Proliferation of Text Messaging and its Effects on Language

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1. Introduction

Text messaging has indeed rapidly paved its way in our modern world for brisk communication and effective expression. In the present age, we do not even feel any need for capitalization. We rather ignore punctuation entirely. We no more use the classic sentence structure that is otherwise necessary to be incorporated in statements in order to make them standardized. According to the opinion of Mphahlele and Mashamaite (2005), in every field of life, may it be social, economic, business, mass communication, etc., SMS language is frequently used. This form of writing style seems to be an easy means of communication for teenagers. That is why some linguists and educators are afraid that too much incorporation or use of texting is negatively affecting the abilities to use spelling and grammar correctly and effectively. Others, however, do not consider this notion to be a threat rather they take pride in what teenagers are doing with the language. They are not worried as youngsters are creating their own innovative style of writing in the new century.

Despite the fact that the students know the difference between formal and informal writing and they use them correctly up to a great extent, yet sometimes text messaging affects by blurring the difference between formal and informal style. It is a human psyche that if one does a lot of practice of anything he will eventually adopt a tendency towards it.

Baron (2008) says that SMS language is teaching innovative use of letters and punctuation. With other advantages, it is also producing sound or phonetic awareness among the users. Coupland (2000) is sharing almost the same opinion by saying that as the young users of mobile phones mix different practices with innovative linguistics style, it is in no way harming language competence.

Thus it is an exaggeration to say that texting is affecting the language negatively. Others’ opinion is different on many grounds as they consider that the proliferation of text messaging is leading and enforcing students towards undisciplined and sloppy habits that affect the standard language immensely. The words are reduced to abbreviations and the phrases are becoming acronyms. As a result, this phenomenon is spilling into writing resulting into a sound danger for language.

The proposed study will investigate the truth of different views of the linguists about effects of texting on language. Furthermore, it will investigate the reality of skeptics’ views that texting is devoid of richness of language as it gives limited vocabulary to express viewpoints to individuals. With that this study will investigate, whether in school while writing ‘texters’ experience any sort of difficulty in expressing themselves or not.

1.1 Objectives

Objectives of the current research project were:
1. To gather the data to see appearance of texting in formal writing of the students.
2. The possible effects of texting on formal language by studying and analyzing the contents of the students of different sampling groups.
3. To get the idea about the impacts of text messaging on the formal writing of the students in Pakistan where English is a second language, not a native one.
4. To investigate the problem related to spelling, punctuation and grammar of language on account of short messaging.
1.2 Research Questions
Following questions were taken into account while carrying out this research project:
1. Is texting harming or improving students’ literacy?
2. Are spelling and punctuation the areas more affected than other areas of standard writing?
3. Can students keep the formal and informal writing separate?
4. What are the harms of text messaging on formal writing in views of students and teachers?

1.3 Hypotheses
Hypotheses for the proposed research work are as under:
1. If the students adopt the habits of frequent texting, their formal writing will be affected by it negatively.
2. If the students use excessive text messaging, the punctuation and spelling areas will be liable to be more harmed than other areas of formal writing.
3. If the students are heavy users of mobile they will not be able to keep formal and informal writing separate.
4. If the students send and receive too many messages, they will get phonological awareness of the language.

2. Review of the Related Literature

Background Study
It was explored in a research by Barkhuus (2005), that young generation is prone towards texting and uses it to become more social as it helps in overcoming the shyness. As it is cheaper than making a phone call and is having fixed and cheaper rates, so it is one of the reasons why the users like using it for a faster communication (Mante and Pires, 2002). SMS are convenient to send by using a little keypad having a limit of 160 characters per message. Therefore texting is unique and stylish in its own way (afHårdSegerstad, 2005). According to Bodomo (2009); Balakrishnan & Yeow (2008) and afHårdSegerstad (2005), as there are also limits of space, so individuals have to contract their messages in order to be brief yet comprehensible. And for the required outcomes, not only words are reduced but phrases and sentences are also contracted. Grinter and Eldridge (2003) also add to this point of view that only one letter is typed for completing the message. With this, symbols and numbers are also combined for making new reduced style for text messaging. In a study done in Malaysia, concern has been shown after finding glimpses of text messaging in the formal writing of the students as it is harming standard writing of students (Muniandy et al, 2010). Shafie et al (2007) has also found out that texting has penetrated deeper in to the youngsters' mind that it can be seen in the answer sheets where they are neglecting the standard ways of writing.

With the arrival of new and advanced technology, new fears and hopes are also developed. In case of texting, one witnesses the situation when it is appreciated because of its conciseness, brevity and quickness (Umberto Eco, 2002). Many studies have been accomplished in order to see the effects or impacts of texting (SMS) on language by many linguists and language experts including language teachers. Some linguists and experts endorse the same opinion that texting has wonderful impacts on language as it enhances ideas related to expressing one’s opinion in a fluent manner. It develops vocabulary and creates phonetics awareness. While some others do not
seem to be agreed upon this opinion as they have got some contradictory ideas regarding influence of texting on language. The opposing opinion argues that texting has affected the English language negatively. In their thinking, the areas that are more prone to change or influence are punctuation, spellings and syntax. They advocate that the students who use too often mobile for texting cannot differentiate between formal and informal writing.

The same type of study carried out by Enriquez and Nolasco (2007), expresses the need of rich vocabulary, grammar and spelling skills in writing standard language as these are basic components of language in a person’s. In a research, conducted by an educational website, Edutopia, the issue about grammar and text messaging was explored. 293 votes were polled. 193 voters were accepting that students are using texting habits of writing in their school assignments and they cannot make distinction between the formal and informal writing. On the contrary, 98 voters did not agree that it is an important issue and students do not show this attitude towards formal school writing as they are well aware of both formal and informal writing. 55 voters were not sure about the exact response (Ring, 2009). SMS language has clear impacts on written as well as spoken ways. Many experts understand the importance of language function and form in language that is being affected by it (Baron, 1984).

A study was done on the same topic related to text messaging effects on teens’ school tasks by ‘Pew Internet and American Life Project and the National Commission on Writing’. It was found out that in 64% school assignments of children, abbreviated terms and symbols appeared frequently. In the same article a teacher states the same thing that text language pops up in the students’ formal writing which she happens to correct it. In her opinion it is the teachers’ job to help to make their students aware of formal and informal writing (Hubert, 2008).

Another study that was conducted by a news station- KHQA, which included interviews of several English teachers and other related personnel about the issue, states and confirms that this sort of writing activity like texting hurts language. It further says that there is nothing serious about it as these problems appear with the arrival of every advanced technology. It was found from an interview that it is lack of profound knowledge about grammar that students fail to write correctly. An example is given when a sentence ‘get the job done’ is written by students not knowing that it is not appropriate to write (Hubert, 2008).

Since teenagers are using texting consistently, it is correct to state that texting is seen in students’ work on the whole. The phone bills confirm that an average of about 1800 text messages are sent or received by every user individually in a month in United States (Neilsen, 2008). There are many instances that show the average of text messaging goes beyond these statistics. An article shows that in a single month, a girl of thirteen did 14,528 messages and AT &T was on four hundred and forty pages. It is astonishing that this girl was sending a message per minute when the time was calculated. What more could be expected from her in school writing tasks that she would be doing (Mah, 2009).

The Philippines is considered the ‘texting capital of the world’ in view of AHN Media Corp (2010). There, the people have become frequent users of mobile phones for texting. They use abbreviated style for writing texts in extensive manner and this appears with the result of affected language proficiency of the users. Language proficiency is required for doing proper communication, either we are students or not (McKee 1939). He further says that standard language is essential regardless of the effects of technology like mobile phones.
The most affected areas by text language are spelling and grammar proficiencies. These areas become harmed negatively as use of short hand writing is common among users using cellular phones for chatting. The students are not concerned with proper use of ‘subject-verb agreement’ and correct spellings in their writing (Kate Ross, 2010). Dolch (1960) says that most affected area by this technology is spelling proficiency. The students must be able to use correct spellings in their writing because they are expressing their thoughts by writing. The best and appropriate thing that appears sound is only to write them with correct spelling.

If we compare private schools with public schools, it is explored that students of private schools are more motivated. They frequently use mobile phones than the students of the public schools. As a result they send and receive more messages than their counterparts (Estuar, 2003).

In a research done by Russell (2010), the effects of texting were found out. It was deduced that spelling skills are getting weaker regardless of age of his students in grade 9 and 11. Texting has, in no way, helped language; rather abbreviated writing is killing language. With spellings, the grammar is also being destroyed. Lee (as cited in Proysen, 2009) shares his opinion by saying that many teachers do not take texting harmful and they encourage their students doing text messaging. They think that it improves their creativity while writing. According to him, some other teachers also do not consider it harmful for grammar.

Edwards (2009) has got the experience of the change in his own writing. He adopted the habits of writing shortcuts in formal writing because he had engaged himself in using cell phone for texting. He adds to that, since it is a faster way of communicating with faster way of writing so individuals get it as a ‘habit’. By giving his own example, being himself indulged in shorthand writing even in school projects, he deduces that texting is affecting the writing skills of students. Guerra (2007) is of the opinion that regardless of people’s mixed opinion about texting, his personal experience reflects that text messaging is affecting proficiency of writing. Banton et al. (2010) has conducted a research on the effects of text messaging on students’ scores in spelling and grammar. It is found after taking tests of high school students of St. Paul School of Ormoc Foundation Inc. It was clearly seen that the cellular phone owners who spend more time on texting have poorer scores as compared to the non-owners who spend little or no time in texting. The same results were seen in a research that the students who developed the habit of texting showed poor formal writing and better informal writing skills when compared to their counterparts (Rosen et al. 2009).

Myhra (2010) writes that text messaging has affected the writing skills of students negatively and they get habit to write informally. They have become habitual of writing shorthand forms ignoring punctuation, spelling and grammar, which is not acceptable in school assignments and tasks.

A research was conducted by Plester and Clare Wood (2009) on British children of pre-teen age to check the influence of text language on literacy. A special focus was by minute observation on the abbreviations and sample language used for the purpose of texting. The results were different from other studies in the field. It was discovered that texting has developed and enhanced the literary skills which was contrary to the surrounding reports. This emphasis is more supported by Wood and Meachem’s (2011) claim of creating phonological awareness by texting as a contributing factor in language literacy. They stressed that texting is improving spelling skills and perception in orthographic processing. Therefore role of texting is
undeniable in supporting literacy. We are living in a new era where texting is a common thing. And people, in order to put maximum text in one message neglect the formal way of writing by using condensed and abbreviated language. In order to avoid negative impacts of texting, the role of a teacher to develop the sense of differentiation between the two ways of writing is significant and challenging (Bernard 2008).

All mistakes in a formal writing are not because of texting habits of the young generation. There are other factors like lack of knowledge and information provided by the educators as a second language which may be amongst other reasons to be blamed for. In Malaysia, these language mistakes can be connected to improper understanding of the grammatical rules of the second language (Darus and Khor, 2009; Drouin and Davis, 2009).

There is another different but modern opinion regarding texting along with two opposite ideas related to proliferation of text messaging and its impacts on language. It says that whatever is happening in everyday world by SMS language is not the extinction of the English language rather we should take this a contribution in language (Vosloo, 2009). Crystal (2011) also says that we can use SMS language to introduce new ways to find its innovative potentials in improving literacy. Some experts think about grammar that it is also an unaffected area of the students. In their thinking, texting is a new evolved language and it cannot affect students’ writing negatively. A student is able to identify the standards, slangs and SMS language (Russell, 2010).

A book with the title ‘Txtng: The Gr8 Db8’ by David Crystal who served as a linguist, did not entertain the negative impacts of SMS language on the individuals’ formal writing. He was of the view that positive effects are the outcomes of texting especially on the literacy skills of the students (Crystal, 2008). He also defends his point of view by saying that the use of abbreviated language is about 10 percent. It is not appropriate to say that it is a new language as some experts view it so. He further argues that the use of text language is not a habitual action of the students as they rarely use it. In his view it is not wrong to say that it is improving literacy. He goes on saying that SMS and net speak are also context based activities and people use only those novel abbreviations that all other know and understand. He also states that this novel style of using language is a nonlinguistic behavior and cannot be justified in formal writing of individuals. To send and receive messages rapidly, the users omit punctuation and follow the sound system ignoring spellings and syntax. This gives the other person equal opportunity to send and receive text quickly like spoken communication. On the contrary, O’Connor (2005), in his findings says that students’ skills of standard writing have been harmed by SMS language and missing areas in standard writing are proper use of punctuation, abbreviations and grammar. According to John Sutherland (2002) who is a journalist, a kind of mental sickness acquired from laziness is noted in individuals who use SMS language. Their spellings and orthography is also not good. He states that, in an unpoetic way, a full text of Hamlet can be written in the most reduced manner using devices of SMS for a faster reading. Along with the use of features like shortening words, using of symbols and acronyms, sometimes mobile phone users leave the pronouns in text communication making the sentence incomplete (Werry, 1996).

The symbols, Crystal (2001) says, are frequently used to express emotions and to lay emphasis on some particular words. Thus it is giving an innovative as well as creative mode to writing. The language used by most of the users is said to be
characterized by their own unique fashion, for example, spoken conversation with special use of acronyms like ‘lol’ for ‘laughing out loud’ (Herring, 1996). With every passing minute, linguists are getting more and more interested in studying the changes brought about by SMS language and its impact on language spellings and writing (Thurlow et al, 2004). According to Ling (2010), the teen agers are the most frequent users of mobile phone for the texting. Therefore, texting is related to phases of life. According to Ross (2006), the shift of the people is towards ‘paperless world’ and electronic communication is paving its way in writing culture. Writing style provides permanence that is inherited in from one generation to the other in the same fashion as received (Finnegan, 1988). Writing in Net speak is not just writing, rather it is likely serving a speech, “talking in writing”. What SMS senders and receivers are participating in is conversation rather than writing (Collot and Belmore, 1996).

The great challenge is for the English educators who, on the one hand are teaching standard language and on the other hand they are observing the contrary trends in formal language assignments. In net speak words are written according to their sound patterns. As a result the writing that is evolving is neither standardized nor formal. Therefore the purpose of second language teachers is in no way being accomplished i.e. to teach standard language skills to produce language proficient individuals. He also states the problem by saying that the users have started incorporating SMS language as a standard language in their formal writing tasks. They are doing so for economy of cost, energy and time. The internet generation is a big victim of it as they are writing wrong spellings, even without taking into account the correct sentence structure. That is why their language is improper and imprecise. In this context the biggest problem is for teachers to bring their students towards standardized use of writing (Mphahlele and Mashamaite, 2005).

Different people have adopted different style to do texting and this happens according to the different purposes of the texts in different contexts (Baron, 2008). She claims that the students that are texting regularly are likely to be enjoying wider range of vocabulary. So it is not wrong to say that SMS language is improving literacy. The students also become conscious about use of standard writing when they are able to differentiate two ways of writing- formal and informal. Thurlow (2011) is of the opinion that texting is providing a generic feel. He feels so because of three major reasons:

(a) Brevity or conciseness of short messages
(b) Typesetting of the short messages
(c) Contents that are little conversation on regular basis

In view of Nadler- Nir (2008), many experts claim that SMS language is a fruit of twenty-first century and it would survive with us like a permanent giant in our lives. In this age of technology there is a need for advance ability to express or communicate fast (Berasa and Mous, 2009).

Crystal (2008) opines that in this age of fast communication, a focus should be on working to get potentials of texting for improving literacy. According to his point of view, texting is not harming literacy but creating individuals with potential skills to read and write. He gives reference to the latest studies done in this field. He goes on saying that the students who are pre-teen agers and do texting showed better understanding by getting good scores in tests of learning Standard English. It is not a big harm or disaster for standard writing. Therefore it is exploring new horizons in improving literacy. He does not seem to advocate the opinion that texting is harming
language through adopting new graphical styles and lots of wrong punctuation. He further says that it is the true awareness of sounds that helps children in texting. And only those can do well who have sound phonetic knowledge. The students who showed good performance in the tests related to spelling and writing were heavy texters. Positive gain can be achieved if focus is provided to the students who are weaker in spelling and reading through texting. It also has its positive impacts in getting awareness in rhyme. Apart from its communicative purposes, there are other strengths of texting e.g. there are poetry competitions as well as competition of text novels by using only 160 characters to build potentials of word play. In his research, he also stresses the use of texting in order to facilitate or improve literacy (Crystal, 2008).

3. Research Methodology

Our two primary research purposes have led to the generation of hypotheses and the testing of hypotheses. The general study to find effects of text language on Standard English certainly requires both. To test specific hypotheses about effects of text messaging on Standard English, triangulation method was used. Questionnaires were designed to reveal patterns which may have been obscured through more global findings of impacts of texting on language. This was accomplished by the selection of appropriate sample (students and teachers), an important concern in this study in a natural setting. The contents of students’ formal writing were also collected. After collection of data, statistical procedures were used, which provided precise, reliable and valid information about relationships and causality. Averages and percentages were used to assemble data and obtaining results. Another approach was to conduct restricted and specific investigation of questions which, in a broader sense, was considered evaluative. Both qualitative as well as quantitative methods were considered and used to analyze and describe data collected from different sampling groups. All features of SMS language like incorrect use of punctuation, wrongly done spellings, mix of two languages, incorporation of reduced or SMS words, use of emoticons and syntactic mistakes all were taken as variables as they were found in formal writing of the students.

Keeping in mind the investigation, three high schools were chosen for population in order to investigate the impacts of SMS language on the formal writing task of the students. First thing to undertake was to select group of students as sample who were heavy users of mobile phones with cheaper packages. Three aspects were given preferences for choosing a sample for research.

a. If the students are heavy users of mobile phones for texting as discussed earlier.
b. If they are spending the maximum leisure time on texting in a day.
c. If they have packages of SMS on mobiles or other application for sending and receiving messages.

4. Results and Findings

4.1 Overall Findings and Comparison of Both Results Obtained from Questionnaires of Students and Teachers:
If we analyze the results obtained from the questionnaires from students and teachers, the following results are seen:

i. The students are frequently doing texting and spending most of the leisure time texting friends. As it is time and cost saving, so it is a good way to be in touch with friends and relatives. The teachers up to great extent know students’ involvement in texting and they are of the view that students are incorporating elements of texting in their formal writing tasks.
ii. The students are using a language without caring about the standards, omitting punctuation, spelling and grammar; they are even using shortened words, phrases and sentences. They are using simple vocabulary as well.

iii. The text language is appearing in the formal work of the students as majority of the students are aware that it is popping up in their work; and the teachers are making them conscious of its presence. If we find out the opinion of the teachers inquired, it was learnt that teachers are also aware of occurrences of texting features in formal writing of the students.

iv. The majority of the students were of the opinion that they can keep formal and text language separate whereas the opinion of the teachers was found different; their views were in contrast with those of students. Although rules of language are taught thoroughly and teachers are strict in its use, yet the students are neglecting standards of language by neglecting those lectures.

v. The teachers confirmed that the negative effects of texting are more as compared to the positive effects of texting on language. Spelling and punctuation are the areas that are affected severely by it. When the learners adopt the habit of writing spelling by following the sound patterns, the spelling they write are wrong. They omit punctuation or incorporate wrong punctuation by adding symbols and numbers in it. The grammatical skills are negatively affected by texting as novel way of writing is adopted by students. About writing skills, the teachers view that texting is not helping in improving it whereas students state that texting is enhancing their writing skills. The improvements in reading comprehension and flow of ideas in writing and phonological awareness among learners are the positive impacts of texting in view of teachers and students.

vi. The teachers do not want that students’ use of text language should appear in their formal writing. Therefore they are assigning low scores to those students who use it. They also discourage it in all the ways possible.

vii. Most of the students and teachers were of the opinion that texting must not be used in formal writing and even it must not be allowed in classroom setting.

viii. According to the teachers’ opinion the learners or students of high schools are directly affected by texting as compared to the college learners because at the young age of 15-16, the students are not mature enough to be strict about the use of standards of any language in formal writing.

The teachers were not definite in giving the opinion that texting must be treated as a separate genre in language on account of its proliferation in use.

4.2 Results of the Content Analysis
One hundred and fifty students were chosen as a sample in order to compare and contrast the results gotten from the questionnaires designed for students and teachers to see the impacts of text messaging on second language (English) of students in Pakistan. The deeper analysis of the contents taken from them for evidence was done thoroughly. The data of fifty students was presented in the tables and charts to draw a clear picture of impacts of texting on formal writing of the students.

i. Tenses Analysis
If we analyze data of the content it was seen that the average of 14.22 sentences were written by these fifty students in the writing task assigned to them. Among
them, an average of 11.14 sentences was written correctly whereas an average of 2.88 sentences was written wrongly. If we further categorize to see the average of all punctuation mistakes, the results are as follows:

### ii. Punctuation Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Punctuation Features</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No. of Missed Full Stops</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No. of Overuse / Wrong Use of Full Stop</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No. of Capitalization Mistakes after Full Stop</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>No. of Misused Commas</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>No. of Missed Commas</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>No. of Wrongly Used Apostrophes</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>No. of Apostrophes Missed</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>No. of Miss used / Overused Question Marks</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>No. of Question Marks Missed</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### iii. The Spelling Analysis

From the spelling analysis it was found that averages of 3 mistakes were there in the entire samples. The mistakes did not appear in their writing tasks continuously, rather sometimes the spellings were correctly and sometimes incorrectly written; that was due to confusion they had about their use. They have adopted the way of writing sloppy spellings and sometimes they are confused about writing even easy words.

### iv. Use of Emoticons

So far as the use of emoticons is concerned its appearance was found in the contents. It was seen that an average of 0.68 was there in the contents of the students. The students have used it for their emotional satisfaction. They have no picture in their mind why they are using it in the formal writing tasks. They have taken this tendency from the texting style where they use lots of emoticons and smileys. Although its occurrence is not regular yet many students are using it in any form they like, without knowingly that their teachers are discouraging these habits of writing substandard writing.

### v. Use of Two Languages

The average use of two languages in the formal task of writing a paragraph was 0.88. As English is not the first language of the students, so any difficulty found is overcome by taking help from first language i.e. Urdu or Punjabi. The learners seem to use some vocabulary items from their native language as they commonly do in texting.

### vi. Use of Abbreviated/Reduced SMS Words

The average use of abbreviated or reduced words was 1.18. The students seem to reduce some letters while writing some words. They have done some innovations in this regard. There is no doubt that this is clearly borrowed from texting.
4.3 Discussion on Results of Content Analysis

The results of content analysis confirmed that many students are adopting ways of writing sloppy language and do not care much about writing standard and precise language. The students whose content analysis was done were high school ESL learners and they have been learning language and studying about the language for 10-11 years. They can write about any unseen topic independently by using simple everyday language.

All the text language features were seen in the work of the students. But there were students who did not use features of SMS language in their work. They avoided it and were able to keep the formal and informal separate; and they use the two different writing ways on two different occasions. In many works that were deeply analyzed for the incidences of text language showed the use of it, in one or the other way. There were many punctuation mistakes in their work. Therefore it was analyzed that punctuation area is one of the most problematic areas of language on account of doing excessive texting. The learners do not seem to give it proper attention in their writing. They missed many times the use of full stop unknowingly and many times they missed commas and other punctuation marks like question marks and exclamation marks. With the missed punctuation, they also use punctuation wrongly by putting punctuation where there is no need to put it. The capitalization also seemed to be weak. Many students were not having any idea where to start the letter in capital form especially after full stop and for proper nouns. An example to be quoted from the content of a student is when he writes that he wore the shirt ‘by ZARA’s man’. The spelling area also appeared very weak because students seem to use it by following sound patterns. In order to write correct spelling they do innovation with them and write them incorrectly. Again, the mistakes did not manifest a continuous trend in their writing tasks, rather the spellings were at times correct and sometimes incorrectly written; which strongly indicated the confusion they had about the correct word. There are spellings like ‘hav’ for ‘have’, ‘agian’ for ‘again’, ‘did’nt’ for ‘didn’t’, ‘throw’ for ‘thorough’, etc. From the content analysis, our first hypothesis that states that spelling and punctuation areas are more harmed with the increase in using text language was confirmed. It was found out that the students who are frequently doing texting are harming their spelling and punctuation areas of language.

The abbreviated words were also seen in the formal writing of the students. The examples of these reduced words are writing of letter ‘i’ for ‘I’, ‘u’ for ‘you’, ‘b’ for ‘be’, etc. It shows that the students are incorporating SMS language in their school writing.

The use of first language was also found in the contents obtained from learners for analysis. As English is not the first language of the students, therefore any difficulty is overcome by taking help from first language i.e. Urdu or Punjabi. The learners seem to use some vocabulary items from their native language as they commonly do in texting. The examples are the use of the words like ‘mughay di lat’ (Punjabi) and ‘ganagoana’ (Urdu), incorporated in writing by few students.

The use of emoticons and smiley are also seen in few students work. The students have used it for their emotional satisfaction and to be trendy. They have no logic in their mind why they are incorporating it in their formal writing tasks. Again their practice shows that they are influenced by their texting style where they use lots of emoticons and smileys. Although its occurrence is not regular yet many students are using it in any form they like without realizing that their teachers are discouraging such habits of writing substandard writing.
The internet generation is a big victim of these trends as they are writing wrong or imprecise spellings without taking into account the correct sentence structure. As a result their language is improper and imprecise and in this context the biggest problem is for teachers to train their students towards standardized use of writing (Mphahlele & Mashamaite, 2005). The hypothesis that we presented hence seemed to be confirmed as the teachers opined that their students even after getting too much instructions of writing standard language were unable to pay attention on keeping formal and informal writing separate. At this stage, another point to be noted is that although the students say that they can keep formal and text language separate, yet they are using few features of texting in their formal writing.

Our hypothesis that says, if the students send and receive too many messages, they will get phonological awareness of the language, is confirmed as well as the observation that students demonstrate a perfect show of following sound patterns in writing words in their writing.

Our first hypothesis is also seemed to be true that says if the students adopt the habits of frequent texting, their formal writing will be affected by it negatively. The contents of the learners confirmed that the negative effects of texting are more as compared to the positive effects of texting on language. Spelling and punctuation are the areas that are affected severely by it. When the learners adopt the habit of writing spelling by following the sound patterns, the spelling they write are wrong. They omit punctuation or incorporate wrong or over punctuation by adding symbols and numbers in it. A study done by Enriquez and Nolasco (2007), expresses the need of vocabulary, grammar and spelling skills in writing standard language as they are basic components or essentials in a person’s life. The grammatical skills are negatively affected through texting as novel way of writing is adopted by students. The students use their first language and emoticons in it. The sentences they made are sometimes incomprehensible and imprecise. About writing skills, it was viewed that the improvements in the flow of ideas and the phonological awareness among learners are the positive impacts of texting. But on the whole the discussion shows that the negative impacts of texting are more than the positive impacts. If we see them through thorough analysis, standard writing is negatively affected by texting.

Conclusion
As the purpose of the study is to locate if there is any problem created by the excessive use of mobile phones with low SMS packages, on language of the ESL learners, so it was found out that students especially teen agers are more inclined towards this technology of fast communication. They are doing little effort by writing a reduced language instead of following too many constraints of formal way of writing. The high school learners are enthusiastic and passionate to use this technology because of the motivation behind that can be due to low rates SMS packages or present trend in the same age group of using mobile.

The students are frequently doing texting and spending most of their leisure time texting friends. As texting is time and cost saving, therefore it is a good way to keep in touch with friends and relative. The teachers, up to great extent, know students’ involvement in texting and they are of the view that students are incorporating element of texting in their formal writing tasks. The text language is quite apparent in the formal work of the students and majority of the students are aware of the fact that it is popping up in their work; and the teachers are also making them conscious of its presence. As per record of the opinion of the teachers’ views inquired, it was seen that teachers are also aware of occurrences of texting features in formal writings of the students while the teachers do not appreciate students’ use
of text language in their formal writing. That is why they deduct marks of those students who use it. They also discourage it in every way possible. Most of the students and teachers were of the opinion that texting must not be used in formal writing and so much so that it must not be allowed in classroom setting.

According to the teachers’ opinion the learners or students of high schools are directly affected by texting as compared to the college learners because at the young age of 15-16, the students are not mature enough to be strict about the use of standards in formal writing.

It was observed that students of age 15 to 16 are taking SMS language for fashion and trend like other members of the same age group in writing consciously or unconsciously and using some of its features in the formal writing tasks. According to Teh (2004), the young children’s formal language is more harmed than those of grownups when they start using texting at such a young age. So far as this study is concerned, it was over all observed through content analysis that the most damaged area of language is that of punctuation. Many students are unable to punctuate where it is required in formal writing or they over punctuate the sentence. Many formal writings lack proper capitalization after each full stop or for proper nouns that is a result of overuse of SMS language.

The aspect to be noted is this that teachers always make students conscious about proper use of punctuation in formal writing but research does not approve this as most of the students did these sorts of mistakes in their formal work. They even do not care to write small letters where the demand is not so. There are some other students who have adopted habits of writing sloppy language. Spellings are the second prey of SMS language. Students do not hesitate to write innovative way of writing words that is only common feature of texting. Spellings, up to some extent are also mixed with homophones e.g. ‘throw and thorough’ and ‘our’ and ‘hour’ etc.

It was also deduced that in some sentences in the same writing task, the spellings of the same word were written differently- sometime correctly and sometime incorrectly as one of the examples that can be quoted is of word ‘again’, that was sometimes written as ‘agian’ by a student. The students also reduced some letters according to their sound that is also a habit taken from SMS. There are some more examples of students who reduce words according to the sound pattern. In some tasks, it was seen that instances of shorthand writing were found e.g. letter ‘u’ instead of ‘you’ and ‘&’ instead of writing ‘and’.

Mixing of two languages, even three i.e. English, Urdu and Punjabi, in some cases was also seen. It happened when students wanted to show some emotions, excitement or having lack of vocabulary while writing. The text language is blamed for this occurrence of mixing of two languages in formal writing. The examples of using first language in formal writing tasks of second language were explored. The reason to adopt such way of writing is considered to lack some lexical items for certain expressions; and for alternative way out, the students took some vocabulary from their mother tongue as they usually do in texting. Syntactical issues were also found in some students’ tasks. The students were eager to write with little care of constructing the correct sentences sometimes. Here, again, something with other factors is too much texting where teen agers do not mind to write as many incorrect sentences as they want, keeping in mind the communication purpose without respecting the standard norms and ways. Although use of emoticons is not so common in students’ writing tasks so far, yet some glimpses of this feature were also located. The positive elements shown by students’ writing were flow of ideas in writing tasks completion in time. They expressed themselves well in second language. With that, vocabulary seemed to be very simple but appropriate as second language learners do in spite of the fact that spellings were affected by increase in use of texting. We have employed four hypotheses in present research.
that were confirmed by the data analyzed and discussed by taking evidences from the content analysis and exploring views of teachers and students on the topic. They were:

1. If the students adopt the habits of frequent texting, their formal writing will be affected by it negatively.
2. If the students use excessive text messaging, the punctuation and spellings areas will be liable to be more harmed than other areas of formal writing.
3. If the students are heavy users of mobile they will not be able to keep formal and informal writing separate.
4. If the students send and receive too many messages, they will get phonological awareness of the language.

It is to be observed that in the coming days the use of sub-standard writing in formal writing task may turn into chaos. As a result the language will be harmed haphazardly if careful measures are not taken.

References


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