Word-Formation Processes in E4PS – Short-term creation

Acronymy

Clipping/truncation

Blend

ACRONYMY is a word-formation process resulting in both **ACRONYMS** and **INITIALISMS**.

An **ACRONYM** is a word – such as **NASA** (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), **Nafta** (North American Free Trade Agreement), **EFTA** (European Free Trade Agreement) **RADAR** (radio detection and ranging) or **LASER** (Lightwave Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation; more commonly and confusingly, it is written as 'laser') – formed from the initial letters of each of a series of words.

Strictly speaking, pronounceable "words" – such as **NATO** (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), **IBAN** (International Bank Account Number), **OPEC** (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), **NASDAQ** /ˈnæzdæk/ (National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations), **PIN** (Personal Identification Number), **POTUS** (President of the United States), **NEET** (Not engaged in Education, Employment or Training) or **UNESCO** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) – are **acronyms**; whereas abbreviations – such as **WTO** (World Trade Organization), **UNWTO** (World Tourism Organization), **OECD** (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), **OSCE** (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe), **ECB** (European Central Bank), **ERM** (Exchange Rate Mechanism), **ESM** (European Stability Mechanism), **GDP** (Gross Domestic Product), **GNP** (Gross National Product), **GOP** (Grand Old Party), **LSE** (London Stock Exchange or London School of Economics), **RRF** (Recovery and Resilience Facility) or **WFH** (Working From Home)– are **initialisms**.

Thus, the distinction between an acronym and an initialism is essentially based on the way we have to pronounce it.

WARNING: some abbreviations can be pronounced either as individual letters (= initialism) or as a word (= acronym) as in the case of **CEO** (Chief Executive

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Officer)[1], VAT (Value Added Tax, especially used in the collocation «VAT-free»), FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions).

Such abbreviations can be a useful way to make writing and speaking more concise and less repetitive, as well as to create an international code easily and immediately understandable among both the community of scholars and learners.

However, abbreviations can be confusing if not explained at their first use – particularly as the same abbreviation can have more than one meaning. Moreover, the shorter is the abbreviation the higher is the number of its potential meanings.

Acronyms and initialisms are generally spelled without periods (AOB, any other business, ICT, Information and Communication Technology, WHO, World Health Organization; PM, Prime Minister, PLC, Public Limited Company, UN, United Nations, IMF, International Monetary Fund) and may or may not be capitalised (a/c, air conditioning; endies, employed with no disposable income or savings; n/a, not available or not applicable; Pakistan, Punjab, Afghania, Kashmir, Sindh and Baluchistan, 'stan' being from Persian 'stan', i.e. country; SDGs, Sustainable Development Goals;).

Furthermore, some initialisms are commonly read as a word, such as FTSE, Financial Times Stock Exchange, read as footsie, NCLB, No Child Left Behind, read as nicklebee, jeep, deriving from GP vehicle, general-purpose vehicle.

REMEMBER: maybe, the only initialisms always spelled with periods are the following: e.g. (*exempli gratia*) and i.e. (*id est*), that are very common in specialised writings.

Avoid redundancy with abbreviations: if a word is represented in the acronym or initialism, do not repeat it:

MEDC/LEDC is correct; 'MEDC/LEDC countries' is wrong

CIA is correct; 'CIA agency' is wrong

NHS is correct; 'NHS service' is wrong.

Both acronyms or initialisms can have, if necessary and possible, a plural form:

MPs stands for 'Members of Parliament';

MEPs stands for 'Members of the European Parliament';

VPs stands for 'Vice Presidents';

CFOs stands for 'Chief Financial Officers';

[1] Often the abbreviation CEO is further abbreviated in CE (Chief Executive).

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CIOs stands for 'Chief Information Officers';

POWs stands for 'Prisoners of War';

QUANGOs stands for 'Quasi-Autonomous Non-Governmental Organizations'.

REMEMBER that the full version of an acronym/initialism corresponds always to a collocation, since we can neither invert the position of each word nor replace any word with a synonym.

* - * - * - * - * - * - * - * - *

REMEMBER to use the database www.acronymfinder.com to search the full version of an acronym/initialism, as well as to consult the online dictionary http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/ to check the right pronunciation of most acronyms/initialisms.

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CLIPPING AND BLEND

They are highly productive word-formation processes, characterizing some specialized languages, such as the language of business, IT, medicine and warspeak.

Such abbreviations, as already underlined for acronyms and initialisms, can be a useful way to make writing and speaking more concise and less repetitive, as well as to create an international code easily and immediately understandable among both the community of scholars and learners.

Clipping or Truncation

It is a process by which a word is clipped, i.e. truncated or cut, at the end (back-clipping), at the beginning (fore- or front-clipping), both at the beginning and at the end (back-and-fore clipping) in the middle (middle clipping).

Its purpose is to shorten words (mostly of Neolatin origin) so that they can become as more comparable as possible to the short terms, mostly of Germanic origin, belonging to the "common core" of the English language.

- ✓ Back clipping:

lab(oratory), info(rmation), rep(resentative), ad(vertisement), admin(istration), exec(utive), Inc.(orporated), memo(randum), gas(oline), temp(orary), fed(eral)[2], Dem(ocrat), Rep(ublican), vet(….), rev(….)

- ✓ Fore clipping:

(tele)phone, (air)plane, (heli)copter, (para)chute, (de)fence, (alli)gator

- ✓ Back-and-fore clipping:

(in)flu(enza), (re)fridge(rator)

- ✓ Middle clipping:

bike (>bicycle), vegan (>vegetarian)

[2] Remember also the clipped word **the Fed** – whose full version is **the Federal Reserve System.**

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Clipping: vet and rev

Vet can be the clipped form of:

- ✓ veterinarian
- ✓ veterinary
- ✓ veteran

Its full version and its meaning depend on the context it is used. Furthermore, by the process of conversion, this clipped word can become a verb (to vet, that is, to screen).

Examples:

> A vet has highlighted a 2020 danger to pets after a six-month-old sprockador needed emergency surgery to remove three face masks.
>
> Second World War vet turns 100 with a socially distanced party — and a parade.
>
> The party will collect applications, vet candidate and submit a name or list of names to Buehler for consideration.

Rev can be the clipped form of eight words:

1. revolution 2. revision 3. revised 4. review 5. reverse 6. revenue 7. revolving 8. Reverend

In this case too, its full version and its meaning depend on the context it is used. By the process of conversion, also this clipped word can become a verb (to rev, that is, to run quickly).

> US rush to Bangladesh revs up economic race with China

☞Generally speaking, clipping makes the meaning of words opaquer.

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Blend

It is a process by which two ore more words are blended, that is, joined to become one word. Therefore, at least one of the words blending with the other(s), has to be previously clipped[3].

- ✓ **smog [> sm(oke) + (f)og]**
- ✓ **motel [> mot(or) + (hot)el]**
- ✓ **Spanglish [> Span(ish) + (En)glish]**
- ✓ **podcast [> pod + (broad)cast]**
- ✓ **hi-tech [> hi(gh) + tech(nology)]**
- ✓ **wi-fi [> wi(reless) + fi(delity)]**
- ✓ **sci-fi [> sci(ence) + fi(ction)]**
- ✓ **blog [> (we)b + log]**
- ✓ **Covid [> Co(rona)VI(rus) + (d)isease]**
- ✓ **webinar [> web + (sem)inar]**

Examples in specialized languages:

- ✓ **stagflation [> stag(nation) + (in)flation)]**
- ✓ **freeware [> free + (soft)ware]**
- ✓ **co-opetition [> co-ope(ration) + (compe)tition]**
- ✓ **e-zine [> e(lectronic) + (maga)zine]**
- ✓ **webzine [> web + (maga)zine]**
- ✓ **medicare [> medi(cal) + care]**
- ✓ **medicaid [> medic(al) + aid]**
- ✓ **Obamacare [> Obama + (health)care (system)]**
- ✓ **glocalisation [> glo(balisation) + (lo)calisation]**
- ✓ **flexicurity [> flexi(bility) + (se)curity]**
- ✓ **Trumpnomics [> Trump + (eco)nomics]**
- ✓ **MAGAnomics [> M(ake) A(merica) G(reat) A(gain)+ (eco)nomics]**
- ✓ **Bidenomics [> Biden + (eco)nomics]**
- ✓ **Brexit [> Br(itain) + exit (from the EU)]**

☞ **Generally speaking, words built by blend have a transparent meaning.**

3 Note that the words clipped, i.e. cut, forming the blend do not necessarily correspond to already-existing clipped words.

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