

## Short Messages: Its Effect on Teenager's Literacy and Communication

**Ms. Usmita Pradhan** - Student, BBA Semester 6, Batch: 2013-16, Rai Business School, Rai University, Ahmadabad, Gujarat, India.

**Email:** [usmitapradhan@gmail.com](mailto:usmitapradhan@gmail.com)

**Ms. Chimmi Tshogay** - Student, BBA Semester 6, Batch: 2013-16, Rai Business School, Rai University, Ahmadabad, Gujarat, India.

**Email:** [chimmitshogay2893@gmail.com](mailto:chimmitshogay2893@gmail.com)

**Mr. Jignesh N. Vidani** - Guide & Assistant Professor, Management Department, Rai Business School, Rai University, Ahmadabad, Gujarat, India.

**Email:** [jignesh.vidani@live.com](mailto:jignesh.vidani@live.com)

**Abstract:** Cell phones have become one of the very necessities in today's modern world for every teenagers and adults. We can't even think of staying away without cell phones. Human beings are going more and more interested with these devices nowadays. People are becoming more depended on cell phones for accomplishing their day to day activities related to their professional and personal lives. Nowadays we are taking advantage of cell phones for sending text message to our colleagues, friends, relatives and family as well as fast as they can. Whenever and wherever we go, we may find that people around you are always engaged with their cell phones screens, either they are sending messages or receiving it. For example schools, colleges, malls and cars, sidewalks, streets, we usually see them as head down and fingers glued to phones keyboard or touch screen and doing something. Sometimes you may be one of them. Nowadays about 90% of youth have cell phones and they mostly felt easy to text rather than to make calls because it is easier way. They can easily type a short message and send whatever they need to say. So in this research our motto is to find out the positive and negative aspects of text messaging on teenagers and whether it affects the teenagers or not.

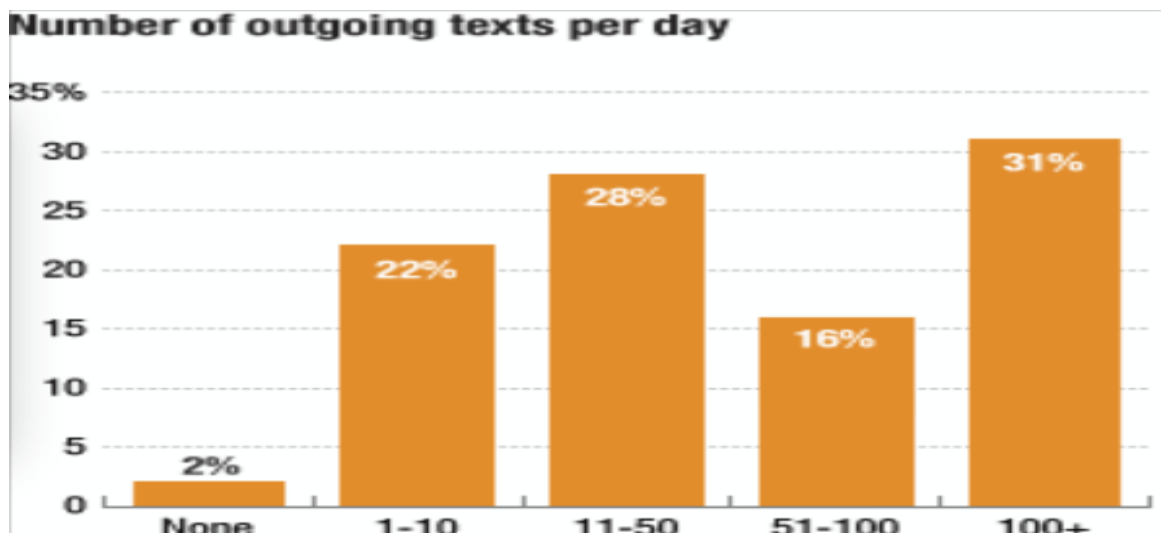
**Key Words:** SMS, Text Messaging, Teenagers, Language, Literacy.

### Introduction:

The primary purpose of the present research was to gain a better understanding of how text messaging has affected adolescent (teenagers) communication skills. This study focuses on some of the effects and likely problems arising out of the use of these text messaging. Texting is the preferred mode of contact for nearly all social and communication activities, socialization and self-expression of the adolescents. They are also the quickest to adopt text messaging. In today's world everyone in and around us are using mobile phones every day. Children today are receiving cell phones at an age as young as eight years old; more than 35 percent of children in second and third grade have their own mobile phone. Because of this, the texting language is integrated into the way that students think from an earlier age than ever before. They shorten words by using symbols to represent the word or symbols whose name sounds like a syllable of the word such as 2day or b4. This is commonly used in other languages as well.

This study will examine that whether texting SMS will impact on language and writing skills of the teenagers and their social lives, and other related issues. The evolution of technology over the last decade or so has happened at rapid speed. Not only innovative gadgets have been introduced but also popularizing it with new languages among young generation. In the modern technological world, people have become so habituated to the idea of sending and receiving information almost instantly.

Figure 1: Showing Number of outgoing texts per day



(Source: Hindustan Times, New Delhi, National dated NOVEMBER, 2013)

**Research Design:**

<b>Research Problem</b>	:	To study the effect of text messaging on the young generation of India
<b>Period of Research</b>	:	15 days
<b>Type of analysis</b>	:	Secondary
<b>Data Collection Method</b>	:	Internet, Newspapers, Magazines and Videos
<b>Type of Research</b>	:	Descriptive Research

**Effects of text messaging:**

**Rural area:**

Nowadays even a rural teenager has become so much obsessed with mobile phones and text messaging. They can stay without food but they cannot live without mobile phones. Though they can't meet the expense of smart phones and its services but still then they go to the extent of fighting with their parents and fulfill their demands.

Text messaging isn't a NEED but a WANT. They like to communicate by texting and enjoy long conversations with all those shortcuts rather than making short calls. Youth ignore their scheduled tasks and endeavor within their cell phones. It consumes their time, money, energy and gets nothing out of it.

**Urban area:**

Teenagers of urban area are so many advances and facilitated in terms of technology. They can't even think of living without mobile phones. They are totally depending on it. They walk, talk, play, eat and live with cell phones on their hands and fingers on keypad. Text messaging has become a trend.

Youths of urban areas are no different than the youths of rural area. All they do is play with texts and forget the rest of the things that tends to be more important like academics, outdoor activities and even families.

**Text messaging ruins English:**

Youths become so frequent with the use of abbreviations (TTYL-talk to you later, GTG-got to go etc...) and shortcuts (U-you, IMP-important) that they even forget the real spelling.

They tend to use them everywhere like in class lessons or exam papers which would not be accepted officially. Some texting terms have even made it into common parlance: 'lol' (laugh out loud), 'omg' (oh my god), pls

(please). The craze for shortening words, absorbed from texting, is also changing how we speak – ‘amaze’ for ‘amazing’, ‘totes’ for totally, ‘blates’ for blatantly: these are all largely teenage usages that are becoming mainstream.

Abbreviations like haha, lol, omg, brb, and btw are more infrequent than you imagine, the use of short forms, abbreviations, and emotional language is infinitesimally small. These shorts of stereotypical markers of teen language could be one of her most interesting findings is that older teens start to outgrow the abbreviation lol, opting for the more mature. If we always put our cell phones in our pockets we can receive that message, then you have the conditions that allow that we can write like we can speak, and that where texting comes soon in. And so texting is very loose in its structure. No one thinks about capital letters and punctuations when one texts.



(Image 1: Image Showing the Parents getting confused with the short message use by kids)

### Negative Effects of Texting in the Classroom:

The students text messaging has an effect to student’s performances in their classroom like use of abbreviations and shortcuts of grammatical words in the notes, presentations, assignments ,test papers would be considered informal and would be rejected. The more students use tools like instant messaging, the less they are able to separate formal and informal English. For example they abbreviate “w-h-y”, “y”.

A problem some teachers are noticing is that students no longer know how to punctuate correctly. Text messaging often contain run on sentences and don’t contain any punctuation; students are carrying this poor habit to the classroom. Another problem is the use of lowercase letters. Students aren’t using capital letters where they should. These are only a few of the problems that have arisen due to the overuse of texting nowadays. The students who texted more made more errors than those who texted less. This type of communication is destroying the way the kids read, think, and write. So because of these problems they tend to make lots of mistakes in exam time. They have a habit of writing short form while texting so they are mostly familiar with those words and they forget to spell the properly. This kind of communication makes lots of errors in our daily life as well. Technology has become so advanced that now cell phones automatically correct spelling errors. And People who own smart phones don’t have to worry about spelling anymore.

Text messages no longer have to worry about what they’re writing. They can breeze through a long text message and not have to worry about spelling errors. This is negatively affecting the way people write shorthand. When it comes down to writing shorthand, these “texters” and “IM-ers” have no clue how certain words are spelled. They are so used to the phone or computer writing it for them. It is accurate to say that the over-use of texting has been detrimental to the way students write formally in the classroom and in the real world. The character limitations on text messages have caused students to form their own style of writing. Using this style so frequently has caused them to carry it over to formal writing projects. Although students are writing more than ever, they are writing with little to no depth, terrible grammar, and are abbreviating almost every word they write. Texting has negatively affected the way students write.

### **Effects of text messaging on English grammar:**

Text messaging makes the youth use to with those shortcuts that is grammatically incorrect which indeed spoils their language and vocabulary. College students have been influenced by the popularity of cellular telephones, just as important as pencils, notebooks and book, cellular telephones has become increasingly evident among college students. Text messaging is the most widely used feature in the phones. There are many varieties of phone models like iPhone 5, Samsung and a lot of more. Text messaging nowadays plays a very important role on our life as a student. Today's youth are keen fan and users of wireless technology.

The students prefer to use the text messaging featured in cellular phones as a way to communicate for the reason that it is bother free and has a small charge. With these, people especially students are most prone to addiction. Addiction in texting can affect the students' ability. It has a capacity of destroying one's grammar ability because of the shifting of text types and by too much use of abbreviation. By this, many students nowadays leads to arrogant their skills around other text forms that is under or within the parameters of standard or formal English. The utilization of text messaging language in the classroom is considered as an inappropriate form of language that is now affecting the Standard English and will lower our scores on writing examinations. These days 85% of the teenagers use electronic communication, including text messaging. This situation puts difficulty to young adults spelling and grammar ability. The value of text messaging raises as the object exchanged represents not only something that is personal, but also a symbol of young independence. On the other hand, the utilization of text messaging language in the classroom is considered as an inappropriate form of language that is now affecting the Standard English and will lower our scores on writing examinations.

### **The cause and effects of texting while driving:**

Many youths are too confident with their driving that they even manage to text and chat. This leads to higher chances of deadly road accidents. Sending text messaging while driving distracts attention from the main task: driving the car safely. The reasons people text while driving can be difficult to pin down, but the effects of it are visible on the roads and in the news. Text messaging is very prevalent in our connected world. Sending someone a brief text is easier, and sometimes faster than making calls to them. All modern cell phones can send and receive texts in an easy way, making it an efficient method of communicating. Texting while driving has attracted considerable media attention and intense public interest. Media stories typically describe crashes that result in deaths or injuries of drivers who may have been texting at the time of a collision.

Texting while driving distracts drivers from the road specially teenagers because they are so careless. Talking on the phone can take concentrations off the road. When a driver looks down at their phone to text, they also take their eyes off the road and because of such problems they put people in danger and lots of accidents occurs nowadays. It's very important to know the rules and regulations of driving. One should be very concerned and alert while driving.

### **Expenses on text messages:**

Text messaging can become expensive. Frequent texters should be sure to have a plan that includes unlimited texts. Many of us think that texting is always cheaper than calling but NO! It is quite expensive for the one who mostly depends on texting.

Even so, some portion of the bill is paid toward these little messages, which wouldn't occur if text messaging wasn't available.

### **Time consuming:**

A text message not only consumes money but also your precious time. Text lovers tend to text maximum of their time pushing aside their regular tasks. This becomes chronic and this is the reason for low performances in their academics. Text messaging can become expensive. Frequent texters should be sure to have a plan that includes

unlimited texts. Even so, some portion of the bill is paid toward these little messages, which wouldn't occur if text messaging/ wasn't available. If a given family sends 8,000 texts in a month and is charged a flat fee of \$30 unlimited on five phones, that's 0.00375 cents per message. Many of people send lots of text messages throughout a day which will consume their precious time but then they are so much focus in their screens that won't bother much. It will not only waste their precious time but also affects their brains due to too much focus on the mobile screen.

### **Text Language Rolls Over:**

Young people who are constant text messagers might get into the habit of using the text lingo in school papers, letters and speech instead of organized, formal writing. Experts worry that these habits will result in generations of sloppy, undisciplined writing. It can also cause problems in emails, when the abbreviations might not be understood. Or the casual language is sent in a formal letter to someone the sender doesn't know well. The informal lingo is inappropriate, in that case.

### **Findings**

- From the study it is found that 100% of the teenagers are aware about text messaging.
- 78% of the teenagers use text messaging frequently.
- 76% of the teenagers think that text messaging affects people being literate, rest of the teenagers i.e. 24% do not agree that text messaging affects people being literate.
- SMS affects the language (spellings) was accepted by 78% of the teenagers.
- It was found that maximum of the teenagers use short words while writing SMS.
- From the study, it was found that teenagers do not use short words while writing the examination paper.
- 36% of the teenagers argue that text messaging helps in improving the language while interacting with different people.
- Text messaging helps illiterate people to read and write says 62% of the teenagers.
- Teenagers have some positive and negative aspects of text messaging

### **Recommendations:**

Texting has become any every day task that many teenagers engage in on a day to day basis. Many of those text messages that are sent often contain textisms. The use of textisms is starting to become more accepted among the younger generation. There have been suggestions from both media sources and educators that texting may have a negative effect on the literacy skills of students. Perhaps that biggest problem is that students do not distinguish between times when they need to write formally without using textisms, and when they are writing informally and the use of textisms is acceptable. With more long term studies on the same group of individuals, With long term studies, it may be possible to see if individuals carry the textisms that they use in their personal correspondences into their formal writing in a workplace environment. Until the time that concrete results are acquired to suggest that texting has deleterious effects, it may be wise to encourage students to lessen their use of textisms, and to instead use proper grammar and spelling while they are using texting as a form of communication.

### **Conclusion:**

We bring to close on the source of our research that the text messaging affects teenager's literacy and language on both the sides that is positively and negatively. It establishes that text messaging impacts adolescent's communication skills in many ways. We identified that Adolescents consider the mobile phone as important in their lives: girls more than boys and we also got to know that through text messaging, we get to interact with different people and gain their views and knowledge and it also helps in making people literate, whereas it has negative aspect too i.e. teenager get lazy and use short words rather than complete words, which gets stored in their brains and hence becomes a habit which later on affects in examination writing and communication. Text messages came into use so that people can save their time, money, energy but the youths of today just reversed its

benefits. Moreover, there are studies that show the usage of SMS for communication declines among the adolescents.

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