

The Spread of Text Communication Platforms and it's Impact on the Adoption of Chat Abbreviations and Slang among University Students

www.doi.org/10.62341/hana3307

Hamida Burawi Ahfeida

Lecturer in College of Science and Technology, Qminis
Hamidaahfied@gmail.com

Nadia Burawi Ahfeida

Assistant Lecturer. Faculty of Arts and science, Qminis
Elorfinadia@gmail.com

Abstract

The integration of text communication platforms into daily interactions has fundamentally reshaped language practices among university students. This study explores the prevalence, factors, and implications of chat abbreviations and slang adoption within higher education contexts. We collected data from a diverse sample of university students using a mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys we find reveal a pervasive use of chat abbreviations ("LOL," "OMG") and slang terms ("lit," "AF") across various digital platforms, highlighting their role in facilitating efficient communication and social bonding. Factors influencing adoption include technological affordances, peer influence, and identity construction within digital communities. Educational implications suggest a need to balance digital literacy with formal language skillsemphasizing awareness of context-specific communication norms. Theoretical insights draw upon social shaping theory to elucidate the reciprocal relationship between digital technologies and linguistic practices. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how text communication platforms shape language norms and social interactions among university students, urging further exploration into longitudinal trends and cross-cultural variations.

Key words: Text communication, chat abbreviations-slang, university students.

انتشار منصات التواصل النصي وأثرها في اعتماد اختصارات الدردشة واللهجة العامية لدى طلبة الجامعة

حميدة بوراوي احفيظة

محاضر بكلية العلوم والتقنية /قمينس
Hamidaahfied@gmail.com

نادية بوراوي احفيظه

مخاضر مساعد بكلية العلوم والآداب /قمينس
Elorfinadia@gmail.com

الملخص:

أدى دمج منصات الاتصالات النصية في التفاعلات اليومية إلى إعادة تشكيل الممارسات اللغوية بين طلاب الجامعات بشكل أساسي. تستكشف هذه الدراسة مدى انتشار اختصارات الدردشة واعتماد اللغات العامية وعواملها وآثارها في سياقات التعليم العالي. قمنا بجمع بيانات من عينة متنوعة من طلاب الجامعات باستخدام نهج متعدد الأساليب يجمع بين المقابلات النوعية والمسوحات الكمية التي وجدنا انها تكشف عن الاستخدام الشائع لاختصارات الدردشة ("LOL"، "OMG") والمصطلحات العامية ("AF"، "lit") عبر مختلف المنصات الرقمية، مع تسليط الضوء على دورها في تسهيل التواصل الفعال والترابط الاجتماعي. وتشمل العوامل التي تؤثر على التبني الإمكانات التكنولوجية، وتأثير الأقران، وبناء الهوية داخل المجتمعات الرقمية. تشير الآثار التعليمية إلى الحاجة إلى الموازنة بين المعرفة الرقمية ومهارات اللغة الرسمية مع التركيز على الوعي بمعايير الاتصال الخاصة بالسياق. تعتمد الرؤى النظرية على نظرية التشكيل الاجتماعي لتوضيح العلاقة المتبادلة بين

التقنيات الرقمية والممارسات اللغوية. يساهم هذا البحث في فهم أعمق لكيفية تشكيل منصات الاتصالات النصية للمعايير اللغوية والتفاعلات الاجتماعية بين طلاب الجامعات، مما يحث على مزيد من الاستكشاف في الاتجاهات الطولية والاختلافات بين الثقافات.

الكلمات الدالة: التواصل النصي - اختصارات الدردشة - العامية - طلاب الجامعة

Introduction

The advent and widespread adoption of digital communication technologies have profoundly transformed how individuals interact and communicate in contemporary society. Among the most notable changes is the rise of text communication platforms such as Short Message Service (SMS), instant messaging applications (e.g., WhatsApp, Messenger), and various social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, Instagram). These platforms have not only revolutionized. This shift in communication norms is particularly evident among university students, a demographic known for its early and intensive adoption of new technologies. For today's university students, digital communication tools are integral to their daily interactions, both socially and academically. Overused expressions can make writing sound tired and unoriginal.

The adoption of chat abbreviations and slang raises intriguing questions about the evolution of language in digital spaces and its implications for broader linguistic and educational contexts. It challenges traditional notions of formal and informal communication and prompts considerations about how these practices may influence language proficiency, social identity formation, and academic performance among university students.

This article explores the phenomenon of chat abbreviation and slang adoption within the context of university students' use of text communication platforms. Drawing on existing literature and empirical studies, it examines the factors driving the proliferation of these linguistic practices, the socio-cultural dynamics shaping their usage, and the potential educational implications. By critically

analysing these issues, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how digital communication technologies are reshaping language norms and social interactions among university students today.

In navigating this exploration, the article will discuss theoretical frameworks such as technological determinism and social shaping theory to contextualize the impact of text communication platforms on language use. Furthermore, it will review empirical findings to illuminate the diverse perspectives and experiences of university students regarding the adoption of chat abbreviations and slang. Ultimately, this investigation seeks to provide insights that are not only relevant for academic discourse but also informative for educators, policymakers, and anyone interested in the evolving landscape of digital communication and language practices.

Objectives of study

These objectives aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of how text communication platforms influence language use among university students, considering both the practical implications and broader societal impacts:

1. To Determine Usage Patterns: investigate the frequency and extent to which university students use chat abbreviations and slang in their digital communications.
2. To study examines the evolution and spread of chat abbreviations and informal language usage within university student communities, as observed through digital communication platforms. To Understand Social and Cultural Factors: identify the social contexts and cultural influences that shape the adoption and usage of chat abbreviations and slang among university students.
3. To Assess Educational Implications: evaluate the potential impact of digital communication habits, including the use of abbreviations and slang, on formal writing skills and academic performance.
4. To Compare Across Platforms: compare the usage of chat abbreviations and slang across different text communication

platforms (e.g., SMS, instant messaging apps, social media) and analyze any platform-specific trends.

5. To Investigate Perception and Attitudes: explore university students' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of chat abbreviations and slang in various digital communication contexts.
6. To Propose Recommendations: Provide recommendations for educators, administrators, and platform developers regarding the integration or regulation of digital language norms in educational and social settings.

Literature Review

This literature review section provides an overview of relevant research and theoretical perspectives, setting the stage for further exploration and analysis in the article. The integration of digital communication technologies into daily life has reshaped the ways individuals communicate, particularly among younger demographics such as university students. Central to this transformation is text platforms, including SMS, instant messaging apps, and social media, which facilitate rapid and efficient exchanges characterized by brevity and informality (Thurlow et al., 2004; Crystal, 2001).

1. Adoption of Chat Abbreviations and Slang

The widespread use of chat abbreviations and slang in digital communication has become a hallmark of contemporary language practices. Abbreviations such as "LOL" (laugh out loud), "OMG" (oh my god), and "BTW" (by the way) enable users to convey complex ideas succinctly, enhancing communication efficiency (Baron, 2008; Tagg et al., 2009). Similarly, slang terms like "lit" (exciting or excellent) and "AF" (as f, intensifier) serve to express emotions and attitudes concisely, reflecting the dynamic and evolving nature of digital discourse (Crystal, 2006).

2. Factors Influencing Usage Patterns

Several factors contribute to the adoption and proliferation of chat abbreviations and slang among university students. Firstly, the

technological affordances of text communication platforms, such as limited character space and real-time messaging, encourage the development of shorthand and informal language (Plester et al., 2008). Secondly, social norms within peer groups and online communities play a crucial role in shaping linguistic practices, as individuals seek to conform to group identities and establish rapport through shared language conventions (Thurlow et al., 2004). Remove the capitalization.

3. Social and cultural implications

The use of chat abbreviations and slang extends beyond functional communication to encompass social and cultural dimensions. Studies have highlighted how these linguistic practices contribute to identity construction and social bonding among university students, reinforcing group affiliations and signalling insider status within digital communities (Herring, 2013; Danet & Herring, 2007). However, concerns have been raised regarding the potential impact on formal language skills and academic writing, with some scholars cautioning against the erosion of grammatical norms and linguistic precision (Hargittai, 2008; Drouin, 2011).

4. Educational considerations

In educational settings, the prevalence of chat abbreviations and slang raises pertinent questions about their influence on language proficiency and academic performance. While some argue that digital literacy encompassing these informal language practices is beneficial for engagement and expression (Plester et al., 2008), others contend that educators should emphasize the distinction between formal and informal communication contexts to cultivate effective written communication skills (Crystal, 2006).

5. Theoretical Frameworks

The development and improvement of technology helps students a lot specifically; the discovery of text messaging that aids the respondents' communication. On contrary, some students have their wrong practice in using these kinds of innovation. Instead of studying their lessons on vacant time, they enjoy texting, browsing

social media and others, so they adopt words and ideas that are informal. As they keep doing this practice, they adopt more and more informalities that unconsciously affect their writing abilities. Social Presence Theory, developed by Short, Williams, and Christie (1976), explained the effect telecommunications media could have on communications. They theorized that communication media differ in their degree of social presence and that these differences play an important role in how people act. Before the advent of computers, teenagers would spend hours on the telephone. In contrast, today they spend hour afterhours texting one another. Online devices have now changed the face of social presence where teens now have developed their own language through the use of Internet Slang, and this medium has changed the way teenagers act. Ochonogor W. C. , Alakpodia N. O. , Achugbue I. E. (2012), from their study, stated, —it is clear that the majority of the students do not know when they make use of slangs or chat room language even when they write a formal text to their lecturers. 215 (66.36%) of the respondents said they text in a constructive manner while 104 representing 32.10% said they use text slang in their writing. This study has shown with the use of Social Presence Theory that these secondary students did not know how to act when it was time to write formal paper, and they also did not know when or how to switch from Internet Slang to formal writing.

Research Methodology

This work isa descriptive survey. This paper describes the structures and patterns of chat Abbreviations and Slang among University students.This approach helped us collect data and describe, in a systematic manner, the characteristic features of the chat abbreviation and slangs of university students. Besides, the descriptive survey, research design made it possible for us to study the chat Abbreviations and slangs of university students by collecting data from only A few samples considered to be representative of the entire group (Nworgu 1991, Osuala 2007). This study collected samples of the chat abbreviation and slang of university students and described and compared their features to determine their similarities and differences.

The population of this study was drawn from the university websites and comprises a male and female undergraduate population, 44,500, which forms the main population of the paper. The university student's is made up of many faculties.

The non-probabilistic sampling method, specifically, the purposive sampling technique, was adopted. This afforded us the convenience of selecting our informants based on our judgment that they would be able to provide us with the required information needed for the study. 120 students, 10 from each of the faculties, were (interviewed as the representative population).

The source of data for this study is primarily the observations using various online platforms and social media, as well as student interviews. The online platforms include: the Uniport Students Forum on Facebook the Uniport Open Market on WhatsApp. Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest Data were collected from the researcher's observations the following social media sites used by university (Uniport students' forum and Uniport Open). Research instruments included a written interview and observation. In the written interview, essays were given to the respondents. These were collated accordingly. Participant observation was adopted. Using the instrument of participant observation, the respondents were prompted into conversations, which were discreetly guided and, as much as possible, directed towards the needed utterance type.

Data Presentation and Analysis.

The present study examines the linguistic patterns and communication trends observed among university students through an observational analysis of their interactions on various online platforms, including student forums and open market discussions on social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp. The analysis reveals the use of unusual abbreviations, grammatical errors, and spelling errors prevalent among the student population. The following examples in tables 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are some of the abbreviations and their meanings.

Table 1 Chat abbreviations and slang used by university students.

Abbreviation	Meaning
Abt	About
Lab	Laboratory
2c	to see
Lol	laugh out loud
Nvm	never mind
F2f	face to face
Btw	by the way

Table 2. Words Replaced by Single Letters

Words	Letter
Why	Y
The	D
See	C
Be	B

Table 3. Words replaced by single digits

Word	Digit
Ate	8
To or too	2
Won	1
For	4

Table 4. Words replaced by combination of letters and digits

Word	Combination of Letter and Digit
Later	l8r
Today	2day
Before	b4
To see	2c
Tomorrow	2moro

Table 5. Some Grammatical Errors when they use abbreviations in the Chat

Grammatical errors (simple past)	Correct form (simple past)
It's majorly seen.....	It's mainly seen.....
I suppose	I'm supposed to
I side you.....	I agreed with what you said
No more concentrate.....	No longer concentrate.....
Before this actions were	Before these actions were.....

Conclusion and Suggestions

This paper has examined an analysis of the chat abbreviations and slang of the students of the Universities. The data were gathered from an online chat platform used by university students and interviews. The study was hinged on the use and gratification theory. The use and gratification theory supports the fact that the students of a university abbreviate and use slang because certain motives compel them to do so, and in addition to satisfying their needs at that moment. We noted that the students of the universities used single letters digits, and combinations of both to replace words, and that some of the words were shortened, contracted, and clipped. It was also noted that students abbreviate in order to minimise cost, save time while chatting, add style to their writing and most often for the fun of it. Furthermore, when using chat abbreviations and slang, the majority of students do not follow In the English language since it is composed haphazardly. It was observed that students at universities do not properly use their punctuation marks in formal writing. Finally, this paper has established that chat abbreviations and slangs have negatively affected the proper English language used by some of the students at the universities.

Suggestions

The rise of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has undoubtedly revolutionized the way we communicate, with chat abbreviations and slangs becoming increasingly prevalent in our daily interactions. While these shortcuts may have their place in informal settings, their use in academic and professional contexts can be detrimental to effective communication and professional development.

References

- Akwanya, A. N. (2007). *Semantics and Discourse: Theories of Meaning and Textual Analysis*. Acena Publishing Enugu.
- Baron, N. S. (2008). *Always on: Language in an online and mobile world*. Oxford University Press.

- Baskerville, P. (1992). *Global English: A Paradigm Shift*.
- Crystal, D. (1987). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2001). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2008). *Texting*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Danet, B., & Herring, S. C. (Eds.). (2007). *The multilingual Internet: Language, culture, and communication online*. Oxford University Press.
- Defleur, M. L., & Dennis, E. E. (1991). *Understanding Media in the Digital Age*. Allyn and Bacon Publishers.
- Drouin, M. (2011). College students' text messaging, use of textese and literacy skills. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 27(1), 67-75.
- Ezekwesili & Chinedu (2008). Information and Communication Technology in learning English as a secondary language. *International Journal of Communication*, 9.
- Harcourt Press Ltd. Chat Abbreviation and Internet slangs. Assessed on 12/06/17. www.uniport.edu.ng
- Hargittai, E. (2008). Whose space? Differences among users and non-users of social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 276-297.
- Herring, S. C. (2013). Discourse in Web 2.0: Familiar, reconfigured, and emergent. In D. Tannen & A. M. Trester (Eds.), *Discourse 2.0: Language and new media* (pp. 1-26). Georgetown University Press. <http://www.knol.google.com/k/PeterBaskerville/globalEnglish-a-Paradigm-Shift> 14/10/09

- Katz, et al. (1974). Utilization of Mass Communication by the Individual. In Blumlet J. G. and E. Katz (eds)•
- Marchand, H. (1969). The Categories and Types of Present-Day English Word-Formation. Munchen: C. H. BeckscheVerlagsbuchandlung.
- Methods and Techniques (2nd ed). New Age International Publishers.
- Michael, A. (2009). Slangs the People's Poetry. Oxford University Press.
- Ndimele (1996). An advanced English Grammar and Usage. Aba: National Institute for Nigerian Languages.
- Ndiyo, N. A. (2005). Fundamentals of Research in Behavioural Science and Humanities. Wusen Publishers, Calabar•Nigeria.
- Nwodo, A. G. (2011). Short Message Service (sms) and English Language Usage in selected secondary schools inNsukka Urban. University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Onuigbo, S., & Eyisi, J. (2008). English Language in Nigeria: Issues and Development. Calabar Paclen Publishers.
- Osuala, E. C. (2007). Introduction to Research Methodology. African First Publishers Onitsha.
- Perspective on Gratifications ResearchLondon: Sage Publications
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). Research Methodology:
- Plester, B., Wood, C., & Joshi, P. (2008). Exploring the relationship between children's knowledge of text message abbreviations and school literacy outcomes. British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 26(4), 456-471.
- Tagg, C., et al. (2009). Teenagers and social network sites: Do off-line inequalities predict their online social networks? First

Monday, 14(11). Retrieved from
<https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2458/246>

Thurlow, C., et al. (2004). Generation Txt? The sociolinguistics of young people's text-messaging. Discourse Analysis Online, 2(1). Retrieved from
<https://extra.shu.ac.uk/daol/articles/v2/n1/a3/thurlow2003003-paper.html>

Walter, C. I., & Christie, O. (2011). Research Methods in Linguistics and Communication Studies. University of Port