English language is an extensive system that constantly changes. Different historical events, modifications and occasions are displayed on the language. Due to the permanent development and improvement of technological devices English people have got the tendency to save their time and effort. That is why shortenings become more and more popular in communication, especially in online sphere which as means of communication made shortenings even more popular.

The article deals with the notion of a shortening, a difference among an abbreviation, shortening and clipping, the way they are studied in modern linguistics by foreign and home scholars. Some scholars’ classifications of abbreviations and approaches to their study are scrutinised.

The aim of the work is to study different types of shortenings and their peculiarities in English language, to classify them and to interpret them according to the sphere of their using and context.

Keywords: abbreviation, shortening, clipping, communication, social network.

Modern society, as well as present-day communication, tends towards the process of globalization. Because of this, the cultural, economic, political branches of the various languages are expanding their vocabulary horizons. Therefore, today we can observe the emergence of a large number of new lexical units, a significant part of which are words influenced by the process of abbreviation. It can therefore be stated that abbreviations have become an integral part of communication. Various social networks, messengers, chat rooms, forums and websites are the source of new words and expressions formed by shortening.

An abbreviation is an shortened form of a word. Abbreviations of words can be used to save space and time, to avoid repetition of long words and phrases, or simply to be consistent with conventional usage [4]. The first mention and reference to the word “abbreviation” dates back to the 15th century. From Old French it is “shortness;
an act of shortening; a shortened thing” and from Old Latin *abbreviationem* (noun *abbreviatio*) is a noun of the past genitive *abbreviare*, also *breviare* means “to shorten”, here *brevis* means “short, low, small, minor” [5].

Among the scholars who researched the phenomenon of abbreviation was K. Sunden. He was the first who started a common reason investigation of abbreviations emergence. He mentioned two main factors: semasiological or functional factor and the factor of practical usage. The first factor deals with transferring of speaker’s emotions. The second one refers to the use of shortened words as the economical way to convey the message. In his works, Arnold claims that abbreviations in English language are even more popular because they are the certain form of assimilation of borrowed words that helps to make their phonetic organization closer to originally English words with the specific one-syllable construction.

Among the shortening definitions, there is a large number of non-uniform ones, as a generalized theory of shortening has not yet been created. Despite the large number of studies on shortenings and abbreviations, there are still open questions concerning this subject in modern linguistics. To begin with, it is necessary to note that there is no common opinion among scholars regarding the very status of abbreviation: although most scholars consider abbreviation as a separate mode of word formation, there is also a thought that views abbreviation as a non-autonomous way of word formation. Moreover, there is a debate concerning the classification of abbreviations.

There are also various terms associated with the concept of abbreviation: “abbreviation”, “shortening” and “clipping”, all of which are sometimes used as absolute synonyms. However, some scholars not only have different interpretations of them, but also consider that they should be separated from each other. Scholar A. Meshkov thinks that shortening should be used in a broader sense than abbreviations and clippings. V. Shokurov, on the contrary, believes that the notion of “shortening” and “abbreviation” should be differentiated.

At the end of the twentieth century, linguistics has increasingly focused on the study of the functional aspect of language units. This has led to the emergence of linguistic pragmatics. Linguistic pragmatics is a separate branch of linguistics that studies the presence of the subjective, human factor at all layers of language and in all
aspects of language functioning, as well as human communication [1, p. 4]. Linguistic pragmatics is a course that studies the ability of a speaker to express intentions through language and to understand the intentions of the interlocutor (i.e. to understand why and how the interlocutor uttered a particular statement) based on the context in which the message was made [2, p. 177].

Linguistic pragmatics primarily examines the speech act. Speech act (from Latin *actus* – action) is the process of transferring certain information from one side, i.e. one speaker, to a second party, i.e. a second speaker. In other words, it is a bidirectional process of communicating a message from the addressee to the receiver. The speech act can be either written or oral. The act of speech consists of two main components: the addressee’s speaking and the auditory perception and understanding of what the addressee hears. In the case of written communication: writing and reading (visual perception and understanding) of what is written. Researchers of structural pragmatics of language K. Buhler, R. Jakobson and others distinguished the following components of the speech [3, p. 179]: sender (addresser); receiver (addressee); message; contact; code; context.

J. Searle identifies five types of speech acts: 1) representatives, or assertives, which oblige the speaker to take responsibility for the authenticity of the message and can be introduced by means of verbs to boast, to complain, etc; 2) directives that force the speaker to do something; 3) commissions, which impose an obligation to do certain things in the future, or to follow a certain course of action; 4) expressives that convey the speaker's psychological state, describing the degree of frankness of the speaker; 5) declaratives, which establish a correspondence between the propositional content of the statement and reality.

Since abbreviation is the transfer of information in a quick and concise form from the speaker to the receiver, it can certainly be considered that abbreviations are part of the speech act. From this it is evident that abbreviations can also be divided into the types by which speech acts are divided, which are representatives, directives, commissions, expressives and declaratives. With the help of this classification, the most used abbreviations in social media are discussed below [6, p. 66].
Directive constructions are considered to be lexical units that indicate consequent actions during communication between individuals. The term *directive abbreviations* refers to phrases that induce the recipient to take certain actions. These can be demands, appeals, orders or permissions, advice, requests, instructions, etc. Thus, the main goal of the speaker is to make the listener to take action, which means to achieve the necessary action by the listener. Directive abbreviations are one of the ways in the world of virtual communication to encourage the recipient to take certain actions. These abbreviations include DIY (do it yourself); SOS (save our souls) or BYOB (bring your own beer/booze); DSH (desperately seeking help).

Furthermore, English distinguishes between two types of directive constructions – requests and preventives. Request abbreviations most often have a verb that expresses a prohibition or a demand. These can be “request”, “demand”, “requirement/threat”, “order”. Examples of this subtype of abbreviations are PRB (Please Reply By – a request to reply as soon as possible, before a certain time. LMK (Let Me Know) – an informal way to end an email, a request to express your opinion. TYT (Take Your Time) – used when you need to get a feedback, but not urgently. KIQ (Keep It Quiet) – be quiet or still, remain silent. Preventives are used to express advice, hint, recommendation, invitation, remark. Examples of such abbreviations include BAC - Back At Computer (a hint of willingness to communicate), BRB (Be Right Back).

Among the first to study expressive abbreviations were scholars J. Searle and J. Austin. Researchers of pragmatic linguistics clearly distinguished expressions among other types of speech acts. However, it should be noted that different scholars have interpreted expressions differently. J. Austin has not distinguished expressions, but includes them in other subspecies of speech acts.

By analyzing the material we can divide expressions into two main groups, namely etiquette abbreviations-expressives and emotive abbreviations-expressives. Expressive abbreviations which include those expressing are: gratitude (THX – thanks), apology: (IMSRY – I Am Sorry), ways to say “goodbye”: (GB – goodbye), actions: (BWL – Bursting With Laughter), gestures: (HB – Hug Back), facial expression: (CLAB – Crying Like A Baby). They are often divided by connotation into positive and negative. With the help of emotive abbreviations, various emotions are expressed
in virtual reality: surprise, happiness, joy, hate, irony, love, approval, irritation, etc. Depending on the purpose of the construction, this unit can express both the etiquette of communication and the emotion that the speaker is trying to convey.

The next group under consideration in this paper is assertive abbreviations which are divided into six main groups. The first group expresses the message and includes the most units. Examples of such abbreviations are AWOL – Absent Without Leave, i.e. information without which the communicator cannot continue the dialogue. The next group – qualifications – includes such abbreviations as ATM – At The Moment. The recognition group includes abbreviations IDC – I Do not Care. Statement category can be as follows: NIME – Not In My Experience. The group of prognoses are linguistic units that refer to the probability of some action, such as TOBAL – There Ought To Be A Law. The group of description refers to those linguistic units that describe or explain a certain state of affairs. Assertive abbreviated constructions can be considered the most common as they have the largest number of lexemes.

Since the technological process does not stand still, it can be assumed that the impact of online space on the means and methods of communication will only increase. Abbreviations are understood as abbreviated lexical units that are part of the original word that allow to convey information quickly and concisely without losing the main message. Since it was investigated that abbreviations can be distinguished as a speech act, the paper considers the types of abbreviations correlated to the speech acts. Therefore, in this work abbreviations-directives, abbreviations-expressions, abbreviations-assertions and abbreviations-declaratives were distinguished. In addition, their subtypes were investigated and some examples of abbreviations were given in relation to their meaning and group.

References


