

ABBREVIATION IN CONTEMPORARY GERMAN VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION

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INTRODUCTION

The widespread use of abbreviated lexemes is a key factor in the development of modern languages¹. Abbreviations are widely used in written and oral communication². New abbreviations facilitate communication but also require decoding and explanation, which is why the process of shortening often becomes the subject of linguistic research by domestic and foreign scholars³. Domestic and foreign linguists studying the formation of lexical abbreviations indicate that the process of abbreviation is currently the most widespread method of word formation⁴.

One of the first linguists to address the question of defining abbreviation was the Swedish scholar K. Sunden⁵. In his work “Contributions to the Study of Elliptical Words in Modern English,” he first touched upon the issue of shortening linguistic units in philology. K. Sunden, studying the general

¹ Fleischer W., Barz I. *Wortbildung der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012. S. 91. Nübling D., Duke J. Kürze im skandinavischen Wortschatz. Kurzwörter im Schwedischen, Dänischen, Norwegischen und Isländischen. *Sprachliche Kürze. Konzeptuelle, strukturelle und pragmatische Aspekte*. Berlin : de Gruyter, 2007. S. 227–263. Kiyko S.V. Homonymy of abbreviations in modern German. *Scientific Bulletin of Chernivtsi University. Germanic philology*. Chernivtsi : ChNU, 2012. P. 20–31.

² Heinrich J., Klöpfer M. *Abkürzungen und Schriftbesonderheiten in der Frühen Neuzeit aus altwürttembergischen Quellen*. Berlin : Pro Business, 2003. S. 13–15.

³ Kreidler Ch. Creating New Words by Shortening. *Journal of English Linguistics*. 1979. Vol. 13. P. 24–36. López Rúa P. English Acronyms and Alphabetisms: A Continuum-Based Approach. *Proceedings of the 20th International AEDEAN Conference*. Barcelona : Universitat de Barcelona, Facultat de Filologia, 1997. P. 213–218.

⁴ Crystal D. *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2003. P. 12. Laszlo S., Federmeier K.D. The acronym superiority effect. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*. 2007. Vol. 14 (6). P. 1158. *Sprachliche Kürze. Konzeptuelle, strukturelle und pragmatische Aspekte*. Hrsg. von J.A. Bäer, T. Roelcke, A. Steinhauer. Berlin : de Gruyter, 2007. S. 8. Salomova G. The reflection features of abbreviations and acronyms of the English language. *The Second International conference on development of pedagogical science in Eurasia 2014*. Vienna : East West. P. 174.

⁵ Sunden K. F. *Contributions to the Studies of Elliptical Words in Modern English*. Uppsala : Almqvist & Wiksell, 1904. 233 p.

causes explaining the emergence of abbreviated lexical units, distinguishes:
a) a functional factor related to the necessity of conveying the speaker's emotions;
b) a practical use factor associated with more economical means of receiving a message. The scholar also attests to the important process of analogy in the borrowing of foreign words.

A. Martinet notes that the core of language evolution is the economy of linguistic effort. The constant contradiction between human communication needs and the desire to minimize mental and physical effort can be regarded as the driving force of language change. Here, as in other cases, human behavior is governed by the law of least effort, according to which a person expends their energy only to the extent necessary to achieve a particular goal⁶.

In addition to the above-mentioned causes of abbreviated lexical unit formation, other factors also play a role. In his study "Meaning and Change of Meaning", G. Stern identifies the following as main factors in the emergence of abbreviations⁷:

(1) phonetic causes because of which forms like *shun* from *attention* have appeared,

(2) graphic causes, whose effect is seen in cases such as *auto* from *automobile*, *gent* from *gentleman*,

(3) functional causes, where the most important role is played by euphemistic shortenings,

(4) economic causes, based on the principle of economy of effort, for example: the lexeme *fall*, formed by clipping the phrase *fall of the leaf*.

Compound words, like phrases, occupy a significant place in the vocabulary of any language. Due to the law of economy of speech effort, there is a tendency to shorten compound words through abbreviation, as well as truncation of the final, initial, medial, or marginal part of a lexical unit. A significant portion of lexical abbreviations functions in online interaction: blogs, social networks, messenger texts, SMS, and media texts. P. Schlobinski notes that in virtual discourse one can often encounter:

(1) final and initial truncations, such as germ. *nich* – nicht "no, don't", germ. *freu* – freuen "to rejoice", germ. *ne* – eine "a (article)",

(2) assimilations: germ. *wars* – war es "it was", germ. *aufm* – auf dem "on (where?)", germ. *aufn* – auf den "onto (where to?)", germ. *aufs* – auf das "onto (where to?)", germ. *haste* – hast du was "do you have", germ. *bissu* – bist du "you are",

⁶ Martinet A. *Éléments de linguistique générale*. Paris : Armand Colin, 1961. P. 176–180.

⁷ Stern G. *Meaning and Change of Meaning. With Special Reference to the English Language*. Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1964. P. 167.

(3) reductions: germ. *müss(e)n* “to have to”, germ. *seh(e)n* “to see”, germ. *g(e)rade* “right now”, germ. *supa(er)* “super”, germ. *wieda* – wieder “again”, germ. *leida* – leider “unfortunately”⁸.

In view of this, it is necessary to identify the factors underlying the widespread use of abbreviation in virtual communication.

The object of the study is abbreviation in German, as well as its structural types used in the online discourse. **The research material** consists of examples of German abbreviations collected through systematic sampling from social networks on the Internet (Twitter, Facebook) and the linguistic corpus of SMS messages (MoCoDa), with subsequent analysis and comparison with recorded abbreviations in the German language taken from the dictionary “Das Wörterbuch der Abkürzungen”⁹. A total of 1,161 abbreviation examples were collected. The **subject** of our study is the pragmatic aspect of abbreviation use in German, driven by motivations such as economy of effort, expressiveness, and the coding principle in digital communication. The study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the pragmatic use of abbreviations in modern German virtual communication. In accordance with this aim, the study addresses the following objectives:

(1) to determine the pragmatic status of abbreviation in German virtual discourse;

(2) to classify German abbreviations used in contemporary online communication from the perspective of speech act theory;

(3) to interpret the pragmatic potential of abbreviation use in the German language in contemporary virtual communication;

(4) to develop a pilot corpus of abbreviations based on German digital discourse material.

The study employs a combination of the following **methods**: the hypothetico-deductive method, interpretation of dictionary definitions, methods of statistical analysis, linguistic observation, descriptive and comparative methods. For the reliability of the results, the method of quantitative counting is applied. To verify the obtained data, a comparison of German abbreviations in communicative virtual interaction is employed.

The use of abbreviations in online interaction is conditioned by both the law of conservation of energy and the desire for new lexical forms of expressing reality. Abbreviations emerge within narrow social environments; most often this phenomenon occurs in youth subculture as a deliberate

⁸ Schlobinski P. *Duden: von HDL bis DUBIDODO. (K)ein Wörterbuch zur SMS*. Mannheim [u.a.] : Dudenverl., 2009. S. 97–99.

⁹ Steinhauer A. *Das Wörterbuch der Abkürzungen*. 6. Aufl. Mannheim, Zürich : Dudenverlag, 2011. 512 S.

violation of literary norms and a protest against the standards of use of a given accepted lexical unit – by not only establishing a new graphic form but also introducing new expressive elements into a structure that until recently was considered virtually unchangeable. Thus, at the *phonetic level* we observe the omission of vowels in certain lexemes: germ. *spr.* – *sprechen* “to talk“, germ. *schw.* – *schweben* “to fly”¹⁰. Closely related to the phonetic methods of forming lexical abbreviations are *graphic changes* involving the replacement of individual letters with digits, where the rest of the word may be represented as a syllable or a single letter: germ. *ko20mispä* – *Ich komme 20 Minuten später* “I will be back in 20 minutes“, germ. *8ung* – *Achtung* “attention“, germ. *gn8* – *Gute Nacht* “good night“. At the *lexical level* we observe processes of acronymization, in which initial letters are used: germ. *Bha* – *Bis heute Abend!* “until this evening“; germ. *ddf* – *(Ich) drücke dich fest* “I hug you tight” or individual letters instead of whole words: germ. *g* – *grinsen* “smile“, germ. *X* – *Kuß* “kiss“. At the *syntactic level* the language of virtual communication has its own structural elements based on deviation from literary norms.

For example, the sequence germ. *du bist* (“you are”) may be reduced to *du bi* in virtual communication and, with increasing user acceptance, develop into the lexicalized form *dubi*. Lexical abbreviation also includes introductory constructions expressing reasoning, source of message, remarks about ways of structuring thoughts, or the text’s directedness toward a certain goal, such as germ. *Bpg* – *bei passender Gelegenheit* “at a suitable opportunity“, germ. *mmn* – *meiner Meinung nach* “in my opinion“, germ. *zb* – *zum Beispiel* “for example“, and phrases with verbs in the imperative mood: germ. *Lua* – *Lass’ uns aufbrechen* “let’s set off“; germ. *Lug* – *Lass’ uns gehen* “let’s go“, fixed phrases functioning as introductory explanatory constructions: germ. *iab* – *im Augenblick* “at this moment“. A special group is formed by expletives, i.e. word combinations that express the speaker’s attitude to the subject of speech but do not affect the content of the utterance: germ. *axo* – *ach so* “oh, I see“; germ. *Klm* – *keine Lust mehr* “no more desire“; germ. *Osuv* – *ohne Sinn und Verstand* “without sense or logic“.

1. Pragmatic potential of abbreviation within speech act theory

Language not only reflects reality but also influences the participants of communication and the situation itself through performative constructions such as orders, promises, and warnings. J. Austin distinguishes five basic classes

¹⁰ Steinhauer A. *Das Wörterbuch der Abkürzungen*. 6. Aufl. Mannheim, Zürich : Dudenverlag, 2011. S. 361, 373.

corresponding to five types of illocutionary acts: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, and expositives¹¹.

D. Wunderlich proposes a division of speech acts into eight main groups: *directives* (demands, orders, instructions, dispositions), *commissives* (promises, threats), *representatives* (statements, reports, descriptions), *erotetives* (questions), *retractives* (correction of statements), *satisfactives* (apologies, responses, thanks), *vocatives* (exclamations, appeals, addresses), and *declarations* (assigning a definition, accusation, opening a session)¹².

K. Bach and R. Harnish construct their classification as follows: *constatives* (assertions, classifications, confirmations, denials, announcements, informing, answering), *directives* (advice, entreaties, prohibitions, permissions, requests, demands, appeals), *commissives* (agreements, invitations, offers, promises, etc.), and *acknowledgments* (apologies, congratulations, greetings, thanks)¹³.

According to J. Searle¹⁴, all speech acts can be classified into five basic types: *representatives* (or *assertives*), *directives*, *commissives*, *expressives*, and *declarations*. This classification overlaps with the categorizations of other scholars but has become established in pragmatic linguistics.

The study focuses on this classification for use in the process of studying abbreviated lexical units in the context of virtual communication. It is worth noting that in this work we also examine abbreviations which, in certain cases, do not contain an encoded verb, e.g. germ. *Aßung* – *Achtung* “attention”. However, they possess illocutionary force in the process of online communication. At this point, we encounter the phenomenon of ellipsis, where, in the context of digital correspondence, this lexical item presupposes the presence of a verbal predicate: germ. *Achtung, sei vorsichtig* “Please be careful”. Therefore, we consider an abbreviation used in virtual communication as a speech act that has the illocutionary purpose of conveying certain information to the recipient. However, this purpose is presented implicitly (through encoding by means of lexical shortening), based on the assumption that it should be recognized by the recipient. At the illocutionary level of analysis, this speech act is interpreted not as a directive, but rather as a message or a partial informative act. The analysis of the significant features of the abbreviation is grounded in understanding it as an instrument of intentional linguistic influence exerted by the sender on the recipient in order to achieve a specific goal.

The analysis of abbreviations in German virtual discourse reveals the

¹¹ Austin J. *How to do things with Words*. Oxford : At the Clarendon Press, 1962.

¹² Wunderlich D. *Studien zur Sprechakttheorie*. Frankfurt a.M. : Suhrkamp, 1976. 416 S.

¹³ Bach K., Harnish R.M. *Linguistic communication and speech acts*. Cambridge : MIT Press, 1982. 352 p.

¹⁴ Searle J. A classification of illocutionary acts. *Language in Society*. 1976. Vol. 5 (1). P. 1.

following main classes of abbreviations as speech acts according to their communicative purpose: *assertives*, *declaratives*, *directives*, *commissives*, *expressives*, and *quesitives*. Each group represented in the classification exhibits specific features from the perspective of its illocutionary purpose:

(1) *assertive abbreviation* – in the sender's assumption of responsibility for the message/assertion/statement;

(2) *declarative abbreviation* – in indicating the sender's status and authority;

(3) *directive abbreviation* – in the sender's inducement of the recipient to perform an action based on the recipient's inference;

(4) *commissive abbreviation* – in the sender's acceptance of an obligation to perform an action in a certain context;

(5) *expressive abbreviation* – in the sender's expression of a psychological state, attitude, or assessment of the existing state of affairs;

(6) *quesitive abbreviation* – in requesting the receipt of information.

Let us examine each group separately.

In *assertive abbreviated constructions*, as well as in commissives and directives, elements of information encoding through abbreviations are frequently observed not only on the basis of their word-formation structure, but also due to the spread of texting practices within certain socio-age groups, particularly in the language of teenagers, programmers, and gamers. The purpose of assertives is to fix the speaker's responsibility for the information conveyed. Assertive abbreviations express the communicator's opinion based on objective parameters of a real situation.

Declarative abbreviations are closely related to assertives but differ in that they presuppose institutional authority, for example: germ. *RfdU* – *reif für den Urlaub* "I am ready for a vacation".

The necessity for the recipient to perform a certain action is expressed by the sender through directive abbreviations, for example: germ. *lug* – *Lass uns gehen* "Let's go!". Directive abbreviations most often occur in digital communication in an indirect form, for example: germ. *svH* – *Suche verzweifelt Hilfe* "Desperately seeking help", which implies an imperative construction "Help!".

The key property of *commissives* is to commit the sender of the message to certain behavior. Examples of *commissive abbreviations* are those where the speaker takes on some obligation: germ. *Biglzuhaus* – *Bin gleich zu Hause* "I'll be home soon", *sz* – *schreibe zurück* "I'll write back".

Expressive abbreviations are associated with the expression of feelings. The speech acts in this group also imply an appropriate response from the recipient to the sender's message, for example: germ. *Ida* – *Ich dich auch* "me too"; germ. *axo* – *ach so* "oh, I see". A distinctive feature of expressive abbreviations

is the presence of an emotional evaluation of an action and the expression of a psychological state, which constitutes an important element of communication in the sphere of virtual interaction. For instance: germ. *Hdgdl – Ich habe dich ganz doll lieb* “I love you very much”.

We also identified a group of quesitive abbreviations, examples of which include: germ. *Wobidu – Wo bist du?* “Where are you?”. These abbreviations are aimed at requesting information and, unlike the other categories presented, are characterized by an interrogative form.

2. Experience in building a linguistic corpus of abbreviated lexical units in virtual communication

While studying truncated lexical units, we collected 1,161 abbreviations of the German language that are most frequently used in digital communication, texting, and SMS messages, and compiled a linguistic corpus of abbreviations. In November 2025, the structure of the corpus was fully prepared in the Microsoft Excel format, representing a database based on which a linguistic corpus of abbreviated lexical units in German was subsequently created. Conventionally, the corpus includes information according to the following main categories: Abbreviation expansion, Abbreviation translation, Speech act, Speech act category, and Examples of the use of abbreviations in online interaction texts (see extract from the table in Table 1).

The process of categorizing abbreviations in our study is based on the classifications of well-known scholars from the pragmalinguistic school

Table 1

Fragment of the Abbreviated Lexeme Database

Abbreviation	Decoding	Translation	Speech Act	Category of speech act	Usage Examples
👉	Daumen runter	thumbs down	declarative	EVALUATION	👉 für dieses Update
24/7	immer, ohne Unterbrechung	always, without interruption, 24 hours	representative	MESSAGE	weil Schauspieler 24/7 arbeiten
adden	Adressbuch oder in die Kontaktliste aufnehmen	add to the address book or contact list	directive	PROPOSAL / INTENTION	Ich adde dich später auf WhatsApp
Addy	Adresse, Kontaktdaten	address, contact details	representative	MESSAGE	Schreib mir dann einfach deine Addy
Ads	Alles deine Schuld	it's all your fault	expressive	ACCUSATION	Ads! Du hast das gemacht

(J. Austin, J. Searle, D. Wunderlich et al.). Some abbreviations can be assigned to multiple classes simultaneously. Based on the material studied, a corpus of abbreviations was compiled and annotated according to their illocutionary orientation. Within the framework of speech act theory, the abbreviation corpus comprises six classes: *commissives*, *directives*, *expressives*, *declaratives*, *assertives*, and *quesitives*. Each class contains categories that further specify the function of the abbreviation.

To illustrate the pragmalinguistic aspect of each abbreviation, Figure 1 is provided, which quantitatively represents the categories identified by us based on J. Searle's classification during the creation of the corpus.

As shown in Figure 1, the classes of assertives and expressives in German are the largest, together accounting for more than half of all the abbreviations we studied (66%). Each group in the classification exhibits specific features. In the expressive group, the influence of the emotive function of language predominates, which is an important element of communication in the realm of virtual interaction. In assertive constructions, as well as in commissives and directives, elements of information coding and encryption in abbreviations

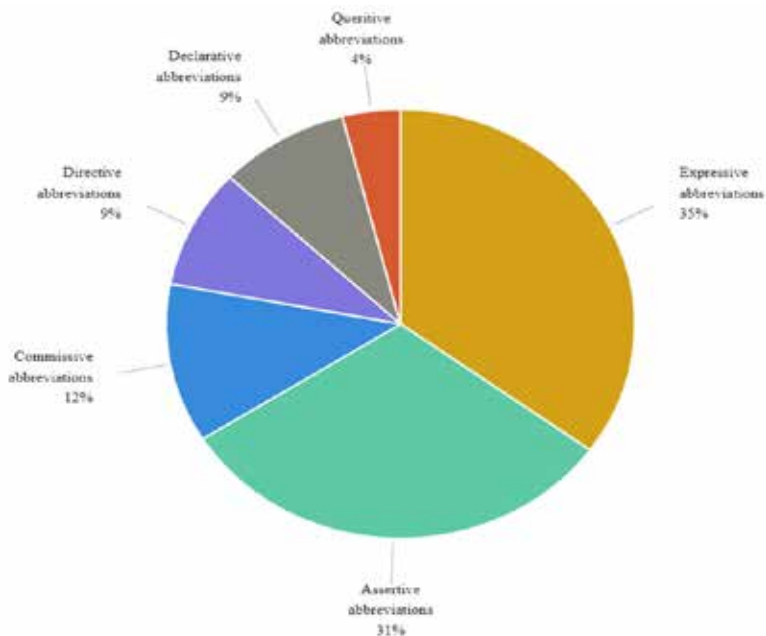


Fig. 1. Distribution of German Abbreviations According to Speech Acts

are frequently encountered, not only based on their word-formation structure but also due to the widespread use of texting within certain socio-age groups, particularly in the language of teenagers, programmers, and gamers.

3. Use of Abbreviations in Digital Communication

The corpus we created during this study contains the main abbreviations with an illocutionary component, divided into six primary groups: *directive abbreviations*, *expressive abbreviations*, *assertive abbreviations*, *commissive abbreviations*, *quesitive abbreviations*, and *declarative abbreviations*.

The necessity for the recipient to perform a certain action is expressed by the sender in virtual communication through directive abbreviations. These are utterances that prompt the recipient to carry out a specific action: calls and demands, permissions and orders, requests, remarks and instructions, advice and guidance, directives, excuses and pleas, warnings, as well as the establishment of norms, e.g. germ. *lug – Lass' uns gehen* “Let’s go”. The analysis of abbreviated directive constructions in German allowed us to classify the lexical items according to their communicative functions into three main subclasses: requestives, preventives, and regulatives (see Table 2).

Requestive abbreviations (7% of directive abbreviations) are represented by performative verbs expressing prohibition or request, such as INQUIRY, REQUEST, DEMAND/THREAT, and ORDER. These speech acts are based on social status and imply that the sender has a serious motivation to prompt the recipient to act, for example: germ. *Ga – Gruß an* “Send regards”.

Preventive abbreviations (21% of directive abbreviations) are introduced by performative verbs performing the function of advice, guidance, or suggestions for the correct resolution of an issue: ADVICE, RECOMMENDATION, PROPOSAL, WARNING, HINT, REMARK, INVITATION. These speech acts are aimed at preventing or preempting actions from the recipient’s perspective. In German abbreviated lexical items, no subclass of ADVICE was identified, which is due to the replacement of German abbreviations with more widely used English equivalents. The preventive abbreviated lexical unit HINT is represented by abbreviations (often in indirect form), e.g.: germ. *Gngn – “Geht nicht” gibt's nicht* “That is not possible”, a hint at the impossibility of performing the action.

Regulative abbreviations (72% of directive abbreviations) are introduced by performative verbs aimed at realizing an ordering function. A regulative abbreviation is a shortened unit with a positive assessment of the recipient. The evaluative expression conveys a communicative purpose of prompting action, giving recommendations, as well as expressing censure. At the same time, it reinforces etiquette norms. Examples of this group include ORDER,

Table 2

Examples of directive abbreviations

Abbreviation	Decoding	Translation	Speech Act
bialzha	Bin allein zu Hause.	I'm alone at home	Hint
DaM	Denk' an mich.	Think of me	Request
Ga	Gruß an	Say hello	Request
hdos	Halt' die Ohren steif!	Don't be sad!	Advice
HDOS	Halt die Ohren steif!	Keep your ears sharp	Advice-warning
Heudo	Heul' doch!	Go cry!	Request (reproach)
LAMAWI	Lach mal wieder!	Laugh again!	Request
lamiinfri	Lass mich in Frieden!	Leave me in peace!	Advice-warning
LdvH	Lies das verdammte Handbuch!	Read this damn manual!	Advice-warning
LMIR!	Laß mich in Ruhe!	Leave me in peace!	Advice-warning
Lua	Lass' uns aufbrechen!	Let's go!	Proposal
Lug	Lass' uns gehen!	Let's go!	Proposal
MaDiNa!	Mach Dich nackig!	Get undressed!	Proposal
MeDiWi !	Melde Dich wieder!	Get in touch!	Advice
Q6	Komme um sechs Uhr.	Come at 6 o'clock.	Proposal
rumia	Rufe mich an!	Call me!	Request
SMS	Schreib' mir schnell!	Write me quickly!	Request
vegimini	Vergiss' mich nicht!	Don't forget me!	Plea
vgl	Vergleiche	compare	Request
wauMi	Warte auf mich!	Wait for me!	Directive
ZL!	Zieh Leine!	Get lost!	Advice-warning

ESTABLISHMENT OF RULES, INSTRUCTION, and GUIDANCE. These are initiative speech acts, the successful completion of which requires an adequate response from the recipient.

The group of *regulative abbreviations* in German (72%) significantly exceeds the share of *requestive* (7%) and *preventive* (21%) abbreviations. We suggest that this discrepancy is influenced by the national specifics of German communication. It can be assumed that in German culture, orders, rules, and instructions predominate. For the German mentality, central concepts include PROHIBITION and PERMISSION, which are perceived positively in German consciousness. Thus, the analysis of the use of directive abbreviations in online communication, which are grounded in different stylistic and cultural-national connotations, allowed us to identify the following: the language of communicants influences the formation and use of directive abbreviations in virtual discourse; the active use of regulative abbreviations in German (72%) enables communicants to effectively influence their virtual communication

partner, controlling their language behavior and compelling them to perform the required actions.

Indirect directive abbreviations in digital communication are most frequently used in indirect form. The use of abbreviations for indirect directive speech acts allows the communicant to successfully realize their intention and achieve mutual understanding with the addressee. This can be explained by the economy of expression, the maintenance of communicative etiquette, and the creation of a favorable communicative atmosphere in the virtual space. All of this ensures a more appropriate response from the addressee and can also produce an ironic effect during interaction.

In virtual communication, the transmission of meaning and the indirect illocutionary intention of a speech act may intertwine, which complicates the interpretation of the act and the recipient's decision-making, requiring the addressee to decode the abbreviated expression. Traditional examples of indirect speech acts include polite requests, sometimes "disguised" as questions, for example: germ. *alkla?* – *Alles klar?* "Is everything clear?".

Depending on the specific context (e.g., closeness or the depth of relationship with the addressee), the communicant selects the appropriate degree of knowledge of the interlocutor, as well as relies on various language competencies: knowledge of the effectiveness of speech acts and principles of communication.

Expressives play a significant role in the process of pragmalinguistic influence in message construction and account for 26% of all other illocutionary speech acts, ranking second only to assertives. This can be explained by the fact that assertives represent the primary function of abbreviations, related to the decoding of information in accordance with the principle of effort economy, whereas expressives are characteristic of the thematic content of virtual communication.

The most common categories among expressives are ABSTRACT CONCEPTS (43%), FAREWELLS (20%), and FACIAL EXPRESSIONS (14%). Following these, in descending order, are GESTURES (9%), ACTIONS (7%), GRATITUDE (3%), FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AND GESTURES (2%), and FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AND ACTIONS (2%) (see Table 3).

The first category we will consider consists of abbreviations related to the theme of GRATITUDE (often with a nuance of respect) such as germ. *Div – Danke im Voraus* "Thanks in advance". The category FAREWELLS includes lexical items such as germ. *Aws – Auf Wiedersehen* "Goodbye", germ. *bm – bis morgen* "See you tomorrow", germ. *gn8 – Gute Nacht* "Good night".

Abbreviations belonging to the expressive class are divided into eight subgroups, all of which share an illocutionary focus on emotivity: ACTION,

Table 3

Examples of expressives

Abbreviation	Decoding	Translation	Speech Act
Bg	Breites Grinsen	wide smile	Approval (emotion)
biLD	Baby, ich liebe Dich.	Baby, I love you.	Love (emotion)
bmvl	Biege mich vor Lachen.	I'm bent over laughing.	Joy (emotion)
BSE	Bin so einsam.	I am so alone.	Feeling of loneliness (emotion)
gn8	Gute Nacht!	Good night!	Farewell (etiquette)
Div	Danke im Voraus.	Thank you in advance.	Gratitude (etiquette)
DN!	Du nervst!	You're getting on my nerves!	Irritation (emotion)
Fg	Fieses Grinsen.	nasty grin	Doubt (emotion)
fümiein	(Ich) fühle mich einsam.	feeling lonely	Feeling of loneliness (emotion)
Gvlg	Ganz viele liebe Grüße.	With all my love.	Farewell (etiquette)
HdgdI	(Ich) habe dich ganz doll lieb	I love you so much.	Love (emotion)
hegl	Herzlichen Glückwunsch!	Best wishes!	Wishing (etiquette)
IHA!	Ich hasse Abkürzungen!	I hate abbreviations!	Hatred (emotion)
lkd	Ich küsse dich.	I kiss you.	Gratitude (etiquette)
lld	Ich liebe dich.	I love you.	Love (emotion)
iVD!	Ich vermisste dich!	I miss you!	Feeling of affection (emotion)
Kzg	Kaum zu glauben	unbelievable	Surprise (emotion)
Ldüa	(Ich) liebe dich über alles.	I love you above all.	Love (emotion)
Lamito	Lache mich tot!	I'm dying of laughter!	Mockery (emotion)
mömidiku	(ich) möchte mit dir kuscheln.	I want to cuddle with you.	Feeling of affection (emotion)
Pg	Pech gehabt	no luck	Dissatisfaction (emotion)

ABSTRACT CONCEPT, FACIAL EXPRESSION, GESTURE, ACTION + ABSTRACT CONCEPT, FACIAL EXPRESSION + ABSTRACT CONCEPT, and FACIAL EXPRESSION + GESTURE. The ABSTRACT CONCEPT category is the most numerous, not only among the subgroups mentioned above but also among etiquette forms, e.g.: germ. *HdgdI* – *(Ich) habe dich ganz doll lieb* “I love you endlessly”. The most used abbreviations in the ACTION group are: germ. *Heudo* – *Heul' doch!* “Go cry!“, germ. *Kv* – *(Das) kannst*

(du) vergessen! “Forget about it“. The category GESTURE forms the smallest group of shortened lexical units within the expressive constructions, including abbreviations such as germ. *ddf* – (*Ich*) *drücke dich fest* “Hug you tightly“. The category FACIAL EXPRESSION includes abbreviations such as germ. *Bg* – *breites Grinsen* “big grin“, germ. *Ikd* – *Ich küsse dich* “I kiss you“.

All groups above reflect different types of illocutions, as it is within the expressive category that emotions – so abundant in virtual discourse – are conveyed surprise, irony, displeasure, laughter, joy, approval, irritation, loneliness, love, hatred, mockery, and affection.

German abbreviations expressed through expressive constructions perform two main functions in digital communication and texting: the expression of etiquette forms and the emotive function of language. In studies addressing the illocutionary-interactive component of speech acts, the expressive class (etiquette speech acts) includes apologies, thanks, greetings, felicitations, and farewells. The emotive function is realized through abbreviations that convey actions in combination with facial expressions, gestures, and abstract concepts.

Next, we present the distribution of assertive constructions in German virtual discourse, in comparison with the total number of shortened lexical items. Six main groups of assertives are distinguished: STATEMENT (52%), QUALIFICATION (16%), DECLARATION (12%), FORECAST (10%), RECOGNITION (6%), and DESCRIPTION (4%) (see Table 4).

The largest category among all assertive constructions is STATEMENT, which includes the “recording of the state of affairs“, for example: germ. *24/7* – *24 Stunden täglich, sieben Tage die Woche* “Always, without interruption, 24 hours a day“, germ. *biglzuhaus* – *Bin gleich zu Hause!* “I’ll be home soon!“, and “warnings“: germ. *Heuni* – *Heute nicht* “Not today“. The category QUALIFICATION is represented by abbreviations such as germ. *AKA* – *Also Known As* (“also known as“), germ. *uawg* – *um acht wird gegessen* “we’ll eat at eight“. The category RECOGNITION includes abbreviations like germ. *ka* – *Keine Ahnung* “No idea!“.

The third-largest category in German assertives is DECLARATION (12%), for example: germ. *kp* – *kein Problem* (“no problem“). The category FORECAST also plays an important role in assertive constructions, conveying a condition that presupposes an event with a certain degree of probability, e.g.: germ. *rumia* – *Rufe mich an* “Call me“. The final category considered in this section is DESCRIPTION, which accounts for 4% of all shortened lexical items and indicates the situation, e.g.: germ. *tw* – *Themenwechsel* “change of topic“.

Research on assertive abbreviations has shown that assertive constructions form the largest class among all speech acts. They encompass many abbreviations with nominal (rather than verbal) structure due to the omission of

Table 4

Examples of assertive abbreviations

Abbreviation	Decoding	Translation	Speech Act
addn	ins Adressbuch aufnehmen	to the address book or contact list	Warning-notification
BIBALUR	Bin bald im Urlaub.	I'm going on vacation soon.	Description-explanation
biglzuhaus	Bin gleich zu Hause!	I'm home right now!	Statement of affairs
DaD	Denk' an dich.	thinking of you	Statement
EDV	Ende der Vernunft	the end of one's wits	Assertion (message)
ff	Fortsetzung folgt	to be continued	Prophecy
gd	ganz doll	immensely	Assertion (message)
GiE	Ganz im Ernst	seriously	Assertion (message)
gin	(Das) glaube ich nicht!	I don't believe it.	Confession
gngn	„Geht nicht“ gibt's nicht!	Nothing is impossible.	Statement
Heuni	Heute nicht	not today	Warning
Hh	(Ich) habe Hunger.	I'm hungry.	Statement of affairs
ida	Ich dich auch	me too	Acknowledgment
iea	Ich euch auch	you too	Acknowledgment
IHDZFG	Ich habe Dich zum Fressen gern.	I'd love to eat you.	Assertion (message)
JoN	Jetzt oder nie	now or never	Statement
ka	Keine Ahnung	no idea	Assertion (message)
kk	Kein Kommentar	no comment	Statement
kp	Kein Problem	no problem	Statement
mwn	Meines Wissens nach	As far as I know.	Acknowledgment
SIW	Soweit ich weiß.	As far as I know.	Acknowledgment

certain verbs. Depending on context, assertive constructions can also be related to other speech acts, particularly declaratives. Unlike other speech acts, pure assertives perform the function of information coding, especially in the context of the emergence of the linguistics of deception as a new research direction at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century¹⁵, a phenomenon that has become widespread in virtual discourse.

¹⁵ Weinrich H. *Linguistik der Lüge*. 9. Aufl. München : Verlag. C.H. Beck, 2019. 90 S.

Among commissives, we identified five main categories based on John Searle's taxonomy of abbreviated lexical items: PROMISES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, THREATS, INVITATIONS, and WARNINGS (see Table 5).

Commissive constructions in German account for 12% of the entire sample. The percentage distribution across categories is as follows: ANNOUNCEMENTS (50%), WARNINGS (31%), PROMISES (7%), THREATS (6%), and INVITATIONS (6%).

The category ANNOUNCEMENTS, i.e., reporting an event or phenomenon, constitutes the largest portion of all commissive constructions in German (50%), for example: germ. *Bigbedi* – *Bin gleich bei Dir* "I'll be at your place soon", germ. *Biglzuhaus* – *Bin gleich zu Hause* "I'll be home soon", germ. *Gin*

Table 5

Examples of commissives

Abbreviation	Decoding	Translation	Speech Act
BIBALUR	Bin bald im Urlaub.	I'm going on vacation soon.	Announcement
Bigbedi	Bin gleich bei Dir.	I'll be with you soon.	Promise
biglezuhaus	Bin gleich zu Hause.	I'll be home soon.	Promise
Biglzuhaus	Bin gleich zu Hause.	I'm home now.	Promise
BGS	Brauche Geld, sofort.	I need money right now.	Request
EIDU	Erwarte immer das Unmögliche.	I always expect the impossible.	Promise
FANTA	Fahre noch tanken.	I'm going to refuel.	Announcement
FKK	Fahre Kaugummi kaufen.	I'm going to buy gum.	Announcement
isdinl	Ich sehe dich im nächsten Leben.	I see you in the next life.	Promise
kgw	Komme gleich wieder.	I'll be right back.	Promise
ko20mispä	(Ich) komme 20 Minuten später.	I'll come in 20 minutes.	Promise
komispä	(Ich) komme später.	I'll come later.	Promise
Lambada	Lass mich bitte an dich lehnen.	Let me lean on you.	Request
MeMiWi	Melde mich wieder.	I'll be in touch again.	Announcement
MUMIDIRE	Muss mit dir reden.	I need to talk to you.	Announcement
Rdsa	(Ich) rufe dich später an	I'll call you later.	Promise
Rfdi	Reif für die Insel.	I deserve a vacation.	Announcement
wauDi	Warte auf Dich.	I'm waiting for you.	Promise
WIWONIEAUGE	Wir wollen niemals auseinander gehen.	We never want to go our separate ways.	Promise
wl	(Ich) will los.	I want to leave.	Announcement
www	Wir werden warten.	We will wait.	Promise

– *Das glaube ich nicht* “I don’t believe that”, *Rfdi – reif für die Insel* “ready for a vacation”.

The second commissive category, THREATS, is directly related to the previous group, representing similar promises but aimed at causing harm or unpleasantness, for instance: germ. *Isdinl – Ich sehe dich im nächsten Leben* “See you in the next life”.

WARNINGS account for 31% of all examples. This group includes cautions, remarks, disciplinary actions, and similar expressions. Abbreviations representing this group include: germ. *8ung – Achtung* “attention”, germ. *wl – (Ich) will los / (Wir) wollen los* “I/we want to go”. A subordinate and indirect category of WARNINGS is REQUESTS, e.g., germ. *BGS – Brauche Geld, sofort* “I need money immediately”. However, this category is rare in digital communication and may also relate to declaratives (indicating a lack of money) and directives (asking for money).

Abbreviations in the category PROMISES constitute only 7% of German commissives. They express voluntarily assumed obligations to do or perform something, for example: germ. *Rdsa – (Ich) rufe dich später an* “I’ll call you later”.

The category INVITATIONS accounts for 6% of all German commissives and conveys a request to do something, participate in an event, or engage in an activity, e.g.: germ. *LUG – Lass’ uns gehen* “Let’s go”. It is important to note the similarity of commissive constructions to directives, particularly the presence of a pronounced verbal structure. Some lexical units expressed as commissives have a bivalent structure and, depending on context, may be classified as directives.

The categories of commissive constructions (PROMISES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, THREATS, INVITATIONS, and WARNINGS) encompass a large class of speech acts that are especially significant in programmer communication, where expressions of intent become a priority for task execution.

A “quesitive” is defined as a speech act that realizes the speaker’s communicative intention to fill a knowledge gap using the resources of a given language, according to the accepted norms and rules of language behavior in a particular society, considering presuppositions and the anticipated reaction of the interlocutor.

All quesitives in our study are divided into general (60%), alternative (20%), and special (29%) questions. Clarifying and disjunctive questions were not found in our sample (see Table 6).

The priority category in German is the group of general questions. In online communication on the social network Twitter, we identified the following

Table 6

Examples of quesitives

Abbreviation	Decoding	Translation	Speech Act
akla	Alles klar?	Everything clear?	General question
bdb	Bist du blöde?	Are you stupid?	General question
bidunowa	Bist du noch wach?	Are you still awake?	Tag question
braduhi	Brauchst du Hilfe?	Do you need help?	General question
FOF?	Freund oder Feind?	Friend or foe?	Alternative question
ie	Im Ernst?	Seriously?	General question
KATZE	Kannste tanzen?	Can you dance?	Special question
KODUMIZUTA	Kommst Du mit zum Tanzen?	Are you coming dancing?	General question
KUWIHEBEKERZ	Kuscheln wir heute bei Kerzenschein?	Shall we snuggle up tonight by candlelight?	General question
LDM	Liebst du mich?	Do you love me?	General question
LIDUMINO	Liebst Du mich noch?	Do you still love me?	General question
luauki	Lust auf Kino?	Shall we go to the cinema?	General question
LZS?	Lust zu schreiben?	Want to write?	Special question
WAKODUWI	Wann kommst Du wieder?	When will you come back?	Special question
WAMAWIHEAD	Was machen wir heute abend?	What are we doing tonight?	Questions containing the w-words
widu	Willst du?	Do you want?	General question
WIDUMIHEI	Willst du mich heiraten?	Will you marry me?	General question
wigeesdi	Wie geht es dir?	How are you?	Special question
wobidu	Wo bist du?	Where are you?	Special question
wwi	Was weiß ich? (mir doch egal!)	What do I know? (I don't care!)	Questions containing the w-words
WZTWD	Wo zum Teufel warst du?	Where the hell were you?	Special question

construction: germ. *wd* – (willst du) *geschlagen werden? Hab einen Hausschuh an* :) “Do you want to be hit? I have a slipper on :)”. An example of an alternative question is: germ. *zmozd* – *zu mir oder zu dir?* “To me or to you?”. As seen in these examples, the abbreviations themselves already constitute a complete text and are not embedded within a larger semantic context. Special questions include abbreviations such as germ. *wobidu* – *Wo bist du* “Where are you?”

The class of quesitives plays an important role in virtual communication, functioning as the only class in speech act theory that combines both a verbal form and an interrogative expression. In German, there is a gradation of

categories within quesitive forms, with general questions being the most prevalent (60%). Abbreviations expressed as quesitive constructions act as fully autonomous texts in digital communication, structurally representing a coherent lexical unit.

The essence of declaratives is represented in the transformations made by an authorized person to the status of the object being represented. We identified three categories of declarative constructions: EXPRESSIONS OF ASSUMPTION (7%), EXPRESSIONS OF CHARACTERISTICS (43%), EVALUATIONS (50%). These categories serve status-related functions, as they establish facts through the representation of those facts (see Table 7).

Table 7

Examples of Declaratives

Abbreviation	Decoding	Translation	Speech Act
1	2	3	4
Bf	Blödfrau!	stupid woman	Evaluation
Ads	Alles deine Schuld!	It's all your fault!	Evaluation
As	Ansichtssache	This is a debatable question.	Expression of assumption
Asi	asozial (unästhetisch, moralisch verwerflich und/ oder kulturell fragwürdig)	antisocial (unaesthetic, morally reprehensible and/or culturally questionable)	Expression of characterization
BM	Blödmann	fool	Evaluation
Dk	Dummkopf	blockhead	Evaluation
Dws!	Du warst super!	You were great!	Evaluation
dubido	Du bist doof.	You're an idiot.	Evaluation
Gie	ganz im Ernst	This is very seriously.	Evaluation
Jwd	janz weit draußen	in the middle of nowhere	Expression of characterization
MS	Muttersöhnchen	mommy's boy	Evaluation
Nw	nicht wirklich	not really	Expression of characterization
QG	Quälgeist	tormentor	Evaluation
qk	Quatschkopf	chatterbox	Evaluation
QmS	Quatsch mit Soße	nonsense	Expression of characterization
SDEDG	Schön, dass es dich gibt.	Good that you exist.	Evaluation
SHR	Süßholzrasppler	sweet-talker	Expression of characterization
Tm	total mies	very bad	Evaluation

1	2	3	4
uhu	unter hundert (alte Person)	under a hundred (years old)	Expression of characterization
Zk	Zum Kotzen	disgusting	Expression of characterization
zz	ziemlich zügig / zack, zack! / ganz schnell	quite briskly	Expression of characterization

Abbreviations in the category EXPRESSION OF CHARACTERISTICS describe distinctive features and qualities of a process or phenomenon, for example: germ. *Ads* – *Alles deine Schuld* “It’s all your fault.” The category EVALUATION is quite similar to the previous one, but in this group the connotation is purely positive or negative, without nuances or gradations (within the “good–bad” spectrum), e.g.:  – germ. *Daumen runter* “Thumbs down.” The third category, EXPRESSION OF ASSUMPTION, includes abbreviations such as germ. *As* – *Ansichtssache* “A matter of opinion.” The categories EXPRESSION OF CHARACTERISTICS, EXPRESSION OF ASSUMPTION, and EVALUATION have a connotative function, expressing the specific author’s opinion regarding a particular object, person, or phenomenon.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings lead to the following conclusions: abbreviations are formed in virtual communication through syntactic, phonetic, and graphic means. The intensive development of the lexical composition of modern German can be explained by the combination of linguistic and extralinguistic factors in the use of abbreviations in contemporary communication.

In German, the basis of abbreviations specific to virtual communication is sentence-utterances. In German virtual texts, such abbreviations function as condensed micro-texts, obligatorily including a sequential, logical, and paradigmically established predicative word combination.

The predicative component is represented in German digital abbreviations either explicitly with a verbal construction, e.g.: germ. *ivd* – *Ich vermisse dich!* “I miss you,” or implicitly, with the verb omitted, e.g.: germ. *AdS* – *Alles deine Schuld!* “It’s all your fault.”

In the process of abbreviation, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs are most involved. A distinctive feature of German abbreviations is the elimination of personal pronouns in emotional expressions and acts of promise, e.g.: germ. *DaD* – *Denk’ an dich* “Thinking of you”. In online interaction, verbs actively participate in the creation of abbreviations. The presence of original verbal

constructions and the ability of communicators to convey their intentions via abbreviations allow such short lexical units to be interpreted as speech acts.

Variation in communicative intentions underlies the classification of abbreviations as speech acts in online communication:

- *Assertive abbreviations* – express the sender's responsibility for the message / assert that the recipient should act based on the recipient's inference.
- *Declarative abbreviations* – indicate the sender's status and authority.
- *Expressive abbreviations* – convey the sender's psychological state, attitude, or evaluation of the current situation.
- *Commissive abbreviations* – indicate the sender's commitment to act.
- *Quesitive abbreviations* – request information.

The classification of an abbreviation depends on communication conditions, contextual role, and presupposition. In online discourse, there are also intermediate types of abbreviations.

The pragmatic potential of abbreviations in German virtual communication is confirmed by their development as fully-fledged units of nomination, as well as their nominative-communicative orientation, which stems from their participation in motivational and pragmatic relations, and their use in virtual discourse.

The process of abbreviation, like virtual discourse in German, is characterized by: dynamism, expressiveness, conciseness, information coding, and compactness. A pragmatic principle of coding plays a crucial role. Another essential feature of abbreviation in virtual communication is the principle of economy of language effort, driven both by the form of virtual communication aimed at dynamic information transfer and the nature of the abbreviation, oriented toward condensation. The form and content of the abbreviation, based on its productive base, determine the emotional coloring of the shortened expression.

SUMMARY

The article investigates the pragmatic potential of abbreviations in contemporary German virtual communication, drawing on material collected from social networks (Twitter, Facebook) and a corpus of SMS messages (MoCoDa). A total of 1,161 abbreviated lexical units were analysed and classified.

The study addresses the phenomenon of abbreviation as one of the most productive word-formation processes in modern German. Grounded in the principle of economy of language effort – as formulated by A. Martinet and supported by earlier scholarship – abbreviations are shown to serve not merely communicative efficiency but also expressive and coding functions characteristic

of digital discourse. Their formation involves phonetic, graphic, lexical, and syntactic mechanisms, including vowel omission, letter-digit substitution, acronymization, and syntactic condensation.

The theoretical framework draws on speech act theory, particularly J. Searle's taxonomy of illocutionary acts. The authors propose a classification of German virtual abbreviations into six pragmatic classes: *assertives* (expressions of informational responsibility), *declaratives* (status-marked statements), *directives* (prompts to action), *commissives* (commitments to future behaviour), *expressives* (emotional and attitudinal expressions), and *quesitives* (information-seeking constructions). Quantitative analysis reveals that *assertives* and *expressives* together constitute 66% of the corpus, reflecting the dual dominance of information coding and emotional expression in virtual discourse.

Directive abbreviations are further subdivided into *requestives* (7%), *preventives* (21%), and *regulatives* (72%). The predominance of *regulative* forms is interpreted as reflecting German communicative culture, in which norms, rules, and institutional directives hold a central place. *Commissive* constructions are led by announcements (50%) and warnings (31%), while expressive abbreviations are dominated by abstract-conceptual categories (43%), farewells (20%), and facial-expression encodings (14%).

A pilot corpus of 1,161 German abbreviations was compiled, annotated by abbreviation expansion, translation, speech act type, pragmatic category, and usage examples. The corpus, structured in Microsoft Excel, provides a structured basis for further computational and pragma-linguistic research.

The findings confirm that German virtual abbreviations function as fully autonomous speech acts, capable of realising a wide range of illocutionary intentions. They are characterised by dynamism, compactness, expressiveness, and information encoding. The pragmatic principle of coding and the principle of economy jointly govern their formation and use, making abbreviation a key mechanism of meaning construction in contemporary digital communication.

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