

il

SPRING 2001

AMADIO, INC.

BOLLETTINO

INFORMATION AND TIPS ABOUT THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE

Abbreviations in Italian

At times, Italian and English rules are different. Often, agencies or clients will wonder what is correct.

This issue of "il BOLLETTINO" continues the discussion of these differences and deals with the most common rules for abbreviating words in Italian.

Note: Abbreviations follow the capitalization rules of the full words they represent.

General Considerations

Various situations require abbreviating words in Italian translations. The most common are:

- The English text allows for a maximum number of characters (e.g., software strings)
- The English text uses abbreviations and the same format should be also used, or is preferable, in the translation (e.g., Art. for Article, Fig. for Figure, or Par. for Paragraph)
- The English text uses abbreviated words to make them fit particular spacing requirements (e.g., in a table)

The following are the more common criteria used in Italian for dealing with the above or similar situations.

Abbreviations on the Second Syllable

This method should be applied to abbreviate words for which there is no conventional abbreviation available. It consists of preserving the initial portion of a word in the following manner:

- The first syllable (the first two syllables if the first is a vowel), and
- The first consonant or group of consonants of the following syllable

The abbreviation is closed with a period.

For example:

Certification	certificazione	cert.
Qualification	abilitazione	abil.

If two words abbreviated using the rule above lead to the same abbreviation, one syllable will be added to the longer word. For example:

Purchase	acquisto	acq.
Acquisition	acquisizione	acquis.

Abbreviations as Word Contractions

As an alternative to this method, abbreviations can be constructed by contracting the word. This is done using the first syllable (two if the first is a vowel) and the last syllable of the word separated by a period without space. With this method, the abbreviations of the words used in previous examples would be:

Certification	certificazione	cert.ne
Qualification	abilitazione	abil.ne
Purchase	acquisto	acq.to
Acquisition	acquisizione	acq.ne

Note that "acquis" drops "uis" because it is no longer needed to distinguish "acquisizione" from "acquisto".

Abbreviations with a Fixed Number of Letters

This method is commonly used in tables or tabular reports, where for various reasons it may be necessary or preferable to use abbreviations of the same length. Typically, these abbreviations are three letters long, although the rule described below can be extended to obtain abbreviations of

e.g.
et al.
i.e.

any length. The basic criteria consists of forming the abbreviation using the following letters:

- The first letter of the word
- The first two consonants following the first letter of the word

The abbreviation is still closed by a period. For example:

Certification	certificazione	cert.
Qualification	abilitazione	abl.
Rules	regolamenti	rgl.

When using the above criteria, if the abbreviations of two words are the same, the third letter of the abbreviation of the longer word is replaced with the first following consonant that is different than the duplicate letter. For example:

Purchase	acquisto	acq.
Acquisition	acquisizione	acs.
Program	programma	prg.
Programming	programmazione	prm.

Abbreviations in Acronym Format

Another method for obtaining fixed length abbreviations is to create an acronym from the word using the following letters:

- The first letter of the word
- Any two other letters (normally two consonants at the beginning of syllables) in the same order in which they appear in the word

Continued on reverse.

If this format is used, the abbreviation has no period at the end and all letters are upper case. For example:

Project	progetto	PRG
Register	registro	RGS

Conventional Abbreviations

Several words that may be used in reports and other technical, business, or legal documents use standard conventional abbreviations for words that are either very common or frequently repeated throughout the text. Table 1 lists the more common of these abbreviations.

Abbreviations for Months and Days of the Week

Other words with conventional abbreviations include the months and days of the week. They are listed in Tables 2 and 3. Note that the days of the week are listed starting with Monday, which, in Italy, is the first day of the week. Calendar weeks will be listed starting with Monday rather than Sunday.

Abbreviations of Common Latin Terms

Latin terms are more often found in legal writing. These terms, which are also used in English and Italian writing, can be abbreviated as indicated in Table 4. Occasionally, some appear in business

Table 1: Most common conventional Italian abbreviations

<i>English</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>Italian Abb.n</i>
Appendix	appendice	app.
Article	articolo	art.
Attachment	allegato	all.
Chapter	capitolo	cap.
Column	colonna	col.
Equation	equazione	eq.
Example	esempio	es.
Etcetera	eccetera	ecc.
Figure	figura	fig.
Lesson	lezione	lez.
Number	numero	n.
Page	pagina	p.
Paragraph	paragrafo	par.
Table	tabella	tab.
Volume	volume	vol.

documents, such as contracts and by-laws, or papers written in the academic world. However, these abbreviations are never used in documents for general distribution. When necessary, such documents use the equivalent Italian term/ expression or abbreviation, rather than the Latin.

Table 2: Italian abbreviations for weekdays

<i>DAYS</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>Italian Abb.n</i>
Monday		lunedì	lun.
Tuesday		martedì	mar./mart.
Wednesday		mercoledì	mer./merc.
Thursday		giovedì	gio./giov.
Friday		venerdì	ven.
Saturday		sabato	sab.
Sunday		domenica	dom.

Table 3: Italian abbreviations for months

<i>MONTHS</i>		
<i>English</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>Italian Abb.n</i>
January	gennaio	gen./genn.
February	febbraio	feb.
March	marzo	mar.
April	aprile	apr.
May	maggio	mag.
June	giugno	giu.
July	luglio	lug./lu.
August	agosto	ago./ag.
September	settembre	set./sett.
October	ottobre	ott.
November	novembre	nov.
December	dicembre	dic.

Table 4: Abbreviation of common Latin terms

<i>Latin Phrase</i>	<i>Abb.n</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
ab initio	ab init.	from the beginning
ad initium	ad init.	at the beginning
confer	cf.	see, refer to
contra ¹	con.	against, in comparison
exempli gratia	e.g.	for example
et alii	et al.	and others
et sequentes	et seq.	and following
folio verso	f.v.	on the reverse side (of a page)
ibidem	ibid.	in the same point/same author
idem	id.	the same
id est	i.e.	that is
infra	inf.	in the following, below, later
loco citato	loc. cit.	in the point mentioned
loquitur	loq.	says
non sequitur	non seq.	it does not follow that
opere citato	op. cit.	in the work (document, book) mentioned
passim	pass.	in various points
scilicet ²	sc.	in other words
secundum	sec.	according to
supra	sup.	before, above
sub voce	s.v.	under item
ut supra	ut sup.	as above
versus ¹	vs.	against, in comparison
videlicet ²	viz.	in other words

¹ contra and versus are equivalent

² scilicet and videlicet are equivalent

Michael A. Amadio

ATA Accredited Member

FREE-LANCE ITALIAN LANGUAGE SERVICES

PMB 445, 8335 Winnetka Avenue • Winnetka, CA 91306

Tel.: (818) 882-5318 • Fax: (818) 882-5318 • E-mail: mike@amadioinc.com

Web Site: www.amadioinc.com