

## SOCIAL-LINGUISTIC MOTIVATION OF FORMING ABBREVIATED AND CLIPPED LEXICAL UNITS

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Abrevierea și prescurtarea unităților lexicale și sintactice au fost folosite din timpurile străvechi. Dar în ultimii 100 de ani, ca rezultat al accelerării în dezvoltarea societății umane a tuturor domeniilor de activitate, a crescut brusc volumul de informație. Sunt folosite metode noi de cercetare și studiere a vocabularului, de procesare a informației abundente care se transmite prin diferite mijloace vorbitorilor de limbă. Vertiginos s-a mărit numărul lexemelor prescurtate, abreviate și telescopate. Numărul cuvintelor prescurtate și abreviate, inclusiv și al celor potențiale, create în limba engleză, atinge cifra impunătoare de circa 0,5 milioane.

În unele stiluri funcționale, acronimele pot fi folosite metasemiotic. Acronimele folosite în denumirile unor instituții, organizații, societăți etc. pot fi create în scopul de a atrage atenția și a produce un impact emoțional asupra vorbitorilor de limbă. Denumirea abreviată a unei organizații, instituții, mișcări social-politice poate contribui la succesul și prosperitatea lor. Este evident caracterul subiectiv în crearea abreviaturilor și prescurtărilor noi în politică, economie și în diverse activități sociale. Apar tot mai multe unități lexicale abreviate sau prescurtate la modă. Pentru consumatori este important ca așa unități metalingvistice să fie joviale, eufonice, asociate cu forme și nume bine cunoscute.

In the present article we summarize the material given in our previous articles on the subject and make an attempt to find some new facts that would help us better understand the given linguistic phenomenon. The internationalization of abbreviated and curtailed terms started in the XVIII with the beginning of the scientific and technical revolution and increased in the XXth-XXIst centuries due to the accelerating tempo of development of the humankind and the intensive influx of abridged units. They have made their way from the periphery of the language and have become one of the most productive means in the language, penetrating into various field of human activity. Many of them belong to specific specialized metalinguistic systems used by limited groups of people in their domains. The main question asked by linguists is whether the acronym presents an independent linguistic sign or a compressed form of the component parts, which losing part of their expressive plane, still preserve their semantic plane [1, p.187]. The classical linguists affirm that any change in the expression plane would influence the change of the semantic plane and vice versa. The French linguistic school of A. Martine affirm that any reduction of the form of a lexeme "*est le signe de son emploi très fréquent dans le discours*" [1, p.187 ].

Now we can clearly state the fact that abbreviations, blendings, clippings and their combinations have become an efficient means of stocking and communicating information in a concise way, practically without any losses on the content plane. There are relatively less productive means participating in the creation of new lexemes. Thus, back-formation of words is based on shortening the initial form: *editor* – *to edit*, *burglar* – *to burgle*, *beggar* – *to beg*, *destruction* – *to destruct*, *housekeeping* – *housekeep/housekept*, *baby-sitter* – *to baby-sit*, *sightseeing* – *sightsee/sightsaw*. Even an acronym may be reduced in the same way: *laser* – *to lase*. In specific functional styles ellipsis can be combined with abbreviation or shortening. Thus, on highway signs in the USA one can see: *Trucks reduced 45 mph* (The speed limit of **trucks is reduced to 45 miles per hour**). Or *pedestrian cross* is marked at cross-roads as *pdx*,

There are different points of view as to abbreviations, blendings and shortenings used in politics, economics, local administration, organizations, military field, research activities, informational technologies, etc. Initially they were created and used in note-taking, file-making, cataloguing, in inventories, having a symbollic or lexical function. Initial abbreviations are read like separate words are usually named acronyms (*radar*, *laser*, *NATO*), some of them may be read both way (*VAT* (Value added tax) – [væt] or [vi ei ti]). On the other hand we find lots of shortenings, blendings, mixed abbreviations and shortenings, which are pronounced like words. Thus, 127 examples represent the combination of letters PET and Pet in various homonymous meanings, having the forms of abbreviations, shortenings, or mixed units: *Phototropic Energy Transfer*; *Physical Equipment Table*, *Point of Equal Time*, *Portable Electronic Telephone*, *Production Evaluation Test*; *Polyester*, *Pet Econ* – *Petroleum Economist*, *Pet Int* – *Petroleum International*, *Pet CC*

*Peters' United States Circuit Court Reports*. There is a number of mixed combinations, where *Pet* is used to substitute *Petroleum Petrol*: *Pet Rev* – *Petroleum Review*. Sometimes they use a longer shortening of *Petroleum*: *Petrol Abstr* – *Petroleum Abstracts* [2].

Blendings (*fusion, portmanteau word, telescoping*) combine two or more shortened or mixed forms of abbreviated, clipped or unclipped words. In modern English the number of fusions has radically increased. For example: *smog* (*smoke* + *fog*), *brunch* (*breakfast* + *lunch*), *positron* (*positive* + *electron*), *motel* (*motor-car* + *hotel*). In this case we have the combination of the beginning of a unit with the end of another one. There exist a great number of words where two or more initial parts of lexical units are blended and pronounced like one entity: *Interpol, Petrom, Moldgaz*. The following examples represent a different criterion in case of partial clipping and even ellipsis: *PANAM* (Pan American), *PETROMIN* (*General Petroleum & Mineral Organization*) etc. [2]. Many widely used clippings are used more often than the extended variant: *lab* – *laboratory*, *phone* – *telephone*. All the types of clippings (initial, mid and final) are regularly used to create shortened lexical units: *sub(marine), phys(ical) ed(ucation)*; *(tele)phone, (cara)van, (ham)burger; (re)fridge(rator), (in)flu(enza)*. The most important fact to be mentioned in case of acronyms is the process of their lexicalization on the basis of words existing in the vocabulary. The phenomenon of homonymy may be used to provoke positive, negative or some other connotations. Acronyms like *radar, laser* are used now as integrated lexemes in many languages of the world. Acronyms may be intentionally created to form certain associations and resemble proper or common names. They may function as personified metaphors, sometimes producing a humorous effect or make people get interested in what they really mean. For example: *ADAM* (4 homonyms) – *Advanced Data Management System, Aid in Design and Evaluation of Data Management, Automatic Data Management System. Automatic Document Abstracting Method*. Here we have the name of the first man created by God. Names of ancient heroes are often found: *ICARUS* – *Industrial Computer Applications, Retrieval and Utility Systems, HERMES* – *Higher Education Resource Materials: Evaluation and Services*. The decoding of many proper or common noun abbreviations demonstrates the fact that they, in their turn, possess two or more homonymous meanings: *DAISY* – *Dairy Information System, Decision-Aiding Information System; EMIE* – *Education Management Information Exchange, Educational Media Institute Evaluation Project; EDGAR* – *Electronic Gathering, Analysis and Retrieval System*. Common lexemes can have equivalent acronyms possessing internal homonymy, connected with the use of the similar initialism in various fields of activity: *ACE*: *Articles in Civil Engineering, Advisory Centre for Education, Agricultural Communicators in Education, American Council of Education, Animated Computer Education; ACTS*: *Acquisitions, Cataloging and Technical Services, Activity Code and Text Systems, Automatic Computer Telex Services; ADMIRES*: *Automatic Diagnostic Maintenance Information Retrieval System, Advanced Management Information and Retrieval System, Automated Diagnostic Maintenance Information Retrieval System*. Many acronyms have come to the point of not just representing a combination of words they gradually developed features of independent lexical units with new global meanings. Thus, *LASER* – well known as *Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation* (there also such homonymous combinations as: *Learning Achievement through Saturated Educational Resources; London and South Eastern Library Region; Learning Achievement through Saturated Educational Resources; London and South*) may be used as a noun, adjective, verb: *to lase* – print some materials by using a *laser printer; a laser aircraft* - *an aircraft with a laser engine, laser* – in the meaning of *quantum/laser amplifier*, etc. [3]. The intentional use of this or that name is found in many cases, i.e. while abbreviating a certain combination of words, some of the elements are left aside in order to have an acronym identical to a given name.

**Double compression** of abbreviations is a very good example of discourse economy/saving of time, space and money. Thus, in "Acronyms and Initialisms Dictionary", Michigan, 1998 we find: *LIF* – *Laser Interference Filter; LFL* – *Laser Flash Lamp; LID* – *Laser Intrusion Detection; LIED* – *Laser Initiating Explosion Device* [3]. In other dictionaries we can find some more: *LMI* – *Laser Microfilming, Inc., LVIS* – *Laser View data Information Service*. Thus, the acronym *laser* here is further compressed as a component part of new abbreviated lexical units [2]. More than 500 word combinations in the English technical terminology can appear in their abbreviated variants with the initial letter of *LASER* in them: Among them we find combinations of acronyms like *LR: laser radar* in the meanings of 1) *лазерная локация* and 2) *лазерный локатор*. Homonymous combinations are available. Thus, *LB* may correspond to: *laser beacon, laser beam, laser blanking, laser bomb, laser bonding, laser burst* [4].

Confronting different terminological systems put forward by scholars we should explain the difference in meanings of the terms to make it easier to understand the material on the subject. We should find out whether there is any real difference in the various approaches and theories, or whether it is purely a terminological difference. If we compare the terms used to name all possible abbreviated lexical units we discover coincidences and discrepancies in various systems put forward by linguists. Thus, in English we find: *shortenings, curtailings, abridgment, abridgement, contractions, telescoping, shortenings, to telescope, abbreviate, curtail, shorten, contract, blend, blendings, fusion, adhesion abbreviations, acronyms, initialisms, abridged words*. *Brachionymy* and *brachiology* are occasionally used (*brachi* – means *short*), *cutting-down, shorten*. In other languages we find very much the same metalinguistic systems with some occasional differences: French – *abrègement, abrégé abrevement, signe abrèviatif, abréviation, retranchement, contractions, syncope, syncoper, sigle; siglaison, brachyonyme (brachy = short, etc.)*; German – *Aphäresis; Apokope, Apokopieren, Abkürzung; Zusammenwachsen (telescoping), Verwachsen; lingv. Zusammenbildung; Kürzung, Verminderung, Herabsetzung, Verringerung; Reduzierung;* *Reduktion, Kürzung; Zusammenziehung, Kontraktion; Abkürzung, Abbréviatur; Kurzbezeichnung; Kürzel*; Spanish – *abreviatura, sigla; acortamiento, abreviación, reducción; contracción, simplificación, reducción; aféresis; apocopa* [4]. Some of the terms can be used to denote exactly the same thing and some others express different meanings. Most of the discussed terms are part of the international vocabulary in the result of the process of borrowing. A great number of terms are being constantly created and entering the usage: Cf. the **French** *apocope, aphérèse, truncation, siglaison, acronymie, mot-valise, port-manteau, initialisme*, - all of them in scientific sources are united in the generic term *abbreviation* (to mean the process of reduction of lexemes). Lately linguists have often used the term *brachionyme*. In French the terms *brachiology, brachiographie, brachionymie, brachionyme* have been actively used, while in English the term *abbreviation* is regularly used as a generic term to express the meaning of any variety of shortening or reduction of a lexeme, and it is also used in the meaning of *initialism* (words usually reduced to their initial letters). The common element the mentioned terms *brachy-* in English (*brachi* – in French) is practically an international affix of Greek origin. It is used to form quite a number of lexical units, especially in the field of medicine. Thus, in the Multilingual Dictionary 10 we can come across the following examples. **English:** *brachyfacial, brachyours brachysyndactylie; brachydactylie*. **French:** *brachygraphie* (shortening of words); *brachysyndactylie; brachydactylie*. **German:** *Brachydaktylie; Brachyphalangie; Brachylogie*. **Italian:** *brachilogia* (Syn: *brevità*); *brachilogico; brachimorfia; brachimeta-carpia* [4]. In the absolute majority of cases *brachy* – means *short*. There are some rare exceptions like *brachyfacial* which means *broad-faced*. From the above given examples we can clearly see that the Dictionary contains lexemes with the clear-cut meaning of *short, compressed, shortening of words, shortness of speech* in French, German and Italian correspondingly. That is why there is no wonder that the term *brachyonymy* is sometimes occasionally used in some other languages. Thus, in the Romanian Explanatory Dictionary (1996) we find the term *brahiologie* “Tip de elipsă care constă în evitarea repetării unui element al frazei exprimat anterior. (fr. *brachyologie*)” [5, p.109]. The meaning of *brahiologie* in Romanian has a narrower meaning than in French, the language it was borrowed from. In Romanian *brahi-* is also mainly used in the field of medicine, for example: *brahial, brahicefal, brahicefalie, brahipod*. Most of these terms have been borrowed from French [5, p.109]. The fact that the new terms *brachiology, brachiographie, brachionymie, brachionyme* become more popular in French can be proved by the fact that they are found in more and more linguistic publications (but not yet used in prestigious encyclopedia). Let us give some examples. A. Ceas in his work “*Brachiographie et oralité*” (1990) quoting from Marie T. Cabre “*Terminologie et traduction*” [6, p.145-156] gave an exhaustive explanation of the given term. On the other hand the Canadian linguist Marie T. Cabre remarks the notional area of reduction of lexemes, giving a formula: *sigles – initialism – acronyms – abbreviations*. The scholar considers the abbreviation as a particular case of reducing the volume of a lexeme. The author states the need to renovate the exiting terminology [7]. Lexicographic sources express an ambiguous attitude towards the introduction of terms in the linguistic usage. “*Le Dictionnaire de la langue français*” de Pierre Robert (1994) mentions the term *brachilogie* [8, p.1842]. Then in Grand Robert – “*Dictionnaire de la langue français*”: we find *brachilogie* – manner of expressing with extreme conciseness [9, p.1643]. In the field of neology linguists should always keep in mind the fact that there is a connection between the social-political conditions of the given speaking community and that of the entire population of the globe in a permanent process of optimization of the linguistic means of communication. A generalizing term like *brachilogie*

in French should help avoid the phenomenon of homonymy, polysemy we come across so often. In the field of lexicography we should pay special attention to the constantly changing terminology to avoid the confusion of scientific terminology in the publication of lexicographic dictionaries, regularly making a revision in order to actualize the neologisms, modifying the definitions, to respect exigency towards the proposed neologisms. The creation of abbreviated units and their metalanguage, the compiling of numerous dictionaries in the domain are part of continuous social and linguistic phenomenon and the important function they have in communication. The increased productivity of abbreviations and shortenings is caused by the accelerating tempo of development of the human society and the need to express concisely the constantly growing volume of information. The higher the level of development, more sophisticated compressed units are created and used. The evolution of acronyms in various functional styles is very often accompanied by a metasemiotic usage of the codified combination of initialisms and clippings. In various contexts the abridged units gradually start to acquire a certain stylistic connotation. Names of institutions, organizations, etc. may be chosen in order to sound more attractive and produce a strong emotional effect on people. The name of an organization, institution, or social-political movement can bring success and prosperity or, if the acronym is not attractive enough, it may be the cause of failure. That is why the subjective character in creating new abbreviations is increasing in the fields of politics, economy and in various social life activities. That is why more and more “elegant”, “fashionable” and “super” compressed units come into being. It is for the information of consumers that it is important to have something jovial, euphonic, recognizable in form, related to some well-known names, that would make the new appellation more superior, attractive, interesting and people would get eager to know more of the object or phenomenon in question.

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