Text (SMS) Language and Its Effects on Writing English Composition: A Study of Selected Grade Eight Junior High School

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

Rationale

In this generation, with children's increasing use of mobile phones, concerns have been raised about its influence on their literacy skills. One well-known feature of children's text messages is that they do not always adhere to conventional written language rules and use a register that is called textese. In this register, children make use of phonetic replacements, such as *ur* instead of your and acronyms, such as *lol* and drop words (e.g. [2]). This has led to the assumption that characteristics of textese may leak into children's general writing, ultimately resulting in language deterioration.

However, this is in sharp contrast to findings from several studies showing that children who used textese frequently did not perform poorly on spelling and tasks measuring literacy abilities. More recently, this research has been expanded to the effect of textese on children's grammar abilities in written language]. However it also depends on the teachers' ability to teach English if they can avoid this kind of problem. Some teachers have unique strategies in teaching grammar and spelling to avoid using textese in writing ability. Outcomes of some studies suggest a negative influence of

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textese on grammar. Nevertheless, variability in coding of textese between studies and use of written tasks, which do not strictly represent grammar, may have masked the effect of textese on children's grammar abilities.

Therefore, the main aim of the present study is to ascertain whether use of textese influences children's grammar performance in spoken language.

According to Chantal N. (2017) When sending text messages on their mobile phone to friends, children often use a special type of register, which is called textese. This register allows the omission of words and the use of textisms: instances of non-standard written language such as 4ever (forever). Previous studies have shown that textese has a positive effect on children's literacy abilities. In addition, it is possible that children's grammar systems are affected by textese as well, as grammar rules are often transgressed in this register. Therefore, the main aim of this study was to investigate whether the use of textese influences children's grammar performance, and whether this effect is specific to grammar or language in general.

In the study of Saeed A. (2017), he mentioned that the advent of the age of the Internet has revolutionized virtually all aspects of life. Such a massive revolution has affected education in a global context. While this substantial use of e-technology has undoubtedly enriched our life and resulted in many significant advances in the social, economic and educational domains, it seems to have genuinely affected our use of language both positively and negatively. Due to the heavy use of the net in texting, emailing, chatting, and social networking, users tend to create their own language norms such as acronyms, abbreviations, contractions, reductions, coinages and other forms of language novelty. Such innovative uses of language are motivated by various

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reasons including speed, brevity and simplicity, among other reasons. However, while such innovative uses might be acceptable in certain contexts, they may not be sanctioned in some others. Academic settings are a case in point.

Therefore, the researcher has the motivation to know what can be the effect of using these new acronyms or textes in their writing skills during formal writing of selected Grade 10 students of MSU-Integrated Laboratory School. She wanted to reveal the possible negative effect of using these texts in writing composition or she wanted to observe if these students are using texts in their writing skills.

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Theoretical Framework

Cultivation theory

George Grebnerin mass communications holds ground in media effect studies. The central claim of that theory is that persistent long term exposure to media content has small but measurable effects on the perceptual worlds of audience members and the more a person is exposed to a message provided by the media, the more likely that person is to believe the message is real. Here the effect of SMS is being measured with proportion to the usage.

Social Cognitive Theory and self-efficacy in writing

Writing is an activity that requires meaning making as well as self-understanding. When people engage with a writing task they value, they can better understand their own thinking, beliefs, and attitudes toward a topic. Self-efficacy is a person's belief that s/he can accomplish a task successfully and persevere even if faced with a challenge (Bandura 1986). Self-efficacy beliefs, which are a core part of social cognitive theory, provide a foundation for academic motivation.

Moreover, Bandura (1997) argued that students' accomplishments could be better predicted by self-efficacy than by previous attainment. This idea is fundamental for teachersbecauseitsupportsteacherinfluenceinalteringstudentperceptions. According to Bandura (2001) and Pajares (2003), self-efficacy originates from four sources: (1)

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interpreting the results of previous performance, (2) models/observing others, (3) social persuasions, and (4) emotional states. In other words, students develop perceptions about their competency for a certain task by considering their past performance, modeling from others, their support system, and their emotional state. Therefore, students are more likely to select tasks in which they have high self-efficacy and avoid tasks in which they have low self-efficacy (Bandura 2001; Pajares 2003; Pajares and Valiante 2006). However, these beliefs can be altered through support and practice and, with time, the new beliefs can become habit and subsume the previously held beliefs.

This is the idea in social cognitive theory that people are agents (Bandura,2001) or proactive and self-regulating to the circumstances they are in.

Specifically grammatical development is interesting in this respect because, as mentioned by Kemp and colleagues, grammar rules of conventional written language are often transgressed in textese. As a result, this lack of grammatical conventions might leak into registers other than textese. To the best of our knowledge, only four studies have investigated effects of use of textese on children's use of grammar. These studies have focused on the use of grammar in written language and have shown mixed results. Cingel and Sundar obtained a negative association between the number of text messages children sent and received and the number of textisms used and children's grammar abilities. However, these findings are hard to interpret, as the authors did not calculate the textism ratio—which is a relative measure that takes text length into account—but used raw scores. In addition, textisms at the word level (spelling), rather than at the sentence level, were responsible for this effect.

Conceptual Framework

The theories presented assist the researchers to come up with the conceptual framework of the study. This study is focused on the effects of the textes or in writing skills of the selected junior high students.

| Part A: Background Information
Part B: SMS Language Use
Part C: Chat acronyms or textes use
Part D: Content of writing composition | → | EFFECTS | → | IMPLICATIONS |
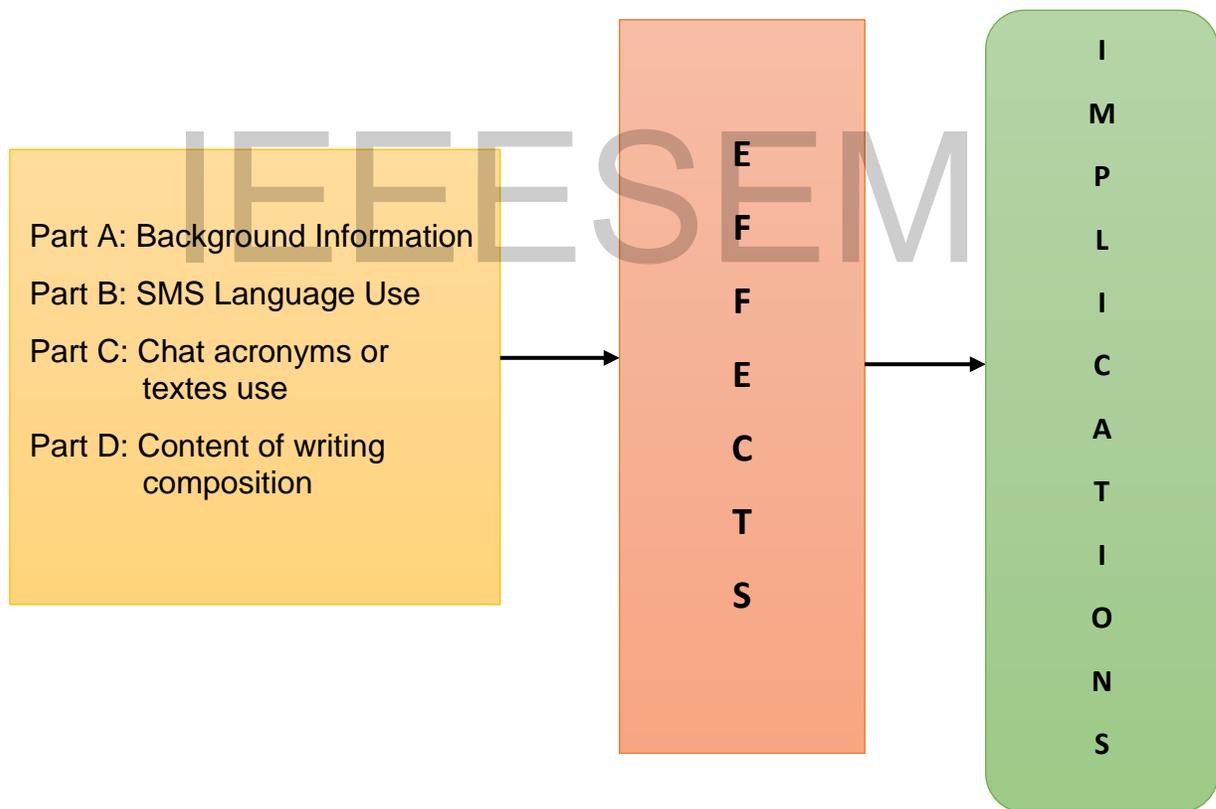
Figure 1: The schematic diagram of the conceptual framework of the study.

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Statement of the Problem

This study collected and gathered 40 selected students from Junior High School that will be used by the researchers. It sought to find the effects of using chat acronyms in text-messaging on academic writing. Specifically, this will answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents' age, gender, type of social media they are using, particular application in social media they are using when communicating with other people, and what are the chat acronyms they are always using?

2. Is there any effect of using chat acronyms in text-messaging on their academic writing in terms of spelling and grammar?

3. What implications can be obtained based on the findings of the study?

Significance of the Study

This paper is aimed not only to explore new generations' language style in their text messages, but also to observe the problems they face in understanding text

language. Subsequently, perception of the new generation users on the effect of text language on Standard English was also gathered.

Scope and Limitation

This paper is aimed not only to explore new generations' language style in their text messages, but also to observe the possible effect in their writing skills. We all know that in writing a composition, a letter or any formal communication, acronyms or textes are not allowed, therefore one of the most problem of the English Language Teachers now a day are getting their students more deteriorating status in English writing skills, and this is also the reason why the researcher tried to find out if it has an effect in texting messages through social media in their writing skills. However, this study will be only concerned into 40 selected Junior High School in MSU-Integrated Laboratory School.

The study will deal with the presentation of the awareness of using textes or chat acronyms in texting messages, because this might be the reason why some students are deteriorating their spelling ability including grammar in writing composition. The researcher has given a questionnaire, a close and open ended question to find the answer of the problem mentioned above. She was going to identify how many times the respondents use messages or chats in one day, she was also going to identify what are the acronyms they are using during texting. After that, she will give open-ended questions to identify if their texts in writing have no acronyms that are not allowed in writing their composition.

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The researcher excluded her data, who are not exposed to social media. She only analyzes those students who are much exposed on social media.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES AND STUDIES

This chapter presented various literature and studies both foreign and local which are very much related to this study.

According to the study of Binti Alias, A. 2016, results displayed the existence of a collateral effect of text language on Standard English among users due to the recurring usage of non-conventional forms of written English as well as short forms and abbreviations leading to the deterioration of (written) language proficiency. 75% of the respondents experienced and showed difficulty in interpreting and understanding text language. Finally, respondents also expressed concerns that the evolvement of SMS (text) language may lead to the endangerment in the standard of a language.

In the study of Aziz S. and Saleh A. 2017, their findings on the effect of texting on AOU-EFL students' writing serve to alleviate concerns over an imminent danger and threat to formal English. Based on a thorough analysis of the students' essays, texting features and graphology were not extensively used. Many students' essays, especially those of students with modest proficiency in English, show no traces of texting whatsoever. Consequently, with this small number of texting features, made by a relatively small number of students, the authors are inclined to believe that other factors

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than text-messaging have an effect on students' writing. The limited number of violations manifested in abbreviations, contractions, numerals and symbols, word play, emoticons, grammar and spelling in digital communication are therefore not necessarily a serious weakness, but rather a style used by well-informed and sophisticated student writers. Put differently, there is no danger in using texting features by teenagers or other age groups if they have the necessary awareness where they can draw the line in distinguishing between formal and informal usage. This is not to suggest, however, that possible dangers of texting are totally ruled out; 80% of the teachers' responses hint to this, as inferred from their responses to item 13 in the questionnaire. It is only with caution that texting features may be safely used, and only when users are well aware of the context and writing styles. The findings of such studies will be significant to teaching academic writing in the EFL curriculum in general. Such research should not only diagnose and identify academic writing problems, but also help to devise and implement relevant remedial strategies to combat learning difficulties based on their type and source, be it e-texting based or otherwise.

While in the article of Lieke V. 2013, reviews empirical studies published in the last decade on the effects of text messaging and instant messaging on literacy to determine whether they positively or negatively affect literacy. Although the majority of studies found a positive correlation between texting and/or instant messaging and literacy, others found a negative correlation, while still others report conflicting findings or no significant correlation at all. The studies reveal that literacy scores may correlate differently with frequency of texting, use of textese/textisms and knowledge of textisms; that there may be different correlations for reading, writing and spelling; and that the correlations may differ for formal and informal writing. The mixed results could also be

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caused by differences in the designs and populations of the studies. In addition, the correlational analyses conducted in most of the studies do not warrant conclusions about causality. All this suggests that there is a need for further research, preferably longitudinal studies with experimental intervention, on the relationship between text messaging or instant messaging and literacy.

Finally, the article of Chantal N. which is also the main source of the researcher was , the main aim of his study was to investigate whether the use of textese influences children's grammar performance, and whether this effect is specific to grammar or language in general. Additionally, studies have not yet investigated the influence of textese on children's cognitive abilities. Consequently, the secondary aim of this study was to find out whether textese affects children's executive functions. To investigate this, 55 children between 10 and 13 years old were tested on a receptive vocabulary and grammar performance (sentence repetition) task and various tasks measuring executive functioning. In addition, text messages were elicited and the number of omissions and textisms in children's messages were calculated. Regression analyses showed that omissions were a significant predictor of children's grammar performance after various other variables were controlled for: the more words children omitted in their text messages, the better their performance on the grammar task. Although textisms correlated (marginally) significantly with vocabulary, grammar and selective attention scores and omissions marginally significantly with vocabulary scores, no other significant effects were obtained for measures of textese in the regression analyses: neither for the language outcomes, nor for the executive function tasks. Hence, our results show that textese is positively related to children's grammar performance. On

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the other hand, use of textese does not affect—positively or negatively—children's executive functions.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This part of the paper contains the discussions on the research design, the locale of the study, the respondents of the study, the research instruments that will be used, and the procedures of data gathering and the presentation of statistical tools.

Research Design

This research deploys the data collection used in Proysen (2009) with modifications in the designated instrument. A self-designed questionnaire was distributed to each respondent through emails. The questionnaire contains of four parts:

Part A: Background Information

Part B: SMS Language Use

Part C: Chat acronyms or textes use

Part D: Content of writing composition

Data collected from items in Part B and C were used to answer research question one. Part B inquired the respondents to notify whether any sort of

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abbreviations and short forms were applied in their messages to different groups of receivers. In Part C, is to identify the chat acronyms and textes used by the respondents during their daily texting on their chosen social media application. Additionally, the respondents needed to provide information on the writing composition with free writing without thinking of any grammar correction. Data collected from these two parts were used to support each other during data analysis.

To achieve the answer to research question two, the respondents were asked to answer Part D which was prepared based on Proysen (2009). Basically, they were inquired to make an assumption of the definition of a list of 'vocabularies' of SMS language. Lastly, as for research question three, the respondents were inquired to respond to the open-ended question in Part B on their perception of the possibility that the abbreviations used in the text language may be accepted as the Standard English.

Locale of the study

The location of this study is in Mindanao State University - Integrated Laboratory School, Main Campus. This school is under the umbrella of the College of Education. It has five sections in each level and it is arranged in heterogeneous sectioning. It was founded on September 12, 1976.

The Grade Eight level is where the researcher gathering the data which is also her motivation to find out if the

Further, it would assume that it would play a great role in the collection and preservation of the cultural heritage of the region; as a consequence, it would contribute

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to the enrichment of nations in the transformation process towards culture of peace and development.

Respondents of the Study

The following respondents are the students of the selected Grade eight junior high school students; there are 46 in the classroom.

METHODOLOGY

This research deploys the data collection used in Proysen (2009) with modifications in the designated instrument. A self-designed questionnaire was distributed to each respondent. The questionnaire contains of four parts:

Part A: Background Information

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Part C: Chat acronyms or textes use

Part D: Content of writing composition

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Data collected from items in Part B and C were used to answer research question one. Part B inquired the respondents to notify whether any sort of abbreviations and short forms were applied in their messages to different groups of receivers. In Part C, identified their chat acronyms they are using of 46 respondents. The respondents were requested to record in writing their last five text messages on the questionnaire provided. Additionally, the respondents needed to provide information about the questions given by the researchers. Subsequently, the respondents will write their answer in the questionnaire. Data collected from these two parts were used to support each other during data analysis.

To achieve the answer to research question two, the respondents were asked to answer Part D which was prepared based on Proysen (2009). Basically, they were inquired to make an assumption of the definition of a list of 'vocabularies' of SMS language. Lastly, as for research question three, the respondents were inquired to respond to the open-ended question in Part B on their perception of the possibility that the abbreviations used in the text language may be accepted as the Standard English.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Part A and B

The research data was collected from a total of 46 Junior High School participants; 26 females and 20 males. A set of questionnaires consisting of four sections were given to the respondents from a selection of higher learning institutions in

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a,SU-ILS to examine the use of SMS (text) language among the Grade Eight and their perceptions on the usage of SMS language. Each part requires participants' response on their experience and understanding of the utilization of SMS language in their communication both in formal and informal settings.

A majority of the participants exhibited that they have experienced the usage of mobile phones or android phones and mostly are using FB Facebook. Only 10 ten of the participants have less experience in the utilization of SMS with 4-6 years experiences, while the rest of the participants have been exposed to this function of mobile phones and Facebook always.

Text Acronyms	N
2day (today)	3
2moro (tomorrow)	2
2nite (tonight)	1
ASAP (As soon as possible)	20
B4 (Before)	1
BTW (By the way)	5

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FYI (For your information)	6
GM (Group Message)	5
LOL (Laughing out loud)	8
PLS (Please)	22
MSG (Message)	1
Coz (Because)	5
OMG (Oh my God)	14
OTW (On the way)	21
TYL (Text you later)	
OOTD (Outfit of the day)	1
ATM (At this moment)	1
IDK (I don't know)	6
BFF (Best friend forever)	5

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TBH (To be honest)	5
PM (Personal Message)	5
TY (Thank You)	20
OTHERS	1

Figure 2: Table for the Part C, identifying the chat acronyms or textes they are using.

In this table, it identifies what are those chat acronyms or textes are most used by the respondents. The most used acronym is the PLS or (Please), second one is the OTW (On the way), third is ASAP (As soon as possible) and TY (Thank you), fourth is the OMG (Oh my God).

Part D. Content of writing composition

STUDENT 1

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The first student wrote a short message to her special friend and the researcher found out that there is an acronym LOL written on the first line of the paragraph. This is evidence that a student might affect the text messaging in her writing a composition, which is also one of the highest total numbers of the students' choice in using acronyms or textes during texting.

STUDENT 2
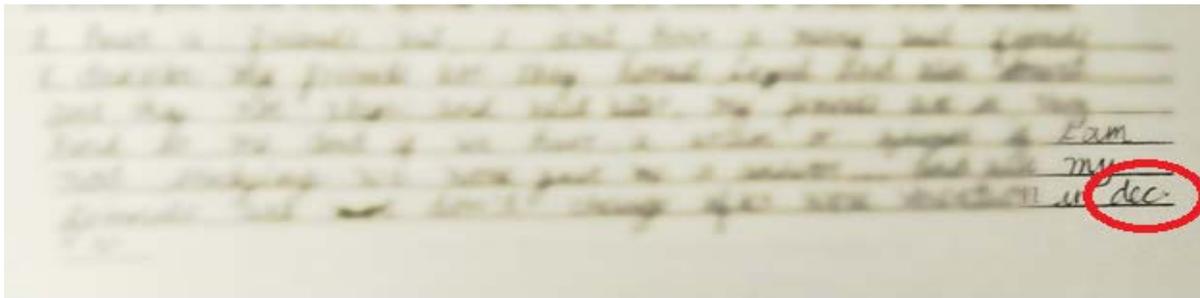
The student 2 wrote about how they go along with her close friend, she included the DEC as an acronym of the word December.

STUDENT 3
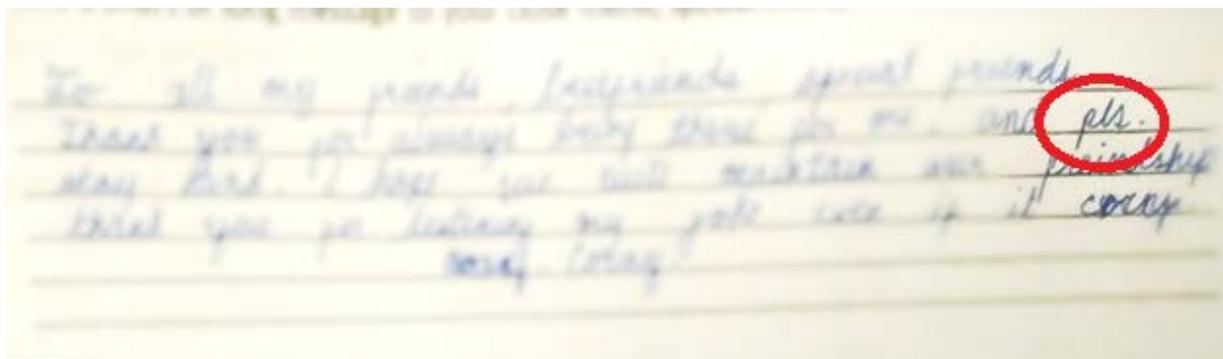
The student 3 wrote a short message to her friend and the researcher found out the acronym PLS as an acronym of please, which is also one of the highest total numbers of the students' choice in using acronyms or textes during texting.

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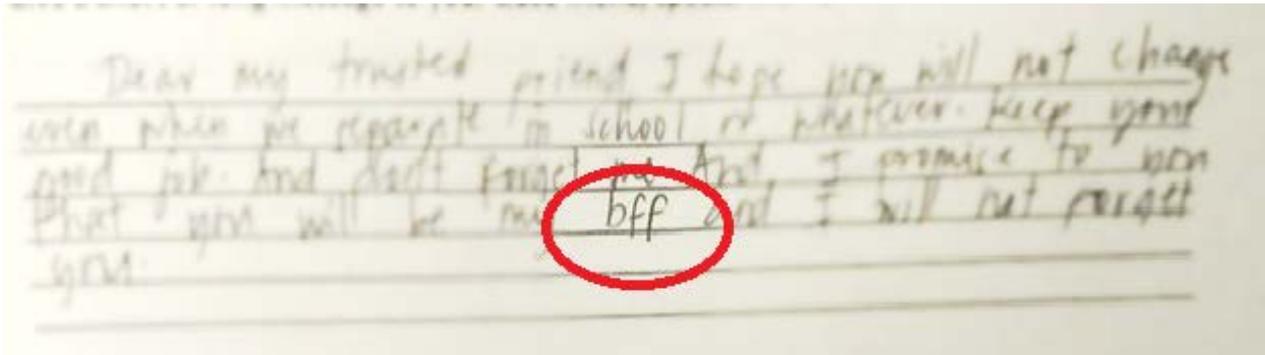
STUDENT 4

The student 4 wrote a short message to her friend and the researcher found out the acronym BFF as an acronym of best friend forever, which is also one of the most chosen acronyms or textes during texting or chatting.

STUDENT 5

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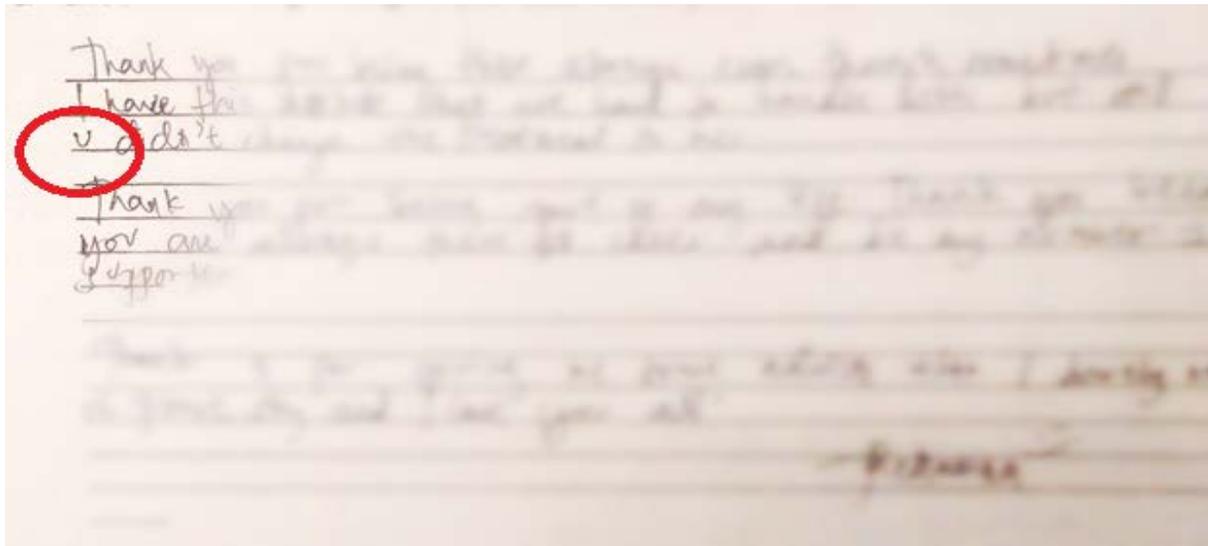
The student 5 wrote a short message to her friend and the researcher found out

the acronym U as an acronym of you, when she wrote the word thank you.

IEEESEM

STUDENT 6
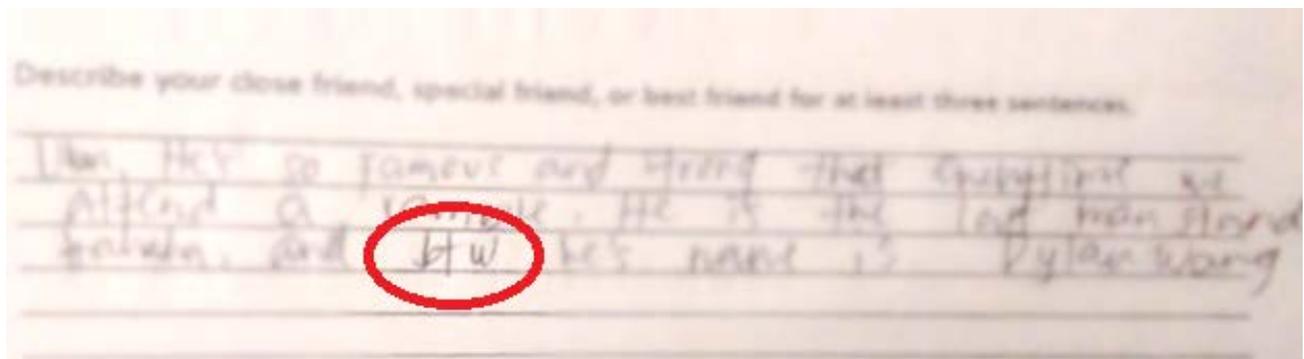
When the researcher asked the respondent to describe her best friend, she

found out the acronym BTW as an acronym of By the way, which is also one of the most

chosen acronyms or textes during texting or chatting.

STUDENT 7
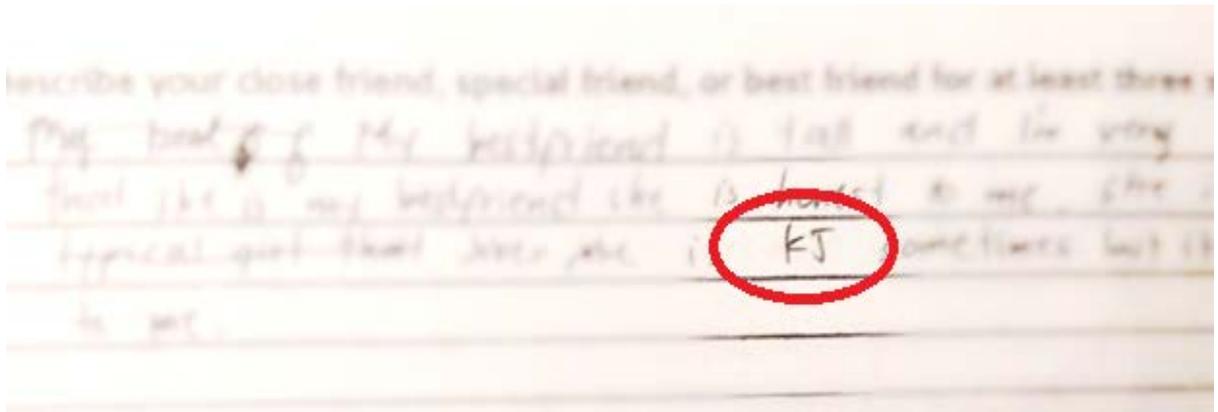
When the researcher asked the respondent to describe her best friend, she found out the acronym KJ as an acronym of kill joy.

IEEESEM

STUDENT 8

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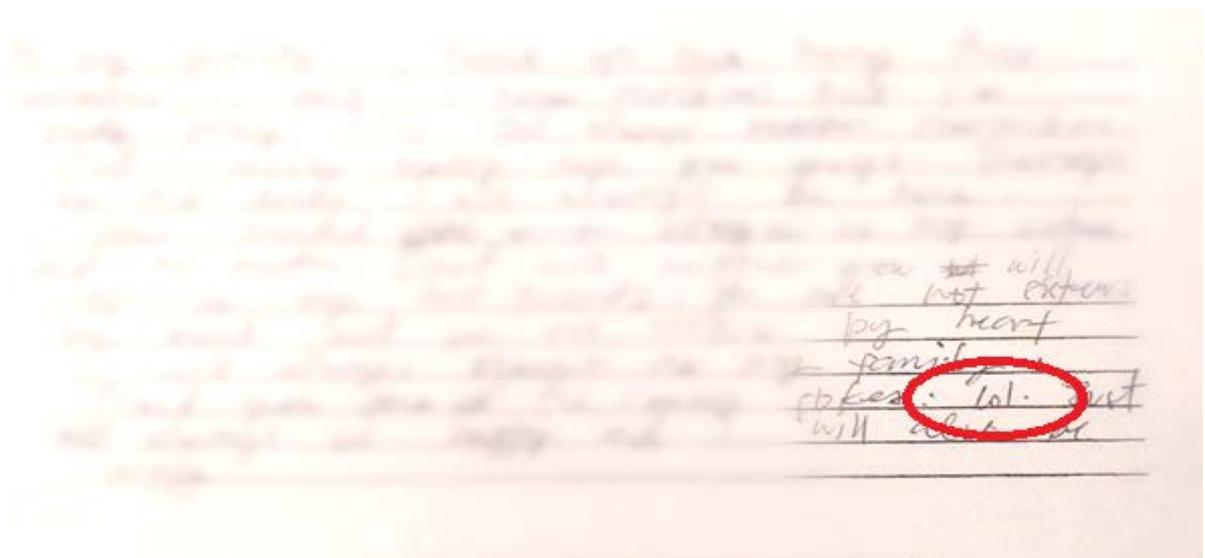
The student 8 wrote a short message to her special friend and the researcher found out that, there is an acronym LOL written on the first line of the paragraph.LOL is an acronym of Laughing out loud, which is also one of the highest total numbers of the students' choice in using acronyms or textes during texting.

STUDENT 9
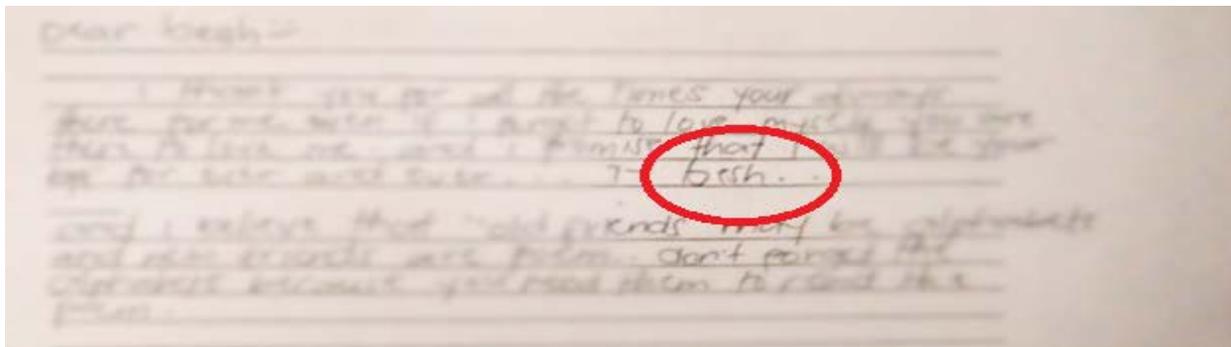
One of the acronyms given for a best friend is BESH which was found in the composition of the student 9 when the researcher asked her to give a short message for her best friend.

RESULT:

TOTAL NUMBER OF SELECTED GRADE EIGHT STUDENTS	TOTAL NUMBER OF AFFECTED STUDENTS IN USING ACRONYM THROUGH WRITING COMPOSITION
46	9

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Though the students affected are not that much, at least the researcher has enough evidence that using acronyms in texting or chatting in social media can really affect their writing composition.

Conclusion

All respondents have sufficient experience with mobile phones as well as short messaging services, however, Grade eight students were not able to respond to a majority of the abbreviations in the list, which contain short forms and abbreviations.

Additionally, most of the respondents notice continuously using informal forms, and have even applied such methods into formal writing. Generally, based on the findings, the student users do feel that the SMS language will alter the Standard English in future due to the evolution nature of the SMS language. Nevertheless, with hope, they believe that people will revert to formal writing structures in formal situations.

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