

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEXTING AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT
AMONGST INTERMEDIATE PHASE LEARNERS IN UTHUNGULU DISTRICT**

BY

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2017

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**Submitted to the Faculty of Education in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of**

Master of Education

**in the Department of
Educational Psychology and Special Education**

at the

University of Zululand

Supervisor: Dr P. Pillay

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DECLARATION

I, Ntombi Octavia Majola, (student number 19930693), declare that this mini dissertation, which is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Education to the University of Zululand, is my own work in design and execution and has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at any university, and that all sources I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a complete reference.

NTOMBI O. MAJOLA

DATE

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my mother, Mrs LC Majola, my two brothers, Muzi and Bheki and my two daughters, Mandisa and Khensane for their belief in me and their huge support. May this work reflect the unwavering bond our family shares.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between texting language and language development amongst Intermediate Phase learners. The study, which used the quantitative approach, sought to determine the influence of learner characteristics on texting language, determine if learners use texting language in the written forms of English, determine if learners are able to write in the standard form of English, and ascertain if texting affects spelling.

The target population were learners in the Intermediate Phase, which is learners from Grade 4 up to Grade 6. There were 213 learners who took part in the study. All these learners were from five African schools, and learnt English as a second language. The instrument used for data collection was divided into four sections: demographic characteristics, translation of texts from Standard English to texting language, translation of texts from texting language to Standard English and also spelling. The SPSS version 24 was used to analyse the results collected from the study.

The findings of the study reveal that age and the grade that the learner is doing has no influence on texting and the learner's language development. Gender has an influence on texting and the learner's language development. Female learners were found to text more than male learners. There is also no relationship between learner's access to cellular phones and their language development. Learners are texting and they know how to text irrespective of whether they own a cellular phone, have access to one or do not have access to one at all.

However, the study revealed that there is a positive relationship between texting language and Standard English. Texting language cannot come into existence without one first learning and knowing the Standard English language.

Based on the findings, the study recommended that teachers should recognise the importance of English language and should organise extra-curricular and co-curricular activities to enhance language development in learners. The Department of Education should promote and support activities that will help learners to improve their language skills.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Social network has spread rapidly around the world. A vast number of children from the Intermediate Phase to FET have access to one or more social networks, such as Facebook, MXit, Twitter and Whatsapp. This has resulted in them using texting as a means of communicating with their families and peers. “Today’s young people are growing up in a world full of smartphones, texting, YouTube, internet access and instant entertainment and information” (Beach & Baker, 2011).

Texting is a short-message sending (SMS) language. The English language slang, as it is used in mobile phone text messaging, is referred to as SMS language (Salomé, Charene, & Chantelle van, 2011). According to a *Macmillan Dictionary*, Rundell (2007), texting is the process of sending and receiving of written messages using a mobile phone. The term is usually applied to messaging that takes place between two or more mobile devices. Texting is known by many names such as txt lingo, txt slang, txt talk, textese; just to mention a few. Text message or “texting” is a more relaxed, colloquial version of the English language, with rare use of correct English grammar. There is increased use of abbreviations and the use of emoticons, Oxley (2011). Furthermore, Oxley (2011) states that texting has been widely pinpointed as the factor behind a decline in literary or poor skills in the use of English in young people. Textism is a large part of the way we socially interact with each other. It is no surprise that, at times, textism finds its way into scholarly context, where it is not accepted.

Children, whose home language is isiZulu, spend more time on their cellular phones texting. Learners from the Intermediate Phase, that is Grade 4 to Grade 6, are still acquiring the use of the second language (L2), which is English. Undoubtedly, they are mostly influenced by the language they learn on their mobile devices, whilst they are still acquiring the correct use of L2. It is, therefore, imperative that the learners have a strong background of the L2 on which to build vocabulary and correct spelling.

The Oxford Dictionary of English, Soanes and Stevenson (2003), defines literacy as the ability to read and write. Learners in black schools start practising reading skills at an early age, but it is in the Intermediate Phase (Grade 4 to Grade 6), where they learn in their L2, English. It is at this stage that they have to master the correct use of Standard English. Teachers complain that learners use texting language when they write scholarly work, for example, *bcoz* for *because*, which is unacceptable. This is evident when teachers discuss the progress of learners' performance in the staffroom, meetings or in clusters. Parents who check their children's work also agree that the features of texting, are evident in their children's school-work. This shows that texting language causes harm to learner's proper use of Standard English.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Teenagers prefer texting because it saves them time from chatting and holding conversations (Porath, 2011). She distinguishes between talkers and texters. Texters use cellular phones for texting and, therefore their personality is not real. Talkers talk on their cellular phones to their friends and are more genuine because their personality is portrayed by their voices. However, text messaging has become the preferred method of communication (Lenhart et al., 2010).

Text language uses abbreviations often based on slang and jargon and the pronunciation of words of which the user must understand the context of the conversation. The learner has first to learn the skill to understand also the formal language as compared to the informal language along with the appropriate context and use of the variant. In order for effective learning to take place, teachers, parents and learners need to work co-operatively. According to (Porath, 2011), carrying of cell-phones by learners in the American schools has been banned, as they are said to be distracting to the learners. Teachers and parents have to teach learners how to use their cellular phones in an acceptable and responsible way, in order for the ban of cellular phones to be lifted in schools. Schools have to set up a list of rules and consequences for learners who fail to conform to the set rules. Unfortunately, this has been tested but failed in schools (Porath, 2011). She (*ibid.*) states that parents should

be more supportive because mobile devices are here to stay. She (*ibid.*) points out that education is standing still. According to her (*ibid.*) schools should implement phone-based technologies or integrate place-based activities which take advantage of the affordance of mobile technology, including texting. There is no development as seen in the field of medicine (health). A teacher from a long time ago could walk into a modern classroom and begin teaching without any difficulty.

Most students have resorted to the use of text message slang or chatroom slangs in their classwork as well as in their examinations. This is not a good phenomenon as they eventually are the same people that will end up teaching the next generation (Ochonogor, Alakpodia, & Achugbue, 2012).

Some researchers, such as Salomé et al. (2011), have witnessed traces of texting in student's academic work both in test scripts and examinations in the USA as well as in South Africa. Many teachers lament the problem of text creep in South African schools. People send text messages every day. Texting has affected people's lives so much so that its use is on the increase. The worst problem is that, even as text is replacing both verbal and non-verbal communication, the use of slang has virtually overtaken good English and those using slang seem to be comfortable with it.

The study (*ibid.*) shows that people nowadays do not talk because they have nothing to talk about. They also write less because they see less, notice less and share ideas less with friends. People spend more time on their techno-toys and are busy fumbling with buttons on their gadgets.

Ochonogor et al. (2012) state that text message or chatroom slang affects student's academic performance either negatively or positively. Positively because some use it to transmit important academic messages or to family members or friends when they are out of credit and cannot make voice calls. It is negative when they become addicted to

SMS, IM, BBM and so on when they use slang to the point of writing such slang in their continuous assessment and examinations. It is most astonishing to note that even though students are aware of the dangers associated with the use of SMS slang, especially during examinations, they still cannot stop it because they unconsciously use it. "However, the use of SMS slang can be overcome if only its users can adopt the use of only simple and correct English when doing so" (Ochonogor et al., 2012, p. 4).

Teachers do not want to introduce technology in their teaching. They'd rather try to find disadvantages as compared to how learners will benefit.

According to Powell and Dixon (2011, p. 58):

The recent increase in short messaging and system text messaging, often using abbreviated, non-conventional 'textisms', in school-going children has raised fears of negative consequences of such technology for literacy.

Ochonogor et al. (2012) express concern that a majority of students in the Delta state university, Abraka, make use of texting but do not know how much of that is bad. They (*ibid.*) state that these students impulsively transmit this in their test and examination environments without knowing its negative effects on their academic assessment.

Powell and Dixon (2011) agree with Durkin, Conti-Ramsden, and Walker (2011) that teachers do complain about children's written work. Teachers describe textism as having an adverse effect on learner's written language. Learners, who text a lot, get used to using incorrect English. Some researchers, such as Johnson (2012), Wood, Jackson, Hart, Plester, and L.Wilde (2011), express concern that the use of textism has a detrimental effect on the learner's memory of written Standard English.

While some researchers suggest that exposure to textism contributes to learner's writing inability, Turner (2010, p. 41) argues that texting language "is just a different language used in special context".

Ryker, Viosca, Lawrence, and Kleen (2011) investigated texting and the efficacy of mnemonics. They (*ibid.*) grouped the sample into texters and talkers. The findings show that "the state of continuous partial attention produced by heavy texting may diminish one's ability to concentrate and thus to remember material that is presented to them" Ryker et al. (2011, p. 31). Talkers knew and recalled more mnemonics as compared to texters. Continuous partial attention is a state where individuals scan for an opportunity for any type of contact at every given moment. Texters spend more time on their phones and this causes their brains to burnout and they are unable to recall acronyms and mnemonics, and also diminishes their ability to concentrate. Johnson (2012) states that the current explosion of digital technology not only is changing the way we live and communicate but also is rapidly and profoundly altering our brains.

Roelefse (2013b) states that the evidence of Facebook-speak is more evident in the written History work than compared to the written English First Additional Language (EFAL). This is attributed to the fact that learners do not pay attention to grammatical and writing style in the History classroom as compared to the EFAL classroom. He (*ibid.*) hypothesised that high exposure to Facebook-speak and limited exposure to formal academic writing have an effect on the academic work of the learners.

Kemp and Bushnell (2011) investigated the effects of mobile phone text messaging method in predictive and multi-press methods. They (*ibid.*) also investigated the experience of texters and non-texters on learner's textism use and understanding. They (*ibid.*) further examined the popular claims that textese was associated with poor literary skills in English.

One of the aims of the study was to examine the efficiency of using textese for both the message writer and the reader, in order to understand the reasons behind learner's use of textisms. The second aim was to compare predictive, multi-press and non-texters on standardised literary measures. The results show that learners make a higher proportion of reading errors when reading messages in textese than in conventional English. They (*ibid.*) also suggest that for the age group 10-12, neither the use of texting nor the choice of text entry was associated with higher or lower literacy scores.

The study (*ibid.*) shows that children, who used texting language, were children who already had a better understanding of phonology. On the other hand, it shows that children could mask their poor spelling ability in text language. The study (*ibid.*) also shows that children who texted, were slower in reading text messages than in writing text messages. Kemp and Bushnell (2011) conclude their study by assuring teachers and parents that textese does not have a detrimental effect on literacy, as media has claimed, but in fact, children benefit positively from texting language. They (*ibid.*) also state that, researchers have to keep up-to-date of the changing cellular phone types as they can influence texting patterns.

Based on what has been reviewed above, it is difficult for the message recipient to read textese as compared to reading conventional English. Poor spellers also tend to indicate their weakness in spelling ability by using textism.

Coe and Oakhill (2011) conducted the study to explore whether there was a relationship between children's reading ability and text-messaging behaviour. The study (*ibid.*) was conducted on children aged 10 and 11, whose L1 was English. Good readers read text faster than poor readers. Poor readers used less textism than better readers. Coe and Oakhill (2011) concluded that learners read messages in Standard English faster than messages in written text. They (*ibid.*) also identify that, although SMS dictionaries have been categorised, they are not identical because of lack of universally agreed categories or devices.

Wood et al. (2011), conducted a research to determine the effect of text messaging on 9 and 10-year-old learner's reading, spelling and phonological processing skills. Learners in the mobile phone group (intervention group), never owned a mobile phone before and were given one for the purpose of the study. During the first week of the study (*ibid.*) the learners texted a lot. The results then showed that there was no sign of the mobile group showing declining levels of literacy during the intervention and the number of messages sent and received at the beginning of the study (*ibid.*) when the abnormally high levels of textism were observed. There was some evidence of the improvement in the awareness of English phonology.

The results show there was evidence of a significant contribution of textism use to the learner's spelling development. The learner's text messaging behaviour had potential to impact significantly on their literary skills, but in the control group, these advantages were not sufficiently found in the study (*ibid.*). Even though learners in the control group were "inexperienced with technology", results show that textism use impacts casually on spelling development.

Learners who have already grasped the correct spelling benefit positively from textism. Those who are still learning how to spell, correctly, will have difficulty understanding the language used in cellular phones. It would be much easier if learners learnt how to spell correctly first before they switched to the language used in cellular phones. After seeing that learner's use of correct spelling declined with the increase of using abbreviated, non-conventional textism, for example, *2nite*, Powell and Dixon (2011) conducted a study to investigate the effect of textism on adult's knowledge of standard spelling. The study found little evidence of negative links between texting and literacy measures in either learners or adults.

With technology taking over and requiring the 160-character limit in a message per text, learners used reading in a much more playful and economical manner. Learners need a good level of awareness in English phonology, in order to read or produce textisms. The

age at which a learner acquires a phone might play an important role in preventing a learner from developing correct spelling (Powell and Dixon (2011)). Participants in the study (*ibid.*) conducted were college students, who were randomly allocated to one of the two baseline conditions. The results showed that exposure to correct spelling had a positive effect on student's spelling. The study (*ibid.*) also raised questions as to whether exposure to textisms had the same positive effect on spelling on learners, who were still acquiring knowledge of Standard spelling.

Adults tend to understand textism better than children because they have acquired better understanding and correct use of literacy. There is no fear that they will deviate from learning or acquiring good use of literacy because they have already mastered correct English.

Salomé et al. (2011) studied Grade 8 and Grade 9 English as a home language in Gauteng. The study (*ibid.*) focused on the possible influence of SMS language on certain aspects of learner's written language skills. The study (*ibid.*) found that abbreviations, non-standard spelling and paralinguistic restitutions were used in text messages written in English. Text messages written in the other of the 10 official languages of South Africa did not feature these characteristics. There are no resources available that can be used to translate the SMS into any of the 10 official languages and vice versa. The study (*ibid.*) showed that learners who condensed their text messages would also apply the condensing to their written school work.

The study (*ibid.*) investigated the educator's perspectives regarding adolescents' utilisation of SMS text messaging types in their written language. The results show that educators perceive text messaging to influence academic achievement and learner's knowledge of Standard English. The results indicate that educators perceive SMS language to have a negative influence on Grade 8 and Grade 9 learner's written language skills in English as home language. Furthermore, educators agree that they perceive SMS language in written forms to lead to poor grades in English as home language and may cause learners to have diminished knowledge of correct Standard English.

Most educators, who participated in the study (*ibid.*), viewed SMS language as any other spelling error, and they said they deducted marks for incorrect spelling, reduced sentence length and punctuation.

According to Salomé et al. (2011), further studies should be conducted on the degree and academic impact on learner's language skills, to determine specific problems experienced by EFAL learners and the subsequent role of the educator in addressing these specific problems, and the influence of SMS language on other official languages of all learners, the nature of the influence and related academic implications.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The use of texting language plays a major role in the everyday lives of people. The learners are not the only ones using texting language; advertisers have now joined the force. Advertisers have adopted the use of texting language so that they attract their target audience and get their message through, in a language that people understand. Learners are easily attracted to any variety of language used around them, be it good or bad. The learners are still learning the correct use of the EFAL and have to understand also how to use cellular phone language.

There is an immense amount of texting language going around. Texting is a fun way to play with words and that learners and students know when to text. Studies such as, Powell and Dixon (2011); Salomé et al.,(2011); Ochonogor et al. (2012), have been conducted to determine the negative effects of texting on the use of Standard English by the learners. It is difficult to argue that texting helps children read and boosts the awareness of phonology. Therefore, it is important to conduct a study to determine whether or not the learners are able to write and spell in Standard English.

The study will answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between demographical characteristics of learners and their use of texting and the standard form of English?
2. Do learners use texting language in written forms of English?
3. Are learners able to write in the standard form of English?
4. Does texting affect spelling?

1.3.1 Intended contribution to the body of knowledge

Teachers and parents fear that the language used by learners on their cellular phones has a great influence on their language. Learners write incorrect spelling and pronounce words incorrectly. A learner is supposed to accumulate more vocabulary as he or she progresses to other grades, but that is not so with learners nowadays. Instead, less vocabulary is gained, spelling is poor and their writing is slow.

In a study conducted by (Roelefse, 2013a) to discover what counts as Facebook-speak features, he discovered that above the expected features such as (deliberate) spelling errors, over-punctuation, the exclusion of functional words, the excessive use of abbreviations and acronyms, additional features were identified. He discovered the nonconventional use of tenses and sentence structure. Texting language is used in order to limit the number of words in a message so as to reduce the cost of texting.

In conclusion to their study, Salomé et al. (2011, p. 485) stated that, “further studies could be conducted to determine specific problems experienced by second language learners”. The concern the researcher has is for the learners, whose first language (L1) is isiZulu, whether they have to master their second language (L2), English, first before they move to texting language.

Coe and Oakhill (2011, p. 6) state that “the studies that relate texting to literacy have tended to focus on teenagers and older participants, whose written language skills are

already well developed”. This then shows that a study (*ibid.*) has to be done on young learners who are beginning to learn how to read and write.

1.3.2 Operational definition of terms

In order to avoid ambiguity, the terms in the study have been defined operationally.

1.3.2.1 Texting

The use of this word in the study shall mean the language used in various terms of texting communication.

1.3.2.2 Language development

This concept shall mean the development of a person’s reading and writing ability.

1.3.2.3 A second language learner

This concept will be used in this study to mean the learner who is learning English as a second language.

1.4 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to determine how far the use of texting language can affect learners in using correct spelling and pronouncing words correctly. Learners in Grades 4 to 6, Intermediate Phase (IP) whose second language is English, struggle with reading and pronunciation of words. Correct spelling suffers because the learners shift to texting language before they have learnt how to read and spell correctly.

Texting has put so much doubt in the minds of teachers and parents as far as the use of Standard English is concerned. The research findings will help alleviate fears teachers and parents may have to ease the worry about the future of the language. Learners will

benefit from the findings as well. Learners will get to know the importance of instilling the correct use of formal English.

The study objectives:

1. To determine the influence of learner characteristics on texting language.
2. To determine if learners use texting language in written forms of English.
3. To make the learners aware of the difference between writing in texting language and the standard form of English.
4. To ascertain if texting affects spelling.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 Research design

The research is informed by the studies reviewed in this study. Some studies such as Durkin et al. (2011), Ochonogor et al. (2012), Salomé et al. (2011) agree that teachers do complain about the learner's written language production. The studies have indicated that a variety of methods can be used to test the findings.

The research will be experimental. Learners will be grouped according to age bracket and phases. Participants will be asked to write a spelling test. Porath (2011) and Powell and Dixon (2011) used a spelling test in their study. Participants will also have a translation task, where they translate a dialogue from Standard English, to texting language and also from texting language to Standard English.

1.5.2 Sampling design

A probability sampling frame will be selected and a cluster sample will be used in this research. The learners will be from the intermediate phase (Grades 4 – 6). Learners

who are between 9 and 12 years old will participate in the study. Learners who will participate will need to own a cellular phone. The participants will be from schools in Esikhalenisenkosi Ward. The learners will be grouped according to age, phase and gender. The findings will represent the population of learners.

Learners who will participate in the study will be learners whose first additional language (FAL) is English and whose home language (HL) is isiZulu or any other African language. Data collected will be anonymised so that the identities of all participants are protected.

1.5.3 Research instrument

1.5.3.1 Its nature

Three research instruments was used in the study. The first research instrument was a dialogue. Participants were required to translate a dialogue from Standard English to texting language. Participants were asked to rewrite the dialogue as if they were writing to a friend. The researcher used the SPSS (version 24) to identify the number of words the participants have written in Standard English and how many words were written in texting language.

Secondly, participants did a spelling test. The researcher called out the words for spelling. The participants wrote down the words (as they heard them). The researcher checked if the words were written correctly, that is, how many words were written in texting language and how many words were misspelt. Again the researcher used the SPSS version 24 to identify these words.

The researcher visited the participants' schools for the purpose of collecting data.

1.5.3.2 Scoring

Participants were assessed in the three skills: reading, writing and listening. They were told what they would be assessed on and how scoring would be achieved. Scoring depended on the research instrument used. The SPSS version 24 was used to identify the results of the data collected.

1.5.3.3 Data Analysis

Data was analysed according to the aims of the study. In the dialogue, for example, the responses were tabulated by criteria such as age, grade, gender and access to a cellular phone. Participants were supposed to be learners who own a cellular phone or have access to one. This would make it easier for the participants to understand what was expected of them.

1.5.4 Description of procedures

A letter to the Department of Education requesting permission to conduct research in the schools was sent. Permission was requested from the principals of participating schools. Parents signed a consent form to allow their children to participate in the study. An explanation of the research was done so that learners knew before-hand what the research entailed so that they could decide whether they were willing to participate or not.

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher planned and conducted the research in a manner consistent with the law, internationally and nationally acceptable standards governing research with human participants. The researcher avoided plagiarism and acknowledged and credited the contribution the authors have performed.

The researcher avoided duplicating work of other authors and publishing it as her own. The purpose of study was explained to participants and the researcher made sure that

the rights of the participants were not violated. The data will be shared with other researchers to allow verification of results.

1.7 PROJECT MANAGEMENT ISSUES

1.7.1 Time management

The study is scheduled to be completed at the end of 2017.

1.7.2 Costs management

Costs involved in the study are anticipated to be:

- Editing of the research proposal
- Photocopying – ink and paper
- Data analysis
- Compilation of manuscript

1.7.3 Resource management

The researcher hired the services of the specialist in the analysis of data and also a specialist in proof-reading the thesis. The researcher has to complete the study to help solve the problem.

1.7.4 Risk management

There were no foreseeable risks of the research to the participants.

1.7.5 Intellectual property and innovation

The intellectual property and innovation is retained by the University for the period of about two years. The researcher will also benefit from the results of the research as a languages teacher.

1.8 THE ORGANISATION/PLAN OF THE STUDY

The study will be organised as follows:

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter will consist of the introduction, motivation, the statement of the problem, the aims of the study, the operational definition of terms, value of the study and the plan for the organisation of the whole study.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This chapter will focus on the review of related literature and report on relevant literature.

Chapter 3 - Research Methodology

This chapter will discuss the research design and the method used in research.

Chapter 4 - Presentation of Data

This chapter will present the process of data analysis and report writing.

Chapter 5 – Summary of findings, recommendations and conclusion

This chapter will discuss the findings, conclusions and the recommendations for the solutions of problems discovered in the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Mobile phones were first developed in the 1940s but became widely available in 1983. The world's first call on a mobile phone was made in 1973. In 1983, mobile phones became commercially available. Recently mobile phones became available in South Africa. In fact, the first cellular service was launched in South Africa by MTN and Vodacom in 1994. In 1999, 10% of the African population had mobile phones, Aker and Mbiti (2010). Mobile phones have become the means of communication used by adults, teenagers as well as children.

According to a study conducted by UNICEF South Africa (2012), South Africans lead as one of the highest users of mobile technology in the African continent. The study indicates that 86% of youth and teenagers (15-24 year olds) are the first adopters of mobile technology. Today, according to Nielsen Southern Africa, a research firm, 29 million South Africans use mobile phones as compared to radio (28 million) and television (27 million). The research further states that less than 5 million South Africans use landline phones. My Broadband states that the number of youth that own mobile phones in South Africa is more than that of United Kingdom (85%) and the United States of America (83%).

It is for this reason that parents and the media fear that the use of mobile phones by children might impact negatively on their language development. In this chapter, the researcher is going to examine the effects of texting on learners in the Esikhalelisenkosi Ward.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The study is informed by Chomsky's theory of language acquisition and development, (known as the innateness theory), which was first published in 1965. This innate

mechanism was termed the language acquisition device (LAD); a device that allows children to process the language spoken in the environment. According to Foster-Cohen (2009), language is a system or a collection of systems that can be constructed or reconstructed by each child through relatively straightforward pattern recognition strategies. She further states that language should be built into the nature of the human brain.

Many different disciplines contribute to the study of language acquisition. Linguistics, Psychology, Anthropology, Education, Cognitive Science and Neuroscience all contribute significantly to the first, second, monolingual, bilingual, typical and atypical (disordered) languages around the world. Some researchers view the nature of language as a body of evident constructions which form a toolbox for communication. They see the task of language acquisition as one coming to mirror the language of the input by observation, imitation, pattern extraction and adjustment towards the adult model. Input is the language a learner is exposed to through reading, listening or watching.

In response to a question on where linguistic structure comes from, Chomsky Foster-Cohen (2009, p. 104) states that humans are biologically gifted with a Universal Grammar, an inborn structure that encodes the form of a possible human language and that assists the child during the acquisition of language. Children are exposed to new rules for using language. They must understand the social rules for interacting with teachers and peers and must also learn to listen carefully to directions and information relating to learning. Spoken language, language development and the level of function are the primary concerns of teachers in schools.

Communication is the process of exchanging information, ideas needs and desires. Communication, according to Lara and Perez (2014), is the meaningful exchange of information between two or more participants through sounds, gestures and movements to transmit very specific messages. Universal Grammar involves three

factors: genetic endowment, external data and principles not specified to the faculty of language. Genetic endowment makes language possible. External data refers to the linguistic data to which the child is exposed. The latter refers to the properties of the brain that cause it to learn a language.

The speaker sends information (encodes), which the receiver comprehends (decodes). The skills essential to succeeding in reading is the ability to interpret (decode) print, especially when faced with new words. When children encounter a new word, they sound out the word, depending on the earlier acquisition of the correspondence of sounds with letters.

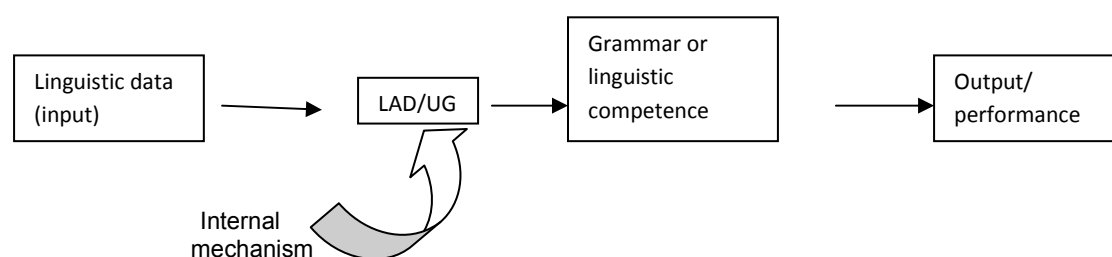


Figure 1: The diagram illustrates how a child acquires a language

(Adapted from Lara & Perez, 2014)

Chomsky formulated the generative theory of language called the Universal Grammar (UG). He describes it as the primary objective of the discipline of linguistics, formulated to explain how human beings acquire language and the biological constraints on this acquisition. Acquisition and learning are the two important branches of UG. Acquisition is referred to as a subconscious process which is implicit in a natural environment (native speakers). Learning is referred to as a conscious process which is explicit and given in a non-natural environment (foreign language).

Chomsky's theory suggests that the human brain contains a predefined mechanism (UG) that is the basis for the acquisition of all languages. He further puts forward that a person's individual grammar is developed from the interaction between the innate UG

and the input from the environment (primary linguistic data). He states that an innate device, Language Acquisition Device, exists in the human brain. This device enables people to learn and use a language. In short, humans are biologically programmed to learn a language, irrespective of the difficulty of the language. Exposure to the language used in the environment is the only requirement a child needs to acquire a language. Besides LAD, children are born with an innate capacity, that is, the internalised basic structure of language.

Reading and writing are also connected to acquiring a language. Reading and writing emerge from children's perspective and expressive language abilities. The language skills important for good writing are semantics, syntax, mechanics and organisation. Reading skills require that children use their early knowledge of sound-letter association to identify unknown words in a text.

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Sentence production is the basis of Chomsky's theory. He argued for an interaction between two factors: the child's innate linguistic competence and linguistic data that children use to develop the language that is consistent with the language of their home environment. Children possess the innate skill and form ideas about language based on input. Children require abundant language input to allow them to form ideas about structure. Lessons in the classroom should demonstrate a variety of sentence types and grammatical forms to provide abundant examples of the adult language.

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A psycholinguistic approach in the classroom is focussed on the children's underlying mental process for speaking, comprehending auditory presented language, writing and reading. These are essential skills for a child to store, internalise and establish information in a language and to retrieve information. "Children possess an innate skill and form ideas about language based on input", according to Levey and Polirstok (2011, p. 27). Therefore, children require profuse language input to allow them to form ideas about the structure. The lessons provided by the classroom teacher should provide clear and complete examples of grammar. Children acquire vocabulary from the

lessons in the classroom and from hearing and reading words from various sources, such as peers and media. Children produce new words that reflect the creativity of the human mind, in spite of limited information.

The use of texting suggests that learners have mastered the knowledge of rules of a language and that texting has become a matter of elaborating upon the phonological knowledge (awareness) of words.

2.3 The difference between writing in text language and the standard form of English

Verheijen (2013) and Penna (2015) conducted a review on the effects of text messaging and instant messaging on literacy. The studies were conducted by two different authors to show the positive and negative effects of texting, respectively. The findings reveal that texting is not a straight forward topic to measure. Frequency of texting, use of textisms, and knowledge of textisms, writing and spelling scores should be taken into consideration. The studies reveal that literacy scores may correlate differently with frequency of texting, use and knowledge of textisms for formal and informal writing. Differences in the designs and population of the studies could cause mixed results.

The American Federation of Teachers states that teachers and parents have expressed their worries and fears on the increased use of texting by learners. In this review, teachers say that they have seen the intrusion of texting in the learners' school work as well as on learners' examination scripts. Different newspapers; the New York Times, The Guardian and the Daily Mail have published articles where teachers express their concerns about Textese being unimaginative, and the view that texters are vandals who are destroying the language.

The reason people text is to reduce the writing time so that a quick response may be received from the person to whom one is sending a text message. Texting helps save

space on the small screen of the cellular phone and minimises the number of words one has to write. A person texting has to conform to the 160-character text message limit. Texting also saves money. When a person texting writes more than the stipulated text message limit, the charge increases. There is no real need for learners to use texting language in their school work, since they do not await a quick response, nor save time since they are not charged for writing more. Instead, they are awarded for their input. There is also enough space for them to respond.

Verheijen (2013, p. 584) states that, "Text messages and instant messaging do not adhere to the standardised norms of correct spelling, grammar and punctuation". Learners are taught to use the correct standard forms of writing, which is grammar, spelling and punctuation. A learner is penalised for using the incorrect forms of grammar. Using texting language in school work or formal writing would show that the learner is incapable or that the learner does not adhere to the rules of the language.

In her review, Verheijen (2013), contends that 'texters' degrade traditional literacy skills and corrupt the Standard English language. She also says that texting "signals the slow death of a language" and poses "a threat to social progress" Verheijen (2013, p. 586). A school is a formal learning institution. Learners need not be told in what manner they have to write a particular task. It should be known and understood that a school task should be written in a formal manner. When texting encroaches into the learner's school work, it shows that the learner has failed to master and adhere to the correct use of grammar.

In comparing two seminal articles, Mphahlele and Mashamaite (2005), conducted a research study on the impact of short message service (SMS) language on language proficiency of learners and the SMS dictionaries. The research was conducted in South Africa on tertiary students. They noted that these students failed to distinguish between informal context in which texting is allowed and formal context in which it is inappropriate. They concluded that texting affects students' language proficiency in two

ways: students fail to express themselves eloquently through writing and that students fail to use words appropriately in context.

In contrast, Craig (2003) focuses on three concepts: language play, plurality of literacies and language evolution. In his review on Instant messaging called 'The Language of Youth Literacy', he argues that language used in texting leads to better general literacy, increased subconscious metalinguistic awareness and improved abilities to use language effectively. He states that texting is not wrong as a language naturally evolves. According to him, texting may eventually become part of the Standard English lexicon. Craig (2003) concludes that texting has no negative effect on the development or maintenance of traditional literacy. He further states that youth literacy problems are caused by a lack of focus on teaching language skills at school.

Verheijen (2013) reviewed a study where Kemp and Bushnell (2011) studied Australian university students on the use and understanding of textism and how it links with literacy skills. The results showed no intrusion of textism into Standard English. This, according to Kemp and Bushnell (2011), shows that students are capable of limiting their textism use to appropriate contexts.

Every year the Department of Basic Education publishes the national diagnostic report on Grade 12 learner performance, *National Senior Certificate Examination Diagnostic Report 2015*). The aim of this publication is to provide teachers, subject teachers and curriculum planners with a picture of learner performance in each subject. There is evidence in certain subjects of how learners responded to questions and attempts have been made to track progress in areas that were highlighted as problematic in the previous years.

An overview of learner performance in English First Additional Language paper 1, Grade 12, shows learners' inability to paraphrase. Candidates did not follow instructions

and they did not read questions with focused attention. The ability to interpret figurative language and adherence to instructions would enable candidates to do well. An overview of learner performance in paper 2 shows that the candidates who performed well were those who had studied the prescribed texts, followed the instructions and responded in accordance with the allocation of marks.

Suggestions are made by the Department of Education to improve learner performance. Learners should be motivated and encouraged to engage with good texts and use dictionaries and other learning aids. This will enable learners to improve their vocabulary, inference as well as their reading skills. Learners will also be able to interpret texts in their own words. It will also help learners to be able to formulate their own opinions and feelings on the texts they have read. Spelling, sentence construction and paragraphing plays a vital role in enhancing writing.

When dealing with advertising material, learners should be taught how to interpret figurative language, how the visual fits into the message and how words are designed to fit in with the message. Learners should be exposed to good writing and be given enough opportunities to plan, write, improve and edit their work.

Basic language skills should be taught continuously. Remedial work after tests and examinations is essential. Feedback after homework is also essential because it improves oral, written, visual and audio skills. Time management should be practised, as running out of time in the examination room may cause the candidate to lose marks. Learners should be taught to follow instructions, keep to the word limit, read and interpret questions properly.

2.4 Effects of texting language on the written forms of English

In her article, the effects of text messaging and instant messaging, Verheijen (2013) [ENREF 40](#) reviews different studies conducted by different authors. These studies were conducted to determine the positive or negative effects of texting on literacy.

Plester, Wood, and Bell (2008) conducted a study on the relationship between textisms and literacy attainment with eighty-eight British children. The children had to pretend that they were in different situations and elicit spontaneous text messages. They were also tested on their reading ability, alphabetic decoding ability, spelling ability, vocabulary knowledge and phonological awareness. The results showed that there is evidence that text literacy is positively associated with Standard English literacy. A positive correlation between textism density and reading, vocabulary and phonological awareness was found by the authors. The extent of children's textism use predicted their reading ability, irrespective of age, vocabulary, phonological awareness and period of mobile phone ownership.

De Jonge and Kemp (2012) studied the use and understanding of textisms and links with literacy skills in sixty-one Australian university students. Participants completed questionnaires, did standardised spelling, reading tasks and experimental tasks assessing morphological and phonological awareness. They also had to read and write text messages in Standard English and in textese on a mobile phone. The results showed that participants who are fluent with textism have better literacy skills.

The relationship between texting and spelling review, conducted by Kemp and Bushnell (2011) [ENREF 12](#) with 227 Australian children, showed that text messaging does not have a detrimental effect on spelling. Questionnaires, translation tasks, and spelling were used to collect data. The results showed that children who produce more textisms are good at spelling.

After reviewing different articles, Verheijen (2013, p. 595) concluded that texting "is not a straightforward matter to measure". The study conducted produced mixed results. These mixed results could have been caused by the differences in the studies' designs and population, as well as characteristics of participants. These caused limitations in comparing the studies reviewed.

Some results show that textism influences literacy. They also prove that it is ungrounded to claim that texting and Instant Messaging have a detrimental effect on literacy. Verheijen (2013) suggested that it would be advisable to conduct studies in

future studying “the effects of texting and IMing on literacy in a wider variety of languages”.

Eshiet (2010, p. 67) defines literacy as “the ability to read and write effectively in any language”. Eshiet (2010) reviewed the semi-literate Africans in Nigeria, looking at the influence of text messaging on the literacy level. He used a questionnaire and an interview as his instruments. In some cases, he had to ask questions verbally to some of the artisans who could not write and record their responses.

The researcher concurs with Eshiet (2010) that in a classroom of students made up of widely varying reading skills, they tend to be “destructive and distractive”, when they do not understand what is learnt in class. They feel left out and therefore resort to creating activities for themselves. Illiterate adults also resort to quarrelling and show petty jealous towards a literate person. If a person did not grasp the expected level of literacy at primary school, enough to be able to read and write effectively, then that person will be frustrated as his or her reading for survival skills will be inadequate. The knowledge gained at a primary school should enable the child to apply the knowledge gained from reading to daily life issues.

With the introduction of mobile phones in Nigeria in 2001, communication improved. Earlier on people found it expensive to make phone calls. Mobile phones became more affordable and accessible as the years progressed. Prices reduced gradually and more people could afford the mobile phones. People preferred to send text messages as it was cheaper than making phone calls.

According to Eshiet (2010), out of 81 semi-literates in his study, a large number had a Senior Secondary Certificate (SSCE) but had performed poorly. Many of the respondents read their text messages and responded to them. The more they read and wrote, the better they were likely to become at reading and writing because they developed reading and writing skills unconsciously. Respondents found it easy to read

simple abbreviations such as 'u' for 'you' and 'b/4' for 'before'. This was easier for the semi-literates to read but the respondents found it difficult to use abbreviations to compose text messages.

While other writers, such as Crystal (1986), found abbreviations to be destructive to language, other writers discovered that abbreviations help with literacy. Eshiet (2010) believes that text messaging can be a tool for improving the literacy level of semi-literates.

Kemp and Bushnell (2011, p. 26) portend that "Textese use does not have a detrimental impact on children's ability to read and spell conventionally". Kemp and Bushnell (2010) conducted a study using eighty-six Grades 5 and 6 learners who were predominately from middle class Australian schools. These learners were fluent in English and texted only in English.

The aims of the study were to compare the texting method, predictive or multi-press, as used by learners who normally text and those who do not normally text. Also, they wanted to investigate whether exposure to texting will have an impact on learners' conventional literacy skills. The study showed that reading messages in textese hindered speed and accuracy as children were not using their mobile phones. However, it was clear that children who are used to texting are proficient at spelling and reading familiar words from standardised literacy tests.

The use of mobile phones by the majority of children worldwide, aged between 8 and 15 years, is increasing. Children, parents and child welfare organisations consider mobile phones as a "must-have" gadget. Media has shown concern about the impact of text messaging on children's literacy development. Researchers such as Kemp and Bushnell (2011) have reassured the media and parents that texting does not hinder literacy development, but that it improves literacy, especially spelling attainment.

Wood et al. (2011) investigated the effect of text messaging on 9 and 10-year-old children's reading, spelling and phonological processing skills. The result of the investigation shows that texting does not affect the development of literacy skills, but it improves spelling. Receiving and sending messages by young children exposes them to print and influences their phonological awareness in a positive way. Their reading and spelling abilities increase. Textism and literacy skills are a contributory factor towards the attainment of literacy skills. The researchers, Wood et al. (2011) even suggested that literacy skills may contribute to textism use.

Other contributory factors of textism to literary development may be age, memory, vocabulary, phonological awareness (as phonological use is linked to textism use) and how long children have owned a mobile phone, according to Plester et al. (2008). Also, children enjoy using and creating textism as they find it playful and enjoyable.

Banning of mobile phones in schools has failed. Children bring mobile phones for various reasons such as to contact parents as to what time to collect them. Teachers have requested several times that mobile phones become invisible on the school grounds. Even though that is the case, students continue to text-message at school.

Thomas and Orthober (2011) examined the uses and barriers to text messaging, to determine if mobile phones could be used for increasing course-related interaction. The study examined the reasons why mobile phones were banned in schools, and how interaction of mobile phones in learning could aid learning and teaching. Learners have a number of reasons supporting integrating mobile phones into learning. Some of the reasons mentioned are that mobile phones enable them to access course material at anytime and anyplace. They can reflect on the lesson learnt earlier on, be able to participate by making comments without being afraid of the students who always dominate classroom discussions.

Students have become aware of websites that allow them to use mobile phones to incorporate their learning. Students use these sites for mathematics assessments, multiple choice and feedback. Incorporating mobile phones with learning is easier as schools in some countries, for example, Japan, are already using mobile phones for communication and school related work. There are certain incidents taking place at school, involving youth, which has resulted in mobile phones being banned in schools. Incidents such as terrorist attacks, gang and drug activities and shootings within the school premises have caused mobile phones to be banned. Beside these occurrences, students tend to misuse mobile phones. They cheat in completing their schoolwork and examinations. They also become vulnerable to cyber-bullying and sexting.

Three classes in a United States school were used for the survey, to provide insight into the participants' demographics and perceptions concerning the use of text messaging. Participants included males and females who were between 15 and 17 years of age. One class was doing Latin and the other two English. The instructors sent text messages reminding them about homework, tests and class assignments. The Latin instructor also sent students Latin sentences to interpret. Data were collected from the actual messages, students' surveys and discussions between the instructors as well as between teachers and students. The majority of the students indicated that they texted daily and sent above twenty texts a day. The 17-year- old participants texted more compared to the other ages. Female participants sent more texts than males. Besides the texts sent by instructors, students texted daily and received school-related text messages from their peers.

Both the instructors and students found the survey to be beneficial. Students commented that text messaging was valuable. They were able to remember tests and homework dates. Texting with their instructors helped them make-up for work they missed when they were absent from class. It helped them come to class prepared. They got quick responses to their questions and got time to practise their translations.

Instructors also benefited from the study. They helped students remember their assignments and that ensured they were better prepared for the following class. The interaction improved classroom community.

Instructors, as well as students, experienced barriers with receiving and sending text messages. A few of the students did not own mobile phones. This caused a restrictive problem as everyone in the class was supposed to receive text messages from the instructors. Instructors emailed their instructions to students' mobile phones. Some mobile phones did not support this service. Some parents grounded their children for texting and therefore students requested that their instructors send them text messages at an appropriate hour. Instructors had to keep to the 120-160-character restriction. The Latin instructor was new to texting and he took longer to type messages. Students complained that he was slow.

The study shows that there is a need to incorporate mobile phones with school work. Participants in the study agreed that mobile phones have helped them improve their grades. Students, teachers, parents, teachers and the community should be educated about ethical and moral behaviours. Schools have to develop clear policies and procedures for use of mobile phones. The study demonstrated that "mobile phones are a positive tool for educational purposes both inside and out of the classroom" (Thomas & Orthober, 2011, p. 69).

2.5 The relationship between the demographical characteristics of learners and their use of texting language and the standard form of English

The study on the effects of text messaging and instant messaging on literacy, conducted by Verheijen (2013), shows that population differences influenced the results of the study. Participants' age group, nationality, cultural differences, gender, educational level and mother tongue, play a large role in influencing the results. The use of textism amongst these participants may influence texting differently. Children,

adolescents, young adults and adults approach texting differently. Children are still at the age where they are developing their literacy skills. Their texting pattern may be different to that of adults.

This study will be reviewing African children in the township schools and how the educational background plays a major role in influencing textism and literacy. Young people with less education background are mostly affected by textism as compared to young people who have received more education.

Bernicot, Goumi, Bert-Erboul, and Volckaert-Legrier (2014) reviewed how skilled and less-skilled spellers write text messages. The first aim of the study was to show that children's knowledge of textism is not associated with poor written language in 10-year-old to 11-year-old children. The second aim was to explore the density of textism between heavy textism users and light textism users using 9-year-old to 11-year-old Finnish children. The findings show no significant difference between these groups. Thirdly, the researcher wanted to see how texting relates to children's performances on academic tests.

Plester et al. (2008) reviewed the ten to eleven and eleven to twelve-year-old children who attended a school in the Midlands of England to determine the extent of the children's knowledge of textism, and how this related to their performance on the academic tests. The review also looked at whether texting and knowledge of text abbreviations adversely affects children's attainment of literacy.

Three methods were used in the study, namely: translation of sentences from Standard English to text language, a spelling sub-test and translation of a sentence from text language to Standard English. Boys and girls were grouped together. No differences were found between boys and girls on any measure. The study identified that those children who have experience in texting scored lower in the school literacy measure as

compared to children who said they do not send any text messages. Regarding the spelling test, the researchers discovered that children depended on the phonological awareness, thus misspelt some of the words, for example, the word 'girlfriend' was spelt 'girlfrend'. Some of the words like "night" received a number of translations: 'nig/ nght/ nyt/ nyte/ nit/ nite', which shows that children at this stage do not adhere to the text patterns, but made a number of interpretation errors.

Plester et al. (2008) state that children's texting behaviour is affected by the enthusiasm to text. The textisms of these children showed that the children are unable to create a number of graphic forms of the same word. Experience with texting is another factor contributing to the manner in which children text. The age at which children first acquired the mobile phone plays a major role. Children who send more messages a day scored lower in the school literacy measure than those who do not text. This study shows that there is "no compelling evidence that texting damages Standard English in pre-teens, and considerable evidence that facility with text language is associated with higher achievement in school literary measures" (Plester et al., 2008, p. 143).

Kemp and Bushnell (2011) conducted a study on children's text messaging, with children of various ages, of which most were girls. The ages of children ranged from 10 to 12 years. The aim of the study was to examine the efficiency of using Textese for both the message writer and the reader, in order to understand the reason behind children's use of textism. All children were slower and less accurate when reading as well as composing Textese than conventional English messages, irrespective of texting method they may have used or experience they had.

Texting has spread widely. The 160-message count required when texting helps texters save time, screen-space and cost per message. Children, therefore, text because it is now a widely-followed trend to save time and cost for messaging. However, reading text messages is slow for the recipient as compared to writing the message, which is relatively fast.

The study on the 11 year-old to 16-year-old British children revealed that it is faster to read conventional English messages than to read Textese in multi-press texting method. Texters prefer to use multi-press texting method because predictive texting usually takes longer as the texter has to ascertain that the word shown is the one he or she wants to use. Even with adult texters, the speed at which they read text messages was slower as compared to writing text messages. Kemp and Bushnell (2011) conclude that textism makes writing more efficient for the message sender, but it takes the receiver more time to read.

Another aim of the study was to investigate the assumption that exposure to unconventional word spelling might compromise children's conventional literacy skills. This is the result of the media showing widespread disapproval of this communication and writing style. Researchers, Kemp and Bushnell (2011) say that children who text are either better at phonological awareness or that they are poor spellers who use textism to mask their weak spelling abilities. These findings are in contrast to that of the media, that the use of texting is harming children's traditional literacy skills. This emanates from the research conducted to find links between the use of textism and literacy skills in pre-teen children. Word reading ability and phonological awareness scores on children aged 10 to 12 years showed a positive correlation between texting and scores and spelling scores.

Kemp and Bushnell (2011) asked participants to write a textese version of a paragraph. The aim was to see how many letters they would have in writing as opposed to the number of letters used in conventional writing. Comparison was made in terms of writing time, proportion of textism written, reading time and proportion of errors made. Kemp and Bushnell (2011) claim that the number of teenagers who text has risen. Teenagers tend to switch to texting when writing to their friends. Even though they text frequently, their reading fluency does not improve. Also, the speed and accuracy in reading text messages is hindered.

The results of this study put the media and parents at ease about claims that texting harms children's literacy skills Kemp and Bushnell (2011, p. 26). There was no significant difference between the participant's spelling, reading and non-word reading. This further suggests that for pre-teenagers, texting is not associated with higher or lower literacy scores. "Children who are good at quickly creating and interpreting textisms are also proficient at spelling and reading familiar and novel words from standardised literacy texts", Kemp and Bushnell (2011, p. 26).

Porath (2011) reviewed text messaging and teenagers and whether the period of mobile phones has an influence on teenagers. Texting has become the most common means of communication in teenagers. Teenagers have many reasons for sending text messages, such as accessibility, convenience, affordability and that texting can be done away from parents and teachers. Users can decide if they want to respond or not as the message sender is displayed. Mobile phones have a silent mode users may activate, so that their communication is discreet and does not disturb others.

Teenagers state that texting has visual anonymity. The texter does not need to see or hear the recipient or message sender. Texting allows the recipient to get time to compose the response. The form of texting that has become popular is the goodnight text. Teenagers have adopted this style to end the day and check up on friends before bedtime. The advantage for teenagers is that their parents do not become aware of the activities that take place during the night as they switch their mobile phones to a silent mode. The goodnight text, which is supposed to bid the other goodnight, will stretch through the night and prevent the teenager from sleeping on time. It also disrupts study time, as the time set out for studying will be used for texting.

Most puritans, teachers, journalists and parents are concerned by teenagers' use of textism. They feel that texting will cause a decline in the writing capabilities of learners

in the English language. Teenagers, on the other hand, say that they know when to use textism. Research done in earlier years does not show any decline in literacy between teenagers who text and those who do not. Teenagers' text messages to distant social people are more formal as compared to text messages between friends.

The number of teenagers who own mobile phones has increased throughout the years. This means that the number of people teenagers text has increased. Also, technology has improved. SenseMS was introduced to personalise conversation and give teenagers an expression by allowing the texter to add facial expressions to indicate emotion. Teenagers stopped using SenseMS because including facial expressions and a background was time-consuming. ComeksShorts was introduced by a French company. This software turned plain SMSs into animated characters talking in comic balloons. Unfortunately, the application required the sender and receiver to both have the software in their mobile phones. The software did not work for most teenagers.

With the development of technology, the software and capabilities of mobile phones will change. QWERTY keyboard mobile phones use predictive texting, which reduces the need to use abbreviations and forces the texter to select a word. Speech-to-text software is also advancing. This allows the texter to dictate the text message.

Palea and Boştină-Bratu (2015) examined age and its influence on second language acquisition. They reviewed whether adults find it easy to learn a second language. There is a belief that children and young adults learn a language better than adults because their brains have a natural ability to absorb new information. It is believed that children have social and environment pressure (school, parents and friends) that motivate them to achieve better.

Even so, adults have many skills, such as organising their learning strategies, having targets and personal or professional interests that increase their motivation for further

learning. Age, time and commitment at which people acquire second language play a vital role in the development of language. The age of second language acquisition has been termed a “critical period” or “time sensitive”, Palea and BoşTinĂ-Bratu (2015, p. 429). The critical period for language acquisition begins around age two. If second language learning begins after age 12, then phonologically the learner can never be as good as a native speaker.

The ability to learn a second language varies, depending on the individual, and is a process that continues throughout life. Adult learners usually reach the levels of second language competence comparable to native speakers. The quality of education and the student's level of motivation play a role in acquiring second language knowledge. Another factor to take note of is that children and adults may be at the same level in learning a language, but material used would be different. Material prescribed for children, for example, would be shorter and easier than the one for adults.

During the early stages of learning, adults are faster at learning a second language than young children. Also, adults become easily discouraged when they have to produce sounds, as compared to children. Adults become more aware of how they produce sounds. The divergence from second language phonetic norms discourages them from pronouncing words freely and openly. Adults are not comfortable in making mistakes. Children lose interest when tasks become more difficult, whereas adults become more motivated to learn. Older students are motivated to learn because they are aware of how a second language is important for their life and career.

Language learning does not involve learning just the vocabulary and syntax. Communicative functions should be included when teaching second language because learners of the second language may need it for their various learning expectations. Second language learners may learn some of the elements of the second language more easily than the first language, depending on cognition.

Age does not only refer to a person's biological or neurological maturity, but to his or her cognitive change and social development as well. Young people may be better at acquiring a second language, than adults. The age of learning and type of learning tasks can be above the capacity of young learners. Young learners reach the native-like mastery of the second language better than adults. Second language acquisition between young learners and adults depends on the circumstances, motivation and commitment each person has for acquiring new knowledge.

Lanchantin, Simoës-Perlant, and Largy (2014) conducted a study to examine whether good spellers write more textism than bad spellers. Participants were forty French-speaking adolescents in the 8th grade, who were in the same French region and were classmates. All participants completed a questionnaire on a computer to assess the participant's traditional and digital reading and writing habits. The 8th grade participants were chosen because the authors believed that they have developed their spelling skills. Participants chose peers to communicate with, and were asked to write messages as if they were on their own computers.

The researchers came to a conclusion that “the use of textism by good spellers would have no negative impact on the quality of spelling”, Lanchantin et al. (2014, p. 56). The level of spelling plays an important part in the production of modifications. Good spellers produce more textism as compared to bad spellers. Also, more words with good spelling were used as compared to modified words. The researchers are concerned by the modified words when it comes to bad spellers. It is difficult to ascertain whether textism was a misspelling or whether it was a real modification. Also, a texter may modify the same word differently.

2.6 The effect of texting language on spelling

Plester et al. (2008) examine the relationship between children's texting behaviours, their knowledge of text abbreviations and their school attainment in written language skills. This study emanates from the fact that most research has been focusing on young adults and adolescents, leaving behind young children – who are still developing written language skills. Two studies were conducted. The first study explored whether the academic outcomes of high and low texters were different. The aim of the second study was to look at the association between textism use and the children's performance on spelling and writing tasks. Participants comprised 116 children from a school in the Midlands of England. The first study explored the performance of standardised test of children who text, the extent of the children's knowledge of textisms and how this may affect their academic performance. The results received presented the mixed picture of the relationship between texting experience and academic ability. High text users scored lower than non-text users on the verbal and non-verbal reasoning measure. The researchers believe that this might have been caused by the cultural variables of participants. In the translation exercise, there was a positive association between the use of textisms and performance on the Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT) verbal reasoning.

The aim of the second study was to look at the association between textism use and the children's performance on spelling and writing tasks. There were 35 participants who were chosen for the study. They were 10 and 11 years old. Spelling and writing methods were used for the study. Children were asked to complete the spelling subtest (of the British Ability Scale II). They were also asked to translate a text language exchange in Standard English and vice versa. Conclusions for the second study showed that there was no evidence of negative association between knowledge of textism by pre-teen children and their written language competence.

Plester et al. (2008) concluded that enthusiasm for textism encourages children to adopt a playful use of the language. The experience of participants with texting and mobile

phone use is still new. Participants made up abbreviations using their phonological awareness and understanding and they did not follow the standard (codified) abbreviations. The researchers feel that experience with texting needs further study. They suggest that further studies should be conducted to determine whether older texters or texters with vast experience become more conventional in their use over time. To conclude, both studies “show no compelling evidence that texting damages Standard English in pre-teens and considerable evidence with text language is associated with higher achievement in school literacy measures”, Plester et al. (2008, p. 143).

Nkomo and Khumalo (2012) conducted a study to examine how the mobile phone has been embraced by the Ndebele people, focusing on its linguistic and communicative impacts regarding the SMS and turn-taking. They discovered that mobile phones became the most popular gadget and the vehicle for interactive communication in Zimbabwe towards the end of 1990. The young and the old, rural and urban, all embraced the existence of mobile phones. Earlier on mobile phones were used at home; businesses, and government offices, but later on everyone could own a mobile phone. They state that mobile phones are not responsible for the evident change in linguistic and communicative developments. They say that mobile phone users have means to control technology since they are able to place limits to some mobile phone usage.

The Ndebele parents bought mobile phones to keep track of their children's whereabouts. Youth like mobile phones for their portability and transportability. As time passed on, children informed parents that they will be the ones to tell parents when they are ready to be collected. Conversations tended to become short. No greetings were made. Turn-taking was dominated by the youth, instead of allowing the elder to initiate the conversation. The youth said that they are the ones who will decide on the turn of the conversation because they own the mobile phone. Once again, mobile phones changed the natural and cultural conversation norms as set out by the elder Ndebele generation.

Code-mixing and code-switching also became popular. Most SMS conversations are in English. English dominates the SMS communication. The youth used English and Ndebele in the text messaging. This was easier to be understood by someone who understands English and difficult for someone who is not familiar with text messaging language. On the other hand, Nkomo and Khumalo (2012) discovered that some members of the Ndebele-speaking community who failed English at school, as well as those who did not get a chance to learn it at school, could read and write SMS dominated by English.

Wei and Wang (2010) examined the relationship between teacher immediacy and college students' use of text messaging in class, using two hundred and twenty-eight undergraduate college students from a university in the North-east United States. Almost all undergraduates in various institutions in the United States own mobile phones. Therefore, text messaging has become the preferred and a frequent means of electronic communication among college students. While this is viewed as an acceptable activity by the students, professors view texting as misbehaviour that causes a problem between teacher-student interactions and prevents students from active commitment in classroom learning.

Teacher immediacy plays a major role in instruction. Immediacy behaviours are divided into verbal and nonverbal immediacy. Verbal immediacy refers to calling students by name, asking for students' feedback about the lesson before and after class, and engaging students in conversations. In nonverbal immediacy, movements, gestures, eye-contact, facial expressions, touch and dress is used to arouse student's attention during instruction. Teacher immediacy enhances teaching effectiveness and positive student-teacher classroom interactions by arousing student's attention and increasing student's positive feelings toward instructors. Other factors that might influence this are student's learning motivation, student's texting gratification and habitual usage of text messaging. The study also examined how teacher immediacy, student learning

motivation and texting behaviour are related and why college students engage in text messaging.

Teacher immediacy facilitated student learning. “When students were emotionally and psychologically connected with teachers and classroom environment, they were motivated to be active”, Wei and Wang (2010, p. 477). Student motivation focuses on “how” rather than “what” students are taught. If students are motivated to learn, they may be likely to text during class. Some students text and learn during class. Their frequent use of text messaging may become habitual and automatic.

Participants in this study were recruited from a small-sized university in the North-east United States. They consisted of both males and females and they all owned mobile phones. The surveyed institution did not employ a classroom policy of banning mobile phones during classes. The participants completed a questionnaire measuring five variables: teacher immediacy, student learning motivation, frequency of mobile texting in class, habitual texting usage and students’ gratification from texting.

The results showed that students’ texting behaviours may be triggered by students’ internal gratifications by habitual media use. Teacher immediacy does not influence students’ texting during class. Students’ text messaging may occur despite a high level of teacher immediacy behaviour. Students tend to focus on grooming their interpersonal relationships and this appears to be leisure activity which they prefer as compared to a learning activity. Students who regularly use text messaging have already developed a habit of texting, irrespective of where they are. Repeated text messaging during class may become an addiction, which students sought out for pleasure, relaxation, escape, inclusion, affection and gratification.

2.7 CONCLUSION

Most schools in South Africa have placed a ban on mobile phones being brought to school. Technology has developed to the extent that text messaging can be incorporated into lessons. Some studies have shown that texting by children may increase reading ability through phonological awareness, vocabulary and reading texts, claims Plester et al. (2008). Children will also understand when to use appropriate context of a language. Librarians and teachers should be aware of the new forms of literature that have emerged to take advantage of SMS capabilities. According to Porath (2011), as from 2008, text message novels have been uploaded in different countries and distributed to subscribers over various websites. Teachers should become aware of websites that have activities they can integrate with learning, using text messages.

Parents should embrace mobile phones and not see them as an enemy. Therefore, schools should rethink before banning mobile phones in schools as they will be encouraging illicit use instead of instructing students on the proper personal and professional use of mobile phones.

2.8 LITERATURE CONTROL

The table displays on the first column; the aims of the study and the journal articles that have been used in writing this study.

Table 1: Literature control schedule

Aim number	Journal article addressing the aim	Relationship to study
1. The difference between writing in texting language and the standard form of English	1. The effects of text messaging and instant messaging on literacy	1. Language corruption
2. The effects of texting language on	1. The effect of text messaging on 9- and 10-year –old children’s reading, spelling and phonological processing	1. Educational level, age 2. Age, level of

the written forms of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> skills 2. Perceived influence of mobile phone text messaging on the literacy level of semi-literate in Nigeria 3. Text messaging and teenagers: a review of the literature 4. Using text messaging in the secondary classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> education 3. Period of mobile phone ownership 4. Uses and barriers to text messaging
3. The relationship between demographic characteristics of learners and their use of text and standard form of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The effects of text messaging and instant messaging on literacy 2. Children's text messaging: abbreviations, input methods and links with literacy 3. Txt msg and school literacy: does texting and knowledge of text abbreviations adversely affect children's literacy attainment. 4. Age and its influence on second language acquisition. 5. Good spellers write more textism than bad spellers in Instant Messaging: The case of French. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Age 2. Gender and educational background 3. Auditorial information 4. Age 5. Age, level of spelling
4. The effects of texting language on spelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Txt msg and school literacy: does texting and knowledge of text abbreviations adversely affect children's literacy attainment? 2. Embracing the mobile phone technology: its social and linguistic impact with special reference to Zimbabwean Ndebele 3. Student's silent messages: Can teacher verbal and nonverbal immediacy moderate student use of text messaging in class? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experience with texting 2. Cultural, social, psychological impact 3. Level of education, motivation to text

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives clarity on the methodology used by the researcher in collecting the data needed to accomplish the aims of this study. Research methodology is, according to Vogt (2016), the overall research design and strategy used in a research study. This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the research design and specific methodology which was used to investigate the relationship between texting and learners' language development.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the methodology that was used and to detail its application. It presents the research design selected by the researcher which she considered most appropriate to allow her to address the research problem in a specific way.

The chapter entails the research design, research method, research instrument, the ethical issues as well as the validity and reliability of the scale used in data collection. A self-structured dialogue and spelling exercise was used as a research instrument. The research instruments are explained and reasons given as to why these instruments were considered appropriate to this study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is the strategy that the researcher chooses to describe, explain and enlighten on how the research question will be answered. A research design sets out the details for the investigation, such as data required, method to be used in collecting and analysis of data in response to the research questions.

According to Kumar (2014, p. 122):

A research design is the road map that you decide to follow during your research journey to find answers to your research questions as validly, objectively, accurately and economically as possible.

Thus, to Kumar (2011), a research design serves two important functions, namely, the identification and development of procedures for undertaking a study and the importance of quality in these procedures to ensure their validity, objectivity and accuracy. The researcher employed an SPSS statistician to achieve the objectives of the study.

Plester et al. (2008) state in their article entitled *Text msg n school literacy: does texting and knowledge of text abbreviations adversely affect children's literacy attainment?* that research conducted previously focused on adolescents and young adults who had already learnt to read and write standard English to acceptable levels of achievement. The results of the study showed that there was no evidence that texting damages Standard English in pre-teens, but there was evidence that experience with text language raises and increases the awareness of language attainment. This study focuses on the Intermediate Phase learners from Grade 4 to Grade 6; those learners who are still learning the correct use of English language. The research will be conducted as a controlled quantitative study in which data are collected using a cross-sectional study design (also known as one-shot). Data collection will take approximately one hour per school.

3.2.1 Permission

With the aim of administering the research instrument to the learners, permission was first sought from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture. The request was accompanied by the research instrument that would be administered to the learners. Thereafter, permission was requested from the District Manager to administer the research instrument to the Intermediate Phase learners in various schools in Esikhalenisenkosi Circuit in King Cetshwayo District. The researcher sought permission in writing from each of the principals of the schools randomly selected for the study. The

research instrument (Appendix C) and the letter requesting permission (Appendix F) were delivered to the schools. Letters to parents and learners requesting permission (Appendices G, H) to participate in the study were also delivered to the schools.

3.2.2 Sampling procedure

Sampling, according to O’leary (2014), is the process of selecting elements of a population for inclusion in a research study. Samples can make the research process manageable.

A cluster sample is a method that was used to select the respondents in this study. (Kish, 1965, p. 164) states that, “cluster samples are generally selected with stratification, because stratification has more advantages for cluster than for element sampling. Stratification denotes selection from several subpopulations called strata, into which the population is divided”. Cluster sampling according to Kumar (2014, p. 240) is based on the ability of the researcher to divide the sampling population into groups called clusters, and then to select elements within each cluster. Cluster sampling is a technique in which clusters of participants that represent the population are identified and included in the sample. The main aim of cluster sampling can be specified as cost reduction and increasing the levels of efficiency of sampling. Clusters can be formed on the basis of geographical immediacy or a common characteristic that has a correlation with the main variable of the study.

Clusters could be grouped according to similar characteristics that ensure their comparability in terms of learner population. Intermediate schools are a good example of clusters in this study. They have similar characteristics. Within these schools, an academic programme of these schools was selected, which for this study are learners from Grade 4 to Grade 6.

The samples in this study are drawn from the learner population in which isiZulu is the mother tongue and English is the first additional language. The sampling frame consists of 18 Intermediate Phase schools in Esikhalenisenkosi Circuit. The number of schools selected should be a quarter (25%) of the number of schools in the circuit. Therefore, five Intermediate Phase schools were selected. All the 17 names of these schools were put in a bowl and then picked out one by one, until all five were selected. The principals of these schools gave consent for learners in their schools to participate in the study, provided that the learners' parents gave consent to their children to take part in the study and that the learners agreed to participate.

3.3 RESEARCH METHOD

Research methods are key principles of research design, according to Guthrie (2010). Research methods are designed to help the researcher choose and use the right research method. They cover the whole process of research. In this study, a correlational method of research will be used. A correlation is a relationship between two variables. The researcher tried to find a correlation between four variables, namely; age, gender, grade and learner's access to a cellular phone. A quantitative research method was used in the study. Quantitative research according to Punch (2005), is the empirical investigation of the research question using scientific methods. The results collected in quantitative research are in the form of numbers and can therefore be analysed statistically to answer the hypothesis. This allows for very little preference, and if other researchers ran the analysis on the data collected, they would always end up with the same numbers at the end of it. The outcome of quantitative research is used to recommend a final course of action.

3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

This study has been influenced by other researchers such as Verheijen (2013), Lanchantin et al. (2014), Plester et al. (2008) and others who have used translation of texts from Standard English to text language and vice versa as well as a spelling test in their research. These seem to be the relevant research instruments as the researcher aims to explore further findings on the topic at hand.

In this study, spelling and translation of texts were used to gather data about the relationship between texting and language development in the Intermediate Phase. The spelling test consisted of twenty randomly-selected words most people used in texting. There were two sections with dialogues. In the first section, twenty-eight words were identifiable for translation from Standard English to texting language. Twelve words from the second section were to be translated from texting language to Standard English.

The research participants completed the spelling test and the translation tasks in the presence of the researcher. In all the five schools visited, two teachers in different schools chose to be present during the sessions. Participants had to write a spelling test to assess their morphology and phonological awareness. These words were dictated by the researcher who is an EFAL teacher. This was done to allow participants to hear the words in the pronunciation in which they are accustomed. A recorder could have been used, but the researcher did not want to have to change the method already planned, if for example, the researcher discovered that there was no electricity in one of the schools on the day of the visit. Participants had to listen to the word, and then write it down in the manner in which they understood it. Participants were told not to share their answers. Both these research methods targeted words that people usually use when texting.

The data collection instrument was divided into four sections. Section A elicits demographical data such as age, gender, grade the learner is doing, whether the learner owns a cellular phone and whether the learner uses text-messaging. In section B, participants had to translate a text from Standard English to text language. Textese messages consisted of 45 words, which make up 160 characters. Conventional messages in Section C consisted of 27 words (79 characters). Section D consisted of a spelling test. Participants wrote the messages and the spelling on a sheet of paper provided.

Participants were asked to translate text messages as if they were on their cellular phones. They had to imagine that they were sending the text message to a friend. In the section C, participants had to translate the text from text language to Standard English. The purpose of these two texts was to ascertain if the learner understands texting. Learners were again requested not to share their responses. The whole session took approximately one hour.

3.4.1 Scoring procedure

The research instrument was divided into four sections. The sections discussed how the respondents were required to complete the tasks and how the analysis of data was done.

Section A

The demographical data in Section A assisted the researcher in identifying the age and the grade at which learners are familiar with texting, which gender texts more than the other, the age at which learners have access to cellular phones and whether learners use text-messaging or not when writing messages.

Section B

The translation of texts from Standard English to text language in this section consists of 45 words, which make 167 characters. The researcher used the SPSS version 24 to analyse these results. The results assisted the researcher in showing how the majority of respondents responded.

Section C

In this section, texts were translated from text language to Standard English. The aim was to ascertain if the respondents know how to text.

Section D

Twenty (20) spelling words were called out by the researcher. The respondents wrote down the word as they heard and understood it. In this section, the researcher aimed to see if the respondent knew the correct spelling of words and also in what form the respondent would decide to write.

3.4.2 Validity and reliability of research instruments

Validity and reliability are fundamental indicators of good research. Together they are seen as what defines scientific proof, according to O'leary (2014). Dane (1990) asserts that validity refers to the extent to which a claim or conclusion is based on sound logic. Face and content validity is the type of instrument used in the study. The researcher ensured that the tasks measured what the researcher intended. The research instrument used in the study measured the link between the research questions and the objectives of the study. The researcher used valid and reliable instruments to collect data. The researcher ensured that participants understood the tasks before they attempted to respond.

The researcher made attempts to validate the research instrument by submitting the instrument to the supervisor. The supervisor looked at the sentence structure used, wording and the construction of the instrument. Discussions and comments were made for the attention of the researcher. Attention was paid to the contents of the instrument to ensure that it was in tandem with the objectives of the study.

O'leary (2014) states that when we have reliability, we know that results are not just one-off. Results would be the same under repeated trials, given that circumstances stay constant. The reliability of the instruments was evident when data collected showed reliability by being consistent in all target populations.

3.5 SAMPLING DESIGN/ PARTICIPANTS

O'leary (2014) claims that sampling is the process of selecting elements of a population for inclusion in a research study. Samples can make the research procedure manageable and allow the researcher to explore groups of people, organisations and events in their totality. A sampling design is the way students; families or electors are selected.

When working with quantified data, the basic rule is to attempt to get as large a sample as possible within time and expense constraints. Findings based upon larger samples have more certainty than those based on smaller ones. As a rule, when the sample is large, the findings are more accurate.

When a sample in quantitative research is selected, the primary aim is to achieve maximum precision within the sample and avoid bias in the sample selection. Random or probability sampling was used in this study. Random or probability samples rely on the process by which each element in a population has an equal chance of being selected. The fishbowl draw was used for selecting the sample. This method was used because the population was small. The names of schools in the sample were written on separate slips of paper, then put into a box and then picked out one by one without looking, until the number of slips selected equalled the sample size decided upon.

The participants were 213 learners in the five Intermediate Phase schools in Esikhawini Township, which is in Esikhalenisenkosi Circuit, uThungulu District in South Africa. The researcher confined the study to this circuit in Esikhawini due to financial constraints.

The table shows the number of schools that participated in the study, how the research instrument was distributed and the percentage of the research instrument that was completed.

Table 2: Distribution of research instrument

School	Number supplied	Number completed	% completed
School A	39	39	100%
School B	41	41	100%
School C	50	50	100%
School D	58	58	100%
School E	25	25	100%
TOTAL	213	213	100%

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.6.1 Permission to conduct research

Guthrie (2010) emphasises that before commencing with research, it is worthwhile to give some attention to the ethics required in conducting this exercise. Ethics guide the researcher to act with integrity towards participants in the research. They also view technical competence as an ethical obligation, which helps ensure that the researcher is regarded as credible when providing research results and that the work is held in high repute.

In order to gain access to schools, the researcher sought and obtained permission from the Department of Education, KwaZulu Natal in Pietermaritzburg. A letter from the Ethics Committee of the University of Zululand was also obtained. Both documents, including the research instrument the researcher intended to use in collecting data,

were sent to schools to ask for permission to conduct research with schools in the King Cetshwayo District.

3.6.2 Procedure

The researcher visited the principals of the five schools selected. A letter addressed to the principal requesting permission to conduct research was delivered to the principal, with both the copy of the ethical clearance certificate from the Department of Education and the University of Zululand, granting permission to the researcher to conduct research. (See Appendix A, B, C). This enabled the principals of participating schools to grant the researcher permission willingly to conduct research with learners. Letters requesting parents to give consent to their children to do research were handed to the principal.

The period to conduct research with learners agreed upon with principals was the period after the final examination in November 2016. This was regarded as the most suitable and convenient time since it would not interfere with teachers' assessment schedules. The researcher explained to the participants their role and the purpose of the research. The researcher guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality to the participants. Participants were also requested to complete the consent form, which clearly stated that they were not forced to take part in the research and that they may withdraw from participation at any time at which they wished.

In four of the schools, participants remained in their classrooms. In one school, different grades were combined. Teachers were present in the classrooms in two of the schools whilst the researcher collected data. In the other three schools, teachers decided not to be present.

3.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the research design, sample, data collection methods and procedures used were discussed to ensure the ethical standards, reliability and validity of the study.

The next chapter will focus on the scoring of quantitative data, presentation and the analysis of the research findings.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data, which was collected from the completed translation of texts and spelling. The presentation of data is systematically linked to the self-developed research instrument attached in Chapter 3. Two hundred and thirteen (213) respondents successfully completed the research. SPSS version 24 was used to analyse the results of data collected.

4.2 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

Validity, according to Guthrie (2010), refers to the correctness of the data collected. The instrument used in data collection should be able to measure that for which it is designed. The research instrument should indicate the appropriateness of each step in the research procedure.

When a research instrument is able to provide similar results when used repeatedly under similar conditions it is described as “reliable”. Reliability indicates accuracy, stability, and predictability of a research instrument: the higher the reliability, the higher the accuracy (Kumar (2014).

The researcher considered other factors affecting reliability of the research instrument, such as ensuring that the targeted words in the spelling as well as in the translation tasks are words commonly used when texting. Anonymity and confidentiality was also emphasised so that the respondents would respond truthfully and reliably.

4.2.1 Validity Test

To test for validity of the instrument, KMO and Bartlett’s test was used. The results are reported in table 3.

Table 3: Test of Validity (N=213)

KMO and Bartlett's Test			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.			.859
	Approx. Chi-Square		7298.450
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df		1770
	Sig.		.000

Table 3 indicates that the items used in the research instrument were reliable. The KMO and Bartlett's test indicate the value of significance measured .000 which is below 0.05. This shows a significant relationship between the variables in the study.

4.2.2 Reliability Test

To test for reliability of the instrument, the Alpha Cronbach's test was used. The results obtained are reported in the table below.

Table 4: Reliability Test (N=213)

Scale and Reliability Statistics				
		Std.	N	of Cronbach's
Mean	Variance	Deviation	Items	Alpha
88.98	115.599	10.752	60	.930

A Cronbach Alpha reliability of .930 was obtained which shows that the research instrument has a high reliability. The Cronbach Alpha reliability obtained is more than 0.7, which shows that the instrument is reliable. Therefore, the instruments used, that is, the translation of texts and the spelling could be considered suitable for use in the study.

4.3 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

In this section, the five variables in the research instrument were analysed, using the SPSS version 24, to determine if they have any relationship to language development. The results of the analysis are presented in table 5.

Table 5: Distribution of participants in the final study (N=213)

Presentation of Biographical Data				
Age	9 years	10 years	11 years	12 years
	16	52	69	76
Gender	Males	Females		
	73	140		
Grade	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	
	31	97	85	
Access to cellular phone	Yes	No		
	118	95		
Text-message	Yes	No		
	88	125		

Initially, the research was to be conducted on learners who own cellular phones. The principals and teachers in three of the schools did not want the classes to be disturbed. They wanted the entire class to participate in the research, irrespective of whether the participants owned a cellular phone or not. The research was thus carried.

The table shows the frequencies of the results. The analysis of data in table 3 indicates that the majority of participants were twelve years old, followed by those participants who were eleven years old, then those who were ten years old and the nine-year-olds

comprised the minority. More females participated in the study. The number of female participants was almost double the number of male participants. The highest number of participants came from grade 5, followed by grade 6 and lastly grade 4. The majority of participants who have access to a cellular phone is 118 (55%) compared to 95 (45%) of participants do not have access to a cellular phone. According to the results, 125 (59%) participants do not use text messaging as compared to 88 (41%) participants who do use text messaging.

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between texting and language development of intermediate phase learners in King Cetshwayo district and to determine the relationship between their demographical data such as their age, gender, grade, access to cellular phone and their use of text-messaging.

4.4.1 Aim 1: Relationship between demographic characteristics of learners and their use of texting language and standard form of English

Tables 6 - 9 illustrate the demographic distribution of the sample used in the study. Age is one of the variables the researcher wishes to study so as to ascertain whether it has any effect on language development. Learners learn language at an early age and gradually acquire more language as they grow up. The results will show if age has an influence on learners' use of texting or using Standard English.

4.4.1.1 Age and using texting and Standard English

H₀: There is no significant relationship between age of learners and their use of texting and standard form of English.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between age of learners and their use of text and standard form of English.

Table 6: Relationship between age of learners and their use of texting and standard form of English (N=213)

Cross tabulation of Age * Texting and Standard English			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	101.089 ^a	114	.801

Calculated $\chi^2 = 101.089$, $\alpha = 0.05$ and df = 114 tabled $\chi^2 = 124.342$

The outcome of the statistical analysis is that the chi-square value at df 114 was 101.089. The critical value is 124.342. If chi-square is less than the critical value, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted. Therefore, the age of learners and their use of texting language as well as writing in the standard form of English is not significant. This finding indicates that the age of learners does not play a role in the use of texting and the use of Standard English.

4.4.1.2 Gender and using texting and Standard English

The biographical results (in table 3) show that female participants use texting more often than the male participants. To test if there is a relationship between the participants' gender and using texting language and Standard English, the SPSS version 24 programme showed the following results as illustrated in the table below.

H₀: There is no relationship between gender of learners and their use of text and standard form of English.

H₁: There is a relationship between gender of learners and their use of text and standard form of English.

Table 7: Relationship between gender of learners and their use of text and standard form of English (N=213)

Cross tabulation of Gender * Texting and Standard English			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	60.800 ^a	38	.011
Calculated $\chi^2 = 60.800$, $\alpha = 0.05$ and df = 38 tabled $\chi^2 = 55.759$			

A chi-square value of 60.800 was obtained. The critical value is 55.759 (at df =38, $\alpha = 0.05$). The calculated chi-square is greater than the critical value. This means that the chi-square value is significant at the indicated confidence level and degree of freedom, suggesting that there is a statistically significant relationship between gender and learners' use of texting and using Standard English. Therefore, H_1 should be upheld and H_0 should be rejected. The variable of gender is associated with texting and language development. The results show that neither males nor females use texting and Standard English more than the other gender.

4.4.1.3 Grade and its relationship towards texting and Standard English

Learners develop language skills according to age as well as the grade they are doing. Some learners find it challenging to be taught all the subjects in English when they start Grade 4, the Intermediate Phase. They have to learn and understand English in order to be able to perform well in all subjects. The following table will show if the grade the participant is doing has any relationship with the use of texting and Standard English.

H_0 : There is no relationship between grade of learners and their use of texting and standard form of English.

H_1 : There is a relationship between grade of learners and their use of texting and standard form of English.

Table 8: Relationship between grade of learners and their use of texting and standard form of English (N=213)

Cross tabulation of Grade of learners * Texting and Standard English			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	68.728 ^a	76	.711

Calculated $\chi^2 = 68.728$, $\alpha = 0.05$ and df = 76 tabled $\chi^2 = 101.880$

The outcome of the statistical analysis is that the chi-square value (df = 76; $\alpha = 0.05$) was 68.728. The critical value is 101.880. This is statistically insignificant because the statistical hypothesis is less than the critical value. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted that there is no relationship between the grades the learners are doing and their use of texting and Standard English is upheld and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which states that, there is a relationship between grades the learners are doing and their use of texting and Standard English is rejected.

4.4.1.4 Access of learners to cellular phones and its relationship to texting and standard form of English

Some participants in this age bracket do not own cellular phones. The study, therefore, includes learners who have access to a cellular phone even though the cellular phone does not belong to him or her. These learners are able to use other applications of the cellular phone, besides making a call.

H_0 : There is no relationship between access of learners to cellular phones and their use of texting and standard form of English.

H_1 : There is a relationship between access of learners to cellular phones and their use of texting and standard form of English.

Table 9: Relationship between access of learners to cellular phones and their use of texting and standard form of English

Cross tabulation of Access of learners to cellular phone * Texting and Standard English			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	47.859 ^a	38	.131
Calculated $\chi^2 = 47.859$, $\alpha = 0.05$ and df = 114 tabled $\chi^2 = 55.759$			

The tabled chi-square value for the relationship between access of learners to cellphone and their use of texting and Standard English had a level of significance of 55.759, which is greater than the value of the calculated chi-square of 47.859. We, therefore, accept the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no relationship between the access of learners to cellular phone and texting and Standard English. This means that being able to learn texting language is not dependant on having access to a cellular phone. Learners do not need to own a cellular phone or have access to one in order to learn texting language.

4.4.2 Aim 2: The effect of texting language in the written forms of English

Some teachers in schools complain about the prevalence and influence of texting in learners' formal work. Learners have to be disciplined to use the correct and accepted form of writing when they are in class, without being prompted to do so. There has been a massive and rapid increase of short message service (SMS) and instant messaging (IMing) among the younger generations due to increased ownership of mobile phones and personal computers, even by school-aged children (Verheijen (2013)). It is therefore easy to understand why some teachers have a widespread fear of the intrusion of texting in schoolwork, with so many children owning or having access to cellular phones. Table 10 will attempt to demonstrate if learners at this age bracket understand what texting entails or whether they lack texting experience.

Section B of the research instrument consisted of the dialogue. Participants had to translate the dialogue from Standard English to texting. Twenty-eight words were targeted in the dialogue. These are the words the researcher expected the participants to change to texting language.

Table 10: The use of texting language in the written forms of English (N=213)

Converting English words to texting				
Word	Texting		Non-Texting	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
hello	154	72.3	59	27.7
my friend	141	66.2	72	33.8
would	168	78.9	45	21.1
you	130	61.0	83	39.0
like	158	74.2	33	25.8
to	163	71.8	60	28.2
come	154	72.3	59	27.7
with	176	82.6	37	17.4
the	192	90.1	21	9.9
library	179	84.0	34	16.0
I am	178	83.6	35	16.4
sorry	170	79.8	43	20.2
I can't	178	83.6	35	16.4
have	155	72.8	58	27.2
cook	165	77.5	48	22.5
supper	178	83.6	35	16.4
today	151	70.9	62	29.1
mother	150	70.4	63	29.6
will	168	78.9	45	21.1
be	176	82.6	37	17.4
home	175	82.2	38	17.8
late	172	80.2	41	19.2
tonight	156	73.2	57	26.8
it's	180	84.5	33	15.5
okay	133	62.4	80	37.6
we	196	92.0	16	8.0
go	197	92.5	16	7.5
tomorrow	150	70.4	63	29.6
Average percentage		77.7		22.3

The percentages for the frequencies in the texting column were added together and divided by the number of words. This gave the average percentage. This was done for the percentages in the non-texting column as well.

On the left are 28 words that were used in Section B of the instrument used for collecting data. The average percentage shows that 77.7% of the learners are able to convert words from Standard English to text language. Only 22.3% failed to convert the targeted words to texting language. This shows that a minority of the learners is not texting. Since the average is way above 50%, it shows that learners are texting.

The results show that learners are texting. More than 50% of the participants text a lot. Few participants are not texting.

4.4.3 Aim 3: The difference between writing in texting language and in the standard form of English

The results of table 8 indicate that most learners are texting. The following table will demonstrate if learners understand what texting is. The participants will be expected to convert words from texting language to the standard form of English.

Table 11: The difference between writing in text language and in the standard form of English (N=213)

Converting texting to English words				
Text word	Correct Form of English		Incorrect Form of English	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
LO	93	43.7	120	56.3
r	38	17.8	175	82.2
u	35	16.4	178	83.6
lm	98	46.0	115	54.0
abt	39	18.3	174	81.7
2day	57	26.8	156	73.2
ur	93	43.7	120	56.3
fone	94	44.1	119	55.9
4give	52	24.4	161	75.6
cum	55	25.8	158	74.2
2	46	21.6	167	78.4
bday	63	29.6	150	70.4
Average		29.9		70.1

On the left are twelve words which were targeted in the dialogue (Section C). Learners were required to convert a word in texting to the correct form of Standard English. The results show frequencies and percentages. The percentages were added together then divided by the number of words. On average, only 30% were able to convert words from texting language to Standard English. 70% were unable to convert the words from texting language to Standard English. This shows that learners at this age have not mastered the art of texting. Looking at the words, for example, only 43.7% of the learners were able to convert the word *LO* to the correct form of English. For the word *r*, only 17.8% were able to correctly convert the word from texting language to the correct form of English. In most cases, learners tend to revert to a phonetic language when converting words from texting language to Standard English. This raises suspicions whether learners understand what texting is or whether they know how to text.

4.4.4 Aim 4: The effect of texting on spelling

In Section D, participants had to listen to and write words that were called out to them. In this exercise, the spelling skills of participants were put to test. There were twenty words in total. The words were chosen because of their popular use in texting. The form of writing (texting or Standard English) the participants were expected to write was not explained. The aim of this task was to see in what form the participants would decide to write each word.

Table 12: The effect of texting on spelling (N=213)

The relationship between spelling and texting						
Words in standard English	Correct spelling		Wrong spelling		Textism	
	Frequenc y	Percent	Frequenc y	Percent	Frequenc y	Percent
about	207	97.2	4	1.9	2	.9
anyone	188	88.3	24	11.3	1	.5
before	175	82.2	37	17.4	1	.5
because	185	86.9	27	12.7	1	.5
between	188	88.3	25	11.7		
different	126	59.2	87	40.8		
everyone	182	85.4	30	14.1	1	.5
forever	179	84.0	33	15.5	1	.5
four	173	81.2	39	18.3	1	.5
friend	185	86.9	27	12.7	1	.5
great	152	71.4	61	28.6		
later	185	86.9	28	13.1	1	
minutes	63	29.6	149	70.0	1	.5
people	191	89.7	21	9.9	1	.5
please	170	79.8	35	16.4	8	3.9
today	207	97.2	5	2.3	1	.5
tomorrow	174	81.7	37	17.4	2	.9
tonight	192	90.1	18	8.5	3	1.4
two	187	87.8	24	11.3	2	.9
you	204	95.8	7	3.3	2	.9
Average		82.5		16.9		6

The table above shows on the left 20 words that learners were expected to spell. The results show both the frequencies and the percentages each word received in the three categories: correct spelling, wrong spelling and textism. The results of data analysis suggest that on average, most learners know how to write the correct spelling of words.

82.5% of learners were able to spell the words correctly. This percentage is way above 50%. Only 16.9% learners could not write the words correctly. The least percentage, 0.6%, suggests that these learners wrote the words in text language. These results also show that most learners do not need to be reminded on how to write formally when doing written tasks at school. They choose to write in Standard English.

The distinguishing characteristic between texting and wrong spelling is illustrated in the image of one participant's script. For the word #14. *minutes*, it is clear to see that the spelling is wrong. For words #16 to #20, it is also easy to distinguish that the participants wrote the words, *today*, *tomorrow*, *tonight*, *two* and *you*, in texting language. The results illustrate that learners still prefer to use the correct standard form of English when writing formal schoolwork.

SECTION D: SPELLING TEST	
Write the words in the space provided.	
1. about ✓	11. great ✓
2. any one ✓	12. late ✓
3. before ✓	13. minutes ✗
4. because ✓	14. people ✓
5. between ✓	15. please ✓
6. different ✓	16. 2 day ✗
7. everyone ✓	17. 2 morrow ✗
8. forever ✓	18. 2 night ✗
9. FOUR ✓	19. 2 ✗
10. Friend ✓	20. u ✗

Figure 2: The image taken from section D of a respondent's sheet

The table to follow will illustrate the relationship between texting and spelling. The words in the Section B and Section C dialogues were pooled together and their relationship against the spelling list in Section D was sought. Section B and C both have to do with the translation of words, irrespective of the method used. The hypothesis below will be tested.

H_0 : Texting does not significantly affect spelling.

H_1 : Texting significantly affects spelling.

Table 13: The relationship between texting and spelling (N=213)

The relationship between texting and spelling			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	621.946 ^a	646	.745

Calculated $\chi^2 = 621.946$, $\alpha = 0.05$ and df = 646 tabled $\chi^2 = 124.342$

The calculated chi-square value for the variable of spelling is 621,946, with df = 646, against the tabled chi-square value of 124.342, is not significant at .05 level. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) that texting affects spelling is upheld. Whilst, the H_0 , that texting does not affect spelling, is rejected. This means that texting significantly affects spelling.

4.4.5 Comparing the relationship between texting and spelling

The degree or strength of correlation between the two variables is illustrated in the table. The lists of words (Section B and C) were combined to find the strength of the relationship between the two variables.

Table 14: The correlation between texting and spelling (N=213)

The correlation between texting and spelling				
	Value	Standard Error ^a	Asymptotic Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Pearson's R	.322	.086	4.944	.000 ^c

The table illustrates the correlation between texting and spelling. The extent of correlation is given by the correlation of 0.322. A correlation of 0.322 shows a very weak relationship between texting and spelling. This means that the two variables are hardly related.

4.4.6 The relationship between texting and Standard English

The study serves to find the relationship between texting and English language development. The two tables to follow will demonstrate the relationship and the correlation between the two variables. Some of the tables above have shown that there is no relationship between texting language and English language development. The tables below will show if there is a relationship between texting and language development, the strength of the relationship and whether it is a positive or negative relationship.

The following table was done to determine if there is a relationship between texting and Standard English. The results in table 11 show that texting affects spelling and table 12 shows that there is no relationship between texting and spelling. Although some results are confusing, the table below will illustrate if there is a relationship between texting and Standard English.

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between texting and Standard English.

H_1 : There is a significant relationship between texting and Standard English.

Table 15: Comparison of texting and Standard English (N=213)

The relationship between texting and standard English			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	318.846 ^a	312	.383

Calculated $\chi^2 = 318.846$, $\alpha = 0.05$ and df = 312 tabled $\chi^2 = 124.342$

A chi-square value of 318.846 was obtained for the relationship between texting and Standard English. The critical value of 124.342 (df = 312; $\alpha = 0.05$) was observed. Therefore, one must uphold the alternative hypothesis (H_1) that says there is a significant relationship between texting and Standard English and reject the null hypothesis, H_0 , that there is no significant relationship between texting and Standard English. The variable of texting is not associated with Standard English. Table 16 serves to illustrate the extent and strength of the relationship between texting and Standard English.

Table 16: The correlation between Texting and Standard English (N=213)

The correlation between texting and standard English				
	Value	Asymptotic Standard Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Pearson's R	.154	.083	2.256	.025 ^c

This table illustrates the extent and strength of correlation between texting and Standard English. A correlation of between 0 and 0.1 is very weak. A correlation of .154 shows a very weak but positive correlation between the two variables, texting and Standard English. Even though the relationship seems weak, it is a strong relationship.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the findings of the data collected was presented and interpreted. Age, grade and learner's access to cellular phones have no statistically significant relationship to texting and using the standard form of English. Gender has a statistical significant relationship towards texting and Standard English. The correlations for all the variables in relation to spelling, texting and Standard English are weak but significant. This shows that the variables tested in this study are significantly not related. The next chapter will present the summary, conclusion and recommendations in this study.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the research findings. In addition, the implications of the findings would be foregrounded and discussed. Limitations that the researcher encountered when conducting the study would be outlined. Recommendations and the avenues for further research would be presented.

5.2 SUMMARY OF STUDY

5.2.1 Aims

- a. To determine the influence of learner characteristics on texting language.
- b. To determine if learners use texting language in written forms of English.
- c. To determine if learners are able to write in the Standard English.
- d. To ascertain if texting affects spelling.

5.2.2 Methodology

A total of 213 participants in five primary schools took part in the study. Parents signed consent forms, which gave their children permission to participate in the study. The participants signed a consent form after the aim, procedure and the expectations of the research were explained to them. The research was conducted in all the five schools on separate days. The principals of these schools scheduled a date for the researcher to conduct the research with the learners. The SPSS Version 24 software programme was used to analyse the results collected during the study.

5.2.3 Results

The results showed a positive relationship between texting and language development. The biographical data has shown to have a positive effect on the relationship between texting and language development. The results also showed that age, grade and

learner's access to cellular phones have no influence on the relationship between texting and language development.

5.3 FINDINGS

The findings are reported according to the aims of the study.

5.3.1 Findings with regard to aim number one

The issue of texting has raised so many concerns about the future of the English language. The variables tested under the first aim try to reveal if texting has an influence on language development. The findings indicate that age has no influence on learners' texting patterns and their language development. This means that no matter how young or old a person may be, texting will not have an influence on the persons' language development.

The study revealed that more females (66%) participated in the study, as compared to 34% of males who participated in the study. The findings reveal that gender has an influence on texting and language development. The findings also show that females use texting language more than males, since their number is higher than that of males.

The findings in the study reveal that grade has no influence on texting and language development. If learners are texting, the grade the learner is doing would be irrelevant where texting is concerned. A learner in grade 4 would text the same as the learner in grade 6.

The study revealed that there is no relationship between learners' access to cellular phones and their language development. Learners know how to text even though they do not own a cellular phone. Owning a cellular phone or having an access to one does not prevent learners from learning texting language. Learners can text, irrespective of owning a cellular phone or having access to one.

The study attempted to alleviate teachers' and parent's fears about the future of the English language. In this study, 59% of participants do not use texting language, as compared to 41% who use texting language. This means that there are still learners who know that they have to use Standard English when they write formal school work. They do not need to be prompted or reminded to do so.

5.3.2 Findings with regard to aim number two

Findings in the study reveal that learners are texting and that they know how to text. Learners are able to convert a word from Standard English to texting language. The fear that stakeholders may have about the demise of Standard English is negated by the finding of the study that a learner cannot text without first knowing the word in its standard form context.

5.3.3 Findings with regard to aim number three

The study revealed that learners in this age bracket do not know how to write texting language. Their texting knowledge is influenced by the language they learn around them. The translation from texting language shows that learners should have been able to convert the most commonly used words in texting language, such as *bday*, *4give*, *2day*, just to name a few. This finding proves that learners text because their peers are texting and they have no idea of what texting really is.

5.3.4 Findings with regard to aim number four

The findings of the study reveal that texting affects spelling. Learners do not need to be reminded on how to write their formal school work. It is expected that learners would write the formal school work in the accepted and formal way. The existence of texting language amongst the formal school work shows that texting affects spelling. It might also show that some learners do not know when not to use the informal writing, especially when writing formal school work.

Although there is a relationship between texting language and Standard English, it might be better to embrace the fact that both are languages. There should be a relationship between the two, since the Standard English language contributed to the existence of texting language. The relationship between the two variables is a positive relationship.

5.4 LIMITATIONS

The following limitations were encountered when conducting the study:

- I. The principals did not want the classes to be divided according to whether learners own a cellular phone or not.
- II. The study had to be conducted on one grade per school in two schools.
- III. In one school, the teacher kept interfering and tried to instruct learners on how to respond.
- IV. The instrument used did not accommodate open-ended questions.
- V. Research was limited to one racial group and to an urban area.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The educators in the school should recognise the importance of language. To this end they should organise extra-curricular and co-curricular activities such as debates, talk-shows, dramatisations, story-telling and poetry displays to enhance language development in learners.

Language teaching should be of high priority in the Intermediate Phase. When learners are integrated into the Intermediate Phase, they are stripped of the bond and comfort they shared with their class teachers in the Foundation Phase. The new language teacher will only have the short time allocated per period to teach what is in the plan and will not have enough time to attend to individual difficulties or challenges.

The Department and schools should promote activities that help learners improve on language as well as instil the love and understanding of the language. Language teaching should not only start and end within the classroom walls, but learners should

be encouraged to get involved and participate in other extra-curricular language activities that would increase their language skills. The high enrolment in schools also hinders teachers to do their jobs effectively and competently. Language lessons require that learners get involved in the lesson and participate in oral activities to derive maximum benefit from the lesson. If the enrolment is high, the teacher-learner approach will not be effective.

The Department of Education should promote continuing education, courses and workshops for Language teachers. Courses should be prepared by experts in the field and teachers with experience in the changing methodologies. A workshop instructor should be someone with knowledge of the subject at hand and should be able to impart and develop teachers on the ever changing methodologies. Teachers allocated to teach languages should be specialists in the field.

5.6 AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should be conducted on learners of other racial groups in the Intermediate Phase. This research aimed to ascertain if the relationship between texting and language development affects learners in the Intermediate Phase. It would be suggested that future research should include learners in the FET Phase. The research should also not be limited to one area, but should include both the urban and rural areas.

5.7 CONCLUSION

It is important to understand that texting is a language on its own. It should also be emphasised that one cannot learn texting language first. One should first master the Standard English before learning texting language. Texting language is dependent on Standard English. Texting language needs Standard English in order to be recognised as a language on its own. Therefore, teachers and parents should encourage learners to learn and understand formal language at an early age so that when learners start using texting language, they would have mastered the correct use of Standard English language.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Declaration by candidate

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University's policies and rules applicable to postgraduate research, and I certify that I have, to the best of my knowledge and belief, complied with their requirements.

I declare that this proposal, save for the supervisory guidance received, is the product of my own work and effort. I have, to the best of my knowledge and belief, acknowledged all sources of information in line with the normal academic conventions.

I further certify that the proposed research will be original, and that the material to be submitted for examination has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

I have subjected this document to the University's text-matching and/or similarity-checking procedures and I consider it to be free of any form of plagiarism.

Signature : _____

Date : _____

APPENDIX B: Declaration by supervisor(s)

I am satisfied that I have given the candidate the necessary supervision in respect of this proposal and that it meets the University's requirements in respect of postgraduate research proposals.

I have read and approved the final version of this proposal and it is submitted with my consent.

Signature : _____

Print Name : _____

Date : _____

Signature : _____

Print Name : _____

Date : _____

APPENDIX C: Letter to request permission to conduct research

University of Zululand
Private bag x 1001
KwaDlangezwa
3886
Tel: 083 430 3654
Email: ntombimajola@yahoo.com
29 March 2015

The Director: Research Strategy Development and ECMIS
KZN Department of Education
P/Bag x 9137
PIETERMARITZBURG
3200

Sir/ Madam

A request for permission to conduct research with learners as subject.

I am conducting a research for M.Ed. Degree in the faculty of education at the University of Zululand. I am writing this letter to request permission to conduct research with learners and educators at schools in and around Esikhawini. The topic of the research is, The relationship between Texting and Language Development amongst Intermediate Phase learners in King Cetshwayo District.

The aims of the study are:

1. To determine the existence of texting language in the learners written school work.
2. To determine the effects of texting language on deviation from Standard English.
3. To determine the influence of learner characteristics on texting language.
4. To make the learners aware of the difference between texting language and Standard English.

Your consideration of this letter and granting of permission to do research will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Student: Ntombi O. Majola

Supervisor: Dr P.Pillay

APPENDIX D: Letter granting permission to conduct research



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane

Tel: 033 392 1004

Ref.:2/4/8/468

Miss NO Majola
PO Box 2679
ESIKHAWINI
3887

Dear Miss Majola

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DōE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEXTING AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AMONGST INTERMEDIATE PHASE LEARNERS IN UTHUNGULU”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 25 June 2015 to 31 July 2017.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

UThungulu District

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 26 June 2015

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa ...dedicated to service and performance
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004 **beyond the call of duty**
EMAIL ADDRESS: kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za / Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za
CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: WWW.kzneducation.gov.za

APPENDIX E: Ethical Clearance Certificate from the University of Zululand

**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**
(Reg No: UZREC 171110-030)



RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Website: <http://www.unizulu.ac.za>
Private Bag X1001
KwaDlangezwa 3886
Tel: 035 902 6887
Fax: 035 902 6222
Email: MangeleS@unizulu.ac.za

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Certificate Number	UZREC 171110-030 PGM 2016/311									
Project Title	The relationship between texting and language development amongst intermediate phase learners in uThungulu District									
Principal Researcher/ Investigator	NO Majola									
Supervisor and Co-supervisor	Dr P Pillay									
Department	Educational Psychology & Special Education									
Nature of Project	Honours/4 th Year			Master's	x	Doctoral		Departmental		

The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project proposal and the documents listed on page 2 of this Certificate.

Special conditions:

- (1) This certificate is valid for 2 years from the date of issue.
- (2) Principal researcher must provide an annual report to the UZREC in the prescribed format [due date-31 October 2017]
- (3) Principal researcher must submit a report at the end of project in respect of ethical compliance.

The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this Certificate, using the reference number indicated above, but may not conduct any data collection using research instruments that are yet to be approved.

Please note that the UZREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the UZREC
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

Classification:

Data collection	Animals	Human Health	Children	Vulnerable pp.	Other
X			X		
Low Risk		Medium Risk		High Risk	
				X	

The table below indicates which documents the UZREC considered in granting this Certificate and which documents, if any, still require ethical clearance. (Please note that this is not a closed list and should new instruments be developed, these would require approval.)

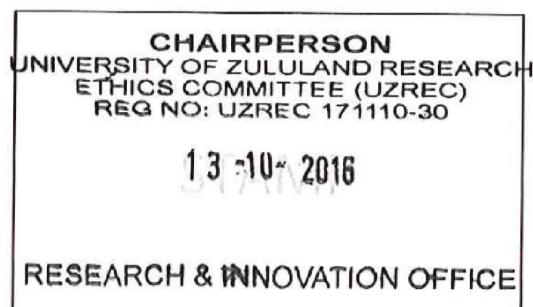
Documents	Considered	To be submitted	Not required
Faculty Research Ethics Committee recommendation	X		
Animal Research Ethics Committee recommendation			X
Health Research Ethics Committee recommendation			X
Ethical clearance application form	X		
Project registration proposal	X		
Informed consent from participants	X		
Informed consent from parent/guardian	X		
Permission for access to sites/information/participants	X		
Permission to use documents/copyright clearance			X
Data collection/survey instrument/questionnaire	X		
Data collection instrument in appropriate language		Only if necessary	
Other data collection instruments		Only if used	

The UZREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Certificate if
 - Any unethical principles or practices are revealed or suspected
 - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
 - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
 - The conditions contained in this Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting the research


 Professor Gideon De Wet
 Chairperson: University Research Ethics Committee
 Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Innovation
 13 October 2016



APPENDIX F: Letter to principals of schools requesting permission to conduct research with learners

University of Zululand
Private Bag x 1001
kwaDlangezwa
3886
Tel: 083 430 3654
Email: ntombimajola@yahoo.com
29 March 2015

The Principal

.....
.....
.....

Sir

A request for permission to conduct research with learners.

I am writing this letter to request permission to conduct research with learners at your school. I am conducting research for the M.Ed. in the faculty of education at the University of Zululand. My research topic is: The relationship between Texting and Language Development amongst Intermediate Phase Learners in King Cetshwayo District.

The aims of the study are:

1. To determine the influence of learner characteristics and their use of texting and the standard form of English.
2. To determine if learners use texting language in written forms of English.
3. To make the learners aware of the difference between writing in texting language and the standard form of English.
4. To ascertain if texting affects spelling.

Your consideration and permission will be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

.....
Ntombi O. Majola

.....
Supervisor Dr P. Pillay

APPENDIX G: Parent's consent letter - Incwadi yomzali yokuvuma

Sawubona Mzali

Uyanxwenxa ukuba uvumele umntwana wakho ukuba abe yingxenye yalolu cwaningo. Kubalulekile ukuthi ubenokuqonda ukuthi ucwaningo lumayelanani nani. Ake uziphe isikhashana ufunde lolu lwazi olulandelayo ngokucophelela.

Lolu cwaningo lumayelana nabafundi basezikoleni zamabanga aphakathi (Intermediate Phase) kanye namababanga aphakeme (High Schools), nemizwa yabo ngokusebenzisa ulimi lwesiNgisi ngokufanele endaweni yase Mpangeni KwaZulu- Natali. Imiphumela yalolu cwaningo kuzokwabelwana ngayo nomnyango wezemfundo eyisisekelo, izobe inezincomo mayelana nemigomo namaqhinga azosiza ekuthuthukiseni nase kwenzeni izinga lokusebenzisa ulimi lwesiNgisi ngokufanele..

Uyaqinisekiswa ukuthi lonke ulwazi azosinika lona umntwana wakho luzoba yimfihlo. Asikho isidingo sokuba umntwana abhale igama lakhe noma lesikole sakhe kulolu luhla lwemisebenzi esizocela ayenze kulolucwaningo.

.....
Ngiaqinisekisa ukuthi ngifundile ngezwa kahle okushiwoyo nami nganikwa ithuba lokubuza imibuzo.

Ngiyazi ukuthi umntwana wami uzokwenza lokhu engaphoqiwe, nokuthi angayeka noma nini, angazisho nezizathu zokungaqhubeki, konke lokhu uzokwenza mahhala. Ngizivumele mina ukuba abe yingxenye yalolu cwaningo.

UKUSAYINA : USUKU.....

Ngiyabonga ngeqhaza lakho nokubambisana kulolucwaningo.

Majola N.O.

Inombolo kamakhalekhukhwini: 0834303654

Isikhungo semfundo ephakeme sakwaZulu

Uphiko lweZemfundo

Umnyango wezeNgqondo neMfundo eyiSipesheli

Private Bag x100

KwaDlangezwa

3886

APPENDIX H: Child participant's consent form

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(Child participant)

(Acknowledge reference to Stellenbosch and Fort Hare)



Project Title: The relationship between texting and language development

Researcher's name: Ntombi Majola

Name of participant:

1. Has the researcher explained what s/he will be doing and wants you to do?

YES

NO

2. Has the researcher explained why s/he wants you to take part?

YES

NO

3. Do you understand what the research wants to do

YES

NO

4. Do you know if anything good or bad can happen to you during the research?

YES

NO

5. Do you know that your name and what you say will be kept a secret from other people?

YES

NO

6. Did you ask the researcher any questions about the research?

YES

NO

7. Has the researcher answered all your questions?

YES

NO

8. Do you understand that you can refuse to participate if you do not want to take part and that nothing will happen to you if you refuse?

YES

NO

9. Do you understand that you may pull out of the study at any time if you no longer want to continue?

YES

NO

10. Do you know who to talk to if you are worried or have any other questions to ask?

YES

NO

11. Has anyone forced or put pressure on you to take part in this research?

YES

NO

12. Are you willing to take part in the research?

YES

NO

Signature of Child

Date



APPENDIX I: Research instrument

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA (RESPONDENT'S PARTICULARS)

Mark what is applicable with a tick. (✓)

1. My age is:

10	
11	
12	

2. My gender is:

male	
female	

3. I am in:

Grade 4	
Grade 5	
Grade 6	

4. Do you have a cell phone?

YES	
NO	

5. Do you use text-messaging?

YES	
NO	

SECTION B: DIALOGUE

Translate the Standard English passage into text language.

Hello, my friend.

Would you like to come with me to the library? We have to get information for the group project.

I am sorry. I can't. I have to cook supper today. Mother will be home late tonight.

It's okay. We will go tomorrow.

SECTION C: DIALOGUE

Translate from texting language to Standard English.

LO! How r u?

Im sorry abt 2day. Was jealous abt ur new fone.

Okay. I 4give u

Will u still cum 2 my bday party

SECTION D: SPELLING TEST

Listen to the audio and then write the words down as you hear them.

1.	11.
2.	12.
3.	13.
4.	14.
5.	15.
6.	16.
7.	17.
8.	18.

9.	19.
10.	20.