

MEDIA THAT MATTERS: MOBILE TEXTING LEADS TO LANGUAGE DECAY

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Abstract:

Objectives: The paper briefly discusses about the impact of social media that uncontrollably affect the language standards of society, particularly student generation and makes an analysis on the usage of media.

Method/Analysis: Usage of unrecognizable smileys and abbreviations were the major cause for language pollution which results in low academic output. Students' typed conversations through social media were collected and their language skills were analyzed. A student faces serious problems with articles, prepositions, verbs, tenses, sentence construction and even with spelling. Texting using abbreviated letters are not only destroying English language standards but also spoiling the students' language skills.

Findings: Poor grammatical convention, the major reason for students' failure, was identified in their chats and conversations through media. Particularly, punctuations were completely omitted and an analysis was made on the usage of them. A survey on students' opinion at the use of 'textese' was conducted at Sathyabama University for different branches of Engineering students at various levels. An interesting set of responses with strong opinions were received, which are both flippant and considerate. Around 10 students from the various branches of the university were asked to give the copies of all the text messages that they had sent in the last two days. These messages were analyzed for their violations of standard English grammar. Apart from this an analysis on the usage of various networks by students, by their preference, and by category was compared and the data was presented in graphs and bar diagrams and thus the statistical analysis was made.

Novelty/Improvement: The three most common types of violation identified are omission of letters, capitalization and punctuation, omission of words, unconventional punctuation, spelling errors, which need to be rectified in future.

Keywords: Social networks, texting, technology, grammar.

INTRODUCTION

Texting is considered to be an interesting way of communication with a random mix up of formal, informal and colloquial language. No doubt, Technology has brought a revival to the age by the introduction of new language styles, and to the surprise, statistics say that around 97 percentage of mobile phone users, between the age of 14 to 33 send nearly 6000 text messages per day. Before twenty years, texting was not of that much importance. But now, the world has become completely technological and people have been sinking into the busy life, unable to speak to others over the phone. Instead short, abbreviated messages are sent, when they find

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a comfortable time. Such new forms of abbreviated language types have become extremely viral that even make the linguists feel threatened.

Background

In early days, there was no machinery to reproduce the speed of conversation. But texting and instant messaging do a notable revolution in the young minds. The extensive use of text language is a social disease which leads to addiction, spoiling the knowledge of vocabulary. It involves the brute mechanics of writing, but is actually a new kind of talking. Whatsapp is one of the applications in technology that is commonly used on mobile phones with advanced features and computers. Innovations such as are smart phones, laptops and ipods with internet have visibly disturbed numerous aspects of our lives. About half of the world's population has access to the internet. It is a well known fact that Whatsapp messenger has replaced the use of personal computers whereas the arrival of smart phones has changed the behavior of a student and his academic performance. Social networks have placed a permanent place in the young minds, which can be easily measured by their desperate involvement in social media that lead them to get connected with friends, relations and academicians.

Influence of Social Media

The downfall of traditional dialect is felt with the influence of social media and networks such as whatsapp, facebook; twitter. Media, being a part of our culture and identity, changes the style of our society. People of present generation do not give importance to grammar and structure of media messages. Internet plays a vital role in their life and electronic gadgets have become their breath. They sink themselves into the technology interactions and thus media has become a tasty recipe to them. But the language becomes horrible in their hands. Abbreviations and acronyms such as OMG, LOL dominate in communication, students tend to forget the use of actual spellings and correct grammar. As a professor I have personally noticed my students using lot of abbreviations in their written work. Even my daughter used to say few abbreviations every time, whenever she wants to convey something funny. So, abbreviations may be useful and convenient for texting, but if they start influencing our verbal conversations that do not seem like a good impact on our lives. I think that abbreviated spelling should be discouraged, especially among students. Although abbreviated words have been created for two reasons: to save time and money on SMSes, they have discouraged students from learning proper English.

Culture of Mobile Communication

Texting and messaging in social networks visibly corrupt the standard writing skills of a student. The recent norms of internet language are ignoring punctuations and

capitalization. Young generation students are crazy of using emoticons, which are normally allowed and accepted in personal emails to friends and relatives. Media might have spoiled the language skill of any student or younger generations, but it does not mean that it is the end of language collapse. Baron commented that computer mediated communications are degrading the language of any student to certain extent. Few examples are given below.

Spelling:

sorry has a new version as sry;
 good night is expressed as gud ni8;
 know as no/knw ;
 don't /dono ;
 but/bt;

you/u

Grammar:

are/r;
 is/s;
 be/b ;
 will/vil

Punctuation:

!!!-over usage of punctuation???

Abbreviations:

OMG;
 LOL;
 ASAP;
 TNQ;
 BFF

Whatsapp Mania

Recent communication technologies transform the way we communicate with each other. Short Message Services (SMS) and Emails are very quick and more convenient, but nobody is ready to realize that a new language is developing around them; changing the mode and style we express ourselves and commune. The extensive use of text language is a social disease which leads to addiction, spoiling the knowledge of vocabulary .Whatsapp is one of the changes in technology that is commonly used on specific mobile phones and computers. Since the Smartphones became popular, many messaging services were launched but Whatsapp has become very popular among them. Besides all, this Application is highly addictive and can create a great

impact on regular users, and apart from that it can leave a trace that becomes difficult to control and cure. Almost everyone in India, use this application instead of using SMS text messaging. Textese always sink in rubbish chats while walking, travelling, talking and eating with a smart phone that is hooked on to Whatsapp which lets them share text messages, voice messages, audio and video files and even images to anyone across the world for free. A smart phone user can be qualified as a Whatsapp fan, with his/her constant texting, profile and status updates, and humorous group chats. Being the current updated application, Whatsapp application makes everyone passionate towards the fervent usage of mobiles. One very notable change that has been brought about by Whatsapp and other such type of texting applications is not yet realized .It is nothing but a new brand of English they have created. Sometimes they may not be even able to decipher what is being communicated.

Peculiar Abbreviations

The younger generations, consider the content of the message rather than the structure and they are taught that grammar is unimportant. Some of the noted abbreviations used in social network are When young people are taught to undervalue literacy as a life skill, they are being harshly misled. They do make mistakes, both when they speak and write, but it is acceptable.

A: hi ..Gm!!!

B: Gm!!!

A: hw r u ????????

B: 5nu???

A: hw abt ur holideizzzzz.....

B: yaah.....gud ..hw s ur sis???

A: she s f9.... she finished her pg in uk

B: ohhh!!!!!! Gr8..... congrats 2 her

A: v hv a farewel at greenpark hotel

B: sure ... I ll try 2 kum

A: k lets njoy!!

The above conversation has been typed very quickly and it didn't even need to go for spell check.

Gm-good morning

Hw-how

r-are

u-you

5n-fine

Abt-about

Holideiz-holidays

Ur-your

Sis-sister

Gr8-great

2-to

v-we

kum-come

njoy-enjoy

Such changes in spellings can be acceptable to a certain extent. This application is not only used among young generation, but it encourages everyone to communicate with children, teachers, students and businessmen.

Crazy use of Emoticons

We have already faced too much linguistic transformation throughout the ages. Sending pictures, videos, making a group chat, voice call and connecting to personal blogs are the highlights of Whatsapp applications apart from texting. In addition to that the application provides colourful, animated and expressive emoticons. The youth of this era are very clever at using the ideal emoticons at the right situations. These emoticons are upgraded and the meanings of them are quite self-explanatory. Expressing feelings and emotions are possible only through emoticons, since we are not able to convey them through texts. Similarly, we should also focus on the side effects of such applications. A teacher has to educate the students to distinguish between academic and text language, for that every teacher should be able to teach the difference. Emoticons such as ;-) add useful elements of non-verbal communication and interpretation.

Remedy through Online Softwares

There are so many grammar and spell check applications that help us to have better English. Such new softwares and applications are used for auto correct spell check and particularly online software support, which is a powerful tool for English language learners. Grammarly is an online spell and grammar checking application that helps users find and correct English writing issues which provides context and correction suggestions about grammar, spelling, vocabulary usage and plagiarism. It's time once again to review those nasty errors that damage our credibility when we write or type. Not normally a fun task, but absolutely necessary.

Experimental Group Survey

A survey on students' opinion at the use of was conducted at Sathyabama University. Different branches of Engineering students at various levels were asked with questions. An interesting set of responses from a varied group of B.E/B.Tech

students with strong opinions were received, which are both flippant and considerate. Around 10 students from the various branches of the university consented to give the copies of all the text messages that they had communicated in the last two days.

These messages were analyzed for their violations of standard English grammar. The three most common types of violation were:

- Omission of letters, capitalisation and punctuation (hi hw r u)
- Omission of words (common in casual speech but not standard writing, as in - am going. Wanna to kum)
- Using multiple punctuation marks (?!!!!), or emoticons ☺

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to focus on the deteriorating level of English language among the present generation students using social networks. The ultimate aim is to determine the variables that may be related to significant changes that occur due to social networking tools and websites, in learning a language. The questionnaire was administered to the students at the end and gathered the following information: The questionnaire was given and the results were analyzed

Name of the Student: _____

Year/Branch: _____

Please respond to the open ended questions:

1. How many social networking sites you are involved in?
2. Please describe your personal experience with social platforms.
3. Do you think that social networking and communications are mandatory for a human being?
4. Are you using any educational networking site to promote your academic proficiency? If so, are you using the short internet languages to communicate with others?
5. Give your opinion about the usage of abbreviated spellings (such as “s” for is and “u” for you) in social networks while texting and chatting.
6. Do you agree that such spellings in social network communication will affect ones language proficiency?
7. What impact do you get from social networks?
8. According to you, which of the errors listed below is the most dangerous one that deteriorates the quality of your language?

(a) Spelling	(b) Grammar
(c) Punctuation	(d) Sentence construction
9. Please comment on the drawbacks of social networking language.
10. What can be done by your language teacher, to correct your internet language?

TABLE 1

Networks	2012	2013	2014	2015
Face Book	65	73	80	96
Whatsapp	50	60	80	97
Blogger	40	48	60	86
You Tube	50	70	75	90
Flicker	30	42	50	60
Linked in	35	58	70	82
Telegram	20	30	50	70
Twitter	40	55	70	88
Google Plus	30	46	65	76
Hi5	25	48	54	75

An analysis of social networking sites was undertaken and the results were given in a bar diagram showing the students preferences on using social networking websites in the consecutive 4 years.

The results with statistical reports were made.

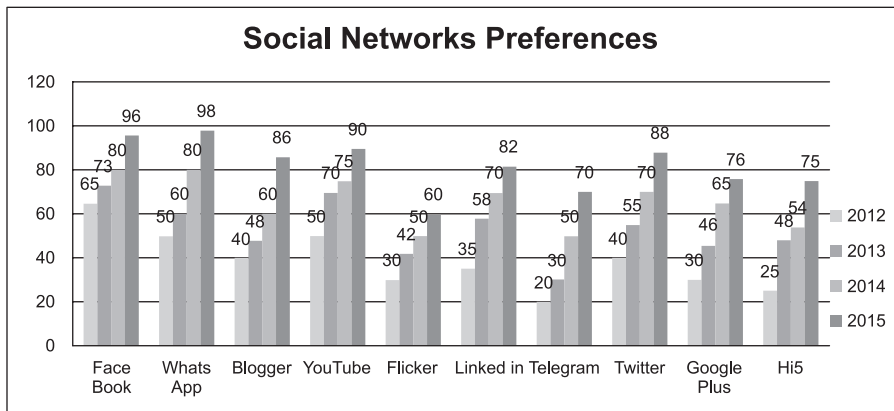


FIGURE 1

LIMITATIONS

There are many limitations to this study that need to be acknowledged. During the limited period of class hours, it was not feasible to get sufficient information from the test takers, apart from teaching the regular curriculum. Furthermore, the focus of the study was narrow, using only the University learners of I year B.E./B. Tech, students at the intermediate level and hence it is little difficult to streamline and generalize the results. It is also difficult to compare the results since the study

focuses on the individual characteristics of the present generation students, who use unplanned spoken language through social networks.

Future Study

- Targeted grammar instruction to eliminate the errors that are found in mobile communication and communications through social networks, should be given.
- Systematic practice in the discussed issues related to the proficiency development i.e., spelling, grammar and punctuation, while texting and chatting, must be provided.

CONCLUSION

Whether we like it or not, we are occupied with Internet language, for the time being. New generation is blooming up with a set of unusual words and peculiar languages. No doubt, “Textese” will dominate the class room assignments and test papers, in the near future, that the teachers will have to accept. Overall, the study provided a snapshot of current status of present generation intermediate students, who are gradually losing their language proficiency due to their indescribable use of internet language.

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