



STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE OF INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TEXTING TREND ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

English language proficiency has become an imperative in the current day knowledge society and the 21st century smart graduates expected to have the ability to communicate properly in English for their personal, occupational purposes. The Global Information age has provided many avenues to facilitate communication channels. Educational communication has certain bench marking aspects as far as the language is considered. The writing skill holds a prominent position in the prevailing pattern of education. Even the Planning Commission of 2012 laid special emphasis on verbal and written communication skills in English as they improve the employability of the youth. Today, social media has become a popular media for exchanging information in most of the fields including the academics. However, the Corona pandemic scenario compelled to have virtual classrooms and it is undeniable that even social media channels have provided easily accessible platforms to many educational institutions to facilitate educational communication. It is also a known fact that social media platforms are very popular among students. Most of the youngsters, even those who hesitate to interact freely in a physical class, freely communicate with their friends and peer groups. So, the researcher, with an objective to study the impact of social media on students writing efficiency and on their academic performance, conducted this study. The researcher administered a questionnaire for students at the college level. It included 940 undergraduate students from ten different colleges affiliated to KSKV Kachchh University in five different disciplines. The paper discusses the findings students' perspective. Responses from the questionnaire were analyzed using the descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentage. The inferential statistics of Chi square was used to test the stated hypotheses at 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance.

Key Words: employability, educational communication, writing skills, social media

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Language is a means of communication which enables one to express ideas and concepts as well as moods feelings and attitudes. English has played an important role in every field of our country. Though it is the official second language, it is the most commonly spoken, read, written language in our country after Hindi. Today it has become imperative as no advancement is possible and no exchange of communication is possible without English. English seems to be an essential criterion in the current scenario, where a person who doesn't have the ability to express his thoughts in English has to face many difficult situations at every phase of life. The language proficiency has become the most effective way of asserting one's superiority. Even the Employment solutions company Aspiring Minds report substantiates that communication skills are the bench marking aspects which determine the employment opportunities for the current day smart generations. In the wake of technological



revolution, it has become global means of communication. So, English, being a key language, has got its emphasis not only in reading or writing but also in speaking. In academics, of four LSRW skills, writing holds a special position as it is the commonest way of evaluating a student's performance in English.

The Emergence of Social media

Today, the ICT Information and Communication Technology revolution has broadened the scope of communication and converted the entire world into a global village. It has made the process of communication easier, faster and effective. It facilitates to provide information, share the content and knowledge, enlightenment, entertainment and keeps us updated with the ongoing changes across the globe. It has added many avenues and social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Messenger, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Google talk and many others applications. All these social media portals are extensively used for mutual interactions amongst old and new friends for various purposes. Some of these sites have become most popular among the students.

Being the representatives of smart generation, all the youngsters welcomed the changes in the communication processes. Accordingly, even in their personal communication, they started using technology enabled devices like computers and android phones. Instead of writing letters, they are communicating with their social groups through social media. The number of social media users has been growing constantly. It has become a prominent medium of their interpersonal and group communication. Today if we look at the blogs it is full of web slang, contracted forms of words, acronyms, and wrong choice of words or

misspelt words. While texting through social media, they hardly think of the bench marking aspects of language proficiency in academics. On one side English language proficiency has become a mandatory either for pursuing higher studies in any discipline or for securing a secured career in any profession. Communicative competence is highly demanded in job market. Even the survey report by employment solutions company by Aspiring Minds revealed that poor communication skills and inadequate computer literacy are the major lacunae of the present-day graduates which hamper their progress.

But, it was noticed that only a few exceptional students were found to be capable of writing and speaking correct English at the final year of their graduation. Many of them were incapable of reading a book with correct pronunciation and following it independently even at this under graduation level. Incorrect spellings and ungrammatical constructions were found to be quite common even among the college students. Correct use of English idioms and figures of speech seemed to be almost unknown. But they actively text through their social media interactions freely and spontaneously. While texting they hardly bother about the quality aspects which are expected in evaluating formal written communicative efficiency.

With the advent of social media networking development, most of the students extensively use these channels for their inter and intra communication. The majority of the student users, regularly text their instant messages through SMS (Short Messaging Service). This has brought about a revolution in the world of communication. Most of the youngsters seem to be hooked on it. It is very common to see young people either holding the handset to their ear or playing on the keys with their nimble fingers. The cell phones in their pockets or wallets keep producing “beep” sounds receiving messages to which a quick reply needs to be sent. It is believed that average



young person sends 20 SMSs in a day. It is estimated that 20 billion messages or more are sent every month worldwide. “Short” is the most important and meaningful word in today’s messages. The language of this instant messaging has come to be called lingua shrunk in which punctuations make words, letters create sentences and words become paragraphs. Further this includes alphanumeric language. This is a language in which alphabets, numbers and sometimes punctuation marks make up the entire message. At times it seems that we have to learn altogether a new kind of language. For example, ‘Good for you’ becomes ‘GD 4 U’: or the famous line of Shakespeare, “To be or not to be: that is the question”. becomes ‘2B or nt 2 B tht is th ?’; ‘See you later’ becomes ‘C U L&R’. It is of course necessary that both sender and the receiver are familiar with the code. This instant messaging is a perfect example of the process of encoding and decoding in communication. (Sinha) It is in the form of dialogue and it is full of shorthand transcriptions of English words pronunciation and speech sounds. To quote an instance, ‘are’ is written as ‘R’, ‘You’ is written as ‘U’, ‘be’ is written as ‘B’ etc. Sometimes they omit the use of vowels (ex ‘Swt’ for “sweet”)

Considering this careless texting phenomenon of the youngsters, the researcher imagining the extent of damage of this sort of communication attempted to study the influence of the social media texting phenomenon on the student's communicative competence and its impact on their academic performance. In the academic field, especially in subjects like English, the entire process of evaluation of academic performance is determined by certain benchmarking aspects in written communication. Clarity of thought and expression is required along with proper word spellings, punctuation and capitalization marks. Omission of articles, prepositions, wrong spellings and ungrammatical construction of sentences have some adverse influence on the marking. Walter K Smart states, “Overall efficiency in writing efficiency in the use of language during college years and thereafter, is acquired through the cultivation and practice of good writing habits.”

Several studies have been carried out by different researchers to assess how the use of social media impact student’s academic performance. Some studies revealed that social media texting habit enhances the students communication skills and some others found that frequent use of social media will adversely affect their academic performance. (Al-rahmi, 2013) found that by collaborative learning and improve the students' academic performance. (Belal, 2014) confirmed that students, as well as the teachers, can formulate group discussions where they can exchange their ideas, can share course-related materials, appeal to their students about assignments which help the students to enhance their writing as well as their speaking. However, the findings affirmed that digital social media also has some negative influence. (Malik, 2020) stated that social media put positive impact on behaviour of the students but has not changed the academic performance of the students in terms of improved grades. (Khan et al., 2019) showed that the students’ writing skills were impacted by the use of social media and he had highlighted the negative effect of social media on students writing skills. (Abbasova, 2016) indicated that their grammar gets worse because of social network usage. Based on the findings of the present study, it can confidently be stated that social networks impact students' writing mostly compared to the other skills. (Pineteh, 2013) revealed that as a result of the social media the under graduate students fail to develop the required level of writing skills which becomes a problem for presenting their thoughts properly in academic writing. This indirectly points out the impact of social media in academic writing which



effects their performance in academics.

The researcher noticed that research studies focussed on the influence of this social media networks and the impact of this social media networking on students' academic performance and communication skills. So, the researcher attempted to study the texting phenomenon of college students and its impact on their academic performance and with regards to their gender, mother tongue and medium of education from their perspective.

Statement of the Problem

A study of the social media texting phenomenon of college students and its influence on their academic performance

Objectives of the study

- To study the students' social media texting phenomenon from their perspective
- To find out if there is any association between students' demographic factors such as gender, mother tongue, medium of instruction and their academic programme and students' responses on social media texting
- To know the influence of social media texting on students' academic performance, from their own perspective

Hypotheses:

Ho: - There is no association between opinion/response on selected aspects of their social media texting phenomenon of male and female students, mother tongue of the respondents, medium of instruction and academic programme they pursue.

Research Methodology:

Design of the Study: This is a descriptive survey

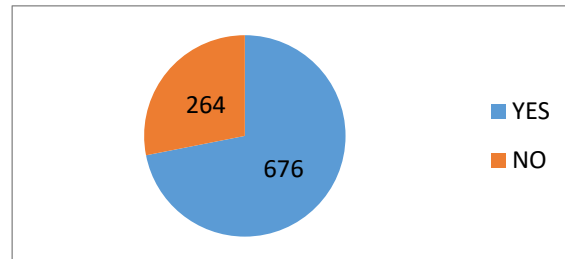
Population and the Sample: The population includes all the 2820 final year undergraduate students enrolled in ten selected colleges in five different disciplines. The sample consisted of 940 final year graduating students. It consists of 229 final BA students followed by 193 BSc students, 410 BCom students, 56 BCA students and 52 BBA

students in all. All these ten colleges located in the district of Kachchh Gujarat. The details are given in the following table

Table1 Demographic Details of Students' Sample

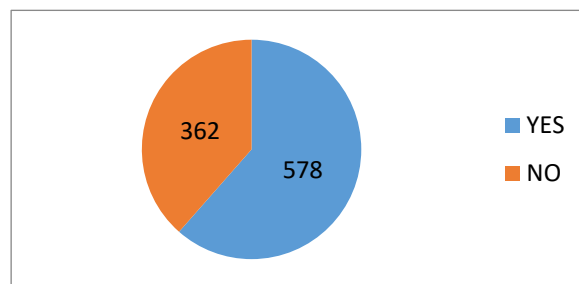
Mother Tongue	Gender	Medium of Instruction
Gujarati: 725 (77%)	Male : 435(46%)	Gujarati: 389(41%)
Hindi : 141 (15%)	Female: 505(54%)	Hindi: 202 (21%)
Others : 74 (8%)		English : 349 (37%)
Total : 940	940	940

Figure 1. showing Student Respondents' of Skill enhancement



As shown in the above figure no 1 it is asserted that out of 940 respondents, 676 respondents believe that social media network enhances their communicative abilities in English language and the remaining 264 of them responded negatively.

Figure No2 showing Students' responses on Consideration of spelling



From the above pie chart no.2, it is observed that out of 940 respondents, 578 (61.48%) of the respondents check their spellings while texting on social media and the remaining 362(38.51%) of the respondents do not check their spellings while texting on social media.

Table no.2 Students' Responses on their Practice of using Acronyms

Options	No of Responses	Percentage
Yes	711	75.6383
No	229	24.3617
Total	940	

From the above table no. 2, it is observed that 711 (75.63%) of the respondents mentioned that they use acronyms while texting on social media and the remaining 229(24.36%) of the respondents do not use acronyms while texting on social media.

In the next question, the respondents are asked to mention whether they keep all the rules and regulations and bench marking aspects of written communication skills while drafting the message or not.

Table no. 3 Students' perspective of considering Mechanics of Writing

Options	No of Responses	Percentage
Yes	510	54.25532
No	430	45.74468
Total	940	

From the above table no.3 and pie figure no.3 it is clearly stated that 510(54.25%) of the respondents keep in mind all the rules and regulations of mechanics of writing skill in English language while texting on social media and the remaining 430(45.74%) of the respondents ignore all the rules and regulations of mechanics of writing skill in English language

Fig.no 3 Students’ perspective of considering Mechanics of Writing

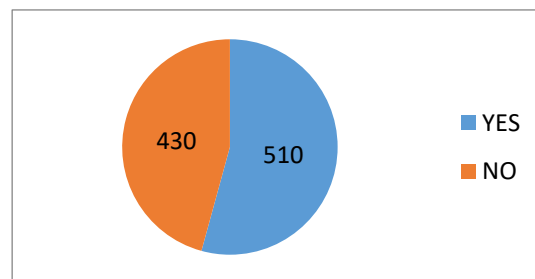
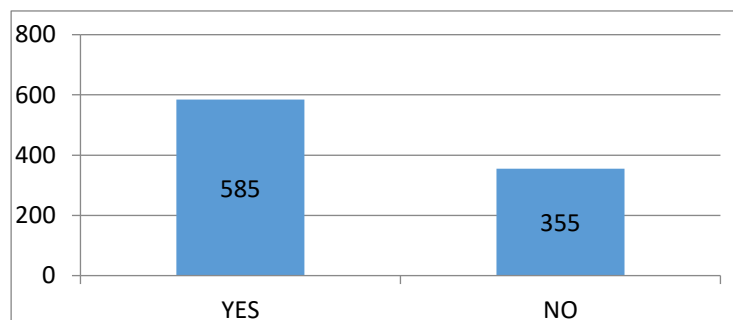


Table no.4.Students’ perspective of social media texting and Academic writing

Options	No Responses	Percentage
Yes	585	62.23404
No	355	37.76596
Total	940	

Figure no.4.Students’ perspective of social media texting and Academic writing



From the above table no.4.and figure no.4. it is observed that 585 (62.23%) of the respondents believe that there is relationship between social media texting and formal academic writing skills. 355(37.76%) of the respondents didn’t believe in this.

Major Findings:

- 72% of the students believe that they can enhance their communication skills their social media networking.
- Their responses confirmed that 42%of the respondents do not check the grammatical aspects while texting on social media.
- 27% of the students do not use words carefully in their social media communication.

- 39% of them confirmed that they do not take care of their spellings.
- 76% of the students regularly use acronyms in their social media texting.
- 46% of them reported that they don't consider aspects of mechanics of writing skills.
- Majority of the students' agreed that they freely use each of the acronyms /short forms while communicating through social media
- 62% of the student respondents' responses confirmed that they believe that their social media texting has got some association with their formal writing skills.
- Majority of them (52%) believe that social media affects their academic performance.
- Most of the students opined that social media texting habit has influences their efficiency in academic performance
- 68% of the student respondents feel that social media texting adopts non -standard and contracted forms of English words.
- Most of the students opined that social media texting habit may influence their efficiency in academic performance in dialogue writing, followed by essay writing, letter writing, report writing segments.
- While mentioning about their problematic segments in which they commit regular mistakes in written English,487 respondents mentioned grammar as the most complicated aspect, followed by choosing the right word and spelling (342), punctuation marks (322) and capitalization (227) and so on.
- 42% of them agree that the habit of social media texting is damaging the quality of academic writing skill.
- 63% of the respondents think that acronyms interfering in formal academic writing may result in low percentage of marks
- 22% of the student respondents do not know the difference between social media texting and formal academic writing.

Hypotheses Testing:

Table No 5 Chi- Square - Gender, Mother Tongue, Medium of Instruction & Academic Programme and Students Responses on the impact of social media on their Communicative Competence and Academic Performance.

Sr no	Students Perspective of social media /its impact on linguistic abilities	Gender (Male/Female)	Mother Tongue (Gujarati/Hindi/Others)	Medium of Instruction (Gujarati/Hindi/English)	Academic Programme BA/BCom/BSc/BA/BCA
1	Communication skill enhancement	0.000**	0.967	0.001**	0.551
2	Impact of acronyms on spelling	0.627	0.000**	0.462	0.011*
3	Influence on Academic performance	0.087	0.053	0.000**	0.002*
Note: * denotes significance at 5% level ** denotes significance at 1% level.					



Ho: - There is no association between opinion/response on selected aspects of their social media texting phenomenon of male and female students, mother tongue of the respondents, medium of instruction and academic programme they pursue.

H1: - There is association between opinion/response on selected aspects of their social media texting phenomenon of male and female students, mother tongue of the respondents, medium of instruction and academic programme they pursue.

From the results of the Chi -square as given in the above table No.1, it was found that there is significant association between the students' responses regarding one aspect in skill enhancement through social media (0.000) in gender, one aspect in mother tongue in its impact in spelling (0.000) and two aspects in medium of instruction in communication skill enhancement (0.001) and its impact on academic performance (0.000) and in two aspects in their academic programme in impact of acronyms on spelling (0.011), influence of texting on academic performance (0.002) . So it confirmed that significant association is found in their responses regarding their perspective of social media texting and its impact on their communicative confidence in two aspects, impact of using acronyms on their spelling (0.011) and influence of social media texting on their academic performance (0.002) in academic programmes. The Chi-square results also confirmed that there is significant association between academic programmes and students' habit of using acronyms, short or contracted forms or web slang in their academic programmes. So, the hypothesis stand rejected as 'P' value of Chi- square was <0.05 in one criterion for gender, one criterion for mother tongue, two criteria for medium of instruction and two criteria for academic programme. where significant results were observed. Accordingly, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted.

Conclusion:

The study confirmed that though social media has many positive aspects as it encourages collaborative learning attitude, stimulates critical thinking skills, the smart teenagers and youth do not have that efficiency to make use of it properly and carefully. The students' attitude towards their social media texting trend revealed their casual attitude. If the same tendency is reflected unknowingly in their formal writing, that will definitely influence their academic performance adversely. Some of the student respondents are unaware about the differences between formal and informal communication aspects. The academic fraternity expects all the bench marking aspects of written communication in English subject. It is undeniable fact that most of the qualifying graduates do not have proper communicative abilities in spite of studying this subject for twelve formal years. In such scenario, if they are exposed to new words, slang, shorthand communication which is not acceptable in academics, this may damage their career prospects. The results from the findings showed some of the possible adverse influences on students' written communicative segments. The study concludes with a suggestion that teachers should guide the students and make them realize the need to distinguish between the formal and informal communication. They should be informed about how they can maximize the benefits of social media, by making proper utilization of it.

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