



ENGLISH SHORTENINGS DENOTING THE NOTION OF ‘A HUMAN BEING’

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Annotation

The article is devoted to the study of the structural features of abbreviations denoting the concept of ‘a human being’. Analysis of lexicographic material revealed a certain variety of types of models according to which the targeted group of lexical units is formed. However, three stood out as the most representative. These are: abbreviations, represented by the initial part of words, abbreviations of combinations, which are represented by the initial letter of each component, and abbreviations of word combinations in which the first element is retained in its entirety, while the remaining elements are usually abbreviated up to the initial letter.

Key words: abbreviation apocope apheresis acronym initialism

A rapid growth of lexical abbreviations was observed in the English language already in the period of the 40-60s. This method of forming new words turned out to be very productive in subsequent decades.

Studying abbreviations across different historical periods offers valuable insights into linguistic evolution and societal changes. By examining the abbreviations used in various eras, we can uncover shifts in language usage, technological advancements, cultural influences, and societal norms. This comparative analysis enables us to understand the specific characteristics and nuances of each period, providing a deeper comprehension of historical contexts. Moreover, studying abbreviations allows us to anticipate potential future developments in language and communication. By recognizing patterns and trends in abbreviation usage over time, we can make informed predictions about linguistic shifts and technological innovations that may influence abbreviation conventions in the future. In essence, studying abbreviations across different historical periods not only enriches our understanding of the past but also equips us with valuable insights to navigate and anticipate linguistic developments in the future.

So, one of the proofs of the productivity of abbreviated units is the fact that they can be found in all thematic sections of the English lexicon. By this article we intend to reveal structural features of abbreviated units within one micro-system identified as lexicon denoting the notion of ‘a human being’.

Structural analysis of the targeted set of the picked up shortened units [1] has made it possible to reveal that abbreviated nominations can be split, mainly, into two big groups. One is clippings and the second is acronyms.

The process of clipping can be identified as a case when a part of a word serves for the whole. In linguistics several types of clippings are distinguished: the first part is retained; the second part of the word is left out. As our analysis has shown, this is the most frequently used type and it is represented by such examples, as: **cap**=captain, **esq**= esquire; **rev**= reverend; **aud** = auditor; **treas**= treasurer; **prof** = professor; **con** = convict; **civ**=civilian, **bish**=bishop; **const**=constable; **nark**=a narcotic agent; **steno**=stenographer, etc. In all these examples, words have been shortened at the end and this process in linguistics is identified as



apocope. As for the examples, in which words are shortened at the beginning, the so-called aphaeresis, they are in the minority compared with the group described above. Here are some examples: **Rari** - Ferrari (used colloquially to refer to the car or its owner); **Vette** - Corvette (used colloquially to refer to the car or its owner)

One more type of clippings distinguished within the micro-system of units denoting 'a human being' is represented by a few cases in which a middle part of the prototype is cut out: **bro**s = brothers; **docs**= doctors; **prof**s –professors; **vets**= veterinarians; **sgt** = sergeant, etc.

Among abbreviated units, there are also words that can be shortened at both sides, i.e. apocopo-apheresis type, for example: **shrink** (from slang headshrinker 'psychiatrist') or **stach** from moustache which can be used metonymically in application to a person; **Til** - Gentile (from 'gentleman');

What is interesting to note here is the fact that there can coexist 2 variants of shortened forms. Compare: **bp** and **bish**, both stand for bishop; **gent** and **get** = for gentleman; **sec** and **secy** = secretary; **Pvt** and **Pte** =private; **au** and **auth**= author. The differences in the sound form of abbreviations are in no way related to differences in meaning, since both correspond to the same lexical-semantic variant.

Apart from the above mentioned types of clippings, another type of abbreviations termed as acronyms, is also not alien to the nominations denoting 'a human being'. Among them, acronyms proper, in which a contracted form is pronounced as a single word; among such units only a few have been found in the group of units under discussion: **VIP**=a very important person. Acronyms within the targeted group are mainly represented by initialisms or alphabetisms which is the case when the shortened form is spoken as a set of individual letters: **CC**= chief clerk; **CI**= chief instructor; **CWO**=chief warrant officer; **FIMC** = Fellow of the Institute of Management Consulting; **ALL**=Associate of the Institute of Linguistics; **S.R.N.** = State Registered Nurse, etc. This subtype of acronymy, according to our investigation, has a number of characteristics: a) in them, one can find not only combinations of the first letters of the prototype phrase but also two or even three letters representing one of the elements of the source unit (**Che**=chemical engineer; **CSigO** = chief signal officer); b) as a rule, in the process of contracting the units, prepositions and articles are not taken into account (**CAS**= chief of the air stuff); c) initialisms can have periods used to separate letters (**L.E.A.D.** = Leader, Executive, Administrator, Director; **S.T.A.R.** = Supervisor, Teacher, Accountant, Receptionist, etc. The semantics of these acronyms has to do with their structure, with each letter representing a specific role or position. They are usually formed by selecting keywords starting with letters, which are then combined into an acronym. This helps create a convenient way to remember and organize information about different positions or roles within a group or team. The semantics of these acronyms usually directly reflect the field of activity or composition of the group they represent); d) initialisms also are distinguished by nominations with the same element occupying the initial position: **FIIA**=fellow of the Institute of Industrial Administration; **FIJ** = Fellow of the Institute of Journalists, indicating that the individual is a recognized member of that institute; **FLA** = Fellow of the Library Association, etc. Abbreviations like '**FIJ**' or B.A. could be characterized as professional designations or titles denoting membership or affiliation with a specific organization or institution. In this case, "FIJ" stands for "Fellow of the Institute of Journalists". These types of abbreviations are often used to denote qualifications, certifications, or memberships within a particular field or industry. Some more examples of suchlike abbreviations are represented with the element 'bachelor':



B.A. = Bachelor of Arts; **B.S.** = Bachelor of Science; **B.E.** = Bachelor of Engineering; **B.Ed.** = Bachelor of Education; **B.Com.** = Bachelor of Commerce etc. Abbreviations with ‘bachelor’ component represent different academic degrees or qualifications obtained upon completion of undergraduate studies with a focus on various fields of study. Among initial elements of such formations, besides fellow and bachelor we can mention also **senior, junior, chief, master,** etc.

Speaking about these two groups of language units, it is necessary to stress the fact that in linguistics there is no strict observance of the division into initialisms and acronyms; in many cases one term, namely, acronym, is used for both.

In addition to the above mentioned structural types, there have been revealed some more of them, namely:

a) abbreviations consisting of shortening of final syllables of the first component of a phrase, while its second component of the word is retained in its entirety - **adman** –[advertisement + man] = advertising department employee; **armraider** = [armor + raider] = a soldier serving in armored units; here we can also include shortenings in which the first component is represented by the first letter and the second element remains intact - **L-driver** (learner driver); **C-head** = cokehead, **B-girl**= bar girl, etc.

b) contractions with the emotional-evaluative suffix **-y (-ie-, -ey-)**: **commie** (communist); **foodie** = food lover; **techy**= tech enthusiast; bookie = bookmaker; **barite**= bartender; **juvie** = juvenile delinquent; **parky** (park-keeper) = a watchman in the park. A certain part of apocopied words undergo changes **seg** also **seggy** =segregationist; **preppie** (Amer)=preparatory (a student or graduate of a preparatory school); **connie/conny**= conductor in a tram; **yuppie** = a young urban professional, etc. These examples show that from the semantic point of view shortenings containing in their structure the suffix **-y/-ie** can denote people by their profession, by their habits, inclinations, by their membership of some collective. The function of this suffix used in the design of abbreviations is no different from its normal function in the language, which is to give the word created on its basis, a bright, emotional coloring:

c) shortenings can also arise as a result of the initial abbreviation of coordinating phrases accompanied by a full and sometimes contracted form of a final element of a phrase, like we can observe in: **A & R. man** = (Artists and Repertory) ‘a person involved in the selection of actors and repertoire’; **R&D engineer** = Research and Development engineer; **A&R rep**= Artist and Repertuaire representative, etc.

d) to a special group of shortenings we can include formations created on the basis of using only consonants of the prototype: **slsmgr**=salesmanager; **tchr**=teacher; **spr**=sapper; **kpr**=keeper; **cmpr**=computer; **sch**=scholar; **gnr**=gunner, **bglr**=burglar; **sgt** = sergeant; **lt**=lieutenant; **stwd** = steward, etc.

To conclude, shortenings denoting ‘a human being’ are characterized by a variety of patterns including not only different types of clippings and acronyms, but also models which are atypical to the whole system of shortened lexicon. However, from among them only one type of clippings, namely, apocope and also initialisms, the subtype of acronyms, can be considered to be widely employed within the system of the nominations under study.

The fact that abbreviations of various structural types are often found in the lexical microsystem denoting ‘a person’ is associated with the need to save time and effort in communication. Abbreviations communicate information quickly and efficiently by



representing shortened forms of words or phrases that may be widely used in everyday language. This is a reflection of the desire for efficiency and convenience in communication, especially in the modern information society.

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