

**LECTURERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE INFLUENCE OF
TEXTING LANGUAGE ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC WRITING IN ENGLISH AT
EGERTON UNIVERSITY, KENYA**

MERCY CHEPKEMOI

**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Master of Education Degree in Curriculum and Instruction of Egerton
University**


EGERTON UNIVERSITY

AUGUST 2023

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

This Report is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in this or any other university:

Signature 

Mercy Chepkemoi

EM13/04012/14

Date.....28/08/2023.....

Recommendation

This Thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as the University Supervisors

Signature..... 

Prof. Mwāngi Ndirangū

Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Management,
Egerton University

Date.....28/08/2023.....

Signature 

Dr. Wathika Lucy

Department of Literature languages and Linguistics
Egerton University

Date.....28/08/2023.....

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The backtracks of this achievement is a product of unwavering belief, support, guidance and exemplary team work

DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

Technology is the hallmark of today's world. It has bequeathed us with computers, mobile phones and related gadgetry. The proliferation of these gadgets in the society has influenced the modes of communication and the use of language. The gadgets have restrictions that force users to flout grammatical and other language rules which are likely to pose a danger to correct English language usage among University students. This study sought to examine lecturers' and students' perceptions on the influence of texting language on students' academic writing in English at Egerton University. The study was guided by Sociolinguistic theory and Situated Learning theories. The study used descriptive survey research design. The target population was Egerton University 2017 third year students comprising of 140 students and 55 lecturers from the Faculty of Education and Community Studies (FEDCOS) and Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS). Simple random sampling and purposive sampling were respectively used in selecting the students and lecturers from the departments of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Management (CIEM) and Literature Language and Linguistics (LLL). A sample of 48 lecturers out of 55 and 121 students out of 140 successfully responded to the questionnaires. A set of questionnaires, one for the lecturers and the other for the students, and an observation checklist were used as research instruments. Content validity of the instruments was determined through expert judgement and piloting. Reliability of the questionnaires was estimated through Cronbach's alpha coefficient. From the pilot study, the students' questionnaire attained a reliability coefficient of $\alpha=0.904$ while the lecturers questionnaires had a reliability coefficient of $\alpha=0.952$. This reliability coefficient met the minimum threshold coefficient of 0.7. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies was used to analyse the data. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20. The results were then presented in the form of Tables. The findings indicated that 97% participating students found texting convenient due to the ease of putting messages together while 74% admitted experiencing challenges in using correct English language and punctuations in handwritten assignments. The findings of this study gives an insight on the influence of texting language on academic writing of Egerton University students in Kenya. The findings of this study are useful to the university students, lecturers and researchers who may be interested in improving the quality of academic writing in universities education.

TABLE OF CONTENT

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION	ii
COPYRIGHT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
ABSTRACT	vi
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	xii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background Information	1
1.2 Statement of Problem	6
1.3 Purpose of the Study.....	7
1.4 Research Objectives	7
1.6 Significance of the Study	7
1.7 Scope of Study	8
1.8 Limitations of the Study.....	8
1.9 Assumptions of the Study	8
1.10 Definition of Terms	9
CHAPTER TWO	12
LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 Importance of the English Language in Kenya	12
2.3 The Proliferation of ICT in Higher Education.....	13
2.3 Research Debates on the Possible Influence of Texting Language on Students’ Academic Writing.....	15
2.3.1 SMS Do Affect Students Writing Skills.....	15
2.3.2 Texting Language has no Effect on Students’ Writing Skills.	16
2.3.3 Texting Language as a Language Variety.....	18
2.4 Influence of Frequency of using SMS on Academic Writing.....	20
2.6 SMS and Students’ English Proficiency in Academic Writing	22
2.7 Theoretical Framework	23
2.7.1 Sociolinguistic theory	23

2.7.2. Situated Learning Theory	24
2.8 Conceptual Framework	25
CHAPTER THREE	27
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	27
3.1 Introduction	27
3.2 Research Design.....	27
3.3 Target Population.....	27
3.4 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size	28
3.5 Instrumentation	28
3.5.1 Questionnaire for University Students (QFUS).....	29
3.5.2 Questionnaire for University Lecturers (QFUL).....	29
3.5.3 Observation Check List.....	29
3.6 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments	30
3.6.1 Validity of the questionnaires and checklist	30
3.6.2 Reliability	30
3.7 Data Collection Procedure	31
3.8 Data Analysis	31
3.9 Ethical considerations	32
CHAPTER FOUR.....	34
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	34
4.1 Introduction	34
4.1.1 Characteristics of Respondents	34
4.2 Frequency of Use of Texting Language	35
4.3 Influence of the Features Provided on the Gadgets on the Use of Texting Language ...	43
4.4 Influence of Texting Language on University Student’s Academic Writing.....	48
4.5.1 Academic Writing Errors As a Result of Texting Language From Students Perspectives.....	48
4.5.2 Influence of texting habit on Students’ Academic Writing.....	54
4.5.3 Lecturers’ Perceptions on Features of Texting Language in Students’ Handwritten Assignments	56
4.5.4 Influence of Texting Language on Students’ Academic writing	59

CHAPTER FIVE	64
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	64
5.1. Introduction	64
5.2 Summary of Findings	64
5.2.1 Frequency of usage of Texting Language	64
5.2.2 Influence of Features on the gadgets on texting.	64
5.2.3 Influence of Texting Language on Academic writing.....	64
5.3 Conclusions of the Study	65
5.4 Recommendations of the Study.....	66
5.5 Recommendations for Further Research	68
REFERENCES.....	69
APPENDICES	77
Appendix A: Student Questionnaire	77
Appendix B: Lecturers Questionnaire	84
Appendix C: Research Permit	88
Appendix D: Research Authorization	89
Appendix E: Journal Publication.....	90

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Target population.....	27
Table 2: Summary of the Methods used to analyse the Research Questions	33
Table 3: Response Rate.....	34
Table 4: How Often Students Texted.....	35
Table 5: Motivating Factors for use of texting language.....	38
Table 6: Use of Texting Language and Class Related Behaviours	41
Table 7: Influence of Features (entry methods) on Gadgets on the Use of Texting Language	43
Table 8: Predictive Mode.....	45
Table 9: Internet enabled and software features.....	47
Table 10: Phonetic Errors in Students ‘Academic Writing	49
Table 11: Use of jargon	50
Table 12: Syntax	51
Table 13: Influence of Texting Habit on Academic Writing	54
Table 14: Features of Texting Language in Students’ Handwritten Assignments	57
Table 15: Influence of use of Texting Language on Academic writing from Lecturer’s Perspective..	60

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

4G- Fourth Generation

CAT – Continuous Assessment Test

CCK- Communications Commission of Kenya

CMC- Computer Mediated Communication

CMD- Computer Mediated Discourse

CIEM- Curriculum Instruction and Educational Management

FASS- Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

FEDCOS- Faculties of Education and Community Studies

ICT-Information Communications Technology

IM – Instant Message

ITU- International Telecommunication Union

KISS- Keep it Short and Simple

LLL- Literature Language and Linguistics

KNEC – Kenya National Examinations Council

SMS – Short Messaging Service

SPSS- Statistical Packages for Social Sciences

WAP- Wireless Application Protocol

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

The last two decades have seen the world undergo a rapid technological revolution. This has reduced the world into a global village due to the proliferation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) gadgets such as computers, the mobile phone, personal digital assistants and laptops. The advent of these technologies has ushered in a new era that is commonly referred to as “the information age” (Bhatnagar & Chopra, 2012). This has resulted into an increase in the quantity of information in circulation worldwide than has been possible in the past. More people can now communicate with each other globally and access such information through the internet. ICTs have become part of this information explosion and are recognized as catalysts for change related to handling and exchanging information. This explosion of information worldwide has also had an influence on various aspects of human life. ICTs play salient roles in the work places, social lives, business, education and entertainment (Bhattacharya & Sharma, 2007; Kozma, 2005). In education, ICTs have impacted on teaching methods used by educators, learning approaches by learners, scientific research, and the way information is accessed and communicated.

Today’s society is characterized by an increased number of ICT users than ever before, with over 73% of the world’s population owning a mobile phone (International Telecommunication Union [ITU], 2023). This has been attributed to the upsurge in the world’s telecommunication market and its subsequent penetration and adoption of the technology by the populace. This is further coupled with the improvement of the internet network with the introduction of Fourth Generation (4G) mobile technology, which is faster and facilitates the convergence of mobile phone and Internet technologies.

In Kenya, reports indicate that there has been an increase in the acquisition of smart phones as most young people preferred using them because of the large screens and enabled software applications such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and email features (CCK, 2014). Further, it is reported that Internet subscriptions grew by 200,000 from 13.1 million subscribers to 13.3 million showing a robust uptake of data services driven largely by mobile phones usage, which represents 99% of Internet usage (CCK 2014). This has also impelled the rise in number of Internet users, which consequently, rose to 21.6 million compared to 21.2 million during the previous quarter of May–August 2014. Internet

penetration in Kenya stood at 53.3% up from 52.3% the previous quarter of the same year. The success of the mobile phone may be explained by its role in young people's existing exchange activities (CCK, 2015). They use the phone as object of attention and topics of conversation among them as they update themselves on the newest features in mobile phone such as larger screens (CCK, 2015).

As noted, the use of these technological gadgets has become an indispensable element in modern society. They have created new opportunities for delivering information and eased communication and resource sharing via the computer, the internet and mobile phones that organizations use to link individuals and run companies across the globe (Haleem et al., 2022). As the interactions between societies cut across borders, the necessity to embrace and adapt to this digital era has seen many countries including Kenya try to keep up with these modern technologies.

The adoption of technology has also impacted education where it is commonly referred to as educational technology. The government as well as most Kenyan universities have also invested heavily in ICT. According to research findings by Gitonga et al. (2013) both public and private universities have made available ICT resources such as personal computers, LCD projection systems, e-learning management systems and the internet connectivity for use by the students and lecturers in teaching and learning. Other ICT based resources facilitate students' records management and intra-university communication (Gitonga et al., 2013). This study also found that students were accessing their academic results, booking halls of residence as well as registering online, indicating a good access to students' records management platforms.

In addition to this, the use of ICT resources for intra- university communication by students and lecturers tends to occur mainly through email, mobile phone and bulk SMS. Makori et al. (2013) asserts that most university students use the internet, the computer and the mobile phone at a rate of 90%, 81% and 77% respectively which may be associated with the increased acquisition of ICT gadgets such as computers and increase in bandwidth connectivity by the Kenya Education Network (KENET, 2018).

Ndirangu (2013) underpins the role of ICT in Higher Education Institutions in Kenya for example, its use in teaching and learning processes that has seen the transformative role of the teacher shifting from being a dispenser of information- in the traditional pedagogy, to a facilitator. Ndirangu (2013) further notes that new technological innovations such as e-learning, distance learning and online libraries have not only increased access to higher

education but also facilitated sharing of information between lecturers across the globe and helped in coming up with solutions to some of the challenges they face through academic research. In addition to this, the flexibility and accessibility enabled by ICT have led to emergence of Open and Distance Learning (ODEL) that is supported and delivered through communication technologies where the teacher and students' interactions are maintained through electronic media. Educational technology therefore makes modern education systems more efficient and accessible. On the other hand, the SMS technology in higher education and the associated systems mirrors the technology that is already being adopted in the business and social arena. The role of technology in the university is not new as it is commonly used by the students, lecturers and administration for communication purposes (Jordan & Mitchell, 2020).

The proliferation of ICTs has been a major source of social change. Moreover, they are very flexible devices as they are easy to use and carry everywhere. They are also popular because of the software applications they possess (Alomari et al., 2012). The mobile technology applications can be differentiated by two underlying technological platforms: wireless web-based technology, such as Wireless Application Protocol (WAP), and text-based technology or Short Message Services (SMS) which this study intends to focus on. SMS is a basic and common feature given by cellular operators to users. With the rapid development of these technological gadgets, the SMS and Instant Messaging (IM) are forms of Computer Mediated Discourses (CMD) among the younger generation that have added to their usefulness. SMS in particular is not only widely used in communication but in recent times, it has been leveraged to provide several utility services like airline ticketing, banking services, commercial services, and institutional alerts. In Mozambique for example, health workers support diagnosis and treatment through bulk SMS which also applies to Uganda and Malawi where health education messages are sent via text messages (Jaiswal, 2011).

However, the Kenyan context of SMS usage goes beyond that of communication purposes as it is also popularly used by money transfer services such as *M-Pesa*, *Pesa Mkononi* by *Safaricom* and *Airtel* companies respectively. The SMS messaging services have also been adopted by utility companies such as Kenya Power Company for querying balances, settling bills and other updates; purchasing goods and paying car packing fees among other uses. A number of businesses, such as educational institutions, banks, and insurance companies have started using SMS messenger as a reminder and promotional tool. Generally, texting is considered to be more economical than calling. Some people simply text

because it is relatively cheaper compared to making a call. Mobile phone companies like Safaricom, have introduced as little daily subscription rates for using either SMS texting as Ksh. 10 for 200 messages within the network or daily internet bundles going for 20KSH. for IGB hourly data (Nyawira, 2023). This has seen massive and rapid increase in short message service (SMS) and instant messaging (IM or IMing) especially among the youth.

Texting language is an English language slang, used to describe mobile phone text messaging style (Thurlow & Poff, 2011). Today, text messaging is considered the most widely used form of mobile data service. According to Worku et al. (2020) SMS service has overcome the requirement in language versatility and it is increasingly being used in social and business communications and even in advertisements. The discourse of communication commonly used is usually characterized by use of SMS features that young people consider 'cool', and marks their identity. Thus, it does not provide them with a platform to use the Standard English taught in schools (Rosen et al., 2010). This is because the *textese* language (also known as txt-speak, chat speak, net speak, texting language, text slang, text-talk, and others) is characterized by a disregard for standard spelling conventions and grammar rules. This orthographically (style of writing) unconventional language form is used for a number of reasons. These include the technical restriction inherent on the mobile phone that limits the writing space on its screen (Lee, 2007).

Further, it allows for a reasonable use of syntactic and lexical short forms enabling it to achieve the brevity and economy required by the confines of the mobile phones' 160-character text message limit. In addition to this, the small screen and an alphanumeric keypad with several letters assigned to each key encourage usage of texting language. They also function as shortcuts to reduce writing time for a quick response thus, saves on time, space and money (Crystal, 2001; Doring, 2002; Sagerstad, 2002; Thurlow, 2003). In addition to this, Ling (2010) suggests that SMS is a life phase and not a cohort phenomenon. That is, its use is more prevalent among teens and more temperate among older age groups.

In the article entitled "*texting G8 db8*", Crystal (2008) observed that language is changing due to technology and that texts speak, as referred to here, is like decoding a message. He noted that there are different adaptations of symbols and punctuation marks that the traditional language does not have. Moreover, as the texting language is written text, it is divorced from gestures, facial expressions and prosodic features such as intonation, rhythm and volume. This is why use of emoticons has been a feature of the texting language. Emoticons infuse electronic communication with an emotional human touch. On the other

hand, the use of hand gestures and prosodic features has been replaced by the creative adaptation of spelling, excessive use of punctuation marks and capitalization (Thurlow & Tomic, 2004).

In light of this, some scholars and other thinkers in education have voiced their concerns that the English language is being overwhelmed by SMS language, which might eventually affect the quality of the Standard English variety used and taught in schools, (Mashamaite & Mphahlele, 2005). English is the official language of communication in Kenya as well as the medium of instruction in schools, colleges and universities. In the school setting, proficiency in English will make the learning of other subjects much easier and facilitate effective communication skills (The Elimu Network, 2013). Since the importance of language is both functional and systematic, an individual who is able to use the language both functionally and systematically for communication purposes, can be argued to be competent in it. However, it appears that spoken and written English by many graduates of the school system in Kenya is wanting (MOE, 2012).

A comparison between text messaging and the standard British English revealed that textese resembles a code, rather than the standard British English language. It is a variant of English that is used in academic writing and contains lexemes recognized by the Oxford English Dictionary (Thurlow & Brown, 2003). Consequently, this has generated a lot of discussions among scholars that has over the years culminated into three schools of thought. Some scholars and educators think that text messaging, has a negative impact on writing skills of students (Fox et al., 2009). Their argument is based on the fact that for the sake of brevity, conciseness and economy of words, SMS and IM throws the elements of writing such as grammar, syntax, punctuation, capitalization to the wind. As a result, these elements are to find their way into students' academic work.

The second school of thought is propagated by Crystal (2009) who argues that texting enhances students' mastery of English language and that they are likely to improve their writing skills. The third school of thought is that texting has neither positive nor negative effect on English grammar at all.

During the release of the KCSE exams of 2014, the Cabinet Secretary for Education Prof. Kaimenyi alluded to the fact that the consistent use of electronic communication devices such as mobile phones and computers has undeniably affected the education process. This is because it has done away with the need to know how to construct sentences and spell words correctly due to "spell checking" and "predictive text" capabilities which

may have contributed to the poor performance in English (Oduor, 2014). This may lead to transfer of poor communication skills, which may be reflected in their academic writing upon joining universities.

Research findings in Kenya such as by Ongonda (2009) who attempted to explicate syntactic aspects as reflected in Kenyan text messages confirms the concerns raised that textese does flout grammatical rules. The findings revealed that new syntactic structures have penetrated into the linguistic continuum of Kenyan texters and that the syntactic nature of SMS in Kenya is based on sentence and word modifications. Syntactic variations observed included omission of pronouns, auxiliary verbs, articles, *to* infinitive, grammatical agreements, contractions and different word orders. In addition to this, Interlocutors used playful manipulation and modification that affects the syntax of the English language.

Technology has become so advanced that computers and mobile phones today can automatically correct spelling errors and punctuation, thus students do not need to worry about what and how they write. However, when it comes to hand written academic assignments, they often misspell words because they are so used to phones or computers writing it for them (Rosen et al., 2010). Teachers argue that papers are being written with shortened words, improper capitalization and punctuation and characters like @, & and /, (Lee, 2007). This could be attributed to the influence of text messages which often contain run on sentences with disregard for proper punctuation, incorrect use of capital letters and the errors made during translating from text language into English such as missing words, articles and pronouns, missing punctuations and misspellings. In addition to this, the frequency of texting could certainly affect a person's communication skills such as reading, writing and speaking in terms of grammar and spelling negatively (Mashamite & Mphahlele, 2005).

1.2 Statement of Problem

Proficiency in the use of English language is critical as it is one of the official languages and language of instruction in educational institutions in Kenya. The skills learned in the English language consists of the ability to listen, speak, write and read with comprehension, while observing the syntactic as well as the morphological rules governing the language. Thus, competence in the English language is important to the university students as they are expected to submit assignments, reports, exams and assessments, which are anchored in correct language use. However, language is a very dynamic entity and constantly changes due to culture, events in history and technology. The proliferation of ICT

technologies have resulted into new forms of Computer Mediated Discourses (CMDs) such as IMs and SMS which have become very popular especially among the youth. These CMDs encourage users to flout grammatical and other language rules, posing a threat to correct usage of the English language among students. The gadgets have inherent restrictions that force use of abbreviations due to constraints of writing space. Studies in other jurisdictions have shown that overuse of texting language is likely to affect student's academic writing at all levels. However, no study has been carried out in Kenya to investigate lecturers' and students' perceptions on the influence of texting language on students' academic writing in English. In light of this, this study aimed at filling this gap the influence of t3ting on student academic writing at Egerton University.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate lecturers' and students' perceptions on the influence of texting language on students' academic writing in English at Egerton University, Kenya.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- i. Determine frequency of use of texting language among university students.
- ii. Examine the influence of the features provided on the gadgets on the use of texting language.
- iii. Students and Lecturers determine the influence of texting language on university student's academic writing.

1.5 Research Questions

The following questions were developed in line with the objectives of the study:

- i. What is the frequency of use of texting language among the university students?
- ii. What is the influence of the features provided on the ICT gadgets on the use of texting language among university students?
- iii. Does texting language have an influence on university students' academic writing?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Due to the option of auto-correct texts, educators are concerned that most students spend most of their time texting, which may be detrimental to their writing skills. Hence, the study

findings are likely to provide an insight and understanding to the curriculum developers, educators and parents of the interaction between use of texting language and University students' academic writing. In addition to this, the findings of the study could guide construction of written assessments. This is because, currently, students are scored on grammar, spelling, and capitalization in most of the written response, regardless of content area. The findings of this research may also be used as a reference material by both students and lecturers who may be interested in this field of study. It is also hoped to demystify the three schools of thought which will hopefully put an end to the debate as to whether or not texting has an impact on students writing skills. The findings of this study may also be informative to the students in regards to how situated learning environment using ICT, may impact on their language skills. Finally, the study may provide recommendations for educators and university students alike to improve their academic writing skills while still leveraging technologies as part of their communication.

1.7 Scope of Study

The study was carried out at Egerton University in Nakuru County. This study investigated the lecturer's and students' perceptions on the influence of texting language on university students' academic writing in English. The study focused on the influence of the features provided on the gadgets and students' texting habits in order to establish their probable influence on their academic writing. From the lecturers, the research aimed at investigating lecturer's perspective of the impact of use of CMD such as texting language on their writing. Therefore, this study was dependent on the perspective of both students and educators.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The scope of this research was the major limitation during the study because the research used data drawn from Egerton University only. These findings may not be generalized to the other levels of education system such as secondary schools because the students' texting habit may be varied.

The study did not explore other factors that can affect the quality of English used in academic writing other than texting language as they were beyond the scope of this research and can constitute other independent studies.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

During the course of the research, it was assumed that:

- The respondents were honest in their answers to the items posed in the questionnaires.

1.10 Definition of Terms

In this section, constitutive and operational definitions of terms used within the context of this study are presented:

Academic achievement: It refers to the measurement of students classroom performance and results from standardized tests or written academic assignments. Students are usually evaluated then given scores and grades.

Academic writing: It refers to formal writing style that is used and accepted in higher learning institutions and adheres to the conventions of punctuation, grammar and spelling. This includes students' written work such as lecture notes, essays, research reports and examination scripts.

Computer mediated communication (CMC): It is defined as any human communication that occurs through the use of two or more electronic devices such as instant messaging and SMS

Descriptivism: refers to the perception that there is no correct use of language and that variation should be acknowledged and recorded rather than be corrected and deemed as wrong.

Discourse: it refers to a formal or informal discussion of a subject in speech or writing. It emerges out of social institutions like the social media and shapes our thoughts, beliefs, identities interactions with others and our behavior.

Emoticon (word from *emotion* and *icon*): it is a facial expression represented by a combination of punctuation mark, letters or other characters, that viewed from the side resembles a facial expression or, more rarely, gestures

Environment: it refers to the physical and social qualities that create a learning experience and make up the school setting.

Grammar: grammar is the system of word structure and word arrangement that is guided by conventional rules of the English language.

Graphones: it is a feature of SMS language in which words are written the way they are pronounced (spoken like writing). This comes from the words ‘graphic’ (written representation) and phone (speech sound). Graphone writing in Kenya seems to be closely influenced by Swahili.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTS): It includes computers, mobile phones telecommunication and audio-visual systems that enable communication to take place via SMS and IM.

Instant messaging: Abbreviated *IM* (in this study), is the online exchange of text messages between two or more individuals using a mobile phone application or an Internet application, through a social networking site e.g. Facebook, Yahoo Messenger, Twitter and Tango or within an online game. Thus, IM is real-time, that is synchronous CMC, whereas texting is asynchronous CMC.

Morphology: It refers to the identification, analysis, and description of the structure of a given language's morphemes and other linguistic units, such as root words, affixes, parts of speech, intonations and highlights on the rules involved in word formation processes. Such as use of exclamation marks for emotive purposes. Texting language is characterized by clippings, abbreviations in its word formation

Pragmatics: It focuses on how context and situation affect meaning of words and usage. Therefore, speakers use language to present information and the recipients draw inferences from the implicit or explicit meaning implied. It addresses choice of words, how sentence pattern and intonation in certain context such as the formal and informal writing styles used for different purposes by students.

Prescriptivism: It refers to the view that language conforms to a set of rules that govern the English language and determines how words should be spoken and written.

Semantics: This is the study of meanings, changes in meanings, and the principles that govern the relationship between sentences, phrases or words and their meanings

Sociolinguistics: It is mainly concerned with use of language in the cultural and social context especially how people with different social identities such as gender and age speak and the effects of that language on the society. It addresses issues such as pronunciation of words and choice of words and how they form personal styles of speech.

Syntax: it entails the set of rules, principles that govern the structure of sentences in regards to how words and phrases are arranged so that they can create correct sentences in a language

Texting language or SMS language: it refers to the abbreviated form of language studied in text linguistics that is commonly used in Internet-based communication such as instant messaging or phone text messages (SMS). It has since evolved to not only take into account the form of a text but also the setting, the texter, addressee and the social or institutional role in the communicative context. The language may include *slang words*, *emoticons* and other shortened words for convenience of fast communication among others.

Text messaging or ‘texting’: refers to the brief messages that are sent using the SMS (Short Message Service) of mobile phones, smartphones or web browsers. The term *text message* refers to the individual message sent while the Users of texting are labelled *texters*. IM and SMS **are** both forms of computer-mediated communication CMC but SMS is asynchronous while CMC is not. Texting consists of colloquialisms, abbreviations, acronyms, symbols, word adaptations, and slang.

Texter: this refers to a person who communicates by text messaging

Transcription: It is a system of alphabetic writing that relies on the use of special symbols devised to reflect the quality of the sounds strung together in speech, where each symbol represents one sound and never the other. It consists of spelling drawn from the letters of the alphabet .eg: *cloud-* becomes [klâud] when transcribed; *school-* becomes [sku:l] when transcribed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter starts by providing an overview on the importance of English language in Kenya and its role in the society and the proliferation of ICT technologies among the higher institutions of learning. It also provides a discussion on research debates among scholars on the possible influence of the writing style promoted by use of SMS on the students' academic writing. It further discusses emerging application trends in SMS usage that aim at encouraging interaction among students. The chapter finally ends with the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guided the study.

2.2 Importance of the English Language in Kenya

In today's globalised society, the importance of the English language cannot be overlooked. English has been playing a vital role in medicine, business, media and is the official language in most countries. English plays a vital role in the Kenyan education sector. It is not only an important subject of study, but also the medium of instruction in other subjects, except other languages in the schools, colleges and universities. It is also the language used in e-learning.

The norm of English language used in Kenya is British standard variety. The fact that the language teacher is not a native speaker of English makes the task of teaching British English standard variety difficult, especially when teaching speaking skills. This may affect the students writing skills as writing is the product of the three skills i.e. listening, speaking and reading. Owens (2004) observes that, spelling, reading and written composition have a significant relationship. He affirms that they must coordinate for optimal functioning. If the students cannot get the ideal model of the Standard English variety, it may contribute to the poor performance that has been witnessed in the national examinations.

In the university set up, to be able to communicate effectively and in a bid to maintain academic standards, students are expected to adhere to the conventions of the standard English language that is acceptable in academic writing and is considered formal. This includes use of correct English grammar, correct spelling of lexemes and word formation process (Mwangi, 2016). While different contexts call for use of different languages in communication, clarity, high precision levels and professionalism is expected in academic writing for the sake of credibility and language standards.

2.3 The Proliferation of ICT in Higher Education

The rapid development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), particularly the Internet, is one of the most fascinating phenomena characterizing the Information Age. ICT powers access to information, enables new forms of communication and provides many on-line services in commerce, culture, entertainment, education and government services (Chopra, 2012). The proliferation of ICT gadgets such as the laptop, tablets and mobile phone has greatly impacted today's society.

It is estimated that by the end of 2007, half of the world's population (3.3 billion) were mobile phone subscribers. Out of these, 2.4 billion people, constituting 74% of all mobile phone users worldwide, were active users of the SMS and IM. In 2010, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (2013) reported that, a total of 6.1 Trillion SMS were exchanged worldwide, from 5.3 billion mobile cellular subscriptions. Likewise in general, the cost of many ICT services is falling fast. As noted earlier, mobile phone ownership has continually increased in popularity over the last two decades, with current mobile phone subscriptions reaching 6.8 billion in a current world population of 7.1 billion people (ITU, 2013).

SMS traffic has declined considerably to 6.22 billion messages from 6.28 billion in the third quarter in 2014 which can be attributed to rise of mobile messaging apps like WhatsApp, LinkedIn, My space, Facebook, and Instagram which are common sites used by the age bracket of 18-26 years, who are mainly college and university students (CCK 2015). It was also noted that the trend is likely to continue based on how many people have opted out of SMS for free Internet-based mobile messaging services and the trending fourth generational network (4G) internet which is much faster. This can be associated with the increase in accessibility to the technological gadgets and their accompanying features that allow users to take still pictures and videos and share them on social sites like Instagram and chat groups such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Messenger, Twitter and Emoji (Kozma, 2005). This uptake and recent uses of text language could be tied to the technology of cell phones, environmental factors, such as common peer language, and the need for self-expression.

This has since signaled unbounded possibilities for language use and communication other dimensions to trending discussions on language use in computer-mediated environments. On the other hand, the massive usage of SMS and IM has led to near collapse of postal services as the trending computer mediated discourse (CMD) has de-popularised the usage of letter writing, telegrams and the landline phones as forms of communication

especially among the youths who consider their usage as out-dated. This clearly disadvantages the students because the postal services which they consider out-dated, provides them with a platform to practise their oral and both formal and informal writing skills (Ennis & Jolivette, 2014). Notably, there is much literature that confirms that the language of communication in Computer Mediated discourse, is a deviation from the normal norm. However, the studies do not indicate whether by using these CMD frequently, it may affect students' academic writing and consequently affect their achievement. Or whether, it is plausible to conclude that there is a relationship between using texting language and students' academic writing.

Ensuring universal service and access to information and communication technologies is a top national objective in many countries. This is often enshrined in laws that govern the sector. As noted by many researchers, the role of ICT in higher education and the proliferation of these ICT gadgets such as the laptop and the mobile phones in the 21st century has been argued to have revolutionized educational practices in many ways and that the impact is projected to grow considerably in years to come (Bhattacharya et al., 2007). Therefore, ICT has been a strong agent of change among many educational practices.

These research findings can be correlated with Makori (2013), whose study sought to investigate the types of ICTs used frequently on and off campus by university students. The results indicated that on campus, ICT resource centres and laptops were the most popular facilities among the students as reported by 81% , followed by mobile telephone with 77% of the respondents. This was associated with high internet usage with a frequency of 95% where results indicated that social networking sites and chat rooms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Emoji messages etc. had over the years increasingly become among the popular recreational uses of ICTs among students. They provide good avenues to catch up with friends and family as they are considered to be relatively cheap, fast and provide them with platforms to air their views and discuss that most students used social networking sites but much was not captured on their use of CMD. They simply stated they were popular.

Faulkner and Culwin (2004) observed that, the effective use of SMS technology in higher education and associated levels, mirrors technology already commonly adopted in the social and business arenas. As an application, it has been used worldwide in mobile learning in tandem with other applications. However, it is used basically for communication purposes, information delivery and retrieval. It is also used as a push up mechanism e.g. in communicating about studies or as a pull only mechanism such as to send out content by

education providers as learners reply to the teaching servers with questions or requests for assistance. Motiwalla (2007) notes that, content delivery is more effective when one combines using the push and pull mechanisms. This is because learners have enough time to reflect and respond to the information they receive.

2.3 Research Debates on the Possible Influence of Texting Language on Students' Academic Writing

The first ever book written solely on texting language, was written by Crystal, entitled *Txtng: The Gr8 Db8*. This may be considered as the most comprehensive literary work so far on the SMS text messaging. Various researches on the possible influence of SMS texting on writing have also been carried out and investigation on this, published in journals, newspapers, and on the internet. These articles such as by Zelenkauskaitė and Herring (2008); Rosen et al. (2010); Shephard et al. (2011) and Crystal (2001) are mostly online and address the positive and negative influences of text messaging on various aspects of social life, including the academic work of students. The debate has since culminated into three schools of thought as the scholars and educators take sides. Some scholars are of the view that texting has no effect on students' academic writing but rather, it enhances students' writing skills while others are of the opinion that texting language does have an effect.

2.3.1 SMS Do Affect Students Writing Skills

This school of thought is anchored on the belief that text messaging, which is associated with availability of such gadgets like mobile phones and laptops among students has a negative impact on writing skills of students (Rosen et al. 2009). Their argument is based on the fact that for the sake of brevity, conciseness and economy of words, SMS and IM throws the elements of writing such as grammar, syntax, punctuation, capitalization to the wind. They further assert that, the misspellings, clipping of words and the extensive use of abbreviations used in IM and SMS are showing up in formal school papers (Robbins et al., 2008).

In a study conducted by Mashamaite and Mphahlele (2005) they explored the possible influence of textese on students' writing proficiency- their findings revealed that a large majority of the educators perceived textese as negatively affecting their students' academic writing skills. They observed that students do not always adhere to Standard English in respect to spelling, punctuation and length of sentences. They claimed that they regularly encountered non-conventional spellings in students' handwritten assignments, which they attributed to students' use of texting language. Consequently, they concluded that

textese affects two aspects of students' language proficiency i.e. their skills to express themselves eloquently through writing, speaking and use of appropriately in context. However, could it be possible that misspellings may result from general language incompetence and not necessarily from use of SMS mediated discourse?

Other Scholars such as Dworkin (2003) base their arguments on the possible influence of IMing and SMS on literacy from a theoretical perspective, focusing on three concepts: language play, plurality of literacy's and language evolution. They argue that: The language play used in textese leads to better general literacy, increased subconscious linguistic awareness and improved abilities to use language effectively; Because human language processing capabilities allow people to develop multiple literacies independently of each other and to use them in their appropriate contexts traditional literacy should be considered as an entity separate from and unaffected, rather than replaced by IM literacy.

The fact that students have become used to the entry method used during texting such as predictive mode on an alphanumeric keyboard that writes the correct spelling for them, this makes it difficult for them to master spelling of words during handwritten assignments (Grace et al., 2012). Thurlow and Poff (2009) also indicate that, Standard English is corrupted by text messaging as the standards of spelling, grammar, sentence structure, punctuation and capitalisation are decreasing, due to the frequent use of texting language. This may consequently affect the quality of English in students' written assignments which is expected to observe the phonology, morphology and syntactic rules governing the language. A deviation from this, if the above is anything to go by, then the quality of English used in academic writing is bound to suffer. The arguments above do prove beyond any reasonable doubt that texting language does have a negative impact on students' academic achievement and on their knowledge of Standard English. This is because, correct language use is basically anchored on the need to observe the grammatical rules, which is clearly thwarted by the increase use of SMS. Despite being argued to provide a good avenue for students to practise their writing and reading skills, scholars such as De Jonge and Kemp (2012), argue that frequent texting may interfere with literacy development or provide an opportunity for young people who are less competent in literacy to mask poor spelling skills.

2.3.2 Texting Language has no Effect on Students' Writing Skills.

The second school of thought is led by scholars who believe that language is dynamic and is prone to evolve with new technologies and the changing needs for communication (Herring, 2003; Ebeling-Witte et al., 2007). They argue that, text messaging should not be

resisted but rather it should be used to engage young people in a way that it should enrich their expression of thought in their writings and improve the spelling skills. This second school of thought is led by Crystal.

In his book, *Txtng: The Gr8 Db8*, which stands for *Texting: The Great Debate*, Crystal (2009) dismisses the popular notion that SMS language and its profuse use of abbreviations, acronyms and slang, impacts negatively on student language and literacy. He supported his argument basing on six main points which included:

1. In every text message, less than 10% of the words are abbreviated.
2. Abbreviations have been in use for decades, and thus cannot be regarded as a new language.
3. Both children and adults use texting language, the latter being more likely to do so
4. Students do not often use abbreviations in their homework and examinations
5. Before texting, one must first know how to spell words correctly in their Standard English language. In light of this, texting cannot be the cause of bad spelling
6. Since texting provides people with the opportunity of engaging with the language through reading and writing, it improves students' literacy.

Kemp and Bushnell (2011) support Crystal's argument by saying that, higher quality literacy skills are related to greater textese reading speed and accuracy. They noted that children who were writing and decoding text messages tend to have skills associated with greater literacy and vocabulary awareness. It was also observed that different uses of abbreviation show an understanding of language phonemes (Verheijen, 2013). In writing about the possible benefits of student texting, Lee et al. (2008); Baron and Campbell, (2010); Plester et al. (2008) and Verheijen, (2013) suggested that, texting is good because it provides students with a platform to write.

Thus, the scholars in support of this second school of thought are of the opinion that rather than affecting students' grammar, the revolution of language in Computer Mediated Discourse (CMD) may actually lead to innovative language use. The playful use of language enables creation of a variety of graphic forms of the same word. Text writing poetry competitions commonly held in Western countries as well as the trending text message novels, confirm that texting can result in creative expressions of language. In light of this, while it does encourage use of language, is it plausible that its use should be encouraged? Poetic license does allow for this but the standard English Language expected to be used in academic writing does not.

These scholars also suggest that texting language provides children and adolescents with increased exposure to text and extra opportunities to engage with language, which motivates them to read and write. They further support their claim by arguing that children who write and decode text messages tend to have skills associated with greater literacy and vocabulary awareness. They draw their conclusions based on observations made that different uses of abbreviation show an understanding of language phonemes (Verheijen, 2013). Another possible advantage is that texting language may increase students' phonological awareness as encourages them to take a keen interest in the underlying sound structure of a language. This may be exemplified by use of phonological abbreviations such as *fon* for phone. These arguments however have drawbacks, they do not take into consideration the varied spelling exhibited in the US and UK texting input which are different phonologically, neither do they consider the various jargons that may be considered as informal language, yet these are CMC platforms from which students learn from. In addition to this, the orthography of the English language is varied from its pronunciation. Therefore, how a word is written in English, may not necessarily have to be how it is pronounced. This is a feature of the texting language which may affect the students' academic writing assignments, resulting in syntax and spelling errors.

2.3.3 Texting Language as a Language Variety

This third school of thought is led by Russel (2010) who is of the opinion that texting has no effect on grammar, but should instead be regarded, as a language variety with its own writing style and orthography. He supports his argument by arguing that since learning a new language does not affect students' ability to use English grammar, it would be wrong to conclude that text messaging does have this effect. He further argues that, slang words have no effect on English grammar. While each generation has its own jargon, English grammar has not been changed and that all students need to do, is to learn the basics in English language class and they would be able to distinguish between slang, texting lingo and correct English. Interestingly, the text terms 'OMG' for Oh My God and 'LOL' for Laughing Out Loud have officially found their way into the Oxford English Dictionary's online edition (Muhammad, 2011).

Studies on SMS language have documented similar characteristics of text messaging (Bodomo et al., 2004). The dominant features in SMS language are the use of abbreviations, slang, syntactic reductions, asterisks, emoticons, deletions of parts of speech, especially subject pronoun, preposition, articles, copula, auxiliary or modal verbs and contractions.

Some of its salient features as discussed by Mashamaite and Mphahlele (2005) include:

- Orthographic abbreviations/contractions (e.g. msg for message, tmrw for tomorrow)
- Phonological abbreviations (thru for through, skul for school, thanx for thanks);
- Acronyms/initialisms (OMG for oh my God, ASAP As Soon As Possible, TBT for Throw Back Thursday, BFF for Best Friend Forever)
- Clippings/shortenings (goin for going, feb for February, xam for exam);
- Single letter/number homophones (c for see, u for you, 2 for to/too, 4 for for);
- Combined letter/number homophones (NE1 for anyone, 2day for today, l8r for later, 2morrow for tomorrow);
- Typographic symbols (<3 for love, & for and, @ for at);
- Omission of punctuation, apostrophes or capitalization (cant for can't, i for I);
- Excessive use of punctuation or capitalization for expressing emphasis (what!!!! For what!, huh??)
- Joining of compounds (e.g. atlst instead of at least, gdmorning for good morning)
- Graphone (*kamin* , *airtym*, *gudnyt*)
- Onomatopoeia (ooh, ah.ahh.ah..a,agh!)
- Accentualization (coz, kinda, wanna, ye, dis)

From the above, he observed that words such as 'school', 'see' have been abbreviated to skul and 'c' respectively. This is a form of transcription by the speakers who choose to write it down as they are spoken and not written, thus achieving brevity and economy of words. In English language, most transcriptions illustrate clearly that there is no direct correspondence between the writing and the pronunciation system. An ideal orthography of a language would show direct correspondence between the writing and the pronunciation system of the language (Mashamaite & Mphahlele, 2005). Due to the drastic nature of the change, there is a whole new set of rules and concepts that are associated with textspeak.

There has been evidence to suggest gender differences in messages written by men and women. Women have been shown to be more likely to communicate affection, whereas men are more likely to communicate aggression (Baron & Campbell, 2010; Herring, 2003). In addition to this, women are projected to use emoticons more often than men (Shephard et al., 2012). In terms of frequency of texting by women, findings indicate that they send more, and longer, messages than men (Baron & Campbell, 2010; Tossell et al., 2012). With regards to studies on teenagers texting habits by Plester et al. (2009); Varnhagen et al. (2009) compared to males, females used texting language more in general, and more expressive texting

features such as whaaat?! for what.

While text messaging volumes have increased, technological constraints on text message length that drives students to use the abbreviated spellings include 160-character text message limit, small screen size and an alphanumeric keypad that has several letters assigned to each key encourage usage of texting language. Software application such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter etc. provide a platform for use of texting language.

Beyond technological influences, social factors, such as the perceived social value of participating in text-rich communication, may also influence textism use (Androutsopoulos, 2006; Grace, 2012; Reid & Reid, 2004). Research by Grace (2012) confirms that texting language density in undergraduates' naturalistic text messages is positively related to the appropriateness of using text language in their own messages. This was also corroborated by Drouin and Davis (2009) who also found that students rated textisms use, as appropriate in messages to friends, but not in messages to university instructors, and varied their textism use accordingly.

2.4 Influence of Frequency of using SMS on Academic Writing

Students represent the largest demographic of frequent texters, therefore one may assume that this practice has the potential to influence their writing skills (Education Digest, 2013). As discussed this far, there are positive attributes to students being encouraged to use texting language such as increase in phonological awareness (Plester et al., 2009). Nevertheless, despite the supposed positive results texting may have had on literacy and reading fluency, the pervading perception is that the frequent use of this texting language is damaging the English language, as supported by Thurlow's (2006) compilation of 100 articles on the topic. This is further supported by Jacquie Ream's work cited in Thurlow (2006) which categorically stated that these kids are not learning to spell but are instead typing shorthand jargon that is not even a complete thought.

Shafie et al. (2010) also noted that spelling and writing are the principal struggle for English second language learners. They examined students in Malaysia and found that frequent use of textisms made it difficult for the participants to recall correct spellings. Further, Drouin's (2011) research findings on the influence of texting language on college students' literacy skills mentions that seeing a word misspelled even once makes it more difficult to recall the correct spelling especially if there is a concise and phonological difference between its orthography and pronunciation.

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that the consistent use of technology

increases student learning but it also has the possibility of creating a generation of poor writers, which consequently affects students' academic writing as well as radically transforming the English language. However, there is no much evidence to support that this is reflective of university students here in Kenya. Besides, the answer to the question as to whether student frequent use of texting language may have an impact on their writing skills was important to know in order to evaluate how to improve students' academic writing skills.

With the changing discourse of language, written language is considered by many scholars such as Wilson (2001) as "living and breathing". Language scholars argue that changes in language are expected, especially with the robust uptake of technology which has already had an impact on various aspects of our lives, including the education sector.

In a research conducted by Common Sense Media (2012), 81% of middle school teachers believed that texting has the most negative influence on student achievement, specifically in writing skills. One-third to one-half of adolescents reported using emoticons and shortened words in academic assignments (Lenhart, 2009). One teacher stated that students currently write papers like they are texting and do not really consider their grammar and spelling before turning in compositions (Common Sense Media, 2012). A report by the Pew Internet and American Life Project reveals that children's advocates along with their educators are concerned that CMD is degrading the quality of writing American students produce (Turner, 2009).

Nevertheless, the positives and negatives of texting may also be viewed differently depending on one's attitude towards technology in general. Scholars who consider it to be essential in our day to day living are more likely to see the creativity, advantages and benefits of engaging in textspeak. Whereas, those who are indifferent to embracing technology tend to focus on the negative aspects of texting such as the shifts in language from a formal register to an informal one (Filippova & Astington, 2008). A study by Common Sense Media (2012), concluded that decisions on penalties, when a student uses texting in academic writing may be attributed to the disproportionately negative view of students' use of texts by the 81% of teachers, who consider themselves "tech savvy".

As a result, do the penalties attracted leave the student at a disadvantage point simply because of a 'digital divide' which consequently affects their achievement. Moreover, in the spirit of digital literacy, is there need for a call for the students to be allowed to be digital writers so that they can make meaningful contribution to the larger society, which they are part of? Nonetheless, researchers list other factors, which may influence the results such as:

phone technology, pervasiveness of phone ownership and social pressures (Astington & Filippova, 2008).

2.6 SMS and Students' English Proficiency in Academic Writing

The English language has complex system of rules where the sound structure and meaning are integrated for the purpose of communication just like any other language. It follows general principles called rules of grammar which provide guidelines on how words should combine in terms of morphology and syntax. However, variations to the Standard English may result from environmental factors such as its use in level of formality of the language to suit the occasion (Awoyemi, 2013).

Students are compelled to use language properly for an effective communication of their ideas and a grammatical formulation of their answers in an examination situation. In return, this earns them maximum or marginal marks for their efforts (Oluga & Babalola, 2013). The use of texting language in an exam situation is considered inappropriate and is often penalized. Despite this linguistic and examination requisites, students still violate the stipulated language rules, sometimes under the influence of intensive or frequent use of particular communication technology (Grace, 2012). Ross (2007) asserts that, students quality of writing is on the decline because just like in texting, students want to get everything written as fast as possible. They do not bother with the writing process- drafting, revising and editing.

Research findings concerning the texting language and style of Computer Mediated Discourse in comparison to the Standard English or 'traditional' ways of communicating prove that no matter the medium of communication, it affects discourse. Each set of technological constraint, means a different set of possibilities, preferences and restrictions (Herring et al., 2001). Ross (2007) further presents the view of the American Federation of Teachers that texting and instant messaging negatively affect students' writing quality on a daily basis, as the students bring abbreviated language into the classroom. As a result of their electronic chatting, they make countless syntax, subject-verb agreement and spelling mistakes in their writing assignments. She further contends that many teachers believe that students' widespread use of "texts speak" was a key factor in their negative performance and that the overall quality of work has suffered because their attitude towards writing has changed. Just like in texting, the students want to save on time and economize on words. They do not bother about how and what they write. Her concern is that exposure to and use of unconventional spelling in texting and IMing may mask or even cause literacy problems,

compromising reading, writing and spelling abilities of the students.

These studies have specifically demonstrated the possible influence of the texting language on students' academic writing with more focus lying on their lexical, syntax and morphological connections which would be useful in raising parallel issues to this study. As more students acquire and use mobile phones, tablets, computers and others, so are they immersing themselves into text messaging. Such is the situation that some teachers, parents and students themselves are expressing concerns that students' writing skills may be at risk as they grow accustomed to the texting language (Verheijen, 2011).

The performance of students in English language at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education, has raised much concern due to the role played by the language in the contemporary society. The English language performance has been recording a decline consistently. The Cabinet Secretary for education has attributed this to the influence of code switching and use of texting language. Students have gotten used to their mobile phones checking spellings for them that they have done away with the need to know how to spell words correctly. It is for this reason that this study sought to investigate the possible influence of texting language on university students' academic writing in English.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Sociolinguistic theory by Coupland (2003) and Situated learning theory by Rosen (2010).

2.7.1 Sociolinguistic theory

According to Coupland (2003), Sociolinguistic theory represents what individuals know about a language. This knowledge includes acquaintance about the social distribution of forms and varieties, hence variation analysis. Androutsopoulos (2006) assert that, language variations online is patterned by age and region. Further, he affirms that, language and social identity contributes to the sociolinguistics of computer mediated discourse.

Variation analysis is pegged on three factors namely, the notion of orderly heterogeneity, language change and social identity (Tagliamonte, 2006). However, SMS language is underpinned with three sociolinguistic maxims: Brevity and speed, Paralinguistic restitution and Phonological approximation (Thurlow, 2003).

Thus, the analysis of these three components of language is characterised by the modification of standard norms of the structure of the sentence, the word formation processes and the semantic denotation and connotation of meaning of words.

In light of this, sociolinguistic theory helped in understanding the nature of SMS

language and guided the discussion on the nature of the discourse of texting language, and also steered the subsequent research theoretically and methodologically. This theory was preferred because morphology, semantics, pragmatics and syntactic aspects of text messages are influenced majorly by social factors.

Sociolinguistic variation was used to explain the reasons for the emergence of morphological, semantic, pragmatics and the syntactic aspects. According to Ongonda (2009), the syntactic variations usually reflected in short text messaging include; omission of pronouns and auxiliary verbs, omission of objects, articles, *to* infinitive, grammatical agreements, contractions and different word orders from which the meaning of words and sentence structure can be deduced. On the other hand, morphological variations are manifested in word formation processes like clippings, combination of figures and words like 2day, acronyms- LOL. The author further observes that, syntactic variations are systematically influenced by a range of factors such as the technical attributes of the mobile phone and shared background or context of the situation.

The sociolinguistic theory further guided analysis of pragmatics. This includes the changing language according to the needs of the situation such as choosing to use Standard English language in writing and texting language for interpersonal communication like in Facebook. It also provided a guideline in analyzing rules of conversations e.g. turn-taking in conversations and the context in which language was used including implications, use of symbols. Finally, it also informed the analysis of the socially motivating factors for the students preference towards using short texting language instead of the standard English language used in their academic writing.

2.7.2. Situated Learning Theory

It stipulates that learning is not merely the acquisition of knowledge by individuals, but instead, it is a process of social participation (Rosen et al., 2010). In light of this, situated learning i.e. learning by doing, may cause unintentional transfer of skills.

Rosen asserts that usage of textism, correlates positively with the quality of informal writing but negatively with the quality of formal writing. She further discusses the low-road/high- road transfer of situated learning theory where the low road transfer implies that when there is a close resemblance between two tasks, the previously acquired skills are transferred unconsciously. On the other hand the high road transfers of skills are usually used more consciously.

For consideration in this study, a person who practices high texting use theoretically

transfers that use into writings that appear closely related to their everyday (texting) writing. Thus, frequent textisms in daily communication leads to unintentional transfer of the textese features to the students Standard English writings (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

2.8 Conceptual Framework

The study considered the perceptions of the influence of texting language as the independent variable while the dependent variable was the quality of English used in students' academic writing. Figure 1 illustrates the interplay between the two variables in this study i.e. university students' use of texting language and the quality of English in their academic writing.

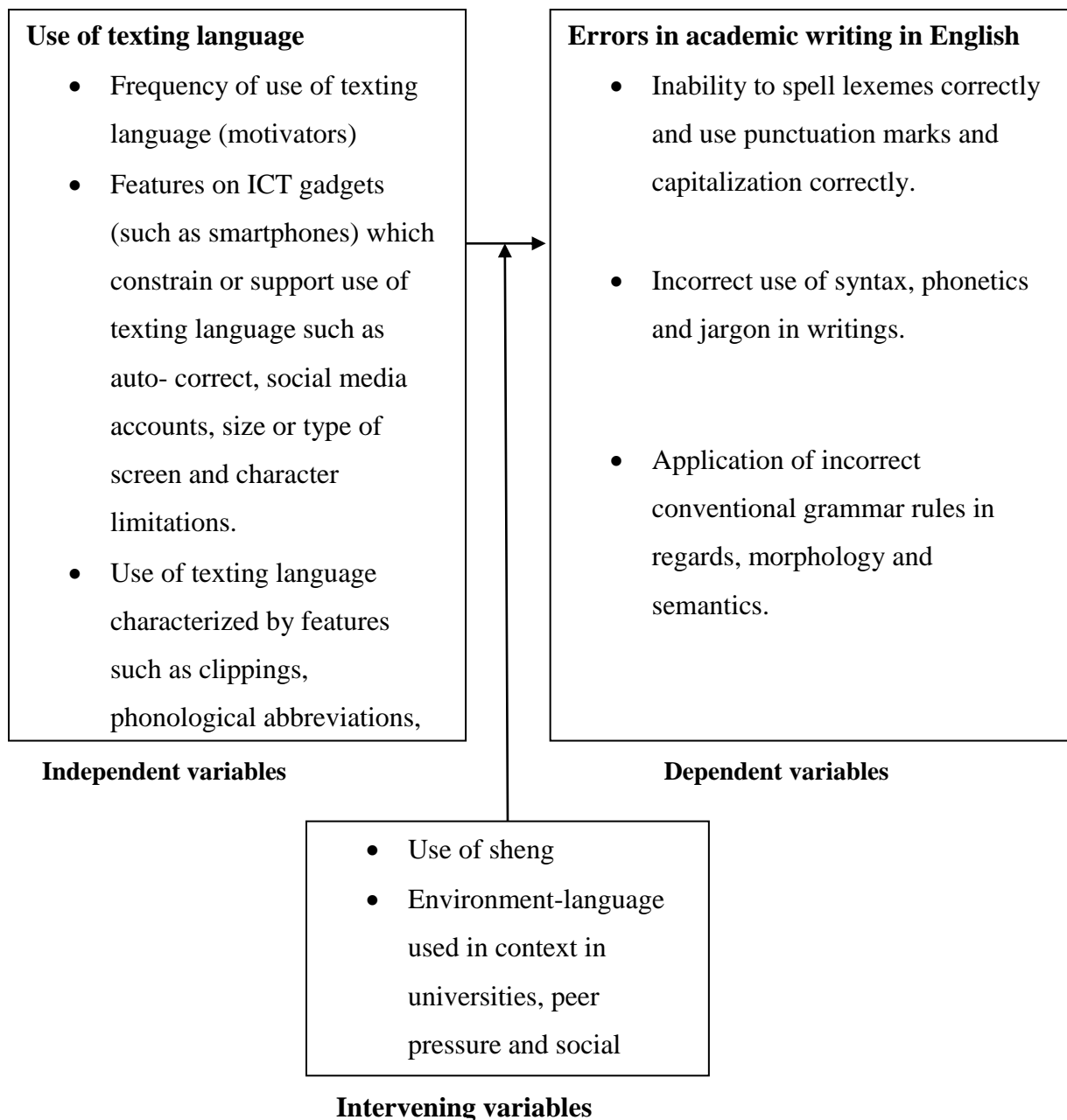


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The model shows the Interaction of use of texting language (Independent Variables) and the resulting errors that are transferred to their academic writing (dependent variable) in universities. The intervening variables in this study were use of *sheng* language and the environment. The intervening variables were integrated in the study to minimize their effects on the study findings.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, the target population, the sampling procedures and sample size, instrumentation, validity and reliability of research instruments, data collection and analysis procedures that were used in the study and ends with ethical considerations that guided the research.

3.2 Research Design

The study used descriptive survey research design to gather data relevant to the perceptions of the influence of texting language on university students' academic writing in English. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), the descriptive survey design aims at describing the characteristics of a phenomenon in a population and thereby establishing the facts. Robson and Kieran (2016) and Welman (2005) further posited that this method enables the researcher to acquire a lot of information through description of the situation without affecting it in any way. This was in tandem with the aim of this research to describe the situation and report it as it was by investigating the variables under study in their natural context. By doing so, the researcher was able to provide an in-depth data analysis that allowed for derivation of more information and meaning from the research.

3.3 Target Population

The target population for this study was Egerton University 2017, third year students who were undertaking B.Ed Arts programme. Therefore, the lecturers who participated in the programme were drawn from the Faculties of Education and Community Studies (FEDCOS) and Arts and Social Sciences (FASS). The total number of lecturers and students respondents expected was 1575 drawn from both faculties. The categories of the respondents and their respective faculties were as shown on Table 1:

Table 1: Target population

Faculty	Students	Lecturers
FEDCOS	1520	30
FASS		25
Total	1520	55

3.4 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

The study used purposive sampling procedure in selecting the departments of Curriculum Instruction and Educational Management (CIEM) and Literature Languages and Linguistics (LLL). The two departments were selected because the students who were undertaking the English language option of the B.Ed Arts programme in FEDCOS were from CIEM. Literature, Languages and Linguistics Department was chosen because the lecturers specializing in English language teaching were located in that department. However, the lecturers from the two departments teach and examine the Bed Arts students and were therefore able to provide the information sought by the study on students' academic writing. The main objective in this type of sampling was to pick cases that were typical of the population being studied (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Simple random sampling was used in selecting the students. This gave an equal opportunity to all the respondents to be included in the study. The total number of lecturers from the two departments was 55; 30 lecturers from the department of CIEM and 25 lecturers from the LLL department. All the lecturers from the two departments participated in the study because their number was small (Kathuri & Pals, 1993).

As indicated on Table 1, the total population of student respondents was 1520 students. To pick the desired sample size from the accessible population-which was the number of students from the CIEM department taking English- a sample of 140 students was selected based on Kathuri and Pals (1993). They observed that, sample size depends upon the purpose of the study and nature of the population under study. They affirm however that the general rule in sample size determination is to use the largest sample possible to allow for generalization. They recommend a minimum sample of 100 respondents for a major group in a study. Therefore, a sample of 140 students and 55 lecturers, from the two departments was considered to be appropriate for this study.

3.5 Instrumentation

There are numerous ways of collecting data and these depend on the purpose and aims of the research. For this research, data was collected by means of questionnaires and observation checklist. Questionnaires were used because they tend to be objective, intense and standardize the observations that respondents make (Punch, 2003). Two sets of questionnaires were developed to cover the research objectives- one for students and another for lecturers. The observation checklist was used to analyse specific features of texting language from students' written work, and to determine to what extent the texting language identified occurred in the scripts and notes.

3.5.1 Questionnaire for University Students (QFUS)

The questionnaire aimed at investigating students' texting-related behaviours and attitudes. The questionnaire included both open and closed-ended items. It covered students' demographic characteristics; mobile phone ownership; activities they did online such as surfing the internet, working on assignments, sending and receiving email among other activities. Their usage of texting language focused on their opinions and experiences with SMS and IM related activities among the students of Egerton University. The questionnaire also collected data regarding students' texting behaviours and phone technology in terms of hardware such as alphanumeric keypad or single press entry system with an aim of establishing whether the characteristics of the technology might be encouraging students to use texting language. The study also sought to investigate the students' opinions on how the features provided on the gadgets, either supported or constrained, their use of texting language and if this had any effect on their academic writing.

3.5.2 Questionnaire for University Lecturers (QFUL)

The lecturers' questionnaire included open and close-ended items using five-point Likert scale for close-ended nature of items. These captured their perceptions regarding the various facets such as use of text abbreviations by students in written assignments that may be attributed to the proliferation of technology. As such, the researcher sought to also establish how they dealt with the texting language if they encountered it in written assignments and their supposed effects or otherwise of the emergent feature of SMS language. Their opinions and experiences with SMS and IM for communication purposes was also of interest.

3.5.3 Observation Check List

The observation checklist provided a general guideline on the features of texting language that the researcher sought to identify from the students' scripts. Samples of the students' writing were examined for the following features; run on sentences with disregard for proper punctuation, incorrect use of capital letters and the errors made during translating from text language into English such as missing words, articles and pronouns, missing punctuations and misspellings. It also included the use of short forms such as U, Excessive use of punctuation marks like what!!!! Use of acronyms and abbreviations, omission of function words, letter homophones and reduced sentence length among others.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

3.6.1 Validity of the questionnaires and checklist

Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it is designed to measure (Burton & Mazerolle, 2011). In this research, two types of validity were considered. Face validity and content validity. Face validity aimed at establishing the instrument's ease of use, clarity and readability while content validity aimed at establishing its accuracy, relevance, and breadth of coverage regarding the domain. This was secured through judgment of my supervisors and external examiners from the Department of Curriculum Instruction and Education Management at Egerton University. Their comments were incorporated in the revised instruments.

3.6.2 Reliability

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), reliability is the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. Reliability was determined by use of Cronbach's alpha coefficient. According to Gliem and Gliem (2003), Cronbach's alpha is a test reliability technique that requires only a single test administration to provide a unique estimate of the reliability for a given test. A minimum of 0.7 and above of Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient is the acceptable level for Social Science research (Straus et al., 1987). In this research, reliability was estimated based on data from piloting in a university, which was not included in the study but had similar characteristics as Egerton University. Analysis of the pilot study results was used in drafting the final questionnaire that was used to collect data. Items that failed to measure the variables they were intended to measure, were amended or removed. The inconsistencies and weaknesses noted were also corrected.

The instruments were pilot tested in a university selected purposively within Nakuru town and with shared characteristics as Egerton university to check if they captured the desired information. From the pilot study tests results, the students' questionnaire attained a reliability coefficient of $\alpha=0.904$ while the lecturers questionnaires had a reliability coefficient of $\alpha=0.952$. This was an indication that the instruments had attained a reliability coefficient above the required threshold and were therefore deemed able to give consistent results from the respondents.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Upon approval of the research proposal, an introductory letter from the Director, Graduate School, Egerton University was sought. This letter was used to seek a permit from the National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) to conduct a research at Egerton University. The university was then visited to inform the Deans of the two faculties and the respective chairpersons of the CIEM and LLL about the study. The researcher administered the instruments in person in order to increase the response rate. Each respondent was given time to fill the questionnaire. Where it was not possible to find or get lecturers to fill in the questionnaires right away, it was emailed or dropped in their pigeon holes or it left with them. The filled questionnaires, once collected in preparation for keying in into the computer for analysis. The sampled students' handwritten assignments were also examined to generate the required information from the observation checklist.

3.8 Data Analysis

After collecting all the questionnaires and completing the observation checklists, the data collected was cleaned for errors and was coded appropriately. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis of numerical and narrative data were adopted (Yin, 1994). The qualitative data was analysed using content or thematic summary analysis. Content-analysis on students' hand written work was used to determine extent to which the texting language occurred in their written assignments. Summary statistics such as percentages and means were utilized to establish the proliferation of the ICT gadgets, their application, enabling factors and possible physical constraints of the gadgets that motivate students to use texting language. Presentation of the summary statistics was in form of Tables. The Frequency of using texting language, the use of contractions and poor punctuation habits of students, were compared. This was to identify if there was any relationship between the students exposure and use of texting language and their Standard English language.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues considered were:

- i. Permission and consent from the relevant authorities (Egerton University, NACOSTI) was sought before data was collected.
- ii. The purpose of study was explained to the respondents before they filled the questionnaire which made them aware of what was being investigated.
- iii. The participants' involvement in the study was strictly on voluntary basis.
- iv. The participants were not required to provide their names or any identifying information as part of the survey.
- v. Every effort was made to assure participants' confidentiality of any information they give since the questionnaires were anonymous and only group data was to be reported

Table 2: Summary of the Methods used to analyse the Research Questions

Research Questions	Independent variable	Dependent variable	Test statistic to be used
1) What is the frequency of use of texting language among the university students?	Frequency of using texting language	Ability to spell lexemes correctly and use punctuation marks and capitalization correctly	Frequencies and percentages Thematic and content analysis
2) What is the influence of the features provided on the ICT gadgets on the use of Texting language among university students?	Features on gadgets which constrain or support use of texting language	Perception of effects of the features on students' academic writing	Frequencies, percentages
3) Does texting language have an influence on university students' academic writing?	Use of texting language	Influence on students' academic writing	Thematic and content analysis

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study which are discussed under key subsections in line with the research objectives. It contains the results that were generated from the data analysis, the interpretation and discussion of the same. Descriptive statistics in form of frequencies and percentages have been used to summarize the results while the qualitative data was analysed thematically.

The purpose of the study was to investigate students' and lecturers' perceptions on the influence of texting language on students' academic writing in English at Egerton University, Kenya. The study objectives were:

- i. Determine frequency of use of texting language among university students.
- ii. Examine the influence of the features provided on the gadgets on the use of texting language.
- iii. Investigate students' and lecturers' perceptions on the influence of texting language on university students' academic writing

4.1.1 Characteristics of Respondents

Questionnaires were distributed to all the respondents who comprised of 140 students' and 55 lecturers from the faculties of FEDCOS and FASS. The response rates was as presented on Table 3.

Table 3: Response Rate

Respondents	Targeted	Return rate	Percentage
Lecturers	55	48	87.27
Students	140	121	86.43
Total	195	169	86.7

As indicated on Table 3, 48 lecturers and 121 students successfully responded to the questionnaire. This represented an 87% and 86% response rate of the expected participants respectively. According to Kothari (2004) a response of 50% and above is adequate for analysis and reporting of the results. Similarly, Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) argued that a 50% response rate was adequate while a 60% return rate qualified as good enough. Based on these recommendations, the response rates in the current study were adequate to draw reliable conclusions.

4.2 Frequency of Use of Texting Language

The first objective of the study was to determine the frequency of use of texting language by the students. The respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they used texting language. The responses were grouped into texting related habits such as: how often they texted, motivating factors of texting and texting language and class related behaviour. Results on each of these dimensions are discussed separately. The results on how often they texted were as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: How Often Students Texted

Items	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
I send more than 10 SMS per day	42	46	5	7	0
I often spend my leisure time texting via SMS or internet	61	38	1	0	0
I find myself chatting online most often	67	29	1	2	1
I text more often than make calls	79	17	4	0	0
I use the phone more frequently than the computer for communication purposes	65	33	1	1	0
I use social media accounts to catch up with friends (IM)	51	47	1	1	0

The results on Table 4 indicate that 88% of the students confirmed that they sent more than 10 SMS per day. This corroborates the findings of a study released by Safaricom Internet Project (2018), which indicated that one third of teens in Kenya text more than 100 times a day either through IM or SMS. It also revealed that among the 17 to 24 year olds, half of them send 50 or more text messages a day, while 45% send out more than 200 instant messages every day. This is probably because texting is cheaper than calling (Park et al., 2016).

The study also indicated that 99% of students often spent their leisure time texting via SMS or IM. The popularity of these Computer Mediated Discourses is usually associated with timely delivery of information. They are relatively cheap and asynchronous (does not require immediate attention by the recipient) (Ling, 2004). It is no wonder that CCK (2017) reported a huge loss being felt by the outdated postal delivery services and has since led to their near collapse. Startlingly, these forms of CMD have transformed existing linguistic

forms that deviate from the norm. Being the most popular form of communication among the students, CMD has evolved and reinvented its unique stylistic features commonly characterized by a high disregard for the conventional Standard English Language as countless syntactical, morphological and grammatical rules are violated (Mashamaite, 2005).

The low data charges or near free internet has left most of the students (96%) making a preference for chatting online. This concurs with the findings by research firm Youth Dynamix (2017) which indicated that young Kenyans aged between 16 and 24 are constantly on their cell phones texting and surfing the Internet, and send an average of 250 messages as texts and chat posts daily. The study established that young people spend about Ksh.300 monthly on their mobile phones, mostly on social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, snap chat and Twitter, and sending SMS.

Further, 96% of the students agreed that they texted more often than making calls. As discussed earlier, tariff charges make texting the preferred mode of communication as it is relatively cheaper than making phone calls. In addition to this, texting is considered to be unobtrusive as they could even chat in class and go unnoticed (Ling, 2004). Moreover, Lee (2007) affirms that students prefer communicating using texting because it was far much easier to correct mistakes before sending the message. He argued further that, students claimed they do not get the chance to review what they are saying before they say it. However, they can do it in text. It is possible to halfway type out a reply and realize that it is improper and one can just take it back.

Nevertheless, despite the popularity of texting, it is not without its own mishaps, because of the need to be brief. The use of texting language makes the message so condensed or filled with phonological abbreviations that the recipient may fail to get the intended meaning, not to forget the failure to auto correct. Consequently, this may lead to a misunderstanding or misinterpretation. For example not everyone is conversant with acronym such as PRW for Parents are watching or TTYL for talk to you later. Challenges with interpretation may result into communication breakdown. Undoubtedly, texting is the most common mode of communication but when we mention the distinctive feature of the discourse used in this platform, it raises concerns among educators, parents, employers and media at large. This is probably because, of the nature of texting language.

Further, Table 4 shows that, 98% of the students use their phones more frequently than the computer for communication purposes. This clearly indicates that, despite the upsurge of laptops, mobile phones are still the most popular tool of communication. Mobile

phones are not only easily portable but they have some software features that cannot be found in laptops. Moreover, with the improvement of software features and data cost for internet accessibility, the smart phone is still the most preferred tool of communication. Bushnel (2008) made an observation that, in today's era, it is common to see students between the age of 14-24 constantly glued to their phones busy typing or tapping on their screens even when they are walking. He was appalled that they may be seated in groups probably waiting for a class or during their leisure time; they are not talking to each other but are all busy fixated on their phones with their hands tapping on the screens. This study findings also concur with those of Bugeja (2017) who noted that, phones allow students to check their SMS and IM faster than the laptops even if students are in the classroom or in a meeting. Similarly, they also allow students to keep up with the latest in news and contribute to on-line discussions. Not to mention, as discussed earlier, phone ownership is more prevalent among students than laptops.

Table 4 further shows that, ninety eight percent (98%) of the students agreed that they used social media accounts to catch up with friends. According to Common Sense Media CSM (2018), a whopping 71% of the youth preferred texting or use social media over talking or meeting with friends in person. It further revealed that, most of them hold discussions online on issues pertinent to themselves or use groups such as WhatsApp to not only schedule classes but also do group work assignments instead of going over to meet physically. The findings are in line with Wei (2014) who noted that students set up a dedicated WhatsApp group to give their feedback online through texting. They also use the groups to discuss their assignments. Indeed, these authors noted further that more than half of college students were currently using social media platforms to coordinate when working on assignments, individual or group assignments. Similarly, Wasserman and Zwebner (2017) recognize the importance of social media such as WhatsApp in the learning process, by arguing that teachers use the app to communicate with parents and students alike.

With most of the youth always in a hurry to type and get instant feedback, the discourse of communication used (IM) is usually characterized with textese language which flouts grammatical rules. Use of Standard English is always considered to be time wasting and not 'cool' (Thurlow, 2006). Arguably so, as one of the lecturers during the study noted, social media accounts such as blogs, wikis, Facebook are also the modern day writing pedagogy and are redirecting writing of today. These are novel platforms, a deviation from the expectation of teachers and parents who expect students to write compositions, essays or

novels. As Pery (2014) suggests, texting is another genre of writing that educators should guide students whether to use it or not. If this was the case, then writing skills can be improved only if the students use the Standard English language.

The next aspect investigated by the study was the motivating factors that encouraged the students to use texting language. The results were as indicated on Table 5:

Table 5: Motivating Factors for use of texting language

Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
	%	%	%	%	%
I prefer texting because it is relatively cheap	72	26	1	1	0
Texting message takes shorter time to put together	59	38	2	1	0
I express myself better in texting than making a call	49	17	1	26	7
I prefer texting when I am not in a position to make a call	17	56	24	3	0
I prefer texting because others also do it	61	37	2	0	0

With the proliferation of ICT gadgets and the noted preferences amongst students, it is apparent that most of the students spend a lot of time texting via SMS or IM. Notably, there were various motivating factors to this. As illustrated on Table 5, 98% of the students agreed that they preferred texting because it was relatively cheap. Texting has always been considered to be more economical than calling as observed by Park et al. (2016). This is because of the low tariff charges levied by mobile phone companies like Safaricom, at 20 shillings only. It entails a package of free WhatsApp all day and 50 SMS (Safaricom Internet Project, 2018). In light of this, texting has since become indisputably the cheapest form of communication amongst students hence the upsurge in the use of texting language. This is because the text messages are relatively cheap but voice calls are highly limited because they are expensive (Park et al., 2016).

A further 97% of the students agreed that they actually preferred texting because texting messages take a shorter time to put together. This conforms with the sociolinguistics maxims of brevity, speed and phonological approximation. For the sake of brevity, conciseness and economy of words, SMS and IM throw the elements of writing such as grammar, syntax, punctuation, capitalization to the wind (Thurlow, 2006). One of the

emergent trends from the study was that of textism which is being put into different categories with conventional English, is transformed for day-to-day use among young people. According to Grace et al. (2012) some of the noted categories of textese include misspellings, clipping of words, syntactic reductions, asterisks, emoticons, deletions of parts of speech, especially subject pronoun, preposition, articles, copula, auxiliary or modal verbs, contractions, the extensive use of phonological abbreviations or abbreviations in general. Arguably, this is fuelled by the orthography of the English language which is varied from its pronunciation. Usually, how a word is written in English, may not necessarily be the way it is pronounced. This much, is a feature of the texting language. For the sake of brevity, they flout syntactical and spelling rules which may affect the student's quality of academic writing assignments (Verheijen, 2011).

Another perception was situational as most of the students (66%) agreed that they expressed themselves better in texting than making a call. According to socio-linguistics theory, certain human behaviors evolve or change over time for one reason or the other (Seidman, 2016). In order to keep in touch with each other amidst limited resources, most young people opt for texting over calling (Siedman, 2016). Nevertheless, texting is divorced from human feelings and emotions. Crystal (2009) makes an observation, in his article entitled "*texting G8 db8*", by arguing that language is changing due to technology and that texts speak, as he refers to it, is like decoding a message. He noted that there is a different adaptation of symbols and punctuation marks that the traditional language does not have.

Moreover, as the texting language is written text, it is divorced from gestures, facial expressions and prosodic features such as Intonation, rhythm, and volume. This is why use of emoticons has been a feature in the texting language. These are electronic communications which infuse CMD with an emotional, human touch. As a result, the texters have created ways to manoeuvre around this, by improper use of capitalization, punctuation marks and use of emoticons to express their emotions or emphasis on a point. This is another feature of texting language that students commonly employ and unconsciously transfer to their academic writing (Thurlow, 2006). An example of this is the use of facial expressions representations such as smile or a frown formed by various combinations of keyboard characters. These are used to express the writer's feelings and emotions. Additionally, use of punctuations makes written discourse comprehensible. Their absence creates ambiguity and affects communication process; consequently it causes misunderstanding and creates an information gap. Moreover, they use upper case to represent emotion (such as WHAT for

surprise) and extraneous use of punctuations for emphasis (e.g. never!!!!!!) (Coupland, 2014). This is merely a manifestation of the influence of texting language on syntax as grammatical rules are creatively flouted.

Other perceptions included 73% of the respondents who agreed that when they were not in a position to make a call e.g. in public places or in class, they would opt for texting. Lee (2007) opined that, text messaging has greater accessibility as it can be used to compensate for ambient noise, instances of weak mobile network connections or poor quality microphones and speakers that plague mobile phones. He further stated that, the urgency and need to be brief is also a factor that may explain why texting is preferred when not able to make a call. A message can be relayed in less than 160 character limit with no need to rattle. This further encourages use of texting as a better mode of communication which encourages use of texting language.

In line with social theories, it is likely that students text more when they find others willing to text as much. Indeed, 98% of the students agreed that they preferred texting because others also did it. Ling (2010) suggests that SMS is a life phase and not a cohort phenomenon. That is, its use is more concentrated among teens and more temperate among older age groups. This is because, the discourse of communication commonly used is usually characterized by, the use of SMS features, that young people consider ‘cool’ and marks their identity. According to the sociolinguistic theory, there is always a co-relation between society and language.

Language affects society in one way or another and vice versa. Ongonda (2009) describes the sociolinguistic theory as one which seeks to explain how individuals know about a language. For college students in Egerton University, the internet is the main platform from which students learn the slang language despite learning to read, write and speak English from the early years of education. However the textese language is characterized by disregard for standard spelling conventions and grammatical rules. Hence, it does not give them a platform to practice using the Standard English taught in schools (Rosen et al., 2009).

The next element investigated in the study was the use of texting related behavior in their learning. The results were as indicated on Table 6:

Table 6: Use of Texting Language and Class Related Behaviours

Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
	%	%	%	%	%
I use it to contribute to online discussions	55	44	1	0	0
I sometimes chat during class	37	37	3	19	4
I use texting language when writing lecture notes	25	47	1	25	2
I often use grammatically correct English when texting	13	10	11	36	30
I use e-mail to send and receive my assignment from my lecturer	25	7	7	38	23

Results on Table 6 further indicated that, 99% of students affirmed that they used social media accounts to catch up with friends and basically chat online. A study conducted by Kondraske (2017) showed that two thirds of social media users indicated that staying in touch with friends and family is a major reason for their use social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, MySpace or LinkedIn. About a half of these argued that they used these sites to reconnect with old friends. This confirms the apparent rapid and massive use of IM among students in these social media platforms. The above is impelled by the proliferation of these ICT gadgets especially the smartphones, which have software features such as WhatsApp and internet accessibility with low data cost compared to SMS.

Most of the students (74%) agreed that they chatted during class. According to a University of New Hampshire study (2017), college students checked their phones and sent text messages between one and five times during class. In addition, Faculty Focus (2018) reports that usage of phones during class harms students' grades and distracts classmates from learning. However, this has not stopped a greater percentage of college students from texting when the instructor is writing on the board, during group activities or during in-class work time.

Further, 66% of the students disagreed that they often used grammatically correct English when texting. Barkley and Lepp (2016) observed that the high usage of mobile phones especially for texting purposes has disruptive consequences. It does not encourage correct use of phonology, morphology, semantics and pragmatics. This is in agreement with observations made by critics of the first school of thought such as Fox, Rosen and Crawford (2009) who asserted that text messaging, affiliated with availability of such gadgets like

mobile phones and laptops among students, has a negative impact on their writing skills. This is because of the nature of texting language which is a common feature of these CMDs. As Shafie et al., Azida and Osman (2010) noted, the chief challenge of a second language learner is spelling and writing. They examined Malaysian college students written work and found a high correlation between the frequency of use of texting language and the quality of their academic writing. The participants found it hard to recall correct spellings of words because of the auto correct feature in their mobile gadgets and frequent use of texting language. The study is in agreement with Bodomo (2015) who asserted that the use of non-standard English among 18-26 year olds was common. Mashamite (2005) agreed with findings of this study by being among the first researchers to raise concerns that the frequent use of texting language negatively affected a person's communication skills i.e. reading and writing in terms of grammar and spelling.

It is not a surprise therefore that 72% of the students agreed that they used texting language when writing lecture notes. Drouin and Davis (2016) noted that students were unable to differentiate the context and the situation when to use the SMS language. They were blamed for considering them as correct while they were surrounded by this language in the form of text messages through the television, billboards, comics, books, newspapers and sometimes circulars from their institutions. Otieno (2014) affirms that students are finding difficulties in synthesizing reports and formal written communication in their respective classes and corporate sectors. Thus, it can be construed that, if students try to exchange ideas with proper form of texting (by utilizing appropriate words, full form of words and proper initiative for grammar enhancement) then text messaging will not have any negative effect and cannot be transferred to their formal writing.

Contrary to earlier findings such as by Gitonga (2015) that use of email was popular among lecturers and students, the study findings revealed that the email was not very popular among the students in sending and receiving assignments as 61% of them disagreed with this. Despite the compelling evidence of digital literacy in institutions of higher learning, lecturers still preferred that students hand in hand written assignments. Additionally, most of the universities conduct sit-in exams. This means that students do more of hand written assignments and not typed ones. As such, the textese language commonly adopted by the savvy-tech students in their informal writing was likely to be transferred to the formal writing.

4.3 Influence of the Features Provided on the Gadgets on the Use of Texting Language

The second objective of the study was to examine the influence of the features provided on the gadgets on the use of texting language. The respondents were asked to indicate how features provided on the gadgets influenced their use of texting language. This objective was discussed in three parts:

- i. Keypad entry method
- ii. Predictive method
- iii. Accessibility to the internet and software features

Each of this will be discussed separately. The results on the keypad entry method were as shown in Table 7:

Table 7: Influence of Features (entry methods) on Gadgets on the Use of Texting Language

Types of Features on gadgets	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Keypad Entry Method					
Alpha-numeric keypad (with letters written above number keys like on a landline phone)	18	6	15	37	24
Qwerty keypad (like a computer keyboard)	3	10	19	51	0
Touch-screen keypad (with separate touch-screens for numbers /letters/symbols)	64	26	0	0	10

From the findings on Table 7, 90% of the respondents agreed that they used touch-screen keypad (with separate touch-screens for numbers /letters/symbols. This is a reflection of the advancements in technology with features such as large screens being a key attraction to the student's texting behaviour. According to Gustafsson (2011) a touch screen user can input or control the information processing system through simple or multi-touch gestures either by touching the screen with a special stylus or one or more fingers. Some touch screens use ordinary or specially coated gloves to work while others may only work using a special stylus or pen. The user can use the touch screen to react to what is displayed and, if

the software allows, to control how it is displayed; for example, zooming to increase the text size.

Other entry methods such as the Alpha-numeric keypad (with letters written above number keys like on a landline phone) was not very popular among the students. Sixty-one percent (61%) of the respondents disagreed that they used it. According to Thurlow (2003) the use of alphanumeric keypad with several letters assigned to each key encourages usage of texting language. He observes that they function as short cuts to reduce writing time for a quick response thus, saving on time, space and money.

Nevertheless, 51% of the respondents disagreed that they used Qwerty keypad (like a computer keyboard). According to Sethi (2013) the Qwerty keypad has often been criticized for being uneconomical and unusable, and rightfully so. Further, Qwerty keypad heavily favours left-handed typists despite the fact that 70 to 95% of the world is right-handed. Julie, (2014) noted that people using QWERTY keyboards only make 32% of strokes on the home row. The “QWERTY” keyboard was invented for typewriters by Christopher Sholes as a replacement for existing keyboards which letters had placed in alphabetical order. These are by far the most dominant kind of keyboards. Nonetheless, as students transform to writing on pen and paper, they reflect the outcomes that they prefer using some words more than others as they have been accustomed to when using their devices with the QWERTY keyboard.

With typewriting becoming one of the most common forms of communication, it is important to understand how the keyboard input affects students writing skills. Siok and Liu (2018) argue that individuals who rely on pronunciation based typewriting methods tend to experience challenges and are less effective in reading and dictation compared to those who rely on orthographic typewriting methods. This is because, students who use orthographic writing methods often have to consider the way they input the words on the phones hence a relatively higher level of critical thinking is involved (Siok & Liu, 2018).

The next keyboard entry method is the predictive mode. The results on this entry method were as shown on Table 8:

Table 8: Predictive Mode

Item	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Single-press predictive (press each key once and phone predicts likely word)	71	25	3	1	0
Single-press non-predictive (press each key once without needing/using prediction)	8	18	9	29	36
Multi-press (press each number key 1 to 4 times for the right letter)	2	8	0	33	57

As indicated on Table 8, the single-press predictive (press each key once and phone predicts likely word) was quite popular amongst the students with 96% of them agreeing to using it. The most widely used, general predictive text systems are T9, iTap, eZiText, and Letter Wise/Word Wise. There are many ways to build a device that predicts text, but all predictive text systems have initial linguistic settings that offer predictions that are re-prioritized to adapt to each user. This learning adapts, by way of the device memory, to a user's disambiguating feedback that result in corrective key presses, such as pressing a "next" key to get to the intention (Arnold, 2020). Most predictive text systems have a user database to facilitate this process. Notably, predictive text is an input technology used where one key or button represents many letters, such as on the numeric keypads of mobile phones and in accessibility technologies. Each key press results in a prediction rather than repeatedly sequencing through the same group of "letters" it represents, in the same, invariable order. Predictive text could allow for an entire word to be input by single key-press. Predictive text makes efficient use of fewer device keys to input writing into a text message (Arnold,2020).

On the other hand, the single-press non-predictive (press each key once without needing/using prediction) and the multi-press (press each number key 1 to 4 times for the right letter) input method were not popular among the students as they each had a percentage of 65% and 90% respectively of students who disagreed that they used them. This is probably because of the evolution of devices where the phones with the traditional alpha-numeric keyboards have declined, paving way to the QWERTY keyboard.

Since texting has been identified as one of the most reliable forms of communication for college going students, it is understandable why the simplest form of texting has been gaining popularity. This is because of the convenience and swiftness it offers. According to Waldron et al. (2017) the use of predictive mode during texting undoubtedly has an effect on writing, leading to grammatical violations. This is because students no longer need to

construct complete sentences and words, the predictive mode makes it easy to get suggestions then easily swipe away what one wants.

However, Waldron et al. (2017) also notes that the grammatical violations are fewer among university students than there are among primary and secondary school students. This may be attributed to the use of initialisms such as *LOL* for ‘laughing out loud and *TGIF* for ‘Thank God it’s Friday’. Furthermore, college and university students have already developed cognitively hence the little effect compared to primary school students. Apart from the cognitive development, Kemp and Bushnell (2011) also argue that the frequency of texting using the predictive mode plays a relatively important role in the language development. For instance, college students often start using smart phones during the later period of their teenage years therefore have an opportunity to develop proper language skills during their early years. By the time they start using smart phones in the predictive mode, their cognitive skills can be argued to be relatively developed hence fewer grammatical violations.

Notably, the students had gotten so used to the entry method used during texting such as the single press predictive mode on an alphanumeric keypad that writes the correct spelling and punctuation for them, thus they did not need to worry about what and how they were writing. Based on the situated learning theory, this is unconsciously transferred to their handwritten assignments (Reinhardt, 2022). However, according to the first school of thought on the effect of texting language on academic writing, when it comes to hand written academic assignments, students often misspell words because they are so used to phones or computers writing it for them (Rosen et al., 2009). This makes it difficult for them to master spelling of words when writing handwritten assignments because of over reliance on these gadgets (Grace, 2012). Referring to the views of Thurlow (2003) he argues that, the small screen and an alphanumeric keypad with several letters assigned to each key encourages usage of texting language. He also asserts that, these function as shortcuts to reduce writing time for a quick response thus, saving on time, space and money. Thurlow and Poff (2009) affirm further that, standard English is corrupted by text messaging as the standards of spelling, grammar, sentence structure, punctuation and capitalization are dwindling away. This is due to the frequent use of texting language as students seek to achieve brevity and conciseness in order to fit into the 160 character limit. Consequently this may affect the quality of English in students’ written assignments where they are expected to observe phonology, morphology and syntactic rules governing the language. A deviation from this, if

the above is anything to go by, then the quality of English used in academic writing is bound to suffer.

The result on the influence of accessibility to the internet and the software features provided on the gadgets were as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Internet enabled and software features

Item	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
I find myself chatting online most often	67	29	1	2	1
I use email to send and receive assignments	25	7	7	38	23
I use social media accounts to catch up with friends	51	47	1	1	0

From the analysis on Table 9, majority of the students (98%) agreed that they used social media accounts to catch up with friends. This findings agrees with a study by Tyson (2009) which found that a majority of students at tertiary level were connected with the digital social media and they spent most of the time in those social networking sites. Helmlich (2011) noted that some of the students used social media to keep in touch with family and friends. Notably, a major consideration in their use of social networking sites was not influenced by their diverse demographic factors of age or race, but instead, the factor that was statistically significant was gender. This was because there were more female social media users than males.

In addition to this, 96% of the respondents agreed that they found themselves chatting online most often. According to Mubaraka (2012) the social environment prevailing within higher education institutions has seen many changes in recent years. Information technological tools such as internet chat rooms could be one of the cheapest and student-friendly tools universities could use to meet the social and psychological needs of their students. Balakrishnan (2013) found that consistent use of technology increases student learning. However, it also has the possibility of creating a generation of poor writers, consequently affecting students' academic writing as well as radically transforming the English language.

A few of the respondents (32%) indicated that they used email to send and receive assignments. This means that students did do more of handwritten assignments than typed ones. Kondraske (2017) observed that email has been used in a variety of instructional contexts. Obvious benefits of email include efficiency, convenience, and cost. However, he

corroborates the findings of this study by affirming that academic use of email is often limited. For example, when analysing educators' email messages, the researcher found that only half of the messages contained course-related information. Most were used only for coursework assignments instead of more purposeful academic communications (e.g. encouraging collaborative work or discussion of individual performance).

Impelled by the robust growth in information technology, studies indicate that most students are driven to use smart phones and laptops because of the unique features that they have and the type of CMD in use (Thurlow, 2006). It is also evident that the consistent use of technology increases student learning but it has a negative impact on their writing skills. However, there is no much evidence to support that this is reflective of all university students here in Kenya. Besides, the answer to the question as to whether students frequent use of texting language may have an impact on their writing skills is vital to know. This is in order to evaluate how to improve students' performance in academic writing and achievement vis a vis the need to keep up with technology in education.

4.4 Influence of Texting Language on University Student's Academic Writing

The third objective of the study was to determine students and lecturers perceptions on the influence of texting language on university student's academic writing. This was to establish of texting language influenced students' academic writing. This objective was discussed in three phases:

- i. Errors in academic writing as a result of use of texting language
- ii. Influence of texting habit on students' academic writing
- iii. Lecturers' perceptions on features of texting language in students' handwritten assignments.

4.5.1 Academic Writing Errors As a Result of Texting Language From Students

Perspectives

Students were asked to indicate errors that have crept in their academic writing as a result of texting language.

This will be discussed in three sub-sections consisting of:

- a) Phonetics
- b) Jargon
- c) Syntax
- d)

A) Phonetics

The results on errors affecting student's phonology were as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Phonetic Errors in Students 'Academic Writing

Errors in academic writing	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Misspellings	54	44	0	2	0
Improper use of abbreviations	38	41	4	8	9

The Table indicates that most of the students (98%) agreed that they made spelling errors in their academic write ups due to the frequent use of texting language. This was also confirmed from the observation checklist where majority of the students write ups indicated frequent spelling errors. This could be associated with the use of the predictive entry method. Thus, they no longer knew the correct spellings of words. The frequent use of texting language as had a great impact on mastery of spelling of lexemes. This is likely to have been further fuelled by the orthography of the English language which is varied from its pronunciation (Verheijen, 2011). The way a word is written in English, may not necessarily be the same as it is pronounced.

As a result, phonetic abbreviations in words such as 'c' for see, 'u' for you and many others have since found their way into students' writing with 79% accepting this as an effect of their texting habits. According to Boakai (2008), texting gave rise to the much-maligned 'txtspk' (text speak) in part because users were bound by the 160 strict character limit for each message. They used shortened forms to avoid paying for messages that had to be split into multiple chunks. With the rise of smartphones and apps like WhatsApp, such strict limitations no longer apply. However, deliberate shortenings remain popular in the realm of social media, where they are generally seen as appropriate in platforms like Twitter. Grinter and Eldridge (2003) concluded that users tend to reduce their messages by eliminating a single letter, utilizing letters, symbols or even numbers to express meaning or using standard acronyms. The act or behaviour of shortening messages due to limitations of space, if used constantly among students, is transferred unconsciously to their hand written assignments according to the high road/ low road transfer of skills (Rosen et al., 2010).

The results of this study provides a rebuttal to the third school of thought led by Crystal (2009) who dismisses the popular notion that texting language has no effect on student language. To support their contention, they argue that different uses of abbreviations merely show an understanding of language phonemes and increases students' phonological

awareness as they pay a keen interest in their utterances and the underlying sound structure of a language. However, it is indisputable that texting language affects spelling abilities as manifested in their academic writing where they are supposed to use Standard English Language. This may be exemplified by use of phonological abbreviations which are often used in students' write ups such as 'fon' for phone, 'skul' for school etc. (Verheijen, 2013).

According to Melbourne (2012) many forms of punctuations have become almost non-existent in texting communication when a message is meant to be short and informal. In non-texting writing, however, commas and apostrophes should always be used correctly. In addition, ends of sentences should always have periods, question marks, or exclamation points, as needed.

To determine whether jargon that sometimes is characteristic of texting language found its way into students' academic writing the result was indicated on Table 11:

B) Jargon

Table 11: Use of jargon

Item	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Use of Slang	53	40	3	3	1
Use of informal language	42	55	1	2	1

The results on Table 11 indicate that a significant number of students (93%) used slang in their academic writing, while 97% agreed that they used informal language in their writing. Odey (2014) lists the linguistic features of the SMS language found in their study which included 'truncation, vowel deletion, alphanumeric, homophony, graphones (letter homophony), initialization, lack of inter-word space, logographic emotions, onomatopoeic expressions and punctuations. Such and similar features to these, he observed, had taken the language to a state of decline in terms of grammar and spelling. It is this intrusion on the Standard English language that creates a state of uncertainty over the future of standard usage.

According to Rosen et al. (2012), learning is not merely the acquisition of knowledge by individuals, but instead, it is a process of social participation. Therefore, it makes sense as to why students are keen to use new slang as soon as they emerge on the internet. Nevertheless, while these may be construed to be inappropriate for use in academic writing,

some words such as ‘fun’, ‘mob’ and ‘stingy’ were once considered to be jargon but have since found their place in Cambridge and the Oxford English Dictionary. This may be the same case with texting language. According to the second school of thought led by Russel (2010), texting has no effect on grammar, but should instead be regarded, as a language variety with its own writing style and orthography. He supports his argument by stating that since learning a new language does not affect students’ ability to use English grammar, it would be wrong to conclude that text messaging does this. He further argues that, slang words have no effect on English grammar and that even though each generation has its own jargon, English grammar has not been changed and that all students need to do, is learn the basics in English language class and they would be able to distinguish between slang, texting lingo and correct English. Interestingly, the text terms ‘OMG’ for Oh My God and ‘LOL’ for Laughing Out Loud, ASAP for as soon as possible have officially found their way into the Oxford English Dictionary’s online edition (Muhammad, 2011).

C) Syntax

On the perceived influence of texting language on syntax Table 12 presents students’ results on this:

Table 12: Syntax

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Flow of ideas	39	58	0	3	0
Poor sentence construction	44	30	5	20	1
Improper use of punctuation marks	55	28	4	5	7
Improper use of capitalization	47	24	3	25	1
Issues with word and sentence order	56	27	12	5	0

Apart from the negative effects of texting language on students’ spelling abilities, it also has a marked effect on syntax. The Table shows big number of respondents (97%) indicated that their academic writing lacked flow of ideas. According to Dawson (2005), the impact of texting among adolescents can lead to problematic outcomes such as poor school performance and other negative effects in communication skills such as poor sentence construction. He further argues that, while new methods of technology make communication more immediately available, the extent to which this paradigm shift can add or detract from the overall quality of adolescents writing and communication skills is unclear.

In addition a large number of the respondents 74% agreed that poor sentence construction is one of the common errors in their academic writing as a result of texting language. A spokesman for the Assessment and Qualifications Authority for Wales (AQA) (2017) argued that the use of text message abbreviations was a growing problem and that chief examiners have since made a point of writing about it because teachers need to be alerted to it. In addition, research findings here in Kenya such as by Ongonda (2009), who attempted to explicate syntactic challenges as reflected in Kenyan text messages confirmed this fear. Observations made during the study included new syntactic structures that have penetrated into the linguistic continuum among Kenyan texters. The researcher concluded that the syntactic nature of SMS in Kenya was based on sentence and word modifications. The study observed syntactic variations including omission of pronouns, auxiliary verbs, articles, to infinitive, grammatical agreements, contractions and different word orders. In addition to this, interlocutors used playful manipulation and modification that affects the syntax of the English language.

Further to this, KNEC (2019) report indicated that examiners had raised concerns that students were increasingly using text message language in KCSE. This is the first official acknowledgement that mobile phone shorthand is undermining Standard English usage. Further to this, included in the report, was an observation by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance, the largest exam board in the country, that the students' KCSE English language scripts were peppered with the abbreviated words which have become second nature to many youngsters (KNEC 2019). The report, compiled from examiners' comments on more than 700,000 English language scripts marked in 2018, acknowledged that text message spellings, such as U for "you" are increasingly prevalent. This is corroborated by the findings of the observation checklist with other examples of text message language including 4U for "for you", B for "be" and C for "see". Vowels and function words were also frequently missed out of words for the sake of speed and brevity.

The results on the Table 12 further shows that, majority of the respondents (83%) agreed that improper use of punctuation marks was among the errors that had crept into their academic writing as a result of frequent use of texting language. This was also confirmed from the observation checklist where students write ups were clouded with missed and overuse of apostrophes. In addition, there was overuse or misuse of exclamation marks and full stops, countless spelling errors and run on sentences in their work. According to the Pew Research Center (2014) texting language is eroding the quality of writing everywhere. This

may point to a perceived decline in standards of spelling, grammar and punctuation, threats to even the most fundamental features of writing, like the full stop. Further, they also noted that some teachers reported noticing more ‘informal’ writing creeping into formal assignments. And in a culture that favours ‘truncated forms of expression’, some students appeared unwilling or unable to write at length.

From the Table, 71% of the respondents indicated that improper use of capitalization was among the errors that had crept into their academic writing as a result of texting language. British Broadcasting Corporation (2003) reports that text messaging has long been blamed for declining standards of spelling and grammar, particularly in paper and pencil writing and both ‘teen-talk’ and ‘netlingo’ (or ‘webspeak’). Text messaging was further blamed for its negative impact on standard or ‘traditional’ ways of communicating. There were other linguistic concerns about threats to standard varieties and conventional communication practices among young people. Modern technologies are held responsible for these threats. Wood (2014) argues that there was a negative association between frequency of use of textese and quality of spelling and other tasks measuring abilities related to literacy such as verbal and nonverbal reasoning.

Using capital letters to indicate strong feelings may be the most famous example of typographical tone of voice. But there are different ways of expressing strong feelings. A linguist, Maria (2015), noted that the use of a single capped word, is simply EMPHATIC. Looking at examples of all-capped words on Twitter, Heath found that the most commonly used single words included NOT, ALL, YOU, and SO, as well as advertising words like WIN and FREE. The same kinds of words that are often emphasized in spoken conversations (or commercials). When one wants to emphasize something in speech, it is often pronounced in a louder, faster, or higher in pitch or all three at once. All caps is a typographical way of conveying the same effect.

Most of the respondents (83%) indicated that issues of word and sentence order were among the errors that crept into their academic writing as a result of texting language. Myers, (2013) designed a research to investigate the effect of text messaging on language and found that texting has a negative impact on people's linguistic ability to interpret and accept words. On the other hand, those who read more traditional print media such as books, magazines, and newspapers were more accepting of the same words and could construct sentences appropriately.

4.5.2 Influence of texting habit on Students' Academic Writing

Students were also asked to indicate their perceived of texting habit on their academic writing. The results were as shown in Table 13:

Table 13: Influence of Texting Habit on Academic Writing

Influence of texting habit on academic writing	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Use of Texting language and Standard English language					
I am concerned about correct spelling when texting	12	9	0	51	28
Texting improves my spelling abilities	2	4	8	39	47
Effect on Academic Writing					
Sometimes I use texting language in writing assignments	36	48	7	5	3
I find it difficult to construct sentences correctly due to overuse of texting language	21	26	12	31	10
I find difficulty in writing correct spelling	46	28	3	13	10
I consider Texting language a threat to the Standard English that I am required to use in examination	12	49	12	9	18

4.5.2.1 Use of Texting Language and Standard English Language

From the findings on Table 13, 79% of the students disagreed that they were not concerned about correct spelling when texting. According to Buchanan (2011) students growing up in an age when communication is done in an abbreviated text language, they fully depend on autocorrect to automatically solve the "i before e" literary dilemma. Kaplan (2012) narrated that many high school students have become dependent on electronic spell-checkers. As a result, teachers have to spend a significant amount of time circling misspelt words on assignments. He also notes that, most of the students do not bother about poor

spelling matters. Spelling errors have negatively affected students' performance in written English. Some students are less likely to self-monitor their spelling because they know the computer will do it for them.

In addition, a big number of respondents (86%) disagreed that texting improves their spelling abilities. Due to use of IM, regardless of their ability to speak with one another, they are poor in correct use of spelling and sentence development. Valk, (2010) noted that there have been recommendations from media sources and instructors that messaging may negatively affect their English language proficiency abilities. As a result, students end up with botched spellings and produce a major tendency for not editing their papers, assignments and formal work. The study also refutes the argument put forth by Crystal (2008) who argues that texting enhances mastery of English language and that the more they write, the more they improve their writing skills. Technology has become so advanced that computers and mobile phones today can automatically correct spelling errors and punctuation, thus students do not worry about what and how they are writing.

4.5.2.2 Influence of use of Texting Language on Academic Writing

Table 13 further indicates that 84% of the respondents indicated that they sometimes used texting language in writing assignments. According to Avais (2015), text messaging has also had some negative influence on the literacy of the college and university students. The tendency of spelling mistakes is increasing among the teens and children due to increased use of text messaging. As a result, the ability of students to write Standard English in the examinations is also decreasing. This finding is confirmed by Detractors of the SMS language such as Majeed (2023) who argued that technologically mediated communication and its resulting languages (netspeak, netslang, SMS languages and the like) constitute a veritable curse as they impact negatively on student communication, particularly on their writing skills.

The study also indicated that some students, 47% agreed that they found it difficult to construct sentences correctly due to overuse of texting language. A KNEC report (2019), observed that most English language examiners found an increased trend in grammatical errors in students' work. A common characteristic of the weakest answers was a lack of punctuation, including the full stop and were difficult to follow. Consequently, sentences were frequently too long (10 lines or more). Apostrophes were often missing and inserted into plural nouns. The usual errors with there/their; are/our; your/you're were frequent (Mashamaite & Mphahlele, 2005). The examiners also described the misuse of capital letters

(a common feature of texting) as being more glaring that year. Further, capital letters were also used in the middle of words, an apparent ignorance of the difference between upper and lower case. Grace (2013) corroborates the findings of this study by affirming that university students were utilizing casual words, short form of words and concise sentences that eventually did not follow correct format in sentence construction, which is the direct effect of text messaging. The correct subject, verb then object format was often disregarded. Thus, the students do not get exposure to correct sentence construction needed for proper academic writing. If this is anything to go by, if the foundation of the students are spoiled, they would not be able to match up while working in corporate sectors.

In addition 74% of the respondents agreed that they found it difficult to write the correct spelling of lexemes. Otieno (2014) corroborates this study finding that graduates of the school system find it difficult to synthesize reports and formal written communication at their workplaces. However, it can be argued that if students exchange ideas correctly utilizing appropriate full form of words and grammar, then text messaging would not have any negative effect.

Finally, Table 13 shows that 61% of the respondents agreed that they considered texting a threat to the Standard English that they are required to use in their academic work. According to Nagla (2014) the advent of SMS is deviating from the established communication procedures by reshaping all the conventional practices. Being the popular medium of communication among young generation, the language of SMS has evolved and reinvented its unique stylistic features, which violate the rules of Standard English. Alfaki (2013) noted that text messaging enhances and leads to proper use of English Language among all levels of the community. However, Albasheer (2014), disagrees with this idea and affirms that using text messaging leads to the deterioration of English language. He asserts that users use simple abbreviated symbolic language without consideration to the rules of grammar, syntax, morphology, semantic, punctuation or spelling.

4.5.3 Lecturers' Perceptions on Features of Texting Language in Students' Handwritten Assignments

The study further sought to determine some of the features of texting language that are usually observed in students' handwritten assignments from their tutors' perspective. The results were as shown on Table 14:

Table 14: Features of Texting Language in Students' Handwritten Assignments

Features of Texting language	SA	A	N	D	SD
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Spelling errors	43	57	0	0	0
Improper use of capital letters	5	47	19	19	10
Lack of, or over-punctuation	14	28	12	39	7
Lack of functional words	27	51	11	2	9
Use of abbreviations or acronyms	37	61	2	0	0
Use of clipped words	37	42	12	7	2

Findings on Table 14 show that there was an overwhelming agreement (100%) that students make spelling errors in their academic writing. This agrees with Drouin and Davis (2016) who indicated that texting hinders the ability of students to remember standard English spelling. Texters therefore tend to write the spelling of some words as they are spoken, omit punctuations and overuse them in their tests, assignments and reports. This sometimes hampers comprehension or the sense they want to convey. They are thus unable to differentiate the context and situation for the use of SMS language. They do not only mix these with Standard English but are blamed for considering them as correct. This is as a result of being surrounded by this language in the form of text messages, television, billboards, comics, books, newspapers and sometimes circulars from their institutions (Rosen et al., 2011).

In addition 52% of respondents agreed that there was improper use of capital letters among students in their academic writing. Baron (2012) found that one of the most common errors in essay writing is the misuse of upper case letters. Students tended to use capital letters for everything that feels important to them. Excessive capitalization is distracting and confusing for the reader. On the other hand, lack of necessary capitalization can appear inappropriate. A study by Challay (2012) revealed that pupils had generally not understood the rules involved in the use of capital letters. The areas where errors were most prominent involved proper nouns, beginning of a sentence and over-generalization.

Only a few lecturers (42%) agreed that there was lack or over-punctuation in their students' academic writing. From the observation checklist majority of students either tended to miss or overuse semicolons, used commas in place of full stops or use full stops in place of

commas. Lee (2007) observes that teachers argue that assignments are being written with shortened words, improper capitalization and punctuation and characters like @, & and /. This could be attributed to the influence of text messages which often contain run on sentences with disregard for proper punctuation, incorrect use of capital letters and the errors made during translating from text language into English such as missing words, articles and pronouns, missing punctuations and misspellings.

Herring (2013) further noted that text is an abbreviated vocabulary that contains various types of symbols, numbers, emoticons, shortening of words, punctuations, vowels and capitalization. This abbreviated vocabulary allows the user to make maximum of 160 words as required by the confines of word count in a message. This forces the users to be economical to fit their words within the limitation of available space. In this abbreviation tonight is written as '2nite'. This does not end with just words but uses phrase words also. For example, 'lol' is used to represent 'laugh out loud'. These types of abbreviated words get normalized amongst teens who are expected to use Standard English Language. Consequently, they consciously or unconsciously use these abbreviated words in their academic work as argued in the situated learning theory.

Nonetheless, 46% of the respondents disagreed that lack or over-punctuation is seen most in students' academic writing. The findings of the study are in line with, Soku (2013) study which found that that students of today ignore punctuation marks in their writing. In his investigation, the researcher asked students to answer five question eliciting information about their uncle. Out of the 540 students who participated, 510 wrote their answers without a full stop at the end of each of the five sentences. The students were of sixteen different nationalities with this common problem. Therefore, lack of or inappropriate use of punctuation marks has always been penalized as part of grammar errors when marking students' exercises but this has not minimized the problem.

Further, majority of the respondents (78%) agreed that lack of function words was usually found in students' handwritten assignments. Chantal (2010) observed that texting affects the use of vocabulary negatively as well as use of function words such as pronouns, articles and auxiliary verbs. This results into run-on sentences and improper use of lexemes. This may be a product of students' preference for texting in short format. The brain gets accustomed to picturing words that way, consequently affecting students' vocabulary and syntax. Therefore, texting hinders learners' ability to use grammar correctly in their writing. Bell (2012) observed that students' use of textese and their spelling and literacy abilities,

were positively related. It was also noted that the types of textisms and textism density were also a factor to be considered. Additionally, the rate of textisms used per word were positively associated with spelling skills, orthographic processing ability, phonological and phoneme processing, awareness and retrieval abilities verbal reasoning scores, reading skills and writing skills.

The Table further indicates that a majority of the respondents (98%) agreed that the use of abbreviations or acronyms was usually found in their students' handwritten assignments. The findings agree with those of Lee (2007) who argued that teachers were receiving assignments from students written with shortened words, improper capitalization, punctuation and characters like @, & and /. This could be attributed to the influence of text messaging which often contain run on sentences with disregard for proper punctuation, incorrect use of capital letters. Other errors occurred during translating from text language into English such as missing words, articles and pronouns, missing punctuations and misspellings.

Finally majority of the respondents (79%) agreed that use of clipped words occurred in their students' handwritten assignments. While conducting a study on the impact of texting (SMS) on students' academic writing, Faiza, (2019) found that most of the students handwritten assignments had such words as 'U' for you, and 'wanna' for want and 'guyz' for guys, 'sec' for a second. On the other hand, he observed the presence of acronyms or letter sequences that stand for a longer phrase, such as 'IDk' for I don't know, 'TTYL' talk to you later and "OMG" for oh my God', and concluded that this has greatly affected the academic writing of the students. In addition, John-Harmen Vall (2010) observed that the negative impact on the students' academic writing is due to texting. Instead of writing correct spellings and writing complete sentences, most of the time students use short spellings for different words and sentences like Fab for fabulous, Sup? For what's up?

4.5.4 Influence of Texting Language on Students' Academic writing

If texting language found its way into the students' academic work, the study investigated lecturers' perceptions on its influence on this. The results were as shown in Table 15:

Table 15: Influence of use of Texting Language on Academic writing from Lecturer’s Perspective

Effects of abbreviated writings	SA	A	N	D	SD
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
I have observed that students are increasingly incorporating texting language in their work	33	56	0	2	9
Texting language poses a threat to the Standard English that should be used in academic writing	44	41	0	6	9
Use of texting language in academic writing inhibits lecturer’s understanding of what the student means	67	12	2	12	7
The quality of academic writing affects students score in exam or CAT	23	51	9	12	5
Students should stop using Texting language for the sake of their education	29	53	0	11	7
Use of texting language in academic writing should be discouraged at all cost	61	39	0	0	0

From the findings on Table 15 majority of the respondents (89%) agreed that they had observed that students were increasingly incorporating texting language in their work. A survey by Pew Research Center (2012) revealed that teachers in the US, nationally and locally, were discovering that writing multi-page papers with formal English seemed like a monumental task to students who tirelessly worked their thumbs out to send text messages with 160-character limits. The research which involved 2,462 teachers nationally, shed light on new challenges when it came to teaching students how to write, including the creeping of informal styles into their academic essays. Proper spelling and grammar have increasingly become one of the issues in class assignments. English language teachers’ work to persuade students that they are not too ‘cool’ for essays has become commonplace. Moreover, Shamim

(2012) argued that texting adversely affected students' use of Standard English. Moreover, there was evidence of one punctuation mark being used for another, showing that there could be other factors such as carelessness or lack of knowledge on the students, lack of training, feedback or emphasis by the tutors.

The Table further shows that, majority of the respondents (85%) agreed that texting language poses a threat to the Standard English that should be used in academic writing. According to Nagla (2014) the advent of SMS has deviated from existing linguistic forms by reshaping all the conventional communicative practices. Being the popular medium of communication among the young, thumb generation, the language of SMS has evolved and reinvented its unique stylistic features, which violate the rules of Standard English. Thurlow (2006) claims that the growing body of scholarly research deals with two types of public observations: first the general influence of texting on the standard language and on popular notions of good communication; second, concerns about the specific influence of text messaging language on conventional literacy.

The Table further indicates that 79% of the respondents agreed that the use of texting language in academic writing inhibits lecturer's understanding of what the student means. According to Döring (2012), lecturers have always complained that students writing skills have been compromised by the use SMS text messaging. The writer argued that, if this is not arrested it could adversely affect students' communication skills. It should be noted that the use of SMS texting is not bad but it is its misuse, especially, the unbridled use of abbreviations, the code mixing, non-standard expressions and spellings and their possible negative impact on student writing skills that must be watched. According to Weiss (2009), several educators and observers are concerned that the abbreviated language style of text messaging is inappropriately filtering into official school writing. Those who stated that it does not affect student writing skills were confident that students use different formats of writing in different situations. This comes up like a register and the students tend to know that official work calls for official language and they rarely break the rules. However, Abdullah (2003) reiterates that text messaging changes what and how students write. Whether these changes are viewed as positive or negative depends on an individual's beliefs on how closely writing should adhere to accepted conventions of formal writing.

Further, 74% of the respondents agreed that the quality of academic writing affects students' scores in exams or CATs. A study conducted by Turner (2009) revealed that, educators were concerned that CMD is degrading the quality of writing American students

produce. Junco (2013) also noted that the negative effect of texting during lecture sessions strongly influencing production of low quality work by the students. Generally, students who frequently texted in class often had lower GPA compared to those who did not.

In addition majority of the respondents (82%) agreed that students' used text messaging language in their school work Popham (2013), found that texting has a negative impact on people's linguistic ability to interpret and accept words. On the other hand, those who read more traditional print media such as books, magazines, and newspapers were more accepting of the same words. Therefore students should stop texting and read books, magazines, and newspapers which would improve their English language. Perry (2014), argued that when students texted, they were writing in a particular genre and for an informal audience. Texting as a genre has space considerations and expectations, which warrant using abbreviations for phrases such as LOL, symbols like 2 for two, and just as few characters as possible. Surprisingly students, translate this to their academic writing which negatively academic performance. Therefore they should avoid texting as this will affects their performance.

Finally there was an overwhelming agreement (100%) that use of texting language in academic writing should be discouraged at all costs. Weiss (2009) stated that, several educators and observers are concerned that the abbreviated language style of text messaging is inappropriately filtering into official school writing. Abdullah (2003) reiterates that text messaging changes what and how students write. Whether these changes are viewed as positive or negative depends on an individual's beliefs on how closely writing should adhere to accepted conventions of formal writing. Albasheer (2014) disagrees with that idea and thought that using text messaging leads to the deterioration of English language. Users use simple abbreviated symbolism language without consideration to the rules of grammar, syntax, morphology, semantic, punctuation or spelling. Therefore, text messages should be avoided by the students

The robust growth in technology, drives them to use smart phones and laptops because of the unique features that they have and the type of CMD in use. It is also evident that the consistent use of technology increases student learning but it also has the possibility of creating a generation of poor writers, which consequently affects students' academic writing as well as radically transforming the English language. However, there is no much evidence to support that this is reflective of all university students here in Kenya. Besides, the answer to the question as to whether student frequent use of texting language may have

an impact on their writing skills is vital to know, in order to evaluate how to improve performance and achievement in students' academic writing vis a vis the dire need to keep up with education technology

From the foregoing discussion, use of texting language has been noted to have an effect on not just the students' academic writing but also academic achievement. The students are making countless syntax, subject-verb agreement and phonetic errors in their formal write ups which negatively affects their performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the lecturers' and students' perceptions on the influence of texting language on students' academic writing in English at Egerton University, Kenya. This chapter contains summary of the study, major findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The following findings were established from the results of the study: The results are presented based on the objectives of the study.

5.2.1 Frequency of usage of Texting Language

With regard to the frequency of use of texting language among university students, the study found that 88% of the students preferred texting instead of making phone calls. The popularity of texting stemmed from the fact that it was cheap due to the low data charges levied by the service providers, it is unobtrusive, asynchronous, and flexible. This has popularized the use of SMS and IM as forms of Computer Mediated Discourse (CMD) with the latter being most popular.

5.2.2 Influence of Features on the gadgets on texting.

On the influence of the features provided on the gadgets on the use of texting language, the study found that the keypad entry methods such as the touch screen and the single press predictive keypad were the most popular amongst the university students. This was the perception of 96% of the student respondents. Features such as the single press predictive mode made students care less about their spellings and syntax due to the auto correction feature provided by the devices. This may explain the noted misspellings and syntax errors in students' hand written assignments due to the use of the auto correct feature.

5.2.3 Influence of Texting Language on Academic writing

On students' and lecturers' perceptions on the influence of texting language on university students' academic writing, the study established that the frequent use of texting language affected students' academic writing. This was the perception of 84 and 89% of students and lecturers respectively. The students observed that due to the use of this

abbreviated language, they found it difficult to write the correct spelling of words. They also admitted that the use of texting language greatly affected their syntax, flow of ideas, sentence construction, word and sentence order. On the other hand, the lecturers observed that the use of texting language in academic writing inhibited their understanding of what the student meant when reading their academic work.

The spillover effect as characterized in situated learning theory is that this resulted in use of non-standard English language even in handwritten academic assignments consequently affecting the students' scores. This was the perception of majority of lecturers. They observed that as the students engaged in their writing practices, informal language such as textese, tended to unconsciously creep into their formal written assignments. They further observed that they found it hard at times to decipher what the students meant when texting language was used in academic writing. This affected students' scores in exams or CATs. Consequently, most of the lecturers recommended that the use of texting language in academic writing be discouraged at all costs.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

Based on the findings presented in this study, the following conclusions were made:

- i. In this digital age, proliferation of technological gadgets such as smart phones have provided platforms for students to express themselves, be more creative and engage in writing practices more than often. SMS and IM are forms of Computer Mediated Discourse (CMD) loaded with creative features of texting language which resembles codes. This thumb generation find it very easy to understand and interpret Texting language. This is why intentional use of texting language is popular in social media realms where it is construed as appropriate and necessary.
- ii. In a students' academic life, writing helps them express themselves. This allows the lecturer to determine the competence of the student in terms of knowledge and skills gained throughout the course. However, based on the findings of this study, students texts using texting language, a language whose maxim follows a simple cardinal rule, KISS (Keep It Short and Simple). Spoken language values speed, ease and flexibility of communication over length and complexity common in written format. Texting is a merger of the two and is designed to be as fast and flexible as spoken language. Undoubtedly, the heightened use of texting language reflects the reality of the times we live in and can only provide useful insights to educators and university administrators

- as they rethink and strategize on how best they can accommodate it in academic writing.
- iii. Of equal importance are the features of the ICT gadgets which can either constrain or encourage students' texting habit. One of the reasons students found it easy to use SMS as a main form of communication includes the predictive option, touch-screen as well as the social media platforms and SMS options availed either in their phones or laptops. The availability of these features predisposes the learners to use texting language as they conform to the cardinal rule of KISS. They have since shaped how and what the young thumb generation writes. An examination of texting language reveals that, textese has its own lexeme that is different from that of the English language. This is because English language is divorced from its orthography. While Texting language takes the form of spoken discourse, it is increasingly gaining popularity as the days go by the use of texting has eased communication in that students are able to keep in touch with a few keyboard presses. The acceptance by both students and lecturers that texting language affects academic writing is a reflection of the technological revolution that has bequeathed us with a new language variety that is definitely here to stay.
 - iv. The exponential growth of online classes and the increase in blended learning reflects the future of education with virtual learning through zoom, google meets and google classroom being preferred. Texting language can be a good educational tool to complement traditional education as it not only encourages active learning but it also appreciates the fact that students in this era are digital natives and they spend 90% of their time texting. It gives them a platform to explore and follows an inquiry based approach to learning highly recommended as part of the 21st century teaching methods. If university administration accommodates the use of texting language in the institutions, then students will not have to be penalized. Lexicographers are already incorporating textese in the dictionary which will go a long way to reduce ambiguity during scoring.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

It may not be possible to separate technology from literacy in this thumb generation. Based on the conclusions of this study, a number of considerations can be made in future practices as well as research. The main areas to consider include:

- i) It is undeniable that Information Communication Technology is an important part of modern society. It is also likely that this trend will only intensify in the coming years. Thus, educators should consider leveraging these gadgets to promote learning. Once academic language rules are made clear and training offered, lecturers can ask students to write short stories, encourage poetry writing competitions or notes using their gadgets. With time, this will not only promote the proper use of grammar and punctuations among students using texting as their main form of communication but will also improve their phonological awareness. Since smart devices such as Smartphones are already popularly used among university students, implementing these changes ought to be slightly easier.
- ii) Educators should make it clear to the students joining university of the language requirements expected to be used in their academic writing. However, the assumption that those students who join the university know and understand English often has educators failing to enlighten students of the required level of grammar rules or standard of English required in their academic work at the university. Therefore, educators should determine the best ways to embed skills and training of academic language rules in the early stages of the university students' lives probably as part of the communication skills course and to emphasize on the same when they submit their assignments. Further research based on case studies from other universities may be relied on to determine the best course of action.
- iii) Nevertheless, it is of equal importance not to forget the fact that, as Crystal stated, texting is the novel way of engaging in writing among the thumb generation. Therefore, it is without doubt that it is here to stay. Thus, it is important to learn how to creatively manage it, and not to shun its mere existence or open a window of negative criticism for the students' style of writing.
- iv) Language change is inevitable for any living language as has been driven over the years by factors such as technological revolution. Lexicographers should standardize them just like other Acronyms and jargons that have been coined and introduced in the dictionaries over the years. Words like LOL, ASAP have already found their way in the Oxford dictionary which is a clear indication of the future of English language as it evolves. This will also inform the decision of University administrators about language used in academic writing which in retrospect affects students' performance.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

The following recommendations were made based on the results and conclusions of the study:

- i) A comparative study could be conducted with groups of students that started using texting for communicating too early, and another group that started using texting in their later years. The current study was limited in terms of the sample and the region from which the target population was. Thus, the study may be valid, but the results may not necessarily be generalizable to university students in different universities like private universities as the admission criteria may be varied. Future studies need to focus on more variable since other factors are more likely to affect the quality of academic language.
- ii) It is likely that a similar study conducted on younger students may yield different outcomes. Therefore, other studies could be conducted at other levels of education such as secondary students
- iii) Additionally, further studies could be conducted to identify new opportunities to utilize these gadgets and their respective CMD as reliable tools for learning.
- iv) This study was limited to texting language in terms of SMS and IM and its use by university students at Egerton University. A future study may seek to examine other ICT factors that are likely to affect academic writing competencies and probably establish the effect on students' performance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Student Questionnaire

Assigned student identification number: _____

Introduction

My name is Mercy Chepkemoi. I am a post-graduate student in the Faculty of Education and Community Studies at Egerton University. My research study is to establish the perception of the influence of texting language on university students' academic writing in English. The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect relevant data in order to investigate this topic. All responses to this questionnaire will be used for the sole purpose of the research and shall be treated with utmost confidence.

This survey will take about 15 minutes of your time. Kindly answer all the questions to the best of your knowledge. There are no right or wrong answers. Your independent and personal opinion is most important. Thank you for participating in the survey. We truly appreciate your valuable time.

In each section, please mark one choice:

A: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

1. Do you own a mobile phone?
Yes No
2. If yes, how long have you owned it?
1 year or less 2-3years 4 – 5 years More than 5 years
1. Kindly provide your perceptions on the information requested in this table

Students opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) I own a smart phone (has touch screen interface, internet access and advanced operating system that runs applications like Whats App)					
b) I have a laptop which I use to chat online					
c) I use the phone more frequently than the computer for communication purposes					
d) I text more often than make calls					
e) I send more than 10 SMS per day					
f) I often spend my leisure time texting via SMS or internet					

4. For the following table, indicate why you prefer texting

Student's opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) I prefer texting because it is relatively cheap					
b) Texting message takes shorter time to put together					
c) I express myself better in texting than making a call					
d) I use it to contribute to online discussions					
e) I use it to give feedback on assignments given					
f) I prefer texting when I am not in a position to make a call e.g. in public places or in class					
g) I prefer texting because others also do it,					
h) Kindly provide any other reason why you prefer texting					

5. My phone has this feature.....

Student's opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) Alpha-numeric keypad (with letters written above number keys like on a landline phone)					
b) Qwerty keypad (like a computer keyboard)					
c) Touch-screen keypad (with separate touch-					

screens for numbers /letters/symbols)					
d) Other (please explain)					

6. Which of the following entry systems do you use?

Student's opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) Single-press predictive (press each key once and phone predicts likely word)					
b) Single-press non-predictive (press each key once without needing/using prediction)					
c) Multi-press (press each number key 1 to 4 times for the right letter)					
d) Other (please explain)					

7. Do you have any social media accounts e.g. Facebook?

- a) Yes b) no

8. If yes, kindly name which social media accounts you have

- 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____

9. Kindly answer the following questions on your texting related habit to the best of your knowledge

Students opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) I use texting language whenever I chat					
b) I find myself chatting online most often					
c) I sometimes chat during class					
d) I use texting language when writing lecture notes					
e) I use email to send and receive assignments from my lecturers					
f) I use social media accounts to catch up with friends					

10. Kindly give three reasons why you use the abbreviated forms in SMS and IM instead of the Standard English language.

-
-
-

11. i. Do you use a mixture of English and any other language when texting?

- a) Yes b) no

ii. Kindly provide some examples of such words.

12. Kindly indicate your agreement/ disagreement on the following information based on your texting habit.

Students opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) I often use grammaticality					

correct English when texting					
b) I am concerned about correct spelling when texting					
c) Texting improves my spelling abilities					
d) Sometimes I use texting language in writing assignments					

13. i) The following are abbreviations frequently used in texting language. Based on the scale provided, indicate how frequently you use any one of them.

Text abbreviations	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
'e' for the,					
'c' see,					
'u' you,					
'b/4 for before',					
'2moro' for tomorrow,					
'&' for and,					
'etc', 'eg' for example;					
'ur' for your,					
'pls' for please,					
'2day' for today,					
'shd' for should,					
'luv' for love,					
Any other					

ii) Kindly explain why you used the abbreviations you have selected above.

14. Please indicate based on the scale provided below your agreement/ disagreement on the errors that have crept into your academic writing as a result of texting language.

Student's opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) Misspellings					
b) Use of Slang					
c) Flow of ideas					
d) Use of informal language					
e) Poor sentence construction					
f) Improper use of abbreviations					
g) Improper use of punctuation marks					
h) Improper use of capitalization					
i) Issues with syntax (word and sentence order)					
j) Others					

15. During translating into Standard English.....

Student's opinion	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) I find it difficult to construct sentences correctly due to overuse of texting language					
b) I find difficulty in writing correct spelling					
c) I consider Texting language a threat to the Standard English that I am required to use in examination					

16. What is your opinion about the possible influence of texting language on your written academic assignments?

END

Appendix B: Lecturers Questionnaire

Assigned lecturer's identification number: _____

Introduction

My name is Mercy Chepkemai. I am a post graduate student in the Faculty of Education and Community Studies at Egerton University. My research study is to evaluate the influence of texting language on university students' academic writing in English. The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect relevant data in order to investigate this topic. All responses to this questionnaire will be used for the sole purpose of the research and shall be treated with utmost confidence.

This survey will take about 15 minutes of your time. Kindly answer all the questions to the best of your knowledge. There are no right or wrong answers. Your independent and personal opinion is most important. Thank you for participating in the survey. We truly appreciate your feedback.

In each section, please mark one choice:

A: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

1. Do you own or use a mobile phone?
 Yes No
2. If **Yes**, do you use SMS messaging services in communicating with your students on your phone?
 Yes No
- 3a. Have you ever come across any SMS and Social media related text abbreviations in your students' work?
 Yes No

b. If Yes, which of these text abbreviations have you encountered (*Kindly mark all that applies*)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) 'ē', for the,					
b) 'c' see,					
c) 'u' you,					
d) 'b/4 for before',					
e) '2moro' for tomorrow,					
f) '&' for and					
g) 'etc', 'eg' for example;					

h) 'ur' for your,					
i) 'pls' for please,					
j) '2day' for today,					
k) 'shd' for should,					
'luv' for love,					
l) Excessive use of punctuation marks e.g. what!!!!					
m) Improper capitalization e.g. HELLO					
Any other (please specify)					

B: Effects of abbreviated writings on academic writing and performance

4. Please indicate based on the scale provided below, your agreement/ disagreement on the perceived effects of use of texting language on academic writing and performance

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) I have observed that students are increasingly incorporating texting language in their work					
b) Texting language poses a threat to the Standard English that should be used in academic writing					

c) Use of texting language in academic writing inhibits lecturer's understanding of what the student means					
d) The quality of academic writing affects students score in exam or CAT					
e) Students should stop using Texting language for the sake of their education					
f) Use of texting language in academic writing should be discouraged at all cost					

5. Indicate which of the following features of texting language you may have found in your students' handwritten assignments

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) spelling errors,					
b) Improper use of capital letters					
c) lack or over-punctuation					
d) lack of function words					
e) use of abbreviations or acronyms					
f) use of clipped words					

g) Any other...



6. a) Should the use of ICT gadgets which encourage texting behaviour amongst university students be banned?



Yes No

b) Please give a reason for your answer

END

Appendix C: Research Permit

<p>THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT: MISS. MERCY CHEPKEMOI BUSIENEI of EGERTON UNIVERSITY, 12226-20100 NAKURU, has been permitted to conduct research in Nakuru County</p> <p>on the topic: LECTURERS AND STUDENT PERCEPTIONS ON THE INFLUENCE OF TEXTING LANGUAGE ON STUDENT ACADEMIC WRITING IN ENGLISH AT EGERTON UNIVERSITY</p> <p>for the period ending: 14th August, 2020</p> <p>..... Applicant's Signature</p>	<p>Permit No : NACOSTI/P/19/48300/30536 Date Of Issue : 14th August, 2019 Fee Received :Ksh 1000</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">.....  Director General National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">THE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION ACT, 2013</p> <p>The Grant of Research Licenses is guided by the Science, Technology and Innovation (Research Licensing) Regulations, 2014.</p> <p>CONDITIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The License is valid for the proposed research, location and specified period. 2. The License and any rights thereunder are non-transferable. 3. The Licensee shall inform the County Governor before commencement of the research. 4. Excavation, filming and collection of specimens are subject to further necessary clearance from relevant Government Agencies. 5. The License does not give authority to transfer research materials. 6. NACOSTI may monitor and evaluate the licensed research project. 7. The Licensee shall submit one hard copy and upload a soft copy of their final report within one year of completion of the research. 8. NACOSTI reserves the right to modify the conditions of the License including cancellation without prior notice. <p>National Commission for Science, Technology and innovation P.O. Box 30623 - 00100, Nairobi, Kenya TEL: 020 400 7000, 0713 788787, 0735 404245 Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke, registry@nacosti.go.ke Website: www.nacosti.go.ke</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>REPUBLIC OF KENYA</p> <hr/>  <p>National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation</p> <p>RESEARCH LICENSE</p> <p>Serial No.A 26334</p> <p>CONDITIONS: see back page</p> </div>
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Appendix D: Research Authorization



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349,3310571,2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245,318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website : www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete
Off Waiyaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref No **NACOSTI/P/19/48300/30536**

Date: **14th August, 2019**

Mercy Chepkemoi Busienei
Egerton University
P.O. Box 536-20115
NJORO.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“Lecturers and student perceptions on the influence of texting language on student Academic writing in English at Egerton University.”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Nakuru County** for the period ending **14th August, 2020.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner, and the County Director of Education, Nakuru County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a **copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

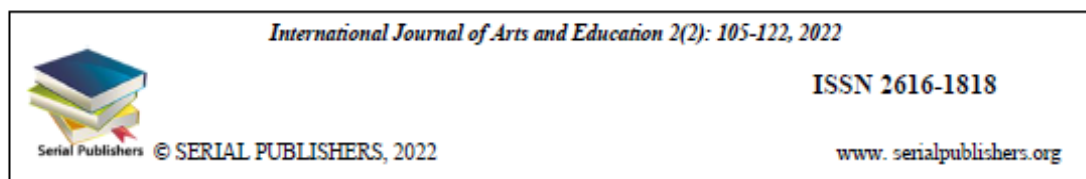

GODFREY P. KALERWA., MSc, MBA, MKIM
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Nakuru County.

The County Director of Education
Nakuru County.

Appendix E: Journal Publication



INFLUENCE OF TEXTING LANGUAGE ON UNIVERSITY STUDENT'S ACADEMIC WRITING IN ENGLISH AT EGERTON UNIVERSITY, KENYA

Chepkemoi Mercy¹, Prof. Mwangi Ndirangu², Dr. Wathika Lucy³

¹M.Ed Student: Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Management, Egerton University

²Lecturer: Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Management, Egerton University

³Lecturer: Department of Literature languages and Linguistics Egerton University

Abstract: Technology is the hallmark of today's world. It has bequeathed us with computers, mobile phones and related gadgetry. The proliferation of these gadgets in the society has influenced the modes of communication and the use of language. The gadgets have restrictions that force users to flout grammatical and other language rules which are likely to pose a danger to correct English language usage among University students. This study sought to examine lecturers' and students' perceptions on the influence of texting language on students' academic writing in English at Egerton University. The study was guided by Sociolinguistic theory by Coupland. The study used descriptive survey research design. The target population was Egerton University 2018 third year students comprising of 140 students and 55 lecturers from the Faculty of Education and Community Studies (FEDCOS) and Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS). Simple random sampling and purposive sampling were respectively used in selecting the students and lecturers from the departments of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Management (CIEM) and Literature Language and Linguistics (LLL). A set of questionnaires, one for the lecturers and the other for the students, and an observation checklist were used as research instruments. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20. The results were then presented in the form of Tables. The study found that the use of texting has eased communication in that students are able to keep in touch with a few keyboard presses. The acceptance by both students and lecturers that texting language affects academic writing is a reflection of the technological revolution that has bequeathed us with a new language variety that is definitely here to stay. In addition, language change is inevitable for any living language as has been driven over the years by factors such as technological revolution. Lexicographers should standardize them just like other Acronyms and jargons that have been coined and introduced in the dictionaries over the years. Words like LOL, ASAP have already found their way in the Oxford dictionary which is a clear indication of the future of English language as it evolves.

Key Words: Texting Language, University Students, Academic Writing

Introduction

Today's society is characterized by an increased number of ICT users than ever before, with over five billion mobile phone subscriptions worldwide, and more than two billion Internet users (International Telecommunication Union [ITU], 2013). This has been attributed to the upsurge in the world's