

## EMERGENCE AND USAGE OF ABBRIVATIONAL HOMONYMS

*S.Sog'lomov – QarDU*  
*2 nd year graduate student*

**Annotation:** the article is devoted to the study of the emergence and use of abbreviation-homonyms in modern English

**Key words:** abbreviation, omoacronymy, polysemantic abbreviation

As a result of the wide spread of abbreviations, another situation arises, namely the formation of homonyms. It is natural that the probability of homonymic correspondence is much higher for smaller units than for larger units<sup>1</sup>. The large number of short one-syllable words in English indicates that homonymy is widespread in this language. Indeed, longer words may agree with one part of their constituent and differ with another, shorter words are more likely to match exactly, so there are many homonyms such as can – “be able to” and can - packing or preserving fruit or vegetables in a jar. When abbreviating various polysyllabic words, their first parts can be matched to form polysemantic homonyms-abbreviations, for example: *sub – subaltern, sub – subeditor, sub – subject, sub – subjunctive, sub – sublimation, sub – submarine, sub – subscription and etc.*<sup>2</sup> Many abbreviations that appear at the expense of different names consisting of several words whose letters correspond to each other form homonyms, for example: *RTC – Railway Transport Corps, RTC – Recruit Training Centre, RTC – Reserve Training Corps, RTC – Royal Tanks Corps*. Such homonyms can cause some confusion in communication acts.

In recent years, there has been an oversaturation of the language with initial abbreviations that are difficult to pronounce and remember. However, the language overcame this crisis with its own internal means: the tendency to adopt (lexicalize) abbreviations into the language system increased, resulting in a qualitatively new

---

<sup>1</sup> Борисов В.В. Аббревиация и акронимия. - М., 2003. – С.59.

<sup>2</sup> Ridout R., Witting Cl. The Facts of English. - London, 1987. – p.14.

method of abbreviations - making abbreviations that correspond to the phonetic structure of common words understandable omoacronymy came into play. Nowadays, omoacronymy is an advanced and important step in the process of abbreviation. The tendency to accept abbreviations into the language system (lexicalization) has increased, as a result, a qualitatively new method of abbreviations has appeared - omoacronymy, which is understood as making abbreviations that correspond to the phonetic structure of commonly used words, for example: *ASE (Best Pilot)* and *ASE (American Council of Education - Federal Council of Public Education)*; *arm (hand)* and *ARM (Automated route management - automatic navigation)*; *cap* and *CAP (Civil Air Patrol)*; *cat* and *CAT (Computer-Aided Tomography)*; *dot* and *DOT (Department of Transportation)*; *Era* (a long and distinct period of history) and *ERA (Equal Rights Amendment - making changes to various rights)*; *map* and *MAP (Military Aid Program)*; *salt* and *SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks)*; *salt* and *SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks)*; *shape* and *SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe)* *win* (victory) and *WIN* (weapon interception). The acronyms *ARM*, *DOT*, *MAP*, *SHAPE*, *WIN* appeared as synonyms for the independent words *arm*, *dot*, *map*, *shape*, *win*.

Another group of homonyms is polysemantic abbreviations. When shortening different polysyllabic words, their first parts can be combined to form homonyms, for example: *sub - subaltern*, *sub - subeditor*, *sub - subject*, *sub - subjunctive*, *sub - sublimation*, *sub - submarine*, *sub - subscription*. Note that if the first group of homonyms (*art - artillery* and *art - art*) do not have a negative effect on the communication process in practice, because they are usually used in different contexts, situations, etc., then the second group of homonyms is bad for the communication process can affect, cause confusion<sup>3</sup>.

Word combinations used in the form of initial abbreviations, abbreviated words (apocopa and apheresis), homonyms-acronyms, abbreviated phrases, etc., also need to be recorded in dictionaries and adapted to the language standards.

---

<sup>3</sup> Мешков О.Д. Словообразование современного английского языка. Москва: Наука, 1976. – С.155-160.

However, there is also a group of neologisms-acronyms that are pronounced like regular words and have homonyms in English. This pattern became widespread in English after World War II, but the omoacronym "fashion" began in the late 20th century and continues to this day. Acronyms, especially business and organization (*NOW, STOP, WAY*), diseases and syndromes (*SAD, AIDS*), computer terminology and virtual communication (*KIT, HAND, NOISE*), etc. often found in names. As a rule, all words included in such abbreviations are written with a capital letter, but there are also other forms of their writing.

Deliberate formation of homonyms-acronyms is a special phenomenon that differs from other abbreviations and word formation processes in general. Unlike the usual initial contraction of word combinations, which results in the formation of homonyms only by accident, in this case homonyms are created consciously, deliberately. Some words interpreted as acronyms are used to express a new object or event, and a corresponding correlative phrase describing this event is created. For example, the system of high-speed automatic check-up equipment is called RACE (Rapid Automatic Check-up Equipment), which is a synonym for the word horse "race"; FIT (Facial Identification Technique), the homonym of this word is fit ("to fit"). In the Word Spy dictionary, we can see that the following homonymous abbreviations are recorded:

**BANANA** (buh.NAN.uh) *acronym*. Build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone. A person who is opposed to new real estate development, particularly projects close to their neighbourhood. – *adj*.

**SPIN** *adj*. Relating to the dense cultivation of vegetables and other crops on small plots, particularly in urban settings [From the phrase *Small Plot Intensive*.]

**HENRY** n. A person with a substantial income, but who is not yet wealthy. [From the phrase *High Earner, Not Rich Yet*.]

**NOISE** *acronym*. The adversaries and enemies of Microsoft: Netscape, Oracle, IBM, Sun, and Everyone else.

**CHAOS** (*KAY.aws*) *acronym*. Can't have anyone over syndrome; not inviting guests to one's house because it is too messy or uttered.

The creators of such acronyms consciously use the characteristic feature of random acronym-homonyms, which is noticeable in speech practice, that is, the ability to be easily remembered and quickly distinguished in the flow of speech; as can be seen from the given examples, this feature is further strengthened by choosing homonymous words similar to anthroponyms (HENRY, GEORGE) as the basis for new acronyms, representing one or another sign of the specified phenomenon. As a result, with this type of homonymization, the expressiveness of speech and the tendency to save energy are especially evident. Unlike regular words, such acronyms are written in all capital letters. For example: **SPIN** adj. *Relating to the dense cultivation of vegetables and other crops on small plots, particularly in urban settings. [From the phrase Small Plot Intensive.] spin* (yangi ma'no): v. *To convey information or cast another person's remarks or actions in a biased or slanted way so as to favorably influence public opinion; information provided in such a fashion.*

As noted by A.I.Golovnya, "homonymy of ordinary, full words in the English language has been thoroughly studied, homonymy of abbreviations has not been studied until now"<sup>4</sup>. In the works of L.V.Malakhovsky, which summarizes thirty years of research on homonymy and includes many interesting linguistic observations, very little information is given about the homonymy of abbreviations, limited to citing a few examples<sup>5</sup>. A.I.Golovnya's research shows that homonymy in abbreviations in English is a phenomenon characteristic of various word groups, and the diversity and scope of its content is analyzed through examples, for example: *WAY – World Association of Youth (= way), WAS – Washington Academy of Sciences (= was), WHO – World Health Organization (= who), BAR – Browning Automatic Rifle (= bar), ACT – Australian Capital Territory (= act).*

All the English examples analyzed above are examples of phonetic-graphic homonymy (words with the same pronunciation and spelling, but different meanings). R.V.Kuzmina analyzed pairs of graphic homonyms or homographs

---

<sup>4</sup> Головня А.И. Омонимия как системная категория языка: монография. Минск: БГУ, 2007. – с.92. [Электронный ресурс] URL:<http://www.bsu.by/main.aspx?guid=76481>

<sup>5</sup> Малаховский Л.В. Теория лексической и грамматической омонимии / Отв. ред. Р.Г. Пиотровский. - Л.: Наука. Ленинградское отд., 1990. - 238 с.

(words matching only according to their spelling) and studied their phonetic properties<sup>6</sup>. LPD orthoepic dictionary of Dj.Wells was taken as a source for the analysis of the pronunciation of homographs in the English language<sup>7</sup>. The meaning of all homographs is clarified according to the new word dictionary and MEDAL<sup>8</sup>. This dictionary, in general, perfectly explains the meaning of words, but it is "lame" in recording homographs made as a result of shortening lexical units. For example, ere from "here", path from "pathology", thou from "thousand", WAN from "wide area network", wan abbreviations and many other abbreviations that follow MEDAL not given in the dictionary.

The many examples of homographs with semantic and phonetic differences show that homonymy of abbreviations is a common and yet complex phenomenon in English, which learners of English as a foreign language should be aware of.

### Literature

1. Борисов В.В. Аббревиация и акронимия. - М., 2003. – С.59-78.
2. Кузьмина Р.В. Омонимизация как результат аббревиации // Известия высших учебных заведений. Серия «Гуманитарные науки» (Научный журнал). Том 2 (2011). Вып. 3. Иваново: ФГБОУ ВПО «ИГХТУ», 2011. – С.215-218.
3. Малаховский Л.В. Теория лексической и грамматической омонимии / Отв. ред. Р.Г. Пиотровский. - Л.: Наука. Ленинградское отд., 1990. – 238 с.
4. Мешков О.Д. Словообразование современного английского языка. Москва: Наука, 1976. – 312 с.
5. Головня А.И. Омонимия как системная категория языка: монография. Минск: БГУ, 2007. – с.92. [Электронный ресурс] URL: <http://www.bsu.by/main.aspx?guid=76481>
6. Macmillan English dictionary for advanced learners. - Macmillan, 2002, 2007.

---

<sup>6</sup> Кузьмина Р.В. Омонимизация как результат аббревиации // Известия высших учебных заведений. Серия «Гуманитарные науки» (Научный журнал). Том 2 (2011). Вып. 3. Иваново: ФГБОУ ВПО «ИГХТУ», 2011. – С. 216.

<sup>7</sup> Wells J.C. Longman pronunciation dictionary; ed. 3. - London: Pearson Education Ltd., 2005. - 870 p. (Longman Pronunciation Dictionary by J.Wells, 3 изд., 2005)

<sup>8</sup> Macmillan English dictionary for advanced learners. - Macmillan, 2002, 2007.

7. **Ridout R., Witting Cl.** The Facts of English. – London, 1987. – p. 13-16.

8. *Wells J.C.* Longman pronunciation dictionary; ed. 3. – London: Pearson Education Ltd., 2005. – 870 p. (Longman Pronunciation Dictionary by J.Wells, 3 изд., 2005)

