ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS IN ONLINE COMMUNICATION: LINGUISTIC FEATURES AND USAGE

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Abstract. *Nowadays the rapid growth of technology is profoundly affecting the way we communicate, as people increasingly rely on abbreviations of words and acronyms while messaging with each other. This article suggests that using acronyms and short forms of words saves time and space while writing. These forms can also add humor, express emotions and make digital conversations more convenient. This research examines common types of abbreviations used in online communication including standard abbreviations, initialisms and acronyms. It also discusses linguistic features, such as letter omissions, clipping and creative spelling. The article aims to explain how these forms are used and what role they play in modern digital communication.*

Keywords: *online communication, abbreviations, acronyms, initialisms, linguistic features.*

1.Introduction

As internet usage continues to grow rapidly communication has become faster and more frequent because individuals rely on shorter forms of words and acronyms while messaging. There are several reasons for using them such as saving time and space, avoiding repetition, can soften the tone and add humor.

People usually shorten the words that they use frequently and commonly. For example, LOL that means "laugh out loud" people use it when they see or receive funny messages or things, IDK, BTW, BRB etc. These forms make messages shorter and faster to type. Because people may not be able to type right away however by using these shortened forms they can respond as soon as possible.

Abbreviations have become a typical feature of digital communication. Although limitations on messenger apps may be fewer, using shortened forms allows users to fit complete thoughts into small spaces. So, there are some cultural and social reasons for it too. For example, using shared shorthand (like IYKYK or FOMO) creates a sense of belonging among specific groups, fandoms or generations.

The aim of this article is to examine the linguistic features and usage of abbreviations and acronyms in online communication. It focuses on their different types, information, meanings, and functions in digital conversations. Furthermore, the article explores the role of these shortened forms in modern informal English.

2.1 The concept of Abbreviations and Acronyms.

An abbreviation—defined by Merriam-Webster (2026) as a shortened form of words or phrases—is often utilized 'to save space and time, to avoid repetition of long words and phrases, or simply to conform to conventional usage'.

While abbreviations serve as a broad category for shortened language, digital communication relies heavily on specific subsets: initialisms, which are articulated letter by letter (e.g., BTW, IDK), and acronyms, which are pronounced as independent lexical units (e.g., LOL, FOMO). This distinction is crucial for understanding how digital speakers compress phonetic structures into visual text.

2.2. Types of abbreviations in online communication.

There are several types of abbreviations, such as standard abbreviations, initialisms, acronyms and creative spelling. Each has distinct meanings and linguistic function.

Standard abbreviations are words that have been shortened by dropping parts of the original word. Their essential functions are that they maximize space and save typing time for vernacular terms without changing how the word is pronounced or used grammatically. For instance info (information), apt. (apartment), temp

(temporary).

Moving beyond single-word reductions, initialisms are combinations where the first letters of a multi-word phrase are combined, but each individual letter is spoken or read out loud separately. They act as quick shorthand for long phrases or polite conversational fillers. To illustrate BTW (by the way), IDK (I don't know), BRB (be right back).

Unlike initialisms—which are articulated letter by letter—acronyms are pronounced as distinct words, blending economy with phonetic ease. They integrate smoothly into speech and text as independent lexical units, often adding a playful or catchy tone. For instance, LOL (laugh out loud), FOMO (fear of missing out), IYKYK (if you know, you know).

Finally, creative spelling involves non-standard, phonetic, or stylized representations of words designed to mimic casual speech or add emotional intensity. These forms bridge the gap between written text and spoken intonation, helping convey tone and informality. For instance, gonna (going to), wanna (want to), or soooo (emphasizing "so").

2.3 Linguistic features and functions of online abbreviations.

Beyond structural categorization, online abbreviations operate through specific linguistic mechanisms and serve vital pragmatic functions in digital discourse. As highlighted in computer-mediated communication research (Crystal, 2001), these forms rely heavily on principles such as economy, truncation, and phonetic compression to streamline the typing process. Functionally, they extend far beyond mere time-saving devices; they act as tools for emotional expression, tone modulation, and social alignment. By compressing linguistic structures, internet users maintain rapid conversational momentum while conveying nuances that might otherwise require elaborate phrasing.

3.Conclusion.

To sum up, the rapid evolution of digital communication has fundamentally transformed how language is used, giving rise to efficient and expressive shortcuts.

As explored in this article, abbreviations, initialisms, acronyms, and creative spelling are much more than mere time-saving devices; they are sophisticated linguistic tools shaped by the demands of speed, technology, and social connection. By using shortcuts like word clipping, phonetic spelling, and blended words, internet users can save space while still expressing emotion and tone. Ultimately, these shortened forms show that language adapts easily, proving that informal digital writing remains a creative and dynamic part of modern communication.

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