

The Outcome of ‘Short Message Service Language’ on Standard English Acquisition case of some EFL students of Oicha¹ Teachers Training Collage

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Abstract

This paper deals with the outcome of some sms style on the students of Oicha TTC. Indeed, the Globalization in making the world a single village, is not only helping students to be up to date but also it is at the basis of bad effects such as a style we call ‘sms Language’. This style is the mixture of pictograms, abbreviations etc. When we took this topic, we found that it is dangerous to be accustomed to this way of writing sms to the contacts even if it helps to save the time. The over use of the ‘sms language’ also called texting leads to the loss of standard spelling of words, punctuation and semantics. Yet these are the key structure of the standard English.

Résumé

Le présent article traite les conséquences de messagerie mobile ‘sms’ ou ‘texting’ sur l’acquisition de l’Anglais parmi les étudiants de l’ISP Oicha. Certes, la globalisation a rendu le monde entier un village. Cette globalisation n’est pas seulement en train d’aider les étudiants à se former ardemment, à accumuler les connaissances... Mais aussi, elle est à la base des styles qui affectent négativement la langue Anglaise. Ce style est le mélange des pictogrammes, acronymes, abréviations... Quand nous avons proposé ce sujet, nous avons trouvé que c’est dangereux de s’accoutumer à cette façon d’écrire les messages aux correspondants, même si ça économise le temps. L’usage excessif des ‘textings’ doit forcément mener à une perte des notions standard de l’orthographe, de la sémantique... alors que ces éléments sont à les bases de l’Anglais Standard.

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List of some abbreviations

ISP = Institut Supérieur Pédagogique

ELF = English as a Foreign Language

ESL = English as a Second Language

FL = Foreign Language

PDA = Personal Director Assistant

Ie = (Id Est from Latin) = That is to say

P = Page

DRC = Democratic Republic of Congo

TTC = Teachers Training College

SMS = Short Message Service

TEFL = Teachers of English as a Foreign Language

1. Background to the Study

The short message service (SMS) are rampant in the famous social-Networks these days; the mobile phones (smart or not) are among the best sellers of 21st century. The magazine Washington Post² asserts that “In the whole world, we may have at least one telephone for two people and in some 30 countries, we have more telephones than there are people”. The way people are writing SMS to their contacts is not a standard one. There have been a specific style for the SMS users, which is not helpful for the language rules. A worldwide language, such as this, should be cared about to maintain mutual intelligibility.

2. Statements of the Problem

The Globalization is making everything easier and quicker than they were in the last centuries. Nowadays, even if there is a long distance between contacts, a single click on the button is sufficient to send one’s message. The English SMS are being written in a non standard style: Abbreviations, Pictograms, acronyms, etc. are the

¹ Oicha is a chief town of Beni territory. This is in DR Congo mainly in North Kivu.

² Cited by Awake, November 2009

fashion of “SMS language” but they help in order to kill the standardization of the English language. In view of these styles, this paper will answer these questions:

- How does SMS language influence and affect Standard English Acquisition today?
- In which way can SMS languages be interpreted variably?
- How can Standard English be forgotten because of the SMS language style?

3. Hypothesis

A hypothesis is “an idea or explanation of something that is based on a few known facts but that has not yet been proved to be true or correct” it is synonym to theory³.

The constant growth of science and technology attracts the entire world. Presently, people brief out things in the style of using a given language in communication. This leads to the “SMS language” in communication. The “SMS language” has become fashion all over the world and in almost all the world’s languages. Unconsciously, the youngsters are not only using them as well, but they are specialists in creating new others. On the other hand, the unlimited use of mobile phones, laptops, desk tops, PDA, etc. is available to whoever needs buying it. This article assumes that the use of texting in all these devices would be a bankrupt of the English language acquisition. And for that reason, viewing the statements of our problem, we postulate that these can be the answers to our three questions and they will be verified throughout the research:

- The “SMS language” truly influences the language in many aspects which include Grammar, Spelling, Semantics and so forth.

4. The “SMS language” is interpreted according to the reader because it does not have a given canon. A pictogram can mean something different depending to the way each one understands it.

5. There is a possibility to lose the Standard English when the user is addict to it, because practice makes perfect.

4. Purpose of the Study

This study aims at analyzing the impact of “SMS” language on the acquisition of Standard English. Moreover, throughout the present article, learners of English as second language in Oicha township and others will notice advantages and negative influence on writing SMS and its auxiliaries in different ways.

5. Significance of the Study

Standard English is among the foreign languages we learn in the D.R Congo. It is very important to learn it so that we can correctly communicate with our neighboring countries of the English expression. Moreover, English is among the top 10 languages which are the most spoken in the world⁴. If it happens that we learn it or we teach it badly, we shall face troubles in the communication with the speakers of English. We should then avoid styles that are (or can be) at the basis of misleading us from a good leaning of such a standard whole world spoken language.

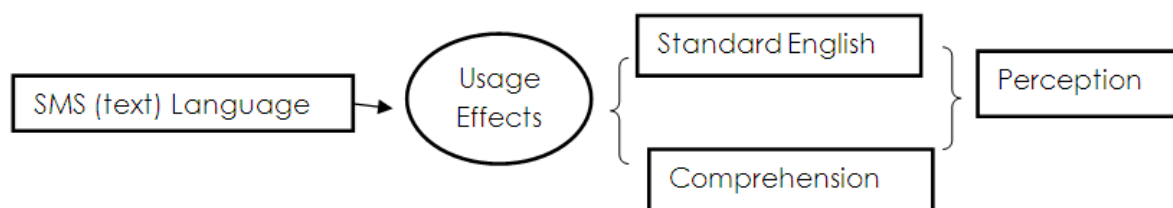
6. Theoretical Framework

“The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study”⁵ I.e it introduces and describes the theory that explains the reason why the problem under Study exists.

The dangers that are hidden in “Text speak” (Text language) are that their chief feature is rebus abbreviation. Words are formed in letters. The clear ideology behind the usage of such abbreviations is directly related to less consumption of time, energy as well as space. Due to the limited message, lengths and minuscule user of interface, SMS users commonly make extensive use of abbreviations. (For instance “4” in place of “for” n8 in place of night)⁶. If something is not done to discourage this system of communicating, we shall face people who know neither the spelling nor the syntax of the standard English.

7. Conceptual Frame work

“A conceptual framework is in analytical tool with several variations and contexts”, en.m.wikipedia.org I.e it is used to organize ideas in a way that is easy to remember and apply. Here is ours:



³ A.S. Horn by, 2010

⁴ Google search: The top 10 languages worldwide 2019, 17:30. 13th January

⁵ Sandra L. Baldwinbook,2011

Our conceptual framework deals with the “SMS language” i.e Abbreviations, Pictograms, Acronym etc, their usage effects on standard English comprehension and the outcome of these texting to the reader’s perception.

8. Scope of the work

This paper discusses the SMS language in all its fields. It starts by the definition of the key concepts related to Standard English and Electronic communication. It ends by the exploitation of the data we got from the questionnaire that the teacher of English and students will answer to help us getting data which concern our research topic.

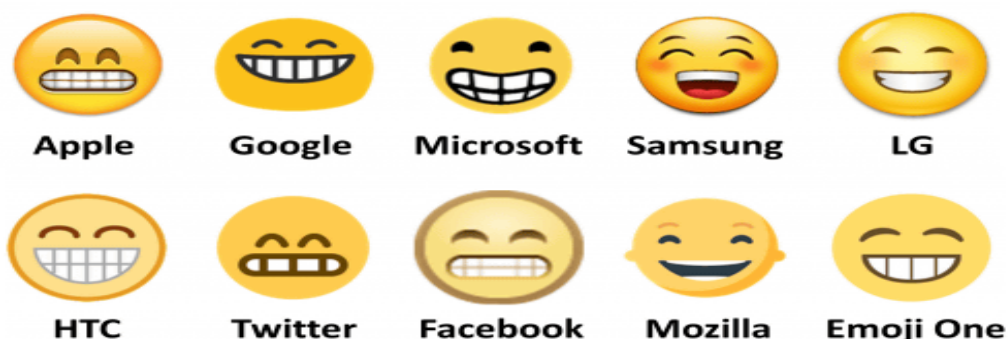
9. Methodologic Aspect

In order to achieve this article, we read books which were the concern of our topic. This is called desk work method and the technique we used was documentation and brain storming; moreover, we planned a questionnaire to verify our hypothesis; this method is called field work. The technique we used was that of questionnaire, which included twelve questions all of them connected to the topic hypothesis. This one was addressed to Students of Oicha TTC in English department.

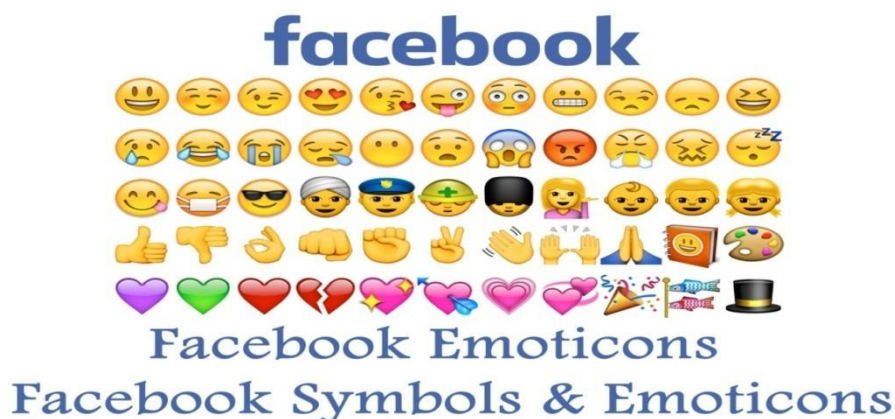
10. Presentation of “textings”

a. Pictograms

The word pictogram as “a picture representing a word or a phrase”⁶. I.e a whole word, phrase even idea can be represented in only a picture. And the interpreter of that message will easily know what the designer would like to say. By itself, a pictogram is not bad because, those who designed the pictograms admitted them to be a part of the language transcription. Facebook, whatsapp, briefly all the Social networks have put in their “SMS” System the pictures that replaces some words, ideas even full sentences. Here are some of them:



The above pictogram is the one standing for laugh. But as we said , there is no cannon to fix them. The same laugh is represented differently according to variant social networks mentioned bellow every pictogram.



These pictures are mostly used in facebook. They mean from left to right: 1) Laugh 2) Happy 3) Kidding 4) Sweet love 5) Love attraction 6) Joking 7) Estonishment 8) Fearful 9) Envy 10) Sick 11) Strong 12) worried 13) Laugh out loud 14) weep loudly 15) Ill 16) Thoughtless 17) Estonished 18) Surprised 19) Agry 20)

⁶ A.S. Hornby,2010

Stupid 21) Troubled 22) Feeling asleep 23) Salivation 24) Nothing to say 25) Farcing 26) Indian style 27) Police man 28) Red cross man 29) U.K.Royal guard 30,31,32 and 33 are children's toys 34) Validate 35) Failure 36) Cool 37) Fight 38) Struggle 39) Victory 40) Clap 41) Bye bye 42) Excuse me 43) Agenda 44) Painter's board 45,46 and 47 Express love in some varieties 48) Deception or broken heart 49) Bight heart 50) Affected heart 51) Heart-sister 52) Party time 53) Public fishing 54) Smart or Formal.

We have to recall that these images can be interpreted differently according to the reader. For example, the image number 3 and 6 are alike with slight differences. There is a way to confuse them easily. Then if sent to a contact, it will take him a long time to be interpreted.

11. Common Acronyms used as Identity

Some other acronyms identify an organization or a person. This is an exhaustive list⁷

1. NFL to mean National Football League
2. AFL to mean American Football League
3. NBA to say National Basketball Association
4. NHL to say National hockey League
5. AA to mean Alcoholics Anonymous
6. AARP to mean American Association of retired persons
7. APA to mean American Psychologist Association
8. MLA to say Morden Language Association
9. ADA to mean American Dental Association
10. PAWS to say Progressive Animal Welfare society
11. WWE to mean World Wrestling Entertainment
12. AAAS to stand for American Association for the Advancement of Science
13. TBN to say Trinity broadcasting Network
14. ESPN to mean Entertainment and sports Programming System Network
15. MTV to say Music television
16. NBC to mean National Broadcasting
17. PBS to stand for Public broad casting service
18. TNT to stand for Turner Network Television
19. SW to stand for Short Wave
20. MW to mean Medium Wave
21. FM to mean Frequency Modulation

12. Standard Abbreviations

The word abbreviation comes from Latin "Brevire" a verb and "brevis" a noun which means short⁸. And it defines the abbreviation as "a shortened form of a word or phrase used mainly in writing to represent the complete form.

Indeed, when reading books, readers usually get the abbreviation used in their books on front pages. Grammar books for instance can indicate these abbreviations. Here is a short list A S Hornby, (2010):

1. Abbr : Abbreviation
2. Adj : Adjective
3. Adv: Adverb
4. Conj: Conjunction
5. Pl : Plural
6. PP: Past Participle
7. Prep : Preposition
8. n : Noun
9. Pron : Pronoun
10. Pt : Past tense
11. Sb: somebody
12. So : Someone
13. Sth : Something
14. Symb : Symbol
15. V: Verb
16. Austral E : Australian English
17. BrE: British English

⁷ *abbreviation.yourdictionary.com*

⁸ *www.smart-words-org.*

- 18. CanE: Canadian English
- 19. EAfrE : East African English .

1.4.2. False Abbreviations

“SMS” users have gone far in creating abbreviations. They mix numbers, letters in order to make themselves understood⁹. The website smart –words.Com gives this non-exhaustive list:

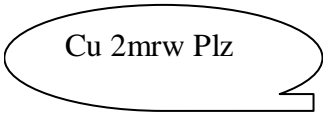
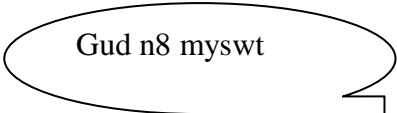
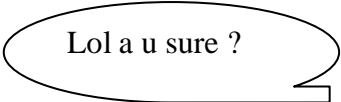
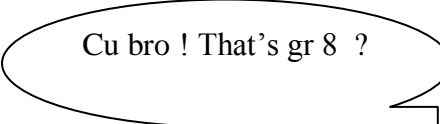
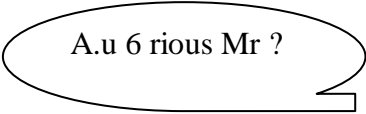
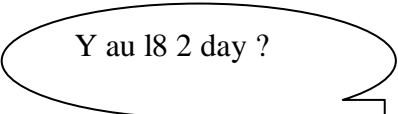
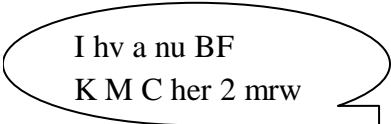
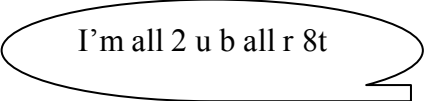
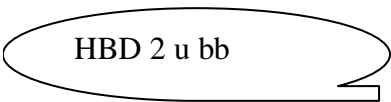
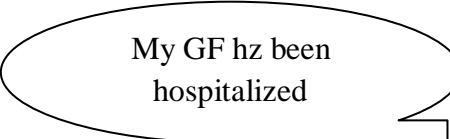
- 1. 2F4Y to say too fast for you:
- 2. 4YEO to say for your eyes only
- 3. 4EVER to mean forever
- 4. BTW to stand for By the way
- 5. DIY to stand for do it yourself
- 6. EOBO to stand for End of message
- 7. EOM to say End of Message
- 8. FYI to stand for your information
- 9. IDK to mean I don't know
- 10. IOW to mean In other words
- 11. NNTR to say No need to reply
- 12. OTOH to stand for on the other hand
- 13. POV to mean point of view
- 14. SFLR to mean sorry for late reply
- 15. TBC to mean to be continued
- 16. TYM to say thank you very much
- 17. ICYMI to mean In case you missed it
- 18. 2MORO to mean tomorrow
- 19. 2n8t to say tonight
- 20. B3 to say Blah , blah , blah
- 21. B4YKI to stand for Before you know it
- 22. BM&Y to mean Between me and you
- 23. BRT to mean Be right there
- 24. CTN to mean cannot talk now
- 25. CWOT to say Complete waste of time
- 26. CYT to mean to say see you tomorrow
- 27. EM to mean Excuse me
- 28. F2F to stand for face to face
- 29. FOAF to say friend of a friend
- 30. GR8 to mean Great
- 31. IDC to mean I don't care
- 32. ILU to mean I miss you
- 33. IMU to mean I miss you
- 34. JK to mean just kidding
- 35. KPC to stand for keep parent clueless
- 36. L8 to say latter
- 37. MTF BWY to say may the force be with you
- 38. MYOB to mean mind your own Business
- 39. NM to mean never mind
- 40. P911 to mean Parent on Alert
- 41. PAW to mean Parent are watching
- 42. POS to mean Parent over shoulders
- 43. NR to mean right Now
- 44. SEP to mean someone else 's Problem
- 45. SITD to mean still in the dark
- 46. SMIM to say send me an instant message
- 47. W8 to mean wait
- 48. WYCM to stand for will you call me?
- 49. WYWH to say wish you were here
- 50. B8 to say Bait
- 51. @ to mean At

⁹ D. Crystal, 2008

13. Some "SMS Language" or "texting"

Here are some "textings" we got from our attendants from the field work. All of them are funny.

14. English "SMS Languages"

- | | | | |
|---|--|----|---|
| 1 |  | 2 |  |
| 3 |  | 4 |  |
| 5 |  | 6 |  |
| 7 |  | 8 |  |
| 9 |  | 10 |  |

These are interpretations of the above textings. we have successively:

1. See you tomorrow please;
2. Good night my sweet;
3. I'm laughing out loud, are you serious?
4. See you brother. That is great?
5. Are you serious mister?
6. Why are you late today?
7. I have a new boy friend come and see her tomorrow.
8. I am all to you baby, be all right.
9. Happy birth day to you baby.
10. My girl friend has been hospitalized.

15. Presentation Analysis and Interpretation of Data

We have read much about the "SMS Language" and have shown them. Before progressing we recall that these "SMS Language" are the style that people chatting at internet have adopted to use in the writing in different social networks and in the phone networks. They are Pictograms, Acronyms and abbreviations. When an when people mix the above matters, the message becomes hard to read or simply unreadable and only people who are informed about can read it. As far as our paper deals with these ways of writing "SMS Language", we proposed a questionnaire to check if students of Oicha TTC can confirm our hypothesis.

16. Geographical Situation

As said previously, our article was realized in Oicha Town, This area is situated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mainly in the North Kivu Province and Beni Territory. It is the Chief Township of Beni Territory in 28 kilo meters north of Beni town. Oicha TTC is one of old state institutions which forms teachers of secondary school, among them EFL teachers.

17. Presentation of Data

Normally, we should investigate all Oicha township English Speakers. Owing to financial troubles, our Sample was that of a hundred all of them, students of English department . Both Students and pupils have helped us answering the questionnaire related to our topic of Research Paper.

After reading books about our topic, we made a questionnaire of 12 questions. The people who attended to the questionnaire had to put an x into the square that corresponded to their answers according to the understanding. The criteria of selection were two: knowing English and having a telephone (smart or standard phone) or again a computer.

18. Analysis and interpretation of Data

When we collected the questionnaire from students, we came to the following result.

1) Telephone possession

People with telephone	People who had no telephone
100	0

All the participants of our Research Paper's questionnaire had telephones, which is a hundred percent.

2) Services used with the telephone

Call	%	SMS	%	Both	%
20	20	23	23	57	57

Among people we consulted, twenty said that they only use call services twenty –three use the short Message service and fifty- seven said that they use both the call service and the short Message services. This helped us to check the third question.

3) Sms language that people used when chatting with the contacts

Pictogram	%	Abbreviation	%	Acronym	%	None	%
18	18	60	60	12	12	0	0

The analysis about the heart point of our Research Paper got a positive answer. I.e, no one of the hundred attended denied to have used the short message service Language Style. Eighteen confirmed to have used the Pictogram; sixty said that they usually write their messages using the abbreviation and twelve said that they sometimes use the acronym.

4) Decodage of the message “ 4ever ur my gr8 hope”

“Forever you are my great hope”

Success of decodage	%	Failure of decodage	%
43	43	67	67

The chart, here presents an inversion of what could be waited for. Everybody use the “SMS Language”, but when it comes to the interpretation of the “SMS Language”, not everybody does it easily.

5) The possibility that “SMS Language” blocks the understanding of a message

Yes it Can	%	No it Cannot	%
69	69	31	31

In the chat above, the “SMS Language” users we consulted said that it can block the understanding of the message that the sender would like to convey. I.e it belongs to the writer to know what he writes.

6) Informants with their respective social networks

Facebook	%	Whatsapp	%	Twiter	%	Facebook and whatsapp	%
40	40%	22	22%	8	8%	30	30%

The social networks are used differently, with different purposes. People we consulted used Facebook in a large percentage; Whatsapp was the second and twitter came to the last position. However, some other people said that they used both Facebook and Whatsapp.

7) People who confirm or refuse to know the interpretation of some images that express a message

Yes	%	No	%
48	48%	52	52%

As for as the interpretation of the “SMS Language is concerned; only 52 people acknowledged that they can easily interpret the Pictograms sent to them.

8) SMS languages from social networks help pupils or students to their linguistic learning

Yes	%	No	%
11	11%	89	89%

Our informants denied the idea that the “SMS Language” can help students in the learning of Languages. It means that, one should not use it because it does not have a good outcome.

9) Advantages for “SMS Languages”

They are short				They are quick				They are codified				They are easy to use			
Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%
80	80%	20	20%	50	50%	50	50%	72	72%	28	28%	35	35%	65	65%

The above question had four alternatives that the attendants had to answer by a "Yes" or a "No". Eighty people said that the "SMS Language" are short. I.e writing them does not take much time. Twenty only denied the option. About the quickness, out a hundred we consulted, half said that they are quick to use another half rejected the idea. Concerning the idea of codification, Seventy two percent said that the "SMS Language" is codified and eighteen said that there are not codified. When it came to know if they are easy to use, sixty-five percent said no and thirty-five said yes.

Taking into account the result above we conclude that the advantage that are in the "SMS Language" are is that, they **are short** and **codified**. Saying that they are easy to use is a mere lie.

10) Disadvantages of "SMS Languages"?

They create laziness				They reduce learning capacity				They make students weak linguistically			
Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%
86	86%	14	14%	74	74%	26	26%	63	63%	37	37%

The disadvantages of "SMS Languages" we proposed were three. Our participants answered as follow "SMS Language creates laziness, eighty –six said yes and fourteen no; they reduce learning capacity, seventy – four confirmed and twenty-six denied. The last option, that of knowing if it create the weakness in the linguistic aspect, sixty-three percent said yes and thirty- seven said no.

11) Piece of advice you provide in writing "SMS Language" on social Networks or mobile networks

Write fully without abbreviation				Avoid images that convey a whole message				Never use SMS service			
Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%
92	92%	18	18%	70	70%	30	30%	40	40%	60	60%

We proposed three options on the twelfth question. The "SMS Language" being the concern, ninety-two percent gave the warning of writing fully the "SMS" we send to our readers not abbreviating nor applying the acronyms , eighteen stuck on using them. Seventy percent warned the "SMS Language" users to avoid images that convey whole messages. To the issue of never using the SMS service due to the "SMS Language style", forty percent said yes and sixty percent said no.

19. Pedagogical implicature

The implicature is defined as "a possible effect or result of an action or a decision" by A.S HORNBY (2010) P 153. The "SMS Language" being our concern in this Research Paper,the fact of sending to our contacts messages including the abbreviations, Pictograms and acronyms (what we have named the SMS Language here) has a very bad impact to the acquisition of the Standard English. These textings do not respect:

- The Pragmatics aspect: which deals with the practical functionality of words in the languages.
- The semantics: which deals with the meaning of each word of the language.
- The Grammar: which deals with the language use and rules.

These three big poles which are the sine qua non conditions of mastering a given language are widely dropped out in the "SMS Language style". We have seen it clearly in the answers that the attendants gave to our questionnaire.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This Paper has focused on The Outcome of 'Short Message Service Language' on Standard English Acquisition case of some EFL students of Oicha Teachers Training College. We have shown that an SMS Language is a style which is used in the social networks mostly Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, Email etc. The fact that, writing in full letters consumes much time pushes people to create their writing system. They are using it to 'save their time' because we are living in the century where time is more than money. Aside these facts, we made a Research questionnaire that a hundred of students partook to. The questionnaire included 12 questions and after the interpretation of the data the result confirmed our hypothesis for example in the questions:

How does SMS Language influence and affect Standard English Acquisition? The collected data said the SMS Language creates laziness 86% confirmed it our informants said that SMS Language blocks the understanding of message; 69% confirmed it

In which way can a SMS Language be interpreted variably? The attendants proved that the SMS cannot be easily interpreted and it is openly seen because on the question five of our questionnaire, which was to interpret **4 even ur my gr8 hope**, 43% only succeeded to decode the message.

How Can the Standard English be forgotten because of the SMS Language style? Our informants confirmed this in 89% saying that SMS Language styles do not help the linguistic learning. In regard to the findings we have got so far, we suggest that:

- People stop writing SMS using “texting” because it cannot help learners to master the Standard English.
- People avoid using images that convey a given message not only because it does not help linguistically but also because it is economically consuming in the sense that when the reader is blocked, he will be obliged to call the sender.
- Teachers who will read us focus on the failure of the “texting” usage due to the consequences it brings to the mastery of the Standard English.

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