Discourse of Chatting Habit on Writing
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Abstract
Over the last years (starting from the last millennium) linguistics impacts of the technology have started to show its influence on the language usage through online communication. These communication domains such as e-mails, instant messaging, text messaging, blogs and etc. taken its place in our lives. Even if these facilities simplified our lives in terms of reaching some possible resources, it also has brought some language varieties as well. Whereas, the communication quickened the process of interaction among the people, less attention is paid to the linguistic properties of the language during online communication. The goal of this paper is to focus on the future ongoing trend and development of written communication through internet medium.

Key words: Linguistics, Technology, Written Communication, Language, Internet
Introduction

New technology has been seen as one of the most important tool during daily language activities. The mobile telephone has been the latest way to communicate quickly since the invention of text messaging (Ong’onda & Matu & Oloo, 2011). The terms ‘text messaging’ or just ‘texting’ refers to the brief typed messages sent using the Short Message Service (SMS) of mobile/cell phones, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), smartphones or web browsers’ (Thurlow & Poff, 2011). People have started to use abbreviations so much that it is pretty difficult matter skipping it and act as if nothing is happening with the language we use when we compare it with present situation and with the beginning of millennium. Through the history, the languages have evolved under the influences of different technologies. ‘There is of course nothing new about fears accompanying the emerge of a new communication technology’ (Crystal, 2006). However, ‘it is the internet that has had a massive change both in the way we speak and how we write’ (Burke, 2010) In the name of technology, text messaging, instant messaging and using abbreviations are the new ways of the daily conversations among people. The text messaging ‘was initially designed as a way for phone companies to get in touch with consumers rather than for inter-consumer communication’ (Tagg, 2012). It mostly has attracted young generation with simplifying the writing by abbreviated typed messaging.

‘Strategies such as these, rather than reflecting impoverished or simplified communication, demonstrate the ability of users to adapt the computer medium to their expressive needs’ (Herring, n.d). However, text messaging is mostly known by its spelling. Phrases are shortened in different ways (thx, coz, gud), phonetically (tabl). ‘The use of shortcuts or abbreviations in online world makes a special concern to the usage of language through internet’ (Tuncdemir & Akbarov, 2013). For instance, instead of ‘laughing out loud’ (lol), ‘because’ (coz), ‘you’ (u), ‘thanks’ (10x), ‘tomorrow’ (2mor), ‘boyfriend’ (bf), and some other acronyms are frequently being used. ‘Some educators believe that this type of language misuse is the fault of the students’ (O’Connor, 2005).

‘Textisms are difficult for outsiders to understand precisely because they draw on intimate contextualized practices and shared knowledge between those involved’ (Tagg, 2012). In this study, with the results of the survey we can understand that the abbreviated typed messages are possible to be understood but omitting the vowel, it can be recognized that consonants carry the main meaning. For instance, ( don’t forget to call me please). In this case, ‘please’
can be recovered from ‘pls’ but it will be pretty difficult to get the meaning of the word if we
omit the consonants ‘eae’. However messaging and texting are also have some restriction in
some platforms (SMS, Twitter) which allows the user to type only 160 letter for a particular
message. This is the reason why users don't apply to the accepted language properties. On the
other hand, keep texting or using abbreviations also decrease the awareness of the standard
language among young generation. 'Linguists and educators can use the debate on text speak
as a legitimate language and the breadth of its grammar, syntax and semantics to spark
academic discussion and understanding of all variations of language and our ideas about them
to promote the art of writing' (Gernenz, 2010).

Hypotheses

1) There is equal number of participants who approve and don't approve using
abbreviations.
2) There isn't statistical difference between number of respondents who are worried that
using abbreviations/acronyms will change language and number of those who aren't.
3) The most frequent reason for using abbreviations is that they are practical for use.
4) Most participants use abbreviations in sms-ing.
5) Educational level is in statistically significant negative correlation with using
abbreviations and in statistically significant positive correlation with using
grammatical properties of language.
6) There are age differences in frequency of using abbreviations/acronyms.
7) Statistically significant number of respondents think that background is required for
understanding series of shortcuts and statistically significant number of them don't
understand series of abbreviations which we have provided in our question.
8) Statistically significant number of participants use slang, rather than constructive
language on the Internet.

Participants:
This paper aims to focus on one of the most common question of how the use of abbreviations
and shortcuts through the texting, instant messaging are related to its social context and its
relation between sociolinguistics as well. Our sample was consisted of 109 participants
through online questionnaire. From Figure 1, we can see the participations’ countries through
the world.
From Figure 2, we can see that 64 of them were female (58.7% of the sample), 42 were male (38.5%) and three participants haven't provided information about their gender (2.8%). The aim was to collect their feedbacks about their approaches to the usage of language.

We also asked our participants about their mother tongue. The results are shown in Figure 3. The mother tongue of most participants was Turkish (35 or 32.1% of the sample), then Bosnian (27 or 24.8%) and English (14, i.e. 12.8% of the sample).

The following languages were placed into category "other": Bengali, Chinese, Croatian, Hindi, Indonesian, Korean, Kurdish and Spanish. Fourteen respondents haven't provided any
answer (12.8% of the sample). The age of our participants was distributed as it is displayed in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-26</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 and over</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1. The distribution of age in the sample*

Most of the respondents are 26 years old or more (57 of them, i.e. 52.3%). There were only 6 participants (5.5%) who are 20 – 22 years old. One participant hasn't provided information about his/her age.

**Instruments and Procedure**

We have conducted online research with the survey of 25 questions. First cluster of questions was on sociodemographic characteristics and most of other questions were on using abbreviations, acronyms and shortcuts in texting and chatting. There were different types of questions: dichotomous, open-ended question and multiple choice questions (MCQ). When participants have answered questions, they had to submit their answers and at the end, all data were exported to MS Excel, in order to make database. After that, the data have been automatically transferred into *SPSS for Win*. Finally, they were analyzed using statistical tools.

**Results and Discussion**

First, we have examined whether our participants mind using abbreviations in texting or chatting. We have used chi-square test for that purpose. The results are shown in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Expected</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Yes, I do not approve it&quot;</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;No, I don't mind&quot;</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>2.701</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From Table 2, we can conclude that there isn't statistically significant difference between number of participants who do not approve using abbreviations and those who don't mind if the abbreviations are used in texting or chatting ($\chi^2(1) = 2.701, p > .05$). Furthermore, we have been interested whether the participants have future concern about the pureness of the language. The results of chi-squared test are displayed in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Expected</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Yes, it endangered language&quot;</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>25.037</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;No, it doesn't affect&quot;</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Future concerns about changing/influencing the standard language by using Internet language

As we can see, there is a statistically significant difference between number of those who think that it will endanger language and those who think that it will not affect standard language ($\chi^2(1) = 25.037, p < .001$). So, more participants ($n = 80$) are concerned about the future of standard language (28 are not concerned). We have also examined what is the main reason for using abbreviations/shortcuts in chatting. The results are ranked in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>It is more practical</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>It is a habitual action</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Never uses abbreviations/shortcuts</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>It is trendy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Reasons for using abbreviations/shortcuts in chatting

Most respondents report that they use abbreviations and shortcuts because it's more practical (n = 70, or 66.7% of valid answers).

Only four of them (3.8%) use abbreviations/shortcuts because it is trendy. Also, four participants haven't answered this question. We asked participants in which platform they use abbreviations more often. The results are shown in Figure 3.

![Figure 3. Platforms and frequencies using abbreviations]

From Figure 3, we can conclude that most respondents use shortcuts/abbreviations/acronyms during SMS-ing (n = 56 or 52.3% of them). Next is Facebook, where 49 participants (45.8% of valid cases) use abbreviations. 39 respondents (36.4%) use them in Whatsapp and 10 participants (9.3%) in Twitter. We have also correlated the level of participants' education and their preferences to use abbreviations and intention to use grammatical rules during chatting and texting. We have applied Spearman's rho coefficient of rank correlation, because our variables are ordinal. In Table 5 is displayed intercorrelational matrix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>educational level</th>
<th>using abbreviations</th>
<th>using grammatical rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>educational level</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.196*</td>
<td>-.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>using abbreviations</td>
<td>-.196*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.354**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>using grammatical rules</td>
<td>-.100</td>
<td>-.354**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Correlations between educational level, using abbreviations and grammatical properties

*correlation coefficients are significant at level .05

**correlation coefficients are significant at level .01
Educational level is in a statistically significant negative correlation with using abbreviations and acronyms (\(\rho = -0.196, p < .05\)), but isn't with using grammatical properties of language (\(\rho = -0.100, p > .05\)). Using abbreviations is, as expected, in statistically significant negative correlation with using grammatical rules (\(\rho = -0.354, p < .01\)).

We have investigated the habit of using abbreviations and acronyms, regarding age. The results are displayed below, in Figure 4.

![Figure 4. Age and the frequencies of using abbreviations](image)

In Figure 4 we can notice that most participants with age of 26 or more rarely use abbreviations in chatting and texting (n = 20 or 36.09% of them). Those from 24 to 26 years old, most frequently say that rarely use abbreviations/acronyms (n = 5, i.e. 33.33%). Most of participants aged 22-24 sometimes use abbreviations and shortcuts (n = 5, 38.46%). Those aged 20-22 rarely or sometimes use abbreviations/acronyms (for both categories n = 2, or 33.33%). Respondents who are 18-20 years old use them sometimes or often (for both categories n = 6, i.e. 35.29%). In two questions, the author of this study gives to participants two sentences which were represented as series of abbreviations, acronyms and shortcuts.

We examined if they think that it is recommended to have the background to understand the first sentence and do they understand the second sentence. The results are shown in Table 6 and 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>background</th>
<th>(\chi^2)</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mst fd tym dey usd ds knd f lng’ge 2 tlk 2</td>
<td>yes 85; no 23</td>
<td>35.593</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From Table 6 we can conclude that significantly more participants think that it is required to have background for understanding this shortcuts. This result is statistically significant ($\chi^2(1) = 35.593, p < .001$).

Table 7 shows us that more respondents don’t understand this series of abbreviations. This result is also statistically significant ($\chi^2(1) = 14.815, p < .001$).

Finally, we were interested in using different types of language on the Internet by our participants. In Table 8 are displayed frequencies and results of chi-squared test for answers on this question.

As we can see (Table 8), most of our participants use constructive language, rather than slang (69 vs. 40), in their written communication on the Internet. This result is statistically significant ($\chi^2(1) = 7.716, p < .01$).

To sum up, all these results have brought us to the realization that ‘Linguists and sociolinguists agree that any language contains a number of varieties which have evolved in
order to serve different functions in society and to fulfill the needs of their speakers’ (Abu-Jaber, 2013). ‘This analysis has shown that the syntactic nature of SMS is based on sentence and word modifications’ (Ong’onda & Matu, 2011). The interlocutors prefer to use different modification which affects the language usage and the result of this study is also showing how the abbreviated words, texting messaging, instant messaging and SMS have influence on the language change process. ‘One counterargument is that digital communication, including texting, can in fact be seen as part of a longer tradition of informal written communication, alongside postcards, telegrams and letters’ (Tagg, 2012).

Bibliography


