

Decoding The Controversy: An Investigation Into The Impact Of Frequent Texting Language Use On Undergraduate Students' Academic Writing

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the potential relationship between the prevalence of mobile phone text messaging (SMS) and the use of abbreviations in academic writing among students at a Nigerian University. Our investigation examines the hypothesis that the surge in SMS abbreviations in academic writing may not solely be linked to an increase in the students' use of abbreviations. Factors such as the context of the writing and the mental state of the students could also impact their decision to employ abbreviations. To gather data, a questionnaire-based survey was conducted with 62 students in 2015, probing their adoption of texting language and its influence on their written assignments. Furthermore, document analysis was carried out on 72 notebooks, 126 written tasks, and 85 examination scripts provided by the students' professor for validation and deeper insights. The hypothesis posited that the influence of texting on students' writing may not have a significant negative impact, and if present, it would be minimal. The results from the analysis revealed that while students were more inclined to use texting language for note-taking purposes, a substantial proportion utilized abbreviations in their assignments compared to examination scripts. This indicates that students demonstrated an awareness of the formal requirements associated with examinations and adjusted their writing style accordingly. The findings suggest that students integrated SMS abbreviations into their notes, written tasks, and exam scripts. However, it was observed that the abbreviations used in the written assignments predominantly comprised standard abbreviations widely accepted in dictionaries and within the realm of linguistics, the student's area of expertise. This research provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics between technology, language, and culture, contributing to a deeper understanding of the influence of texting language on academic writing in the context of Nigerian university students.

Keywords: *Texting language, academic writing, college students, writing proficiency, language influence.*

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I. Introduction

In the digital era, the ubiquitous use of texting language has sparked a contentious debate about its influence on students' academic writing skills. This chapter seeks to explore this controversy by conducting a comprehensive investigation into the impact of frequent texting language use on students' written production of the English language in academic settings. By drawing on empirical evidence from the case study of college students in a federal university in Nigeria, I aim to provide an in-depth understanding of the complex relationship between technology-mediated communication, language practices, and academic writing proficiency. The primary objectives of this chapter are to analyze critically the findings from the case study, evaluate the influence of texting language on written English production, and offer insights for psycholinguistic research and educational practices.

The study of the impact of texting language on students' academic writing holds significant relevance in contemporary education. As digital communication continues to shape the way that individuals interact and express themselves, it is crucial to assess how this linguistic phenomenon affects college students' ability to produce proficient and coherent written English in academic contexts. By examining the effects of texting language on academic writing, researchers can identify potential challenges, such as the potential erosion of

formal language norms, the compromise of grammatical accuracy, and the impact on overall writing proficiency. Simultaneously, researchers can also uncover potential benefits, such as increased writing fluency, adaptability to evolving language use, and innovative language practices. By conducting a comprehensive analysis of these implications, educators and policymakers can develop informed strategies to bridge the gap between informal digital communication and formal academic writing, fostering effective written expression while acknowledging the dynamics of contemporary language use.

This part focuses on a case study carried out with graduating linguistics students in a Nigerian institution to give a nuanced and culturally particular understanding of the interaction between technology, language, and culture. This case study has its roots in Nigeria's distinctive sociolinguistic environment, where English is the official language and is influenced by several regional tongues and dialects. Additionally, the widespread use of texting language among Nigerian students offers a valuable lens through which to explore the impact of technology-mediated communication on academic writing. By examining the experiences, perceptions, and writing practices of these students, researchers can gain insight into how their frequent use of texting language influences their written production of English in an academic setting. The case study findings provide real-world illustrations of the complex dynamics between technology, language use, and academic writing proficiency, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities that arise in a multicultural and multilingual context. This study advances our knowledge of the relationship between technology, language, and culture in an academic writing context by taking into account the sociocultural aspects and unique experiences of Nigerian students.

In conclusion, the introduction to this chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the focus and objectives, underlining the significance of studying the impact of texting language on written English production in academic settings. It also previews the case study conducted with graduating linguistics students in Nigeria, highlighting its relevance in uncovering the interplay between technology, language, and culture. It offers multidisciplinary insights for educators, researchers, and policymakers. By comprehending the multifaceted effects of texting language on students' academic writing, stakeholders can develop informed strategies to enhance writing proficiency, address potential challenges, and harness the advantages presented by technology-mediated communication in academic contexts.

II. Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are to examine the potential correlation between the utilization of mobile phone text messaging and the prevalence of abbreviations in written work among final-year undergraduate students at a university in Nigeria and to objectively assess the impact of short message service (SMS) language on academic writing in the context of Nigerian university students.

Participants

The respondents in this research study were 62 final-year students (48 female, 14 male) from the Department of Linguistics and African Studies at a university in the south of Nigeria. I specifically selected this group due to their discipline-related familiarity with academic writing and their frequent use of SMS abbreviations. All participants were self-reported as proficient in English, which serves as their first and/or official language, having been exposed to it since kindergarten.

Research Instrument

The primary objective of this study was to explore the correlation between students' consistent utilization of texting language abbreviations and the incorporation of such abbreviations in their written compositions. Data collection encompassed the administration of a questionnaire to students, followed by the meticulous analysis of their notebooks, written assignments, and examination papers to corroborate the information provided in the questionnaire responses. The findings revealed that a significant proportion of participants acknowledged their frequent use of texting language abbreviations, opined that such language deviates from conventional grammar norms, and recognized its detrimental impact on their academic writing proficiency. Moreover, the outcomes indicated that while the majority of respondents experienced the inclination to employ texting language during examinations, a portion exhibited the ability to refrain from such usage, with a fraction continuing to integrate it into their written work. Contrary to prevailing assumptions, the research failed to yield substantial evidence supporting the notion that the pervasive adoption of texting language abbreviations has deleterious consequences on the quality of the respondents' written expressions.

Data Collection

After obtaining ethical clearance from the university authorities and securing informed consent from the students, the questionnaire was distributed during regular classes. All 62 questionnaires were completed and returned immediately, ensuring a high response rate. Additionally, for further analysis and validation of responses,

the research utilized 72 notebooks, 126 written assignments, and 85 examination scripts provided, with permission, by one of the professors who taught the students.

Data Analysis

The research methodology employed in this study utilized a simple percentage analysis to scrutinize the data acquired for the investigation. This analytical approach hinges on the use of percentages to compare various sets of data, thereby facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the data trends. Specifically, the total number of participating students was multiplied by a hundred and subsequently divided by the overall count of SMS abbreviations identified in their submissions to discern the frequency distribution. The outcomes of this analysis were methodically tabulated and graphically illustrated to present the findings in an accessible manner, fostering precise communication of the research results (*see Table 1*). This technique was adeptly employed to investigate the coherence between the responses provided in the questionnaire and the actual content evident in their written submissions. The primary emphasis of this study is directed toward the presentation and evaluation of the questionnaire responses furnished by each participant. These responses have been segmented into two distinct categories: general information pertaining to the respondents and specific details concerning texting language usage. In light of the survey responses, a total of 62 students actively engaged in completing the questionnaire. Among these participants, there were 16 male respondents, 45 female respondents, and one individual who opted not to disclose their gender, indicating a predominance of female respondents in the study cohort. Furthermore, within the sample size of 62 respondents, only one individual fell within the age bracket of 13 to 19 years, while the majority, comprising 56 respondents, were aged between 20 and 30 years. Merely one respondent belonged to the age group of 31 to 40 years, with four participants failing to specify their age range. This demographic breakdown underscores that a significant proportion, amounting to 90.3% of the respondents, were situated within the age range of 20 to 30 years.

Table 1: Questions with respondents' responses and percentages

Question	Yes	No	No response	X	X
Do you send & receive SMSs?	61 (98.4%)	1 (1.6%)	0 (0%)	N/A	N/A
If yes, how often?	Regularly 38 (61.3%)	Sometimes 20 (32.3%)	Rarely 3 (4.8%)	Never 1 (1.6%)	No response 0 (0%)
Do you obey grammatical rules?	5 (8.1%)	47 (75.8%)	6 (6.7%)	3 (4.8%)	1 (1.6%)
Do you use texting language in a formal situation?	5 (8.1%)	21 (33.9%)	12 (19.4%)	22 (35.4)	2 (3.2%)
Do you use texting language in an informal situation?	17 (27.4)	29 (46.8%)	4 (6.5%)	3 (4.8%)	9 (14.5%)
Question	Formal	Informal	Both	No response	X
How did you learn to use SMSs?	6 (6.7%)	18 (29.1%)	27 (43.5%)	11 (17.7%)	
Question	Yes	No	No response	X	X
Do you use texting language when taking notes in class?	29 (46.8%)	24 (38.7%)	9 (14.5%)	N/A	N/A
If yes, do you consider it useful?	29 (46.8%)	13 (20.9%)	20 (32.3%)	N/A	N/A
Are there other ways texting language help you in your academics?	12 (19.4%)	31 (50%)	19 (30.6%)	N/A	N/A
Do you think that the use of texting language as a teaching tool in certain topics could pique your interest?	24 (38.7%)	25 (40.3%)	13 (21%)	N/A	N/A
Are you sometimes tempted to use texting language during examinations?	27 (43.5%)	26 (41.9)	9 (14.6%)	N/A	N/A
Have you ever used texting language during examinations?	10 (16.1%)	42 (67.8%)	10 (16.1%)	N/A	N/A
Question	Yes	No	Not sure	It depends	No response
To this end, would you consider texting language as detrimental to your academics?	22 (35.5%)	12 (19.4%)	1 (1.6%)	17 (27.4%)	10 (16.1%)

Frequency of SMS usage

The frequency of SMS usage was examined among respondents in this study. Table 1 displays the responses obtained regarding the frequency of sending and receiving SMSs. Out of the total 61 respondents, the vast majority (n = 38; 61.3%) indicated that they used SMSs regularly, while 20 respondents mentioned using SMSs occasionally. Interestingly, 58 out of the 61 respondents who reported using SMSs did so quite frequently. In contrast, only three respondents stated that they used SMSs infrequently, and just one respondent claimed to have never used SMSs. It is evident from these findings that the majority of participants were actively engaged in sending and receiving SMS messages, indicating a high level of exposure to SMS usage in this sample.

III. Summary Of The Effect Of Texting Language On Respondents' Academic Performance

A substantial number of students, amounting to 22 (35.5%), expressed strong reservations regarding the impact of texting language on their academic pursuits. Their apprehensions were articulated through a series of poignant reflections, underscoring concerns about the deleterious effects of such informal communication practices on their written English proficiency and academic performance. The sentiments conveyed emphasized the view that the utilization of texting language could potentially compromise the quality of their written work, impede language acquisition, undermine examination success, and project an image of frivolity and lack of dedication. Moreover, the prevalence of texting language was perceived as a hindrance to mastering grammar fundamentals, resulting in diminished scores, failures, and a departure from linguistic norms and conventions. Conversely, a smaller cohort comprising 12 students (19.4%) adopted a contrasting stance, asserting that texting language did not pose a threat to their academic endeavors. Their rationales centered on the perceived benefits of texting language in facilitating computational skills, enhancing computer literacy, and even speculating on its potential normalization as an acceptable mode of communication. Notably, a solitary participant (1.6%) expressed ambivalence towards the issue, citing concerns about the pervasive nature of texting language and its potential spillover into formal academic contexts, particularly during examinations. Additionally, a contingent of 17 students (27.4%) adopted a nuanced perspective, contending that the evaluation of texting language's impact was contingent upon contextual factors and individual adaptability. Their elucidations highlighted the dual nature of texting language, acknowledging its utility in casual settings such as note-taking and short message exchange while cautioning against its adverse implications for spelling proficiency and examination performance. Ultimately, the prevailing sentiment among a majority of students reinforced the assertion that texting language could exert a detrimental influence on academic pursuits, underscoring the imperative for vigilance and discernment in navigating the linguistic landscape of contemporary communication practices.

IV. Research Limitations

The study's limitations include its focus on final-year linguistics students from a single university, which may limit generalizability to broader student populations. Additionally, relying on self-reported responses could introduce response bias. Finally, by adopting a quantitative approach and utilizing a well-structured questionnaire alongside document analysis, this research contributes to the complex relationship between SMS language abbreviations and academic writing. Revealing the impact of texting language on written work among Nigerian university students, this research highlights the need for further exploration of language dynamics in contemporary communication contexts.

V. Unraveling The Controversy: Examining Conflicting Theoretical Arguments And Viewpoints On Texting Language And Academic Writing

This section aims to present and analyze the conflicting perspectives surrounding the influence of texting language on academic writing, with the goal of gaining a deeper understanding of its potential effects on students' language skills and writing proficiency. The influence of texting language on academic writing has sparked a heated debate among scholars and researchers. Unraveling this controversy is essential to gain a better understanding of the effects of texting language on students' academic writing skills. I investigate the complexities of this subject and explore the need for more research by analyzing the many arguments and points of view from reliable sources.

Some researchers argue that frequent use of texting language negatively affects students' language skills, including grammar, vocabulary, and spelling (Plester et al., 2009; Waldron et al. 2015; Rosen et al., 2010; Jolly, 2017; Thurlow, 2006; Grace, Kemp, Martin, & Parrila, 2013). Others suggest that the use of texting language enhances students' language creativity and flexibility, leading to more engaging and expressive writing (Wood et al., 2014; Thurlow, 2006). In terms of formality and academic writing norms, critics contend that texting language undermines the formality and precision required in academic writing, potentially leading to a decline in overall writing quality (Cingel & Sundar, 2012; Sheehy, & Holliman, 2018). Supporters of texting as writing argue that students can differentiate between informal texting language and formal writing contexts, adapting their language use accordingly (Al-Kadi, 2019; Ta'amneh, 2017; Javed and Mahmood, 2016). In the case of cognitive processing

and linguistic adaptation, some researchers propose that the cognitive processes involved in texting language use may hinder students' ability to switch to formal writing conventions (Benkorichi, 2017; Boştinã-Bratu, 2015). Conversely, other studies suggest that students possess the cognitive flexibility to adapt their language skills based on the communicative context, demonstrating the ability to switch between texting language and formal writing (Siqi-Liu, & Egner, 2020; Braem, & Egner, 2018).

Further into the controversy, there exists a contentious debate regarding the potentially detrimental effects of frequent texting language use on users' linguistic development. Critics argue that it represents a corruption of the standardized form of language and attribute this negative perspective to texters' perceived laziness (Humphry, 2007) in using emoticons and texting language. Concerns are raised about the implications for students' grammar and punctuation proficiency (Humphry, 2007). Furthermore, Humphry (2007) highlights the issue of ambiguity associated with text message abbreviations, exemplified by the multiple interpretations of "LOL" depending on context. Moreover, the potential confusion between texting spellings and conventional English spellings can lead to an increased prevalence of spelling mistakes (Pullum, 2012). These concerns have been further amplified by media reports of school children employing texting language in their essays, as exemplified by articles such as "Examiner's warning over exams culture" and "Is txt mightier than the word" from the BBC (2002, 2003).

In contrast, proponents of texting language offer a counterargument. Crystal argues against the notion that texting language is inherently detrimental to language, citing its historical basis and the presence of abbreviations in various domains (Crystal, 2008). He contends that errors observed in children's schoolwork cannot be solely attributed to texting language, as it is used by both children and adults, and the errors are not as prominent in adult work (Crystal, 2008). Crystal asserts that texting language, far from implying low literacy, may even enhance users' literacy skills and competencies (Crystal, 2008).

Supporting Crystal's viewpoint, Freudenberg's (2012) study examining the written work of 100 students found that the number of errors attributed to texting language was negligible, with no instances of emoticon usage. Additionally, errors identified were not exclusive to texting language but existed prior to its emergence (Freudenberg, 2012). Similarly, proponents argue that the evolution of "textese" is intricately linked to a solid foundation in grammar and phonetics, positing that it should not adversely affect students' grammar skills (Grace, Kemp, Martin, & Parrila, 2015). This perspective suggests that students, if properly taught, can discern between slang, texting language, and standard English, employing them appropriately in their respective contexts (Grace, Kemp, Martin, & Parrila, 2015).

In Nigeria, the ongoing debate regarding the potential negative impact of SMS abbreviations on students' writing has gained considerable momentum, coinciding with the country's substantial increase in cell phone usage since the introduction of the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) in 2001 (Winzker, Southwood & Huddleston, 2009; Amos, 2018). Educators at the University of Benin City have expressed concerns about students' extensive use of abbreviations in their written work, attributing it to the widespread adoption of texting language (Amos, 2018). Given these circumstances, it becomes crucial to conduct a study to investigate whether the frequent use of SMS influences the utilization of SMS abbreviations in students' written work, as widely reported.

VI. Results Of Findings

The findings of this study support our hypothesis that any correlation between texting and the use of abbreviations in students' work may be minimal. Contrary to initial expectations, the analysis of data collected from questionnaires and examination scripts revealed interesting insights. While a significant proportion of respondents claimed they could refrain from using texting language abbreviations during examinations, the actual use of such abbreviations in their written assignments was even lower. This discrepancy between self-reported behavior and actual practice indicates a level of awareness and adaptability among students when it comes to formal writing requirements. Interestingly, a small percentage of students did admit to using texting language during examinations, yet the prevalence of such usage in their test scripts was higher than expected. This discrepancy underscores the nuanced relationship between informal texting practices and formal writing conventions. The fact that SMS-related abbreviations were not prominent in written assignments suggests that students recognize the distinct contexts in which different forms of language are appropriate. Moreover, the presence of standard abbreviations like *i.e.*, *etc.*, and *e.g.* in examination scripts demonstrates that students are capable of distinguishing between formal and informal language usage. The absence of widespread SMS abbreviations in academic writing refutes the notion that texting negatively influences students' writing skills. Rather, it highlights their ability to make conscious decisions about language use based on context and audience expectations. Overall, these findings align with previous research and underscore the importance of language adaptation in academic settings. Students' ability to navigate between informal texting practices and formal writing norms reflects a nuanced understanding of language diversity and context-specific communication. This

study contributes valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on the impact of digital communication on academic writing proficiency.

The Impact of Texting Language on Students' Written Work: Insights from Nigerian Higher Education.

This section presents a comprehensive examination of the impact of texting language on students' written work in the context of Nigerian higher education. Drawing from the case study conducted among graduating linguistics students, this section synthesizes the key findings and explores the factors that influence students' decision to use or refrain from using texting language abbreviations. The aim is to provide nuanced insights into the intricate dynamics of technology, language, and culture within this academic setting.

The following noteworthy findings emerged from the study. Students self-reported their ability to refrain from texting language abbreviations, and an examination of their written work revealed that a substantial majority of the participants were able to abstain from using texting language abbreviations during examinations (Braithmoh, 2020), with 94.4% of students employing texting language in notetaking, 45.2% utilizing it for assignments, and 30.6% employing it during examinations. This finding suggests a conscious and self-regulated effort by students to adapt their language use according to the formal demands of academic assessment. Exploring the factors influencing the use of abbreviations, the investigation uncovers the intricate interplay of various factors that influence students' decision-making process regarding the incorporation or omission of texting language abbreviations in their written work.

Key Factors from Data Analysis

Importance and Purpose of Writing

The participants indicated that the perceived significance and purpose of their writing strongly influenced their inclination to employ or eschew abbreviations (Braithmoh, 2020). When the writing task was deemed academically consequential, students exhibited a greater propensity to refrain from using texting language abbreviations, prioritizing formality and precision. Similar to other forms of informal language use, such as pidgin or colloquial language, students demonstrate the ability to abstain from using texting language. As noted by Winzker et al. (2009: 13), "SMS-speak is informal and deviates from the standard written language that is formally taught in schools; however, adolescents – although very proficient in SMS-speak – do acquire a sensitivity towards different varieties of the languages which they speak during their time in the school system and appear able to gauge the appropriate use of language in formal situations." According to Thurlow et al. (2004: 124), the use of Standard English as the accepted standard for formal writing, such as college essays or business letters, differs significantly from how language is used in everyday spoken conversations. The spoken and written languages differ noticeably because people rarely talk and write in the same way. This difference is especially true of the spoken language, which is influenced by the internet among other things. This difference highlights the dynamic nature of language and its ongoing evolution.

Linguistic Competence

The student participants in this study seem to have a high language proficiency and a greater propensity to avoid texting language abbreviations, striving to uphold conventional writing standards (Braithmoh, 2020). However, the findings reveal the presence of texting language abbreviations in the students' written works, albeit to a limited extent. While this finding may suggest that texting language has some influence on students' written productions, it is important to note that the evidence from this study is insufficient to support definitive claims regarding its positive or negative impact. The results neither indicate an improvement in students' writing due to texting language nor do they provide evidence to the contrary. In comparison, Van Dijk et al. (2016) study found a connection between texting language and students' overall grammar performance. Their study suggests that learners analyze sentences to determine which elements to include or omit in different contexts, thus continually enhancing their grammatical knowledge and performance (Van Dijk et al., 2016: 17).

Sociocultural Factors

The impact of sociocultural factors on students' language choices was a prominent aspect highlighted in this case study. The findings demonstrate that peer norms and the prevailing language practices within students' social circles significantly influence their decision to use or refrain from using abbreviations in their written work. This observation emphasizes the profound influence of culture and social dynamics in shaping language preferences, including the integration of texting language into academic writing (Braithmoh, 2020). Furthermore, this study highlights the role of social identity in language use among students.

Students often adopt linguistic practices that align with their social groups, seeking acceptance and conformity within their communities (Hogg, 2003; Nawaz, 2011). This wish reinforces the notion that language choices are not solely individual decisions but are deeply intertwined with social factors and the desire for belongingness. The diffusion of texting language into academic writing can also be attributed to the pervasive

influence of digital communication technologies on contemporary society. The prevalence of text messaging and online communication platforms has created a new communication landscape that shapes language practices across various domains (Crystal, 2011). The integration of texting language in academic writing can be viewed as a manifestation of the evolving linguistic landscape influenced by technological advancements and the changing communicative norms of the digital era.

The findings derived from the case study conducted among Nigerian linguistics students reveal the impact of texting language on students' written work. While a significant number of students reported the ability to abstain from using texting language abbreviations during examinations, several factors were found to influence their decision-making: the importance and purpose of writing, linguistic competence, and sociocultural factors emerged as influential determinants of students' utilization or avoidance of abbreviations. The results of this investigation contribute to our understanding of the intricate dynamics between technology, language, and culture in the context of academic writing within Nigerian higher education.

As we have explored the impact of texting language on students' academic writing skills, the next section will focus on the strategies that students employ to address the challenges of texting language in the academic context.

VII. Controlling The Urge: Students' Ability To Manage Abbreviations In Academic Writing

This section aims to explore students' ability to manage abbreviations in academic writing, focusing on the role of self-regulation in resisting the temptation to use texting language abbreviations. It examines the factors influencing students' decision-making and provides insights into the strategies they employ to strike a balance between informal texting language and the formal requirements of academic writing. Self-regulation plays a pivotal role in students' ability to manage the urge to use abbreviations in academic writing. It involves the conscious effort to control one's linguistic choices and align them with the expectations of formal academic discourse. Jansen et al. (2019) indicate that self-regulatory skills are essential for students to resist the temptation of using abbreviations associated with texting language and ensure their writing aligns with the formal language norms expected in academic contexts. According to the findings of the study conducted by Braimoh (2020), 43.6% of the students expressed an urge to use abbreviations during examinations. However, the actual usage of abbreviations during examinations was lower, with only 30.6% of students implementing them. This discrepancy suggests that the frequent use of texting language among students influences their writing behavior. The study found that 69.4% of students were successful in restraining themselves from abbreviating during exams, proving that some people are able to manage their urge to abbreviate. This finding suggests that students demonstrate an understanding of the formal requirements of examinations and adjust their writing style, accordingly, recognizing that texting language abbreviations used for notetaking are unsuitable for assignments and exams.

This research findings align with Winzker et al. (2009:12). The results further indicate that students incorporated SMS abbreviations in their notes, written assignments, and examination scripts. However, upon analysis, I observed that the abbreviations used in written assignments were mostly normal abbreviations accepted in standard English dictionaries or within the field of linguistics, which is the student's area of study. There were no instances where written assignments solely contained SMS abbreviations, except for the abbreviation "D" for "the," which was found in only one student's work. On the other hand, the examination scripts contained abbreviations like "i.e.," "etc.," and "e.g.," which are accepted in formal writing.

These results parallel earlier studies like those conducted by Plester et al. (2011), which showed a marginally significant correlation between learners' texting ratio and their performance on a vocabulary test. The texting ratio did not significantly predict variation in vocabulary or grammar scores, according to the research by Van Dijk et al. (2016:16).

Notably, in the present study, despite 43.6% of students indicating an urge to use texting language abbreviations during examinations, approximately 54.8% of the written assignments and examination scripts contained no abbreviations. If the negative influence of SMS usage on writing were true, a higher proportion of students would have been expected to utilize a significant amount of texting language, given that over 95% of students reported regular SMS usage.

Students' decision-making processes about the usage of texting abbreviations in academic writing are influenced by some factors. First, the purpose and seriousness of the writing task emerge as significant determinants. When students perceive their writing tasks as high-stakes, formal, or evaluative, they tend to be more cautious and avoid using abbreviations (Durkin et al., 2011). Conversely, in more informal writing contexts, such as online discussions or personal reflections, students may feel a greater inclination to incorporate abbreviations. Second, students employ a range of strategies to navigate the tension between the convenience of texting language and the expectations of formal academic writing. One strategy involves the conscious oscillation between texting language and formal language registers, adjusting their linguistic choices to match the specific requirements of the writing task (Tagg, 2011). Third, students may also establish self-imposed rules or guidelines, setting limits on the use of abbreviations to maintain a formal writing style (Wood et al., 2014). Moreover,

engaging in thorough self-editing and proofreading processes allows students to identify and rectify instances of inappropriate or excessive use of abbreviations.

This study enhances our understanding of students' approaches to managing abbreviations in academic writing by providing insights into their self-regulation abilities and decision-making processes. By referencing these aspects, future educators can gain valuable guidance on fostering effective writing practices and assisting students in meeting the rigorous language demands of academic contexts, all while acknowledging the impact of texting language. Armed with this knowledge, educators can implement focused initiatives to foster critical thinking and language skills that enable students to decide for themselves when to use abbreviations properly.

By explicitly addressing the nuances of formal language requirements and the influence of texting language, educators can help students strike a balance between the convenience of abbreviations and the need for clarity, precision, and adherence to academic conventions. Providing students with the main skills that they require to deal with the difficulties created by the use of abbreviations in academic writing.

By creating an inclusive learning environment that acknowledges and addresses the impact of texting language, educators can foster students' growth as proficient and adaptable writers, capable of engaging with diverse communication contexts. This research underscores the significance of incorporating a nuanced understanding of students' management of abbreviations in academic writing within educational practices. By equipping educators with evidence-based insights, the study supports the advancement of effective pedagogical approaches that empower students to excel in their academic writing endeavors while staying mindful of the evolving linguistic landscape shaped by texting language.

VIII. Texting Language Integration: Assessing Its Impact On Students' Written Works

The main goal of this section is to investigate the carry-over effect of texting language on students' written works in academic contexts. It aims to assess whether the integration of texting language elements influences the overall quality and effectiveness of students' writing, exploring both potential negative influences and potential benefits associated with its use. The section recognizes the need for a balanced evaluation of how the presence of texting language impacts students' writing practices and calls for informed pedagogical strategies to address these influences and enhance students' proficiency in formal writing contexts. The carry-over effect of texting language on students' written works extends beyond casual communication. As such, there is a need to investigate whether the presence of texting language influences the overall quality and effectiveness of students' written work in academic contexts. By providing a detailed and balanced assessment of the influence, this section examines both the potential negative effects and the potential benefits associated with the integration of texting language in students' written works.

The ubiquity of texting language among students has raised apprehensions regarding its impact on formal writing and the need to investigate whether the linguistic characteristics and stylistic norms inherent in texting language manifest in students' written works, with potential implications for coherence, grammar, vocabulary, and overall writing proficiency. Notably, Thurlow's (2006) research illuminates the phenomenon of linguistic carry-over and the metadiscursive construction of language in new media, offering insights into how elements of texting language can permeate different written communication genres, including academic writing. Our exploration provides valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of language transfer. It opens avenues for further examination of how the integration of texting language affects students' writing practices, as well as the development of pedagogical strategies to address these influences and enhance students' proficiency in formal writing contexts.

The presence of texting language in students' written works raises questions about its impact on the overall quality and effectiveness of their writing. Critics argue that the use of abbreviations, acronyms, non-standard spellings, and unconventional syntax may hinder clarity, coherence, and adherence to formal language norms (Crystal, 2008; Waldron et al., 2015). Critics express concerns that students may struggle to differentiate between formal and informal registers, leading to potential confusion for readers or evaluators. Furthermore, the perceived informality of texting language may undermine the professionalism and credibility of students' written works.

It is essential to consider diverse perspectives. Some studies suggest that incorporating elements of texting language, such as emoticons, abbreviations within appropriate contexts, or informal discourse markers, can enhance expression, creativity, and engagement in written communication (Danet & Herring, 2007). These studies argue that students may strategically use texting language to convey informality or to connect with their audience, especially in more interactive or informal writing genres.

To provide a comprehensive evaluation of the impact, this section presents a balanced assessment, considering both the potential negative influences and potential benefits of texting language integration. It acknowledges that the excessive use of texting language and the disregard for formal language norms can undermine the clarity, coherence, and professionalism of students' written works. Students who heavily rely on texting language may struggle to communicate complex ideas effectively or fail to convey their arguments in a

structured and organized manner. On the other hand, it also recognizes that judicious and strategic integration of texting language elements can foster communicative effectiveness and audience engagement, particularly in contexts where informality is appropriate. Some researchers argue that when used sparingly and purposefully, elements of texting language can add a conversational tone, convey emotional nuances, or create a sense of immediacy (Crystal, 2008; Danet & Herring, 2007). This adaptability may be advantageous in certain writing genres, such as personal narratives, online discussions, or informal reflections, where the goal is to establish a connection with the reader.

Exploring the impact of texting language integration on students' written work examines the pervasive influence of texting language beyond casual communication and its implications for the quality and effectiveness of students' written works. It offers a comprehensive and nuanced assessment, examining both the potential negative influences and potential benefits associated with the integration of texting language. Recognizing the intricate involvement of the incorporation of texting language is paramount for informed pedagogical practices and the development of effective writing instruction. By examining this phenomenon, our exploration contributes to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by the integration of texting language in students' written expression, paving the way for informed educational approaches that cater to the evolving linguistic landscape.

IX. The Search For Clarity: Examining The Relationship Between Texting Language And Students' Writing Proficiency

The main goal of this section is to examine critically the relationship between texting language and students' writing proficiency. It aims to assess whether texting language has a positive or negative effect on writing skills by conducting a comprehensive literature review and analyzing existing evidence. The section emphasizes the need for further research, more robust methodologies, and considerations of various linguistic and sociocultural factors to gain a more certain understanding of how texting language influences students' writing abilities. Given the ongoing discourse and assertions regarding the impact of texting language on students' writing abilities, it is imperative to conduct a thorough examination of the existing evidence and assess whether texting language has a positive or negative effect on writing skills. Through a comprehensive literature review, this analysis underscores the requirement for additional research and empirical data to make definitive assertions regarding the correlation between texting language and students' proficiency in writing. The influence of texting language on students' writing proficiency has sparked numerous claims and debates. Critics argue that the use of texting language, characterized by abbreviations, acronyms, and non-standard spellings, may lead to a decline in writing skills, hindering students' ability to communicate effectively in formal settings (Wood et al., 2015; Plester, Wood, & Joshi, 2009). These scholars express concerns that the abbreviated nature of texting language may encourage a lack of precision, coherence, and grammatical accuracy in students' written work.

However, some researchers suggest that the influence of texting language on writing proficiency may not be as detrimental as initially believed. They argue that students possess the ability to differentiate between formal and informal language registers, adapting their writing style accordingly (Al-Kadi, 2019; Ta'amneh, 2017, Tagg, 2011 Braimoh, 2020). Furthermore, studies have shown that students often demonstrate code-switching abilities, effectively utilizing texting language in informal contexts while adhering to formal language norms in academic settings (Drouin, 2011; Rosen, Chang, Erwin, Carrier, & Cheever, 2010). To evaluate the relationship between texting language and students' writing proficiency, a critical analysis of the available evidence is essential. Several studies have explored the impact of texting language on writing skills, employing various research methodologies, and assessing different aspects of writing proficiency. For example, research by Weldron et al., (2011) investigated the effects of texting language on children's informal writing and found limited evidence of negative impact. In a study by Drouin and Driver (2014), they analyzed messages written by American undergraduates and discovered a negative association between texting density and reading/spelling ability. Conversely, studies by Plester et al. (2009) and Rosen et al. (2010) revealed associations between frequent use of texting language and reduced grammatical accuracy and spelling proficiency.

However, it is important to acknowledge the constraints and difficulties that come with examining this relationship. The diverse linguistic and sociocultural contexts in which texting language is used, as well as individual differences among students, pose challenges in drawing definitive conclusions. Small sample sizes and the use of self-report measures in some research also highlight the need for more trustworthy procedures to provide findings that can be applied broadly. More studies must clarify the relationship between texting language and students' writing proficiency given the paucity of conclusive findings in the available body of evidence. Future studies should adopt longitudinal designs, encompass larger sample sizes, and utilize robust measurement tools that encompass the diverse dimensions of writing proficiency. Furthermore, investigations should take into account moderating factors such as age, language background, and genre-specific writing to acquire a more nuanced comprehension of how texting language influences writing. This comprehensive approach will contribute to a deeper understanding of the impact of texting language and inform effective pedagogical strategies.

Examining the relationship between texting language and students' writing proficiency entails a critical analysis of the ongoing debates and claims regarding the influence of texting language on writing skills. While critics express concerns about its potential negative impact, existing research suggests that students possess the ability to navigate diverse language registers. However, the available data are still inconclusive, focusing on the need for a more in-depth investigation to get a more certain understanding of this relationship. Robust studies encompassing a large sample size would offer valuable insights into the proportion of students affected by frequent texting language use and the presence of significant variations. The need for taking into account numerous psychological, social, cultural, and linguistic aspects that could contribute to the consequences of regular texting language use cannot be overstated. A multi-pronged approach would enable the identification and categorization of individuals who are more likely to be impacted by such usage, thereby enhancing our comprehension of the phenomenon. Such research endeavors would yield generalizable findings and facilitate the identification of potential predictive factors associated with the effects of frequent texting language use on individuals' writing proficiency.

X. Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to explore the correlation between students' consistent utilization of texting language abbreviations and the incorporation of such abbreviations in their written compositions. Data collection encompassed the administration of a questionnaire to students, followed by the meticulous analysis of their notebooks, written assignments, and examination papers to corroborate the information provided in the questionnaire responses. The findings revealed that a significant proportion of participants acknowledged their frequent use of texting language abbreviations, opined that such language deviates from conventional grammar norms, and recognized its detrimental impact on their academic writing proficiency. Moreover, the outcomes indicated that while the majority of respondents experienced the inclination to employ texting language during examinations, a portion exhibited the ability to refrain from such usage, with a fraction continuing to integrate it into their written work. Contrary to prevailing assumptions, the research failed to yield substantial evidence supporting the notion that the pervasive adoption of texting language abbreviations has deleterious consequences on the quality of the respondents' written expressions.

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