

by Aditya

Rationale

I was introduced to the idea of texting and its effects on the English language after reading the blog of David Crystal, a linguist. He wanted to "dispel urban myths about texting", showing how texting is not ruining the English language. Furthermore, I consulted resources that showed how texting could be detrimental to the English language. After exploring contrasting viewpoints, I decided to produce a written task on language in a cultural context, specifically how texting is changing the English language.

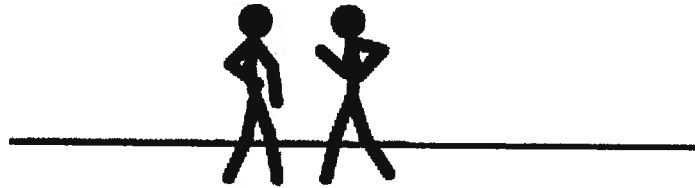
In today's society, even though there is an increased use of mobile phones and texting capabilities, "text language" is still not acceptable to be used anywhere other than on a phone. The intended audience of this text are those aged 18-35 as they are the most frequent texters. Specifically, the article is targeted towards the British as texting is compared to "Oxford-standard" English, which represents proper spelling and grammar. The purpose of this text is to show the audience that texting is part of an inevitable change in language, and that it will be possible to use anywhere. The article was published on "The Onion UK", an online newspaper that satirizes real-world ideas. Satire was employed to create humour and keep the audience interested as the content may be perceived to be unexciting. Furthermore, the internet was chosen as the medium because the target audience is likely to read news on the web rather than newspapers.

I am writing as a man in his twenties, who is studying journalism at Oxford. This persona is young enough to relate to the audience, using a style and tone that communicates to them. Specifically, British slang is used to set the tone of the article. Information is organized in paragraphs with quotes from multiple parties and contains a headline, photo and dateline.

Word Count: 300

“DKM”, says English Language to Texting

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An artist's rendition of the scene.

OXFORD, UK — Late last night a fight broke out at The Bear Inn, just south of High Street. The brawl involved two rather unlikely parties, Texting and the English Language. Before the two could tear apart the pub in its entirety, a professor of English at the nearby university made a call to the Bobbies. By the time they arrived, the pub was destroyed.

When asked for compensation for the damages, Texting told the barman, “dw, its nbd”. Upon hearing this statement, the English Language got his knickers in a twist, exclaiming, “One does not speak in letters! We have proper words with which we convey our ideas!”

Before another word could be heard from the characters, they found themselves spending the rest of the night in the clink. The Bobbies made sure to keep them in separate cells, as to avoid any more altercations. Soon enough, word had reached the English Department at Oxford, and bail had been posted for the English Language. Note that Texting was released soon after an anonymous citizen posted his bail.

After the incident, statements from the two parties involved were collected and it was evident that the fight broke out because the English Language was insulted. Information was also obtained that Texting was in fact a man from the “gr8 st8 of Pennsylvania”. In fact, it had only been 7 years ago when he had been recognized by the people of Oxford.

The English Language made his argument by referring to a study obtained from the Pennsylvania State University. The study showed a correlation between adolescents who text and get lower scores on grammar assessment tests. Moreover, the data showed that even those that simply read texts may have trouble grasping basic grammar skills.

"Everything that I have heard from you involves poor punctuation, bad grammar and inappropriate abbreviations", stated the English Language. He wanted to express how some teachers have seen the use of texting on English exam papers. Certainly not something that bodes well for Britain's future.

In defense, Texting said, "i dont ruin language, i improve it"; a surprisingly coherent sentence from the man.

An outrageous statement? Perhaps. But that was not all Texting had to say.

"txt language can b used only if da orig word is known", continued Texting. He cites researchers from the University of Coventry that say texting uses word play and requires an understanding of phonetics and pronunciation. Texting went on to talk about how these researchers found that those who text can actually spell better and that any form of reading and writing is good for literacy.

These two were really going at it, like two nerds fighting over a homework question. They were both pretty cheesed off.

By this time, the English Language was flustered and was turning red. There are over 150000 words in the language and he had to go and say words that could not be printed on this website.

"relax man. i wld just say @#\$%", was all Texting had to say to that.

But the debate did not end on that note. The English Language had to have the last word.

"It is as Orwell had predicted, you seek to diminish our lexicon and limit our thoughts. Forget 1984, it is present day that we must fear." Thought-provoking words from an old man. By evoking passages from 1984, the English Language explained how the use texting would lead to less words remaining in the language and less words with which to express yourself.

To this Texting replied, "dude wat is 1984? u dont even need soo many words". In fact, only 10 words make up 25% of all recorded English language. Texting was trying to say that we do not need many words as we do not even use all of them. "da language is bloated", concluded Texting.

He also referred to the use of emoticons, which are ways to represent emotions using images, something that the English Language could not do. Instead of expressing happiness through words, Texting explained how you can simply write out a grin, which is more efficient and carries more meaning. He ended his statement with a big “:)”.

The English Language was stumped and did not know how to respond. He had all the words from centuries of collection and could not think of a single thing to say.

Texting pounced on this silence and exclaimed, “languages r ment 2 die!”. He explained how languages die off and new ones are “born” in its place. Furthermore, Texting looked at how new words may take the place of an old one is the same language. A kind of Language Darwinism if you will.

“It is necessary to point out that language changes. Take for example the word fridge. This word used to be a shorter way to say refrigerator, which was the actual term. Like texting, the general population uses the short form rather than the full word and is able to convey the exact same meaning”, piped in an anonymous person from the crowd.

Upon hearing this statement, the English Language lost his composure and only had a few letters and even lesser words to say. All he could manage was, “K. Just DKM.” ☹

Word Count: 893

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