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Тябина Д.В, Волгаева М.С. Способы образования аббревиатур в русском и английском языках

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**Methods of forming abbreviations in the
Russian and English languages**

Современный темп жизни способствует развитию различных способов образования слов, одних из наиболее распространенных становится применение сокращений слов. Статья посвящена анализу сходств и различий аббревиации и акронимов в русском и английском языках

Ключевые слова: аббревиатура, сокращение, аббревиация, английский язык, русский язык, способ образования

Modern pace of life leads to evolving of various ways of word formation. One of the most widespread is the use of contractions. The article analyzes the differences and similarities of abbreviation process in Russian and English

Key words: abbreviation, acronym, abbreviation, English language, Russian language, methods of word formation

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Due to increasing pace of modern life, humanity seeks to make all surrounding phenomena as more cost-effective ones as possible, including the ways of communication. In order to make written communication convenient there were introduced the simplified word contractions, so-called abbreviations and acronyms.

At the beginning of the last century abbreviation was a characteristic of exclusively formal written and business language. Today connection of a few words into one taking the first letters has become an integral process of everyday life for many people.

This topic of the article is relevant owing to the huge popularity of abbreviations among Russian and English speakers. Unfortunately, not so many people are competent to follow the rules of abbreviation. Thereby it is one of the reasons why the quality of written and spoken language is falling rapidly.

It should be noted that in the Russian language a few examples of abbreviations and acronyms were found in the days of ancient Russia. The vivid evidence can be illustrated by such names as “Святополк” (derived from “Святой полк”, in English it means “The Holy Regiment”), Любомир (derived from “Любовь и мир”, in English it means “Love and Peace”); city names, such as Новгород (“Новый город”- “New Town”). According to Valgina N.S. [1, 8.6], widespread use of abbreviations in Russia was noticed in the XX century in the periods of the most significant economic, social and political upheavals.

It is known that abbreviations received the mass distribution in spoken English in the XVI century. This suggests more practical nature of the English language as a whole, the primary purpose of which is to attain the simplest communication for the rapid achievement of communication tasks.

It is interesting that the modern prevalence of abbreviations in both Russian-speaking and English-speaking countries is fairly the same. However the observed increasing tendency to make contractions is in English. Sergeeva T.S. proposed the following classification of English abbreviations [2, p.176]:

1. “Initialisms” (alphabetism);
2. Acronyms;
3. Truncation or clipping;
4. Liaison.

We will give examples of the kinds of abbreviations. The obvious example of initialisms is “www”, which means “World Wide Web”. “TOEFL” (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is an acronym. Truncation has also widespread use in the English language. Such lexical unit as “photo – photograph” is also a truncation. “Internet – International Network” is the example of liaison.

It is important to emphasize that initialisms and acronyms can easily be confused for the reason that both relate to the type of letter abbreviation. The way to pronounce such words is helpful to differentiate them. Initialism has pronunciation by alphabetical basis while acronym is read as the whole word.

Sergeeva [2, p.176] also highlights the variety of abbreviations such as:

- authoring language or occasional;
- text abbreviation;
- commonly accepted ones.

Furthermore we must pay attention to the fact that among the types of abbreviations in the English language there are letter abbreviations of whole sentences: “DI-AFYO – Did I Ask For Your Opinion?”; “GMAB – Give Me A Break”. It should be noted that this type of contraction is the characteristic of computer slang. Moreover it is the English language which was the first to have such a phenomenon as “SMS-reduction”. According to Ionina A.A. [3, p.21] its peculiar feature is the replacement of an entire word by one letter or digit, for example: be – b, 8-ate, you-u, fi9-fine.

It is also necessary to distinguish a separate kind of contractions used in the English language – a graphic contraction. It is used exclusively for writing and serves to simplify writing of a text. Here are the example of this type: “Dr. – Doctor” or “m.p.h. – Miles Per Hour”.

According to the article on the abbreviation in Collegiate Dictionary of linguistic terms and concepts [4, p.500], the Russian language has the following abbreviations:

1. Initialisms (literal, sound, sound-literal), for example “СНГ” – CIS, the Commonwealth of Independent States, “ЦСКА” – Central Sports Club of the Army;
2. Syllabic abbreviation (“колхоз” derived from “коллективное хозяйство” (collective farm), “комсомол” derived from “коммунистический союз молодёжи” (the Young Communist League);
3. Acronyms consisting of an initial part of the abbreviated words and sounds (“РосНИИ” derived from “Российский научно-исследовательский институт” – Russian Scientific Research Institute);
4. Abbreviations consisting of word parts and the whole word (“драмкружок” shortened from “драматический кружок” – a drama club, “запчасть” shortened from “запасная часть” – a spare part);
5. Abbreviations consisting of word parts and the form of oblique case of a noun (“завкафедрой” derived from “заведующий кафедрой” – a head of the department, “замдекана” derived from “заместитель декана” – a deputy dean);
6. Abbreviations consisting of the beginning of the first word in conjunction with the beginning and the end of the second word or only the end of the second word (“мопед” derived from “мотоцикл + велосипед” – motorcycle + bicycle).

In the Russian language such a phenomenon as initialisms has the greatest distribution because it is easier to pronounce and remember lexical units obtained by this method. However, many names of public institutions have predominantly syllabic abbreviations so as it is easy to understand the terms.

As we can see the abbreviation processes in Russian and English are similar in methods of formation in most cases. However, in the English language there is a separate kind of acronyms that have no analogues in the Russian language. We are talking about the shortening of the letters of Latin words, which are not read as Latin words and translated into English. For example, “a.m. – Ante meridiem – in the morning”, “A.D. – Anno Domini – of our era”.

Today the attitude of people around the world to abbreviation is rather ambiguous. On the one hand, the abbreviation greatly simplifies all kinds of speech, but on the other hand because of the abundance of abbreviations people begin to get lost and forget the meaning of each of the abbreviations.

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