

Trends of Social Media Writing among Students of Mount Mary's College of Education in the Eastern Region of Ghana

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the trend of social media writing among students in Mount Mary College of Education. This study involved a total of 150 students, 60 of whom were males and 90 were females, studying English language and French at the time of the study. The Initialism Theory which was modified by David Crystal was used as a framework for this study. The respondents were chosen as purposive sampling. Examined were the WhatsApp screen photos taken by respondents that identified quiz papers and group assignments. The study concluded that when people write individually, social media does had an impact on their formal writing. Students who work in groups, on the other hand, were not affected by this. Another finding of the study was that respondents employ a wide range of social media lingo, including clipping, abbreviation, alphanumeric homophony, vowel deletion, grapheme, and other slang terms, among other things. According to the results of the survey, most people type in social media or internet language when they communicate on social media to make it easier for them to communicate.

Introduction

In recent years, social media usage among students is no longer restricted to laptops and desktop computers but is increasingly facilitated by smart phones as well. The ICT tools utilized mostly for social media and video calling but less for computer, global positioning system, web camera and radio (Panda et al ,2019). WhatsApp being the potential source for socialization and internalization promoted the creation of social wealth (Nain et al,2019). Negussie and Ketena (2014) conducted a study at Jima University in Ethiopia and

discovered that many students use social media sites such as Facebook on laptops and smart phones. A similar study conducted in America by Ahmed and Qazi (2011) found that most students use their phones to access social media, which lends credence to this conclusion. Mehmood and Taswir (2013) did a study in Oman and discovered that 80 percent of students use their mobile phones to access social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. There is evidence that more people are now accessing social networking sites using their mobile phones than previously. Students at Mount Mary College of Education may be seen using their

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phones to visit social media sites like Facebook. It is fairly common for students at Mount Mary College of Education to use social media platforms and almost exclusively use their smart phones to access social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. The majority of these youngsters purchase these smart phones in order to be able to access social media. The most popular social media sites visited by these pupils are WhatsApp messaging and Facebook, to name a few. The social media platforms are used by the students to communicate with their friends, parents, and other family members, as well as with their teachers.

These areas are frequently visited by students during social events such as morning devotionals, eating sections, and matriculation ceremonies, among other occasions. Additionally, the students make use of these social media platforms in the classroom, even during teaching hours. Students were caught fidgeting with their phones and chatting on social media during break time as well, according to the researcher, who watched them idling on the college grounds. In addition, the students use their phones to check social media while in their dorm rooms. Texting is the most used mode of communication among these pupils, and as people communicate on these sites, they meet people from all over the world and begin to learn how to write in a manner that is appropriate for social media platforms, among other things. As these kids navigate via these social media platforms, they employ various modes of communication common in the social media sector, such as netspeak and the excessive use of abbreviations. Consequently, it is evident that our real-world social lives have undergone some degree of alteration. The abbreviation "LoL" has now acquired more than one connotation in popular culture. LoL is now used as a type of punctuation to give a funny or happy tone to texts, like how a period is used. Its significance has expanded beyond the literal sense of the phrase.

Information is now primarily available online. Student use of social media is increasing (Kolan & Dzandza, 2018). Due to its popularity, many academics have researched it (Choney, 2010; Mehmood & Taswir, 2013; Kisk, 2008; Jacobson & Forste, 2011). According to these researchers, social media and internet usage can have positive or negative consequences on pupils' academic performance. Social media affects students' writing skills. No relationship was established by Ndaku et al. (2013) or Ahmed and Qazi (2011). In informal talks, students often use shorter versions to prevent errors (Obi *et al.*, 2012). Students from K-12 and higher education have used social media for various purposes. Examining student work revealed that most students use abbreviated forms that affect meaning. Netspeak, for example, violates English capitalization,

punctuation, and sentence structure. According to Oluga and Babalola (2013), netspeak affects students' spelling and inhibits them from acquiring accurate orthography. Social media is one rationale for students choosing shorter forms. Ghana's universities and polytechnics have studied the effects of social media on students. Kolan and Dzandza (2018) conducted research on UGA students and found some students were addicted to social media. They observed that social media use significantly affects student academic performance at Koforidua Polytechnic. UEW students, according to Appeanti and Danso (2014), are open to academic social media use. They looked into how social media affects high schools. They determined that social media use robs pupils of academic time. Mahama (2016) studied senior high school social media use, using Armed Forces Senior High School as a case study. She discovered that social media helps students' grades. He and Dadzie (2015) found that social media distracts students from their work and makes them use Pidgin English. Similar articles and essays to Marwa and Sabrina (2017) who studied English at Tlemcen University found that social media harmed academic writing. According to Nutakor (2015), social media writing patterns affect pupils' spelling and academic achievement. The Central Region's Agona West Municipality has four senior high schools. Yousaf and Ahmed (2013) discovered netspeak had mixed effects on student writing skills. This investigation was quantitative. O'Connor, 2005; Shaughnessey, 2008; and Sakowicz, 2005. They discovered that social media harmed students' writing. Ghaleb (2013), Harris and Dilts (2014), Fishman and colleagues (2005), and Yunus et al. (2013) studied high schools and universities.

This study is vital because most studies on this topic have focused on universities and senior high schools. College students are using netspeak or shorthand in their tests, papers, and examinations, causing spelling and academic problems. Because our elementary children are taught to teach, their netspeak will have a huge impact on the younger generations. According to Hussein and Lingwood (2012), it is easier going than Standard English. Achimbe and Achimbe (2011) say English is a rare language. According to Widdowson (1994), the Standard English brand has been kept. Widdowson also noted that standard English grammar, lexis, and spelling are appropriate for writing. The student teachers must write clearly and without netspeak. Students' informal and inadvertent usage of these abbreviations and shorthand is helping them learn and become more comfortable with these languages, which they will use in official writing such as quizzes, examinations, and other assignments, among other things. Internet talk, which is supposed to be an informal language, has infiltrated public conversation, and is now

impacting children's spelling, grammar, and overall performance in school and other areas.

Theoretical foundation

Marchand's (1969) Initialism Theory defines initialism as a word formation used for organisation and scientific discovery names like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Students have recently adopted these initialisms on social media for communication and other uses. This shows that Marchand's original goal and purpose of initialism have changed in today's environment. Crystal calls this theory of initialism "netspeak." Crystal (2001) calls the online language netspeak, and it features a new sort of initialism: acronyms, abbreviations, graphemes, alphanumeric homophony, and multi-word sentences compressed into a single word. Marchand (1969) views initialisms as "more or less arbitrary elements of words welded into an artificial new word" (Marchand, 1969, p.45). Marchand published on initialism before social media, but his idea still holds today. Today's kids employ initials or shorthand in their social media work. For example, LOL, OMG, and TGIF.

An abbreviation is "a series of letters spelled with capital letters" (Ljung 2003) and lists "DNA" as an abbreviation. Currently, pupils use abbreviated language to communicate with their peers and elders, including teachers and family members. Crystal (2008) thinks netspeak is a new sort of language. It is a new language, especially among the youth. It is important to note that an acronym "must be pronounceable" and "can only comprise letter sequences authorised in conventional English words" (Ljung, 2003, p.158). Ljung also lists "NATO" (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) as an acronym. According to Ljung (Ljung, 2003, p.157), depending on its source, a word like "RAF" which stands for Royal Air Force, can be classified as either an acronym or an abbreviation. An initialism that combines acronyms and abbreviations is pronounced as a word, whereas another pronounces it letter by letter. These include words like "CDROM" and "Email" (Ljung, 2003, p.2). Organization names are generally created using abbreviations and acronyms, while notions like "DNA" are occasionally utilised (Ljung, 2003). Initialisms are a type of severe clipping that has been employed since the 1800s but became popular in the second half of the 20th century (Harley, 2006). "The expansion of bureaucratic institutions named with long, ungainly compounds and phrases" led to the development of initialisms (Harley, 2006, p.97). Harley (2006) classified initialism into three types: abbreviations, acronyms, and terms that were once initialisms but are now more like blends. For example, Jeep, previously G.P,

stands for "General Purpose" (Harley, 2006). An initialism is generated to "reduce potentially long names to something manageable," according to Denning *et al.*, (1995). To avoid typing long words on social media, students use initialisms or abbreviations. Only Ljung (2003) and Harley (2006) acknowledge that a new sort of initialism is currently gaining popularity. According to Ljung (2003, p. 46), "ASAP" stands for "as quickly as possible." (Ljung, 2003). According to Harley (2006), the terms originated in electronic communications such as email, instant messaging, and chatrooms. These abbreviations are used on Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, text messages, and emails. Also, "typists are compelled to save frequently used phrases, or phrases used to maximise communicative flow rather than transmit genuine information" (Harley, 2006, p.1). Harley (2006) attributes these new initialisms to the Internet and social media, but Ljung (2003) disagrees. However, both authors wrote after the Internet came out, which suggests that these initialisms may be a new way of making things.

According to Crystal (2001, p.86), a new genre of abbreviated forms has emerged. Abbreviations can now be sentences long, not just words (Crystal, 2001). Coleman (2012) explains how to build slang terms using initialisms, he cites "LOL" as an example of a slang initialism. It can be an abbreviation or an acronym, depending on whether you spell it out or say it normally. Coleman adds that several of these initialisms refer to laughter. Other initialisms include "ROFL" for "rolling on the floor laughing" and "PMSL" for "pissing myself laughing" (Coleman, 2012). Many of these initialisms are used online to convey feelings in a manner similar to spoken language (Coleman, 2012). According to Kinsella (2010), these initialisms are sometimes used to express a tone rather than a literal meaning. Teenagers use Netspeak to identify themselves with their parents and to generate an inner sense. Baron (2011) reviewed prior research on netspeak and concluded that teenagers can discriminate between formal and informal writing and that netspeak does not appear to affect their literacy (Baron, 2011). But it's probably premature to say netspeak hasn't changed formal language. Baron says that, historically, inappropriate language has found its way into more formal everyday speech and writing. But, as Baron (2011) points out, there's no evidence that online and mobile devices will soon drastically transform offline language. Given their ubiquity in netspeak, it's not unexpected that "lol" and "brb" have made it into offline language (Baron, 2011). Baron argues that kids who use social media can tell the difference between professional and casual writing. Crystal (2008) modified the Initialism Theory by going beyond abbreviations and acronyms and categorising the netspeak people use on social media as: shortening or reducing, clipping, numbering or alphanumeric homoph-

ony, abbreviated forms, contraction/vowel deletion, spelling in accordance with pronunciation/graphemes, using single letter method and letter repetition to achieve speech like quality or lay stress. These linguistic features or texting processes as identified by Crystal are explained as follows:

Shortening/reducing : This is a writing process in which a lexical item is reduced or shortened in most cases to ensure that the message is conveyed correctly; it is also the process in which a letter or group of letters from a word is elided in writing. Some examples include: *tnxs* for thanks, *pls* for please, *evening* for evening, among others.

Numbering, also known as alphanumeric homophony, occurs when a whole or part of a word is replaced with a number or to represent words, phrases, or clauses. When respondents are typing on social media, for instance, they often partially eliminate the word, phrase, or sentence with phonetically similar letters or numbers that sound almost the same as the substituted word or phrase. Examples include 2 for to, 4 for forger, 2morrow for tomorrow, and L8 for late, among others.

Graphemes: Graphemes are letter homophones. Graphic means the written representation while the phone means sounds. This is when words are written based on how they are pronounced, that is, spoken like the written form (Barasa and Mous, 2013). Grapheme is also when the actual spelling is written by how the word is pronounced. Some examples include: *Fone* for phone, *daaria* for diarrhea, *dem* for them.

Clipping: This is when a whole word of more than one syllable is reduced to a shorter form. Yule (2010) also describes clipping as the process of shortening in which a word loses a syllable. Some of the notable clipped forms of words usually used by respondents are as follows: “exam” for examination, “*lab*” for laboratory, and “chem” for chemistry.

Abbreviated forms are typically formed by combining the first letters of a group of other words (Ljung, 2003). For example, in Jesus' Name (I J N), As Soon As Possible (ASAP), Laughing Out Loud (LOL).

The internet as a communication medium and its role in language change

The evolution of the internet and social media ushered in a new form of language called netspeak. Netspeak is the language that is mostly used on social media sites. These sites include WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram,

among others. Netspeak consists of emoticons, abbreviations, acronyms, shortening and clipping (Baron, 2001; Mann and Stewart, 2000). There are a lot of terminologies that can be used to refer to netspeak. These terminologies are technologically mediated language, internet slang, chattish, weblang, netlingual, digital English, and textese (Barasa and Mous 2013; Dansieh 2011; Crystal 2001; Sutherland 2008; Thurlow 2007).

The advent of the Internet and computer technology resulted in the creation of several whole new terms and idioms. According to Crystal, “the velocity at which [Internet users] are inventing new terminology is unprecedented in contemporary linguistic use” (Crystal, 2001: 67). Given the Internet's birth of numerous new expressions, it's not surprising that these expressions will find their way into other domains as well (Dent, 2007). As a result, Dent believes it is unsurprising to discover language that developed online in situations other than the Internet. Coleman (2012) hypothesises that slang in general is changing at a faster rate than ever before because of broad Internet use. When you're online, you're exposed to a plethora of slang terms, many of which you may be unfamiliar with. If Internet users are exposed to slang idioms frequently enough, they will begin to use them before they are totally conversant with their meanings. Coleman (2012) asserts that this could trigger a chain reaction among Internet users, resulting in an increase in the frequency with which an expression is used. When a word is often used, it immediately loses some of its meaning due to the high frequency with which it is used (Coleman, 2012). According to Coleman (2012), “because of the speed of play and the relatively limited range of likely topics in MUDs, acronyms and abbreviations have become commonplace among the users of these games” (Coleman, 2012, p. 270). Crystal (2001) claims that utilising solely initialisms, as was the standard in the early days of texting, will become increasingly difficult. This style of language will probably fade away, or at least become less popular (Crystal, 2001, p. 230).

Online writing rules and conventions are substantially different from those of written and spoken language. The Internet opens new stylistic possibilities (Crystal, 2004). Crystal is pointing out that people can now write in many ways online. According to Dent (Dent, 2007, p. 4), Internet language is a “blurring of boundaries between spoken and written language.” such as excessively colloquial construction and non-standard usage (Crystal, 2001). Orthographic features have been affected, for example, through the removal of capitalization and punctuation (Crystal, 2001). Most students who communicate on social media do not focus much on punctuation and capitalization because, to them, once their message gets to their intended target,

they become relieved. Netspeak “is better seen as a written language that has been pulled some way in the direction of speech than as a spoken language which has been written down” (Crystal, 2004, p. 79). Netspeak comes from two words. That is “net,” which means the internet, and “speak,” meaning language. To put it simply, netspeak means internet language, or language used on the internet.

A text can also be made up of a series of alphanumeric blends. Examples of such compositions include the following: “4 u” replaced “for you,” “luv u” replaced “love you,” “b4” replaced “before,” “love you with all my heart” replaced “luwamh,” “to whom it may concern” replaced “twimc,” “2d8” replaced “to date,” and “db8” replaced “debate” (Essoh et al. 2014; Crystal 2008, Dansieh 2001). All these language techniques have caused the social media language to be considered a kind of independent written register that does not necessarily depend on the conventions of the standard written language. Most students at Mount Mary College use this new language to communicate with their friends, family members, and even with their tutors. This new language, according to research, has affected students both positively and negatively.

Table 1. List of some common netspeak

Abbreviations	Their meaning
IDK	I don't care
2morrow	Tomorrow
2nite	Tonight
AEAP	As early as possible
ASAP	As soon as possible
ASL	Age/sex/ location
B3	Blah blah blah
B4 YKI	Before you know it
BFF	Best friend forever
Bm&Y	Between me and you
BRB	Be right back
BRT	Be right there
BTAM	Be that as it may
C.P	Sleepy
CTN	Cannot talk now
CYS	See you soon
CWOT	Complete waste of time
CYT	See you tomorrow
E123	Easy as 123
EM	Excuse me?
F2F	Face to face
GR8	Great
FC	Finger crossed

(Table continued)

(Table continued)

Abbreviations	Their meaning
FOF	Friend of friend
IDK	I don't know
ILU / ILY	I love you
IMU	I miss you
IRL	In real life
JK	Just kidding
JC	Just checking
JTLYK	Just to let you know
KFY	Kiss for you
KMN	Kill me now
KPC	Keeping parents clueless
L8R	Later

Adopted from (Marwa and Sabrina, 2016).

Methodology

The research design used in this study was phenomenological in nature. The participants in this study included one hundred and fifty (150) level one hundred pupils. This group consisted of sixty (60) men and ninety (90) women that were active on social media platforms. All the participants are language students, both in French and in English. These participants were chosen because the researcher teaches them, and as a result, they have access to information through their smartphones, making it simple to conduct interviews with them. To pick the thirty (30) participants from among French and English Language students, the purposive sample technique was employed. The reason for this was that all the participants were social media users, and hence the respondents were chosen specifically for the purpose of the study.

Result and Discussion

What are the trends or systems of writing used by Mount Mary College of Education students on social media?

This research question sought to find out the trends and systems of writing on social media and the effects these trends impact on the spellings and writings of students' academic work. When students were asked the question “Do you use shorthand when you are chatting on social media?” Most of the respondents responded in the affirmative.

When respondents were asked to mention some of the netspeak that they use, they mentioned various forms which have been tabulated as follows:

Table 2. English words in chat forms

Word	Respondents' short form
Because	bcos
Please	pls
Between	btw
Pictures	pics
Tomorrow	2morow
Tonight	2nite
For	4
To	2
Laughing out loud	lol
Thank God is Friday	tgif
Control	ctl
Delete	dlt
About	abt
From	frm
Phone	fon
School	skul
See	c
You	u
House	hse
This	diz
Love	luv
Father	fada
Good	gud

A closer look at the table indicates that respondents totally deviate from the normal English spellings of words. They therefore couch their own words to chat or interact with their friends and family members. This implies that students do not only communicate among themselves using netspeak but it is sometimes extended to the elderly. While Baron (2011) claims that students appear to be able to discern between formal and informal language while communicating on social media, this study's analysis of respondents' quiz papers suggested otherwise. There are so many trends that can be realized based on the internet language that the respondents mentioned. Crystal (2008) categorized the trends in the texting or writing process as follows: shortening or reducing, clipping, numbering/ alphanumeric homophony, abbreviated forms, contraction/ vowel deletion, spelling in accordance with pronunciation / graphones, using single letter method and letter repetition to achieve speech like quality or lay stress. Some of the shortened or reduced words used by respondents on social media are shown in the table below:

Table 3. English words and in their reduced or shortened form

Word	shortened/ reduced word
Because	bcos
Please	pls
Between	btw
Government	govt

Table 4. Some English words and respondents' use of alphanumeric homophony

Word	Numbering/ alphanumeric homophony
Ate	8
To	2
For	4
Great	gr8t
Nice	9c
Tomorrow	2morrow
Tonight	2nite
Today	2day
Before	b4
Wait	w8
Forever	4ever

Table 5. Some English words and respondents' clipped forms

Word	clipped form
Information	info
Pictures	pics

Some of abbreviated forms that respondents mentioned when they were interviewed were as follows:

Table 6. Some English words and respondents' abbreviated forms

Words	Abbreviated form
Thank God is Friday	TGIF
Laughing out Loud	LoL
Good Morning	GM
Oh My God	OMG
As Soon As Possible	ASAP
I Miss You	IMU

Table 7. Some English words and respondents' use of graphontables

Word	graphone
City	ct
See	c
You	u
Come	kam
The	d
Phone	fone
School	skul
Be	b
Done	dan

Contraction /vowel deletion: in contraction, the vowels are deleted from words. So these words are well described by the consonant rather than the vowel. Examples of the contractions and vowel deletion mentioned by respondents include the following.

Table 8. Respondents' use of contraction / vowel deletion

Word	Contraction/vowel deletion
Text	txt
From	frm
Should	shld
Limited	ltd
Round	rnd

From the table 8, it could be seen that some vowels are deleted when respondents are chatting on social media. With the words text, from, should, limited and round, the vowels [ɛ], [ɔ], [u],[I] and [au] are deleted from the words respectively. Students in recent times have adopted these new ways of writing or spelling of words on social media which they have also used in their formal writing. Odey et al. (2014) indicated that students are influenced consciously or unconsciously by the way they text onto their classroom work. When respondents were asked as to the reasons they write these shorthand on social media they gave series of responses. Some of these responses include the following:

“please, it is very fast if I type using shorthand on social media.” Another respondent also indicated that “short-hand saves a lot of time when typing”. One of the respondents also said “I use shorthand because when I am chatting with people I don't want to write long words”.

According to research conducted by Soomro and Kamran (2013) among some University of Pakistan students, most of them had affirmed that they use shorthand, abbreviation, clipping, graphones among others to send messages or chat on social media. In Soomro and Kamran study most of the respondents had also indicated that when they use shorthand it facilitates the process of texting and saves time. This view agrees with this study being undertaken when respondents had indicated similar sentiments.

Figures 1, 2 and 3 are samples of 82 screenshots of respondents WhatsApp chats. A careful look at the documents revealed that respondents use shorthand when typing. Some of the shorthand writings or net language that appeared in the respondents screenshot chats are *dis* for this, *tym* for time, *u* instead of you *nafin* for nothing, *yea* instead of yes, and *dose* for those. With the second

respondent, the following shorthand were identified; *yhh*, *frnd*, *tg* representing you,yes,friend and thank God. The third respondent used short hand such as the following in her chats *notin,jxt*, *4,ohk*, *il*, *yh*, *u* instead of nothing, just, for, will, yes and you respectively.

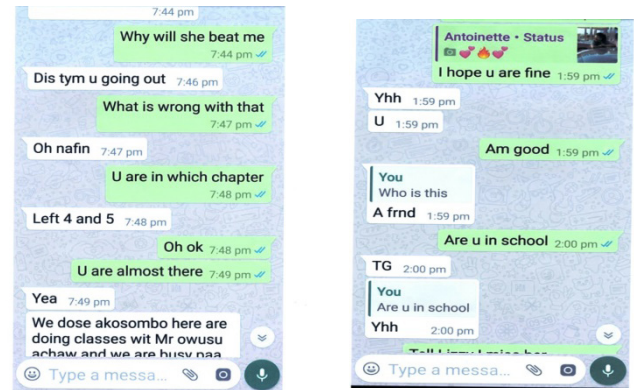


Figure 1, 2. A Documents showing some trends of writing in a respondent's WhatsApp screenshot

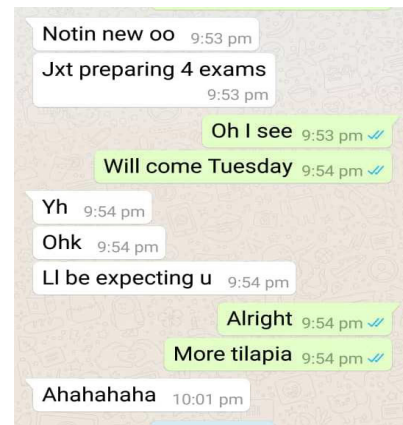


Figure 3. A Documents of a respondents' WhatsApp screenshot

Table 9. Respondents' whatsapp chat and the chatting processes used based on figures 1, 2 and 3

Text process	Examples	full word
Contraction/ vowel deletion	jxt, tym,yh, frnd	just,time,yes, friend
Alphanumeric	4	for
Abbreviated forms	Tg	thank God
Graphones	dis, dose, u, nafin, ohk	this, those, you, nothing oh okay
Shortening / reducing	il, wit	will, with
Letter repetition to achieve speech-like quality or lay stress	yhh, oo	yes
Clipping	exams	

Table 10. Tabulation of 82 WhatsApp screenshots received from respondents

Trend	Number	Percentage (%)
Abbreviation	52	14
Graphone	88	23
Shortening	94	24
Letter repetition	32	08
Clipping	4	01
Alphanumeric homophony	51	13
Vowel deletion	66	17
Total	387	100

From table 10, the total netlanguage used by respondents in their WhatsApp messages were three hundred and eighty-four (384). Shortening represents the most dominant netspeak linguistic feature made of 24%. Examples drawn from the sampled respondents' screenshot WhatsApp messages include the following *il* for will, *wit* for with, *tnxs* for thanks *notin* for nothing and others. The second most dominant netspeak feature was graphone which constituted 23% of the total netspeak linguistic feature identified from respondents' WhatsApp screenshots. Some of the graphones identified are as follows: *sapa* for supper *dis* for this *dose* for those among others. The next trend identified was vowel deletion which attracted 17% out of the total 387 netspeak. Some of the examples from the whatsapp screenshot of the respondents include just for *jxt*, *tym* for time, *frnd* for friend. The fourth most dominant feature was alphanumeric homophony. Examples drawn from the respondents' whatsapp screenshots include the following: *4get*, for forget, *2morow* for tomorrow *4* for for, *2nite* for tonight, *2geda* for together. The next most used linguistic feature was abbreviation which accounted for 14%. Some of the examples used in respondents' screenshots included *ge* for good evening, *gm* for good morning, *lol* for laughing out loud, *tg* for thank God. Letter repetition for stress and emphasis also attracted 32 netspeak which represented 08% out of the total 387 netspeak language. Some of the examples in the respondents' whatsapp screenshots are "plssssss", "ooooooo", "yessss", "yoooo", "haaahahaha" among others. Finally, clipping was the least represented screenshot linguistic feature used. Clipping only had 4 netspeak language which represented 01%. some examples used by the respondents are "exam" for "examination", "maths" for "mathematics", "chem." for chemistry, lab for laboratory.

From table 8, it could be deduced that respondents use various trends or netspeak when they are chatting on social media. Marchand (1969) theory of initialism focused more on abbreviations and acronyms. Before the advent of the

internet in the 21st century, abbreviation usage was carefully used. In recent times, the use of netspeak or internet language is used anyhow. Some respondents even indicated that they use such language for fun. One respondent indicated that "I use abbreviation and shorthand when writing on social media for the fun of it". This is in line with starowicz (2007) study which revealed that some respondents write on social media because they want to impress their friends that they know how to write and use netspeak. Lee (2002) averred those abbreviations and shorthand were created for brevity and also to save time and also speed up the typing process. When respondents were asked why they use netspeak, the respondents gave the following responses;

"I use internet language because it enables me to communicate faster". Another respondent also mentioned that "when I use shorthand it helps me to avoid the correct spellings of words so that my friends wouldn't know that I do not know how to spell a particular word".

The views from the respondents agree with Odey et al. (2014) study on effects of netspeak on students' writing. In their study, they mentioned that students use netspeak in order to save time and facilitate the process of typing. It can also be seen that students also use netspeak when chatting on social media so that they will avoid the correct spellings of words. Sometimes, people are mocked at when they are unable to spell simple words. So to avoid mockery from their peers, they tend to use netspeak which has not got any specific way of spelling. Indeed, there are several ways by which words are spelt when one is using netspeak for example the word "school" could be spelt using netspeak as "skuu" or "skuul".

From table 8, it could be realized that most of the respondents used vowel deletion and graphones most when chatting on social media. The reason is that with graphones one writes a word based on the sound. This is an easy way of writing without thinking about the actual orthography of the word. In the English language, quite several words are not spelt based on their sounds. Therefore, if respondents are spelling words based on their sounds then this poses a serious threat to English language spellings. According to Al Bereiki and Al – Mekhlafi (2016), they said that sound letter correspondent is not regular in English language. This means that one cannot depend on the English letter sounds to spell a word. The sounds and the orthography in English do not always correspond. Starowicz (2007) posits that the more students use netspeak online, the more they tend to use it when they are offline. This gives the indication that these graphones and shortening could be transferred online to respondents' quizzes, assignments, and examinations among others.

Crystal (2004) stressed that the norms and conventions applied when writing online is different from both spoken and written language. Crystal makes the point that writing on the internet is quite different from when making a speech or written language. This was the reason why these respondents wrote on the internet using shorthand. Crystal further argues that the internet offers a new variation of stylistic writing. In this case, people adopt varied ways of writing on the internet. Crystal (2001) asserted that it will be nearly impossible for one to type using only initialisms, as it was in the early days of texting, since it will breed too much ambiguity. These initialisms or shorthand are mixed with proper spelling of words. The comparison of the respondents chats on social media reveal that they chat using internet language.

Conclusion

Lesser-known techniques of shortening and abbreviation are used by students on social media. Shortening and grapheme are the most popular trends. The respondents use these trends to save time when talking on social media. The second observation is that pupils struggle to memorise complicated spelling. To avoid learning long and difficult spellings, they use shortening, clipping, abbreviation, and numbering methods. Students' group projects do not use social media terminology. Because when students study in groups or peer evaluate each other's work, errors are minimised if not eliminated. Netspeak is utilised in both English language and HIV/AIDS quizzes. Students lost scores in an English Literature quiz for utilising social media lingo. But they weren't penalised for HIV/AIDS. The study recommends that teachers should concentrate and focus more on the differences between formal and informal writing systems and increase the students' awareness about their correct spellings. Punitive measures should be carried out by teachers and examiners against students who use internet language in all formal writings such as examinations, quizzes, assignments among others. Teachers should frequently encourage group assignments to minimize the errors committed by students. Teachers should not only ring or circle students' wrong spellings or grammatical errors, but they must provide reasons for the rings or the errors.

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