

A LINGUISTIC INVESTIGATION OF RECENT ENGLISH ABBREVIATIONS  
AS DISPLAYED IN TEXTUAL CORPUS

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The present annotation deals with the investigation of chosen lexical units that have become noticeable in the English language communication in recent decades. To be more specific, it focuses on abbreviations and acronyms as being elaborated in the framework of the monolingual synchronic annotated textual corpus English Web 2021 (enTenTen21). For the needs of the research, the following abbreviations and acronyms have been selected: *FOMO*, *JOMO*, *YOMO*, *BFF*, *SMH*, *DM*, *GOAT*, *WFH*. Proceeding from evident similarities between them from the viewpoint of their origin and background, we suppose that also their linguistic characteristics will be related. As a corpus-based annotation, its preliminary goal is to recognize recurrent patterns in which the key abbreviations and acronyms usually occur to study their concordance (contextual occurrence of the searched pattern) and word sketch (collocations) representations in relation to their discourse functions. And namely these corpus concordances and collocations help comprehend how much the elements of semantics and morphology extract from the given context (Moon, 2006; Leláková, 2024).

The investigation of abbreviations and acronyms in corpora has not gained much attention; we aim to shed light on this linguistically interesting issue. Mainly internet-based acronyms have been investigated in recent years; Yudytska (2018) investigates their functional and syntactic constraints in the corpus environment. Zaboťnova (2017) focuses on their role in saving speech efforts in the process of communication in the chatspeaks. Eventually, Jucker and Dürscheid (2012) introduce a new terminological framework for keyboard-to-screen communication.

The research procedure itself consists of two phases: we interpret the extralinguistic background of the abbreviations and acronyms, and subsequently, we consider their linguistic behaviour of the that is associated with the realization of individual grammatical categories. There appear to be certain limitations of such a research procedure: the number of lexical units we could handle here is limited (Halliday, 2004); our aim is to explore a manageable amount of linguistic information that might be presented in the form of research results. In addition to this, we are forced to filter manually out the lexical forms that do not represent part of the searched expression paradigm, mainly thanks to its contextual dependency, an abbreviation with a diverse meaning from the one listed in this annotation., e.g.: the abbreviation *SMH* possesses also these units in the background: *Smart Mobility Hub*,

*Surrey Memorial Hospital*, etc. The following table illustrates the number of concordances of the abbreviations and acronyms in question:

Table 1: The number of concordances of the abbreviations as demonstrated in English Web 2022 (enTenTen22).

abbreviation/acronym	full form of the abbreviation/acronym	number of concordances
FOMO	Fear of Missing Out	12 120
JOMO	Joy of Missing Out	10 599
YOLO	You Only Live Once	23 051
BFF	Best Friends Forever	46 742
SMH	Shaking My Head	25 455
DM	Direct Message	10 588
GOAT	Greatest of All Time	20 233
WFH	Work From Home	16 855

The corpus concordances demonstrate that new abbreviations and acronyms in the contemporary English language reflect the extralinguistic reality from the areas of the Internet and social media; gender politics; the environment; entertainment; emotions, communication, and family; health; work; travelling; sports and games; science and IT technologies; fashion and clothes; food and drink; money and business affairs. The instances below exemplify the utilization of the recent abbreviations as registered in the corpus:

- mental health and psychology: *We are spending more time, right now, with our people, talking about mental wellness, the fear of missing out – we call that FOMO.* (ey.com);
- work/life balance: *As the Americans say, you only live once (YOLO). Throw yourself out there and go find out what really motivates you.* (ie.edu);
- social media: *Recently, girls have played a significant role in introducing new words into everyday German language, such as BFF. This is especially noticeable on social media, where many consider themselves influencers, a lexical unit that has also become a common part of German youth vocabulary.* (dw.com);
- emotions: *An abbreviation for "shaking my head," SMH is the anti-LOL. This is used to express disappointment, disagreement, or disbelief.* (sti.edu);
- the Internet: *I have reached out to Air Canada on multiple fronts (direct through website, facebook direct message and Twitter DM) and am waiting to be contacted.* (ntd.com);

- sports: *Tems even took things a step further by calling him the Greatest of All Time (GOAT).* (legit.ng)
- work: *Also, these archetypal WFH women will continue to work from home even when the pandemic ends to ensure that their family enterprises continue to survive.* (epw.in).

The aim of the following subsection is to have a deeper insight into the linguistic traits of these units. First, we need to emphasize that they undergo morphological processes to fit into grammatical structures of the English language.

Typically, they are combined with determiners including articles and quantifiers, e. g.: *It was a needed reminder not to buy everything the BFF was selling, no matter how much I wanted to.* (mtv.com). Moreover, they have the capacity to take the plural ending of English nouns, e.g.: *When the lessons are over, it's time for a walk with BFFs.* (4j.com); *The new changes will situate the teams within their respective home cities, and they'll eliminate the GOATs team composition.* (hp.com).

This group of acronyms and abbreviations shows great flexibility when addressing the word classes to which the lexical units belong; they are classified under nouns or adjectives:

- nouns: *Will those working remotely begin to experience FOMO?* (jll.nz);
- adjectives: *The never-ending GOAT debate would have a lot more clarity.* (cbc.ca).

The studied abbreviations and acronyms have the ability to make additional modification of noun phrases, e.g.: *The NYC specialty coffee retailer is now shipping convenient WFH care packages.* (pr.com); *He also apologized for coining the term YOLO.* (cbc.ca). Simultaneously, they naturally become part of verb phrases, e.g.: *Want to avoid YOLO spending induced by other people's social media posts?* (mic.com). In these instances, they appear in the surroundings of vocabulary that reflects the needs of the contemporary users of the English language, e.g.: *That being said, if you do use the new merged feature, your Instagram DM experience will change quite a bit.* (bgr.in)

Marginally, these units of language constitute new compounds, e.g.: *Over the summer, The Wall Street Journal implied that a WFH-sweatpants habit might be why you gained the "covid 15."* (hnn.us) and are found in close succession of archaic lexical units, e.g.: *Know thyself (and thy WFH weaknesses).* (bpr.org)

The results of the annotation demonstrate that the linguistic features of recent abbreviations and acronyms reflect extralinguistic aspects of specific communication acts. Furthermore, the methodology employed in the presented annotation might encourage possible future studies in the area of corpus linguistics focusing on specific issues of lexicological character.

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