

CLIPPINGS AND ABBREVIATIONS IN ENGLISH WORD-FORMATION

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Abstract

This article explores two important processes in English word-formation: *clipping* and *abbreviation*. These methods are part of linguistic economy and are widely used in informal, academic, technical, and digital communication. The paper outlines the types, functions, structural patterns, and usage domains of clippings and abbreviations, illustrating how they contribute to the dynamic development of vocabulary. Through comparison and examples, the study highlights their relevance in modern English and their increasing presence in global linguistic practices.

Keywords: Clipping, abbreviation, word-formation, initialism, acronym, shortening, contraction, blend, linguistic economy, informal language, vocabulary development, modern English, lexical innovation, morphological processes.

1. Introduction

The development of vocabulary in any language involves multiple processes, among which *clipping* and *abbreviation* hold a special place due to their role in simplifying longer lexical items. These processes are driven by linguistic economy — the tendency of language users to save time and effort in communication.

2. Clippings: Definition and Classification

2.1 Definition

Clipping is the process of shortening a longer word without changing its meaning or part of speech. It typically involves removing one or more syllables from the original word.

Example: “advertisement” → “ad”

2.2 Types of Clipping

1. **Back clipping** – the end of the word is cut off:

Examples: exam (**from** examination), lab (**from** laboratory)

2. **Fore-clipping** – the beginning is removed:

Examples: phone (**from** telephone), plane (**from** airplane)

3. **Middle clipping** – both the beginning and end are removed (rare):

Example: flu (**from** influenza)

4. *Complex clipping* – compound words are shortened in both parts:

Examples: *sitcom* (**from** *situational comedy*), *netizen* (**from** *Internet citizen*)

3. Abbreviations: Definition and Classification

3.1 Definition

Abbreviation is a general term for shortened forms of words or phrases. This includes initialisms, acronyms, and other contracted forms.

3.2 Types of Abbreviations

1. *Initialisms* – formed from the first letters of words; each letter is pronounced separately.

Examples: *BBC* (**B**ritish **B**roadcasting **C**orporation), *USA* (**U**nited **S**tates of **A**merica)

2. *Acronyms* – formed from the initial letters but pronounced as a word.

Examples: *NASA* (**N**ational **A**eronautics and **S**pace **A**dministration), *UNESCO*

3. *Shortenings/Contractions* – omitting letters from inside the word.

Examples: *Dr.* (**D**octor), *Mr.* (**M**ister), *dept.* (**d**e**p**artment)

4. *Blends (portmanteau words)* – merging parts of two words into one.

Examples: *brunch* (**b**reakfast + **l**unch), *smog* (**s**moke + **f**og)

4. Functions and Usage

Both clippings and abbreviations serve various functions:

- *Efficiency in speech and writing*
- *Informality and colloquial tone*
- *Specialization in technical, academic, and digital fields*
- *Branding and naming (e.g., apps, companies)*

They are especially common in youth slang, journalism, digital communication (texts, chats), advertising, and popular culture.

5. Comparison of Clipping and Abbreviation

Feature	Clipping	Abbreviation
Based on	A single word	A word or phrase
Form	Shortened version	Initials or blended/shortened forms
Pronunciation	Like a regular word	Can be letter-by-letter or word-like
Examples	<i>exam, gym, fridge</i>	<i>UN, FBI, Dr., CEO, Wi-Fi</i>

6. Conclusion

Clipping and abbreviation are essential mechanisms of word-formation that reflect the needs of modern communication. They support linguistic economy and

creativity and play a central role in the formation of informal, technical, and digital lexicons. Understanding their forms and functions enhances one's ability to analyze and use language effectively in various contexts.

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