

VERBING IN MODERN SPOKEN ENGLISH

Lilia Gabitova ¹
Zhanargul Beisembayeva ²

¹Kazan Federal University

²Gumilyov Eurasian National University

Email: habirshah@mail.ru

ABSTRACT

This article is concerned with the study of the concept of verbing in modern spoken English. Verbing is the transition of words from other parts of speech into the category of verbs without changing the form. Verbing exists to make our message concise and accurate. It helps to send a message in a more fresh, energetic and unconventional form. This technique is simple and, therefore, widespread in the word formation of the English language, especially in its colloquial form. Verbing is a feature that distinguishes English from other languages. According to the analysis, today, verbing in English is frequent in the field of technology, especially in the field of Internet technology and digital communication, due to the lack of descriptive vocabulary in this area. The field of technology is a new area of interaction and there are relatively few terms in it, thus, people use the existing vocabulary to express their actions. Verbing is often used in advertising, in the names of institutions in order to attract attention. The main purpose of using verbing in the service sector or advertising is to draw consumer's attention to a product or service. The offer sounds unusual and the person involuntarily fixes attention on this message, consequently, information about this product imprints itself in his subconscious. Verbing of proper names is widely used, the use of the names of famous people as allusions to create a livelier, but at the same time compact description. Verbing is also used to create nonce words in slang and is of humorous character.

Key words: Verbing, linguistics, spoken English, slang, noun, verb.

1. INTRODUCTION

In American and British variants of spoken English, a technique known as "verbing" is in usage. According to the dictionary of linguistic terms, verbing is the transition of words from other parts of speech into the category of verbs without changing their form. Such transition is syntactic rather than morphological, because words of other parts of speech perform the function of a verbal predicate (The Dictionary of Linguistic Terms, 2018).

Throughout the history of the language, verbs have been introduced into English via nouns. In fact, the first example of verbing dates from 1871. This process took place according to the pattern that is used today: verbing of the noun takes place, people begin to use a new verb, the media take up this idea, and this new verb becomes part of our

vocabulary. Today, the following verbal lexemes derived from nouns are common occurrence: drink, divorce, dress, fool, host, etc (Ashrapova & Alendeeva, 2014; The basics of verbing, 2018).

It should be noted that it takes less time to change nouns into verbs. For example, the word “medal” was first used as a noun in 1578, and the earliest known usage of the word as the verb “get a medal” appeared in the newspaper only in 1966. While the word “to Google” was called “the most useful word of 2002” and entered the Oxford English Dictionary in 2006, although the noun “Google” began to exist only in 1997 (The basics of verbing, 2018).

Of course, the adoption of new forms of words, as well as the use of existing words in a new syntactic function, takes some time, however, as we see in the example above, today this process is accelerated and, according to Stephen Pinker, demonstrates its widespread occurrence. Pinker estimates that approximately one in five English verbs comes from noun, including such ancient verbs as *rain*, *snow*, and *thunder* and later convert verbs *oil*, *pressure*, *referee*, *bottle*, etc. According to Pinker, “the conversion of words from one part of speech to another has been a part of English grammar for centuries, this process is a characteristic feature that distinguishes English from other languages” (Mukharlyamova et al., 2016; The Language Instinct, by Steven Pinker, 2018).

2.METHODS

This work uses descriptive method, including observation, comparison and generalization, collection of actual material and its classification; dictionary definition analysis method; comparative-typological method, as well as the method of continuous sampling from lexicographic sources (explanatory, associative, synonymous).

3.RESULTS

According to the analysis, today, verbing in English occurs widely in the field of technology, especially in the field of Internet technologies and digital communication. Many words that were originally used as nouns, such as message, email, tweet, blog, text, friend quickly change into verbs. *Is that really you tweeting on the other end?; Am I really messaging?; I'm gonna email my husband* (How the Blind email, tweet, and blog, 2018). *We friend and unfriend (or defriend) people on Facebook. We blog.*

One often uses proper nouns related to technologies as verbs: *We google it. We skype to keep in touch. We youtube to watch video clips. And we facebook and whatsapp people about what's going on.* This phenomenon is explained by the fact that this is a new sphere of interaction and there are relatively few terms in it, therefore, people use the existing vocabulary to express their actions.

Americans and British like to use the names of famous people as allusions to create a livelier, but at the same time, compact description. These allusions began to be used as verbs, for example, *the Guardian* quotes British singer George Michael as saying: *Look, if people choose to believe that I'm sitting here in my ivory tower, Howard Hughesing myself with long fingernails and loads of drugs, then I can't do anything about that...* (George Michael interview, 2018). Howard Hughes is an American businessman, aviator and director, famous for his eccentricity and bodacious behavior, thus, the usage of this

proper name in the form of a verb can have the meaning of “*get weird ideas, behave in a queer way*”.

The following example: *I'm not going to Joe Namath anything, but we're going to be competitive* (Verbing, 2018). Joe Namath is a former American rugby player, famous for his cheeky-bold prediction of his team winning the U.S. NFL championship. The use of this name in the form of a verb has the meaning of “*make a challenging forecast of the victory of one's team*”. Another example is Hugh's phrase from serial *Lost*: *You just totally Scooby-Doo'd me, didn't you?* (Verbing, 2018). Scooby-Doo is a dog from the American animated serial, famous for its super-shyness, therefore, this proper name has the meaning “*to feel dismay for no reason*”. The use of this type of verbing allows to convey a sufficiently large emotionally-colored amount of information in one short sentence.

Many examples of verbing of proper names can be found on the *Urban Dictionary* website. [9]:

1) *Arrrgh man, you just Rick Rolled me again!* Rick Astley is a British singer and it is his clip that is sent on as a joke / trick instead of requesting any other video clip.

2) *Did you hear, Bob "Kurt Cobained" himself yesterday.* Kurt Cobain is a famous American singer who committed suicide by shooting himself in the head with a gun. Accordingly, this verbing means to kill oneself with a shot in the head.

3) *That's so true, they Miley-Cyrused the hell out of her pictures and songs.* Miley Cyrus is an American singer and actress who began her career as a teenager and subsequently changed her image and stage image to a more mature. Thus, this verbing is used when an image or a song is greatly changed compared to the original in order to make it better.

4) *Friend 1: Dude, I watched Fight Club over the weekend. Those last 5 minutes were the worst movie ending ever. Friend 2: Oh my god, they sure Stephen King-ed it.* Stephen King is an American fantasy, horror, and thriller writer who is known for unexpected endings of his novels. Accordingly, when a film, a book or a story has a beautiful story, in bright colors and magnificent imagination, but with an absolutely absurd end that has no meaning, it seems that the end has been written by someone else.

5) *You just got Michael Bay'd son!* Michael Bay is an American filmmaker widely known for his action movies and special effects. This verbing is used in the meaning of “blow up” literally or figuratively. For example, on someone's page on a social network, an image with a commentary that means you were blown up is published in joke.

In everyday life, verbing can be found in advertising and in the names of institutions: *Let's coffee, Let's burger, Let's fries*, groups on social networks *Let's tea*, vending machines *Let's pizza*. An Argos retail operator in the UK and Ireland recently urged everyone not to buy (*Shop for it*), but “to argos”: *Argos it! (Buy in Argos)*.

Verbing is often found in situations involving food and drink. Ted, a character on the TV show “How I Met Your Mother”, offering to buy a drink, asks: «*Can I beer you?*» (*shall I buy beer for you?*). *Urban dictionary* gives ten meanings of the verb «*fooding*»: *Elizabeth is fooding at Macdonald's with her boyfriend*. In the windows of cafes or restaurants you can find the phrase: *Do you salad or sandwich?*

The main purpose of verbing in the service sector or advertising, in our opinion, is to attract consumer's attention to the product or service. The offer sounds unusual and the person involuntarily fixes attention on this message, accordingly, information about this product imprints itself in his subconscious. Verbing is also used to create nonce words in slang and is humorous, for example, “*eye it*” (*look at it*) (Conversion,

2018). In American TV serial *My Boys*, one of the characters says a phrase *I like your verbs that are things. I think I'm gonna sandwich after I sofa here for a bit.*

Urban dictionary gives the following examples: *I potatoed on the couch all day today.* «Couch potato» – a phraseological unit having the meaning of a lazy person who spends much time watching TV. Another example: *I'm so tired I can't even brain right now. Do you mind scooting over a bit?* This verbing is used for comic effect (*Urban dictionary*, 2018).

4.DISCUSSION

Verbing exists to make our message concise and accurate. In situations where one word is used repeatedly, such as a business meeting, verbing is more common. Verbing helps to send a message in a fresher, more energetic and unconventional form. This technique is simple and therefore common in the word formation of the English language, especially in its colloquial form. This is because English, being an analytical language, does not use the change of the forms of words using dependent morphemes (affixations), i.e. it does not have an extended ending system and contains a large number of monosyllabic words. A base form of the verb also does not have a clear ending, accordingly, verbs converted from nouns are initially considered to be regular verbs and form the past form by adding the ending -ed.

The use of verbing in technology is due to the lack of descriptive vocabulary in this area. The field of technology is a new area of interaction and there are relatively few terms in it, therefore, people use the existing vocabulary to express their actions. The use of verbing of proper names is explained by the desire to convey more information in one phrase. The main purpose of verbing in the service sector or advertising is to draw consumer's attention to the product or service. The offer sounds unusual and the person involuntarily fixes attention on this message, and information about this product imprints itself in his subconscious.

5.CONCLUSION

Thus, we can conclude that verbing is a common concept in English linguistic culture which has been used for decades. Currently, in spoken English one often uses verbing of proper names, namely the names of celebrities, in order to deliver a large amount of information in a single phrase, as well as verbing of technology-related terms, which is connected with the lack of descriptive vocabulary in this area. In addition, verbing is often used in advertising, in the names of institutions in order to attract attention.

6.ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

REFERENCES

1. The Dictionary of Linguistic Terms (2018). [Electronic Resource]. URL: http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_Buks/Linguist/DicTermin/v.php (Accessed: January 13, 2018).
2. Conversion (2018). [Electronic Resource]. URL: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conversion_\(word_formation\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conversion_(word_formation)) (Accessed: January 13, 2018).
3. George Michael interview (2018). [Electronic Resource]. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2009/dec/05/george-michael-interview-music-sex-drugs> (Accessed: January 23, 2018).
4. How the Blind email, tweet, and blog (2018). [Electronic Resource]. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_009w_oK6dQ (Accessed: January 24, 2018).
5. The basics of verbing (2018). [Electronic Resource]. URL: <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/the-basics-of-verbing-nouns/> (Accessed: January 13, 2018).
6. The Language Instinct, by Steven Pinker (2018). [Electronic Resource]. URL: <https://tonoticeandtolearn.com/2013/05/11/steven-pinker-on-language-human-thought-part-1/> (Accessed: January 14, 2018).
7. Urban dictionary (2018). [Electronic Resource]. URL: <https://www.urbandictionary.com> (Accessed: January 24, 2018).
8. Verbing (2018). [Electronic Resource]. URL: <https://www.thoughtco.com/verbing-definition-1692587> (Accessed: January 13, 2018).
9. Ashrapova, A., & Alendeeva, S. (2014). Recognition of English and German Borrowings in the Russian Language (Based on Lexical Borrowings in the Field of Economics). *English language teaching*, 7(12), 47-53.
10. Mukharlyamova, L., Alendeeva, S., & Ashrapova, A. (2016). Borrowed words in language teaching (on the economic term system of the Russian language in the XXI century). *Journal of Language and Literature*, 7(2), 163-168.