Sociological Import of Mobile internet Device and Text Jargons: Focus on Students Communication Skills

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Abstract: The rapidly evolving text messaging phenomenon among teenagers and young adults through mobile internet devices is noteworthy. Short messages (SMS) can be of great importance to communication skill, however it can be destructive if not controlled, the implication may lead to student's failure based on spelling mistakes, poor composition of sentences and expression. As more students worldwide acquire and use mobile internet devices for communication and expressing themselves in text jargons and SMS messaging such situation calls for concern for stakeholders in the education sector. In view of this, effort was made by this study to examine the influence of text jargons through mobile internet devices on student's communication skills. Two hypotheses were formulated. 150 students from three secondary schools in Ojo Local Government Area were purposively selected as the sample for the study. A self-constructed questionnaire with fifteen items tagged, "Influence of Mobile internet Device and Text Jargons on Students Communication skills" were used to generate data for this study. Split half method of reliability was used to determine the stability and consistency of items in the instrument as a reliability co-efficient value of 0.77 was derived for the Questionnaire showing a positively strong reliability meaning that it's suitable for the study. Data collected was analysed through the use of Chi-square statistical tool. Based on the outcome of the study, it was recommended that the overbearing influence of text jargons should be controlled from infiltrating to academic classroom teaching and learning process, so as not to ruin student's grammatical competence.
Keywords: Sociological Import, Mobile Internet Device, Text Jargons, Students Communication Skills.

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, mobile phones have been instrumental to the rapid increase in telecommunications accessibility. Mobile phones have become integral part of daily life among the general population and college/university students. Several studies have found that the use of mobile phones among college/university students has brought about a profound and diverse pool of knowledge. One of the features of mobile internet device usage is text messaging, also known as texting, is basically a short message sent or received using a mobile phone or the internet [1]. According to Grinter and Eldridge [2] text messaging is using a mobile phone to send a message. In fact, the words texting and text messaging have become part of common lexicon and are the general terms used to refer to sending short messages from mobile phones. There is no doubt that teenagers and young adults all over the world are at the forefront of the text messaging phenomenon [3, 4]. Text messaging behaviours show similar patterns all over the developed world as teenagers can be observed with their thumbs twiddling across the body of the mobile phone, their eyes fastened on the tiny screen and even in some cases expressing emotions such as joy, anger and frustration based on the nature of the message received.

In sociological context text messaging is exceptionally influenced by social and cultural factors. Carrington [5] postulates that the introduction of short messaging service (SMS) has created the context for the emergence of new forms of language, new grammatical structures and a new communication medium and undoubtedly, text messaging has influenced conventional language structures in an immense way. As more and more students worldwide acquire and use mobile internet devices text messaging is changing conventional language patterns and this negative change is called text jargons. Text jargons is characterized by choppy lingo, sloppy spellings, grammatical errors, unbridled use of abbreviations, alphanumerism and so on are the negative grammatical features of text jargons. Teenagers and adults on social media (Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Mebo, Twitter, 2go and so on) in Nigeria adopt some of the following text jargons in chatting:

Table-1: Various Text Jargon on Mobile Internet Device

Correct English Word	Remark	Text Jargons	Remark
School	(Grammatically Good)	Skool	Grammatically Bad)
Night	(Grammatically Good)	Nite	Grammatically Bad)
Great	(Grammatically Good)	Gr8 s	Grammatically Bad)
Crate	(Grammatically Good)	Cr8	Grammatically Bad)
Phone	(Grammatically Good)	Fone	Grammatically Bad)
Liquor	(Grammatically Good)	Lik	Grammatically Bad)
Banned	(Grammatically Good)	B&	Grammatically Bad)
Once	(Grammatically Good)	1ce	Grammatically Bad)
Bad	(Grammatically Good)	Bd	Grammatically Bad)
Done	(Grammatically Good)	Dn	Grammatically Bad)
Good	(Grammatically Good)	Gd	Grammatically Bad)
Every	(Grammatically Good)	Evry	(Grammatically Bad)
Which Means Wait A Minute	(Grammatically Good)	Wam	(Grammatically Bad)
Talk To You Later	(Grammatically Good)	Ttyl	(Grammatically Bad)
Btw By The Way	(Grammatically Good)	Btw	(Grammatically Bad)
I Don't Know	(Grammatically Good)	Idk	(Grammatically Bad)
Laughing In My Tummy	(Grammatically Good)	Limt	Grammatically Bad)
Scratching/Shaking My Head	(Grammatically Good)	Smh	Grammatically Bad)
Are You Stupid Or Something?	(Grammatically Good)	Aysos	Grammatically Bad)
Parent Watching	(Grammatically Good)	Pw	Grammatically Bad)
Rolling Of The Floor Laughing	(Grammatically Good)	Rotfl	Grammatically Bad)
I Love You	(Grammatically Good)	Ily	Grammatically Bad)
You Are Welcome	(Grammatically Good)	Uwc	Grammatically Bad)
Laughing Out Loud	(Grammatically Good)	Lol	Grammatically Bad)

Adapted From (Mohabir, 2004)

Text jargon in sociolinguistic view of Bernstein [6] refers to two communication codes, the restricted and elaborate code. The restricted code unlike text jargons occurs in a relatively informal situation, linguistically highly predictable, lacking stylistic range and codes could be meaningful to the members of the sub-culture. By contrast, elaborate code is used in relative formal, education situations, permitting people to be reasonable in their expression. By contrast, the restricted code occurs in a relatively informal situation, linguistically highly predictable, lacking stylistic range, using symbols gestures and intonation to convey meaning to the members of the sub-culture. An examination of the text messages and jargons adopted on mobile internet devices may seem like a foreign language to someone who is not conversant with its unique and idiosyncratic language pattern that is often times far removed from the normative language [15]. Several of these acronyms have become part of text jargons and text messaging is often viewed as a hybrid between written and spoken language as new language patterns emerge in society. This language pattern has become a common sight on students' assignments, befuddling educators who are unsure of how to fix the growing problem. There has also been a dramatic decline in the writing abilities of students due to tweeting, Facebooking and texting. They do not capitalise words or use punctuation marks anymore; any word longer than one syllable is now abbreviated to one word. The agreement or disagreement emerges from various points of view (optimistic, pessimistic, pluralist and techno-realist). The optimistic view of text messaging, for instance, focuses mainly on the gains that can be had from engaging in text messaging. It stems from the view that all technological advancements and devices are positive and lead to progress. On the other hand, the pessimistic view frames its ideologies around the losses, costs and harms of mobile telephony. A key argument mobile technology pessimists assert technologies as a system of surveillance. According to Weerakkody [3] the techno-realist view takes the middle ground and views technological applications such as text messaging as a mixed blessing‖ capable of both positive and negative outcomes. Findings reavealled that who practice English SMS in their communication with their colleagues, friends and families improved greatly in both oral and written skills, thereby recommending the use of SMS among students [7]. Study also conducted by Jacob [8] on the effect of using mobile phone SMS on note taking and comprehension of material presented through an audio system. Result concluded that SMS style of writing improve students note-taking competence as well as comprehension. However with the increasing usage of text messages and text jargons among students, there has been a growing concern among educators parents and researchers about the damage on communication skills. Pertinently, the quality and competence of writing and communicative skills of learners in English language appears to be gradually eroded by text messaging and text jargons. This study therefore is anchored on ameliorating the

negative influence of text messaging and text on student's communicative skills and grammatical competence.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of Planned Behaviour Adoption research also employs the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) to explain students adoption mobile internet devices for the text messaging and text jargons. This theory, which was developed by Ajzen in 1985, is an extension of the Reasoned Actioned Theory and was particularly designed to predict and explain human behaviour in specific contexts [9]. Ajzen's main thrust was that human behaviour is complex and thus difficult to understand. He was of the opinion that cognitive self-regulation is an important predictive and explanatory element of human behaviour and if analysed could provide invaluable answers. Ajzen believes that although aggregate analyses provide insight into general societal behaviours, they lack the ability to explain and predict a variety of behaviours in specific situations and therefore the need existed for a model that can be used in situation-specific circumstances. Cairns and Mallet [10] also found that perceived behavioural control accounted for a significant amount of the variance and proves that the TPB is very useful for predicting intentions. This account for the intentional evolution of new form of communication pattern through SMS and text jargons which have altered among youths and students in our society.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose is to identify the influence of text jargons on students communication skills. This research has the following as its objectives:

- To find out the influence of text jargons on spelling and punctuation of students in formal writting
- Examine the usage of text jargons and its negative influence students communication skills and grammatical competence.

Research Hypotheses

- There is no significant influence between text jargons and students writing skills in higher institution
- There is no significant influence between text jargons and students communication and grammatical competence in higher institution.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive survey research design because the design seeks to describe all variable relating to the study. The basis for adoption of a descriptive design is that no variable was manipulated rather a simple studying of the existing variables as they occur. A descriptive design seeks to establish opinion on issue of the day, attitude towards more basic issues and facts about people interviewed or observed. It identifies present condition, prevailing needs as well as provides information on which to base sound decision [11].

Population

The population for the study were all Tertiary Institution students in Lagos state. A sample of one hundred and fifty students were used for this study from three institutions of Lagos State University (LASU), Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education (AOCOED) and Federal College of Education (FCE, Akoka) LAGOS.

Sample and Sampling technique

A sample of 150 students were used in the course of this study. A Stratified sampling technique was adopted whereby students of the department of English Language from Lagos State University (LASU), selected (50 respondents), Federal College of Education (FCE), Akoka selected (50 respondents), and Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education (AOCOED) selected (50 respondents) from each institution irrespective of their levels so long the student have access to a mobile internet device. However, after the stratification, a simple random sampling method was then employed to select these students.

Table-1: Distribution of sample on the basis of gender and Institutions

Gender	AOCOED	FCE TECH (AKOKA)	LASU	
Male	28	11	8	47
Female	22	39	42	103
Total	50	50	50	150

Research Instrument

A self-constructed questionnaire with fifteen items tagged, "Influence of Text jargons on Students Communicative and Grammatical Competence" was used to generate data for this study. Respondents are expected to respond to a four likert scale options ranging from Strongly Agreed (SA) to Disagreed (D) depending on their level of agreement and disagreement

of each items. After meeting face and content validity by experts in the field of Test, Measurement and Evaluation, twenty students distinct from the sample of the study but have all the characteristics with those of the main study was used as pilot study. After data generation, Chronback Alfa of reliability was used to determine the stability and consistency of items in the

instrument as a reliability co-efficient value of 0.77 was derived.

Method of Data Analysis

Chi-square at 0.05 probability level was used to analyse and test the two formulated hypotheses in this study due to the variation in the sign posts used in the course of formulating the hypotheses.

RESULTS

There is no significant influence between text jargons and students writing skills in higher institution.

Table-2: Showing Chi-square Analysis on Text Jargons and Writing Skills

Variables	A	D	TOTAL	DF	S.G/L	Cal. Val	Cri. V	Decision
Text Jargons	191	260	750	12	0.05	252.8	21.0	**Rejected**
Writing Skills	151	148						

Interpretation

Table 2 shows that the calculated value is 252.8 is greater than critical value of 21.0, the null hypothesis is thereby rejected. There is a significant influence between text jargons and students writing skills in higher institution. This influence can be negative featuring in spelling and punctuation errors grammatical composition among students.

There is no significant influence between text jargons and students communicative and grammatical competence.

Table-3: Showing Chi-square Analysis on Text Jargons and Communication Skills

Variables	A	D	TOTAL	DF	S.G/L	Cal. Val	Cri. V	Decision
Text Jargons	292	189	750	12	0.05	285.5	21.0	**Rejected**
Comm. Skills	195	74						

Interpretation

The calculated value of table 3 is 285.8 indicating that it is greater than critical value of 21.0, therefore the null hypothesis is thereby rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence between text jargons and students communicative and grammatical competence. The communication skills and grammatical competence of students can be negatively influenced by text jargons if not caution and controlled.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Students do not think that text jargons influences their formal writing, communication and grammatical competence. Students with low language ability generally displayed more text jargon in their formal writing whether they are high or low frequency texters. These findings support the prediction that Students with high language ability are able to separate formal from informal writing situations and as such informal structures are not evident in formal writing pieces [12]. The unscientific poll conducted by Edutopia.org, corroborated this findings out of 1028 respondents 50% were agreed that text jargons is harmful to students writing and grammatical competence. 20% were opposed to this view that text jargons could have some effect but should not be seen as a major problem, while 27% felt it cannot have any negative influence [13]. As asserted by Starovoit [14] text jargons can be destructive if not controlled and left to accept make up words, choppy lingo, sloppy spelling and grammatical errors to get a quick and short message across. However, it can be a very good tool to boost language skills if controlled and written in proper order. However, despite this linguistic and examination perquisites students often advertently or inadvertently violate languages rules more importantly added by intensive use of mobile internet devices when chatting or texting.

The effect of SMS on students written communication skills examined by Dansie [7]. In his article effects of SMS on students writing skills and teachers attitudes towards this phenomenon, opined that teacher of English language found abbreviations used in text messaging and text jargons as assaultive to written English. Students write up may not be devoid of punctuation mistakes, bad grammar and inappropriate abbreviations which is hazardous to students communication and grammatical competence. However Motlezabdah [6] study on effect of SMS on retention of collocation among Iranian lower intermediate learners revealed that participant is the SMS group could significantly outperform one in conventional group. No doubt text message can be of immense benefit in improving the grammatical competence of students but the anchorage of this study is the negative of text jargons. In Nigeria text message and text jargons are not relatively tolerable in formal written and examination situations, examinees faces sanctions from examiners such as mark reductions or outright failure [16, 17].

CONCLUSION

This study explored sociological import of mobile internet device and text jargons focusing on its influence on student's communication skills. The data generally showed that there was a trivial influence between the two variables. However, a strong relationship between language ability and instance of jargon was found. Generally, the rapid evolution of text messaging phenomenon among students and young adults through mobile internet devices is noteworthy. Short messages (SMS) can be of great importance to communication skill, however it can be destructive if not controlled resulting in text jargons. The implication may lend to students failure based on spelling mistakes, poor composition of sentences and expression. Since English language is a lingua- Franca student's competence cannot be compromised by stakeholder in the education sector to avoid this language hazard.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are hereby suggested:

- Educational administrators or management should discourage lectures and teachers across all higher institutions to desist from encouraging student to use text jargons when lecture note are taken
- Mobile internet devices featuring application as Whatsapp, Facebook, Histagram and so on contributes significantly to the use of text jargons and SMS, thus students should differentiate between academic learning and social interaction.
- Parents should monitor and caution their children against the linguistics danger inherent in the use of text jargon as regards their communication and grammatical competence.
- Seminar and workshop should be organized to create a platform for interaction between lectures and learners.
- Qualified and competent English teacher should be employed couple with conducive learning environment this will serve as a basis for building a solid grammatical foundation for elementary learners.

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