



## Use of Sms Language - A Threat To Effective Written Communication in English

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### ABSTRACT

The paper titled *Use of SMS Language - A Threat to Effective Written Communication in English* focuses on the transformative impact of SMS text messaging among students these days. This paper throws light on the possible ill effects of the use of SMS language by students even in formal communication in order that it could be viewed and remedied appropriately. It underscores the negative impact on the learners of the constant use of the SMS language in formal communication. This paper ends, stressing the role of teachers in making the language learning skills of students as effective as possible so that they could come off with flying colours in their respective academic and professional careers.

**KEYWORDS :** Use of SMS, language, threat, communication in English

### Introduction

Short Messaging Service or Text Messaging is supposed to be the fastest and most reliable means of communication and it has, no doubt made communication easy to. SMS has influenced, in particular, the present generation where Standard English has been deprived of. Students across the world use mobile phones and consequently the use of mobile has become quite common. In order to convey any information in the shortest span of time, one finds SMS quite convenient. Such is the situation that some teachers, parents and students themselves express the concern that the proficiency level of students in written communication stands the risk of being sacrificed on the altar of text messaging. Though the intention of using SMS language in terms of quick transformation of information is good, its effect is pernicious and adverse. This posthumous style of writing among the younger generation in formal written communication is a matter of great concern. SMS language and its profuse use of abbreviations and slang can impact negatively on effective use of language in course of time.

### What is SMS Language?

Short Messaging Service or shortly known as SMS is an essential tool for humans nowadays. SMS is also referred to as texting, sending text messages or text messaging from one mobile phone to another. It was started in 1980's when telecommunication experts were discussing various specifications of delivering short messages between mobile phones through a network. The first SMS sent was "Merry Christmas" by an engineer by the name of Neil Papworth to his colleague in the United Kingdom on December 3, 1992. Seven years later, SMS started to take off and the teenagers were the first to adopt this technology, followed by others.

### Spread of SMS thread

Unlike the use of language in the days gone, that of SMS has become common everywhere as the technology is being used and modified from ringing tones to Akademi Fantasia voting and FIFA World Cup results, besides creating a new career through SMS businesses. Based on India's Economic Times, this concept of texting was pictured more than a century ago. SMS began for the operators to impart information to the clients about the network which has become a medium of communication among the mobile phone users nowadays. Keypad of the mobile phone, which has the same function as the computer keyboard, gives rise to various abbreviations, short forms, emoticons and codes. SMS language is understood by the users easily and it can be said that most people have been using it for years.

### Replacement of language through SMS texting

SMS language has replaced many words in language. For instance, 'b' is used instead of 'be', 'c' is used instead of 'see', 'ok' or 'k' is used instead

of 'okay'. Words are replaced or mixed with numbers like 'for' is replaced by '4', 'to' is replaced by '2', 'later' is replaced by 'l8r'. Many words have been created newly by texters like 'dem' for 'them', 'coz' for 'because', 'gud' for 'good'. By omitting 'g' at the end of 'ing', few words are used in texting like 'goin' for 'going', 'eatin' for 'eating'. Many words are being used by combining the first alphabets of each word to replace a sentence like 'LOL' for 'laughing out loud', 'OMG' for 'Oh My God'. Emoticons are normally used to represent smiley, where only three to four punctuations are used to form an image as below. The punctuation (:) will be the eyes, whereas the hyphen (-) will be the nose and the next punctuation or letter used will represent the mouth. For instance, :-)) represents happiness, :-( represents sadness, :-| represents boring, :-D represents laughing, :-/ represents a state of confusion.

### SMS Language – A Threat to Written Communication

"The power of expression in language is a matter of skills rather than knowledge. It is a power that grows by exercise, not by knowing merely meanings or rules"

-Thomson and Wyatt (*Teaching of English in India*, Page 15)

Using SMS language has become a trend these days. Sometimes, it takes minutes for a reader to figure out the meaning of what is being mentioned about. The same pattern is followed by the students in the exams too probably because of the time limit and the language used frequently. This has caused a major drawback as the students do not know the correct spellings of words and this affects their overall knowledge of spellings in English. It is better not to argue for the acceptability of this form of language but we should certainly make them aware of the fact that it shouldn't be turned out to be their habit. Definitely while texting SMS, the purpose and context differ altogether but it should not affect the effective use of English under any circumstances.

### Conclusion

Even though language is a tool for communication, it is well admitted that it is a powerful and effective tool in any formal, academic and professional set up. The present generation may consider the use of SMS language a revolution in the process of communication and they may even consider it an easy process during communication in this fast moving world. However, the use of SMS language in examinations and on professional occasions is not acceptable, as it seems unprofessional. Constant use of SMS language, therefore, poses a threat to effective written communication in English.

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