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University of Diyala
College of Education for Humanities
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TEXTING AND TEXT MESSAGES

A Research

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In the Name of Allah Most Merciful Most Gracious



And those who have been given knowledge
see that what is revealed to you from your Lord
is the truth, and it guides to the path of the
Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy.



TRUE ARE THE WORDS OF ALMIGHTY ALLAH

(SABA: VERSE 6)

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ABSTRACT

Text messaging has become a way of life for many in the 21st century. Indeed, people can be seen in malls, schools, just about everywhere using their cell phones to send character-based messages to their friends, classmates, family members, and co-workers. This form of communication has become especially popular among young people. For one, it permits them to communicate with others from just about anywhere. Secondly, it permits them to communicate silently, which can be beneficial in noisy environments, like bars, when having an effective conversation on a telephone would be difficult, or where extraneous communication must be done quietly, such as in a classroom. Thirdly, it permits them to communicate both synchronously (i.e., two-way communication is occurring simultaneously) and asynchronously (i.e., two-way communication is delayed), thus combining some of the benefits of telephone and e-mail communication. This technology has also given rise to a new language form in which abbreviated spellings, acronyms, and other shorthand notations are almost universally employed by its users. It is precisely these features and their use that are at the heart of this research. More specifically, the purpose of this study was to investigate, not only how frequently these symbolic expressions are utilized, but how they are utilized in terms of the language functions that they signal followed by a number of findings.

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1. Introduction

Writing today has become a mass phenomenon. Access to writing, with a more or less correct spelling, is within anyone's reach. The contemporary conversational writings produced by the new technologies have led to the emergence of new spellings and more informal written texts.

Writing practices used in modern means of communication are mainly characterized by their abbreviated aspect. In the world of smart-phones and computers, teachers and parents are often faced with the idea that our children and students, in addition to the well-known correct language, use a completely different language that adults cannot understand. They have replaced books and "face to face" communication with SMS (Short Messaging Service), social networks, messenger or chat. They forget the formulas for politeness, spelling, punctuation marks or text layout in the page. The designation "SMS language" means, by extension, the type of language in use for instant messaging or e-mails, on Internet forums and blogs, or in networked games, the primary motivation for its creation and use being to send comprehensible messages using the fewest number of characters possible. SMS is known today under many other names such as *textese*, *txt-speak*, *txtese*, *chatspeak*, *txt*, *txtspk*, *txtk*, *txto*, *texting language*, *txt lingo*, *SMSish*, *txtslang*, or *txt talk*. The word texting was officially recognized by the "Oxford English Dictionary", in 2006. Fast and convenient texting especially attracts teens. SMS is the most used way of communication today. Every minute, nearly 50,000 messages are sent worldwide.

2. What is Translation?

There is no unanimous agreement on the definition of translation, nor are translation theories agreed on the types or models of translation. Each translator has his own definition, or theory, or model when translating. In its general sense translation is often regarded as a project for transferring meaning from one language into another.

As this can be seen, there are two key words in this definition, that is, transferring and meaning. The first key word indicates that when translating, we must deal with two languages because translation in the standard sense is a form of interlingual communication that involves a source language (SL) and a target language (TL), i.e., the language we translate from and the language we translate into, respectively. The second key term in the definition above tells us that the main concern of translators is to capture or convey meaning in interlingual communication. Meaning is a complex notion; Linguists usually divide meaning

into denotation (the core conceptual meaning of the word) and connotation (the shades of meaning that are sometimes added to the denotation of the word). For example, the English lexical pairs (*die* / *pass away*) share the same denotations, but they differ in their connotations, that is, *pass away* expresses positive connotations that do not exist in *die*.

It should be noted that translators should capture both denotation and connotation in their translation (Farghal and Shunnaq, 1999:2). According to other linguists, translation is a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in another language (Newmark,1982:7) or it could be defined as, " the expression in another language (or target language) of what has been expressed in another, source language, preserving semantic and stylistic equivalences, (Bell, 1991:5)".

Nida (1974:12) believes that" translation is concerned with the reproduction of the closest equivalent of the source language text (SL) in the target language (TL) that means translation is based on equivalence not on transference".

Also," translation is an operation that is performed on languages (two or more) in which the source text is replaced by the target text on the basis of equivalence between both texts (lexis and grammar) of the source text are replaced by equivalent (lexis and grammar) of the target language; and the source language phonology (or graphology) is also consequently replaced by target language phonology or graphology " (Ismail, 1989:19). The views towards defining the term translation varied and the need among different people to communicate their experience and knowledge led to the discovery of translation as a solution that overcomes the barrier of language and a means of conveying ideas, knowledge, and experience from one culture to another. Thus translation is a very old human activity.

3. Defining Text Messaging

Text messaging, or texting, is the act of composing and sending electronic messages, typically consisting of alphabetic and numeric characters, between two or more users of mobile devices, desktops/laptops, or other type of compatible computer. Text messages may be sent over a cellular network, or may also be sent via an Internet connection.

The term originally referred to messages sent using the Short Message Service (SMS). It has grown beyond alphanumeric text to include multimedia messages

(known as MMS) containing digital images, videos, and sound content, as well as ideograms known as emoji (*happy faces, sad faces, and other icons*).

As of 2017, text messages are used by youth and adults for personal, family, business and social purposes. Governmental and non-governmental organizations use text messaging for communication between colleagues. In the 2010s, the sending of short informal messages has become an accepted part of many cultures, as happened earlier with emailing. This makes texting a quick and easy way to communicate with friends, family and colleagues, including in contexts where a call would be impolite or inappropriate (e.g., *calling very late at night or when one knows the other person is busy with family or work activities*). Like e-mail and voice mail, and unlike calls (*in which the caller hopes to speak directly with the recipient*), texting does not require the caller and recipient to both be free at the same moment; this permits communication even between busy individuals.

Text messages can also be used to interact with automated systems, for example, to order products or services from e-commerce websites, or to participate in online contests. Advertisers and service providers use direct text marketing to send messages to mobile users about promotions, payment due dates, and other notifications instead of using postal mail, email, or voicemail.

4. The Language of Texting and Instant Messaging

The electronic writing has become so influential that it may even affect conventional writing skills. The last decade has seen a massive and rapid increase of Short Message Service (SMS) text messaging and Instant Messaging (IM or IM'ing) among the younger generations due to increased ownership of mobile phones and personal computers, even by school-aged children. Texting, which originated around the turn of the century, is the exchange of brief text messages between mobile phones. IM became popular in the beginning of the twenty-first century. It is the online exchange of text messages between two or more individuals (i) using a mobile phone application or an Internet application, (ii) within an online game. Both are forms of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), the difference being that IM'ing is real-time, that is synchronous CMC, whereas texting is a asynchronous CMC.

These two forms of communication use a language which has many features in common. It is referred to by a variety of terms, including "SMS language", "text language", "SMS speak", "text speak" and "textese". In such language, standard spelling conventions and grammar rules are often disregarded and the use of "textisms" is prevalent. These orthographically unconventional language forms are used for a number of reasons. They function as shortcuts to reduce writing time for a quick response. They achieve the brevity and economy required

by the confines of a 160-character text message limit, a small screen and an alphanumeric keypad with several letters assigned to each key in short, they can save time, space and money. Plus, they are considered "cool" by many young people.

4.1 Types of Textisms

Textese can include the following types of textisms

1. **Orthographic Abbreviations/Contractions**
(e.g. *msg* for *message*, *tmrw* for *tomorrow*).
2. **Phonological Abbreviations**
(e.g. *thru* for *through*, *skool* for *school*, *thanx* for *thanks*).
3. **Acronyms/Initialisms**
(e.g. *tyl* for *talk to you later*, *omg* for *oh my god*, *brb* for *be right back*).
4. **Clippings/Shortening**
(e.g. *goin* for *going*, *feb* for *February*, *xam* for *exam*).
5. **Single Letter/Number Homophones**
(e.g. *c* for *see*, *u* for *you*, *2* for *to/too*, *4* for *four*);
6. **Combined Letter/Number Homophones**
(e.g. *NEL* for *any one*, *2day* for *today*, *18r* for *later*).
7. **Emoticons/Smileys**
(e.g. ☺ - for *happy*).
8. **Typographic Symbols**
(e.g. *x* for *kiss*, *<3* for *love*, *&* for *and*, *@* for *at*).
9. **Omission of Punctuation, Apostrophes or Capitalization**
(e.g. *cant* for *can't*, *i* for *I*).
10. **Excessive of Punctuation or Capitalization for Expressing Emphasis**
(e.g. *what!!!!* for *what!* *huh??* for *huh?* *NEVER* for *never*).
11. **Repeating Letters to Mirror Lengthening**
(e.g. *soooo* for *so*, *grrreeeeennn* for *green*).
12. **Accent Stylization**
(e.g. *gonna* for *going to*, *anuva* for *another*, *dat* for *that*);
13. **Neologisms or "Nonsensical Transmogrifications of other Words"**

(e.g. *lolz* for *lol* [*laughing out loud*]).

So in terms of normativity, instant messages and texts frequently don't follow to the institutionalized standards of right spelling, sentence structure and accentuation. What appears to issue most is proficiency: conveying one's message as quickly, concisely and viably as could reasonably be expected, regardless of standard dialect decides that are disregarded along the way. All things considered, this does not involve that textese is just made out of rebuses, new-fangled abbreviations and iconography, and completely digresses from the standard spelling rules: it is only that youthful individuals' "textiquette" does not require their dialect to fit with these standards. Truth be told, it might even be the situation that textese has its own principles as opposed to that it follows certain principles.

5. The Characteristics of SMS

Communication by SMS, email or instant messaging is more popular than ever. Millions of SMS are sent each day in the world. Essentially derived from verbal communication, texting possesses a syntax and vocabulary different from the "standard" written language. Grammar and spelling are often neglected. Young people use slang, express their feelings with emoticons or abbreviations, such as "*lol*", shorten the words or invent new ones. Swearwords and vulgar expressions are also common. This way of writing allows them to distinguish themselves from adults and to show their belonging to a group. As English is tacitly accepted as the official language of the Internet, acronyms and abbreviations are generally derived from English words. This vocabulary is however enriched by "national" acronyms, this amalgamation leading to a new form of language, often known in French, for example, as "**Frenglish**" (French with English), and in Romanian as "**Romglish**" (Romanian with English).

The "SMS" language is, therefore, not always easy to decipher. The basic rule of texting is to express yourself with the fewest number of characters possible because a message cannot contain more than 160 words. We must use our ingenuity to write a clear and concisely stated message. This is generally done in different ways, with no respect for specific rules.

One way is to use abbreviations, for example, *lol* for *laugh out loud* or *lots of love* or *brb* for *be right back*. Vowels are often omitted in words with no common abbreviations, for example *dictionary* becomes *dctnry*, *keyboard* becomes *kybrd*, etc. Sometimes, words are combined with pictures, or replaced by numbers or single letters to make them shorter or for reasons of homophony; for example,

four is written *4*, *later* is written *l8r*, *I love you* becomes *I <3 u*, etc. Also, most texters have done away with capitalization. They often use punctuation and capitalization to form emoticons suggesting body language and facial expressions (Geertsema, S., Charene H., and Chantelle V., 2011:121-122).

6.The Mechanics of Texting

The terms 'text messaging' or simply 'texting' allude to the brief composed messages sent using the SMS (Short Message Service) of mobile/cellphones, PDAs (Personal Digital Assistant), cell phones or on the other hand internet browsers. Despite the fact that messages these days frequently incorporate pictures, recordings and music (thus the more current term MMS (Multimedia Message Service), the essential text based messaging service keeps on being massively prevalent. Texting was at first created and discharged commercially in the early to mid-1990s and has since seen a huge rise in currency around the globe following the quick spread of mobile telephony. Most regularly used for individual to-individual communication, text messages are additionally progressively being used to communicate with robotized frameworks (for example *purchasing products, taking an interest in TV challenges, enlisting voters*). One fascinating 'assemblage' phenomenon is the use of short messaging services with intuitive TV, which befuddles the limit between relational and broadcast messaging. As is generally the status, the innovation is constantly changed.

On this note, and in arranging text messaging with reference to computer-mediated communication more generally, it is important to perceive dependably the interaction between what is a technology itself permits (or bears) and what the communicator herself/himself conveys to the technology. Most clearly, on account of text messaging, the gear is small and, eponymously, mobile; it in this way manages most texters an inconspicuous and moderately inexpensive methods for communication. In the meantime, text messaging is technically in fact and practically and limited, permitting just a specific number of characters per message. Moreover, as text based CMC, it is *primarily* QWERTY- driven – or in other words, dependent on the standard " keyboard (Internet, 2007). Regardless of whether any mechanical element of any technology introduces as a communicative limitation or opportunity, in any case, constantly relies upon the client what's more, on the setting of use.

7. Metaphonology of Text Messages

According to certain views, it turns out that SMS's are overworking a considerable effect upon standard English, as many phrases primarily distributed only to wireless cell phones that have got their entrance into everyday dialect. "These communicative developments are going to get a deep influence on the patterns of language".

The language of text messages owns extreme features of a shorthand. This appears due to the fact that an SMS works on a protocol, which allows from 148 to 160 characters per message, depending on a model of the cell phone. Thus, if the limit is exceeded, the 'extra' writing will be sent as a separate SMS.

Rather more, the rang bound to 160 characters involves spaces between words. In such a highly circumscribed environment writing is hampered by the limited space. Additional difficulty consists in the usage of numeric cell phones keypad. By the same symbol, the coming of new quality of the text dialect, sometimes referred to as 'textese', was under those situations.

Textese is an informal phenomenon, it is subject to the principle of economy, providing that a message must be as brief as possible but at the same time carry the fundamental content. In SMS's the body of writing is subordinated to the dominance idea: making everything as short as possible decodable for the recipient. Thus, in order to obtain the required result, which is the maximal content in minimal form, cell phone users change the English dialect.

For Sobkowiak (1991:132), manipulating with language is the condition in which "metaphonological competence appears to be crucially involved [...] the function and metaphonological competence especially, acts an important role in the unusual ways which phonological representations can be changed".

It must be emphasized, that in the case of text messages the manipulation does not stem from frivolous causes but rather is transcribed by the technical limitations of the medium. In text messages, word play does not sound to be accomplished per second but is likely to be imposed by the circumstances. The economy of writing appears to be the subordinating fundamental underlying the use of SMS's. The brief forms of words are necessitated by the style of the medium allowing 160 characters.

Actually, it becomes clear that creating new shapes of words does not matter. Seldom, does texting appear to show highly original and innovative approaches of word forming and changing. Rather, it sounds that the existing approaches are extensively used. For example, the huge majority of the text messaging dialect was traditionally used in instant-messaging programs on personal computers years ago. Thurlow's (2003: 59-60) observation gives support to the above claim: "new linguistic practices seldom spring from nowhere, neatly quashing pre-existing forms and conventions just as technologies do not replace each other, nor it is really possible to imagine communicative practices breaking completely, or that dramatically with long-standing patterns of interaction and language use".

The standardize of the phenomenon sounds to be really groundbreaking. Traditionally, never has the conscious tampering of language appeared to be very common and text messaging, it has lately obtained a new distance. Sending SMS's is classical communication act in which both the sender and the recipient must share the same code. If they fail to do so, a communication collapse happens and the communication act falls short of acting it is essential function. In text messaging, it appears that the cell phones user society shares a conventionalized code of communication.

The inhabitation of texters is increasing constantly as the wireless cell phones are far more obtainable than, for instance, laptops or palmtops. The most obvious characteristic of text messages is that the invention of new orthographical forms, according to the previous existing rules, is the continuous character of the process. In the words of Crystal (2001) the possibility of SMS's is noticeable.

7.1 Acronyms

we can define acronym as a series constructed of the initials such as in *NATO*, *OK*, *BBC*, etc. However, acronyms are not limited to initials. Sobkowiak (1991:142) claims that "letters, syllables and other chunks of words are cut out, rearranged and assembled to invent a heretofore non existing word or series. Metaphonological competence is entrance in the process to emphasize accordance with phonotactic limitations and euphony. Furthermore, as Ronneberger-Sibold (1990: 2) points out, the variety of acronyms is really effective. She also defines their purpose: "they serve to construct new lexemes without internal morphological structure [...] unhampered by the limitations of the normal word formation rules".

Sobkowiak (1991:143), refers to the fact that the tampering is accomplished on purpose as it is easier and shorter to use the initials *AIDS* instead of a longish phrase *Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome*. Moreover, metaphonology is used which is obvious in the fact that usually an acronym is designed in order to look alike a great extent the systematic lexical items.

This way of word formation has been in use for years. Marchand (1969: 369) claims that "letter-words are new in European languages. The real vogue has grouped in with our century only" and notices that in the Middle Ages the personal names were made from the initials of a title, name and the father's name as in Hida (Hayyim Joseph David Azulai) or Rambam (Rabbi Mosche B. Maimun).

The abundance of acronyms used with reference to SMS's is gained by those publications that are devoted to explaining their meanings. If one visits websites dedicated to text messages, attached will one find a glossary containing the acronyms should a cell phone user need any help in decoding them. Some of those acronyms overlap with those used long time ago in mail messages such as *IMHO (in my humble opinion)*, *ASAP (as soon as possible)*, *FYI (for your information)* or the prime example of *LOL (laughing out loud)* and derivatives *LMHO (laughing my head off)*. Their familiarity can facilitate the process of construing the meaning, some of those acronyms are so frequent that the recognition is instant and poses no major difficulties. However, a certain problem arises when the acronyms appear somewhat exotic and weird. Their use is restricted to a certain group of cell phone users, local usage, specific context or even jargon. *LND (London)*, *SRO (Standing room only)*, *JK (Just kidding)*, *IGU (I give up)*, *TMB (text me back)* or *PCM (please call me)* illustrate the trend.

Therefore, a conclusion can be drawn that the distribution of all the acronyms employed in text messages is highly uneven. Some acronyms are immediately obvious but again, the case arises for whom. It might be a pure incident that a person would recognize the acronym *TC (Take Care)* whereas the highly frequent items *THX (thanx)* or *BTW (By the Way)* could remain unknown. It is highly likely that certain acronyms will be popular in specific age, sex or social affiliation groups but not in others, whereas the use of email and internet as well as playing computer games reinforce familiarity with acronyms used in SMS's as they overlap. "As for acronyms, which are encoded by stringing together the initial letters of words in phrases in English, what the acronyms mean may not

always be understood by users, unless they are already familiar with the dialect CMC (Nishimura 2003: 89).

7.2 Blending

This technique is also referred to as ‘portmanteau words’ and consists in involving two or more lexemes in the base. The prime examples are *smog* (*smoke plus fog*) or *brunch* (*breakfast plus lunch*). As Bauer (1988: 39) explains, “two or more words are simply merged where they overlap, so that no information is lost, but repetition of letter combinations is avoided”. Marchand (1969: 368) remarks: “the result of a blend is always a moneme, i.e. an unanalyzable, simple word, not a motivated syntagma”. Typically, the bits taken of certain words are smaller than a morpheme. Text messages offer a special treatment of the blending technique, namely the use of numerals. The instances of *2nite* (*tonight*), *2morrow* (*tomorrow*), *3dom* (*freedom*), *4ever* (*forever*), *4tun* (*fortune*), *m8* (*mate*), *gr8* (*great*), *w8* (*wait*) describe how the numeric keypad of the cell phone can be used. Blending a number into a lexical item is a deliberate, intentional process of mixing metaphonology. It does take the conscious of homonymy to substitute a syllable of a word with a number so that the phonological interpretation of the number would be in agreement with the phonology of the substituted syllable or chunk.

In the case of *3dom* (*freedom*), there is an obvious disagreement between the pronunciation of *three* /*Tri:*/ and the morpheme of *freedom*, *free* /*fri:*/. Nevertheless, the meaning of the blend stays clear despite “substituting” the dental fricative with the labiodental one. The use of numerals in text messages is not a matter of fancy, but it is necessitated by the specific layout of the keypad since numerals are placed on the same buttons as the alphabet letters. Thus, exploiting the existing conditions shows that in the construction of new forms of words the users access the metaphonological means. The overlapping of the phonemes from the syllable of the word *great* with the pronunciation of the number *eight* is merely a coincidence. Yet, it leads to the construction of a new, shortened and economic form of the lexical item *great*. Notably, the numeral always tends to substitute a syllable as in the examples of *2nite* (*tonight*), *2morrow* (*tomorrow*), *3dom* (*freedom*), *4ever* (*forever*), *4tun* (*fortune*).

7.3 The ABC Language

The term ABC language designates the use of letter names. This word play employs a graphemic-phonemic manipulation. If the case arises in which a certain letter name such as *r* corresponds to a word like *are*, then the grapheme coincides with the phonemic form. This type of text messages involves instances such as *b* for *be*, *n* for *an/and*, *o* for *oh* (*oh I see*), *UR* for *You are or your*, *c u* for *see you*, *y* for *why* etc. Sometimes a letter stands for a whole word (*Y* for *why*), whereas in some cases a letter replaces a chunk of a word (as it is the case in the instance of *l8r* – *later*). Thus, this is another example of using metaphonological competence.

8. Ambiguity

In human dialect, vagueness is unavoidable. By its very nature, dialect is arrangement in which are reacting gradually question and clear up in overwork decrease vagueness. For this exploration, a few sorts of possibility vagueness were recognized. They were: first sort:

8.1 Length Ambiguity

This refers to a symbol that is involved just a single letter. symbols displaying length equivocalness were overlooked from the analysis because they may be used as initials (e.g., *H* for *Henry*).

8.2 Symbol Vagueness

It alludes to an image that either spells a genuine word (e.g. *AS* and *BAG*) or spells an acronym that has another generally –accepted meaning (e.g., *ATM* and *SOB*). Images showing symbol image were also neglected from this study due to the trouble of deciding the aim of the image .

8.3 Expression Ambiguity

It alludes to an image that has more than one conceivable (e.g. *HAHA* could mean understanding "*Giggling*," it could signify "*Showing at least a bit of kindness Attack*").

8.4 Culture Ambiguity

Which means and an all the more generally acknowledged importance inside the bigger content informing society (e.g. *BOT* signifies "*Purchased*" inside the objective corpus, however its all the more normally perceived importance is Back on Topic”).

9. Conclusions:

The researchers reached to the following findings:

1. Text and instant messaging are negatively affecting students’ writing quality on a daily basis, as they bring their abbreviated language into the classroom. As a result of their electronic chatting, kids are making countless syntax, subject-verb agreement and spelling mistakes in writing assignments.
2. There may be a gender effect: boys and girls may have different texting habits leading to a different impact on literacy—research has found that females use more textisms than males.
3. It is necessary to introduce the distinction between the channel and mode of communication. The former denotes a path or means of conveying information (e.g. email, television, mobile phone), whereas the latter refers to particular modus operandi, such as ‘highly effective communication mode.
4. Text messages can be conveyed from everywhere as there are no restrictions on place, there also is no need for any sophisticated equipment and the cost of sending one text message remains lower than the cost of telephoning.
5. It is an extremely convenient communication mode. Communication can be executed in a discreet manner, without disturbing anyone especially when in public.
6. A major conclusion can be drawn that creation of text messages proceeds under the control of the metaphonological competence. Textese

demonstrates the capacity and huge potential of metaphonology as the texters are able to effectively manipulate phonemes, graphemes, syllables, letters or numbers in order to create the desired, economical effect. Metaphonological competence aids preservation of the phonology of a lexical item with the use of a numeral or a letter instead of a whole syllable