



The Influence of SMS Language on Academic Writing: A Study at University Level in South Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract

Text messaging language is taking the place of Standard English language which is applied as a source of communication via cell phone. It is emerging in the form of a new language. It is influencing the formal writing of the learners. Keeping in view the above-mentioned purpose, the current study was planned to find out the influence of it on academic writing. 27 University English language teachers and 160 students were the Participants of the study. Data were collected through two questionnaires. Collected data was analyzed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results revealed that students are inclined to the use of SMS language as it is easy to use. It is an easy, convenient and speedy way of communication. The findings also showed that teachers and students are fully aware of the negative influence of text messaging on their academic writing. It is spoiling the punctuation, spelling and sentence structure of the English language learners

Key Words: Professional Qualification, Competencies, Subject Teachers of Education, Teachers Educators

Introduction

Text messaging is a popular way of communication among the mass particularly students these days. It is convenient, fast and cheaper means of text interchange. Text messaging is the fruit of modern technology. It has a notable influence on academic writing in many aspects that is difficult to ignore and avoid. The prominent influence of text messaging is freestyle writing of the English language by students belonging to high and higher classes who have mobile phones at their hands. They start to do SMS in the English language on mobile phones in English is comparatively easy, exact and precise, So the use of text language encourages and enhances learning or acquiring of a new trend in communication. Students use practical communicative language in SMS. When students use text messaging via their cell phone. They become able to communicate not only written communication but also spoken. They speak well as there is no fear of spelling and punctuation errors. In this way, the SMS language makes them confident to use the English Language. Students slowly and gradually feel more comfortable while using language in text messaging. On one side text messaging is facilitating the users of the language while on the other side it is spoiling the academic writing of the students. Students are making so many mistakes in spelling, sentence structure, punctuation, discourse and pragmatics of the language. New trends in English language has been developed through the SMS language. Proper users of the language are confused. English dialect slang, as it is utilized as a part of cell phone content informing, is alluded to as SMS dialect (SMS Language). Casual words used in daily language use are applied in text messaging language instead of applying the formal language use. SMS language users feel comfort in using text language in their communication. They use their own abbreviations and short form of the language. In this way, the pronunciation, spelling, sentence structure and word formation are influenced negatively. The users of the text language are aware of the negative impact of their communication but they have become habitual to this use of specific language.

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It is shocking to mention that the expressions of the standard language are totally influenced by the text message users. The use of a short form of the language as text messages use requires proper guidelines to understand. In most of the cases, the long proper lexical unit is shortened i.e thank you is replaced with 'tnx' or in some time it is applied as 'tx'. The outlook of the word is changed entirely just for the comfort of the users of text language. A study conducted in South Africa it was found that short-form writing of some words creating the situation of nonstandard language. Punctuation, semantics and the image of the word is ignored.

This study researches the instructors' viewpoints with respect to teenagers' use of the previously mentioned content informing sorts in their composed dialect. Instructors' points of view with respect to young people's utilization of accentuation imprints (counting the utilization of emoticons) in composed undertakings were likewise incorporated into this study. Teachers are casually debating the effect of content informing on the composed dialect aptitudes of learners. Differentiating sees on the effect of multiplying content informing are communicated [5]. A few instructors and perception are worried that the condensed dialect style of content informing is improperly sifting into authority school composing. The application of text language is spreading even in the examination system. Showing the non-serious attitude of the learners of the language. It is creating a very difficult situation for the examiners who check the paper having the use of text messaging language.

Owens [8] states that, with particular respect to youthful learners, perusing and composing structure a vital part of the instructive framework. Spelling and perusing, and additionally spelling and composed creation, are demonstrated to have a huge relationship [9]. Perusing and spelling offer indistinguishable fundamental phonological procedures, however, are not just switched forms [8]. Proclaiming spellings (perusing) is less requesting than composing spellings. This is because of the way that the written work of spelling re-quires bigger amounts of data to be removed from memory [10]. To an expansive degree, spelling requires division, while perusing requires mixing aptitudes. Spelling and composing are associating forms that must arrange for ideal working [8].

As indicated by Crystal [11], the inventive capability of messaging has been practically disregarded. Examine demonstrates that messaging does not eat into youngsters' capacity to peruse and compose. It rather enhances proficiency. The most recent studies (from a group at Coventry University) have discovered extraordinary positive relations between the use of text messaging and academic writing.

Methodology

Written material composed by 160 undergraduates for appraisal reason in a characteristic setting, following the one research, were broke down for the purpose of marking of SMS highlights for example exclusion of spelling and syntax, for the present investigation with the goal that the students perform in the most aspects and practical manner mistakes which can be taught. The utilization of signs and symbols was nonexistent in the contents of the populace under examination so this was not recorded as a variable of the current study. The learners of the language were belonging to the 18-24 years age range. All the participant whether teachers or students were from two public sector universities of southern Punjab. As SMS language is described by the oversight of accentuation denotes, the spots where an accentuation imprint ought to be utilized were considered and indicated mandatory settings in Table 1 mentioned on the next page. The proportion of the quantity of precluded accentuation imprints to mandatory settings was recorded with the end goal of examination. With respect to the lexical items, the quantity of spelling impossible to miss to messaging language or shortened spelling to the absolute number of words composed was recorded for investigation. Utilizing triangulation, teachers training English at a similar level and a similar for 160 learners of English language were given two distinct kinds of polls to finish so the outcomes can be as evident a portrayal of the populace as could be expected under the circumstances. The reason for the surveys was to gather information identified with their experience and to have a thought regarding their feelings in regards to the impacts or generally of SMS language on the scholarly composition of the undergraduate learners of the language. The taking an interest these students had practically coordinating degree of English capability, having examined English as a Second Language for 08-10 years before getting a confirmation in these building programs Participants of the study were belonging to various groups like O level, A level, matriculation and intermediate.

Methodological triangulation was utilized to gather information with the end goal of this investigation on account of the potential downside of meetings or surveys alone. As indicated by Hall and Rist (1999), the meeting may include 'particular review, self-dream, perceptual contortions, memory misfortune from the respondent, and subjectivity in the analyst's account and deciphering of the information (pp. 297-298). As indicated by Gass and Mackay, (2005) "Given that members' frames of mind towards others can affect what they state, there is additionally the threat of the alleged radiance impact.' Students were approached to compose a section on one of the three subjects given inside a word point of confinement of 150-200 words in an hour during class. For investigating information, the idea of Suppliance in Obligatory Contexts was utilized. This is quantitative research. As factual apparatuses, rate and normal techniques were utilized to investigate the information. The investigation was additionally led through an extensive appraisal and assessment by analysts for the articles composed by understudies for this examination. At that point, quantitative information was gotten from the subjective evaluation. The reviews accumulated from the respondents (understudies and instructors) were considered for further examination and discoveries of the said investigation.

The major aim of the current study was to find out the situations in which undergraduate English language learners use SMS language while in their daily communication. Participants of the study were belonging to Public sector universities of Southern Punjab. It was the purpose to explore the influence of SMS on formal writing and degree of the awareness of text language users about the use of SMS language. For the above-mentioned goal survey method was applied as the study has a quantitative approach. The survey method was used with the application of two questionnaires one for the teachers of the English language and the second for the 160 English language learners of the undergraduate level.

The questionnaire tool was applied to gather the information specifically related to SMS use and the influence of that usage on the academic English or Standard English language

Data Processing and Analysis Procedure

During Collected data were entered on the datasheet of the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). The data were processed and analyzed under the advice of statisticians.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Frequency (%), Mean and Standard Deviation of the reason of SMS language use(N=160)

Sr. No.	Item No.	Statement	1*	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
1	1	SMS language is easy use.	41.3	23.1	8.8	10.0	16.9	3.62	1.51
2	3	Text language is appropriate.	29.4	23.8	31.3	8.8	6.9	3.60	1.19
3	5	In my spare time I do SMS to my friends.	35.0	23.8	16.3	9.4	15.6	3.53	1.44
4	9	Learners use simple language in messaging on cell phone.	17.5	28.8	28.8	21.3	3.8	3.35	1.11
5	12	I can compose my message rapid.	9.4	25.0	41.9	20.6	3.1	3.17	.96
6	13	I enjoy text language while in chat.	8.1	23.8	30.0	31.9	6.3	2.96	1.06
7	11	My communication purpose is achieved.	9.4	23.8	30.6	23.8	12.5	2.94	1.16

Note. *1 = Str Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Neu; 4 = Di Ag; 5 = Str Dis Ag.

The frequencies (%) of the reason of SMS language use, means and standard deviations showed the high-frequency use, first four Item; SMS language is easy to use (M=3.62, SD=1.51), Text language is appropriate (M=3.60, SD=1.19) In my spare time I do SMS to my friends. (M=3.53, SD=1.44) Learners use simple language in messaging on the cell phone (M=3.35, SD=1.11) 60% of the respondents reported Agree or strongly agree. The

next three items of this factor fall in medium use frequency, I can compose my message rapid (M=3.17, SD=.96), I enjoy text language while in chat (M=2.96, SD=1.06) and My communication purpose is achieved (M=2.94, SD=1.16). It is evident that most students use SMS language as it is easy, simple, enjoyable, the message is composed rapidly and purpose is achieved.

Table 2. Frequency (%), Mean and Standard Deviation of student’s Consciousness of SMS language use (N=160)

Sr. No.	Item No.	Statement	1*	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
1	2	I apply short lexical form in sms language.	33.1	30.0	13.1	20.0	3.8	3.69	1.23
2	4	I apply cell phone in daily life frequently for SMS.	29.4	28.8	18.1	18.8	5.0	3.59	1.23
3	6	I apply short form of spelling in chat language.	41.3	17.5	20.6	10.6	10.0	3.69	1.36
4	7	The influence of text messaging use is known to me.	21.3	31.9	21.3	16.3	9.4	3.39	1.24
5	8	In my daily life I communicate through text language.	18.1	23.8	38.8	13.1	6.3	3.34	1.11
6	10	I don’t care about grammar	17.5	21.3	29.4	16.9	15.0	3.09	1.29
7	14	Text language is not appropriate.	17.5	23.8	23.1	22.5	13.1	3.10	1.29
8	17	People enjoy text language.	38.8	20.0	8.1	17.5	15.6	3.49	1.52
9	18	I adopt the vocabulary of text language consciously.	29.4	28.8	6.9	25.6	9.4	3.43	1.38
10	19	I am habitual of text language.	30.6	18.1	24.4	17.5	8.1	3.42	1.36

Note. *1 = Str Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Neu; 4 = Di Ag; 5 = Str Dis Ag.

The frequencies (%) of student’s consciousness of SMS language use, means and standard deviations showed the high-frequency use, first three Items; I apply short lexical form in SMS language. (M=3.69, SD=1.23), I use the cell phones in daily life frequently for SMS (M=3.59, SD=1.23) and I apply the short form of spelling in chat language. (M=3.69, SD=1.36). The next seven items fall in the categories of medium frequency use; The influence of text messaging use is known to me. (M=3.39, SD=1.24), In my daily life, I communicate through text language. (M=3.34, SD=1.11), I don’t care about grammar (M=3.09, SD=1.29), Text language is not appropriate (M=3.10, SD=1.29), People enjoy text language (M=3.49, SD=1.52), I adopt the vocabulary of text language (M=3.43, SD=1.38) and I am habitual of text language (M=3.42, SD=1.36) 63% of the respondents reported Agree or strongly agree. It revealed the awareness of the students about the use of SMS language. Students are aware of text language; its inappropriate grammar, vocabulary and spelling but they use it frequently as they have become its habitual users.

Table 3. Frequency (%), Mean and Standard Deviation of Influence of SMS language use on Academic writing (N=160)

Sr. No.	Item No.	Statement	1*	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
1	15	SMS language deviates from linguistics norms.	17.5	19.4	18.8	27.5	16.9	3.70	1.36
2	20	I feel difficulties in academic writing.	41.3	23.1	8.8	9.4	16.9	3.70	1.51
3	21	My spellings are under influence of SMS language.	33.1	30.0	13.1	19.4	3.8	3.63	1.22
4	22	SMS language has spoiled my grammar.	29.4	23.8	31.3	8.1	6.9	3.61	1.19

5	23	I make spelling mistakes in academic writing.	29.4	28.8	18.1	18.1	5.0	3.60	1.22
6	24	I become confused about spellings.	35.0	23.8	15.6	9.4	15.6	3.53	1.44
7	25	I become confused about grammar while writing academic.	41.3	17.5	20.0	10.6	10.0	3.40	1.36
8	26	My proficiency has been influenced by SMS language.	21.3	31.9	20.6	16.3	9.4	3.35	1.25
9	27	Learners of language get the adverse effects of the use of text messaging.	18.1	23.8	38.1	13.1	6.3	3.35	1.11
10	28	In my paper I usually use text language due to habit.	17.5	28.1	28.8	21.3	3.8	3.16	1.11
11	29	Text messaging has confused me in spelling while attempting papers.	17.5	20.6	29.4	16.9	15.0	3.09	1.29
12	30	Learners of language donot use proper sentence structure due to SMS influence.	9.4	23.1	30.6	23.8	12.5	2.93	1.16
13	31	Text messaging has spoiled my concept of tenses.	9.4	24.4	41.9	20.6	3.1	2.93	.96

Note. *1 = Str Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Neu; 4 = Di Ag; 5 = Str Dis Ag.

The frequencies (%) of influence of SMS language use on academic writing of students, means and standard deviations showed the high-frequency use, first six items; SMS language deviates from linguistics norms (M=3.70, SD=1.36), I feel difficulties in academic writing (M=3.70, SD=1.51) My spellings are under influence of SMS language. (M=3.63, SD=1.22) SMS language has spoiled my grammar (M=3.61, SD=1.19), I make spelling mistakes in academic writing (M=3.60, SD=1.22) and I become confused about spelling in academic writing. (M=3.53, SD=1.44) Next seven items fall in the categories of medium frequency use; I become confused about grammar while writing academic writing (M=3.40, SD=1.36), My proficiency has been influenced by SMS language (M=3.35, SD=1.25), Learners of language get adverse effect by the use of text messaging (M=3.35, SD=1.11), In my paper, I usually use text language due to habit. (M=3.16, SD=1.11), Text messaging has confused me in spelling while attempting papers. (M=3.09, SD=1.29), Learners of language do not use proper sentence structure due to SMS influence (M=2.93, SD=1.16) and Text messaging has spoiled my concept of tenses (M=2.93, SD=.96) 65% of the respondents reported Agree or strongly agree. It exposed the negative effects of SMS language on academic writings of University students in southern Punjab, Pakistan. Text language negatively influences grammar, vocabulary and spellings of the students who are habitual of SMS language use. They become confused while writing in the examination.

Table 4. Frequency (%), Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers about the influence of SMS language used on student's academic writing (N=27)

Sr. No.	Item No.	Statement	1*	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
1	1	Students don't care about spelling in academic writing.	33.3	51.9	3.7	3.7	7.4	4.00	1.10
2	2	Students don't care about punctuation in academic writing.	37.0	37.0	11.1	14.8	0.0	3.96	1.05
3	3	Students use abbreviation in academic writing.	25.9	51.9	7.4	3.7	11.1	3.78	1.21

4	4	Students use letter or number the way a word letter sound.	25.9	44.4	14.8	11.1	3.7	3.78	1.08
5	5	Students use non-conventional spelling in academic writing i.enite, skil.	25.9	51.9	7.4	11.1	3.7	3.85	1.06
6	6	Students use G. Clipping like going-goin.	48.1	33.3	11.1	7.4	0.0	4.22	.93
7	7	Students use extra punctuations of joy or sorrow.	14.8	40.7	22.2	11.1	11.1	3.37	1.21
8	8	Students use deletion of end letters like aft-after.	22.2	40.7	25.9	7.4	3.7	3.70	1.03
9	9	Students violate grammar rule in academic writing.	40.7	40.7	7.4	11.1	0.0	4.11	.97
10	10	Students do not use proper sentences in academic language	25.9	33.3	14.8	14.8	11.1	3.48	1.34

Note. *1 = Str Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Neu; 4 = Di Ag; 5 = Str Dis Ag.

The frequencies (%) of reason of SMS language use, means, and standard deviations showed the high-frequency use, first four Item; Students don't care about spelling in academic writing (M=4.00, SD=1.10) Almost all the participants accept their carelessness in spelling, Students don't care about punctuation in academic writing (M=3.96, SD=1.05), students are unaware about the use of punctuations as they don't care while using SMS language in their daily routine. Students use abbreviation in academic writing (M=3.78, SD=1.21)) Students use letter or number the way a word letter sound (M=3.78, SD=1.08); Students use non-conventional spelling in academic writing i.enite, skill (M=3.85, SD=1.06), Students use G. Clipping like going-goin (M=4.22, SD=.93) Students use deletion of end letters like aft-after (M=3.70, SD=1.03)) Students violate grammar rule in academic writing (M=4.11, SD=.97) 85% of the respondents reported Agree or strongly agree. Next two items of this factor fall in medium use frequency, Students use extra punctuations of joy or sorrow (M=3.37, SD=1.21) and Students do not use proper sentences in academic language (M=3.48, SD=1.34) which is showing a negative influence on the standard English writing skills of the students. Teachers responses are evident that student's formal writing skill is negatively influenced by text language. Students use nonconventional spellings, Clipping, extra punctuations, letters and numbers used as the have sounded, Grammatical wrong sentences and vocabulary are due to SMS language.

Conclusion

On the bases of the above mentioned results and discussion, it can be said in the conclusion that university teachers have given their opinion in the favor that text messaging has been influencing negatively academic writing of university students. SMS language is spoiling the spelling and sentence structure of the students. This effect has minimized the knowledge of correct English among university students. It has influenced spelling, grammatical structure and punctuation. As a result university students have adopted wrong spelling, short sentences (Grammatically wrong) and incorrect punctuation use. The majority of students use SMS language as it is easy, comfortable and convenient to use, a simple, enjoyable, message is composed rapidly and purpose is achieved. Students are aware of their habit of text language; its inappropriate grammar, vocabulary and spelling but they use it frequently as they have become its habitual.

University students have a negative influence of SMS language use in their mind that text language negatively influences grammar, vocabulary and spellings of the students who are habitual of SMS language use. It has a very bad influence on the academic writing of the students. They become confused while writing in the examination. Teachers' are of the view about SMS language that student's academic writing is negatively influenced by text language. Students use nonconventional spellings, G.clipping, extra punctuations, letters and number used as they have sounds, Grammatical wrong sentences and vocabulary is due to SMS language. Students use SMS

language, they are aware of its use, its negative influence on academic writing but have become habitual of its use in daily life.

The current study has contributed to the field as it creates awareness among teachers as well as university students of South Punjab, Pakistan about the negative influence of text messaging. It has opened the door for researchers to conduct further researches to explore other aspects related to it and to develop strategies to save the standard language among university-level students. The current study included university students of age group 19-25. The same can be conducted on matriculation and intermediate levels. Other researchers can conduct research studies to explore the positive effects of SMS language as it can be used for important academic messages or important information exchange with family without voice call. The current study is on university students while another study can be conducted on the higher school level.

It is amazing to note that students are aware of the harms of SMS language as it is spoiling the sentence structure and spelling use but they cannot stop it because they are habitual of its usage. It is suggested that students should use the simple short, grammatically correct sentence, correct punctuation and spelling as pointed by Crystal (2011). The present research has explored the impact of SMS language in accordance with Baron [12], Crystal [11] and Thurlow[3].

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