IS THE LANGUAGE USED IN SOCIAL MEDIA AFFECTING TEXTUAL LANGUAGE VIS A VIS SPOKEN LANGUAGE?: STUDYING THE IMPACT OF ACRONYMS ON LANGUAGE USAGE

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Abstract:

This study aims to trace or establish a neutral point that excess amount of digitalization has tampered the standard language or human beings are once again heading toward an evolution of new form of youth language which will carry within it the germs of Acronyms, breeding into a new form of language. Though CMC computer mediated communication, and teaching through it has been there in English Language Teaching since long time. But recently the development in the fields of technology, has begun to take its toll on the language (master) of youngsters altering their word usage in spoken & written form. The internet and its shortcut language have an adverse effect on young learners as per many linguists. But on the contrary a fact cannot be denied that the usage of textese or acronyms are absolutely personal and context based. My research will try to delve into, whether this increasing trend of using Textese in WhatsApp is altering or having an adverse effect on language? Turning it into an abbreviated form or rather it's just another stereotypical notion against a new invention. Also, my study will include that WhatsApp usage and its influence on the younger generations as to the excess usage of Textese hampering their ability to learn the textual language or the inability to communicate in a standard language as said by, Humphry's and Sutherland. Finally, I will conclude that linguistic feature of WhatsApp is different from that of other social media or how ICT has now become an important part of communication, making the social media active in language development, also some of the faltering elements that WhatsApp has inflicted on the textual or standard language.

Keywords: Acronyms, Computer mediated communication, Information communication technology, Textese.

Introduction:

With the dawn of 21st century technology is flapping its wings towards every possible area it can grasp. Be it our décor be it food or be it education or the major languages we are using, it is affecting every arena of its conduct. Technology has always been a very vital counterpart of language learning or even communication, but with the discovery of new source of socially mediated applications, the language is slowly taking its leap towards a formation of short encrypted language, leaving behind the authentic form of English we use till now. But does that mean it's a disease to our language? or this is just another beginning of a new age were the medium of expression for youngster is short and stout. Technology has always been the object for criticism, whether it's the famous philosopher Plato who wasn't happy about the invention of paper, as he thought that it will cause "loss of control of language" and "loss of memory". Therefore, the language usage in WhatsApp, the textual messages used in it has placed English in a very evolving phenomena or rather slowly changing it into an example of acronyms. John Sutherland, Professor in Modern literature at the college of London, claims texting "penmanship for illiterates". This he does so as to explain the condition as to how youngsters use

master(written) language, using abbreviations like LOL (laughed out loud), g2g (got to go) or: D(happy). But is this the truth behind the effect of technology over language, there have been many such allegation according to many linguists the social media and its word storm is creating menace of the language but some also think this to be a revolution of change, the internet can certainly offer ways to supplement English rather than seriously disrupt or supplant it(Crystal, 2001). Just like the way English altered from old English to middle then to Elizabethan and so on it kept on getting new form with the addition of new word new ways of expression.

There have been many researches into finding as to how development of technology is affecting the textual language, the social media (WhatsApp, Facebook) influenced language the use of 'textese' is a form of abbreviated language or it can also be termed as online writing. Though abbreviated form of language has been there since the invention of mobile phones as we have SMS (short message service), now WhatsApp has turned language almost into an example of short encrypted form. An essay, on comparison between the discourse features and communicative practices in the use of textese in WhatsApp across two different generations, written by Alfonso and Olga (2015), talks about how WhatsApp is creating a fear regarding the effect on language of youngsters. I will too focus on this same comparative analysis about the emergence of social issue regarding the use of textese or language turning into acronyms, but I will try to come to a conclusive point. My research will particularly focus on whether this increasing trend of using textese through WhatsApp is altering the language to turn into acronyms and abbreviated forms, or rather it is just another stereotypical notion of terming an invention with various allegations and negative side. The language of Twitter whether it is more flexible and gives enough area to structure a communication, much in a prolonged way than the instant messaging or SMS, was surveyed and put into theory by Lewis (2010). Similarly, my study will too try to establish somewhere a conclusion that how much WhatsApp usage and their influence on the young generation has led them to the excess usage of Textese, how it is hampering their ability to learn the textual language or the inability to communicate in a standard language (Humphry's, 2007: Sutherland, 2002). I will include a little bit of information regarding computer mediated language and ICT (information communication technology), so that I can emphasize on the point that how language has been influenced by technology over many years and it's not the sudden invention of this social application (WhatsApp) that has made communication almost depended on technology. Also, how much use ofWhatsApp and its method of communication has faltered on the language of youngsters, with the support of a small survey I will try to conduct a reality check over this social concern regarding language alteration.

Computer mediated communication CMC inculcates many sub points into it, or moreover it is an umbrella term for human communication via computer. It includes both asynchronous mode and synchronous mode, asynchronous mode refers to the communication, Email system, where people are not necessarily communicating face to face. Whereas synchronous is a real time communication mostly video conferencing, also some of the instant messaging applications but the modern communication system is very contradicting bridging the gap between asynchronous and synchronous mode of communication. The development of CMC has led to invention of varied different form of communication, the digital world has brought into many ways of instant messaging applications and made the world small, as people are now able to stay connected with each other over Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram without being even present at the place. But with this the practice of Textese has also increased a lot, as to instant messaging (WhatsApp) is detrimental for the traditional language or standard language, as it leads to degradation of grammatical and spelling skills for the youngsters who are very much influenced (A.P.J. Verheijen, 2015).Learners of English using new communication technology especially text messaging commits numerous error ranging from incorrect spelling to grammatical sentence

structure (Mphalele and Mshmite, 2005). Using WhatsApp and Facebook exploits our skills for the authenticity of the language we degrade in our standard, but do we leave behind our conscience while writing an essay or an article on the notebook or the trend of social application is so strong that we carry its saplings in our formal life too in the form of acronyms.
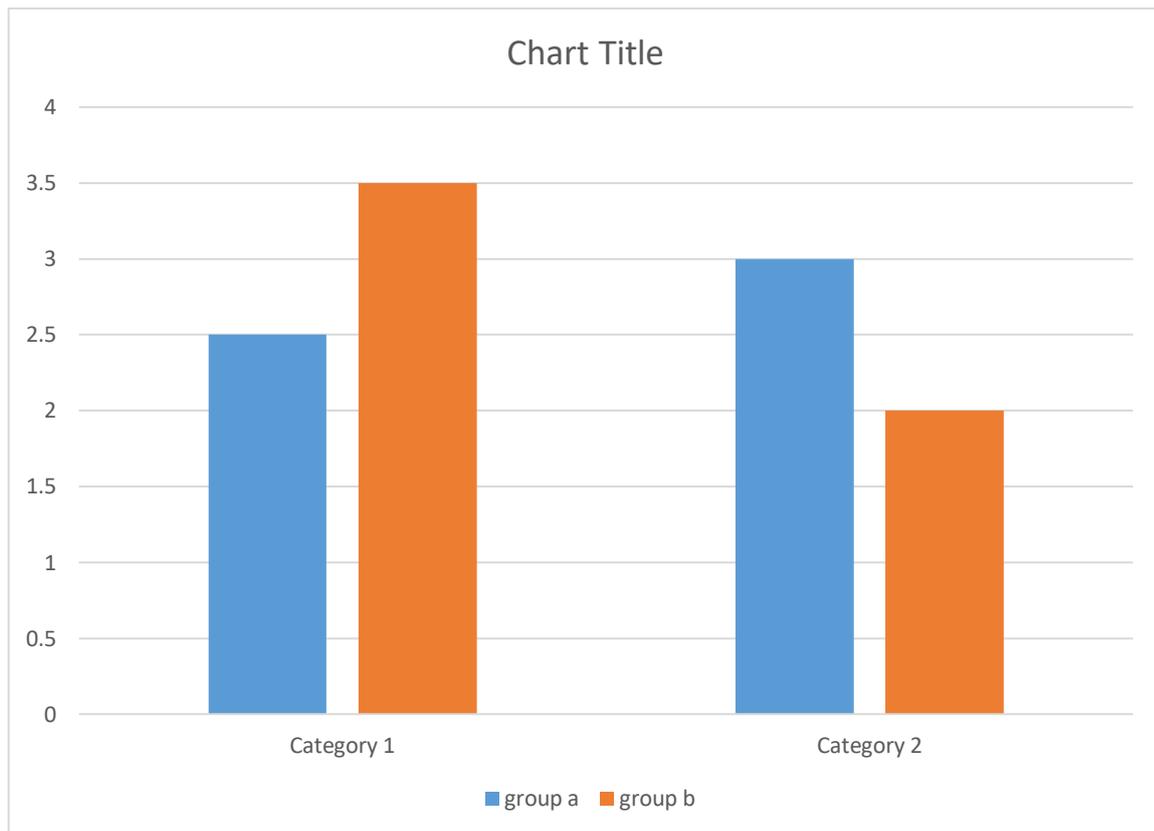
Talking about the means of ICT Information communication Technology which is a very age-old method of deriving knowledge-based learning in terms of every field. Now if we look into the texting pattern of WhatsApp it contains feature of sharing documents, pictures, videos, voice note and also unlimited form of texting. This application included in WhatsApp not only helps in sharing information but also backing it up with E-Learning which is very common in this era, students missing classes can get hold of lectures, people weak in communication can everyday have a chat with the teacher or fellow mates to improve the communication skills though this isn't exactly helpful for oral communication but at least it will enhance the vocab skills and grammatical skills to certain extent. Also, any form of instant texting is purposed for a short and time savvy communication this is because we live in a fast-paced world and each time we spend is constantly counting. The emergence of social media and its urge for social interactions leads us to the amalgamation of communication technology and mobile based technology and also web-based applications. Thus, it is completely on the perspective or content of the language users and their orientations what hamper will WhatsApp inflict on them while using it. To be sure on this matter or rather observe the exact psychological effect that WhatsApp and its extensive amount of abbreviated language has on the users or whether this is just an early assumption about an application whose usages and effects are yet to be unravelled, I have first shared some information about what exactly WhatsApp refers to and its functions and added, a small survey on the WhatsApp usage, in attempt of fetching a conclusive point

WhatsApp and Facebook are the social platform were people stay connected to each other, either by communicating, sharing pictures and also sometimes, video chatting. But these applications have the proneness of using textese because of which there is an influence on the textual language, terms like "vandals", "destroying", "savaging" are surrounded by textese users (Humphry's,2007). But there have been grounding on the fact that textese haven't had such influence on the language alteration. but a linguistic register is not supposed to be mixed with that of textese as any kind of educational or a major (written) language will have the content as the most prioritized for the person. Also, WhatsApp though have a wide range of abbreviated language or acronyms being used, still they differ from the text message or SMS which have a limit of 160 words in it. This makes it a very flexible platform, while typing in WhatsApp though people use textese but it's a choice not the compulsion of the user, as there is no limit on writing a text.

Research Methodology

For the purpose of this study, I conducted a test on two age groups, Group A consist of four students below 19-22 and Group B consist of four people25-30. In their WhatsApp accounts a questionnaire was send including 27 abbreviated terms and they were ask to answer the correct full form. The first group includes students and the second group is a mixed one with some employed and some of them studying. The problem which I mostly faced, no one was ready to answer so many abbreviations and I received very few replies, which led me to assess only eight people's replies and conclude the result, from their respective data. Also extracting the data was a problem, as very few replied in a sequence, others just haphazardly answered their known terms texting the full forms and not following the answer box in the questionnaire.

While collecting the data, Group A which included only students they refused to reply and knew very less about the acronyms and came up with very few answers but the elder generation, Group B were much aware and well acquainted with the acronyms and answered more. But regardless of this unique kind of answering session, what is found is that though Group B were the eager ones to answer more, but they committed a lot more mistakes then the Group A, who answered less but their data were all correct. This result can be interpreted from the given Figure below, which includes two categories, category 1has the group attempting more by solving the full forms of acronyms and from category 2 it can be assessed which group has given more wrong full forms of the abbreviations.

The above two categories suggest that neither of the two group is much acquainted with the use of textes, though the GroupB members answered more but their answers were mostly incorrect and depended upon assumptions. Whereas Group A answered few, but their answers were almost all correct. The results obtained here both agrees and disagrees whether really, WhatsApp has made people specially the younger generation affected with the use of acronymic language, leading to gaping's in the correct English language usage.

This leaves me to the conclusion that it is very unpredictable in case of a language faculty of a person, as who is inclined towards Textes or acronyms prone language. As we see the younger generation isn't much interested or rather aren't aware about the full forms of the acronyms, hence they don't answer much but on other the hand they are very correct in their answers, regardless of the minimum amount they answer. But the senior age group who are supposed to be more avoiding towards the acronyms answer back more, though a lot of mistakes found in their answers but they take part in it which shows they have a habit of using textes or maybe it was just a quest for them. My point is, if language would have been altered then why is there a opposite reaction from this age groups, if the young generations are to be hampered from the extensive exposure to social apps then why aren't they aware of the textual abbreviations entirely. As I mentioned earlier that the language is entirely a topic based or alive over context, any person using it is supposed to carve according to the requirement. Any form of internet usage or social interactive apps are there to save our time in communication hence, they have the tendency to breed abbreviated forms of language which once again is a choice as WhatsApp, Facebook and many such social interactive apps do not have word limits, so this is once again a debatable term that whether social application effect language or it's just a moral allegation that takes its toll over anything newly launched or developed in modern technology.

Conclusion:

This study has sought to prove on the basis of an empirical evidence, and tried to bring in a neutral conclusion, as to how much the language is affected and how much it is not. The study has demonstrated a survey through a number of students whether how much they prefer the acronyms and how much they know about it. This has brought about some unexpected results and somewhere proven the fact that language faculty depends completely on the context using, also to certain extent it proves that WhatsApp is enough flexible and provides the platform for the users to communicate without shortening the language, which once again makes it unique and modern than the other previous source of communication such as SMS. However, in terms of evolution of a language, or its adverse effect on textual form that is very changing as nothing ever remains the same way it was once originated, just as we now don't use Victorian or old English form language with time English has developed and is developing with every age and its aspect. Very base example the speech patterns or the kind of dialects or rather doable language the young people tend to use grate on the ears of adult because they are unfamiliar to them, but that doesn't entirely change the language or defect the standard, the changes in the language add a flavour to the language or a style and slowly get adjusted and acquainted to us (Crystal, 2001).

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