

# The Difference between Abbreviations and Acronyms in English /Arabic Translation Process

**Author: Dr. Gamar Sulieman Ibrahim Hassabo**

Assistant Professor, Department of Foreign Languages, College of Arts and Humanities, Jazan University,  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Email: [gassbo@jazanu.edu.sa](mailto:gassbo@jazanu.edu.sa)

DOI: [10.26821/IJSRC.13.5.2025.1305012](https://doi.org/10.26821/IJSRC.13.5.2025.1305012)

## Abstract

This paper addresses the difference between abbreviations and acronyms its relevancy and importance in English /Arabic Translation process. This paper uses descriptive analytic approaches. The purpose of this study is to shed light on abbreviations are linguistic shortcuts that save space, time to avoid repetition of long words and phrases, or simply to conform to conventional usage by making words or phrases simple to write or say and acronyms that's used to reduce phrases of names, organizations, and forms of technology, as well as many other general things. The main result concluded by this paper that the translators should be well equipped and professional with both bilingual who converts written or spoken material from one language to another (source language to target language) while preserving the original meaning, format, and tone.

## 1. Introduction

There is a great deal of overlap between abbreviations and acronyms. Every acronym is an abbreviation because the acronym is a shortened form of a word or phrase. However, not every abbreviation is an acronym, since some abbreviations – those made from words – are not new words formed from the first few letters of a series of words. <https://blairwells.com/abbreviations-vs-acronyms/>

The aim of the study is to focus on the difference between abbreviations and acronyms English /Arabic translation perspective.

In our multicultural and interconnected world, translation of acronyms and abbreviations plays a crucial role in the communication of different cultures. It affects understanding, interpretation, and the precise transfer of meaning between different languages. The translators in the academic field face unique challenges related to cultural influences in their work.

## 2. Related to Literature Review

The goal of this study is to discover the current body of research that encompasses research areas, theoretical reviews, providing a comprehensive analysis of types of acronyms, abbreviations and cultural differences and ultimately drawing a well-rounded conclusion.

### 2.1 Abbreviation

An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word or phrase, as N.Y. for New York, Mr. for Mister, lb for pound or ctn for cartoon.

There are millions of common abbreviations used every day. Abbreviations are shortened forms of words or lengthy phrases. You'll find them in almost every discipline and area of life, from commonly used abbreviations in names or titles, such as Mr. for mister or pres. for president, to less commonly used abbreviations, such as the short version of the word abbreviation itself, which is abbr. When you write out your address, most people write "St. or Ave." instead of "street" or "avenue."

When you write the date, you may abbreviate both the day of the week (Mon, Tues., Wed., Thurs., Fri., Sat., and Sun.) and the month of the year (Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.).

There are also tons of industry specific abbreviations that you may be unaware of unless you are in the industry, such as medical abbreviations or dental abbreviations.

Shortening the word “Avenue” to “Ave.” is an abbreviation, because it is the shortened version of the word. However, it is not an acronym since the word AVE is not a new word comprised of the first few letters of a phrase. Ibid

## 2.2 Types of Abbreviations

There is more than one type of abbreviation.

1. **An acronym** is a new word created from the initial letters of a long name or phrase, for example, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).
2. **An initialism** is a long phrase that is abbreviated to its initial letters. The letters are pronounced individually, not spoken as a word — for example, FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation). An initialism can be considered a type of acronym.

The U.S. is itself a well-established abbreviation, as are the shortened forms of the 50 states, like NY for New York. As you will see in the following lists, abbreviations exist in all areas of life, from medicine and military to geography and baking.

An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word used in place of the full word (e.g., Inc.). An acronym is a word formed from the first letters of each of the words in a phrase or name (e.g., NREL or DOE). Abbreviations and acronyms are treated similarly in NREL publications.

An abbreviation is a truncated word; an acronym is made up of parts of the phrase it stands for and is pronounced as a word (ELISA, AIDS, GABA); an initialism is an acronym that is pronounced as individual letters (DNA, RT-PCR). <https://www.Nerl.com>

## 2.3 The Benefit of Using Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviations and acronyms are used to save space and to avoid distracting the reader. Acronyms that abbreviate three or more words are usually written without periods (exception is U.S.S.R.). Abbreviations should only be used if the organization or term appears two or more times in the text. <https://www.mcc.gov>

### Why are Abbreviations and Acronyms important ?

Abbreviations and acronyms are shortened forms of word (s) or phrases (s). They assist in making manuscripts easy to read and understand. Additionally, they help in meeting the strict word-count targets, avoiding the repetition of words, thereby making the text easy to read. Acronyms can also help form the culture of organizations, work groups, and professional disciplines.

They can even shave a few seconds off the length of many communications. Overusing acronyms unconsciously can be damaging and abusive to listeners. <https://www.enago.com>

Historians use the acronym MAIN to help remember the four major causes of World War One. M stands for militarism, A is alliances, I is imperialism, and N is nationalism. Use this acronym to help remember the four MAIN causes of World War One.

## 2.4 Using Abbreviations and Acronyms Sparingly

Avoid using a given acronym unless you use it extensively in a publication. In a short report, do not use an acronym for a phrase you use five or fewer times. In a long report, do not use an acronym for a phrase you use

fewer than 10 times. In a webpage, do not use an acronym for a phrase you use fewer than three times. Some two-letter abbreviations and acronyms are acceptable (e.g., AC and DC, or MW). Avoid other two-letter acronyms that are less universally used (e.g., EE and RE).

### Spelling out Acronyms

In general, each time you use an acronym for the first time in the body of a report or on a given webpage, spell it out and put the acronym in parentheses after the full name. However, you do not need to spell out most common abbreviations and acronyms (e.g., AC, DC, cm, m, Hz, kW, MW, GW, and rpm) in most technical reports.

### Abbreviating Measurement Units

Spell out a technical abbreviation in full in text when you use it without numerals. For example, write "a few centimeters" rather than "a few cm." Ibid

### 2.5 Acronyms in Arabic

In addition to derivation, Arabic has blends, clippings/shortening, abbreviations and acronyms. Arabic blends are created by clipping and blending elements of a complex phrase like (كهرومغناطيسي; electromagnetic), (أوراسيا; Eurasia), (بِسْمِ اللَّهِ; to say in the name of Allah).

As for acronyms and initialism, Arabic has a limited number, although they are widely used in English. Arabic acronyms appeared quite recently due to globalization and contact with other foreign languages, mainly English via media (radio, TV, newspapers), social media, trade, science, and technology. Arabic acronyms are uniquely and spontaneously created by native speakers. As in English, Arabic acronyms consist of the initial letters of longer phrases or compound nouns such as names of organizations, companies, industries, trade names, businesses, educational institutions, government agencies and others. They are also used in medicine, technology, social media, politics, economics as well as common language. Al-Jarf, Reima (2021).

## 3. Discussion and Analysis

### 3.1 Abbreviation Pronounced as individual letters

English Abbreviations	Meaning	Translations	Arabic Explanations
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation	بي بي سي	هيئة الإذاعة البريطانية
WHO	World Health Organization	دبليو اتش أه	منظمة الصحة العالمية
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid	دي ان اي	حمض الدوكسي ريبونوكلييك
HRH	His Royal Highness	اتش اراتش	صاحب السمو الملكي
UN	United Kingdom	يو ان	المملكة المتحدة
MP	Member of Parliament	ام بي	أعضاء البرلمان
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	سي أي اي	وكالة الاستخبارات المركزية
AN	Arab news	عرب نيوز	اخبار عربية
CNN	Cable News Network	سي ان ان	شبكة كابلات نيوز
IMF	International Monetary Fund	اي اف ام	صندوق النقد الدولي
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade	جي أي تي تي	الاتفاقيات العامة بشأن التعريفات الجمركية والتجارة
ATM	Automatic Teller Machine	اي تي ام	ماكينة الصراف الآلي
GM	Genetically Modified	جي ام	معدلة وراثيا
CDM	Clean and Development Mechanism	سي دي ام	الية التنمية والنظافة
EEP	Energy and Environment Partnership	إي إي بي	شراكة الطاقة والبيئة
USA	United State of America	يو اس اي	الولايات المتحدة الاميريكية
FAQ	Frequently asked questions	اف اي كيو	الاسئلة الشائعة
MI6	Military Intelligence 6(UK equivalent of (CIA)	سي أي اي	الاستخبارات العسكرية السادسة

ICC	International Criminal Court	أي سي سي	المحكمة الجنائية الدولية
Dr. /Prof	Professor	دي آر او بروف	دكتور / بروفيسور / استاذ مساعد او مشارك
PM	Prime Minister	بي ام	رئيس الوزراء
AL	Artificial Intelligence	أي ال	الذكاء الاصطناعي
CPAP	Continuous Positive Airway Pressure	سي بي أي بي	الضغط الهوائي الايجابي المستمر
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation	سي بي آر	الانعاش القلبي الرئوي
CRF	Chronic Renal Failure	سي آر اف	الفشل الكلوي المزمن
SAEP	Saudi Association for Education and Psychology	سي اي إي بي	الجمعية السعودية للتربية و علم النفس

### Abbreviation

Standard abbreviations (for example, units of measurement, or states and counties) do not need to be defined. For example UN, USA

### 1. Clippings

Some words are often used in an abbreviated form in informal situations. We say for example, **kilo** instead of kilogram or **gig** for gigabyte. Other examples include **air con** (air conditioning), **satnav** (satellite navigation) are formed from the initial letters of word groups; blends like motel 'mix' or conflate sub morphemic elements; clippings like **prof** (professor), high tech (high technology), **carbs** (carbohydrate), **cell** (cellphone) shorten existing words. **McCarthy & O'Dell (2012)**

- Abbreviations of well known (renewed) in international organizations generally have their own translation in each language (WFP = PMA, NATO = OTAN). In this case, write the full name and abbreviation in brackets. E.g. United Nations (UN).
- Abbreviations and acronyms may not be easy to translate, especially when faced with one we have not seen before. As we have seen above, they rarely translate directly from one language to another. They can pose an interesting challenge, an opportunity to delve further into the heart of a language and its culture.

<https://community.translators.wb.org>

### 3.2 Abbreviation pronounced as individual words are called acronyms

English Acronyms	Meaning	Arabic Translation	Arabic Meaning
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization	اليونسكو	منظمة الامم المتحدة للتربية والعلم والثقافة
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization	الناتو	منظمة حلف الشمال الاطلسي
PIN	Personal Identity Number	بن	رقم التعريف الشخصي
SAD	Seasonal Affective disorder	ساد	اضطراب عاطفي موسمي
ARAMCO	Saudi Arabian oil Company	ارامكو	الشركة العربية السعودية للنفط
FAO	Food Agricultural Organization Funding Opportunity Announcement	الفاو	منظمة الاغذية والزراعة الاعلان عن فرص التمويل
NREL	National Reliable Energy Laboratory	نريال	المختبر الوطني للطاقة المتجددة
SAMA	Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency South African medical Association Society of American Mosaic Artists South Atlantic Medal Association Senior Accredited Minnesota Assessor Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art	سما	مؤسسة النقد العربية السعودية – الجمعية الطبية في جنوب افريقي – جمعية فنلني الفسيفسا الامريكية – رابطة جنوب الاطلسي الطبية – كبير المقيمين المعتمدين في ولاية مينيسوتا – متحف جنوب الجينيز للفنون

	Scandinavian Alternative Music Awards Serbian American Medical Association Scientific Apparatus Manufacturer Association Scientific Apparatus Markers Association <a href="https://www.acronymfinder.com">https://www.acronymfinder.com</a>		جائزة الموسيقى البديلة الاسكندنافية الجمعية الطبية الصربية الاميركية جمعية مصنعي الاجهزة العلمية
FIFA	International Federation of Association Football(organizes World Cup)	فيفا	الاتحاد الدولي لكرة القدم
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Agency	ناسا	الوكالة الوطنية للملاحة الجوية و الفضاء
SUNA	Sudan News Agency Society of Urologic Nurses and Associated Southeast Urbana Neighborhood Association Series on Unified Numerical Approximations Switchmen Union North America <a href="https://www.acronymfinder.com">https://www.acronymfinder.com</a>	سونا	وكالة السودان للانباء - جمعية ممرضات المسالك البولية و الزملاء - جمعية الاحياء الحضرية في الجنوب الشرقي- جمعية حي جنوب شرق المدينة سلسلة حول التقريب العددي الموحد نقابة عمال النقل في امريكا الشمالية
SPA	Saudi Press Agency	سبا/واس	وكالة الانباء السعودية/ واس
SAEP	Saudi Association for Education and Psychology		الجمعية السعودية للتربية و علم النفس
HAMAS	Islamic Resistance Movement	حماس	حركة المقاومة الاسلامية
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency	جايكا	الوكالة اليابانية للتعاون الدولي
IAIA	International Association for Impact Assessment Institute of American Indian Arts (offering academic excellence to both native and non-Native populations) Institute of Arab and Islamic Arts Italian Association of International Accountants <a href="https://www.iaia.edu">https://www.iaia.edu</a>	ايا	- الجمعية الدولية لتقييم الأثر معهد الفنون الامريكية الهندية معهد الدراسات العربية و الاسلامية الهندية الدوليين الجمعية الايطالية للمحاسبين
IATA	International Air Transport Association	ايتا	جمعية النقل الدولي العالمي
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	ايدز	نقص المناعة
COVID 19	Corona Virus Disease 2019	كوفيد 19	مرض فيروس كورونا عام 2019
SIDS	Sudden Infant Death Syndrome	سيدز	متلازمة موت الرضع الفجائي
FOMO	Fear Of Missing Out	فومو	الخوف من الضياع
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries	اوبك	منظمة الدول المصدرة للبترول
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization	انتربول	المنظمة الدولية للشرطة الجنائية
CALL	Computer Assistant of Language Learning	كول	استخدام الحاسوب لتعلم اللغة
UNICIF	United Nation children's Fund	اليونيسيف	منظمة الامم المتحدة لريادة الامومة و الطفولة
SCOPUS	A scientific abstract Citation database launched by the academic publisher	اسكوبس	اطلاق قاعدة بيانات الاستشهاد العلمية من دار النشر الأكاديمية.

4. Acronyms like NATO are formed from the initial letters of word groups; blends like motel 'mix' or conflate sub morphemic elements; clippings like prof shorten existing words.

Some syllabic acronyms to be mixture since they include more than the first letter of each word. Syllabic Acronyms use syllables of words instead of initials to make new words. ForeX comes from 'Foreign Exchange'(mix the incial. Interpol comes from 'International' + 'Police (full name: International Criminal Police Organization).

COVID-19 is the acronym for the full name corona virus disease of 2019. The abbreviation was designated by the World Health Organization. The new name of this disease is Corona Virus Disease 2019, abbreviated as COVID-19. In COVID-19, 'CO' stands for 'corona,' 'VI' for 'virus,' and 'D' for the disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as "2019 novel corona virus" or "2019-nCoV. <https://www.goodrx.com>

5. The meaning of the acronym can be translated, with an explanation as to where it comes from. To do this you provide the reader with a one-time reference, and if it comes up in the text again, explanation is necessary.
6. Acronyms concerned with medicine (those that refer to diseases, compound names of body parts, etc.) also have a default translation: TC = CT (computed tomography), SIDA = AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).

**3.3 Some acronyms have become so normal as words that people don't think of them as abbreviations any longer, and so they are not written in capital letters:**

English Acronyms	Meaning	Arabic Translation	Arabic Translation	Meaning
Laser	light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation	ليزر	تضخيم الضوء عن طريق انبعاث الإشعاع المحفز	
Sonar	sound navigation and ranging	السونار	هو جهاز استشعار بالصدى يستخدم في البحار والأجواء لاكتشاف الأشياء والقياس البعد عنها	
Scuba	Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus	الغوص	الغوص بجهاز التنفس	
Radar	Radio Detection and Ranging	رادار	رادار هي اختصار للموجات اللاسلكية، والرصد، والمدى	
Zip	Zone Improvement Plan	زيب	خطة تحسين المنطقة	

7. The meaning of the acronym can be translated, with an explanation as to where it comes from. To do this you provide the reader with a one-time reference, and if it comes up in the text again, no explanation is necessary.
8. Acronyms concerned with medicine (those that refer to diseases, compound names of body parts, etc.) also have a default translation: TC = CT (computed tomography), SIDA = AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).

In Arabic, there are 3 types of acronyms:

- I. Original Arabic acronyms for names of companies, associations, organizations, political movements, and news agencies such as جستن Saudi Association for Education and Psychology, حماس Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement), واس Saudi New Agency.
- II. Borrowed acronyms pronounced as a word الناتو NATO, أرامكو ARAMCO, اليونسكو UNESCO, الفاو FAO, اليونيسيف UNICEF, ناسا NASA
- III. Transliteration of English acronyms names of Arabic news agencies, companies, organizations and universities as in كاوست KAUST, سانا SANA, صدق SIDC, and أحسن AHSAN ز

Acronyms are either pronounced letter by letter as in (ب.ص P.O. box), or as a word as in داعش ISIS; قسد Forces of Democratic Syria; أسيان ASEAN; الفيفا FIFA; آياتا IATA).

Since Arabic generally connects consonants in writing, most acronyms look like words and are pronounced as words adding unwritten short vowel diacritics to break consonants. Al-Jarf, Reima (2021)

9. Translation for acronyms within a text, It occurs, you have two options the meaning of the acronyms can be translated, with details or reasons that someone gives to make something clear or easy to understand as to where it comes from. To do this you provide the reader with a one-time reference, and if it comes up in the text again, no explanation is necessary. The second option is used when you select not to use the acronyms contained in the source language: so, you make up an acronym according to the definition in the target language. Remember that this option can only be used when you're certain there's no official translation.

10. Working together with the customer helps keep in validity when translating acronyms, which makes the translator's job so much easier; and of course, the reader's understanding is greatly improved.
11. There are more Abbreviations and Acronyms in medical English. Medical abbreviations are used in all medical and surgical departments, during surgery, the emergency room, and at discharge.  
AIDS& SIDS are medical acronyms, the translator needs to understand the text in source and target language deeply before translation, transliteration should be avoided in this area. The translator should make sure that the translation conveys the same objectives of the SL, thus contributing to the major scientific areas of abbreviations and acronyms introduced in the SL. The translators need to know the language of the discipline they are dealing with.
12. UNICEF اليونيسيف is an important and distinguished organization; it is an acronym of (United Nation children's Fund) and it can be translated into Arabic equivalent is.(صندوق النقد الدولي) This acronym is related to UN Bodies and widely well known in Arabic. The translator can help the reader with a full acronym between two brackets after the Arabic transcription as in: (UNICEF) اليونيسيف. It can be transcription; The correct translation is. منظمة الاغذية والدواء العالمية او منظمة رعاية الامومة والطفولة
13. In my experience, translators who have very little knowledge, experience and skills sometimes avoid translating acronyms or abbreviations possibly for different reasons, e.g., lack awareness of how to do it. Lack of knowledge of the need to translate acronyms and abbreviations.

### 3.4 Conclusion

This research contributes to a deeper understanding culture on the translation process of the translator's techniques in translating abbreviations and acronyms from English to Arabic. The translators face challenges in translating cultural texts full of acronyms, in translating cultural texts will be studied and the influence of culture on the choice of terms, linguistic structures and methods. Some translators rely on transliteration or transcription in order to keep the text valid and avoid making any mistakes while translating acronyms or abbreviations. The results of the study can contribute to develop acronyms and abbreviations English Arabic translation process in the field of enhancing cultural understanding between different cultures.

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