IMPACT OF SHORT MESSAGING SERVICE (SMS) LANGUAGE ON THE WRITTEN ESSAYS OF RURAL AND URBAN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN

ZARIA METROPOLIS, KADUNA STATE

BY

OKAFOR ABUMCHUKWU EBERE

B.Ed (ENGLISH)

M.Ed/EDUC/0901/2009-2010

BEING A THESIS SUBMITTED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION IN FULFILMENT OF THE AWARD OF MASTER IN EDUCATION (TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE) AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, KADUNA STATE.

DECEMBER, 2014.

DECLARATION

I hereby, declare that this thesis is written by me and that it is a record of my research work except where reference is made to published literature and assistance sought which were duly acknowledged.

……. **…….**
OKAFOR ABUMCHUKWU EBERE **DATE**
(Candidate)

CERTIFICATION PAGE

This thesis titled ñ Impact of short messaging service (SMS) language on the written essays of rural and urban senior secondary schools in Zaria metropolis, Kaduna stateò by Okafor Abumchukwu Ebere has met the requirement governing the award of the degree of master of Education (Teaching English as a second language) of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Therefore, is hereby approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

é é é é é é é é é é é é . Dateé é é é é é é é é é é

Dr. Ramlatu Jibir Daura
Chairman, Supervisory Committee

é é é é é é é é é é é é .. Dateé é é é é é é é é é é

Dr. Sadiq
Member, Supervisory Committee

é é é é é é é é é é é é .. Dateé é é é é é é é é é é

Prof F.S.M Koya
Head of Department
Arts and Social Science Education

é é é é é é é é é é é é . Dateé é é é é é é é é é é

Prof A.Z Hassan
Dean School of Postgraduate

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late mother Mrs. Beatrice Okafor for her unforgettable support while she was alive, and Professor K.O.K Okafor Udeozor for the good foundation he inculcated in me.

Also to friends who in one way or the other gave their moral and spiritual support throughout this research work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Foremost, I would like to express my profound gratitude and deep regards to my supervisorDr. Ramlatu Jibir Daura, for her continuous support, patience, motivation, enthusiasm and immense knowledge. Her exemplary guidance, monitoring, suggestions, criticisms and constant encouragement helped me throughout the course of this thesis.

My sincere thanks go to Professor Isaac Olaofe my lecturer for his cordial support and valuable information which helped me in completing this task through various stages. His suggestions were really helpful.

I am obliged to Dr. Amodu Eneojoh Jonah of the English Department, Ahmadu Bello university, Zaria for his contribution to the success of this research work, Iam grateful for his cooperation during the period of my assignment, his material was quite useful.

I give my deep sense of gratitude to Professor Onyemelukwe of the French Department, ABU, Zaria for her encouragement and advice right from the beginning of the programme.

I shall not forget my uncle chief Chukwuma Anueyiagu whose hard work made me to attain this level today and Engineer Chukwujekwu Okafor for his support and encouragement.

I am indebted to Mrs Binta Ahmed Saka who had always been there for me right from the onset of this research work and to all my friends and colleagues for their concern and useful contributions.

Above all, my profound gratitude goes to God almighty for his divine wisdom and guidance throughout the period of this programme.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of Short messaging Service (SMS) language on the written essays of rural and urban senior secondary school students in Zaria metropolis, kaduna state. The design adopted for the study is the descriptive survey design. Five secondary schools were selected for the study, three from the urban and two from the rural area. The sample of the study comprises 100 students from the selected secondary schools, SS2 students were used. For data collection, samples of the students' written essays were examined for the following features of SMS: spelling errors; lack of punctuation; over-punctuation; shortening of words, incomplete sentences and acronyms. These were grouped under the four components of the WASSCE marking scheme which are content, organization, mechanical accuracy and expression. The data was analyzed using t-test statistical instrument. The results of the study showed that using signs and symbols (SMS) has an effect on the development of content, organization, mechanical accuracy and expression components of the students' essay writing. Texting helps students to develop writing ability and create ideas but these ideas are not properly presented. In the light of the results of the study, the researcher recommended that students be given more essay writing exercises and teachers of English should endeavor to mark regularly based on the content, expression mechanical accuracy and organization components of the WASSCE marking scheme and give corrections and feedback.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é . ii

Certification é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é . iii

Dedication é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é . iv

Acknowledgement é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é v

Abstract é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é .. vi

Table of contents é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é vii

List of Tables é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é .. viii

List of Appendices é é é é é é é é é é é é é é .. ix

1.0 Definition of Terms é é é é é é é é é é é é x

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study é é é é é é é é é é . 1

1.2 Statement of the problem é é é é é é é é é é 6

1.3 Purpose of the Study é é é é é é é é é é é 7

1.4 Research Questions é é é é é é é é é é é . 8

1.5 Research Hypotheses é é é é é é é é é é .. 8

1.6 Significance of the Studyé é é é é é é é é é . 9

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study é é é é é é é é 10

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1Introduction é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 11

2.2 Quality Writing, SMS and Essay writing é é é é é é é 12

2.3 SMS and the Content Component of essays é é é é é é 24

2.4 SMS and the Organization Component of essays é é é é 27

2.5SMS and the Expression Component of essays é é é é é 28

2.6 SMS and the Mechanical Component of essays é é é é é 32

2.7 The Use of Text messaging in Educational Institutions é é é 35

2.8 Previous Studies in SMS and Written Essays é é é é é é é . 43
2.9 Theoretical Framework é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 52
2.10 Summary of the Review é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 54
2.10.1 Gains from the Review é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 55
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
3.1 Introduction é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 56
3.2 Research Design é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 56
3.3 Population é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 57
3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure é é é é é é é é é é 57
3.5 Research Instrument é é é é é é é é é é é é é 58
3.6 Pilot Studyé é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 59
3.7 Validity and Reliability of Research Instrumenté é é é é é 59
3.8 Procedure for Data collectioné é é é é é é é é é é é 59
3.5 Data Analytical Procedure é é é é é é é é é é é é é 60
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA
4.1 Introduction é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 61
4.2 Analysis of Data é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 65
4.3 Major Findings of the Study é é é é é é é é é é é é 72
4.4 Discussion of Findings é é é é é é é é é é é é é . 73
4.5 Summary é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 78
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
5.1 Introduction é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 79
5.2 Summary of Findings é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 79
5.3 Conclusion é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 80
5.4 Recommendations é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 82
5.5 Suggestions for Further Researché é é é é é é é é é é 84
5.6 Limitations of the Studyé é é é é é é é é é é é é é 85
References é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 86

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 The population of Sampled Schools é é é é é é é é é é é 58
Table 3.8 Some Features of SMS Found in the Studentsô Written Essays é 60
Table4.1 SMS Features Observed in the Students Written Essays é é é 62
Table 4.2 T-test for Rural and Urban Secondary Schools é é é é é é é é 64
Table 5.2 Itemized Findings from the Sampled Essays

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 97

Appendix Bé é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é 98

Appendix Cé é é é é é é é é é é é é é é é ... 99

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The role of written language has clearly changed during the last decades with the emergence of the computer information and communication channels. A great deal of communication occurs by means of writing, which in addition to traditional pen and paper, is mediated by the computer, the internet and devices such as mobile phones. Text messaging is known as a popular tool among teenagers to send jokes, riddles, invitation to parties and other information to their friends. Texting has become a way of life of many teenagers, in particular, students, since most of them own and use mobile phones in their daily life. This phenomenon has in one way or another given rise to a new dialect.Technology plays a very important role in communication today. The cell phone is one of the most effective, convenient and widely used technological instruments used for communication globally. It uses a communication facility known as the short message service (SMS) which is relatively cheaper both in terms of time and money spent during the process of communication. One uses fewer and shorter words compared to direct communication over the cell phone.

Word processing and sending messages via email are among the most common activities on computers today. Written language is in general standardized with less (dialectal) variation compared with spoken language. Learning a written language means not only acquiring its more or less explicit norms and rules, but also learning to handle the overall writing system, Telemann,(1991). One learns how to segment words, form clauses and express themselves in many different contexts and for

different purposes. One learns to master grammatical, discursive and strategic competence to convey a thought or message to the reader.

Nowadays, the popular channels of communication that enables written interaction are web chat and instant messaging on the internet, as well as text messaging (SMS) via mobile phones. Some say SMS is an aberrant world of abbreviations, numerals and pictorial icons. The truth is, SMS has rewritten the way we communicate. More importantly, SMS has made human fingers do the 'talking'. Interestingly, it makes people more articulate and open. Texts used in SMS are produced mostly at all times with the aim of saving time, effort, and even cost because it is much cheaper to send messages via SMS than making calls.

According to Russell (2010), SMS has become the 'useful' tool of communication nowadays; formal language is under serious threat. 'Anti-formal communication structures' have been introduced and gradually gaining ground. This has become a matter of concern to linguists and language purists alike. Thus, several questions have been raised especially among teachers because they feel that by using SMS languages, it can affect the students' performance especially in their writing ability and product.

Students use text messages so frequently that an article by Carrington (2005) referred to them as ǿaddictsô There is almost an unspoken comment here that recreational use of SMS language may ultimately lead to addiction and a lowering of studentsô ability to shift between text types according to social context and that increasing mastery and use of txt must ipso facto lead to withering skills around other text forms embraced within the parameters of standard English. However since SMS

has become the 'useful' tool of communication nowadays, formal language may be under threat.

Lenhart and colleagues identified three main reasons why teens are choosingtexting over talking. First, sending text messages is a form of asynchronouscommunication and is more discrete than traditional voice phone calls. Second, textmessaging can serve as a ñbufferò when communicating with friends around parents inaddition to being a more comfortable form of communication when discussing intimateor personal subjects with possible romantic interests. Lastly, Lenhart, Ling, Campbell,and Purcell (2010) described texting as ña simple way to keep up with friends when thereis nothing special that needs to be communicatedò.

Just as talk time has become shorter, text messages themselves are a short methodof communication. According to Buczynski (2008), ñtext messaging, or morespecifically, SMS (Short Message Service) texting enables text messages up to 160characters long to be sent and received by mobile phonesò. At an average wordlength of five, an average ñtextò would only allow a total of 32 words per message.

This limitation in characters may be one of the reasons teens tend to abbreviateand often ignore the rules of spelling and grammar when texting. Another reason forabbreviations is the use of secret codes. With the many abbreviationsused by teens when texting, it is no wonder that teenagers are sending and receivingthousands of text messages each month.

As Vosloo (2009) made clear, ñtexting does notalways follow the standard rules of English grammar, nor usual word spellings. It is sopervasive that some regard it as an

emergent language register in its own rightò.Like any new technology or rising trend, there will be people in the media and researchfields seeking to both understand its potential, as well as determine whether any negativeconsequences could result from its use.

The majority of the current literature on text messaging has focused onsociological connections; Taylor & Harper, (2003); Faulkner & Culwin, (2005); Igarashi,Takai, & Yoshida, (2005) and emotional links; Reid & Reid, (2007); Igarashi, Motoyoshi,Takai, & Yoshida, (2008); Lin & Peper, (2009), literacy, McWilliam, Schepman, & Rodway,(2009); Plester, Wood, & Joshi, (2009); Rosen, Chang, Erwin, Carrier, & Cheever,(2010), and the ways schools can use the technology to enhance a studentôs education; Harley, Winn, Pemberton, & Wilcox, (2007); Hill, Hill, & Sherman, (2007); Naismith,(2007); Buczynski, (2008).

While studies have shown positive correlations betweenstudents who text and the intimacy levels of their communication Igarashi, Takai, &Yoshida, (2005), questions still remain in regards to texting and its impact on formalwriting ability in the classroom.One such inquiry into text messaging is to determine whether the time secondary school students spend texting instead of talking over the phone has a positive ornegative impact on their formal writing skills. A thorough literature review hasuncovered little research regarding the impact of texting on formal writing skills and theresearch that has been done is somewhat contradictory. Dr. Beverly Plester, the headresearcher on the Children's Text Messaging and Literacy projects at CoventryUniversity, has conducted studies with colleagues on children that show a positivecorrelation between text message volume and competence with literacy

andlanguage Plester, Wood, & Joshi, (2009) p. 158.A study by Larry Rosen, Jennifer Chang, Lynne Erwin, L. Mark Carrier, andNancy A. Cheever (2010) showed a positive relationship between texting and informalwriting, but a negative correlation between texting volume and formal writing amongyoung adults. Another scholar on the subject is executive director emeritus ofthe National Writing Project and lecturer at the University of California's BerkeleyGraduate School of Education, Richard Sterling. Sterling concluded that a sufficientamount of writing, even through texting, is very beneficial and can develop studentsô writing in a positive way Vosloo, (2009).

According to Russell,(2010), SMS has become the 'useful' tool of communication nowadays; formal language is under serious threat. 'Anti-formal communication structures' have been introduced and gradually gaining ground. This has become a matter of concern to linguists and language purists alike. Thus, several questions have been raised especially among teachers because they feel that by using SMS languages, it can affect the students' performance especially in their writing ability and product.

Concerned scholars have been complaining about poor performance of secondary school students in English language in Nigeria, reports from chief examiners of public examination bodies like west African examinations body reveal that students are failing English language at an alarming rate. The percentages of students who obtained credit passes in each year of observationwere less than those who failed Ubahakwe (1991). Many scholars have complained about poor teaching methods employed by the language teachers.This quantitative research study has been designed

to examine whether there is a positive or a negative impact of SMS on the ability of students to effectively write formal papers at the secondary school level.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Text Messaging System or Short Message System (SMS) allows users to send and receive short messages from handheld, digital mobile phones or from a computer to a mobile phone, giving almost instant access to others and to connect to the same service. Young people in particular, have taken to the SMS technology and are adapting and inventing language to accommodate the 160-character limit of short messages which has implications for communications and language use. This is because they are more interested in getting their messages across and becoming less concerned about correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Carlson (2004) asserted that language shortcuts and colloquial language are órein forcing bad habits in writingô (p.1) Students seem to have become more dependent on the language shortcuts (SMS) which may have adverse consequences on the studentsô formal writing skills.

The problem is that texting is replacing talking among teens Lindley, (2008), yet their primary form of communication in the classroom is oral communication andformal writing. In addition, texting is being blamed for hampering studentsô formalwriting skills. Plester, Wood, and Bell (2008) claimed texting which is moreconversationally based is appearing in standard written English and that ñthis concern,often cited in the media, is based on anecdotes and reported incidents of text languageused in schoolworkò. Rosen, Chang, Erwin, Carrier, and Cheever (2010) addedthat

ñeducators and the media have decried the use of these shortcuts, suggesting thatthey are causing youth to lose the ability to write acceptable English proseò.

Vosloo (2009) agreed that ñfor a number of years teachers and parents haveblamed texting for two ills: the corruption of language and the degradation in spelling ofyouthsô writingò .

At this time, only a small number of studies have been focused on the impact thathigh level of text messaging may have on teenagers, and even fewer studies have beenfocused on their ramifications on formal writing in an educational setting. Simply put,further research is needed to reveal the impact that high levels of text messaging mayhave on teenagers and young adults when it comes to formal writing in the high schooland college classroom. This study thus seeks to examine the impact of the language of short messaging service on the written essays of secondary school students. It will look at the content, organization, mechanical accuracy and the expression component of the studentsô essay writing.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this study is to find out the impact of SMS language on the performance of secondary school students in essay writing in Zaria metropolis, Kaduna state.The specific purposes of the study are:

a. To ascertain the impact of the language of SMS on the content component of written essays ofrural and urbansecondary school students in SS2.
b. To identify whether the use of the language of SMS affects the organization component of written essays of rural and urbansecondary school students in SS2.

c. To determine the extent to which the language of SMS influences the mechanical component of written essays ofrural and urban secondary school students in SS2.

d. To examine the impact of the language of SMS on the expression component of written essays ofrural and urban secondary school students in SS2.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research work attempts to provide answers to the following questions:

a. What is the impact of the language of short messaging (SMS) on thecontent component of written essays of rural and urbansecondary school students in SS2?

b. How does the language of short messaging service (SMS) affect the organization component of written essays of rural and urbansecondary school students in SS2?

c. To what extent does the language of short messaging service (SMS) influence the mechanical component of written essays of rural and urban secondary school students in SS2?

d. Doesthe language of short messaging service (SMS) have impact on the expression component of written essays of rural and urban secondary school students in SS2?

1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES.

In line with the research questions, the following null hypotheses were raised for this study:

H_{o1}: There is no significant impact of SMS language on the content component of written essays ofrural and urban secondary school students in SS2.

H_{o2}: SMS language has no significant influence on the organization component of written essays ofrural and urban secondary school students in SS2.

H_{o3}: There is no significant relationship between SMS language and the mechanical component of written essays of rural and urban secondary school students in SS2.

H_{o4}: SMS language has no significant effect on the expression component of written essays of rural and urban secondary school students in SS2.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study deals with the need for the study and its possible application and utilization.

This study is significant to the subject in the following ways:

It addresses the question that so many teachers, parents, and students have aboutthe potential relationship(s) between SMS technology and studentsô formalwriting skills in the classroom..

The study may lead educators and students to a greater understanding of how text Messaging may relate to a teenagerôs writing development and ability toeffectivelypresent him or herself through writing.

The study may also provide administrative insight as to how text messaging should be managed by the school; e.g. should it be encouraged or banned from theclassroom?

To curriculum planners, the study is expected to give an understanding of how SMS language affects studentsô writing;hence, they will see if there is need to adjust the curriculum to factor in the technological changes that may improve their deficient writing skills.

This work gives writers an insight into SMS language and its impact on written English. Embarking on this, they are motivated to produce more works on the impact

of SMS language on studentsô writing.The study also serves as a resource material for others who want to carry out research in related field.

1.7 SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study is confined to determine if there is a negative or positive impact of SMS language on the written essays ofsecondary school students in Zaria Zonal Education Inspectorate Division, Kaduna state with a total studentsô population of 14,396.The coverage of this study was limited to five (5) senior secondary schools in Zaria zonal inspectorate division, Kaduna state. SS2 arm of the senior secondary schools were used.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Considering the relatively short history of mobile telephony in general and SMS text messaging in particular, it is rather amazing the level of interest it has generated among researchers and authors around the world. Not many books have been written on the subject yet. In 2007, Finnish author Hannu Luntiala published the first ever book written solely in text message language, about a business executive travelling throughout Europe and India. Crystal,(2008), a renowned Linguistics Professor came out with his book entitled Txtng: The Gr8 Db8. This could be said to be the most comprehensive literary work so far on the SMS text messaging.

Various researches on the impact of SMS texting have also been carried out and findings published in journals, newspapers, and on the internet. These articles, mostly online, address the positive and negative impacts of text messaging on various aspects of social life, including the academic work of students. David Crystal, contends that texting is not harmful to studentsô literacy; rather it enhances it (Crystal 2008). In his book, Txtng: The Gr8 Db8, (a logogram which stands for Texting: The Great Debate*)*, Crystal (2008) refutes the popular view that SMS language and its profuse use of abbreviations and slang can impact negatively on studentsô language and literacy. His claim was based on these main points; that:

i. Abbreviating has been in use for decades, and thus is not a new language;

ii. Children and adults alike use text language; the latter being more likely to do so.

iii. Students do not habitually use abbreviations in their homework and Examinations.

iv. Before people can text, they must first know how to spell. Texting can therefore not be a cause of bad spelling.

v. Since texting provides people with the opportunity of engaging with the language through reading and writing, it improves peopleôs literacy.

However, text messaging is not without a consequence. Plester,Wood, and Bell (2008) explained:

> There has been concern about the supplanting of standard writtenEnglishby what is often seen as the more conversationallybased andorthographically reduced medium of texting language. This concern, oftencited in the media, is based on anecdotes andreportedincidents of text language used in schoolwork.

Rosen, Chang, Erwin, Carrier, and Cheever (2010) added that both educators and mediaprofessionals have suggested that text messaging is causing young people ñto lose theability to write acceptable English proseò .

Because the technology is relatively new, the majority of peer-reviewed literatureon text messaging andcollege-age students has only been few. This literature has predominantly focused on investigating the impact of text messaging on studentsô written essays in the areas of content, expression, organisation, mechanics and the ways that schools can use the technology toenhance the studentsôeducation.

2.2 QUALITY WRITING, SMS AND ESSAY WRITING

Hines and Basson (2008) explained that ñwriting is first and foremost a thinkingprocess. It involves communicating ideas by first assembling supporting evidence,carefully analyzing an audience, and tailoring a message to achieve a desired outcomeò

On the topic of thinking, authors Ronald T. Kellogg and Bascom A. RaulersonIII (2007) suggested that ñin order to achieve higher levels of writing performance, theworking memory demands of writing processes should be reduced so that executiveattention is free to coordinate interactions among themò. Their article,ñImproving the Writing Skills of College Studentsò explained that:Writing well is a major cognitive challenge, because it is at once a test ofmemory, language, and thinking ability. It demands rapid retrieval ofdomain specific knowledge about the topic from long term memoryKellogg, (2001). A high degree of verbal ability is necessary to generatecohesive text that clearly expresses the ideational content McCutchen,(1994). Writing ability further depends on the ability to think clearly about substantive matters.

Kellogg and Raulerson reviewed numerous studies on the writing process to reveal threefacts involved with self-regulatory control of the writing process. These facts include;

i. The proven correlation between measures of working memory capacity and writingperformance,
ii. The fact that children have limited literary fluency until their mechanical
iii. skills in handwriting and spelling are developed, and

iv. That it takes approximately adecade of experience to use writing as a means of thinking and language productionKellogg, & Raulerson III, (2007,).

The authorsô theory of deliberate practice to improve writing ability was based on the aforementioned facts, as well as the following factors:

i. The maturation of working memory throughout adolescence.Thompson, Holmes, Jernigan, & Toga(1999),

ii. Learning strategies forprewriting, drafting, and revision that manage the demands of composition.Fayola (1999), and

iii. Rapid retrieval of domain-specific knowledge fromlong-term memory when needed during composition, thus avoiding the need for transient storage in short-term working memory.Kellogg, (2001);McCutchen, (2000).

Kellogg and Raulersonôs (2007) theory of deliberate practice suggested two necessaryelements for successful implementation: spaced practice (distributed learning over timeinstead of crammed learning during long sessions) and timely feedback. ñsuch practice helps writers to gain cognitive control over text production byreducing the individual working memory demands of planning ideas, text generation, and reviewing ideas and textò Kellogg, & Raulerson III, (2007).

Text messaging is the practice whereby users of mobile and portable devices exchange brief written messagesvia cellular networks. While the act of sending a text message is termed ñtextingò, the sender is called a ñtexter.òIt is used in place of voice calls in circumstances where it may be impossible or inexpedient. Generally, textingis considered more economical. Some people simply text because it is relatively cheaper compared to placing aphone call to another mobile phone. Originally, it is referred to

messages sent using the Short Message Service(SMS); but as is characteristic of most technologies, the service has undergone transformations to covermessages that contain image, video, and sound. It has also evolved from person-to-person messaging to includeinteraction with automated systems and is available on a wide range of networks. There is a bit of controversy asto who actually invented the SMS. In some quarters, credit is given to Neil Papworth, a 22-year-old test engineerfor Sema Group (now Air wide Solutions), who is said to have been the first to invent the service in 1992, using apersonal computer to text ñMerry Christmasò through the Vodafone network to the phone of one Richard JarvisWikipedia, (2010). In some other quarters, credit is given to Matti Makkonen, a pioneer in Finnish mobile communications Dogbevi, (2008).

Today, text messaging is considered the most widely used mobile data service.Its use around the globe can simply be described as pervasive. It is on record that by the end of 2007, half of theworldôs population (3.3 billion) was mobile phone subscribers. Out of this, 2.4 billion people, constituting 74%of all mobile phone users worldwide, were active users of the SMS Wikipedia, (2010). With an average of 27texts sent per day by subscriber, the Philippines is considered the worldôs largest average user of the SMS bymobile phone subscribers. Scandinavia, particularly Finland, Norway and Sweden had over 85% of thepopulation using SMS over the same period. By the end of 2008, the European average and North AmericanSMS-active-user rate had risen to about 80% and 60% respectively. The International TelecommunicationsUnion in a report released in 2009 rated Africa as ñthe region with the highest mobile growth rateò at the close of2008 ITU, (2009). Although Africaôs ICT penetration levels in general

lagged behind the rest of the world, itdefied all predictions in the area of mobile cellular telephony, with subscriptions rising from just 5% in 2003 toover 30% by the end of 2008. Dogbevi (2008).

Text messaging mostly involves the use of pictograms and logograms. Words are either shortened through theuse of symbols to represent the word, or using symbols whose names sound like a syllable of the word. A textmay consist of words or an alphanumeric combination. For example, texting ñto dateò could be rendered as 2d8;ñfor youò, as 4 U; and ñbeforeò as b4. To text ñto whom it may concernò for instance, one could simply writetwimc. ñLove you with all my heartò could also be texted as ñluwamhò BBC-Focus on Africa,(2004:25).

Several syllables of a word can also be substituted using numeral sequences. An example is the French a12c4 ñaun de ces quartresò meaning ñsee you aroundò (cited in Wikipedia, 2010:12). It is also possible to use numbersalone to communicate whole passages. This is particularly so in character-based languages like Chinese and Japanese. For instance, ñ8807701314520ò in Chinese is literally translatable as ñHug hug you, kiss kiss you,whole life I love youò (Ibid). The SMS technology allows up to 160 characters in length for each short messagecomposed with Latin alphabets, and 70 characters in length for those composed with non-Latin alphabets likeArabic and Chinese.www.ccsenet.org/ijel International Journal of English Linguistics Vol. 1, No. 2; September 2011Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education 225Wikipedia,(2010). Wherever there is mobile phone reception, text messaging is possible. When United StatesPresident Obama was delivering his speech in Accra during his visit to Ghana in 2009, the U.S. Department ofState reached citizens all

over the world using SMS. Through SMS, live highlights of the speech were receivedby African and international/non-U.S. citizens around the world in French and English (Butcher, 2009). Powerand Power (2004) also observed that even deaf people are able to communicate with each other better throughSMS.

In addition to interpersonal communication through texting, ordering products and services, texting votes (i.e.SMS voting), and participating in contests or polls have also become common features of the service. Forinstance, MTN subscribers in Ghana who are customers of Société Générale-Social Security Bank (SG-SSB) canreceive statements of their balances through ñSikatextò ï literally ñmoneytextò, and even top up credit by simplytexting their request to a given code. Another recent service that uses text messaging is MTNôs ñmobile moneytransfer.ò Of late, one thing that many a Ghanaian mobile phone user is gradually getting sick of is the unbridleduse of texts by service providers to notify subscribers about various promotions. All sorts of raffles are nowbeing drawn through texting. The National Lotteries Authority (NLA) has recently also adopted the service as ameans by which people could stake the weekly lotto. In Uganda, farmers are able to access the real price of theircrops with mobile phones via SMS. This way, they avoid being cheated by unscrupulous middlemen Ross, (2004).

In Kenya, SMS money transfers called M-Pesa which was pioneered by SAFARICOM has become sopopular that between April 2007 and April 2010, the number of users soured from 52, 000 to 9.7 millionaccording to company statistics Agence France Presse, (2010).

The Global Messaging Survey conducted by Nokia in 2002 revealed that text messaging has addictive tendencies.This finding was confirmed by a study undertaken at the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium in 2004.Following these, another study at the University of Queensland in Australia found that ñtext messaging is themost addictive digital service on mobile or internet,ò adding that ñthe text reception habit introduces a need to remain connectedò Wikipedia, (2010). By this facility, a sense of connectedness of users is assured even incircumstances where voice calls may not be practicable or acceptable. It also provides users with theconvenience of responding to messages when they deem fit.

According to Norguist (2012), the term essay was adopted by Montaign in the 16th Century to describe his ñattemptsò at self portrayal. This was after Aldous Huxley described it as óa literary device for saying almost everything about almost anythingô. Today, there are almost a thousand and one other definitions of essays. One of such is that by Ayto (2005) who defines essay as a óshort nonfictional literary compositionô. Akinborewa and Olagbanju (2010) define essay as: A piece of writing on a particular subject matter or topic. It is otherwise known as composition. Essay can take the form of narration, description, exposition and argument.

The essay is written on several topics in different fields and has the structure, introduction, body and conclusion. For the purpose of examinations such as WAEC and NECO, the essay is considered along the lines of content, organization, expression and mechanical accuracy. The content, according to Akinborewa and Olagbanju, is the ideas of the candidate and their development which must be relevant to the central theme. It is the section that tells whether the candidate understands what he/she is

expected to do in the composition. The candidates are expected to write not less than 450 words here.The organization tells whether the candidate treats the question he chooses the way it should be. The writing is judged as whether it is intended to be an article, a speech, a letter (formal or informal) etc. The qualities to look for include:

i. A suitable opening
ii. Adequate development
iii. Good paragraphing
iv. Balance
v. Coherence
vi. A suitable conclusion

Expressions, they state, concern how the English language is used in writing. The following qualities are important in expression:

i. Clarity and general appropriateness of style (including, for example, range and aptness of vocabulary)
ii. Effective arrangement and variation of sentence structure.
iii. Judicious and imaginative use of figurative language.
iv. Appropriate words, collocations and sentence types and
v. Skilful and sophisticated use of punctuation.

Mechanical accuracy usually abbreviated as MA deals with errors of spelling, wrong use or omission of punctuation marks and grammatical errors. Such errors in grammar include:

i. The omission of essential sentence elements (e.g. subject, predicate, complement)
ii. Wrong use of tenses (using present tense in place of past)

iii. Misuse of modal auxiliaries (may/might, can/could, will/would, etc)

iv. Confusion in the use of pronouns.

v. Confusion between countable and uncountable nouns, e.g

vi. equipment (correct) equipments (wrong) Infrastructure (correct) infrastructures (wrong)

vii. Wrong prepositions.

viii. Misuse of relatives (that, who, which, whose).

ix. Misuse of conjunctions.

x. Errors of concord.

xi. Errors in comparative constructions.

xii. Punctuation errors include any of the following:

1. The omission or wrong use of the full stop, question mark, exclamationmark and quotation marks (single/double)
2. Wrong use of comma with the following possibilities:
3. Insertion of comma between subject and verb.
4. Subject and object.
5. Verb and complement.
6. Simple structure where no phrases or clauses intervene.
7. Insertion of comma between adjectives and nouns.
8. Insertion of comma between verbs and adverbs.
9. Omission of comma in separating items in a list of words, phrases or clauses.
10. The use of a small letters at the beginning of proper nouns or a sentences.

11. The splitting of a word that is normally written as one word and the wrong syllabication of words.
12. Inconsistency in the use of abbreviations.

Alabi, (2008: 202) states that ñwriting in the process of formal teaching and learning in English, is thus becoming confusingò. It then implies that students read little or no periodicals, novels, textbooks and teachersô notes which could mould them and shape their writing. Alabi (ibid: 201) claims further that experienced writers are able to switch between this ówritten language of GSMô and formal writingô. However, many students who send and receive messages have not been able to switch easily or are not willing to switch at all. Mphahlele and Mashamaite (2005) define Short Messaging Service (SMS) as a service that a cell phone service provider provides to his clients for ease of communication. Cellphone users can communicate with one another using symbols and/ or abbreviated form of words and sentences to save space, time and money.

The popularity of SMS led to a new form of communication that is distinct from the traditional written and spoken languages, although it shares similarities with other forms of Computer Mediated Communications (CMC) like instant messaging, social networking websites and e-mails. Ling (2005) labeled SMS language as a ñtrans-linguistic drag queenò because it contains features of both spoken and written languages.SMS is also significant in that the texter in an attempt to express himself or herself carefully selects from a choice of words to create the right atmosphere for the message.

Nevertheless, the invention of mobile phone messaging is considered to be the source for the invention of SMS language. SMS language thus permits the sender to type less and communicate more quickly than one could without such shortcuts. One example is the use of "tomoz" instead of "tomorrow". Nevertheless, there are no standard rules for the creation and use of SMS languages. Any word may be shortened (for example, "text" to "txt"). Words can also be combined with numbers to make them shorter (for example, "later" to "l8r"), using the numeral "8" for its homophonic quality.The primary motivation for the creation and use of SMS language was to convey a comprehensible message using the fewest number of characters possible. This was due to the way in which telecommunication companies limited the number of characters per SMS, and also charged the user per SMS sent. ñTo keep costs down, users had to find a way of being concise while still getting their messages across.ò Mphahlele and Mashamaite(2005).

The paragraph is one basic feature absent from SMS because of their shortness and compressed form. This affects the expressional component of such writings. The characteristic of SMS language is unique because the messages are typed on the small keypad of the phone and are limited to 160 characters in length (Segerstad, 2005). Besides, communicators have to tap multiple times per character because each keypad holds several letters and symbols.In addition, communicators usually have to scroll to the next screen of the phone to read the entire message due to its limited screen size. Due to the limitations of space and production time, communicators try to maximize their expressivity with minimal words Bodomo, (2009) Balakrishnan & Yeow,(2008) Segerstad, (2005). Bodomo,(2009, p. 113). proposed that for SMS language, ñwords,

phrases and sentences should be coded with as few symbols as possible without giving up comprehensibility.ò Grinter and Eldridge (2003) note that communicators shorten their messages by dropping a single letter; using letters, symbols or numbers to make an appropriate sound; and using standard or ad-hoc acronyms. Mphahlele and Mashamaite (2005) went a step further to suggest that ñSMS language would not conform to grammatical, syntactic and spelling rules of the English language.òThe kind of writing system investigated is neither in conformity with the accepted abbreviations and coinages of words in the English language.

The students are occupied with the use of SMS/TM and are used to the wrong usage of abbreviations (weda (whether), sum (some), bby (baby), accpt (accept), ds (this) etc), coinages (HAND- have a nice day, YOYO- youôre on your own, TIME- tears in my eyes etc), clippings or shortening of lexical items e.g. vet(eran), math(ematics), doc(tor), spec(ulation), lab(oratory), ad(vertisement), pub(lic), memo(randa) etc., wrong use of morphemes e.g. dis-, in-, im-, inter-, ex-, com-, mis-, post-, circum-, re-, trans- etc., substitutions of lexemes with letters of alphabets or Arabic numerals or figures e.g. b4 (before), 2day (today), 9c (nice), 4 (four), 2nite (tonight), etc., wrong or no use of mechanics and wrong spellings. The implication here is that these conversational forms allow the senders to construct their own meanings and, in a sense, a language of their own. (Pitfield, 2004, p. 37). postulated the following: ñThe written message is an important object of social value, as young people have ownership of, or have immediate control over it.ò This raises the value of the text message even more as the object exchanged represents not only something that is personal, but also a symbol of young peopleôs independence. But, on the contrary, the

utilization of text messaging language in the classroom is considered to be an inappropriate form of language that is infecting Standard English and leading to lower scores on written examinations. This form of communication interferes withstudentsô spelling and grammatical skills, as well as their capacity to write comprehensible, succinct sentences leading to poor results in the subject (English language)**.**

2.3 SMS AND THE CONTENT COMPONENT OF ESSAYS

The content of an essay means the subject matter conveyed in an essay, the content component of the essay deals with ideas and their development as they are relevant to the central theme which is the topic the candidate is writing on. It also provides a given number of words for which the essay should be written. In the case of WAEC and NECO, candidates are required to write not less than 450 words contrary to the provision of SMS service providers of a number of characters which sometimes is also dependent on the phone type being used and the number of pages used by a user attracts more charges. This has made the users to device a language writing style to minimize the space to attract a single charge by the company. The new form of the language style ranges from spelling inconsistency such as hv and ve, nite and nyt, nd and n, bak and bk etc., improper use or lack of punctuation marks, the use of figures to represent words e.g. 4(four or for), 2(to or too), the use of prefix to represent words such as mis, com, trans, dis, un, in, post etc., the use of a letter(s) to represent word(s) such as b for *be,* c for *see,* d for *the,* etc. These varied forms of writings are mostly used by literate Nigerians via SMS which they send to acquaintances, wards and colleagues and these are read by their recipients and their children who have access to their handsets and consciously or unconsciously open to the SMS in/out box devices.

They view, read and assimilate these new forms of writings and transfer them into the formal school writings such as WASSCE English essay: for example, óeverbodyô (everybody), ólounchingô (launching), óaveryô (every), óinformô (inform), ócountrysô (countries), ódramesô (drama), ósatatô (start) and ódisô (this). Teh (2004).

Textese is a slang or jargon which is not officially approved by the examination bodies in the country nor has it been approved for official usage in offices or the media. That is to say the practice of using textese for communication is unofficial and found only among peers. Adults are forced to use this form of language by the type of phone and the nature of service offered by the SMS providers. Halliday as cited by Bloor and Bloor (1995:1), defines language ñas a system of meaningsò. That is to say that when language is used, the language acts become the expression of meaning. From this point of view, letters of every language are built up in word(s) to create meaning that is acceptable and intelligible within the speech community. The English orthography takes the forms of the English letter A-Z which are taken systematically to form the English word(s) in the correct or conventional form that is universally accepted in a particular language in formal and informal writings. For example, óshe isô (formal) and sheôs (informal) in English language are both accepted in usage.

At the level of pronunciation, the English sounds/phonemes are considered, to enable one pronounce the words formed from the letters accurately and to differentiate a word from other words. As important as the word óphonemeô is in the human society, many scholars find it very difficult to define the word.

Aristotle as cited by Ayodele, Oyeleye, Yakubu, and Ajayi, (2001) define phoneme as ñthe smallest significant unit of speech and languageò. They explicate that some

scholars dwell on its function as a unit of meaning. Bloomfield (1933) regards it ós a minimum free formô, implying óthe smallest speech unit capable of functioning as a complete utterance, as in the example ófire.!ô If then, word(s) is/are to create meaning, as shown above, and in GSM orthography the same word is rewritten as fir/fre by reason of minimizing space, the point here is that there is likely to be confusion in the mind of the receiver, especially if both the receiver and the sender do not have a shared knowledge of the word.

Ayodele et al. (2001) refer to Firthôs definition of words as ósubstitution countersô they buttress that one needs to replace, add or remove distinctive sounds to obtain new words. Thus, the alteration of any single element is done consciously to ensure that the single element added within the language is universally accepted. In other words, the lexeme replaced with letters of alphabet is to be perceived as SMS/TM, words like: ócô replaces see;ódô replaces the, them, that; ófô replaces for, or alphabet clusters like: dm/dem replaces them; ówhô replaces either with, which, what or when; and ór replaces areô. All these are contextual and should, therefore, not be used in formal writings like the WAEC/NECO where candidates do not hold any Mutual Contextual Beliefs (MCBs) with the examiners.

The utilization of text messaging language in the classroom or examinations such as WAEC and NECO is considered by many educators to be an inappropriate form of language that is ñinfectingò Standard English and leading to lower scores on writing examinations (Carrington, 2005. P. 168). This form of communication interferes with the studentsô spelling and grammatical skills, as well as their capacity to write comprehensible, succinct sentences.

2.4 SMS AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMPONENT OF ESSAYS

For every type of essay to be written, there is a form of language to be used. Formal writings demand the use of formal language while informal writings demand informal language. The effective application of each of these forms of language in the right situation determines whether the candidate has understanding of the question. Hence, organization deals with the arrangement of the materials the candidate iswriting.

The essay writing, according to Akinborewa (2010), must be properly structured into a suitable opening, adequate development of main ideas, good paragraphing, balance, coherence and a suitable conclusion.The case with the SMS is different seeing that it does not even have the space to accommodate the provisions of each form of essay to be written. Consider, for example, most of the text messages we send are letters but the features of the letters are absent, i.e. no address, salutation and conclusion as well as signatory. Let us take a text message inviting an examiner for marking from WAEC for illustration: ñYou are invited as AE to Government Day Secondary School Kofar Yandaka, Katsina. Your Ex No is 3012/2056. CE/TLôs Coord ï 1/11/12 AEôs Coord ï 2/11/12ò. Much information is lost in the above letter of invitation because SMS is used. The address of the receiver is not there, name and signature of the sender is also absent. However, it seems to be very convenient and cost effective to send messages particularly what is called ôbulk SMSô.

ñText messaging resembles code rather than standard languageò Thurlow, (2003). Standard English is often referred to as standard language. Standard English is the variant of English that is usually used in writing (especially printing); it is associated

with the educational systems of English speaking countries worldwide. Individuals who make use of Standard English are viewed as educated. Thurlow, (2003) states ñand outsiders and other educated people alike, can understand Standard English.ò Unfortunately, coded language expressions (text messages) are not necessarily comprehensible to an outsider. Some clarification and understanding of a governing rule system is needed. For example, single or multiple words are condensed by means of replacing individual syllables and words with single letters or digits. Whole words may also be omitted.

Poor paragraphing and stops: Most candidates open the paragraphs having the first letter of the word with small letter and when sentences had been punctuated with a stop the first letter of the word was seen to be written in small letter. Take for example, the following seen in the beginning of a paragraph: i can no longer live with my brother again. becouse (because) want (what) I Pass through in the house. my brother has two wives. every day quarrel in (quarreling). (WAEC, 2009 excerpt).

2.5 SMS AND EXPRESSION COMPONENT OF ESSAYS

Expression in essay deals with how language is used in the conveyance of meaning. Chioma Ibe (2004) stated that the qualities indicating oneôs proficiency of the language in question in writing essays are:

i. Clarity and general appropriateness of style (including, for example, range and aptness of vocabulary); Depending on the topic, the candidate is expected to select the vocabulary suitable for it. For instance, one is not to use language that is only appropriate for informal letters for formal letters nor use the language of the debate for narration. This would not work.

ii. Effective arrangement and variation of sentence structure; The candidate is to have clear knowledge of the structure and apply them in his writing. The candidate should use a mixture of simple, compound and complex sentences in the presentation of his/her facts.

iii. Judicious and imaginative use of figurative language; In order to use language effectively, one is expected to be very imaginative making use of figurative expressions such as metaphors, simile, personification, irony, hyperbole, euphemism etc not only to capture the mode of the writing/writer, but also paint a detailed expository picture of the event being written about. Once again, this is almost impossible with the SMS.

iv. Appropriate words, collocations and sentence types: A wide variety of sentence type is expected to be used here ranging from declarative, imperative, interrogative and exclamatory sentences. Collocations are special word combinations usually a verb and a preposition commonly referred to as particles which are used to form a single expression. For example pick up, stamp down, run up, etc. Such language use is also required of candidates.

v. Skillful and sophisticated use of punctuation: This forms part of the qualities of a good expression. The effective use of punctuation marks such as the full stop, comma, semicolon, colon, question mark, quotation mark etc enhances ones proficiency of a language. From studies of spoken language such as the English language, people influence each other in the way they speak, often by adopting features of the accent of the person they are talking to. Very likely a similar accommodation takes place in text messaging' (Alexander 2008). If this is so, this

might cause a problem especially in connection with teaching written language.Theapparent lack of respect for traditional rules of the written language has horrified some observers, who see in the development an ominous sign of deterioration in standards. Text-messaging is often cited as a particular problem. Children of the future will no longer be able to spell, it is said' (Alexander 2008).

Crystal (2008: 89) states that ótheyounger you are, the more likely you are to textô. Teenagers and young adults are the most enthusiastic users of the text messaging service, and they are challenges, the text messaging phenomenon is also something which can make language learning more difficult for children, especially when it comes to distinguishing between standard written language and non-standard written language. 'Language is a form of social behaviourô Crystal (2007: 103), and one has to be linguistically prepared. According to Crystal (2007), the principle of appropriateness rules, and that 'we know demands that we need to change our language ï as we do our clothes ï as we move from one context to another. And there are hundreds of contextsô Crystal (2007: 209-210). Teachers have to instill appropriate linguistic behavior, according to Crystal (2007), and teach the pupils when to use the standard form of language, and when it is acceptable not to. Some interesting and commonly used abbreviations are:

? I have a question

<3 broken heart

@TEOTD - At the end of the day

143- I love you

182- I hate you

A3- anytime, anywhere, anyplace

BC- because

CSL- canôt stop laughing

DM- doesnôt matter

4NR- foreigner

G4C- Going for coffee

"RU cmng 4 pR 2nite" - Are you coming for prayer tonight?

Thurlow, and Brown, (2003).

Candidates use these in formal writing examinations like SSCE and NECO without considering that they do not have mutual contextual beliefs with the examiner. In addition, these varied forms of writings are mostly used by literate Nigerians via SMS which they send to acquaintances, wards and colleagues and these are read by their recipients and their children who have access to their handsets and consciously or unconsciously open to the SMS in/out box devices. They view, read and assimilate these new forms of writings and transfer them into the formal school writing, SSCE English essay: for example, óeverbodyô (everybody), ólounchingô (launching). The above examples also show the confused state of the candidates during the formal English writing. The candidates at this time know that the essay writing examinations they take need to be in formal writing but, in the attempt to write full forms, they are usually faced with serious problems of omission of letters, wrong spellings and confused plural formation. This is a proof that, the candidates have concerned themselves with the use of the GSM SMS/TM device and have avoided the reading of books. The candidates have become so much used to the reading and writing of SMS

that they become confused when faced with the essay writing that requires the formal writing of 450 words.

2.6 SMS AND MECHANICAL COMPONENT OF ESSAYS

By mechanical component is meant all aspects of the language relating to word class usage, tense and punctuations. Each of the eight word classes (noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, preposition, conjunction and interjection) is to be used in its own right. Similar to the study by Grinter and Eldridge (2003), SMS communicators in this study also use letters and digits to represent words because they make similar sounds. Bodomo (2009) also reported similar phonetic-based methods but also included the combination of letters and number homophones such as the word ô4ô in his paper. The use of letters and

digit homophones are as follows;

Do u want to hav brkfst tmr? (you)

He say v need to c him on this fri. (we, see)

N hav to c 1st. (And, see)

if not need 2 go there 2 time . (to)

thanks *4* accompany me go today; (for)

ÅNumber homophones, for example: "B4" (Before)

ÅLetter homophones, for example: "U" (You)

ÅNon-conventional spellings, for example: "Nite" (Night)

During the construction of text messages, only exclamation marks and full stops are generally used. Bodomo, (2009)

EMOTICONS

Emoticons are extended interpunction symbols. They convey emotions and represent human facial expressions. Examples include:

Å:-) indicates a smile or happiness

Å:-/ indicates skepticism

Å:-(indicates sadness or a frown.

The quality and length of a written product may be also influenced by spelling. This can partly be due to learners focusing on spelling instead of, or to a larger extent than, other components of writing. The content of written compositions may also be influenced by learners avoiding the use of words of which the spelling is uncertain (Silliman & Wilkinson, 2007). Based on these facts, it is therefore plausible to surmise that adolescents at condensing their text messages will also apply this condensing to their written school work. The abbreviated language style of text messaging is inappropriately filtering into official school writing. The use of SMS language has also been observed in examination scripts (Weiss, 2009). Examination scripts are saturated with abbreviated words.

Text messaging system has to a great extent influenced studentsô writing performance. Text messaging has revolutionized spellings and thrown grammar out the window. With the increasing use of mobile messaging, emails, and instant chat, people are becoming less concerned about correct spelling and more interested in getting their message across. There is no time for commas and full stops, no time to frame sentences or even words. Words are spelt phonetically and sentences are telegraphic.

For the unaccustomed eyes such messages may be Greek and Latin, but for the young generation, that is the way communication is going to be. (Berg,2003). Because of the limited message lengths and tiny user interface of mobile phones, SMS users commonly make extensive use of abbreviations, particularly the use of numbers for words, for example, "4" in place of the word "for", and the omission of vowels, as in the phrase "txt spk" are similar in that they reduce attention to spelling, punctuation, and grammar with words like "4u" ("for you") or "2gthr yrs 18r" ("together years later"). The impact of all these in school certificate mechanical accuracy are listed below:

1. Wrong use of apostrophe: cantô instead of canôt, wounôt instead of wontô,my sister dress instead of my sisterôs dress, doôt instead of donôt, mybrothers wife instead of my brotherôs wife.
2. Poor capitalization: johnson instead of Johnson, lagos instead of Lagos, faTher instead of father, enJoy instead of enjoy, SokoTo instead of Sokoto,agartha instead of Agartha.
3. Wrong compounding:

   my self ï myself

   him self ï himself

   some thing ï something

   every one ï everyone

   every thing ï everything

4. Poor use of syllabification and hyphen: Most candidates do not use ódashô to indicate the continuation of syllables in the next line. Likewise most compound words were not hyphenated.

5. Replacement of lexemes with letters of alphabet:

N replaces and

B replaces be

T replaces to.

K replaces ok.

G replaces go.

6. Alphabet clusters: Cm replaces come.

Lv replaces love.

Hw replaces how. Berg, (2003)

2.7 THE USE OF TEXT MESSAGING IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

The mobile-phone communication benefits education at several levels. Its effects on secondary school students learning are both positive and negative. Operationally, it makes class management, including attendance and administration, easier and more effective as this will enable the teachers and the school head to communicate effectively with both students and their parents. On the time-management level, it enhances coordination between teachers and students. As Tracy(2001) wrote, history is full of records of reckless and daring exploits of young man, some of which have resulted in great good and others in great evil. Some effects of mobile phone on studentsô performance at the Secondary School level also include:

1. contact with their parent while in school.

2. To trace easily the teachers, classmates for solutions to educational problems.

3. To use internet to search out useful information.

4. To use the mobile as a minicomputer.

5. To use dictionary and thesaurus in the mobile phone.

6. To listen to F.M radio for entertainment.

7. To find out the translation of verses of Holy Books, and

8. To make photos and movies though which usually negate the academic performances of young mind.

On the other hand, mobile-communication activities in classrooms have negative aspects, including cheating, harassment, delinquency distraction (lack of concentration), immorality and time wasting. Additional problems emerging from use of GSM in schools include;

damage to attention span, critical-thinking skills, and respect for learning and listening to teachers. Students who are distracted lose the ability to concentrate, to plan, and to work with complex ideas and sometimes seem to reflect a general decline in civility. According to Ansari [10], mobile phone has a number of negative and unhealthy impacts and effects on studentsô academic performances at the secondary school level which includes waste of time and money, its vibration and use may be harmful to health. Sir William Stewart (1993) in his book ñMobile Phones and Base Stationsò narrated that exposure of radio frequency causes great absorption of energy in the tissues of head which is harmful to nervous system. Vibrations of mobile phones also have effects on the pumping of blood. Heat of mobile phone also causes skin problem, rays from tower are also harmful and it is suggested that towers should be 16 KM

away from population. According to Awaz [2006] mobile phone affects the social life and health of all society members as well as secondary school students. Some other effects in his view are as follows:

a. It is a cause of disturbance to secondary students when they are busy in their lecture or projects in class rooms or libraries.

b. It seems that it may cause increase in decline of moral values. With the use of mobile phone, students now feel no shy to tell lie. When they are sitting in hotel or park, they tell their parents or teachers that they are sitting in the library.

c. Loss and misplacement of mobile phone is very common. The student who loses his/ her mobile phone also undergoes tension and this affects their studies. Quraishi has pointed out another negative impact of mobile phone on studentsô learning by saying that most of the students write the abbreviations while messaging to others,the same habit has been developed, and they use the same abbreviation in solving the papers in the examination hall. They write ñUò ñ2ò ñBtwò ñBecozò ñRò and ñBVò instead of ñYouò ñtwo/toò ñBetweenò ñbecauseò ñor/areò and ñwifeò respectively, which is a wrong way of writing. With Assertions of Quraishi and Awaz, it is discovered that mobile phone (GSM) has negative effects on students which are serious enemy of academic performance compared to the positive contributions which it has made to the educational growth of the students.

Dave Harley, Sandra Winn,Sarah Pemberton, and Paula Wilcox have been studying how text messaging can be usedto support studentsô transition from high school to college. Citing Mintel (2005), theauthors stated that cell phone ownership of 15 to 24 year-old in the United Kingdom hasreached 93% and that SMS technology was

available on all mobile phones (p. 229).As for the role of text messaging in studentsô everyday social interactions, textmessaging was found to be used much more than voice calls (p. 233). The authorsexplained that their qualitative analysis (with interviews of 30 students) showed that ñtextmessaging is the dominant mode of electroniccommunication amongst students andplays a central role in maintaining their social networksò Harley, Winn, Pemberton, &Wilcox, (2007,). The reasons for this included the asynchronous quality of texting,in addition to being able to use the technology as an ñemotional bufferò which madecommunicating sensitive issues much easier (p. 234). Other students use of SMStechnology reported in the study included maintaining contact with close family membersand using it as a way to sustain a sense of presence with support networks (p. 235).Anis(2007); in ñNigerian Englishò Chiluwa (2008).

While a few scholars insist that texting has a negative influence on standard writing, spelling and grammar,Siraj and Ullah (2007), mostexperimental studies maintain that texting does not pose a threat to Standard English learning and teaching. These scholars point out that despite diffusing texting style into óformalô writing occasionally (e.g., school work), senders of text messages almost always recognize that language is context specific Durscheid (2002); Chiluwa (2008), though they do not necessarily view computer-mediated communication as ówriting.ô Lenhart (2008).Shortis (2007) suggests that the linguistic creativity of texting poses littlethreat to standard spelling. Some of the research on the issue of standard illiteracies from Plester shows a positive relation between texting and literacy, Plester, (.2009). One instantmessaging study also suggests that new media language does notinterfere with

standard literacy Taglamonte and Denis (2008).Plesterôsresearch confirms that young people as well as oldertexters are inherently aware of main pragmatic factors such ascontext, relationship and communicative purpose which is inline with the findings of Durscheid (2002) and Chiluwa (2008).

According to Thurlow (2007), very few of text messages aresystematically óunrecoverableô, even when read out of theiroriginal, discursive context and even to outsiders, texters certainly are aware of the need forintelligibility i.e. the Gricean maxims of quantity and mannerGrice (1975); An example of this is the use of consonant clusters (e.g.,THX), following the rule and metapragmatic awareness ofconsonants in English having more semantic value than vowels.Moreover, many of the non-conventional spellings found intexting are already prevalent and pre-date the mobile phone,Crystal, (2008); Shorts (2007a). The notion of standardness inwritten language is itself a convention and always an abstraction from spoken language Cameron (1995); and Shorts (2007). In thissense, therefore, many of the typographicpractices of texting offer more ócorrectô, more óauthenticô representations of speech. As Jaffe puts it: ôThe use of nonstandard orthography is a powerful expressive resourcegraphically having some of the immediacy, the óauthenticityô,and óflavorô of the spoken word in all its diversityô.

Umberto Eco (2002) points out that we live in an age wherethe tiny, the concise and the simple are greatly appreciated incommunication and texting has them all and like many earliercommunication technologies, it evokes certain fears and hope.

As Mey(2001:5) suggests, the field of pragmatics is interested inthe process of using language and its procedures, not just itsproduct, the everyday meta pragmatic

commentaryabout texting is definitely apragmatic since it mostly focuses onthe structures, forms and grammars of language, its supposedlydistinctive lexical and typographic style, not the product and itsfunction. As Sutherland (2002) puts it, human beings will useany medium to communicate and to make records and texting isjust a medium to communicate.

According to Thurlow (2002),even though many ólinguistic puritansô nowadays exaggerate theódeathô of punctuation, the use of question marks(?) and fullstops(.) is persistently observed despite the extra effort and timeit takes. Crystal (2006) opines that despite many textersôenjoying flouting linguistic rules, they also realize they shouldbe understood. When messages are longer, containing moreinformation, they use more of standard orthography.

According to Crystal (2008), creative potential of textinghas been almost ignored. Research shows that texting does noteat into children's ability to read and write. It rather improvesliteracy. The latest studies (from a team at Coventry University)have found great positive relations between the use of textlanguage and the skills required for success in Standard Englishin pre-teenage children. The more abbreviations in theirmessages, the higher were their scores on tests of reading andvocabulary. The children better at spelling and writing used themost textisms and the younger they received their first phone,the higher their scores which implies that they could not be goodat texting if they had not already developed significant literacyawareness. Texting also helps children become more aware ofrhyme. Texting can benefit weaker readers and spellers whowould generally avoid books. Before one can write and playwith abbreviated forms, one needs to have a sense of how thesounds of a language

are associated with the letters of thatlanguage. One needs to have a knowhow of the possibility ofalternative spellings. If one is aware that oneôs texting behavioris different, one must have an idea that there is such a thing as astandard. If one is using such abbreviations as lol and brb ("beright back"), one must have developed sensitivity to thecommunicative needs of oneôs SMS language. One needs tohave a good visual memory and good motor skills.

The educational perspective of internet linguistics proposedby Crystal (2011) suggests that we need to know how to buildon the strengths of SMS language and its creative potentials.Cell phones have a lot of expressive potential apart from their basic communicative functions. The world has seen textingpoetry competitions and text novels as new evolving genresexploring the possibilities of word play within the 160 characterconstraint. Why canôt we use it to improve studentsô proficiencyin standard language? Although text messaging enhances communication (informally), this paper expresses the fear that it has more negative influence on users as regards communicability in English language. It is true that text messaging allows for creativity among users but to what extent does it enhance mutual intelligibility (when the receiver could not decode the text lingo)? And to what extent do the ótextersô achieve possibility, feasibility, and appropriateness which areneeded for successful communication in English? This is because students spend a greater period in the days texting messages, making and receiving calls, saving answers to likely examination questions to be used in cheating than reading. Thus, they misappropriate the opportunitiesthey would have used in learning to writeformal, semi-formal and proper informal letters, and even essays, to texting messages. This habit invariably

affects their speech as students hardlyhave adequate responses to questions in classes. They cause confusion for their examiners by using unconventional features of text messagingsymbols which is used to represent words,as in 2day (today) b.4·(before) gr8 (great) @(at) 9t (night) bcos (because) etc. They also use capital and small letters indiscriminately, as writing first person pronoun ói ô in small letter, ói ô and using capital letters in the middle of sentence as ói wish u success in ALL ur papersô

In view of this Russel (2010: 3) feels that: ñYoung adults who use more language-basedtextisms (short cuts such as LOLò 2nite, etc.) in daily writing produced worst formal writing than young adults who used fewer linguistic textisms in daily writingò. This is true because, if one fails to consciously avoid itsô use in formalwriting; the inevitable resultant effect is poor performance in academic assessment. Text messaging destroys the ways students read, think and write. It makes them to show lazy attitude towards reading and writing as they are incapable of thinking rightly as to decode ideas accurately. Again, they find it difficult separatingformal and informal English as they freely use ñUò for ñyouò, ñ4ò for ñforò, ñplsò for ñpleaseò,ñ2mrwò for ñtomorrowò etc. during formal academic work. SMS messaging style is therefore harmful tostudentsô writing and grammar. This view issupported by Holloway (2011: 10-11) who states; Writers and language experts have come out against the use of SMS abbreviations. British journalist and broadcaster, John Humphreyshas said that texting is ñwrecking our languageòand has called its users ñvandalsò. Linguistic traditionalists worry that texting will reduce usersô ability to write correct English sentences,and will harm their spelling and vocabulary. Because SMS originated from the need to send, very short messages, it discourages complex vocabulary and

prevents the creation of longer, more sophisticated phrases.The situation noted above explains the focusof this paper that the use of text messaging has contributed to the deformation of the Englishlanguage in Nigeria and beyond.

2.8 PREVIOUS STUDIES IN SMS AND WRITTEN ESSAYS

A few essays have been written about the SMS, it is a new field that is just developing. Interest is just gradually being given to it. That notwithstanding, the researcher was able to have access to few studies focused on ñSMS Texting and Its Potential Impacts on Studentsô Written Communication Skillsò. Dansieh,(2005) carried out a research to ascertain the veritable impact of SMS language on the writing skill of students of Wa Polytechnic in Ghana. The result reveals, struggle with grammar, lexis and structure. Therefore, text messaging which encourages abbreviating and non-conformity with grammatical rules could worsen studentsô written communication skills rather than improve them.The point of divergence is in the subject of study. While Dansieh,(2005) carried out his study among polytechnic students, this research investigates secondary school students.

However, several recent studies have looked specifically at the use of ótext-messagingô. The book ôThe Inside Textô (Harperet, Palen and Taylor, 2005) collects a number of studies of SMS use as well as designs issues in relation to digital text communication in a broader sense. Several studies of mobile phone use (including SMS) and only SMS use concentrate their observations on teenagers. Grinter and Eldridge (2001), for example, were among the first to explore the use of text messaging among teenagers, investigating why they have been so eager in their adoption of mobile phones and in particular text messaging. They describe how text

messaging helps teenagers retain their privacy in a parent-controlled life and how they maintain social relations outside school. Alternatively, Taylor and Harper (2002) focus on the significance teenagers give to text messages themselves, comparing their communication to ógift-givingô practices. Both studies emphasize the ódeisure and funô aspects of the medium amongst their teenage user groups, although Ling (2004) later emphasizes how (virtually) all age groups in Norway use text messages for ómicro coordinationô and organizational practicalities.

Studies carried out on French-speaking populations have confirmed the massive use of text messaging by adolescents. A study by Leo and Wolf (2004) and another by Samsung in 2006 in Belgium, found that 75% of the Belgian population owned a mobile phone. For 45% of Belgians, the exclusive function of a mobile phone was to make phone calls and send SMSes. Furthermore, 90% of those aged 15-35 used the SMS function. In France, according to the CREDOC study (Bigot & Croutte, 2009), the proportion of mobile phone users rose from 24% in 1999 to 82% in 2009. In 2003, 57% of mobile phone owners used the SMS function; in 2009, this proportion had reached 74%. The younger the person, the more SMSes are used to communicate: 100% of young people between the ages of 12-17 sent SMSes, 68% of those aged 40-59 and only 21% of people over 70 years of age made use of this mobile phone function. The average weekly number of SMSes sent lies between 19 and 30. Crystal (2008) and Thurlow and Poff (2009) describe the same type of situation across different countries and different languages: the United States, the United Kingdom, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Italy, South Africa, Nigeria, New Zealand, Kuwait, Malaysia, Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Berg,(2003)

postulates that the limited message lengths and tiny user interface of mobile phones make SMS users to commonly make extensive use of abbreviations, particularly the use of numbers for words, for example, "4" in place of the word "for", and the omission of vowels, as in the phrase "txtò ñspk" are similar in that they reduce attention to spelling, punctuation, and grammar with words like "4u" ("for you") or "2gthr yrs 18r" ("together years later"). Also, Rosen (2009) is of the view that regular use of the service can impact negatively on the everyday language of ñtexters.ò In an unscientific poll conducted by Edutopia. org, out of 1028 respondents, 50% were of the view that texting was harming studentsô writing and grammar. 20% thought that text messaging could have some effect on studentsô writing; but did not consider it a major problem; while 27% felt it did not have any negative influence (Russell, 2010). One respondent was cited to have remarked ñé my studentsô spelling is atrocious. Texting does not and has not helpedò.

SMS language has indeed no doubt some effect on students written essays. Thus, as students embrace this popular form of technology, there will be adverse consequences on the studentsô formal writing skills, For instance; bt for but, knwlge for knowledge, forvr for forever and 2 for to. Thestudents use these expressions which have drastic effects in the formal essay writing. These kindsof expressions constitute grammatical errors and lead to low performance.

The study of Ravid & Tolchinski, (2002) sought to determine the linguistic specificities of SMSes defined as a register of written communication. Along the same lines, Crystal (2001) emphasized the importance of the concept of ñlanguage varietyò which can be applied to oral and written language, legal language, scientific language,

regional particularities of an SMS language, literature and also to computer-mediated writing, including SMSes. These variations are systematic, predictable and conventional. While giving a lecture, a university professor would not be expected to speak in the same way as a sports commentator reporting a televised football match. In the same way, it would not make sense to expect the SMSes written by teenagers to resemble the written language such students use in an academic setting. The SMS messages will surely display different graphical, orthographical, and grammatical traits as well as an organization of discourse which deviates from the standard form (Crystal, 2001). According to them,SMSes are also able to fulfill different social functions.

Research concerning SMS messaging has revealed a great deal about the most obvious characteristic of SMSes: the use of orthographic forms which differ from those found in traditional writing. The specific spelling forms which have been invented are essentially neographic forms resulting from puzzle grams or the use of homophonic letters and numbers, phonological reductions, symbols, and acronyms (Crystal, 2008; Frehner, 2008). In this vein, many studies have specifically focused on the French language (Anis, 2007; Bouillaud, Chanquoy & Gombert, 2007; Fairon & Klein, 2010; Liénard, 2005, 2007; Panckhurst, 2009; Rivière & Licoppe, 2005). SMS is just a phone language, thus, SMS is not meant for academic purposes but students consciously or unconsciously import this language in English formal writing examinations hence expression, content, organization and mechanical components are neglected to the core.

Véronis & Guimier de Neef, (2006), like the first research carried out on oral language in the early 19th century by (McCarthy), highlighted the gender differences between girls and boys. In the area of computer-mediated writing, girls, as compared to boys, use SMS messaging more frequently, and send longer and more complex messages including more ñemotionalò content (Thurlow & Poff, 2009). There are now sufficient available data to go beyond these most obvious orthographic traits of SMSes and focus in /on the other questions being examined in this area of research. One French-language study (Rivière & Licoppe, 2005) led the way by focusing on the addressees of SMS messages: SMSes are usually sent to close friends, no matter the age of the mobile phone user. The authors stressed the frequency of within-family SMS use between parents and their children, and the more limited use of SMSes in formal or professional settings. Emotional messages made up the majority of the exchanges. By working with a large corpus of SMSes collected in a natural situation (Fairon, Klein & Paumier, 2006) by teenagers between the ages of 13-18, the role of the writersô characteristics (age, gender, and SMS experience) on the length of the SMSes they sent were examined. The study also focused on the functions of SMS messages (informative or relational). The objective was to show the extent to which the length and functions of SMSes varied according to the characteristics of the writers.

In the UK, Grinter and Eldrige (2001) collected the SMS messages of five boys and five girls between the ages of 15-16 (who were paid to participate). The teenagers were asked to copy down on a form all the SMSes they had sent and received over the past seven consecutive days. The mean length of the 236 messages was 71 characters.

Thurlow and Brown (2003) analyzed the data collected in the UK by Brown (2002) from 70 participants with a mean age of 19. At the end of a class, students were asked to fill out a questionnaire detailing their use of mobile phones and new technologies, as well as to transcribe five SMS messages received or sent during the previous week. The mean length of the 544 messages analyzed was 65 characters and 14 words. Hård af Segerstad (2005) and Döring, Hellwig and Klimsa (2005) found similar results with Swedish and German participants, respectively. In a telephone survey in 2002, Ling (2005b) analyzed 882 messages collected from 463 Norwegian participants between the ages of 13 and 67. The participants were asked, along with questions concerning their mobile phone use, to provide the exact text of the last SMSes they had sent. The average number of words per SMS was 5.54 for the men and 6.95 for the women. The author also analyzed the complexity of the messages as defined by the number of sentences, propositions or distinct thoughts. Of the messages sent by women, 40% were complex (containing more than one sentence), compared with 26% for men. The group of 16- to 19-year-old teenage girls wrote the greatest number of complex messages (51% as compared to 15% for boys of the same age).

Ling (2005a) presented data collected in 2004 from 1000 Norwegian participants between the ages of 13 and 67 via the telephone survey method already used by Ling (2005b). The author collected 417 messages (written with or without the use of the T9 predictive text function) with an average length of 29 letters and approximately 6 words. For the 13- to 34-year-old age group (including a 13- to 15-year-old group and a 16- to 19-year-old group), girls wrote longer messages than boys (30 and 20 letters, respectively). Between 34 and 54 years of age, both men and women sent messages

containing 20 letters, while from 54 to 67 years of age, the number of letters rose for women (25 letters) and decreased for men (10 letters). When looking at the broadest age range of 13-67, a decrease in the number of letters per message (from 25 to 17.5) can be observed, with 34 years of age as the tipping point. Deumert and Masinyana (2008) examined SMSes which were collected in 2006 from 22 participants in South Africa; the participants ranged in age from 18-27, were bilingual speakers of SMS. The authors asked the participants to transcribe (or send directly to the researcher) all the messages they had sent throughout the previous week. The 312 messages in total were written either in one or the other language, or in a mixture of both. The average length of the messages was 133 characters and 22.6 words, with girls writing 23 words, and boys, 19 words.

In each of the prior studies, the same methodological problem was encountered: the technical impossibility of directly collecting the SMSes as a computer file, and thereby the need to copy down a fleeting text. This created an overall problem with regard to the reliability of the corpus (the researchers did not possess the original messages) and the representativeness of the recopied messages (the risk of an over-representation of short messages, which are easier to recopy). The results varied according to the method used: working with a small group of participants known to the researchers, or via a telephone survey carried out with a large number of participants. In the first case, the collected messages were 65-133 characters and 14-22 words in length, while in the second case, the collected messages were 29 letters and 6 words in length. Data were collected in English, Norwegian and IsiXhossa. Prior researches gave information neither on the role of age during the period of

adolescence (13-18) nor on the level of SMS messaging or experience with computer-mediated communication on the evolution of data. As far as this period is concerned, Lingôs (2005a and 2005b) research emphasizes that girls write longer and more complex messages than boys.

The majority of studies carried out on SMS messaging have primarily been interested in the orthographic characteristics of the messages. However, a few studies have also analyzed such measures as the length of messages and their functions. However, this study based its analysis on the school of thought which postulates that brevity, concision, and economy, of the simple message system (SMS) of text messaging has affected the essential mechanics of writing such as grammar, syntax, punctuation and capitalization.This study also seeks to find out whether some of the claims made hold true for students of secondary schools in their written essays in English language, where the grades which majority of applicants obtained in English language could best be described as ñgentleman passesò in student parlance i.e. the barest pass one can get in a core subject, or borderline grades. In an academic environment, one out of every three students came in with a combination of results obtained from two or more sittings of the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSSCE), Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) or the newly introduced bridging programme access Course (a bridging course), one wonders whether text messaging can really be the blessing that some claim it can be to studentsô written communication skills. Kate,(2007).

Segerstad (2005) states that SMS users omitted non-alphabet characters such as period, comma,etc. Students use the (é) on a regular basis to signify a pause, similar

to the pauses made in conversations, despite the extra effort to key in two additional full stop. While vowels and punctuation of words in SMS language are generally omitted, David Crystal (2008) observes that apostrophes occur unusually frequently. He cites an American study of 544 messages, where occurrence of apostrophes in SMS language is approximately 35 percent. This is unexpected, seeing that it is a hassle to input an apostrophe in a text message with the multiple steps involved. Interestingly, the use of apostrophes cannot be totally attributed to users attempting to disambiguate words that might otherwise be misunderstood without it. Students omit the apostrophe (ó) regularly such in words like ñimò, ñcantò, ñdontò, ñwontò, ñitsò and ñwhatsò to save time and space.

There is no doubt that text messaging has some impacts on the way people talk and write ï some negative; others positive depending on the content and context. An article posted under ñWikinewsò reported that in November, 2006, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority gave its approval to the move that secondary school students be allowed to use mobile phone text language in the end of year examination papers. This could probably be ascribed to the pervasiveness of SMS text lingo among the students. However, following the wide publication of reports dating back to 2002 on the use of text language in school assignment, some sections of the public became concerned about the decline in the quality of written communication. The report also revealed that teachers and professors had started having difficulty in keeping the trend in check. This study therefore seeks to find out the adverse effect of SMS.

2.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this project is grounded in theories,generalizations and research findings focused on text messaging and writing. Theframework of this study that concerned writing was based on the theories of Moffett andGibson who ñcontend that these choices are determined by one's sense of the relation ofspeaker, subject, and audienceò (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 365). In other words, thestyle and substance of oneôs writing is a matter of context that can and will vary fromsituation to situation. This theory supports the idea that students may write one waywhen sending text messages to friends and an entirely different way when writing formalpapers for their college professors. The framework is reinforced by Lloyd Bitzerôs ñRhetorical Situationò theory which ñargues that speech always occurs as a response to arhetorical situation, which he succinctly defines as containing an exigency (whichdemands a response), an audience, and a set of constraintsò Flower & Hayes, (1981).

However, SMS language does not conform to the accepted rules of language use. It goes contrary to Standard English and its use in examinations or written class assignment is considered inappropriate and unacceptable. Moreover,

SMS language lacks orderliness and clarity because it does not have a structure. This makes it ambiguous and meaningless especially to the examiners, who do not hold any mutual contextual belief with the students. The intended message is not passed. While research on text messaging has shown positive correlations betweenstudents who text and the intimacy levels of their communication Igarashi, Takai, &Yoshida, (2005), questions still remain in regards to texting and its relationship to formalwriting ability in the classroom. For formal writing and literacy, current research hasbeen somewhat contradictory. Studies by Beverly Plester and

colleagues have revealed apositive relationship between texting and writing performance Plester, Wood, & Joshi, (2009), but studies by Larry Rosen and colleagues have shown a negative correlationRosen, Chang, Erwin, Carrier, & Cheever, (2010). Plesterôs work has beenpredominantly on younger, grade school children, while Rosenôs study focused on college aged students. Beyond one study by Rosen, very few studies focusing on textmessage volume and formal writing scores in this age group have been identified. The lack of research in this area and contradictory results to what has been examined with younger students were the main reasons for this study.

2.10 SUMMARY

Other studies on textmessaging have focused on cyber bullying, as well as sociological/emotional links andgender. These studies have painted a clearer picture on how students use and view textmessaging in their daily lives. Lastly were the studies on text messaging and literacy.

Some studies have shown positive correlations between students who text and the Intimacylevels of their communication, however many questions remain in regards totexting and its relationship to formal writing ability in the classroom. The younger students in Plesterôs studies showed a positive correlation between textism usage and literacy, while Rosenôs studies on college age students showed a negative correlation between studentsôuse of textisms and their formal writing ability. Based on these, this study examines the impact whether positive or negative of text messaging on the written essays of secondary school students. The areas examined are the content, expression, organization and mechanical components of essay writing. Also the use of text messaging in education is reviewed.

GAINS FROM THE REVIEW

The review of related literature was of immense help to the researcher, the following are some authors whose works pertaining SMS language were reviewed.

	Content	Gains from the review
Akinborewa (2010)	Essay writing must be properly structured into a suitable opening, adequate development of main ideas, good paragraphing, balance, coherence and a suitable conclusion.	The study deals with SMS and essay writing.
Crystal (2007)	The principle of appropriateness rules and thatôwe know demands that we need to change our language as we do our clothes as we move from one context to another. And there are hundreds of contextô Teachers have to instill appropriate linguistic behavior, according to Crystal, (2007), and teach the pupils when to use the standard form of language, and when it is acceptable not to.	The study seeks to find out the impact of using SMS on formal English writing.
Berg (2003)	Berg (2003) postulates that the limited message lengths and tiny user interface of mobile phones make SMS users to commonly make extensive use of abbreviations particularly the use of numbers for words for example, "4" in place of the word "for", and the omission of vowels, as in the phrase "txtò ñspk" are similar in that they reduce attention to spelling, punctuation, and grammar with words like "4u" ("for you") or "2gthr yrs 18r" ("together years later").	The study identified the features of SMS language used in studentsô essay writing.
Rosen (2009)	Rosen (2009) is of the view that regular use of SMS language can impact negatively on the everyday language of ñtexters.ò	The study seeks to find out whetherSMS language has a negative impact on studentsô written essays
Carlson (2004)	Carlson (2004) asserted that language shortcuts (SMS) and colloquial languages are órеinforcing bad habits in writingô (p.1)	The study sought the impact of SMS language on studentsô essay writing.

Notwithstanding, a lot has been reviewed and all were cited in the literature review.The works of these authors have indeed contributed in making this work come to reality, through the review of the works of these people, the researcher got different views concerning SMS language. This served as available data and resource material for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the precise methods and procedures used in conducting the study. These include: research design, population of the study, sample and techniques, instrument for data collection, validity of research instrument, reliability of the instrument, procedures for data collection and procedures for data analysis.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The design adopted in this work is a descriptive Survey design. The survey method is considered appropriate for this study because it is used to investigate phenomenon in their natural setting so as to examine the true nature of the subject under discussion. Survey according to Obioma(1988:51) is ña type of research method involving among others specifying the properties of a given phenomenaò including aspects of the problem being investigated in a study through the use of sample. In the same vein, Osuala (1987:180) noted that survey research study both large and small populations by selecting and studying samples chosen to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables. This method is therefore adopted in order to assess the impact of SMS language on studentsô written essays. The method is found appropriate because it allows the researcher to come up with a generalization about the entire population and at the same time determine the current status of the population from which the data is collected.

3.3 POPULATON

The total number of students in the senior secondary schools in Zaria Zonal Inspectorate Division of Kaduna State stood at an estimate of 14,396. For this study, the population is limited to the number of students in the five senior secondary schools which were selected for the research. In all, the five selected secondary schools have a total population of 4,219 SS2 students. Therefore the total population is 4,219 and Since English language is compulsory, all the students offer the subject.

3.4 SAMPLING AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

A sample is a small group of subjects in a research drawn procedurally from the population from which the information of the entire population can be inferred. The sample of the study comprises of SSII students selected from five (5) secondary schoolsin ZariaZonal Inspectorate Division, Kaduna state.The sample of this study consists of one hundred (100) SSII students.

The proportionate sampling technique is used, this is because it enables the researcher to get accurate representation of the population as recommended by Best(1981).

Theresearcher thereforeused only a representative portion of the secondary schools in Zaria zonal inspectorate division, Kaduna state. The following secondary schools were sampled for the study.

Table 3.1 Table Showing Population of Sampled Schools

GROUP	NAME OF SCHOOL	No.OF STUDENTS	SAMPLED No. OF STUDENTS IN SS2
URBAN	Alhudauda College	969	17
	Barewa College	782	19
	G.G.S.S D/ Bauchi	715	20
RURAL	G.S.S Awai	522	23
	G.S.S Gimba	708	21
TOTAL		4,219	100

3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The researcher gave the students a narrative essay on the topic ñ My first day at schoolò These essays were marked by the researcher based on the WAEC marking scheme of content, expression, organization and mechanical accuracy. The scoring guide was arranged thus;

Content=7

Expression=8

Organization=3

Mechanical accuracy=2

Total=20 marks

Hence the essays were marked over twenty (20) and later analyzed for features of SMS speak. The following features of SMS were examined: spelling errors; punctuation errors, ignorance of paragraphs; shortening of words, acronyms and incomplete sentences. The researcher circled these features of SMS in the sampled essays for the purpose of data analysis. The study concentrated on the content, organization, expression and Mechanical Accuracy (MA) of the WAEC marking

scheme standard because these areas are where the errors are revealed. Everything was done within the period of six weeks.

3.6 PILOT STUDY

A small samplesize of ten (10) respondents were used for pilot testing. The researcher gave ten students of SS2 class of demonstration Secondary School, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria a test on narrative essay. The topic of the test was ñMy First Day at Demonstration Secondary Schoolò The result of this revealed that students use SMS language in writing.

3.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The validity of this research is based on studentsô essays, the content validity is used to analyze the work after which table of specification would be used to represent the results. The review of literature also provides facts towards the validity of this research. The reliability of the instrument was assured through a test re-test method which yielded a correlation co-efficient of 0.68. This was considered reliable enough for use.The reliability of scoring procedure was adapted from Feldt (1989), Hambleton (1991), Orwin (1994), Shavelson (1991) and Traub (1994) in order to establish the extent to which score summaries represent systematic versus unknown or unintended sources of variability, by estimating classical and other sorts of reliability.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The sampled essays were personally collected by the researcher, marked and circled for features of SMS language.The sampled essays were hundred in number. Hundred students were selected from the five senior secondary schools used for the study and all the selected students participated in the essay writing. To enable the researcher

determine the impact of SMS, the errors examined were; spelling errors; punctuation errors, ignorance of paragraphs, shortening of words, acronyms and incomplete sentences, these errors were classified under content errors, mechanical accuracy, organizational and expression. The features of SMS grouped under content were acronyms, for expression,incomplete sentences , shortening of words and non standard use of spelling were considered, mechanical errors comprise wrong use of capital letters and errors in punctuation. In the area of organization, ignorance of paragraphs was the main item.

3.9 DATA ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

The samples of written work were analyzed for actual features of SMS.The list of features tallied in the written samples were spelling errors, punctuation errors, poor paragraphing, acronyms, shortening of words and incomplete sentences. These SMS features were talliedaccording to the frequency with which they occurred in the samples. The research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics in which frequencies and percentages were employed and to test the hypotheses raised, t- test statistics was used.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the data is presented and analyzed. The chapter covers the results and discussion based on the one hundred (100) samples used in the study. Data collected were analyzed based on the four research questions raised in the study.Descriptive statistics was used by employing frequencies and percentages to analyze the research questions.The errors observed were categorized under mechanical, expression, organization and content components of essay writing. The mechanical errors comprise wrong use of capital letterspunctuation errors. In the aspect of expression, incomplete sentences, shortening of words non standard use of spelling were considered. For organization, ignorance of paragraphswas the main item while in the content the variable considered was acronym. The samples comprise of both rural and urban secondary schools in Zaria Zonal Inspectorate Division, Kaduna state. Hundred SS2 students were selected from the schools used.

The paired sample t-test was employed to test the four (4) null hypotheses raised at 0.05 level of significance.The Paired-Sample T- Test procedure compares the means of two variables for a single group. The procedure computes the differences between values of the two variables for each case and tests whether the average differs from 0, for each variable: mean, sample size, standard deviation, and standard error of the mean, for each pair of variables; correlation, average difference in means, t test, and confidence interval for mean difference, Standard deviation and standard error of the mean difference.

If the average difference between the measurements is equal to 0, the null hypothesis holds. On the other hand, if the average difference is not 0, the null hypothesis is rejected.

In addition, the procedure produces: Descriptive statistics for each test variable, The Pearson correlation between each pair and its significance and, a confidence interval for the average difference is (95%). Table 4.1 represents SMS features found in the studentsô written essays.

Table 4.1 Features of SMS Found in the Written Work of the Students.

S/N	Text items	Standard Spelling	Varieties	Frequency
1	2ld	told	Tod,2d	6
2	nd	and	an	6
3	B4	before	Bf, bfor,b/f	2
4	schl	school	Skool, skul	3
5	aftr	after	ftr	1
6	Enteôd	entered	nil	1
7	u	you	nil	1
8	Bcoz	because	b/c.cos,coz,bcos	1
9	d	the	nil	6
10	baf	bath	Bef,bat	3
11	frm	from	4rm	1
12	Un4getable	unforgetable	unforgtbl	1
13	wen	when	wn	4
14	wich	which	w/c	4
15	dey	they	dy	1
16	4omer	former	Foma,formr	1
17	ak	ask	nil	1
18	4	for	fr	3
19	rifom	Right in front of me	nil	1
20	foyi	For your information	nil	1
21	hep	help	hp	3
22	2	to	nil	6
23	dem	them	nil	6
24	den	then	nil	8

25	dis	This	nil	5
26	In2resttn	interesting	interestn	1
27	soheg	So help me God	nil	1
28	In2roducn	introducing	introducn	1
29	2b	To be	nil	4
30	wia	Where,were	wher	4
31	stdnt	student	studen	1
32	tnx	thanks	Tanks,tanx	4
33	insid	inside	nil	1
34	bai	buy	Bi,by	1
35	yr	year	nil	1
36	cdn	Could not	nil	2
37	sci	science	nil	1
38	Dnôt	Donôt	nil	2
39	amina	Amina	nil	1

Table 4.2SMS Features Identified in the Students' Written Work and their areas of Impact.

AREA OF IMPACT	SMS features	items	varieties	Standard spelling
Expression Component	Shortening of words	2ld 4ortunately Em Yr Abt Goin B4 D Cdn Sci Frien	Tld Fortuntly Dem, dm	told fortunately Them Year About Going Before The Could not Science Friend
Expression	Incomplete sentences	BRB BD		Beright back Be there
Mechanical Accuracy	Non standard use of apostrophe	Entrd	Entrd	entered
Expression	Nonstandard spelling	resumtn Bcos In2roducing 4rm Dm Tym Dey	Resumptn introducn frm dem nil dy	Resumption because Introducing From Them Time they
Mechanical Accuracy	Exagerated use of exclamation marks	Dnt !!!!		Dont
	Wrong use of capital letters	Y, amina, LV		you Amina love
Content	acronyms	RIFOM SOHEG FOYI	Right in front of me So help me God For your information	

4.2 ANALYSIS OF DATA

To analyze the research questions, frequencies and percentages were employed and the results were presented below:

Research question 1: What is the impact of the language of short messaging service (SMS) on the content component of written essays of secondary school students in SS2?

Table 4.3 Reported features of SMS per group for content component.

participants	Acronyms frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
urban	42	59.16
rural	29	40.84
Total	71	100

The variable considered under content is acronym,as indicated in the table 4.3, the urban learners of English were more inclined to make use of acronyms than the rural learners. Approximately 59.16% of the urban learners used acronymswhile the rural students were approximately 40.9%. This shows that the urban students use more acronyms than the rural students. However the two groups committed these errors, thus the responses prove that SMS language affects the content component of the studentsô essay writing.

Research question 2

What is the impact of the language of short messaging service (SMS) on the organization component of written essays of secondary school students in SS2?

Table 4.4 Reported features of SMS per group for Organizationcomponent

participants	Ignorance of paragraphs frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
urban	39	58.21
rural	28	41.79

Under organization, ignorance of paragraphs is considered. From the table 4.4, approximately 58.21% of the urban learners ignore paragraphs while approximately 42% of the rural students committed the same error. The urban students committed this error more than the rural students. The two groups were prone to this error, this is an indication that SMS language affects the organization component of the studentsô essay writing.

Research question 3

What is the impact of the language of short messaging service (SMS) on the mechanical component of written essays of secondary school students in SS2?

Table 4.5 Reported features of SMS per group for mechanicalcomponent

participants	Punctuation errors frequency(N)	Percentage %
urban	31	57.41
rural	23	42.59
Total	54	100

Punctuation errors were prominent to a comparable extent within the two groups. From table 4.5, approximately57.5 % of the urban and approximately 42.6% from the rural were prone to these errors, the urban students also committed more of these errors than the rural students. Both groups committed the errors, this is an evidence that SMS language has an impact on the mechanical component of written essays of the students.

Research question 4

What is the impact of the language of short messaging service (SMS) on the expression component of written essays of secondary school students in SS2?

Table 4.6Reported features of SMS use per group for expression component

SMS features	participants	Frequency	Percentage
deliberate spelling errors	Urban	35	56.45
	Rural	27	43.55
	Total	**62**	**100.00**
Incomplete sentences	Urban	29	55.77
	Rural	23	44.23
	Total	**52**	**100.00**
Shortening of words	Urban	20	43.48
	Rural	26	56.52
	Total	**46**	**100.00**

Source: Authorôs work 2014

Spelling errors were comparably used by the two groups, also shortening of words and incomplete sentences, in deliberate spelling errors, 56.45% of the urban students committed this error while 43.55% of the rural learners committed the error. 57.77% from the urban and 44.23% from the rural made use of incomplete sentences , 43.48% of the urban students shortened words while 56.52% of the rural students committed the same error. However, these errors are prominent among the two group of learners, thus, SMS language has impact on the expression component of the studentsô written essays.

HYPOTHESIS 1

There is no significant impact of SMS language on the content component of written essays of rural and urban secondary school students in SS2.

Table 4.7t-tests for the rural and urban secondary schools for content component

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	T-Critical
Rural	Acronyms	100	3.533	1.506	.389	2.700	4.367	9.089	14	.000
Urban	Acronyms	100	3.533	1.506	.389	2.700	4.367	9.089	14	.000

Source: Field work, 2014

To test this hypothesis, the t-test was determined, the scores collected from the groups were analyzed and compared as shown in the table below.

The Mean column in the paired samples t- test table displays the average difference between the rural and the urban secondary schools in an essay writing which took an interval of six weeks.

The t-test statistic is obtained by dividing the mean difference by its standard error. The t-critical column displays the probability of obtaining a t- statistic whose absolute value is equal to or greater than the obtained t -statistic. Since the calculated absolute t-value is greater than the calculated t-critical value obtained, the null hypothesis is not accepted. Thus SMS has effect on the content of studentsô written essays.

HYPOTHESIS 2

There is no significant impact of SMS language on the organization component of written essays of rural and urban secondary school students in SS2.

Table 4.8t-tests for the rural and urban secondary schools for organization component

paired Samples Test

Variables		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Paired Differences 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper	t-value	df	T-Critical
Rural	Ignorance of paragraphs -	100	1.500	1.286	.344	.757	2.243	4.364	13	.001
Urban	Ignorance of paragraphs -	100	3.133	2.167	.559	1.933	4.333	5.600	14	.000

Source: Field work, 2014

To test this hypothesis, the t-test was employed, the scores collected from the two groups were analyzed and compared as shown in table 4.8.

The result shows the differences between the observed classes, as can be deduced from the above table; the value is high on the Ignorance of paragraphs for both groups. The rural group had a t-value of 4.364 while the urban group had 5.600.The results reveal that SMS language has a significant effect on the organization component of the studentsô essay writing. The null hypothesis is rejected because the t. calculated value is greater than the t-critical value, this is in accordance with the decision rule which states that if t-calculated value is greater than t-critical value, it implies that there exist a significant difference between the groups as such null hypothesis should be rejected.

HYPOTHESIS 3

There is no significant impact of SMS language on the mechanical component of written essays of secondary school students in SS2.

Table 4.9 t-tests for the rural and urban secondary schools for mechanical component

Paired Samples Test

			Paired Differences							
						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	t-critical
Rural	Use of capital letter to Denote strong emotions	100	2.533	1.125	.291	1.910	3.157	8.718	14	.000
Urban	Use of capital letter to denote strong emotions	100	3.400	1.352	.349	2.651	4.149	9.738	14	.000
Rural	Errors in punctuations examples exaggerated use of exclamation marks and question marks	100	1.800	1.320	.341	1.069	2.531	5.281	14	.000
Urban	Errors in punctuations examples exaggerated use of exclamation marks and question marks	100	1.467	.834	.215	1.005	1.928	6.813	14	.000

Source: Field work, 2014

To test this hypothesis, the t-test was employed, the scores collected from thegroups were analyzed.In use of capital letters to denote strong emotions, the rural group had a t-value of 8.718 while the urban group had 9.738 and in punctuation errors, rural had5.281while urban had 6.813.

The results in the above table 4.3 suggest that the calculated t- values are greater than the t- critical values so the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant effect of SMS language on the mechanical component of the studentsô essay writing.

HYPOTHESIS 4

There is no significant impact of SMS language on the expression component of essays of secondary school students in SS2.

Table 4.10 t-tests for the rural and urban secondary schools for expression component

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	T-Critical
Rural	Non-standard use of spelling	100	2.267	1.668	.431	1.343	3.190	5.264	14	.000
Urban	Non-standard use of Spelling	100	2.333	1.397	.361	1.560	3.107	6.468	14	.000
Rural	Incomplete sentences	100	1.067	1.033	.267	.495	1.639	4.000	14	.001
Urban	Incomplete sentences	100	1.600	1.404	.363	.822	2.378	4.413	14	.001
Rural	shortening of words	100	.733	1.387	.358	-.035	1.501	2.048	14	.060
Urban	shortening of words	100	.933	1.223	.316	.256	1.610	2.956	14	.010

Source: Field work, 2014

To test this hypothesis, the t-test statistical method is used, the scores collected from the groups were analyzed.

In non standard use of spelling, the rural group had a t-value of 5.264 while the urban group had 6.468. For incomplete sentences, the rural group had a t-value of 4.000 while the urban group had 4.413 and in shortening of words/ sentences, rural had a t-value of 2.048 while the urban group had 2.956. From the observed variables in the table above,

The values are high on Non-standard use of spelling compared to incomplete sentences and shortening of words, like wise in the calculated t-critical values, hence, the null hypothesis is rejected because all the t-values calculated are higher than the t-critical values.

4.3 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The major findings of this study reveal that there is a significant difference between SMS language and the following components of essay writing; content, organization, mechanical and expression. It can be deduced that

1. SMS language imbibes in students the ability to create ideas as stated by Crystal (2008). SMSing helps students to develop writing ability, it also saves time and space. All these are positive impact. Notwithstanding, it still has an adverse effect on the content of studentsô writing as the ideas created are presented in numbers and abbreviations which the examiner finds very difficult to understand. In a studentsô script ósohegô was an acronym used to represent ñso help me God, ófoyiô meaning ófor your informationô So, The intended message may not be passed. ófoyiô and ósohegô have no semantic relationship with their meaning! In this case now, there is no way the examiner will understand the intended message. Also the number of words per line is limited which limits the required 450 number of words in WASSCE.
2. SMS has a negative impact on the expression component of studentsô writing. the students made errors such as ób4ô meaning before,ób/cozô meaning because, I left d house very early dat morning meaning I left the house very early that morning. In a formal writing exercise, all these will be circled and students will be penalized, which can hinder their performance.
3. SMS affects the organization of studentsô writing. Generally, in text messaging paragraphs are ignored. This was prominent on the studentsô scripts as there was

poor or no paragraphing in their writing, the sampled essays attached in the appendices serve as an evidence to this.

4. SMS impacts negatively on the mechanics of studentsô writing. The students committed mechanical errors such as óiô for I., eg i woke up very early in the morningóentrôdô for entered, eg as I entrd the school.ócoudâtô or ócdnô for couldnôt. these examples were extracted from the sampled essays in the appendices.

4.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the findings of the study, four (4) null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance and all were rejected. This is because the t-calculated values were greater than the t-critical values for allthe hypotheses hence the Ho were rejected.

It is therefore gathered that the performance of students in the written essays were highly significant thus the language of short messaging service (SMS) affects studentsô essay writing in the following components; organization, mechanical and expression.

From table 4.2,ónd ô,ó2ô,ó2ld ô,ódem ô,ódenô,ónxô,ôwenô,ódô were frequently used by the students as these SMS features ranked the highest number of frequencies, this is because these symbols are common and they are used in different contexts.These (and other) features did indeed occur in the formal written English of the participants, the presence of them in formal writing shows the inability of students to switch from informal habit to formal ones especially in examination, standard English is neglected.Thus SMS language has a significant impact on the studentsô formal

writing,this agrees with Thurlow (2003) who stated thus ñand outsiders and other educated people alike, can understand Standard English.ò Unfortunately, coded language expressions (text messages) are not necessarily comprehensible to an outsider. Some clarification and understanding of a governing rule system is needed.For example, single or multiple words are condensed by means of replacing individual syllables and words with single letters or digits, 4rm is used in place of from, ó2ruô is used in place of through.Whole words may also be omitted for instance,ó2ô is used as to,ô4ô is used as for and u is used as you.With this, it indicates that SMS language has an adverse impact on studentsô writing.

The finding also concurred with the work of Rosen (2009) who is of the view that regular use of SMS language can impact negatively on the everyday language of ñtextersò the study also agree with Carlson (2004) who asserts that language shortcuts (SMS) and colloquial languages are reinforcing bad habits in writingò (p1)The prophesies that texting inevitably will erode children's ability to spell, punctuate and capitalize correctly, and that children will transfer these new habits into their schoolwork seem to have some truth to them, despite what Crystal (2008) says. Crystal reported on his work with teenagers from schools in the United Kingdom. He asked them whether they would use text message abbreviations in their schoolwork, and they looked at him 'with blank incomprehension' (Crystal 2008: 152). The students answered that they had never heard of anybody who used text message abbreviations in their schoolwork, and that 'you'd have to be pretty stupid not to know the difference' (Crystal 2008: 152). He also maintains that 'all the evidence suggestthat

belief in an impending linguistic disaster is a consequence of a mythology largely created by the media.

Children's use of text abbreviationshas been hugely exaggerated' (Crystal 2008: 173). However, from the observation from the fieldwork students do not keep the language of text messagingseparate from Standard English written texts, so that text messaging language is used inschool work. Crystal says that 'if there are children who are unaware of the difference between texting and standard English, then it is up to teachers to make them aware. If there are children whose discourse skills are being hampered by texting, then it is up to teachers to show them how toimprove' (Crystal 2008: 165). In other words, teachers are given a great responsibility when it comes to raising the awareness of appropriate and non appropriate language behaviour.

According to Crystal (2008), text messaging did not become popular in the United States until 2004, which makes the results from the essays even more surprising. This means that text messaging has had a great impact on people's spelling in just four years. The way people speak, as well as the way people write, have been affected by text messaging and Internet chat, even though electronic communication has not been around for a very long time yet. Crystal reports that 'in 2006, the chief examiner's report of the Irish State Examination Commission drew attention to a concern over one section of the Junior Certificate' (Crystal 2008: 153). The complaint was as follows:

Expertise in text messaging and email in particular would appearto have affected spelling and punctuation. Text messaging, with its use of phonetic spelling

and little or no punctuation, seems to pose a threat to traditional conventions in writing (in Crystal 2008: 154).Crystal is not concerned. This is something which needs special attention in the future. The results of the essays from the fieldwork indicate that students are not completely confident in how to use the apostrophe according to the rules ofStandard English, and text messaging may not make it any easier for those who are struggling.

Truss (2003)reports that many people have difficulties with this particular feature, and TheApostrophe Protection Society is not happy with the misuse of the apostrophe, which can be seen e.g. on street signs and in shop windows.Teachers can dedicate a lot of time teaching the studentshow to use the apostrophe, but once the students have left school, the teachers are not in control any more. Abbreviations(shortening of words) were frequently used in the essays of the students and itmay not always be as easy as it seems for the teachers to control and correct this. Some students areso against written assignments, that it can be a tedious task just to make them write anything at all.

In handwritten essays from the fieldwork, an enormous amount of abbreviations occurred, and manyElectronic communicationof these appeared without any explanation. The meaning sometimes became clear from the contextbut on many occasions, it was impossible to understand what the abbreviation stood for. In the interpretation of the abbreviations, it took more time to read through the essays.

Abbreviating saves time for the writer, not for the reader. If students abbreviate either deliberately or unconsciously on written exams, any external examiner might have

difficulties understanding what the students mean by the abbreviations. This might cause low grades for the students, and they need to be warned that abbreviating may cause unnecessary misunderstandings. More than half of the students, abbreviatewhen they intend to write Standard English, this suggests that specialattention needs to be paid to Standard English on one hand, and the language of text messaging onthe other hand.

There is no doubt that text messaging has had an impact on Standard English, because people have started to use the abbreviations in spoken language, and as thefieldwork showed, somepeople also transfer these new habits into their school work. Some of the abbreviations might beincluded as a part of the standard language, as happened with ó*ps*'and ó*nb*'a long time ago. Otherabbreviations may already be forgotten by the time the next generation takes over. However,Standard English will continue to be taught in schools, and there will always be students eager tolearn the standard norms of spelling and punctuation.

Some students find it difficult to keep the language of text messaging separate from the Standard English, and whether Standard English will change as a result of this remains to be seen. One thing is certain, and that is that text messaging has had an impact on Standard English, however slight or great.Withregard to the performance of SS2 studentsin the four (4) null hypothesis raised, the results prove that SMS language has impact on studentsô essay writing.

4.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, data collected using t-test instrument was analyzed, presented and discussed according to the research questions using descriptive statistics and the four (4) null hypotheses formulated were tested using t-test, the result shows the rejection of the four (4) null hypotheses since there was significant difference between the performances of the students.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the summary of the major findings, limitations and suggestions for further studies. It also puts forth the conclusion made based on the findings; it is the hope of the researcher that useful recommendations made in the study will be implemented by those concerned.

5.2 SUMMARY

The study investigated the effect of the language of short messaging service (SMS language) on the performance of secondary school students in essay writing. The research questions cover the following areas; the effect of the language of short messaging (SMS) on the content, mechanical, organization and expression components of written essays of secondary school students.

The researcher was inspired to embark on this study because students are beginning to use SMS in their school examination written essays thus violating the rules of standard English.The descriptive survey design was used for the research, five secondary schools were selected for the study. The proportionate sampling technique was used to select samples from the five selected secondary schools used. The sample of this study comprise of 100 students from the five selected senior secondary schools used for the study.

To collect the data for the study, the researcher used samples of studentsô written essays .The features of SMS used in the studentsôwritten essays were circled and used for data analysis.

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics andt-test statistical instrument was used to test the hypotheses.In line with the research questions, the following null hypotheses were raised for the study:

Ho1: There is no significant impact of SMS language on the content component of written essays of secondary school students in SS2.

Ho2: There is no significant impact of SMS language on the organization component of written essays of secondary school students in SS2.

Ho3: There is no significant impact of SMS language on the mechanical component of written essays of secondary school students in SS2.

Ho4: There is no significant impact of SMS language on the expression component of written essays of secondary school students in SS2.

Major findings revealed that SMS language has an adverse impact on studentsô writing.One common feature of all the SMS is the ability to limit characters in words, saving space and time. SMS features deviate from the rules and norms of standard English, the examiner marking finds it difficult to infer the meaning of the features and even when the examiner understands some of these features because of the popularity of their usage, they are circled and penalties await the candidates under mechanical, expression, organization and content components. Students are affected most in mechanics because most of the features fall under the mechanical errors.

5.3 CONCLUSION

From the results obtained through the study, it is evident that mobile phone use among students is very high and using the device specifically for text messaging is also common. Empirical evidence from an environment where all respondents in the

target group had English as their L2, proves that generalizing the positive impact of SMS text messaging on studentsô literacy as Crystal and some others claim could be misleading.

Given the findings of this research, use of SMS language contributes to studentsô poor performance in essay writing.

More so, an appreciable number of students equally struggle with grammar, lexis and structure.

Text messaging which encourages abbreviating and non-conformity with grammatical rules could worsen studentsô written communication skills rather than improve them. SMS language can harm the studentsô writing skills.

In view of the attested addictive effects of text messaging, caution must be exercised in encouraging students in its use. If not checked, students are likely to get so used to it that they may no longer realize the need for Standard English constructions even in writings that are supposed to be formal, a phenomenon OôConnor (2005) describes as ñsaturation.ò

With findings obtained from the research, it is evident that text messaging could pose a threat to studentsô writing skills and therefore must not be entertained by the teacher in studentsô assignments and examinations. It is not in any way a show of creativity as the students have failed to understand where and when the use of text messages is appropriate. Text items are completely unacceptable in formal context. The written communication skills of students are already poor. Various reports have proven this. Even among applicants for enrolment into the university for the 2013/2014 academic year, majority of them about (83%) obtained grade E in English

at the West African Secondary School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE). Thus, the argument that SMS text messaging is a blessing because it helps improve studentsô written communication skills may hold water elsewhere; but not in English language. Evidence obtained from sampled marked scripts indicates that the harmful effects of text messaging on studentsôwriting skills have become a major threat at the secondary school level. Be that as it may, it is important to eschew complacency and rather adopt conscious and pragmatic measures now so as to prevent the phenomenon from further worsening studentsôwriting skills. All efforts must therefore be made to help students write good English whether on phone or on paper. The practice by some teachers of only marking content and not expression and mechanical accuracy, must cease immediately.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of this study as enumerated above it has made it necessary to make some recommendations of certain measures which will help in combating the use of SMS text messaging especially in the formal school writing.

Many teachers of English neglect teaching writing, these could be because of their ignorance of how to teach writing, they see teaching writing as mere hand writing and filling in words in the blanks of workbooks.Teachers have to instill appropriate linguistic behavior and teach the pupils to use the standard form of language. This can be achieved by giving them constant essay writing exercises and making necessary corrections. It is through these that they will be able to identify and see the gravity of the use of theseSMS features in formal writing. They can then discourage the students from using these SMS features through regular corrections and feedbacks as the

students write essays regularly and the teachers mark. The existence of the modern gadget - GSM has come with its orthography,which is gradually being adopted by Nigerian students into the formal essaywriting. As the future stakeholders of the English language, the currenttrend, if unchecked, consciously or otherwise, will kill the formal writing andmake way for the ónew GSM writingsô and this would invariably adulteratethe standard of English usage in Nigeria.

The students should be taught the four components considered in marking essay writing properly, they should be made to know how using SMS in their formal writing can affect them in these components: mechanical, expression, organization and content. Teachers can achieve these by concentrating more on these components in the teaching of essay writing and in marking the essays,teachers should not focus on the content alone.In order to achieve communicative competence in the English language,students should not only see text messagingas the easier and quicker means of communicationbut should realize its negativeeffects on their academic work. They shouldimbibe the practice of writing formal letters and essays adhering to grammatical conventions and writing mechanics. They should be conscious of their writingso as to separate informal and formal writing in order not to use text features in their formal academic work.

It is important for Teachers to attend professional conferences, meetings and workshops on the language of electronic text messages, this will allow them to be better informed about the latest developments in the field and other current issues in the teaching profession ñteaching English as a foreign languageò by so doing teachers

can share ideas with other teachers in different countries on this problem of using text messaging in studentsô formal writing and its solution.

Teachers of English can emphasize the avoidanceof text messaging among students by organizingpublic enlightenment lectures tellingthem the educational implications of suchusages. They can achieve these by organizing seminars, lectures and conferences within the school premises in which issues like these will be discussed and the students should be imposed to attend these lectures.

In line with what Otagburuagu (1997: 10)views when he cites Broughton and Brumfit(1980:20) as saying that: ñThe ability toput sentences together effectively needsSystematic encouragement and sometimesexplicit teaching and part of the work in aWriting course involves teaching studentsto be sensitive to the rules of discourse inEnglishò.

If these recommendations are utilized, it isbelieved that the SMS style of communicationand its negative impact on studentsô academicperformance, especially those learning Englishas a second language, and communication generallyshall be reduced or possibly nipped at the bud.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

A study of this nature cannot cover every area, hence the following recommendation for further studies have been suggested.

More work should be carried out by other researchers because there is very little literature in this area.

The study was carried out in urban and rural secondary schools; it should be extended to L1 and L2 learners.

The study may also be extended to include teachersô attitude towards studentsô use of SMS language in writing.

Other problems and difficult concepts in English language content of the curriculum should be investigated.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There is no study without limitation hence this study is not an exceptional. The researcher used ordinary paper to determine the impact of SMS language on studentsô written essays. The sampling of the subjects was restricted to an intact year group, SS2 in the schools sampled. The researcher was only allowed to use afternoon time which is about the closing time. The computation of the mean scores, standard deviation of the score and T-test statistical method of data analysis was so much a tedious procedure.

REFERENCES

Abdullah, A. (1998). Generation txt: mixed messages. Hartow: Longman.

Adams, K. and A. Winter (1997) ñGang graffiti as a discourse genre.ò *Journal of Sociolinguistics* Vol 1.

Adeosun, A. O. and Maduekwe, A.A.N (2008) ñConnecting reading and writing Through Whole Language Activities: A strategy for achieving literacy for national Developmentò Proceedings of the 22nd Annual Conference of the Nigerian English Studies Association (NESA).

Agence France Presse, (2010). Text message cash transfers booming in South, East Africa [Online]Available: http://news.malaysia.msn.

Akinborewa,T and Olagbaju, O. (2010). Simplified compositionworkbook for senior school certificate candidates. Ibadan: Joytal Printing Press.

Akindele, F. and Adegbite, W. (1999). The Sociology and politics of English in Nigeria. An Introduction. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press.

Alabi, V.A. (2008) Problems of an emergent written language of the global system for mobile communication (GSM) in Nigeria: Proceedings of the 22nd Annual Conference of the Nigerian English Studies Association (NESA)

Albrow, K. H.(1992) The English writing system: Notes towards a description. London Longman.

Alexander, D. M.(1990) ñWhy Not ñUò for ñYouò?ò *American speech* vol; 5.

Anis, J. (2007). Neography: Unconventional spelling in French SMS text messages.

Apari,W. J. (2008) ñLanguage orthography: A step towards Ogu language Engineeringò A paper presented at the 26th West African language conference (WALC), University of Education, Winneba, Ghana, July 28 ï August 3.

Ayto (2005) ñGrammar as a tool of language literacy: An Evaluation of Three Nigerian senior secondary school English course booksò Proceedings of The 22nd Annual conference of the Nigeria English Studies Association (NESA).

Awaz (2006). How to do things with words. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. SMS length and function in teenagers .

Ayodele, S.O. Oyeleye, A.L. Yakubu, S.O. and Ajayi, D.A. (2001) General English: A course for tertiary Levels. Ibadan: Bounty Press Ltd. Ayto (2005). Teen

sends 14,528 text messages in a single month. Balakrishnan, V., & Yeow, P. H. P. (2008). Text Entry Factors and Texting Satisfaction: An analysis among Malaysian Users.

Bamgbose, Ayo ((1995). English in the Nigerian Environment. In Bamgbose Ayo, Banjo Ayo and Thomas Andrew (eds.)*New Englishes: A west African Perspectives,* Ibadan: Mosuro publishers.

Bamgbose, Ayo (1992). Speaking in tongues: Implications of multilingualism for language policy in Nigeriaò InBamgbose Ayo, Banjo Ayo and Thomas Andrew *(eds.) New Englishes: West African perspective,* Ibadan:

Barkhuus, L. (2005), Why everyone loves to text message: Social management with SMS proceedings from ACM GROUP õ05: International ACM SIG GROUP on supporting group work, New York, ACM

Berasa, S., & Mous, M. (2009). The oral and written interface in SMS: Technologically mediated communication in Kenya. Netherland: LOT.

Beslile, R. (1996). E-mail activities in the ESL writing class. Retrieved 10 February, 2006 from: http://iteslj.org/Articles/Beslile-email.html.

Birkerts, S. (1994). Into the electronic millennium. In S. Birkerts (ed.) *The Gutenberg Elegies.* Winchester: Faber and Faber.

Bloomfield, L. (1993) Language. London: Allen and Unwin.

Bloor, T. and Bloor, M. (1995) The functional analysis of English. London: Arnold.

Bodomo and Lee (2004) Linguistic features of SMS texts in Hong Kong. *Australian Journal of Communication,* vol11.

Bodomo, A.B. (2009). Computer-mediated communication for linguistics and literacy: Technology and Natural Language Education. Hershey:IGI Global.

Brooks, G. L. (1998) A History of the English language. London: Andre Deutsch Ltd.

Brown, B. (2002). Studying the Use of Mobile Technology. In Brown, B., Green, N. and Harper, R. (eds.) *Wireless world. Springer.*

Brown, G., & George Y. (1993) Discourse analysis. Cambridge: CUP.

Bucznsk (2008.) Always on: Language in an online and mobile world: Oxford University Press.

Butcher, D. (2009). Obamaôs Ghana speech highlights delivered live via SMS. Mobile marketer, 15 July, 2009.

Camilla, A.T. (2004) Electronic Discourse: A Comparative Study of Some Cameroonian and British Email Messages. Unpublished D.E.A Dissertation: University of Yaounde 1.

Chang, Erwin, Carrier &Cheever. (2010). Forensic Linguistics:finding a murderer through Text Messages Retrieved on: April 5,2012

Campbell and Purcel (2010) SMS and its negative effects on language.Retrieved on: February 16, 2011.

Carlson (2004, April). Teens' texting symbols invade schoolwork (The Sacromento Bee) Retrieved March 4, 2007: http://www.sacbee.com/education/v-print/story/889102.html

Carrington(2005)."Academic Literacy in a wired world: Redefining genres for college

Chioma Ibe (2004) Teaching and reaming the writing Skill in the English language theories, issues and practice. Onitsha: Cape Publishers International Ltd.

Chiluwa, I. (2007) ñThe óNigerianessô of SMS Text Message in Englishò *Journal of the Nigerian English Studies Association* vol 3.

Collot & Belmore (2003) ñSMS essay rings alarm bells for Youth Literacyò. unpublished BA dissertation, Cardiff University.

Crispin, T. (2003) Generation TXT? The sociolinguistics of Young peopleôs text Messaging .Washington: Washington University Press

Crsytal, D. (1995) Language Play. London: Penguin Books.

Crsytal, D. (1997) English as a global Language.

Crystal, D. (2007). Txtng: The Gr8 Db8. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Crystal, D. (2008). Txtng: The Gr8 Db8. Oxford: Oxford University Press.Cup levinson

Danet,. & S.C. Herring, (Eds.), The multilingual internet: Language, culture and Communication on line. (pp. 87-115). New York: Oxford University Press.

Darus, S. & Khor, H.C. (2009) Common Errors in Written English Essays of Form One Chinese Students: A Case Study. *European Journal of Social Sciences,* 10(2).

Dogbevi, E. K. (2008). How SMS technology is changing lives in Ghana. Ghana Business News, 6 December, 2008. [Online] Available: http://www.ghanabusinessnews.com (March 6, 2010).

Drouin, M., & Davis, C. (2009). R U Txting? Is the Use of Text Speak Hurting Your Literacy? *Journal of Literacy Research,* 41. Retrieved February 2, 2011 from http://pdfserve.informaworld.Com .

Dukiya, F. (1991) ñSome Errors of Concord and Tenseò In Undergraduate Texts English Language and Literature. Ibadan: Paperback Ltd.

Elvis, F. W. (2009). The Sociolinguistics of Mobile Phone SMS Usage in Cameroon and Nigeria. *The International Journal of Language Society and Culture.*

Elwood-Clayton, B. (2005). Desire and Loathing in the Cyber Philippines.

Erickson, T. and Kellogg, W.A. (2000). Social translucence: An approach to designing systems that support social processes. In transactions of computer Human Interaction. 7(1), 59-83. ACM Press. Estudios de Juventud, 57.

Faleke V. O. and Alo, M. A. (2008) ñMutual contextual Beliefs (MCBs) Exhibited in Nurse-Patient Interactions in Southwest.

Faulkner and Culwin (2005) The principle of relevance and meta messages in online discourse: Electronic exchanges in a graduate course. Language, "Literacy and Culture Review" .

Fayola (1999). "Electronic discourse: Evolving conventions in online academic environments". Bloomington, IN: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication. [ED 422 593]

Fisher, C. (1992). America Calling. CA, USA. Berkeley University Press.

Freudenberg, K. (2009). Investigating the impact of SMS speak on the written work of English First Language and English Second Language High School Learners. Retrieved 8 August, 2011 from Stellenbosch University, Sunscholar Research Repository website: http:// scholar.sun.ac.za /bitstream.

Finnish, Author, Hannu Luntiala(2007)) Blurring the Boundaries: Cell Phones, Mobility, And the Line between Work and Personal Life. In Brown, B., Green, N. and Harper, R.(eds.)*wireless world. Springer.*

Grinter, R., & Eldridge, M. (2003). Wan2tlk?: Everyday text messaging. proceedings of the ACM Conference on human factors in computing systems.

Grinter, R.E. and Eldridge, M.A.(2001). y do tngrs luv 2 txt msg? In Proceedings of CSCW 2001. Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Grinter, R.E. and M. A. Eldridge. (2003) Wan2tlk? Everyday text messaging. In Proceedings of CHI 2003. ACM Press.

Guffey, M. A., & Du-Babcock, B.(2008). Essentials of business communication Asian Edition, Singapore: Thomson.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1979)Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning. London: Edward Arnold.

Hardaf Segerstad, Y.(2002) ñUse and Adaptation of Written Language to the Conditions of computer-mediated communication.ò department of linguistics: PhD. Goteborg, Sweden..

Hamzah, M. S. B., Ghorbani, M. R., & Abdullah, S. K. B. (2009). The impact of electronic communication technology on written language. *US- China Education Review,* 6. Retrieved February 22, 2011from http://www.teacher.org.cn/doc/ucedu200911/ucedu20091107.pdf

Harley, Win, Pemberton, & Wilcox (2007). The effect of computers on student writing: A meta-analysis of studies from 2002 to 2007. "*The Journal of Technology, Learning, and Assessment", 2(1).* Retrieved December 15, 2009, from http://www.bc.edu/research/intasc/jtla/journal/pdf/v2n1_jtla.pdf

Harper, R., Palen, L and Taylor A. (2005). The Inside Text. Springer.Harper, R., Palen, L and Taylor A.(eds.) (2003)The Inside Text. Springer.Herring, D. Stein & T. Virtanen (Eds.), Handbook of the pragmatics of CMC. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Hesse-Biber S. N. & Leavy, P. (2011) The Practice of Qualitative Research (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/deafed/ enh04 http://faculty.washington.edu/thurlow/papers/Thurlow (2003)-DAOL.pdf

Igarashi, Motoyoshi,Takai and Yoshida. (2008). Second language research: methodology and design. Lawrence Erlbaun Associates, Inc. International Telecommunications Union. (2009). Information Society Statistical Profiles 2009: Africa. College students in Pakistan. *International Journal of Business and Management,* Vol. 5, No. 4, April.

Igboanusi, H. (1997) Language and Nationalism: The Future of English inNigeriaôs Language Policies. *Journal of Social and Cultural Studies* vol.1 no. 2.

Igboanusi, H. (1998) Lexico-semantic innovation processes in Nigerian English. *Research in African Languages and Linguistics (RALL),* vol.4 No.2.

Ito, M. and Okabe, D. (2005). Intimate Connections: Contextualizing Japanese Youth and Mobile messaging. In Harper, R., Palen, L and Taylor A. (eds.) *The Inside Text.* Springer.Jaffe, A. and S. Walton. ñThe voices people read: orthography

and Nonstandard Representation of speech.ò Journal of Sociolinguistics 4 (4) (2000).

Jenson, S. (2005) Default Thinking: Why consumer products fail. In Harper, R., Palen, L and Taylor A. (eds.) *The Inside Text. Springer. Johannesburg: ITU.*

Jernigan &Toga(1999). The use of e-mail in the L2 classroom: An overview. "Second Language Learning & Teaching", 1. Retrieved on December 15, 2003, from http://www.usq.edu.au/opacs/cllt/sllt/1-1/Kupelian01.htm

Jowitt, D. (1991) Nigerian English Usage: An Introduction. Lagos: Longman. Kamran, S. (2010). Mobile Phone: Calling and texting patterns of college students in Pakistan. *International Journal of Business and Management, Vol. 5, No. 4, April.*

Kassesniemi, E. and Rautiainen P. (2003) Mobile Culture of Children and teenagers in Finland. Mobile Communication. Cambridge: CUP.

Katakoa, K.(1997) ñAffect and letter writing: Unconventional conventions in casual Speech by young Japanese women.ò Language in Society 26.

Kate, R. (2007). Teachers Say Text Messages Ruining Kids' Writing Skills.

Katz, J. and Aakhus, M. (2002). Perpetual Contact: Mobile Communication, Private Talk, Public Performance. Cambridge University Press.

Kellog. (2001). Comparing e-mail and synchronous conferencing in online peer response."Written Communication

Kopomaa, T. (2005). The Breakthrough of Text Messaging in Finland. In Harper, Lamidi, M.T (2000) *Aspects of Chomsky Grammar.* Ibadan: Emman Publications. Lee, C. (2002). Telecommunications Reforms in Malaysia. Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics, 73, pp 521ï 540. Retrieved August 8, 2011 fromhttp://fep.um.edu.my/images/fep/doc/2001%20Pdf/FEA-WP-2001-006.pdf.

Language Teaching. The Internet *TESL Journal*. Retrieved on:

Leibowitz, W. R. (1999). Technology transforms writing and the teaching of writing. "Chronicle of Higher Education", 46 (14), A67-A68. [EJ 597 490]

Lindley(2008). Cyberplay: Communicating online. Oxford: Berg Publishing. Luntiala, H. (2007). Viimeiset viestit (Last Messages). Helsinki: Tammi

Ling, R. (1994) ñA Taxonomy of Telephone Conversations based on the Callers: Preliminary Results of a Quantitative Examination.ò Kjeller, Telenor Fou (Fou

Rapport 33/94).Online 24 March 2006 Available: http://archives/tele. Com /ling/communication/ut.html

Ling, R. (2004) The Mobile Connection. Germany, Elsevier.

Ling, R. and B. Yttr, (1999) ñNobody sits at home and waits for the telephone to ring: Micro and hyper-coordination through the use of the mobile phone.ò Oslo, Telenor Research and Development, 1999.

Ling, R.& peper (2005). The Socio-linguistics of SMS: An Analysis of SMS Use by a Random Sample of Norwegians. In R. Ling & Pedersen (Eds.) *Mobile Communications: Renegotiation of the Social Sphere.* London: Springer Retrieved January 30, 2011 from http://www.richardling.com/ papers /2005_SMS_socio-linguistics.pdf.

Lynch, B. (1998). Toward a context-adaptive model for the evaluation of language Teaching programmes. Los Angeles: University of California. Dissertation Abstracts International 48: 2264A Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (2010). Q4 2010, Selected Facts & Figures. Retrieved August 3, 2011 from http://www.skmm.gov.my/link_file/ facts figures/stats/pdf/

Mante, E. A. & Pires, D. (2002) SMS Use by Young People in the Netherlands.

McCutchen(1994). Gaining a new, wider audience: Publishing student work on the Internet. "Reading Online", 4(10). Retrieved October 26, 1999, from http://www.readingonline.org/electronic/elec_index.asp?HREF=/electronic/karchmer/index.html [EJ 662 523]

Mcwiliam,Schepman,& Rodway (2009). E-mail and word processing in the ESL classroom: How the medium affects the message. "Language Learning and Technology"

Mosuro publishers.Banjo, A. (1996) Making a Virtue of Necessity: An Overview of the English Language in Nigeria. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

Mphahlele, M. L., & Mashamaite, K. (2005). The Impact of Short Message Service (SMS) Language on Language Proficiency Of Learners And The SMS Dictionaries: A Challenge For Educators And Lexicographers IADIS International Conference Mobile Learning. Retrieved March 29, 2011 from, http://www.iadis.net/dl/final_uploads/200506L022.pdf

Nadler-Nir, R. (2008). ToingToing! spkN d txtN lngwij. Blog Archive, April11.Retrieved May 24, 2009, from http://www. toingtoing. Com.

Ndukwe, E. C. (2006) ñThree Years of GSM Revolution in Nigeriaò Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC)ò A power point presentation.

Nokia. (2002). Are you ready for multimedia messaging service: An evolutionary Approach to implementing MMS. [Online] Available: www.nokia.com (April 20, 2010).

Norguist(2012) SMS Text Messaging Tops Mobile Phone Calling. (2009). Does text messaging harm students' writing skills?. Retrieved March 3, 2009: http://www.edutopia.org/poll-text-messaging-writing-skills

OôConnor (2005). Instant messaging: Friend or foe to studentsô writing? International Literacy Forum. Cambridge Polity Press.

OôConnor, A. (2005). Instant Messaging: Friend or foe of student writing? New Horizons for Learning, March 2005. [Online] Available: http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/literacy/oconnor. htm (May 28, 2010).

OôConnor, J. D. (1989) Better English Pronunciation. Cambridge: University Press.

Oluikpe, B.O.A. The Use of English for Higher Education. Onitsha: African University Press. Opara, S.C. (1999) Applied English Linguistics. Lagos:T-Excel Publishers.

Orisawayi, D. (1995) Integrated Use of English for Academic Papers. Ibadan: Stirling Publishers.

Palen & A. Taylor The Inside Text: Social, Cultural and Design Perspectives on SMS (pp. 33-50) Dordrecht, Springer. Pearson, J., Nelson, P. Titsworth, S., & Harter, L. (2008) Human Communication (3rd ed).Boston: McGraw-Hill.124

Palen, L and Taylor A.(2001) The Inside Text. Springer. Rafi, M. S. (n.d.).(2011) SMS Text Analysis: Language, Gender and Current Practices. Retrieved February 27, 2011 from, http://www. Tesol france. org .

Paul (2004) Cell Phone: The Story of the World's Most Mobile Medium and How It Has Transformed Everything. Amazon: Padgrare Macmillan.

Pitifield (2004) Texting effects on teenagers' grammar . KHQA News, Retrieved March 28, 2009: http://www.connecttristates.com/news/news_story.aspx?id=274742

Plester, wood, &bell(2008). "From Gutenberg's galaxy to Cyberspace: The transforming power of electronic hypertext". Toronto: CITD Press.

Posteguillo, S. Netlinguistics(2003) An Analytical Framework to Study Language, Discourse and Ideology in Internet. Castello De La Plana, Publicacions de la Universitat de Jaume.

Pound, L. ñWord coinage and American trade names.ò Dialect Notes. 1914. ñSpelling-manipulation and present-day advertising.ò Dialect Notes 5 (1923).

Power, M. R., and Power, D. (2004). Everyone here speaks txt: Deaf people using SMS in Australia and the rest of the world. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education,* Vol. 9. doi:10.1093/deafed/enh042.

Ravid, D. & Tolchinsky L. (2002). Developing linguistic literacy: a comprehensive Model.

Riviere, C. A. and C. Licoppe. (2002). From voice to text: continuity and change In the user of mobile phones in France and Japan. In Harper, R., Palen, L and Taylor A. (eds.) *The Inside Text. Springer*.

Ronald. T, Kellog and Bascon. A, Raulerson111 (2007). "Electronic mail in foreign language learning revisited". Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

Rosen, S. (2009). The Impact of Text Messaging on Standard English. Retrieved February 15, 2011 from, The University of Bergen Website. https://bora.uib .no/bitstream/1956/3320/1/56404526.pdf

Ross, W. (2004). ñInside Informationò BBC, Focus on Africa January ï March 2004. London: BBC.

Russell, L. (2010). The effects text messaging on English grammar.

Sala, B. M. (2006) Mobile Phone Usage In Cameroon. Paper presented at the International conference on Language, Literature and Education in Multicultural Societies.

Segerstad Y. H. (2005) Language in SMS: A Socio-linguistic View. In R. Harper, L. Selected Fragments. On line 28 April 2006. Available: http://archievesobusus.com/English/books.nn/bdbirk.html

September 8, 1992.

Shafie, L. A., Naziraosman., & Darus, N. A. (2007). Mobile Text Messaging: iz tis lang 4 da fture? Malaysia: Retrieved February 29, 2011 from Universiti Teknologi Mara.

Spagnolli, A. & Gamberini, L. (2007). Interacting via SMS: Practices of social closeness and reciprocation. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 46.

Thompson,Holmes, Jernig &Toga(1999). Mobile Phone Usage for M-learning: Comparing Heavy and Light Mobile Phone Users. Campus-wide information systems, 24. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Takoradi Polytechnic. (2010). Rapporteur-Generalôs report. Report on a three- day Seminar for Vice Rectors and Industrial Liaison Officers of the ten Polytechnics in Ghana, Monday 1st March to Wednesday 3rd March 2010.

Taylor, A. S. and Harper, R. (2002) Age-old Practices in the ónew Worldô: A study of gift-giving between teenage mobile phone users. In Proceedings of CHI 2002. 4(1), ACM Press.

Teh, E. H. (2004). Debate Over Influence of SMS Lingo on Students.

Telecom Statistics (2003). National IT and Telecom Agency Denmark. Ministry for Science, Technology and Development.

Teleman (1991). Utopia or Chaos? The Impact of Technology on

Thurlow, C. & Brown, A. (2003). Generation Txt? The sociolinguistics of young people's text-messaging. Retrieved 28 July 2010.

Thurlow, C. & Poff, M, (2011), Text Messaging, Handbook of the Pragmatics of CMC. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyters.

Thurlow, C. & Poff, M. (2009). The language of text messaging. In S.C.

Tomori, S.H.O. (1977) The Morphology and Syntax of Present Day English: An Introduction. Ibadan: Heinemann.

Ubahakwe (1991) The Sociolinguistics of SMS Ways to Identify Gender Boundaries. ó*Handbook of Research on Discourse Behavior and Digital Communication: Language Structures and Social Interaction*ô Rotimi Taiwo Obafemi Awolowo UNi, Nigeria.Information Science Reference.Hersley, New York

Véronis, J. & Guimier de Neef, E. (2006). Le traitement des nouvelles forms de Communication écrite. In G. Sabah (Ed.), Compréhension automatique des Langues et interaction. Paris : Hermès Science.

Verschueren, J. (1999). Understanding pragmatics. London: Arnold. SMS length and Function in teenagers Zone, Nigeriaò *Journal of the Nigerian English Studies Association (JNESA)* Vol. 13 No 1.

Verschueren, J. (1999). Understanding pragmatics. London: Arnold. SMS length and Function in teenagers

Voslooo (2009) Cn u txt? Retrieved on: February 16, 2011. http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2002/nov/11/mobilephone

WAEC Marking Scheme in English Language (2006-2009) Signed by Amadi, P.P.A (Nigeria), Ekuban, J. E. (Ghana), Junisa, D. S. (Gambia) and Wright (Sierra Leone).

Wimmer, R.D., & Dominick, J. R. (2006). Mass Media Research: An Introduction. (8thed.). USA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Wood, J. T. (2001). Gendered lives: Communication, gender, and culture (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. SMS length and function in teenagers www.ccsenet.org/ijel *International Journal of English Linguistics* Vol. 1, No. 2; September 2011

William Stewart (1993) Writing Courses". Retrieved October 27, 1995.

Yaounde, (2009)*The International Journalof Language Society and Culture* Editors: Thao Lê and Quynh Lê URL:www.educ.utas.edu.au /users/tle/JOURNAL/ ISSN 1327-774X © LSC-2009, Issue 28.

Yin, R. (1994).Case study research: Design and methods. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications. www.ccsenet.org/ijel *International Journal of English Linguistics* Vol. 1, No. 2; September 2011 Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education 229.

APPENDIX A

SMS FEATURES FOUND IN THE STUDENTS WRITTEN WORK

SMS features	**items**	**varieties**	**Standard spelling**
Shortening of words	Thru Image RR W Em Yr Abt Knw Goin B4 D Cdn Sci Frien sr	Tru, 2ru Dem, dm	Through Imagine Rail road With Them Year About Going Before The Could not Science Friend sir
Incomplete sentences	BRB RIFM I 8 u		Beright back Right in front of me I hate you
Non standard use of apostrophe	Excôd Excôtd Entrôd	Excd Exctd entrd	Exceed Excited entered
Non standard spelling	resumtn lyf @$$e$$ Emty 4getable Bcos In2roducing 4rm Dm Tym Dey	Resumptn Laif Ases Coz Frm dem	Resumption Life Assess Empty Forgettable because Introducing From Them Time they
Exagerated use of exclamation marks	Dnôt !!!! Ha ha!!!!!!		Donôt
Wrong use of capital letters	Y, amina, LV		Why, you Amina love
Acronyms	lol		Laugh out loud

APPENDIX B

The Raw scores of the SMS features identified in the students' written essays

GROUP 1 Rural schools

S/N	Ignorance of paragraphs	Acronyms	Wrong use of capital letters	Shortening of words	Punctuation errors	Non standard use of spelling
1	2	2	3	2	1	3
2	1	2	3	1	3	3
3	1	2	3	1	3	3
4	1	2	4	1	1	3
5	1	4	3	4	3	4
6	1	2	2	1	1	2
7	1	3	2	2	1	1
8	2	1	4	2	2	1
9	2	1	4	2	2	1
10	2	1	4	2	1	2
11	1	2	1	3	1	3
12	1	1	1	3	1	3
13	1	2	1	2	1	3
14	1	2	1	4	1	2
15	2	2	1	1	3	1
16	3	1	1	1	2	4
17	4	1	1	3	2	1
18	2	1	1	1	1	1
19	3	1	3	1	2	1
20	2	3	1	1	1	3

GROUP 2 Urban schools

S/N	Ignorance of paragraphs	Acronyms	Wrong use of capital letters	Shortening of words	Punctuation errors	Non standard use of spelling
1	1	1	3	3	1	1
2	1	2	3	1	1	3
3	3	2	3	2	1	3
4	2	2	1	5	1	3
5	3	1	2	4	1	1
6	2	1	2	1	1	2
7	1	3	2	1	1	3
8	2	3	2	1	2	1
9	2	3	1	1	2	3
10	2	1	1	1	1	2
11	1	1	1	3	1	3
12	1	1	1	3	1	3
13	1	1	1	1	1	3
14	1	1	1	1	1	2
15	1	1	1	1	3	2
16	1	1	1	1	1	2
17	1	1	3	3	1	2
18	1	3	1	1	1	2
19	3	2	1	3	1	3
20	2	3	1	1	1	3

APPENDIX C

Samples of Studentsô Written Essays