

# Common abbreviations in the language of college students

*Jinfei Liao, Zhiyi Huang, Xiaomin Huang*

Fuzhou University of International Studies and Trade, Fuzhou 350202, China

**Abstract:** In modern Chinese, the emergence and widespread application of abbreviations have become a significant phenomenon and a common element in communicative language. Especially in daily communication among college students, abbreviations have become a common language phenomenon. However, this trend is also accompanied by a concern that the non-standard use of abbreviations is gradually emerging. To address this issue, this article proposes a series of suggestions aimed at guiding the standardized use of abbreviations, fully leveraging their convenient and efficient advantages, and better adapting to the constantly accelerating pace of modern social life.

**Keywords:** Modern Chinese; Abbreviation; College student

## I. Introduction

Abbreviations in modern Chinese constitute key elements in the vocabulary system. In recent years, the rapid progress of society has led to a sharp increase in the pace of life, which is also reflected in language. It requires people to convey as much information as possible with the fastest efficiency within a limited time. Therefore, abbreviations, as a product of this demand, have gradually become popular. Abbreviations have deeply penetrated into every aspect of college life and occupy a crucial position in new vocabulary. This article aims to deeply analyze the commonly used abbreviations in the language of college students, and propose a series of practical and feasible standardization suggestions based on their existing problems and characteristics. These suggestions aim to guide college students to use abbreviations more standardized and accurately, thereby ensuring smooth and efficient communication.

## II. Concepts related to abbreviations

Abbreviations refer to the selection of certain high-frequency polysyllabic words or phrases as alternative forms of communication for simplicity and efficiency, while maintaining their original meaning. This abbreviation form is composed of some representative phonetic parts in the original language, which is consistent in meaning with the original form and is an important simplified expression method in language communication. In short, abbreviations are used for convenience by shortening and omitting frequently used and longer words without changing their original meaning. For example, “Fujian Normal University” is abbreviated as “Fuzhou Normal University”; Fuzhou University of Foreign Languages and Trade is abbreviated as “Fuwai”; “Establishing the capital” is abbreviated as “establishing the capital”; “Ideological and political” is abbreviated as “ideological and political”; The Olympic Games are abbreviated as the Olympic Games

In the era of booming new media, the college student community is undoubtedly the most active and highly engaged vanguard force in the internet. With the rise and rapid expansion of various new media platforms, a series of emerging network abbreviations have gradually entered the public eye and are significantly favored and widely used by college students. These abbreviations not only enrich the online communication methods of college students, but also subtly influence their language communication skills and expression habits.

For example, “City knows how to play” - you city people really know how to play; “Yyds” - the eternal god; “Ten Moved Refusals” - Although deeply moved, then rejected them; “BTW” - by the way.

In short, the emergence of abbreviations stems from the practical needs of pragmatics, which is to simplify language forms to achieve convenience and efficiency in writing. This simplification based on practical communication needs is fundamentally different from abbreviations that simply pursue simplicity in writing.

## III. The double-sided nature and influence of abbreviations

Motivation: (1) Convenience. In this fast-paced era, people generally pursue efficiency and convenience, and this trend has deeply penetrated into various aspects of our lives, including language expression. People tend to use concise and clear language to quickly convey information, in order to save time and energy. Especially among college students, this trend is particularly evident. The rapid development of technology has brought unprecedented convenience and fun for college students to communicate in the online space. The popularity of social media, instant messaging tools, and other platforms has enabled college students to stay in touch with friends anytime, anywhere, and share life experiences. In this digital world, internet slang and abbreviations have emerged. With their concise and easy to remember characteristics, they have quickly become popular among college students, bringing unprecedented convenience and fun to them. (2) Innovation. Teenagers are undoubtedly one of the most active groups in the online space, demonstrating remarkable creativity and enthusiasm through their good education. In this digital world, they have fast acceptance and efficient dissemination capabilities, which enables internet abbreviations to spread widely in a very short period of time. The internet abbreviations created by teenagers are ingenious, fully demonstrating their creativity and innovative thinking. These abbreviations cleverly combine English and Chinese to form a unique and creative language expression. They not only simplify complex vocabulary, but also add fun and personalization to communication, making online communication more colorful. For example, combining “Center” and “position”, abbreviated as “C position”, represents the person in the most central and core position of the idol group, and later can refer to the central position in all occasions.

Limitations: (1) Ambiguity. The meanings of words that are abbreviated and mixed together can easily lead to misunderstandings. For example, abbreviating “encountering difficulties” as “lost” and “lost items” as “relics” can easily lead to misunderstandings. Everyone has different experiences, personalities, and understandings of abbreviations. (2) Low universality. Emerging abbreviations are indeed mainly popular among young people, especially among college students, while a considerable number of elderly people, due to their low frequency of using social media, often find it difficult to understand and accept these emerging language phenomena. Abbreviations commonly used by college students can be difficult for those who are not familiar with these language habits to understand. These abbreviations are formed by retaining important morphemes of the original words, abbreviating English words, extracting initial letters, etc. However, for those without relevant background knowledge, it is difficult to understand their meanings at once. Not only does it fail to achieve the purpose of communication, but it also goes against the original intention of communication due to the lack of expression of words, creating a generation gap between two generations. (3) Affects the ability to use Chinese. Excessive use of abbreviations by some college students on the internet may indeed lead to their vocabulary gradually becoming narrower. Although internet abbreviations are convenient and fast, they often only contain partial information of the original vocabulary and cannot fully express its full meaning, thereby affecting their ability to express themselves in Chinese. Long term immersion in the environment of abbreviations can easily make people forget the original meaning and usage of these abbreviations. If college students use abbreviations too frequently, they may gradually forget the original meaning and usage of these abbreviations, leading to misunderstandings and confusion in communication. Even in formal occasions or when writing articles, abbreviations are unconsciously used, leading to non-standard and lack of rigor in expression. (4) The limitations caused by blind spontaneity. Especially in the online learning environment, college students often use abbreviations or internet language in online communication, which may sometimes distort their original meaning due to misunderstandings or abuse. For example, “forgetful and stinky” - “bodybuilding” was originally a positive term used to describe a person’s healthy and beautiful figure. However, through such abbreviations and misunderstandings, it may have been given a negative connotation, causing negative associations, and there are many such words. Transforming what originally belonged to a positive connotation into a negative one, and imbuing the negative with a positive connotation.

#### IV. Standardization of abbreviations

##### 1. Grasp the concept of time when using it

The concept of time is particularly crucial in the use of abbreviations, as different eras can give birth to different abbreviations. As time goes by, new abbreviations spring up like mushrooms after rain, while some old abbreviations may gradually fade out of people’s sight. This change not only reflects the vitality of language, but also reflects the inevitable trend of historical development. Therefore, when using abbreviations, we need to have a keen sense of time. The first thing to consider is whether this abbreviation still conforms to the current trend of the times, whether it is still widely used and accepted by people. If an abbreviation is outdated or only circulated in a specific small group, we need to be extra careful when using it to avoid communication barriers or misunderstandings.

##### 2. Grasp spatial concepts when using

Some abbreviations have distinct regional characteristics, and careful consideration should be given when using them to determine whether they are unique to the region or universally used nationwide. If the selected abbreviations are not widely recognized or accepted in a specific region, to avoid misunderstandings, it is recommended to use the original words directly or add annotations to explain them.

##### 3. Pay attention to the occasion when using

With the widespread use of abbreviations in daily life and work, we are increasingly discovering that they may carry different meanings in different contexts. Due to differences in expertise across different industries, the same abbreviation may have completely different interpretations in different fields. To avoid misunderstandings and communication barriers, we need to be more cautious and meticulous when using abbreviations. Firstly, we need to maintain a curiosity, observe and summarize more, and try to understand the specific meanings of abbreviations in different contexts. Meanwhile, in communication, if encountering abbreviations that may cause ambiguity, we should promptly explain and clarify them to ensure the accurate transmission of information.

##### 4. Grasp the group concept when using it

“Group” is explained in the Modern Chinese Dictionary (revised edition, 1999) as “a general term referring to the overall composition of individuals who share essential similarities.” In modern society, college students and netizens undoubtedly constitute a huge social group, each possessing unique cultural and linguistic phenomena. In these groups, abbreviations are widely used and spread as an emerging language form. For example: School of Education - Academy of Education, Introduction to Mao Zedong Thought - Mao Zedong Thought, and so on.

##### 5. Pay attention to the rules of English abbreviations when using

In English text, it is recommended to minimize the use of abbreviations, usually no more than three to five. However, when the full name is too long and needs to be mentioned multiple times, abbreviations or abbreviations can be used appropriately to simplify the expression. Abbreviations that have been widely accepted and recognized can be directly used without additional annotations, such as DNA, RNA, HBsAg, HBsAb, WBC, PCR, CT, MRI, PET, etc.

## V. Conclusion

In today's fast-paced era, abbreviations play a crucial role in language communication among college students. They not only bring great convenience and fun to interpersonal communication, but also deeply adapt to people's pursuit of simplicity and efficiency. However, although abbreviations play an important role in language communication among college students, we still need to be cautious in their use and fully consider the potential negative effects they may bring. The use of abbreviations is not arbitrary, it needs to be used appropriately in appropriate contexts and situations. As one of the main groups of people using abbreviations, college students should be more aware of their responsibilities and obligations in the process of using them. Firstly, the advantages of Chinese abbreviations should be fully promoted, combining traditional language and culture with modern online language to create abbreviations that have both cultural heritage and contemporary characteristics. Secondly, it is necessary to master the standardization of abbreviations, understand and follow the rules and principles of using abbreviations, and avoid using non-standard abbreviations in formal occasions or important documents. Finally, use appropriate language and communicate in the appropriate environment to ensure accurate and effective communication. In short, abbreviations play an important role in language communication among college students, but we need to fully consider the potential negative effects they may bring when using them. As one of the main groups of people using abbreviations, college students should be more aware of their responsibilities and obligations in the process of using abbreviations in a standardized, accurate, and civilized manner, in order to maintain the standardization and beauty of Chinese language.

## Reference

- [1] Liya Guo. The use of abbreviations in communicative language [J]. Education and Teaching Forum. 2014 (38): 153.
- [2] Yuxuan Zhang. Analysis of the Formation of Internet Abbreviations [J]. Modern and Ancient Cultural and Creative. 2022 (01): 123-125.
- [3] Kun Zhou. Research on Internet Abbreviations [D]. Henan University. 2018 (01).
- [4] Yuxuan Zhang. Analysis of the Formation of Internet Abbreviations [J]. Modern and Ancient Cultural and Creative. 2022 (01): 123-125.
- [5] Shengmei Li. Common Abbreviations in Language for College Students [J]. Rhetoric Learning, 1999 (04): 18-20.
- [6] Feng Jiang. Research on the Impact of Chinese Abbreviations in Internet Language on College Students [J]. Chinese Character Culture. 2021 (23): 3-4.
- [7] Lingyan Yin. On Abbreviations and Their Standardization [J]. Journal of Xianning University, 2004, (24): 92-94.
- [8] Yang Han. The Characteristics and Standardization of Abbreviations. Chinese Language Journal. 2007 (S1): 101-102+118.