



TEXTING ABBREVIATIONS AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Texting language is a new language variety that appears with the Internet and digital media. This language has developed a unique style that requires new terminology, which separates it from daily language. It is very common between Internet users, bloggers, chatter, gamers, and teenagers in general. Some people consider such a language variety as an informal language. Linguists, educators, and language teachers should take care of this new trend. It has some influences on the formal language and academic writing. I am interested in studying this new linguistic trend and review the literature. I have some question about it depending on some linguistic theories and educational perspectives. My goals are to find out about the role of internet, media, and technology to teach English in EFL context and to distinguish between formal and informal written forms and to compare between how English native speakers and non-native speakers of English deal with this language.

Keywords: Texting language, Language abbreviations, ESL, EFL.

Introduction

The Internet has changed people lives, speech styles, jobs, communication, and education. Modern cell phones, digital cameras, and other new devices have affected the way we use language. People communicate with each other through electronic mail, instant messaging, and texts. They might “chat” in different virtual rooms, join interesting online groups, comment on news websites, and write in blogs and “wikis.” These practices construct new forms of “discourse, identity, authorship, and language” (Kern, 2006, p.183). The English language is widely used on the Internet and is considered to be the most common Internet language. English language has many new expressions and abbreviations that appear on the Internet. These Internet expressions have grown in popularity. People use several terms to describe them, such as texting language, textese, Internet language, digital language, and chatting language. Such expressions build up a new variety of English that is very common among Internet users, bloggers, chatters, gamers, and teenagers in general. It is considered an informal written language, much like slang, which is an informal spoken variety of the language. This paper uses the term “texting language” (TL) to mean all these kinds of messages, expressions, and abbreviations.

TL has progressed from standard messaging in instant message and electronic mail, to texting in cell phones, recently to short microblogging on some sites such as Facebook, Flickr, and Twitter. The current trend in microblogging style can be described as an abbreviated written form that follows some character restrictions. Such expressions and abbreviations started when cell phone companies restricted the number of characters in every text. This restriction led to development of a new form of discourse, which I call a “technological discourse.” This discourse exists also in social networking services such as at “wall posts”

in Facebook and “hashtags” in Twitter. Such discourse developed a linguistic form that led to the creation of orthographic conventions. This form depends on shared social references in order to use emoticons (to be defined later) for expressing emotional states. According to Thurlow (2003), these expressions compose a linguistic unique style that is “reinventing conventional linguistic and communicative practices” (p. 1).

Communication through the Internet changes at a rapid rate. It has become a standard form of communication. Adolescents and teenagers use texting language extensively to communicate. Smartphone possession has been growing in a speed rate. These facts generate some concerns about the effects on children’s language. Parents, teachers, educators, and linguists question the consequences of children’s use of texting language on their understanding of English grammar and their use of standard written forms. Some questions exist about children literacy skills. Other questions focus on different topics such as language change, linguistic diffusion, and linguistic perspective.

This paper contributes to the research on texting language. It attempts to determine how texting language affects language acquisition and students’ literacy and writing skills. It answers the research question, which is “what are the effects of texting language on English language learning?” This paper is fourfold. First, it reviews the literature about texting language. Second, it describes my limited collected data and examples of texting language. Third, it discusses and analyzes these data from linguistic perspectives and educational perspectives. The final part presents pedagogical implications and academic practices for English language learners. This paper might be a map to deal with texting expressions in general and in learning contexts in particular. Its purpose is not to support any linguistic theories about the effects of texting expressions on children’s language.

Literature Review

Communication through technological devices and the Internet has changed radically during the past two decades. There is no doubt that TL is vastly different from language used any place else. TL has become a unique form of language that is full of reduced expressions. This form has special features that make it more sociable and immediate than most forms of written communication. It sits in between spoken and written forms of language. According to Gong and Ooi (2008, p. 917), “computer communication has not only expanded our conceptions about human communication by offering options that have previously been unavailable, but also blurred the line between speech and writing.” Such communication brings convenience and quickness to the modern world.

Although these expressions have a short history, their influence on language has produced a great deal of debate. TL have generated an enormous level of interest among educators and researchers. Copious research exists on the effect of texting in journals, newspapers, and on the Internet. Some online articles address the positive and negative impacts of text messaging on different aspects of academia and social life. However, I have not found many books that focus on this phenomenon. Yet some editing books include chapters on the topic. The most well-known literary work so far on texting messages is in David Crystal’s book “*Txtng: The Gr8 Db8*.” In general, literature about TL has brought three main camps of thought about the effects of TL on language learning.

The first camp of thought centers on some negative relationships that have been noted. Some educators believe TL is a bane of technology and the Internet because it has negative impacts on students’ communication skills, particularly on their writing skills. Therefore, they believe that literacy skills may be under threat. Thurlow, Lengel, and Tomic (2004) “go as far as suggesting such terminology could be harmful” because “children may be losing their linguistic ability as a result.” Rosen, Chang, Erwin, Carrier, and Cheever (2010) state that “regular use of the texting service can impact negatively on the everyday language of texters.” They found that the frequent use of texting expressions was related to poorer scores on a formal writing task among young U.S. adults who have some or no college education. De Jonge and Kemp (2012) found that Australian undergraduates’ poorer performance on spelling and reading assessments was associated with frequent text-messaging and greater use of texting devices.

Studies have produced mixed results, depending on the literacy tasks used in the samples. Texting expressions are correlated negatively with some skills rather than other skills in each study. For example, Grace, Kemp, Martin, and Parrila (in press) found that texting messages were associated negatively with spelling, but not reading, in Canadian students. These studies showed a general negative relationship between the use of texting expressions in communication and scores on grammar assessment. Furthermore, text messaging destroys the user's ability to use crucial mechanics of writing, such as grammar, syntax, punctuation, and capitalization. This argument negates the positive impact of texting expressions as generalized by David Crystal.

Crystal leads the second camp to deal with texting as a blessing, rather than a harm, to student literacy. Texting messages and expressions enhance student literacy and communication skills. Text messaging is not just writing. It can include editing to format the messages into a limited and precise characters before they send them out. The more students write, the more they improve upon their writing skills. Teachers can use the texting phenomenon as a perfect example to teach language change and innovation.

Crystal (2008) disproves the general opinion that texting language and its profuse use of abbreviations and slang can impact negatively on student language and literacy. Text messaging is not the threat many fear it is. His book cites six main points. First, fewer than 10% of words in a typical text abbreviated. Second, abbreviating is not a new practice because it has been used for decades. Third, children and adults alike use text language, the latter more likely to do so. Fourth, students do not usually abbreviate in their homework and examinations. Fifth, texting cannot cause bad spelling because people must know how to spell before they text. Sixth, texting improves people's literacy because it provides people with the opportunity to engage in the language through reading and writing.

The third camp doubts whether texting really has any effect, positive or negative, on literacy skills and language grammar at all. This group assumes that texting messages have neither positive nor negative impact on student writing. This group looks at texting message as another language. Because learning a new language does not affect students' ability to use English grammar, it would be incorrect to conclude that text messaging can affect their grammar. They provide strong evidence by comparing texting language to slang. They state that slang words do not affect English grammar. English grammar has not changed over the years although each generation creates its own jargon. If students learn the basics in English class, they will distinguish between "slang, texting lingo, and correct English" (Russell in Dansieh, 2011, p. 223).

The research is still quite restricted about this phenomenon. More longitudinal data is needed to examine the issue of connection for this population, especially with grammatical understanding. This area of written and spoken language development must be observed comprehensively. TL frequently display transgressions of grammatical conventions, such as omitting capitals and apostrophes like in "im well," and misspelling of words that are determined by grammar like using "ur" for your or you're.

Methodology

For the purpose of this paper, I collected data from different websites. I searched common social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter. I looked at comments section in the New York Times Magazine, Albuquerque Journal, and CNN. I went through many reviews about video games in several digital games websites. During my investigation, I focused on common abbreviations. I collected some data listed in Appendix A. Typing on these websites with computer keyboard as the input methods. This compelled me to think about texting and cell phone messages that are composed on a number keypad. I thought to include more data about texting messages, where the abbreviated expressions started and grew. I added some common expressions used through text messages in Appendix B.

After I started analyzing the data, I decided to dig in deeper and search for useful source or article to guide my analysis. I accidently discovered a website that has a list of texting abbreviations. It is "Netlingo." This encouraged me to look for another website that has collections of chat acronyms and text

message shorthand. I found Internetslang, Gaming Slang, Chat Slang Abbreviations, Textually, Text-symbols, Netspeak, Urban Dictionary Netspeak, and Mobile. These websites include most of the virtual world vocabulary, texting language, web abbreviations, Internet slang, and emoticons. In addition, I found much of my collected data in these websites. Researchers, educators, linguists, and others interested in this topic can rely on them to conduct their studies.

Looking at texting language in depth reveals different types of abbreviations used to communicate. Although it is mostly a sound-based, or phonological form of spelling, I coded the data and categorized them into four types: initialization, substitution or alphanumeric, spelling and writing error, and pictograms or logograms. Some typos are not included in my coding. We cannot consider all abbreviations the same although some similarities exist. People might classify these abbreviations into different categories. Much of the literature on text messaging lists different typical features yet does not quote specific research or evidence. Researchers lists of features and categories seem to correspond with common belief. For example, Crystal (2008) followed the same trend in his observation and analysis.

Initials and acronyms exist in the data as the most common types of abbreviation. An acronym is a pronounceable word that is formed from the initial letters in a phrase, such as “LOL” for “laughing out loud” and “YOYO” for “you’re on your own.” An initial is a group of initial letters used as an abbreviation for a name or expression, with each letter pronounced separately, not like a word, such as “GLE” to mean “good luck everyone.” A texter might write “TWIMC” to mean “to whom it may concern” or “TTG” to mean “time to go.”

Substitution is another type of texting abbreviation. It means to substitute a letter by another letter, a group of letters by a letter, or by a number. This reduces redundant letters and makes substitution to improve correspondence with the spoken word. It attempts to get rid of difficulties of current spelling. People simply replace letters in some words by making relatively few substitutions of letters or sounds compared such as “awreddi” for “already,” “thnx” for “thanks.” This practice also uses real pronounced sounds to replace the spelling letters, and irrelevant sounds to pronunciation, such as “fotograf” in “photograph.” Texters sometimes use numbers to replace letters, such as “4got” for “forgot” and “L8” instead of “late.” Texting expressions comprise many alphanumeric combinations such as “2d8” for “to date” and “B4” for “before.”

The third type of this language is writing and spelling errors. It might contain different kinds of errors. Letter omission is a common strategy in the interest of brevity in texting language, particularly with unstressed vowels or diphthongs. For example, “abt” to mean “about,” “lvl” to mean “level.” One can find deleted vowels in stressed syllables, such as “syml” for “symbol” and deleted consonants such as “shud” for “should.” Most doubled consonants are written as a single consonant, such as “holy” for “holly” and “spel” for “spell.” In fact, online chatter seems to eliminate all double letters.

Texting language also involves the use of pictograms and logograms, which are the fourth type of abbreviations in my data. Logograms are either numbers, letters, characters, graphic units, or combinations used to represent a word or a phonetic sound. For example, “@” to represent “at,” “555” to represent “laughing,” and “20” to show “location.” Pictograms are emoticons that are symbols consisting of characters that represent paralinguistic features, such as facial expressions like ☹, ☺, and ☺.

It is worth mentioning that there are some overlaps between the categories that I follow to code my data. Some abbreviations have more than one explanation. In other words, it is not simple to categorize and analyze certain expressions because they contradict with each other. Some letters and sounds are shortened in different ways. For example, “Y” and “U” represent “you.” “U” is the sound representation of the whole word while “Y” is the initial of the word. The same appears with “see,” represented by “C” and “S.” The data show that “thank you” is expressed by “TY,” “TU,” or “TQ.” “Later” is expressed by “L8R” or “LTR,” and “tonight” is abbreviated by “2ng” or “2nt.” On the other hand, some expressions include more than a type of abbreviation such as “havta,” which is “have to.” That includes spelling errors and sound substitution.

Analysis and Discussion

The data have many examples of texting expressions and linguistic shortenings. Analyzing should start with inspecting the current communicative forms and recent technology. This will set the foundations for the next part of this paper. Texting language has many forms because technological devices enable people to innovate many ways to use language. In addition, the combination of several existing forms into multimedia formats helps us combine various types of media for the purpose of communication (Bodomo, 2009). We can integrate text, images, audio, and video features into any piece of writing. Recent devices and applications give us more flexibility in communicative situations, such as a real-time communication in Skype or Internet telephone services that include both written and oral communicative types. These devices allow people to contribute in or engage with the same topic regardless of where they live. Such communication and flexibility lead to a unique language style. This language exists with new expressions and terminology that distinguish it from daily language.

This part of this paper discusses this unique style, which is full of abbreviations and looks at the reasons behind them. One of the main points about abbreviations is that, over history, they are common in language. English has many examples of abbreviation, acronyms, and initials. Contractions are a part of regular spoken language by most speakers of English and frequently occur in many genres of written language (Crystal, 2008). Therefore, this phenomenon is well known among linguists and researchers as well as among language users and speakers. This paper examines the use and frequent popularity of abbreviations in texting language and its pedagogical implications in language learning.

TL originated, for the most part, with cell phone texts. Crystal (2008) and Baron (2008) state that text messages are limited to 160 characters. For longer messages, one can stitch two messages together. But, this costs the sender more money. Texting abbreviations are used in different websites, social networking pages such as Facebook, Flickr, chatting rooms, MSN messenger, discussion forums, and comment sections. They continue to be used in Twitter as a recent micro-blogging tool. Twitter is an Internet-based messaging service limited to 140 characters. The nature of texting raises questions, such as how does character limitation affect text messaging and cause linguistic creativity?

Character limitation is the commonality of most popular messaging services and websites. It influences producing linguistic innovation in short messaging services. It, therefore, plays a role in linguistic innovations in text messaging and micro-blogging. Looking at my data, character limitation plays a considerable role in language innovations. Such limitation leads users to be creative to exploit the full possible length of every text message. This exploitation suggests that users might invent a new abbreviation or use colloquial abbreviated forms. It encourages users to use a range of linguistic innovations to shorten their transmissions (Baron, 2008). I cannot generalize that all texting abbreviations are innovations and contain new features. However, it is obvious that character limitation causes linguistic creativity, affects message length, and produces problems to a certain extent in both grammar and spelling.

It is difficult to decide the reason or reasons behind these abbreviations. Some people point to the user's misunderstanding of suitable grammar and spelling when texting. Others point to the user's intentional abbreviating in order to be economic to use character limit, "to reduce the length of their messages" (Taylor & Vincent, 2005), to add expression and emotion (Dresner & Herring 2010), or to show their membership of a social group (Lewis & Fabos, 2005). These motivations for using alternative spellings and linguistic innovation in texting language enable the users to express themselves in unique ways without taking care of grammatical correctness.

Age of the users makes another difference. Children use the language differently from teenagers and adult. Dixon and Kaminska (2007) state that "children's representations of grammar and orthography are more flexible than those of adults" (p. 21). They might be not as well integrated as those of adults. Dixon and Kaminska illustrate that "incorrect grammar and spelling are less likely to reflect the children's representations of those forms in memory. For adults, the receptive and productive language systems may be better integrated, as could be their representations of spelling, grammar, and orthographic conventions" (p. 21). Adults are able to manipulate and create some orthographic conventions such as deleting the

vowels in “txt” or “msg,” mainly because their conventional literacy skills are more combined. It looks like a kind of playful use of unconventional orthographic forms.

Looking at data again, different violations in unconventional orthographic forms exist, such as the use of symbols and emoticons in place of traditional words and punctuations. There are some word-based grammatical errors, such as “you is” and “he do.” There are some unconventional orthographic representations that have phonological representations such as “2day” for “today.” Creating such abbreviations with a phonetic basis shows a high level of phonological awareness. It proves the positive side of the texting language, as Crystal states above, by linking phonological awareness and skills of spelling and writing. Plester, Wood, and Bell (2008) argue that children are more sensitive to orthographic patterns and they are more able to play with them to create texts.

In English spelling system, there are some strange spellings in spelling words that produce complex relationships between sounds and letters. English sometimes ignores phoneme identity in favour of spelling identity, shows the morphological relations between two words, and retains its original spelling if it is borrowed from another language. Therefore, phonological and orthographic conventions regularly interrelate with conventions about morphology and grammar (Nunes, Bryant, & Bindman, 1997). Wood, Kemp, Waldron, and Hart (2013) outline three main uses of texting language that harm grammar: spelling of individual words, spelling of word combinations, and correct use of orthographic and punctuation conventions. Wood, et al. (2013) explain how each way may harm grammar and show various grammatical transgressions that have been observed in text messaging.

In terms of linguistic theories, the data that I produced might be discussed from different views. One of them is the “Frequency Theory” that states that “frequency of use can affect linguistic behavior,” and expressions of higher frequency tend to undergo sound change at a faster rate than those of lower frequency (Bybee & Hopper, 2001, p. 10). This means that frequent expressions have more opportunity to be affected as they are exposed to these online processes more than infrequent expressions. Phonological reduction takes place when expressions are often repeated. Frequency of use, thus, plays a huge role in popularity of texting expressions. Texting expressions are common in familiar and casual settings where representations of sound change phonetically and lexically. These settings allow more reduction and enable people to create language as they use it, as individuals and as communities (Bybee & Hopper, 2001).

This change of high-frequency expressions goes through “Grammaticization” processes. This is another linguistic theory that is defined by Bybee (2006) as the creation of a new grammatical morpheme and a new construction out of a particular instance of an old construction. Therefore, an existing construction with specific lexical items in it, becomes more frequent, changes in various ways, and becomes a new construction. Grammaticization is the main vehicle for the creation of new grammatical morphemes because it proves the need for the cognitive representation of instances of constructions. Grammar consists of specific cases of use that marry lexical items with constructions. In other words, grammar is routinized and entrenched by repetition.

Hopper (1998) introduces “Emergent Grammar” as a new approach that studies grammar as a real-time, temporal, social phenomenon in which structure is always deferred and spreads systematically from individual words, expressions, phrases, and small sets. He suggests that structure, or regularity, comes out of discourse and is shaped by discourse in a continuous process. Emergent grammar “starts out with the assumption of communication, there is always an implicit interlocutor, and forms are constantly being adapted to the needs of the hearer or the audience” (p. 161). In Emergent grammar, the forms of a language are spread during acts of communication among speakers who are not equal, but are different in their ability to make and exploit this adaptation. Speakers differ in their “previous exposure to language varieties having different degrees of prestige and status” (p. 163).

Language is a complex system in which the processes that occur in individual usage events, such as texting expression, with high levels of frequency, lead to the establishment of a system within the individual. They also lead to the “creation of grammar, its change, and its maintenance within a speech community” (Bybee, 2001, p. 730). As in Hopper’s view of grammar above, language is indeterminate, always under construction, and structured only by emergent patterns that come and go as the forms that

carry them are found useful for their speakers. Language is not an abstract system of units with meanings and rules for combining them, but, instead, integrated normative modes of interactive behavior and the accompanying social use of corporeal signs such as words and gestures (Hopper, 1998).

This theory of language agrees with many scholars' arguments that language should be studied not as a distinct and separately apprehended "segregated entity," but as an activity combined with other activities that form part of communicative situations, such as in texting or Internet chatting. These theories lead the discussion in this paper to consider language acquisition, as a first language and mostly as a second language, because learners learn the language from "their language experiences using general cognitive and interactive skills" (Lieven & Tomasello, 2008, p. 168). Learning a language is not a "question of acquiring grammatical structure but of expanding a repertoire of communicative contexts. It is about the acquisition of frequent constructions and chunks" (Ellis, 2001, p. 10). Frequent patterns and chunks in the input, such as texting expressions, affect language acquisition. These expressions are better remembered when repeated across learning experiences.

Language Teaching and Learning

TL has many implications in language learning and teaching. This section discusses some implications of texting language on language learners' performance and competence. Although there are some constructive features of texting expressions in language learning as the second camp argued above, teachers and educators need to pay attention to the dark side of these expressions. TL has an effect on student's learning, writing skills, and performance ability. Dansieh (2011) found that about 84.4% of the participants in his study "intimated having employed the abbreviated forms" (p. 226). This confirms the fact that texting expressions have a great impact on the work quality of students. Dansieh argues that "about 65.9% intimated they developed their own ways of abbreviations while 34.1% copied those developed by friends". The result of Dansieh's study showed that students who text achieved the low levels of performance and academic work.

This low level of achievement may have resulted because the students use phones as a medium of communication in their daily lives. Learners' interactions and communications with all that is around them is very important in language development. According to sociocultural theory and interactionist second language acquisition, it is hard to learn a language in isolation from its context and usage. The Internet, technology, and media currently are very valuable forms of communication to practice language. Educators, therefore, must know how students deal with the linguistic, cognitive, social, and material resources in different communicative situations. This knowledge will qualify teachers to follow the language development of their students.

Educators need to understand that learners learn new semiotic skills on the Internet. Learners in general and non-native English learners in particular are exposed to less standard writing and less linguistic accuracy and politeness on the Internet. TL is regularly less correct, less complex, less coherent than other forms of language. Koutsogiannis and Mitsikopoulou (2004) point out that the hybrid vernacular varieties of English that learners develop in online contexts may not have much in common with the language in school contexts. In addition, Herring (2001) points out that "nonstandard features are not due to inattentiveness or not knowing the standard forms but are often careful adoptions to reduce typing effort, to imitate speech or sounds, or to be creative" (p. 617). Crystal (2001) adds that "simplification such as the omission of prepositions, copulas, or auxiliary verbs is not just a matter of typing economy but likely represents dialect features, reflecting the pressure to accommodate their diverse group members" (p. 188).

The Internet and media provide language learners with more opportunities to socialize through language than the classroom does. On the Internet, there are a couple of multimedia practices that go farther than print textuality. Many different forms of production exist on the Internet. Language learners are not only able to change their traditional discourse structures but also to join multicultural learning communities. Although there are some negative aspects of the Internet connected with language learning,

as discussed above, it does in some ways contribute to improving learners' language use in terms of fluency, accuracy, and appropriateness. Reeder, MacFadyen, Roche, and Chase (2004) found that "learners' online "self-introduction" postings differ significantly in terms of their underlying notions of how identity is established online, and attributed these differences to the gap between the individual learner's communicative culture and that of the computer" (p. 93).

Technology and media help teachers to look at literacy skills from another perspective. Modern teaching approaches apply different kinds of tools for communication, such as learning platforms, "Wikis," and bulletin boards. It is not these tools per se that affect the learning of language but how they are used in classroom. The use of technology to teach literacy skills differs from the traditional literacy practices in school (Koutsogiannis & Mitsikopoulou, 2004). While reading and writing are obviously main modes of online language use, "the Internet requires a complexified vision of literacy that goes well beyond the skills of encoding and decoding texts" (KERN, 2006, p. 195).

The Internet has a wide array of skills, genres, and conventions. Warschauer (2003) argues for the need to develop different types of electronic literacies such as computer literacy, information literacy, multimedia literacy, texting literacy, and the like. In a study of people use of electronic literacies in four contexts, Warschauer (1999) states that "the sociocultural context in these settings significantly shaped the nature of online teaching and learning. Technology had an amplifying effect, reinforcing teachers' underlying instructional approach, whether it was based on second language writing as a form of discipline, liberation, vocation, or apprenticeship" (p. 195).

Technology use is integrated into numerous pedagogical approaches. Language teachers, therefore, should "be critically aware of the connections among technology, culture, and ideology, and specifically about the ways in which technology amplifies and constrains aspects of language learning" (Chapelle, 2003, p. 9). Students can learn strategies for comprehension and become more independent readers. Writers have a habit of spending some time thinking about how to present their viewpoint and how to involve with prospective respondents.

Regarding learning contexts, there is no doubt that TL has arrived to the classroom. We know that students use their mobile devices in the school with and without teacher knowledge. Students are contented with their own devices because they have mastered their use. It is not a surprise if we find some of the school writing are nonstandard or informal. Students use texting abbreviations when they take notes, answer questions, express themselves, compose a response, and write in daily journals. We might see these abbreviations in essay compositions that are more formal forms. Students are more likely to focus on the writing approach taken by the model around them because they do not learn how to write when they text or type online (Braaksma, Rijlaarsdam, & Bergh, 2001). Crystal argues that language learners "may end up learning the nonstandard forms rather than the standard ones because they may not have any intuitions about what constitutes standard versus nonstandard forms" (2001, p. 237).

Educators should teach students how to distinguish between standard language and nonstandard language. Students should learn how, when, and where to use each form of language. This is more essential with non-native English learners who have several difficulties beside the new language. While texting language might be common and normally use by native English learners, it is not for non-native. It does not help the foreigners to learn the accuracy of language, particularly if they are not exposed to the standard forms before non-standard forms or if they live in a foreign context. Ellis (2001) states that "fluent native speakers know a tremendous amount about sequences of language at all grains" (p. 21). Therefore, these expressions might be harmful to non-native speakers if there is no guide in their exposure or if they are not exposed to correct English, as Russell stated above.

In virtual society, language learners need some educational implications to become more self-directed in their learning and to be successful in this new technological environment. They should be able to learn self-monitor, improve their learning skills, and collaborate in the learning process around them. Teachers must include TL in classroom activities as casual practices. They should present it in speaking practices or short passages for reading practices. They must guide learners to the special features of the texting expressions and explain how it relates to the standard form. Moreover, teachers should involve the phonetic features of texting language to enable learners to pronounce and memorize the common

expressions. Such phonetic features enhance learners' pronunciation and memory as well as their language development.

Conclusion

This paper discusses texting abbreviations and its impacts on how people talk and write in general and on language learning in particular. Texting messages are the process whereby users of portable devices and cell phones exchange short written messages. They were used mainly instead of voice calls in specific circumstances before they had become the best, quickest, and most dominant way of communication. They are full of abbreviations that make texting expressions a unique language style. This style spread extensively through the Internet. In addition, new mobile devices simplify the process of accessing and chatting in social networking services and microblogging websites.

There are three different views about the influences of texting expressions on language development and literacy skills. Some scholars believe that TL have negative effects while some other see the reverse. The third group are not sure about the effect of such language because they look at it as a new language. This paper does not support any view because it is misleading if we do not consider the content and context of learning. Another consideration should be paid to the user of these expressions whether a native English speaker or not. This paper argues that there are some negative and positive effects of such abbreviations depending on academic standpoints. It presents several findings about some harmful effects of text language on student writing skills. It discusses many examples of grammatical transgressions and cases of careless or ignorant grammatical structures.

The paper looks at the complaints by educators and language learners about how students struggle with grammar, lexis, and structure. It is a main threat that TL encourage shortening and non-conformity with grammatical rules. The process simply worsens students' written communication skills, especially non-native English learners, which proves the first school's argument. In addition, new elements of language locates it closer to colloquial forms, which differs from Standard English. This paper aims to stop this phenomenon from more worsening students' writing skills by helping them write good English on paper and on phone. It focuses on helping low proficient learners of English because they are the victims of TL.

Earlier studies on texting and literacy have just focused mostly on violations of the spelling and representation of individual words in text messages, and the relationship between such violations and other conventional literacy skills, usually spelling and reading (Wood, et al., 2013). There is a need for more research to examine the relations between texting expressions and grammatical understanding, between texting abbreviations and second or foreign language learners, between Internet language and classroom practices, between the modern devices and curriculum expectations, and between the virtual society and language acquisition theory.

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Appendix A

Retrieved from Twitter (10/24/23) 11:40 am to 1: 40 pm

Kim Menma @Kim_Crescent6h

Im going to watch naruto now, AFK for a moment

Daniel @GoronGuy 22 Oct

Siglemic: im always afk just refilling the twitchbux u kno

AFL-CIO @AFLCIO 19m

McDonald's set-up a "help" line b/c they know their workers can't get by on low pay. Listen in here: [#FastFoodSwindle](http://d.shpg.org/15145256t)

Traci @parker_traci 1h

If my life had an exit lane, I'd have to make a U turn b/c with 2kids I'd inevitably forget something 'crucial' at home

meowlissa. @arollonmel 2h

Thnx 4 making me l8 pic.twitter.com/FjRb4usmey

Bez @Bez 21 Oct

shud I tex dis to the guy i liek y/n too L8 awreddie did pic.twitter.com/O0wVT8leax

feather ☩ @wut3vrr 1h

HE WAS A SK8R BOY SHE SAID SEE YA L8R BOY

Siena Witte @Siwitte 3h

'grats to @tatumkeane and the rest of the @gneoday team on their b-e-a-utiful new app! What a lovely day to get things done :)

HLUPIST @Pinky_Smalest 1h

Pay day is 2mr 4 many..how much do you have in your purse / pockets / wallet right NOW?LOL

Bruxy Cavey @Bruxy

Here's the fb link for 2night's "Why Choose Jesus?" talk in Hamilton. Wud luv 2 C U there!

cheonggam @dxnda 19 Oct

please reply qap need to ask so manyyy things

Vamshi Chand Reddy @v9550550055 20 Oct

AYC Executive Meeting of Chennur assembly pic.twitter.com/DynzANh3Lz

Nanita Z. @Nanita1AkiPaiT 17h

.Yahoo bsts Google, but God trumps Yahoo, CEO Marissa Mayer says, "I think that for me, it's God, family and Yahoo – in that order."

❀Isabella❀ @7KMilesForWhat

1m

ngl i've never listened to any of the opening bands but i've heard of all of them so i dk i hope they're good

Chris Many @cmany

15 Feb

Check out this photo <https://www.pheed.com/p/3223090> @roykissel @BBG690 GL2U!

Fredgine Fayville @FredFayville_x3

21Oct

@MarisaDeBlois awe s2u , I love you too sweetie .xoxo

100%Cuteness♥ @ChidinmaAnne

18 Oct

Tanx a lot d....s2u too @dat_emerald

goodinthestacks @goodinthestacks

3h

@raamatuid @michaelrperry6 the internet has ruined me. I look at a book and I'm like TLDR.

FyierryaFeyra #YSF# @FeyraLuvYS

6h

tqvm guys 4 da wishes.. :) & if u r my frenz, tq 4 loving me 4 who I am.. u know who u r. :) #GodBless...
<http://instagram.com/p/f2dkfntav-/>

Lisa von Steijern @LisavonSteijern

23 Oct

Photo of the day! More autumn colors. TYVM for all for your support and welcome to my new followers!
<pic.twitter.com/Ok8zn5ON4z>

NWLC @nwlc

3h

Pls co-sponsor the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act again @tammybaldwin! We miss u! #PWFA wd help women keep jobs& have healthy pregnancies.

#Vartika @ssttuuttii

3h

#AAPMumbai reqsts Sachin Tendulkar not to associate wd MCA Club which hs stolen Chldrn's Play Ground #SachinSaveMCA <pic.twitter.com/4b48pEzQZB>

Appendix B

Table 1. List of some new abbreviated words on the Internet.

abt	About
b/c	Because
b/w	Between
bro	Brother
thanx	Thanks
L8	Late
L8R / ltr	Later
H8	Hate
555	Laughing
BK	Back
Broom / bthrm	Bathroom
QQ	Crying

dmg	Damage
el	Everyone
Grats/gratz	Congratulations
4got	Forgot
4rl	For real
RE	Regarding
J	Joking
lvl	Level
thnx	thanks
U1	Unlucky
2day	Today
2l8	Too late
2mr	Tomorrow
2ng	Tonight
W8	Wait
Y	Why

Table 2. list of some abbreviated phrases and expressions on the Internet.

ANON	Unknown person
C U	See You
QAP	Quick As Possible
VBD	Very Big Deal
INCYDK	In Case You Didn't Know
YSVW	You're So Very Welcome
YGTI	You Get The Idea
TLTR	Too Long To Read
2EZ	Too easy
AFC	Away from computer
ATM	At the moment
AYC	Are you coming?
BC	Be cool
Beast	Awesome person
BM	Bad manner
BO5	Best of five
BSTS	Better safe than sorry
BRB	Bathroom break
CICU	Can I see you?
CUB	Call you back
CYE	Check your e-mail
DYFI	Did you find it?
DK	Don't know
DYLM	Do you like me?
EZPZ	Easy peasy
GL2U	Good luck to you
GLE	Good luck everyone

HAN	How about now?
HORU	How old are you?
IIRC	If I Remember Correctly
IIUC	If I Understand Correctly
IRL	In real life
LF	Looking for
LOL	Laughing out loud
NJ	Nice job
NL	No limit
NP	No problem
NT	Nice try
RUC	Are you coming?
YT	Are you there?
S2U	Same to you
SBT	Sorry 'bout that
TLDR	Too long, didn't read
TQVM/TYVM	Thank you very much
TTYL	Talk to you later
TY	Thank you
WAS	Wait a second
WB	Welcome Back/ Write Back
WD	Well done