results show that clipping accomplishes three main goals: it improves communication effectiveness (linguistic economy), strengthens a sense of community (in-group identity), and fosters a sense of closeness between authors and followers (para-social authenticity). The study comes to the conclusion that, rather from being a straightforward reaction to character restrictions, word shortening is a purposeful language technique employed to navigate digital settings.*

Key words: *Lexical clipping, Computer-Meditated Communication (CMC), Linguistic Economy, Social Interaction.*

INTRODUCTION

Social media's introduction has drastically changed language usage, leading to the emergence of new communication styles that are quick, simple, and casual.[12] Lexical clipping, which is the method of reducing a word by removing one or more syllables or characters, has emerged as one of these changing phenomena. These shortened forms, which range from "pics" to "vibes," "sus" to "delulu," are common on social media sites like Instagram, TikTok and others.

Lexical clipping, or word shortening, in social media conversation is examined in this study. It looks into the morphology of these words and how they contribute to linguistic economy by improving communication. This study focuses on the function of clipping in short-form video and influencer culture, whereas other studies by Marcondes looked at generic digital abbreviations[13]. According to the results, clipping is a tactical technique for creating digital personas and encouraging para-social closeness with viewers. In the end, the study makes the case that clipping is a necessary adjustment to the social and technical requirements of contemporary platforms.

Main part

According to I.Plag, the technique of reducing a longer term to a shorter form while maintaining its essential meaning is known as lexical clipping.[14] Clipping has frequently been linked to efficiency and informality in traditional linguistics (e.g., examination: exam). But its uses in Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) go beyond simple conciseness.

[12] Naqvi, S. Z. R. (2025). The Rapid Growth of Digital Communication and Social Media's Influence on Language. Social Science Review Archives, 3(1), 1672-1686.

[13] Marcondes, C. B. (2007). A proposal of generic and subgeneric abbreviations for phlebotomine sandflies (Diptera: Psychodidae: Phlebotominae) of the world. Entomological News, 118(4), 351-356.

[14] Plag, I. (2018). Word-formation in English. Cambridge university press.

Digital communication frequently promotes linguistic economy, where efficiency is valued, according to Cenoz and Gorter[15]. However, social considerations also play a role in this economy, in addition to technical limitations like character limits on Twitter. Clipping is an effective strategy in social media communication, and there are several ways in which clipped forms are created:

a) Back clipping, the most common way of clipping, is created by removing the final part of a word and keeping the beginning. For example: application – app, advertisement – ad, demonstration – demo.

b) Fore-clippings is a type of morphological process in which the beginning of a word is removed and the final part is kept. For example: telephone – phone, internet – net, aeroplane – plane.

c) Clipping + suffixation is a word-formation process in which a word is first shortened and then a suffix is added, usually to create a friendly, informal, or expressive tone. For example: delusional – delu – delulu, best friend – best – bestie, Instagram – Insta – Instie.

According to Drăguşin, clipping can serve as a digital myth, a linguistic marker that denotes membership with a specific online community or subculture[16]. Understanding phrases like "POV" (Point of View) and "GRWM" (Get Ready With Me) helps users participate in social media specific language use.

Clipping directly supports linguistic economy on platforms with character constraints or a strong focus on immediate use. For example, one of the influencers on social media, Selena Gomez posted a post with caption: "everyone smelled so good last night. Lol, but thank you for your love on this one." Here, "LOL" (laughing out loud) although originally an abbreviation, is used as a lexicalized clipping form on social media context. Rather than describing literal laughter, it functions as a pragmatic marker, that softens the tone of an utterance. By using it, influencer achieved to create strong social meaning with minimal textual effort.

Another example of clipping on social media is the use of shortened or clipped words in comments. For instance, on a video, one user commented: "This is so sus" and "You are so delulu for him".

Here, back clipping is illustrated by words like "sus". "delulu". The word "delulu" shows informality where a small suffix -u is added to make the word playful. This type of language play strengthens para-social connections and signals understanding and softening potentially negative meanings in groups.

Familiarity with terms like "delulu" and "sus" mark someone as part of the social media "besties" who humorously tease themselves.

Conclusion

Lexical clipping on social media is a dynamic and complex linguistic phenomenon that goes much beyond simple word shortening. Its ubiquity across platforms, morphological diversity (particularly back-clipping and hypocoristic suffixation), and strong pragmatic functions have all been shown by this investigation.

[15] Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2008). Language economy and linguistic landscape. In Linguistic landscape (pp. 63-77). Routledge.
[16] DRĂGUŞIN, E. D. (2024). The clipped language revolution: Exploring clipping in contemporary Social media English. Intertext, (1), 32-44.

In situations where characters are limited, clipping is an essential strategy for linguistic economy that enables quick and concise communication.

The study of lexical clipping, which highlights users' creative adaptation and the complex interaction between linguistic choice and technological infrastructure, provides insightful information about how language is changing in the digital age as social media continues to develop.

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