
STRUCTURAL-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF ABBREVIATIONS IN ENGLISH

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Annotation

The paper focuses on the integrated approach to investigation of abbreviations that are referred to the units of secondary nomination. Abbreviations facilitate the communication process due to the principle of economy in language. Abbreviation that goes back to ancient times is one of the most actively performed and intensive processes in the English language. The use of abbreviations is connected with both linguistic and extra-linguistic factors that to a great extent determine a variety of discourse under consideration and ways of decoding certain linguistic units of abbreviated form, where context plays the most important role.

Keywords: abbreviation, discourse, cognition, proposition, communication, integrated approach, interdiscursivity

INTRODUCTION

Abbreviation can be clearly stated as a powerful means in the development of languages. The process of abbreviation can be traced as far back as Ancient Egypt, when contracted linguistic forms consisting of more than one element emerged. As for the system of English abbreviations, it has evolved over several centuries¹.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Widespread creation and use of abbreviations as a materialized and verbally represented lingual-mental process due to the emergence of saving mental power and attitude can find the explication both by the appearance of new phenomena and their contracted nomination requirements in terms of the tendency to reduce existing nominative units for practical purposes (Vishnyakova et al., 2019). This is also explained by the need for creativity and search for optimal solutions, inherent in human consciousness and typical of human nature. From the point of view of cognitive-discursive approach, the formation of these nominative units in language can be considered to be the phenomenon related to realization of verbalized mental processes. They are referred to particular varieties of discourse structuring, due to the needs of the society and certain discursive limitations (Van Dijk, 1997; Van Dijk & Kintch, 1983; Couthard & Montgomery, 2015).

¹ Academic dictionaries and encyclopedias. (2019). Retrieved from <https://enacademic.com/> Arutyunova, N. D. (2016). The sentence and its sense: logical and semantic issues. M.: Nauka.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thus, in the dictionaries abbreviation is accompanied by the following definitions: “Middle English abbreviacoun “contraction, shortening”, borrowed from Anglo-French abbreviation, borrowed from Late Latin abbreviātiōn-, abbreviātiō, from abbreviāre “to abbreviate” + Latin -tiōn-, -tiō, suffix of action nouns. Thus, derived from the Latin word ‘brevis’ and translated as ‘short’, the term means a concise form of lexical units that permits to perceive part as a whole; “1. A shortened form of a word, such as ‘Dr’ for Doctor or ‘PTO’ for ‘pleaseturn over’ (URL: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/abbreviation>). The dictionary also indicates that some of the abbreviations can only be used in writing, and not in oral speech—so they are marked accordingly².

In this paper we are trying to make an attempt to describe the abbreviation phenomenon within a number of discursive spheres. For example, while taking into consideration such humanitarian issues as the political discourse or the public relations discourse, one comes across abbreviations, which in their meaning possess the peculiarities of terms functioning in the corresponding area as special notions, typical of a certain discourse representation. The process of creation and decoding the linguistic units in question may sometimes cause difficulties in the written and oral forms of speech in some cases facilitating, and sometimes complicating the process of transmitting information and communication. As is well-known, abbreviations creation is conjugated with other mental-lingual procedures designed to reflect, fix, decipher and explain the meanings of the notions indicated by contracted forms of various structural and semantic types.

For example, the analysis of the political and PR varieties provides for the possibility to identify the types of abbreviations that function within their speech representations that can be distributed according to their composition type.

The prime source for abbreviations is the multi-element phrases among which three-element units are most widely spread: ECJ, ABM, MFN, etc. Next come two-element abbreviations: (EU, RS, US, PR) and five-element structures (NAALC, NAAEC), followed by the group of four-element units (FIFA, NACC), and very rarely six-element structures, like EPISTER, STANAG. UNESCO. An example of one-element abbreviations, as in “C”, “A” should be also adduced within these lines.

Special attention should be given to homonymic abbreviations, such as C, under which different notions can be applied, such as compromise, constituent, controversy, conservative, etc. It is a matter of common observation that context is of vital importance in this connection, as well as other discursive characteristics dealt with not only linguistic but also extralinguistic peculiarities of the units in question functioning. One more example of abbreviation homonymy is a well-established fact that the MLE abbreviation has acquired a wide-spread application in the English language, to be associated with Multicultural London English

² Crystal, D. (2011). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139164771>

phenomenon, i.e., the new ethnosociolect, appeared in Modern English (Kerswill, 2017). The same linguistic sign may be used in the other meanings: mobile logistics element, missile launch envelope, mobile launcher equipment (in military terminology), microprocessor language editor (in technology), maximum likelihood estimate, MultiLine Entry field (IBM, OS/2) (in computing), Mediated Learning Experience, managed learning environment (in education) (URL: <https://translate.academic.ru/MLE/en/ru/>).

Thus, taking into consideration the actual text material, that is representation of discourse under consideration, we may come across the following examples, illustrating the process of abbreviations functioning: “At the heart of this regime continues to stand the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Although the 1945 UN Charter urged the promotion of ‘universal respect for, and observation of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all’, it failed to specify the human rights that states had to guarantee and respect”³; “Bilateral treaties are concluded between two states, such as the START treaties through which the USA and Russia have agreed to reduce their stockpiles of nuclear weapons” (Ibid., p. 334).

CONCLUSION

The analysis of abbreviation process within the political, business and public relations areas referring to the respective discourse varieties has shown that in all the spheres mentioned certain types of abbreviations are used to transfer information in the most precise way. It should be mentioned within these lines that one may come across the same abbreviations used in different discursive varieties thus being the sign marker of interdiscursivity. It is also important to note the diversity and rapid entry of certain abbreviation forms and models into the language, often used in the types of discourse under analysis and acquired the character of stable language expressions. They do not cause problems in their decoding and are also characterized by automatism being used by the linguistic cultural community representatives, thus facilitating communication process. Otherwise stated, the integrated approach that includes a number of methods appropriate for abbreviated forms investigation seems to be the most appropriate.

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