Abbreviations' formation in Romanian computers language

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Abstract: Following the model of international languages (Russian, French, English, German), in the last decades the number of abbreviation compounds have risen, that brings a contribution to the internalizing of Romanian language, following the French one in the lexical field. Nowadays, the abbreviation phenomenon has developed greatly, and this is evident by the number of initialisms and their frequency especially in specialized languges.
Key-words: abbreviation compounds, initialisms, specialized languges, IT language.

In linguistics the term abbreviation is explained broadly by a „representation of a unit or of a series of units"[1] It is considered an abbreviation[2]: the reduction of a syntactic group or of a compound word to a single element.

In our everyday language, it is accepted as an abbreviation the meaning of shorting a word or a group of words, for easing the lecture or speech. Combined words have as a particular feature the presence in their compound of one or more abbreviations (letters, initial letters or fragments of words, of compound elements or even some parts of the word's structure, for example prefixes), which can combine either among them or with some other full words (or compound elements). They have, as a starting point, compound nouns or syntactic groups whose meaning they take up and which is then running as abbreviations: PC (Personal Computer), CD-R (Compact Disc Recordable), DVD (Digital Video Versatile Disc), HTML (Hyper-Text Markup Language), HTTP (Hyper-Text Transfer Protocol), etc.

Following the model of international languages (Russian, French, English, German), in the last decades the number of abbreviation compounds have risen, that brings a contribution to the internalizing of Romanian language, following the French one in the lexical field.

These compounds mainly appear in commercial and technical language and they are considered by Iorgu Iordan[3]: „linguistic products created from the needs of saving time and money", as well as they appear in the political and administrative fields. The method for their creation has two related and concomitant aspects: the abbreviation of the words or terms which form the base and the combining of the abbreviations. The formation process has a selective and conventional feature; an important role is played by the fantasy of those who create the new compound.

Nowadays, the abbreviation phenomenon has developed greatly, and this is evident by the number of initialisms and their frequency. „The avalanche of such formations, takes us to a rejection reaction, which is at least anachronistic, because this phenomenon is our international century feature, especially for the last decades. Considered by many critics as a plague of the century this phenomenon is a necessary one justified by graphical time and space economy which is obtained and is so precious in the speed century. Of course its development exceeds the objective necessity area becoming a fashion, which is still international. "[4]

This type of lexical creations is important because of „their increasing rate in our current vocabulary and their contribution of internalizing Romanian vocabulary (by taking up some of foreign words formation models)."[5] It seems that those signs of democracy have brought a diversity

[1] J. Dubois, apud. G. Beldescu, *Ortografia actuală a limbii române*, p. 110.
[2] G. Beldescu, *Ortografia actuală a limbii române*, p. 110.
[3] Iorgu Iordan, apud., Adriana Stoichițoiu-Ichim, *Abrevierile în româna actuală: modă sau necesitate?*, p. 205.
[4] Mioara Avram, *Abrevieri în actualitate*, p. 4.
[5] Adriana Stoichițoiu –Ichim, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

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of options which is visible in written press and which is linguistically reflecting the vocabulary level, our society being the witness of a linguistic „assault".

In the formation of a new word, when we start from many words, we left behind some linking elements (like prepositions, conjunctions and articles), but sometimes from phonetic reasons in the compound appears the initial letter of a prepositions or a conjunction. The other terms can be either all abbreviated or just some of them, every abbreviation representing the first part of a word: initial letter, initial syllable, a bigger or a smaller fragment of a syllable.

The abbreviation compounds lent from a foreign language are not special from those created in Romanian language, and they are preponderant to the scientific language. As the compounds' paper shows[6] „the loanwords which had as correspondences some Romanian translations of other words or identical initials and are placed in the compound abbreviation's order may appear as created in Romanian." As for those of scientific terminology, it is considered that all the terms of the initial letters are in the abbreviation during their forming and serve as the starting point, for example: ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network), ISP (Internet Service Provider, IP Address (Internet Protocol Address), PDF (Portable Document Format), RAM (Random Access Memory), WWW (World Wide Web), etc. The role of a certain occidental language varies in time, but both French and English are considered as influences, in actual Romanian language are many loan words of international initialisms which are created with elements of a foreign language, especially English, not regarding and considering the origin country.

As Iorgu Iordan underlined[7], „the formation model was initially the French one and after that the Russian one" and now we must search for it in different languages as: German, Italian, English and especially French[8].

The thematic compounds have a special abbreviation compounds' feature as determinant-determinate, bearing a foreign influence[9], there are also the compounds whose themes come from abbreviations (and which can be used mainly as the independent word) like: aero-, auto-, tele-, info- from aerodinamic, aeromodel, automobil, autostradă, televiziune, telejurnal, infomania, inforetea, infojurnal, etc.

This method of abbreviations is very productive (especially the initial letters compounds), the inventory was increased with some Romanian formations as well as some loanwords.

„The abbreviation of a word or a succession of words or terms of a compound word may constitute an exclusive question of writing, without the possibility of being used in speech, or may function in both language fields".[10]

In the scientific and technical works in order to save space, the specialists are using abbreviations, whose codes are revealed to the reader. We encountered many opinions about the formation methods of abbreviations, all considered as effects of foreign influences: the truncation, the initialism, and the acronym.

1. The truncation is explained by a „shorting of a word"[11] and it is influenced by some models from French: cinema, metro, radio, taxi. In Iorgu Iordan's opinion: „the process very accurate applied in French does not match our language. That is why we have few words, which are from the origin language, where they have come from already shortened".

His opinion is contradicted, mainly, by the existence in our language of some loan truncation abbreviations of English origin: baschet (basket-ball), volei (volley-ball), fotbal (foot-ball), living (living-room), blugi (blue-jeans), porno (pornografie), disco (discoteca), retro (retrograd), hi-fi (high-fidelity), tele (televiziune), telenet, mass media (mass media communications), net (network), fax (facsimile), soft (software), hard (hardware), etc. The truncation is also found in speech, and has some numerous aspects in every day language,

[6] Fulvia Ciobanu, Finuța Hasan, *Formarea cuvintelor în limba română. Compunerea,* p. 152.
[7] Iorgu Iordan, apud. A. Stoichițoiu-Ichim, *op. cit.*, p. 206.
[8] F. Ciobanu, F. Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 164.
[9] M. Avram, *Probleme ale exprimării corecte*, p. 254.
[10] G. Beldescu, *Ortografia actuală a limbii române*, p. 112.
[11] Adriana Stoichițoiu-Ichim, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

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colloquial, or media. These had been developed in Romanian after some French models, the truncation of some prefix compounds like: muzică disco, atelier foto, reparaţii auto; there are frequent prefix compounds with audio and video, used as invariable adjectives: casetă video, casetă audio, sisteme video, supraveghere video, format audio/video; as nouns („pe video-urile personale") and or as adverbials („Întregul festival va fi înregistrat audio şi video"), etc.

2. The initialisms and acronyms abbreviations are those formed by syllables and parts of words for acronyms, and by initial letters for initialisms. They are considered written language formations, but they can be used either in speech.

It seems that Romanian, although „a genealogically suffixes derivative type" language, is close to French, following its model in lexical creation field, but without excluding other foreign influences (Russian, English, German).

A) The acronyms „represent in Romanian language (as in French) a possibility of allogenic composition"[12]. In the actual Romanian language the model comes from English, which gave us the topic proposed by Mioara Avram[13] as „determinant-determinate": Webcam (Webcamera), Interpedia (Inter encyclopaedia), Intranet, Ethernet, Fortran („formula translator"), iBook (Internet Book), iMac (Internet Macintosh), INDEO (Intel Video), etc., and either arguments towards compound formation on „ the way of compound terms". In such way we have to deal with:[14]

a) full words existing independently in our language;

b) compound elements existing independently in our language; and one

c) abbreviations of some words;

Some abbreviations may have three different interpretations: an abbreviation, a theme or and existent word in the pendant of the omitted final letter (as the first term) by phonetic reasons. The only relation between the three categories of compounds is limited to the mixed types (the thematic compounds from abbreviations and the abbreviation compounds combined with full words): Website, Websurfer, Activex, Altavista, Cybercafe, Cybersex, Cyberfobia, Cyberspace, Cybernet, Linux, Multiplex, Photoshop, Pixel, UNIX, etc. Their development as syntactic structure innovations seems to bother us more than the lexical loan itself.

From abbreviations, the most common, according to French model, are the initialisms. They follow the French and English models, but, unfortunately, in IT language they are translations from English words.

B) The initialisms are formed by initial letters of a syntactic group more or less developed; they confer a denominative function and a linguistic economy. The initialisms, as other types of abbreviations, are conditioned by the frequency of the syntactic abbreviated group and the initialism transparency. They are often used in science as well as in media, television and advertising.

In the scientific language, they allow a rapid communication among specialists: AMD (Advanced Micro Devices), ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange), AVI (Audio Video Interleave), PC (personal computer), LP (long play disk), CD (compact disk), CD-ROM (Compact Disc-Read Only Memory), CD-R (Compact Disc Recordable), CD-Rw (Compact Disc Rewritable), CPU (Central Processing Unit), DOS (Disk Operating System), USB (Universal Serial Bus), UPS (Uninterruptible power supply), JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group), LCD (Liquid Crystal Display), MPEG (Motion Picture Expert Group), OCR (Optical Character Recognition), IBM (International Business Machines), ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network), ISP (Internet Service Provider), etc.

Some initialisms come from older loans; they are international, and the order of the initial letters being the one of the origin language, the readers being already familiarized with those: S.O.S., M.P.E.G., J.P.E.G., I.B.M., W.W.W., I.T., C.D., P.C., L.C.D, L.P., etc. In the recent international loans, the succession of the initial letters copies the order from the origin language (in this case English): V.I.P. (very important personalities), C.D. (compact disk), D.J. (disk-jockey),

[12] Iorgu Iordan, *Limba română actuală. O gramatică a greşelilor,* p. 248.
[13] Mioara Avram, *Probleme ale exprimării corecte,* p. 258.
[14] Mioara Avram, *op. cit.,* p. 259.

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P.C. (personal computer), CPU (Central Processing Unit), DOS (Disk Operating System), USB (Universal Serial Bus), UPS (Uninterruptible power supply), LAN (Local Area Network), etc. The initialisms are not only easy to use, but they are also productive, these derivatives forms are used in specialized discourse, as well as in everyday language: „da-mi USB-ul", „asculta CD-ul", „vizionează DVD-ul", „este un MP-3", etc.

The transposition of the initialisms from one language to another has some specific problems determined by their nature: the possibility of storage in the target language of their original form and the possibility of their development in the target language in an explicit manner.

There are a lot of initialisms known only by few specialists or even only by their author. They have a cryptic feature and confer or attest a certain esoteric of terminology. The descriptive precision, the flexibility, the relatively easy formation and, in so many cases, their international feature, determine a frequent utilization of initialisms in specialized discourse.

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