English in the Information Society

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Txtng. The gr8 db8

Attitudes

- Negative: digital virus, alien, outlandish, slanguage, dyslexia, mental laziness, illiterate
- Neutral: textese, hi-tech lingo, hybrid shorthand
- Positive: inexpensive, unobtrusive, personal, quick, convenient

When we look at texting, what is it that is of interest?

- length of message
- consequences for
  - grammar
  - lexis
  - pragmatics
  - spelling
- who texts how much with whom about what and why?

Length of message

- In general very brief: two-thirds are single-sentence messages.
- The SMS novel works screen by screen, each screen a chapter.
- In 2004 Qian Fuchang wrote a novel called Out of the Fortress about an extramarital affair. It circulated on phones in China, consisted of 4,000 words in sixty chapters

How fast?

Guinness Book of Records: Ang Chuang Yang wrote the sentence, *"The razor-toothed piranhas of the genera Serrasalmus and Pygocentrus are the most ferocious freshwater fist in the world. In reality they seldom attack a human."*

It took him 43.44 seconds.

Why text?

- usually mundane affairs (call meet; where shall we meet? when?)
- phatic communion
- insults and mobbing
- contact with counseling centers
- the desire to play (the ludic element)
  - jokes
  - riddles
  - chain letters

Pragmatics

Frame rules for texting: no *do*'s, but a number of *don't*'s
(Crystal 2008: 27)

- Don't text when you're with someone else, without apology.
- Don't say anything in text you wouldn't say in person.
- Don't send bad news by text.

There are lots more.

Pragmatics

- Texting etiquette
  - about 10% use a salutation or closing
- salutations
  - none necessary
  - Hi
- closings
  - usually informal
  - kisses (*xxx*), *c u*
  - name (*S, Steve*)
  - *bye*
  - emoticon
- other routines
  - *where are you?* or *I'm in/at x*.

Grammar

U 2. Glad journey OK. x

Landed safely. On way to town. xxx

c u in 5 min x

Spelling

- 82% use no capitalization at all
- 11% have only the first letter capitalized
- 7% use capitals in names and for following sentences (104f)

Abbreviations

- only 6% used abbreviations of any kind (105)

ASAP	as soon as possible
AKA	also known as
BTW	by the way
LOL	laughing out loud
CWOT	complete waste of time
FYI	for your information
dwb	don’t write back
anfscd	and now for something completely different
btdt	been there done that

Emoticons

☺or :-)	smile
;-)	wink
:-@	scream
:-))	very happy
:-)))	very, very happy
:-))))))	ecstatic

Omitted letters

plsed	pleased
rite	write
msg	message
txtin	texting
xlnt	excellent
bt	but
vr	very
tmrw	tomorrow
hav	have
thn	then
mbrsd	embarrassed

Non-standard spellings

cos	because
omigod	oh my god
fone	phone
ova	over
luv	love
shud	should
sum	some
wat	what
thanx	thanks
ya	you

One-up-manship

IMO	in my opinion
IMCO	in my considered opinion
IMHO	in my humble opinion
IMHBCO	in my humble but correct opinion
IMNSHO	in my not so humble opinion
LOL	laughing out loud
ROTFL	rolling on the floor laughing
ROTFLMAO	rolling on the floor laughing my ass off
ROTFLMAOAY	rolling on the floor laughing my ass off at you
ROTFLMAOWTIME	rolling on the floor laughing my ass off with tears in my eyes

Initialisms

N	no
G	grin
Q	queue
W	with
Y	yes
GF	girl friend
DL	download
W/E	week-end
JK	just kidding
DK	don’t know
CMB	call me back
OMG	oh my god

Pictograms and logograms

b	be
2	to, two, too
@	at
x	kiss
zzz	sleeping

Age

up to mid-twenties: 85% send SMSs on a daily basis

over 67: 2.7% do

teens and young adults: used the most abbreviations

younger adults: most likely to use standard capitalization and punctuation

Regionalisms

Yo, DC	Hi, David Crystal (AAE)
wiv	with (Cockney)
wassup, sup	what's up? (AmE, youth language
bin, bn	been
dat	that
gizza	give us a (BrE)
dunna	don't (ScotE?); don't know (?)
gonna	going to (AmE)
wotcha	what are you (BrE)

Gender

Who texts more?

40% of women text daily; 35% of men do

Whose messages are longer?

6.95 words / message for women; 5.54 for men

Whose syntax is more complex?

Women's; 75% of male messages are single-sentence texts

Who abbreviates more?

Woman (also use more emoticons), but at a low level

Who uses standard spelling more?

Woman, for example 8.5% capitalize; 4.9% of men do.

Who uses salutations and closings more?

Woman

Who uses texting to express emotions more?

Women

Who uses texting for arranging practical coordination more?

Women

Texting literature

text-messaging poetry competition
Example:

txtin iz messin
mi headn’me englis,
try2rite essays,
they all come out txtis.
gran not plsed w/letters shes getn,
swears I wrote better
b4 comin2uni.
&she’s african

Texting literature

- length restrictions (160 characters)
- no restrictions on orthography (may be standard; need not use abbreviations)
- (ortho-)graphic welcome , e.g. wen he :-)s @ me.
- little grammatical deviation

Translation task # 1

GD CTRL-S r gr8sh S Qun.
Long liv r nobl Qun.
Gd CTRL-S th. Qun!
ALT-S hr vktr ES,
Hp E & glr ES,
Lng 2 rain ovR S;
Gd CTRL-S th. Qun!

Solution # 1

God save our gracious queen
Long live our noble Queen.
God save the Queen!
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us;
God save the Queen!

Translation task # 2

dad@hvn
urspshl
we want wot u want
&urth 2b like hvn
giv us food
&4giv r sins
lyk we 4giv uvaz
don't test us!
save us!
bcos we kno ur boss
ur tuf
&ur cool 4 eva!
ok?

Solution # 2

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy will be done
In earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts
As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into
temptation,
But deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory, for ever.
Amen.

Translation task no. 3

YY U R YY U B I C U R YY 4 ME

Solution no. 3
Too wise you are,
Too wise you be.
I see you are
Too wise for me.

Homework reading (see links)

Ammon

Parakrama

Since this reading is about the standard in scholarly writing, be ready to take a position the (realistic) bounds of the norm.