

Text Messaging and its Impact on Written Standard English

El Mensaje de Texto y su Impacto en el Inglés Estándar Escrito

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Recibido 21 noviembre 2016
Aceptado 2 febrero 2017

Resumen

El envío de mensajes de texto ha hecho posible nuevas formas de interacción. Mi objetivo ha sido analizar el impacto que las nuevas tecnologías, utilizando acrónimos, emoticonos y otros, han tenido en el inglés estándar escrito. El lenguaje electrónico es un texto escrito que ha absorbido y se ha transformado, en nuevas formas semióticas. Estos nuevos códigos, utilizados para interconectar e interactuar entre los usuarios, han cambiado la manera en que la gente se expresa, así como el lenguaje escrito lo que ha llevado a dar menos importancia a la ortografía. La Lingüística ha tenido una considerable influencia en la práctica de los mensajes de texto. Vamos a examinar tres campos principales de la lingüística: la semántica, la fonética y la sociolingüística. A través de un cuestionario auto-diseñado (15 preguntas, 90 respuestas) se ha sabido que los participantes eran conscientes de que preferían escribir los mensajes en un inglés más estándar.

Palabras clave: mensajes de texto, acrónimos, *whatsapp*, emoticonos, lingüística.

Abstract

Texting has produced new forms of interaction possible. My aim has been to analyze the impact new technologies employing acronyms, emoticons and the like have had on Standard written English. Electronic language is a written text that has absorbed and become transformed through novel semiotic forms. These new codes, used to interconnect and interact among users, have started to change the way people express themselves and at the same time, the written language which has led to placing less importance on spelling.

Linguistics has had a considerable influence on text messaging: we examine here three major fields: semantics, phonetics and sociolinguistics. From a self-designed questionnaire (15

items, 90 respondents) it was found that whilst participants were aware of the various forms of texting they preferred to keep their messages as close as Standard English as possible.

Key words: texting, acronyms, *whatsapp*, emoticons, linguistics.

1. INTRODUCTION

The principal objective of this article has been to compare a group of Standard written English expressions with the language of text messages, where new forms such as abbreviations, figures, emoticons, pictograms, logograms, and other symbols are employed. In text messages, novel codes of writing have transformed the so-called Standard English into a new linguistic variety, and have taken the law of Minimum Effort to its limits.

The departing research question of this article is: Has the use of texting messages changed the way of writing in Standard English?

And the answer would be that it has indeed changed it to some extent in the sense of adding rather than detracting, results from the questionnaire (see Corpus of Analysis and Gathering of Data) indicate that most individuals prefer to maintain Standard English as much as possible when texting.

The advent of text messaging has made new forms of interaction possible, unthought-of in other times, as the norms of mainstream written English have been gaily abandoned.

The phenomenon of texting is not particularly new. As far back as the 1930s, text-based messages were being sent by telex, a switched network of teleprinters similar to the telephone, over RCA transatlantic circuits between New York and London. And by early 1990s the Short Message Service (SMS) or as it was later dubbed, txt-speak, chatspeak, textto, txtk, txt, texting language, txtslang, had appeared.

Although initial growth of text messaging was slow, over time it has increased dramatically. As Elena Alonso and Manuel Perea state in their work *SMS: Social and Cognitive Impact*, “the growing use of mobile text messages has given place to a debate on the social impact and the psychological effects of this new mass media (2008:24). Texting is a network to establish social relationships among young individuals. Nowadays, there are an estimated 4 billion active users, about 80% of all mobile phones.

With regard to the content, texting nowadays can be defined as the process of shortening words and adding numbers to a text message: as an example, *2g4u* (too good for you), *hbtu* (happy birthday to you) or *gr8* (great). Moreover, emoticons are increasingly present in myriad forms. It is a new developing dialect whereby the speaker can convey a lengthy or

complicated thought by abbreviating phonetically or through the use of substitutive letters, numerals and characters. In addition, slang may be included. Texting is mostly used with cell phones and, until recently, in situations of limited space/characters. Many of the coinages used in messaging never found routinely, they are artful creations devised just for fun to see how far this kind of approach can be developed. Indeed, this system has not reached its limit and is still accreting new abbreviations. What is written serves to be read and pronounced in certain specific ways making the written form different. This means that a feature of the new language forms is centered on phonetics. Such a metamorphosis represents yet another difficulty not only for foreigners, for example, but also for non-peer group members in order to understand and decode the novel format.

Charles Kay Ogden and Richard Armstrong, *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923: 11) laid out a linguistic model: a triangle of meaning describing a simplified form of relationship amongst the speaker as subject, a concept as object or referent, and its designation (sign). Taking this further with the coming of text messaging, the new version of the triangle goes from the novel expression to the pronunciation, the phonetic form, from the phonetic form to the original form, the standard word, and from that to the concept and from the concept to the object. Ogden's et al. triangle thus, evolves from a triangle into a square.

Odgen and Richard's Triangle of Reference

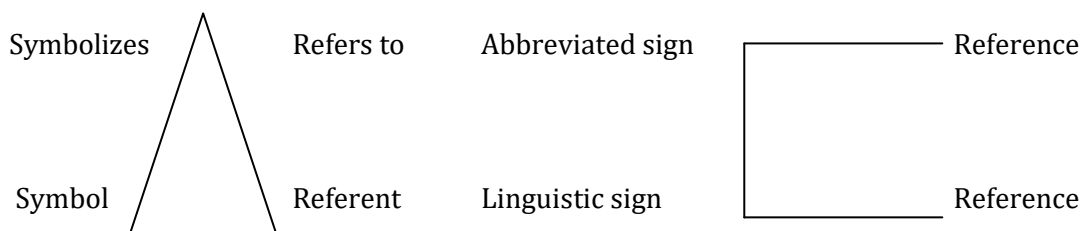


Figure 1: Triangle of meaning

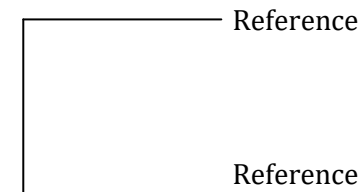


Figure 2: New version of the triangle of meaning.

The paper first looks at **Text Messaging and Linguistics** beginning with a brief look at the evolution of oral and written language and the roles of phatic and expressive communication. It is followed by the **Theoretical Framework: State of the Art** which reflects the view of a number of authors who do not concur over whether or not texting is detrimental to Standard English even though abbreviations have existed for many years. In the **Corpus of Analysis**

and Gathering of Data section the corpus employed in this work is described and the questionnaire that was administered to the author's relatives/close friends to obtain information about texting habits and attitudes. The Principal of Minimum Effort is introduced in **Texting: Acronymes, WhatsApp and Emoticons** with a description of these novel forms of writing and their relationship to communication competence and the codification **process**. In the following three sections: **Text Messaging and Semantics, Phonetics,** and **Sociolinguistics** the paper examines the role of the three most relevant fields of linguistics with respect to this phenomenon. Finally, in the **Analysis of the Results**, the answers to the questionnaire are evaluated and in the **Conclusion** a summary is presented.

2. TEXT MESSAGING AND LINGUISTICS

Linguistics is the scientific study of language; it considers the various modes of communication including speech, writing and semiotics and, as such, plays a key role when evaluating text messaging. Prior to examining this novel phenomenon, however, it is necessary to summarize the evolution that oral and written languages have undergone. As George Yule puts it "The primitive words could have been imitations of the natural sounds which early men and women heard around them" (1985:12). These sounds of language, along millions of years, and the special physical features humans possess, have evolved into what we call oral language. Concerning written language, we have to imagine human attempts to represent information visually in the form of cave drawings at least 30,000 years ago. According to Yule, pictograms and ideograms served to record some events although they were not taken to be any type of specifically linguistic message. In fact, they have been traditionally treated as a form of pictorial art. From pictograms and ideograms we move to logograms, rebus writing, syllabic writing, the written language, and as a natural extension in the 21st century, to text messaging, the latest forms of interaction and communication.

When considering features of spoken communication that use both phatic and expressive expressions it is necessary to bear in mind Roman Jakobson's six functions of language associated with the process (1960:75-85). Jakobson, a key figure in the 20th century field of Linguistics, developed techniques for the analysis of sound systems in languages, inaugurating the discipline of Phonology. Belonging to the structuralism movement, he identified six functions of language associated with the communication process: 1) Referential (contextual), 2) Poetic (auto-reflection), 3) Emotive (self-expression), 4) Conative

(receiver), 5) Phatic (channel), and 6) Metalingual (code). All these functions are linked to text messaging in the sense that it is a communicative act between receivers and senders. His phatic function refers to the interaction associated with the Contact/Channel Factor. It can be observed, for instance, in farewells, greetings, and polite formulae and it provides the keys to opening, maintaining, verifying, or closing the communication channel. Moreover, this phatic function is particularly linked to the short messages used when texting, including emoticons; it only performs a social task, as opposed to conveying information.

Another figure that has been paramount in the field of Sociolinguistics is William Labov who studied the linguistic features of African American vernacular English. He considers that these phonological modifications should not be stigmatized as substandard. In concurrence with Labov's work on linguistic variation, written language in texting is usually abbreviated and numbers added, e.g. *2be*, although the sound of the words remain the same as in oral language, i.e. /tu:bi:. Barreiro (2008: 105).

In summary, text messaging is performed in the here and now using phatic and expressive communication, and has changed the way people write. Moreover, it is affecting not only young, middle-aged and increasingly elderly people but also children, who start writing texts on their mobile phones from the age of eight or less.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: STATE OF THE ART

As previously stated modern day texting can be traced back to the SMS used for the first time on 3rd December 1992.

Yet the English language has been abbreviated ever since it began to be written down. For instance, *exam*, *vet*, *fridge* and *bus* are so familiar that they have become new words.

Authors such as the British linguist David Crystal consider that texting is positive for language and challenges those who believe that it should be condemned as "textese", "slanguage" or a "digital virus". Crystal's works include "*textng, the gr8 db8*" (2008) and "*A glossary of Netspeak and Textspeak*" (2004), and he believes that although many texters enjoy breaking linguistic rules, they also know they need to be understood. He goes even further when he states there has never been a linguistic phenomenon like this which has aroused such curiosity, suspicion, fear, confusion, antagonism, fascination, excitement, and enthusiasm, all at once. Texting seems to be here to stay as "the latest manifestation of human ability to be linguistically creative and to adapt language to suit the demands of diverse settings" –language in evolution (2004: 5-10). Crystal is not alone, other authors including

Crispin Thurlow, Caroline Tagg and John McWhorter concur in his opinion about the advantages of texting.

Nevertheless, some authors believe texting is detrimental to Standard English. For instance, John Sutherland was quoted in 2008 as saying that texting is “bleak, bald, sad shorthand, drab shrinktalk... Linguistically it’s all pig’s ear... it masks dyslexia, poor spelling and mental laziness. Texting is penmanship for illiterates”. And, in a similar vein, John Hymphrys, in the *mailonline* (2016) argued that texters were: “Vandals who are doing to our language what Genghis Khan did to his neighbours 800 years ago. They are destroying it: pillaging our punctuation, saving our sentences, raping our vocabulary and they must be stopped”.

4. CORPUS OF ANALYSIS AND GATHERING OF DATA

I have followed a quantitative methodology in my research and the corpus I have chosen is *Netlingo: The List. The Largest List of Text Messages Shorthand and Internet Acronyms* by Erin Jansen (2010:6) which provides a suitable tool for this work. This corpus offers the most complete list to date and is a handy guide to internet acronyms and text abbreviation.

As Jansen explains, difference among acronyms, shorthand, and leetspeaks: “An acronym is derived from the first letters of a phrase and is pronounced as a new word, for example SNAFU is pronounced “snafoo”. Shorthand refers to an abbreviation, saying the letters one-by-one for example FYI (For Your Information) is pronounced “F-Y-I” and “leet speak is a type of symbolic jargon in which you replace regular letters with other keyboard characters to form words”, i.e “hacker” (*hyxor*). It was used by hackers to prevent their websites/newsgroups from being found by simple keyword searches (2010).

As a support for this corpus, the “*tmsg*” *Text Messaging Survival Guide* (2007) by Evie and Jack Shoeman offer a list of the most popular text messages although it is growing and changing all the time.

In order to carry out this project, I designed a questionnaire made up of fifteen items to be answered by a sample of individuals from my family and close circle. I used Google Forms to create the questionnaire because I considered it a free and powerful tool to collect information and to create a survey on my own. Three different age groups were taken into account: (i) 10 to 18 years, (ii) 18 to 45 years, and (iii) >45 years. Participants lived not only in Spain but also in the United Kingdom, Germany, and the United States of America. The questionnaire was administered by email during February and March 2015, from 130

possible responders, 90 answered by email in English; 45 of them were members of my family.

5. TEXTING: ACRONYMS, WHATSAPP, EMOTICONS

The theory of linguistic economy, or the Principle of Minimal Effort for Maximum Communication was postulated by André Martinet (1955). He defined it as “the unstable balance between the needs of communication to the optimization of the linguistic system” and its current relevance to texting is immediately clear. First, however, I would like to define acronyms, *whatsapp*, emoticons, and the like. They all are employed to shorten words and transform them into being as simple as possible in order to save time and write the least number of characters. As Thurlow states in his PhD in *Language and Communication* (2010), text messaging resembles code rather than standard language, as a consequence, they may be perceived as non-standard typographic or orthographic forms, which can be found in some of the following forms:

- G-Clippings (excluding the end -g letter), for example: Goin (Going).
- Shortenings (deletion of end letters, excluding the -t letter) for example: Aft (After).
- Contractions (deletion of middle letters) for example: Nxt (Next).
- Acronyms and initialism (formed from the initial letters of various words), for example, LOL (Laugh out Loud).
- Number homophones, for example: B4 (Before).
- Letter homophones, for example: U (You), and,
- Non-conventional spellings, for example, Nite (Night).

In addition to the three main groups I have concentrated my research on:

5.1. Acronyms

An acronym is defined by *www.dictionary.reference.com* as “a word formed from the initial letters or groups of letter in a set phrase or series of words and pronounced as a separate word”. Some examples would be, for instance, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), Interpol (International Criminal Police Organization). In the case of texting messages, people use many of them mixed with a number to indicate a word or to express a simple sentence. For instance, ASAP (As soon as possible), BB4N (Bye Bye For Now), BBL (Be Back Later).

5.2. Whatsapp

California-based *whatsapp* Inc founded in 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum both former employees of Yahoo is an early stage Silicon Valley technology startup that has become incredibly successful. It is a cross-platform, instant messaging app that allows images, videos and audios to be sent to friends, colleagues and family over Wi-Fi and cellular data networks. It supports both direct and group messaging, and accounts are set up using one's phone number as the only identifier. Moreover, there are no advertisements or extra charges in app purchase, although *whatsapp* has switched from being free to a paid service to avoid growing too fast. By early January 2015, *whatsapp* reached a new milestone of 700 million monthly active users with over 30 billion messages being sent every day. Additionally, it possesses an extensive range of emoticons that can be inserted when writing messages.

With respect to videos, they have become the latest trend in social networks: linked to the development in smartphone cameras of increasingly sophisticated technology. It can be observed that young people, in particular, and photos. Young people, in particular, more and more, love to visualize images and music as a way of interacting each other.

5.3. Emoticons

The use of emoticons is also habitual. As previously stated, an emoticon can be defined as a representation of a facial expression, depicting emotions, feelings and moods. They derive from the 19th century when they were found in informal and humoristic writing. They express feelings of being happy, sad, in love, cranky, or experiencing just about any other existing sentiment. Neither are these emoticons restricted to Western culture: there are also Japanese, Korean, and Chinese ideograms. The final result is that the user is able to send a group of emoticons expressing different ideas without using a single word.

Digital forms of emoticons were introduced into internet by Scott Fahlman, from Carnegie University, Pennsylvania, in a message sent on 19th of September 1982. "Smiley", also called "a happy and smiling face" is a representation of a smiling humanoid face. It is a yellow circle with two dots depicting black eyes and a black arc for the mouth. It is an emotion icon and a meta- communicative pictorial representation. Moreover, the faces can acquire different forms, from happy to sad, angry, etc. All these characters indicate a code and a meaning in the written message and follow a semiotic language. Here are some examples of emoticons, smiling, laughing, winking, surprise, weeping and angry.



Figure 3: Different expressions of emoticons.

Thousands of different emoticons have invaded messaging, especially *whatsapp*, not only with “smilies” but with constantly changing icons referring to nature such as flowers, trees, and all kind of animals, and many figures representing eating, sleeping – practically everything you can image. The need to express emotions and gestures rapidly with cell phones has changed the way of communicating. These symbols nuance, match or put into context the meaning of the written messages and they are beginning to be used in more formal registers. The language of emoticons is a good choice faced with the difficulty of expressing emotions in many cases due to shyness and timidity, especially among adolescents. As stated by Mar Gutierrez Colon, in *La Vanguardia* newspaper (2015) most people would never express their emotions if they did not have emoticons to do it. Research has been performed about the use of emoticons and coincides in underlining the fact that women use them in a different way to men. The former express more feelings whereas the latter tend to use them as a means of mockery or sarcasm. Emoticons are upgrading, enriching, and enhancing written communication by adding new forms of expression in a dialogue between speaker and receiver. Language is not becoming degraded but richer. Thus, just with one simple emoticon we enrich what we want to convey.

From the linguistic point of view, messaging is affected by the notion of communication competence and the codification processes. This is because its code does not follow the standard model and its intention is not the mere transmission of information, but to construct a code characterizing a social group and thus giving form to a collective. Signs and codes become established by their own use which has led to the creation of diverse web pages introducing an extensive glossary of the most commonly used words in messaging and its codifications.

The future will tell whether this extra language will continue to evolve and acquire more formal registers of communication.

6. TEXT MESSAGING AND SEMANTICS

Text messaging, as a tool for communication between two or more people, has much to do with semantics and semiotics. Semantics, defined as the study of meaning communicated through language, is the most diverse field within linguistics. Its basic task is to show how people communicate meanings with pieces of language. Linguistic meaning is a special subset of the more general human ability to use signs. The process of creating and interpreting symbols, also called signification, led to scholars like Ferdinand de Saussure, as explained in John Saeed's book *Semantics* (2009:5), to state that the study of linguistic meaning forms part of general research in the use of sign systems or semiotics. John Saeed (2009: 239-245) remarks that semioticians investigate the types of relationship that may hold between a sign and the object it represents or, in de Saussure's terminology, between a signifier and its signified. Floyd Merrel (2005: 28) considers C.S. Pierce as the father of semiotics when he and made a basic distinction in his *Theory of Signs* (1880) between icons, indexes and symbols. In an icon there is a similarity between a sign and what it represents; an index is where the sign is associated with its signified, often in a causal relationship; and a symbol is where there is only a conventional link between the sign and its signified.

It should be taken into account that text messages represent the language interconnection between senders and receivers through a new application, but always working with words, sentences and meaning. Semiotics has a close relationship with text messaging, and especially with all the different symbols, emoticons and numbers that people use when texting. All of these have a meaning and are written to be understood by the receivers.

When using text messages we are employing written language and intercommunicating with other user/s by means of this new code. For that reason, I would like to underline the importance of the functions of language in the Speech Act Theory developed by the philosopher J.L. Austin (1975) and mentioned by Saeed (2009: 233-241). As previously stated, functions can be analyzed at three levels: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. The concept of the illocutionary act is central to the concept of the speech act. Austin distinguishes amongst five illocutionary speech acts: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative. Expressive speech acts, for instance, denote a psychological state.

The sender expresses feeling towards the receiver (paradigm cases: thinking, apologizing, welcoming, congratulating, etc.). Some examples would include *Happy birthday* and *Hi*.

John Searle introduced the notion of indirect speech acts (1969). These take place when the speaker communicates to the hearer more than s/he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer. In the new internet applications this can be seen very clearly as the sender of the message writes the minimum quantity of words being sure that the receiver understands the message because of their common knowledge.

Searle also put forward the concept of primary and secondary illocutionary acts. The former being the indirect one which is not literally performed, and the latter the direct one carried out in the literal utterance of the sentence. In transferring Searle's indirect Speech Acts' Theory to the text messaging act the result would be the same. Sometimes text messages are indirect illocutionary acts as, for instance, "We should leave for the show" and other times they are direct "I cannot go". Searle explains how it is possible that a speaker can say something and mean it, but additionally mean something else.

From the linguistic point of view, messaging is affected by the notion of Communicative Competence, a term coined by Dell Hymes in 1972. It refers to a language user's grammatical knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology and how to employ utterances appropriately, and the codification process, which signifies developing a writing system and setting up official rules. Messaging codes do not follow the standard model and their intention is not the mere transmission of information, but to create a code characterizing a social group thus giving form to a collective. Signs and codes become established through their use which can lead, amongst other things, to the creation of diverse web pages introducing an extensive glossary of the most widely used words in messaging and their codification.

At the same time, texting challenges years of linguistic studies about communication, for example, Paul Grice's (1975) Maxims of Quality and Relevance and the Maxim of Clarity (avoid ambiguity, avoid obscurity, be brief and be orderly), (Saeed 2009: 213).

In addition, it is necessary to bear in mind that within the field of linguistics, the texting functions of language which, being diverse, encourage the users' considerable creativity even though texting deployment is mainly for mundane activities that have been known to verge on the ridiculous or, at the very least, obvious.

The transmission of one-way or two-way messages has an important influence on messaging which in comparison with Standard English, changes the ways of traditional communication.

7. TEXT MESSAGING AND PHONETICS

Phonetics and text messaging are also connected to the previously mentioned Principle of Minimum Effort and Maximum Communication. The communication factor adhered to by the Prague School was later supplemented by the introduction of the human factor to phonology through the concepts of “asymmetry” and “economy of effort in phonological change”. The Minimal Effort Principle implies that speakers use the smallest number of phonemes requiring the least amount of effort to be produced. William Diver (1979) went further and maintained that there exists a struggle between our need for maximum communication and our desire for minimum effort. In other words, the communication factor will always be in conflict with the human one. The semiotic act of communication, for instance, can be seen as a *mini-max* struggle: the desire to create maximum communication with the minimal effort. This principle has a strong influence on text messaging as the aim of texting is to get the highest quantity of information with minimal words and effort. One way of achieving this is by the use of acronyms, emoticons, numbers and abbreviations with the idea of saving the time and effort one has to spend when writing texts employing all the words, that is to say, in the traditional way.

8. TEXT MESSAGING AND SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Sociolinguistics is a relatively new field, first developed in the 1960s as an academic field of study. It is particularly related to text messaging as it studies the relationship between language and society. Variation is a key word in sociolinguistics and is related to style, register and gender. Variation signifies the evolution of language and standard written English is no exception. As Rubén Chacón Bertrán puts it, from the sociolinguistic point of view “the most important source of information is the way social and situational factors affect language and make it vary” (2004:26).

By connecting sociolinguistics to text messaging it can be seen that text messaging is a new form of written language in which novel codes are used with the purpose of communicating among senders and receivers in an easy way. It is a new dialect that has been created in the last twenty years. When we talk about diachronic variation it means the change over time that all languages suffer. Variations in gender and style would also reflect the kind of texters.

According to Chacón Bertrán “women tended to be more conservative in terms of language use, as men were reported to show more language change”.

In addition, he states that a diglossic situation takes place when writing text messages: “a diglossic situation entails the co-existence of two or more codes which are used in the same setting but under different circumstances”, Chacón Bertrán (2013:105-107). This can take place, for instance, among friends, in business, when flirting, in farewells, etc. We could talk about two varieties, the high variety in which the message is written in Standard English and the low one in which the message is written in casual terms, using acronyms, abbreviations, emoticons, and the like. For example, when sending a text to your boss saying “See you tomorrow” the high variety would be written in standard, with full words or “CYT” to a friend. As we can see, text messaging practice is very much related to the field of sociolinguistics. Text messages are used to coordinate everyday events and to maintain social networks.

9. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

The questionnaire has been divided into two principal contents: The Attitudinal content and the Linguistic one. The former has shown us that 46.7% of participants use texting messages for pleasure, and only 12.2% for working matters. Moreover, 55.6% of the participants use their cell phones equally for texting or speaking, solely 13.3% of the respondents use their phones only for speaking. We should highlight that 82.8% of them have stated to be *whatsapp* users and only 17.8% use their cell phones for texting. With respect to the Linguistic content, it should be underlined that 76.6% of the respondents use abbreviations, emoticons, numbers, and acronyms and, at the same time, the majority employ abbreviations for farewells and flirting. Normally the aim of using abbreviations is to save time, 56,4% for this reason and 23% for fun. This answer shows us that saving time is not only important for pre-teens and teens but also for adults.

10. SUMMARY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE. 90 RESPONSES

City: Barcelona, Oviedo, Valladolid, Málaga, Palma de Mallorca, Hamburg, Bilbao, London, Donostia, Terrassa, Alicante, Jaca, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Madrid, Sunnyvale, Granada, Ávila , San Francisco, Sant Boi de Llobregat, Valencia, Valladolid, Palafrugell, Stuttgart, Teià, Sant Cugat del Vallès, El Masnou.

Country: Spain, Germany, United Kingdom, USA

10.1 Gender

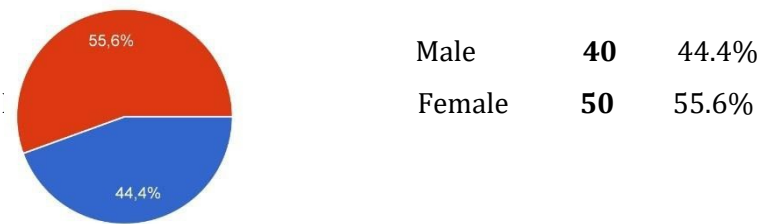


Figure 4: Percentage of participants per gender.

10.2 Questionnaire



Table 1: Percentage of participants per age-ranges.

ATTITUDINAL CONTENTS

10.2.1 Do you have a mobile phone?



Figure 5: Percentage of mobile phone users.

10.2.2 When texting, what do you use more frequently

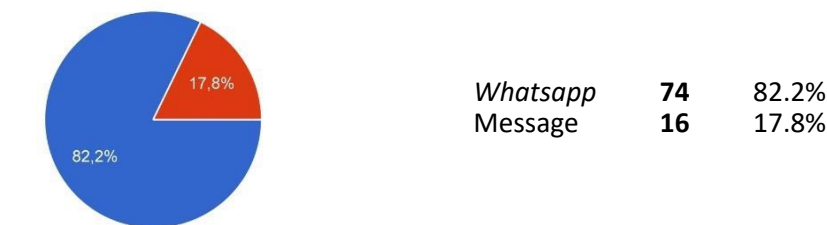


Figure 6: Tools used by participants.

10.2.3 What do you prefer to do with your phone: to call or to send messages?

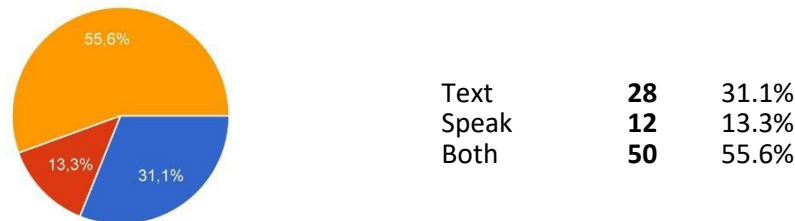


Figure 7: Preferences in phone uses.

10.2.4 If yes, what is the main goal of your texting?

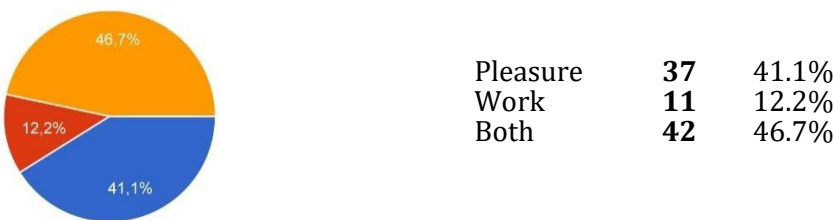


Figure 8: Goals for texting messages.

10.2.5 In general, what is the level of seriousness of your messages?

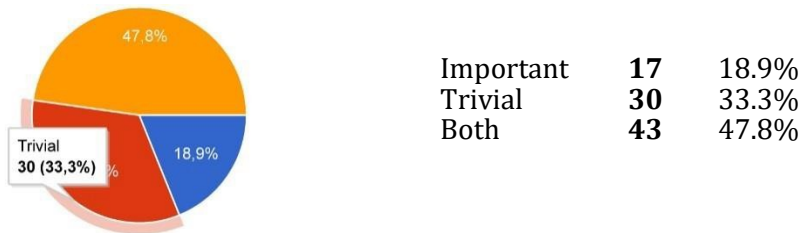


Figure 9: Degree of seriousness in text messages.

10.2.6 How frequently do you text others?

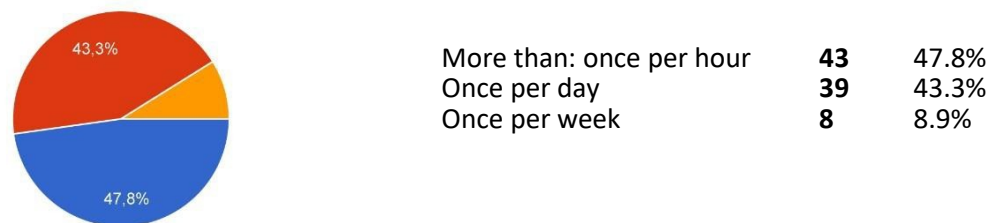


Figure 10: Frequency in texting messages.

LINGUISTIC CONTENTS

10.2.7 Do you abbreviate your messages?

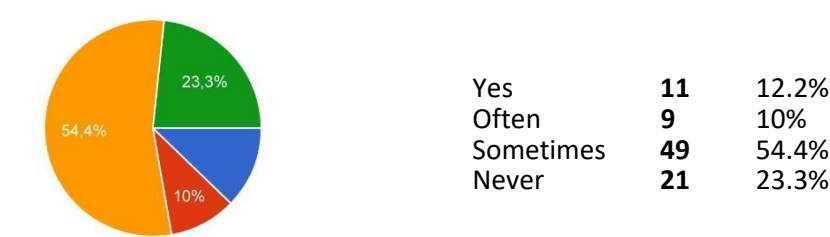


Figure 11: Degree of shortening messages.

10.2.7.1 If so, do you use abbreviations?



Table 2: Percentage of messages using abbreviations.

10.2.7.2 If so, do you use emoticons?



Table 3: Percentage of messages using emoticons.

10.2.7.3 If so, do you use numbers?



Table 4: Percentage of messages using numbers.

10.2.7.4 *If so, do you use acronyms?*



Table 5: Percentage of messages using acronyms.

10.2.8 *Do you use abbreviations for greetings?*



Table 6: Percentage of messages using abbreviations for greetings.

10.2.9 *Do you use abbreviations for farewells?*

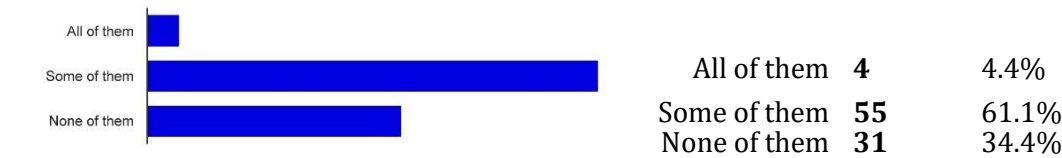


Table 7: Percentage of messages using abbreviations for farewells.

10.2.10 *Do you use abbreviations for acknowledgments?*



Table 8: Percentage of messages using abbreviations for acknowledgments.

10.2.11 Do you use abbreviations for flirting?



Table 9. Percentage of flirting messages using abbreviations.

10.2.12 Why do you use abbreviations and/or acronyms?

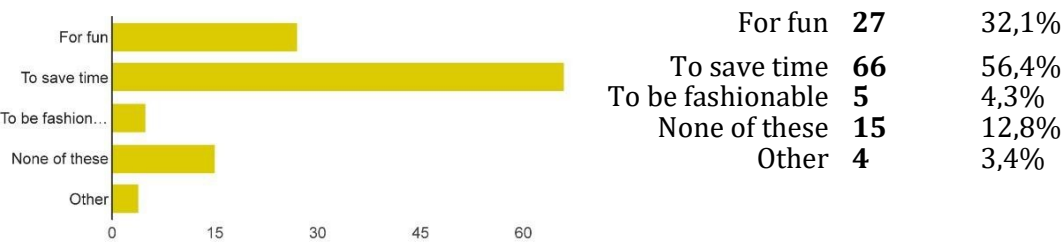


Table 10: Reasons for using abbreviations and/or acronyms.

10.2.13 In case you answered Other:

I don't tend to use abbreviations
I dont use them
Because sometimes it's correct

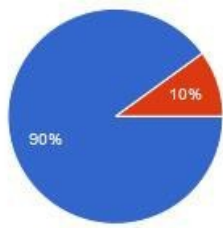
Table 11: Other responses.

10.2.14 Does your texting adapt to new acronyms,etc.?



Figure 12: Percentage of messages adapted to new acronyms.

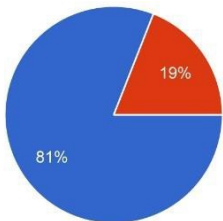
10.2.15 *Are spelling and punctuation important for you?*



Yes	81	90%
No	9	10%

Figure 13: Importance of spelling or punctuation in messages.

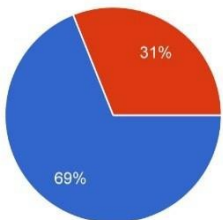
10.2.16 *If you answered No in 10.2.15, are you aware you are using English language incorrectly?*



Yes	17	81%
No	4	19%

Figure 14: Percentage of participants aware of using English incorrectly.

10.2.17 *If you answered YES in 10.2.16, do you mind?*



Yes	20	69%
No	9	31%

Figure 15: Percentage of participants worried of using English incorrectly.

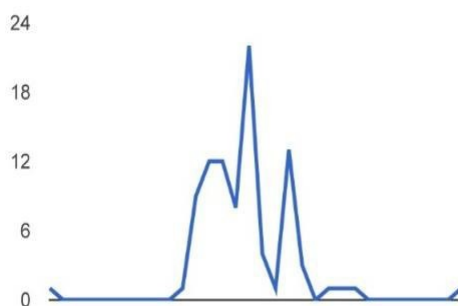
10.2.18 *Why? Why Not?*

Because I like it
because later in school you will write wrong
Because it is important to maintain the richness of language
I love accurate speaking
because language should not be a fixed thing
Because I like to write well
level of seriousness of my messages

because I'm think so
It's not my mother language
Keep the language
Because is more easy read
Because I like writting correctly
Yes i mind, because its important to write correctly
Because I am understood and I do not communicate with texts with children
Because. I like write fast
Spelling and punctuation are important for me because they reflect my knowlegde and
I prefer to write properly
It's also important to have a good spelling, iust for work or relationships.
Because no
Because it makes de person

Table 12: Reasons for.

10.3 Number of daily responses

Figure 16: Responses given between February 22nd 2015 and March 25th 2015.

What will happen in the future? This is the key question. Nobody knows. In the questionnaire what is clear is that most of the participants really think language has to be preserved, even though they use the new technologies. We have to take into account that in this questionnaire 80% of the participants are adults, and older-adults and only 20% are between 10 to 18 years- old. Surely, if it had been the opposite, 80% young people and 20% adults and older-adults, the results would had been very different as pre-teens and teens are braver and bolder when using the new technologies.

When talking about the use of greetings, farewells, flirting and acknowledgements, more than 50% of the respondents employ texting for farewells. Flirting is used very little in this research by the respondents.

From this analysis, I would, additionally, like to show examples of different forms of texting depending on using only acronyms, acronyms and numbers with emoticons, and so on. The short sentences I have chosen are among the most common ones used by texters.

Be back soon.....BBS (acronym)

Bye For Now.....B4N (Acronym plus number)

See You Later..... CUL (Acronym but using the phonetic sound of /s/)

Good to see you....G2SU (Acronym plus number) Have a Nice Day.... HAND (Acronym)

Hugs and Kisses.....HAK (Acronym) Welcome Back.....WB (Acronym) Hi.... (Acronym)

When employing acronyms, the receiver would possibly need a dictionary to understand what the sender was trying to convey. If those short sentences are used very often, as is the case in young people, they will become decoded easily. In contrast, for foreigners, besides the inconvenience of using another language, a new difficulty would be added when writing in this completely new dialect. There is not, for the moment, an international code to avoid this conundrum. Only emoticons and general figures can be internationally understood with a quick look.

11. CONCLUSIONS

This work has shown the importance of the new technologies among all kind of users - adolescents, adults, males and females. Nevertheless, a small group of people still refuse to employ not only the new systems of communication through text messages, *whatsapp* and the like, but even to employ computers as an effective tool in their professions. Indeed, it is still possible to find doctors, lawyers and so on using handwritten index cards. This goes against the times and our reality.

In this paper we have seen that a number of authors are completely against the novel forms of written language, finding them harmful for language. Others are in favor, regarding them as a means of communicating easily and rapidly, and accepting the natural course of evolution this texting use may produce. Such people are aware that they cannot go against technology and of its positive benefits. Languages evolve over time and these new codes of writing are a clear example.

The findings from the survey point to the fact that people distinguish amongst the new codes of writing and Standard English, and employ them in different events and situations. As we know, researchers have studied the impact of texting on written Standard English and most of them have concluded that Standard English has been learnt over time by students and is

not easy to forget. Indeed, a limitation of the new linguistic forms is that the complex structures of Standard English cannot be replicated by texting. Nevertheless, whilst most teenagers are unaware of the fact, texting from a linguist point view is a valid form of writing. The vast majority of young mobile phone users receives little direct technology instruction and, in many cases, may not require it. They only have to initially experience the interpersonal benefits that text messaging can afford and then their engagement with the medium increases. Nevertheless, instruction in new technologies at schools should form an important part of their education as texting is rapidly becoming an integral element of our lives.

I would say, in summary, that the great majority of the respondents to the questionnaire acknowledged the importance of maintaining the English language as Standard as possible when writing *whatsapp* or messages. Nevertheless, the use of acronyms and particularly emoticons among users was greater each time and appeared to add rather than detract from the message.

Finally, the world of texting and apps is in constant evolution and further research is required to demonstrate how the new technologies will affect not only the written language but also other forms of social interaction.

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