

Text-Speak: Its Influence on the English Spelling Skills

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Abstract - This study aimed to determine the perceived influence of texting on the English spelling skills of the Teacher Education students of the West Visayas State University – Janiuay Campus (WVSU-JC). It likewise aimed to determine the significant differences on the influence of texting on the English spelling skills of the students when they were grouped as to sex, course and year level and to ascertain the significant relationship between the students' perceived influence of texting and their performance in English spelling. This study utilized the descriptive method in describing how texting or text messaging influenced the English spelling ability of WVSU-JC Teacher Education students. Two hundred five (205) randomly selected Teacher Education students were utilized as respondents of the study. Researcher-made instruments such as English spelling test and a questionnaire checklist that described the influence of texting on the English spelling skills of the students were used to gather data. Means and standard deviation were used to describe the influence of texting on the English spelling skills of the students. The *t*-test and ANOVA were used to assess the significant differences on the influence of texting on the respondents' English spelling skills and Pearson's-*r* correlation was used to test the significant relationship between the students' perceived influence of texting and their performance in English spelling. Results revealed that there was no significant relationship between the Teacher Education students' perceived influence of texting and performance on their English spelling test and that texting moderately influence the English spelling skills of the Teacher Education students when the respondents were taken as an entire group and as to sex, course and year level. The English spelling skills of the Teacher Education students were good when the respondents were taken as an entire group and when the respondents were grouped as to sex, course and year level. The *t*-test results revealed no significant difference on the influence of texting on the English spelling skills of Teacher Education students when they were grouped as to sex and course; however, when they were grouped as to year level, there was a significant difference on the English spelling skills of the respondents. Pearson's-*r* correlation results showed that there was no significant relationship between the Teacher Education students' perceived influence of texting and performance on their English spelling test.

Keywords: Texting, Influence, English Spelling, Skills

INTRODUCTION

Attributable to modernization and technological advancements, many new gadgets are created and introduced to people. These devices are in a way very much helpful to individuals to make life easier and faster. Cell phones are part of technological advancement. It helps a lot in communication. With just a peso, one's message can be received by the intended recipient.

Texting, text-speak or short message format is popular to cell phone users, which consists mostly of teenagers, aging from thirteen to nineteen. Due to texting, cell phone users tend to adopt the texting

lingo, which is more of abbreviations and slangs. Sometimes, smiley faces, asterisk emoting and emoticons, which are commonly used by texters, are always present in their messages.

Rosen, Chang, Erwin, Carrier and Cheever [1] posited that to conserve space, SMS text, also called textisms, textese and text-speak, utilizes more abbreviations and otherwise shortening of words, dropping of letters, combining letters with symbols or numbers to make an appropriate sound, and acronyms.

According to Gann, Bartoszuk, and Anderson [2], instant messaging became more popular after the company was purchased by America Online in 1997

and used the technology in what became the popular America Online Instant Messaging service (AIM). However, sending messages via mobile phone technology has surpassed messaging via the Internet

According to Goldstuck [3] mobile phones were introduced to the youth market in the late 1990s and during 2004, 500 billion SMS messages were sent worldwide.

Thurlow and Poff [4] stated that text messages written in isiXhosa did not feature these characteristics, although there are numerous resources that explain the adaptation of English when text messaging, there is not such an abundance of information relating to the adaptations made to the other 10 official languages. As Rafi [5] found that the observed data demonstrate that SMS language ignores orthographic and syntactic regulations of a language with a enormous stress on written sounds and compressions e.g, 8 for 'ate', 4 for 'four and for', bcz for 'because', and short sentences as 'how r u? hopu'll b busy in urstdy.Ma 2. When r v gona meet 4 datwork? Here the main concern derives the attention of the researcher and focal argument to check the effect of those phenomena on university students regarding their writing skills.

Crystal [6] noted that texters are prone to ignore spellings, either intentionally or reflexively. The accepted credence is that texting has developed as a twenty-first-century trend as a highly idiosyncratic vivid style, full of contractions and out of the ordinary uses of language, used by an immature generation that doesn't worry about standards.

Dixon and Kaminska [7] suggest that when using text language or 'textisms' children revert to a phonetic language, which it has been a negative effect on literacy but equally, may not affect spelling.

Ling and Baron [8], however, have identified both quantitative and qualitative differences between the two uses of language among teenagers. Ipsos [9] shows that among all digital activities on the Internet, 85 percent of the 14-25 year olds answered using the Internet to search for information, 76 percent said they had a profile on a social network, and 67 percent indicated that they wrote instant messages.

Likewise, Berman [10] underscores that the proliferation of SMS language has been belittled for causing the deterioration of English language proficiency and its rich heritage. Opponents of SMS language feel that it undermines the properties of the English language that have lasted throughout its long history. Moreover, words within the SMS language

that are very similar to their English-language counterparts can be confused by young users as the actual English spelling and can therefore increase the prevalence of spelling mistakes.

According to Lanchantin, Simoës-Perlant and Largy [11], the distinction between oral and written forms of communication has become vaguer due to digital writing bringing together some of the characteristics of oral and written forms. This suggests that perhaps the act of using textisms to shorten communication words leads young adults to produce more informal writing, which may then help them to be better "informal" writers.

Likewise, most students regardless of sex, course and year level in college rely much on the use of SMS language to convey a comprehensible message using the fewest number of characters possible. This is perhaps due to two reasons: one, telecommunication companies limit the number of characters per SMS, and also charged the user per SMS sent. To keep expenditures down, they have to find a way of being brief while still sharing the desired message. Two, typing on a phone is on the whole slower than with a keyboard, and capitalization is even slower. As outcome, punctuation, grammar, and capitalization are principally ignored. Hence, SMS language is still widely used for brevity.

The varied impact of previous studies related to texting may serve as basis for the extent of influence on spelling and even on writing skills of tertiary students when these variables are considered: sex, course and year level.

In WVSU Janiuary, the School of Teacher Education (SOTE) students, as respondents, showed to be cell phone users and have been addicted to short messaging format as per initial interview and focus-group discussion. Some of these students orally accounted some cases of misspelling and jotting incorrect abbreviated statements in their composition writing and spelling tests. Getting used with the texting method, they would relate, in a way, have partly affected their academic performance in English language subjects. This supported the strong contention of the researchers that the respondents' spelling skills might have suffered due to texting. However, there are also experts and analysis that oppose the idea that texting has negative effects on the writing skills of students. They believe that texting even helps students improve their writing skills and they believe that students know when to use the texting lingo and when to use the correct form of

writing. Hence, this study is conducted in order to find out the extent of influence of texting on the spelling skills of the Teacher Education students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to describe how text-speak or text messaging influenced the spelling ability of WVSU-JC Teacher Education students. Specifically, it also yielded answers to the following: Extent of influence on the spelling of the respondents when taken as an entire group and when classified as to sex, course and year level; the spelling skills of the respondents as an entire group and as to sex, course and year level; if significant differences exist on the performance of the respondents on their spelling test when classified as to sex, course and year level; and if significant relationship exists between the respondents' influence of texting and performance on their spelling test.

METHODS

Of the 510 student population of the School of Teacher Education (SOTE), SY 2013 – 2014, two hundred five (205) or 50% randomly selected BEED and BSED students, were utilized as the respondents of the study.

The descriptive method was employed in this study and described were the influence of texting on the respondents' spelling ability, their spelling skills and the differences in the influence and spelling skills when they were classified as to sex, course and year level.

Initial interview and focus-group discussion were utilized to identify the respondents who are cell phone users and to describe their dependence to short messaging method.

To describe the influence of texting on the spelling skills of the respondents, the researcher-made instruments, a Spelling Test and a Questionnaire Checklist, were used to gather data. The spelling test was divided into three parts: One to Three Syllable Words, Phrasal and Statements. The test contents were tried out for validation and reliability prior to final administration of the spelling test. Likewise, the checklist was validated by jurors and was also reliability tested.

The respondents were asked to choose the items which correspond to how they are influenced by texting and they were given list of words which they sent as text messages to the researchers. Respondents

were sent with a P15.00 load so they had no reason for not responding to the questionnaire checklist.

Using a Likert Scale type of checklist, the respondents' responses were clustered as follows: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Undecided (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5). The given scale was used to interpret the influence of texting on the spelling skills: 1.00 – 1.67: Not Influenced (NI); 1.68 – 2.34; Moderately Influenced (MI); 2.35 – 3.00: Highly Influenced (HI). *The given scale was used to interpret the result of Spelling Skills of the respondents: 1.00 – 13.33: Poor; 13.34 – 26.66: Good; 26.67 – 40.00: Very Good.*

The statistics employed were means and percentages, t-test, standard deviations, analysis of variance and Pearson's r Correlation. Corresponding descriptions were employed to identify the extent of influence on the respondents' spelling skills, and their spelling skills when taken as a whole and when classified as to sex, course and year level.

The researchers believed that this study is best administered among future educators considering their academic standing in the campus. Also, the respondents belonged to the only school in the campus with mandatory national licensure examination at the end of the four-year course.

Table I shows the distribution of respondents when grouped as to sex, course and year level:

The total number of respondents was 205 or 50 percent. Out of 205 respondents, 38 (19%) were males and 167 (81%) were females; 130 (63%) were BEED and 75 (37%) were BSED; 73 (36%) were first year, 60 (29%) were second year, 37 (18%) were third year and 35 (17%) were fourth year students.

Table 1. *Distribution of Respondents*

Categories	N	%
Whole	205	100
Sex		
Male	38	19
Female	167	81
Course		
BEED	130	63
BSED	75	37
Year Level		
1 st Year	73	36
2 nd Year	60	29
3 rd Year	37	18
4 th Year	35	17

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As to the descriptive and inferential findings of this study, Table 2 shows that as an entire group, texting moderately influenced the spelling skills of the Teacher Education students with the mean of 1.89 and standard deviation of 0.1945.

Table 2. Influence of texting on the spelling skills of Teacher Education students when taken as an entire group and when grouped as to sex, course and year level

Categories	Mean	SD	Description
Whole	1.89	.1945	<i>MI</i>
Sex			
Male	1.89	.2474	<i>MI</i>
Female	1.88	.1812	<i>MI</i>
Course			
BEED	1.87	.1873	<i>MI</i>
BSED	1.90	.2063	<i>MI</i>
Year Level			
1 st Year	1.91	.2141	<i>MI</i>
2 nd Year	1.87	.1812	<i>MI</i>
3 rd Year	1.92	.1711	<i>MI</i>
4 th Year	1.80	.1765	<i>MI</i>

When classified as to sex, texting moderately influenced the male and female, male with the mean of 1.89 and std. deviation, .2474 while the female with the mean of 1.88 and std. deviation, .1812. When grouped as to course, texting moderately influenced the BEED with the mean of 1.87 and std. deviation, .1873 and the BSED with the mean of 1.90 and std. deviation, .2063. When grouped as to year level, texting moderately influenced the first year to fourth year students. First year with the mean of 1.91 and std. deviation, .2141; second year with the mean of 1.87 and std. deviation, .1812; third year with the mean of 1.92 and std. deviation, .1711; and fourth year with the mean of 1.80 and std. deviation, .1765. The SDs obtained showed the narrow dispersion of the means for each group, revealing the homogeneity of the respondents concerned in relation to the general influence of texting on their spelling ability. These results proved that the respondents' spelling ability was partly but not totally influenced by texting.

Table 3 shows that when taken as an *entire group*, the spelling skills of Teacher Education students were *good*. When grouped as to sex, both male and female had *good* spelling skills, the 38 males with 17.95 mean and 11.618 std. deviation, and 167 females with 18.96 mean and 12.245 std. deviation. When grouped as to *course*, both BEED and BSED had *good* spelling

skills, the 130 BEED with 17.97 mean and 12.476 std. deviation, and 75 BSED with 20.17 mean and 11.395 std. deviation.

Table 3. *Spelling Skills of Teacher Education students when taken as a whole and when grouped as to Sex, Course and Year Level*

Categories	Mean	SD	Description
Whole	18.78	12.110	<i>Good</i>
Sex			
Male	17.95	11.618	<i>Good</i>
Female	18.96	12.245	<i>Good</i>
Course			
BEED	17.97	12.476	<i>Good</i>
BSED	20.17	11.395	<i>Good</i>
Year Level			
1 st Year	21.23	12.837	<i>Good</i>
2 nd Year	17.17	10.115	<i>Good</i>
3 rd Year	17.19	12.786	<i>Good</i>
4 th Year	18.09	12.631	<i>Good</i>

When grouped as to *year level* from first year to fourth, they had *good spelling skills*. Seventy-three first year students yielded with 21.23 mean and 12.837 std. deviation, 60 second year students with 17.17 mean and 10.115 std. deviation, 37 third year students with 17.19 mean and 12.786 std. deviation, and 35 fourth year students with 18.09 mean and 12.631 std. deviation. The SDs obtained showed the narrow dispersion of the means for each group, revealing the homogeneity of the respondents concerned as to their spelling skills. These results, though generally described as *good*, supported the researchers' contention that texting may in fact have a relative influence on students' spelling skills. On the other hand, the respondents' spelling skills, regardless of categories, showed promising outcome despite the intervening influence of texting.

Table 4. Influence of Texting on the Spelling Skills of Respondents when they are grouped as to Sex and Course

Categories	Mean	t-value	p-value
Sex			
Male	1.89	.281	.779
Female	1.88		
Course			
BEED	1.87	-1.069	.286
BSED	1.90		

p > 0.05 significant at 0.05 alpha; *df*: 203

T-test results revealed that there were no significant differences on the influence of texting on

the spelling skills of Teacher Education when they are grouped as to sex ($t = .281$; $p = .779$) and course ($t = -1.069$; $p = .286$). Sex, represented by male and female, may be an interesting and important variable, yet it has yielded similar results. This may be due the ability of both sexes to mentally and emotionally account or weigh for what would be considered as a good or bad influence not only by texting but also those brought about by their everyday activities and decisions. Moreover, if we put to fore the respondents' basic education, as per law of the land, there was no sex discrimination in the teaching of spelling in the elementary years. More or less, what they learned in the past in spelling was not influenced by course taken and year level.

ANOVA results showed that there was a significant difference on the influence of texting on the spelling skills of Teacher Education students when they are grouped as to their year level ($F = 3.358$; $p = .020$). The curriculum by which the students has been exposed to provided strong conditions as to language and professional education as they proceeded to higher level; hence, the learning exposure of one in the higher years as compared to those in the freshman year is widely amplified. Students' vocabulary and writing skills are presumably improved as they aged and they are able to explore different genres of literature. Most likely, the respondents, as a year level, apparently showed a maturing exposure as they shift from one level to the next; thus, the relative impact of texting on their spelling skills.

Table 5. Influence of Texting on the Spelling Skills of Teacher Education students when they are grouped as to Year Level

Categories	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
Between Groups	.368	3	.123	3.358	.020
Within Groups	7.351	201	.037		
Total	7.720	204			

$p > 0.05$ significant at 0.05 alpha

Duncan Multiple Range Test (Post Hoc) results showed that there was a significant difference on the performance of Teacher Education students on their spelling test when they are grouped as to their year level. Significant difference existed between fourth year and second students when they were grouped as to year level. The second year and fourth year students have yielded significant difference as revealed in the result that also shows a higher perception on the influence of texting among second year respondents

against the fourth year group due to their nature of group perhaps.

Table 6. DMRT Results for the Significant Difference on the Influence of Texting on the Spelling Skills of Teacher Education Students when grouped as to Year Level

Year Level	Subset for alpha = .05	
	1	2
4 th yr	1.80	
2 nd yr	1.87	1.87
1 st yr		1.91
3 rd yr		1.92

T-test result revealed that there were no significant differences on the performance of Teacher Education students on their spelling test when they are grouped as to sex ($t = -.466$; $p = .642$) and course ($t = -1.257$; $p = .210$). Apparently, sex has no bearing on the spelling ability of students because spelling is expected to be mastered by students by the time they reach college regardless of sex.

Table 6. Result of t-test for the Significant Difference on the Performance of Teacher Education Students on their Spelling Test when they are grouped as to Sex and Course

Categories	Mean	t-value	p-value
Sex			
Male	17.95	-.466	.642
Female	18.96		
Course			
BEED	17.97	-1.257	.210
BSED	20.17		

$p > 0.05$ significant at 0.05 alpha; $df: 203$

ANOVA results showed that there was no significant difference on the performance of Teacher Education students on their spelling test when they are grouped as to their year level ($F = 1.619$; $p = .186$). The ability of the students is similar regardless of year level that may be the result of the fact that spelling was initially studied in the pre- and elementary grades and the skill was carried until their college. This may also be attributable to their course as future educators, owing to their rigid academic preparation, positive attitude, being particular with possible writing errors and the overcoming skills that they may possess against challenges that go with finishing their prescribed curriculum.

Table 7. ANOVA Results for the Significant Difference on the Performance of Teacher Education Students on their Spelling Test when they are grouped as to Year Level

Categories	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
Between Groups	705.885	3	235.295	1.619	.186
Within Groups	29211.793	201	145.332		
Total	29917.678	204			

$p > 0.05$ significant at 0.05 alpha

Pearson's-r correlation result showed that there was no significant relationship between the Teacher Education students' perceived influence of texting and performance on their spelling test ($r = .024$; $p = .734$). This means that texting has no bearing at all on the spelling ability of the respondents. Their ability to spell is not dependent upon texting. As observed, students who know how to spell in the first place know how to shorten or make acronyms out of phrases and texting does not deteriorate spelling ability at all. Moreover, the respondents' course training may have given them the ability and clear understanding to delineate the detrimental impact of texting against their highly- academic writing skill, primarily on their spelling ability. Most likely, the frequent conduct of spelling quizzes in their language classes may have helped them overcome the perceived influence of texting.

Table 9. Relationship between the Teacher Education Students' Perceived Influence of Texting and Performance on Their Spelling Test

Category	r-value	p-value
Attitude towards texting and performance in Spelling Test	.024	.734

$p > 0.05$ significant at 0.05 alpha

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Texting, text-speak or text messaging moderately influenced the spelling skills of Teacher Education students. One obvious reason contributing to this contemporary craze is the preponderance of electronic gadgets such as cell phones, tablets and computers, which are easy and leisurely communication partners.

The spelling skills of the Teacher Education students were described as good. This finding disclosed that not all students were influenced by texting; the students used technology appropriately that they did not abuse it to the point of addiction, and that they were aware of their spelling whether in texting, writing or typing.

The influence of texting on the spelling skills of the respondents when grouped as to sex and course revealed to have no significant difference, which means that sex does not influence the attitude of students towards texting or their tendency towards spelling. On the other hand, there was a significant difference on the influence of texting on the spelling skills of Teacher Education students when grouped as to year level. This means that attitude varies at different levels and this might have been influenced by different factors such as the family and the environment.

The performance of the respondents on their spelling test when classified as to sex, course and year level yielded to have no significant difference. This implies that sex, course and year level have nothing to do with the performance and spelling of the students. Whatever the sex, course or year level they belong, their performance depends much on their own stored and acquired knowledge.

Moreover, there was no significant relationship between the Teacher Education students' perceived influence of texting and performance on their spelling test. This means that texting does not influence the spelling skills and performance of the respondents. The errors that they committed could have been influenced by some factors like carelessness and lack of knowledge of certain spelling of words.

Although as a whole, the students have good spelling skills and texting moderately influenced them, there is still a need to sharpen their vocabulary in order to acquire more skills and this could be done by providing them more drills and exercises and more exposure to reading materials.

It is highly essential for the teachers to focus on the spelling and vocabulary of the students, more activities involving reading and writing such as reading of the selections like paragraphs, poems, stories; and let the students explain what they are about and summarize the selections or list down words that are not yet familiar to them and find the meaning of it. They may also have a vocabulary

enrichment activities or 10-item spelling tests to lessen the number of students who are poor in spelling.

Lastly, there is a need for students to further engage in comprehensive reading. Reading books, magazines, newspapers or watching educational programs on television and playing words or memory games, using technology like *Hangaro*, may be resorted to in order to have strengthened exposure to English spelling.

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