

THE THREATENING TRENDS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract

English, the language of universe serves as a tool for communication all over the world. In this era of digital technology, the role of modern innovations in communication is an unavoidable. In the present scenario, the mobile users prefer to send SMS language widely. As a result, 'SMS' language has been used in formal communication also. This is very evident in school and college examinations. So, the language of texting is altering the English language. This paper aims to stress the consequences of 'SMS' language and how it damages the English language and how the users ignore the spelling rules, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, etc., knowingly or unknowingly affecting the Standard English. The main objective of this paper is to present more details about such usage and also recommend suggestions to solve this problem.

Introduction

Language is very important means of communication among people. Language is so important form of communication between humans that it is difficult to think of a society without language. It gives shape to people's thoughts and guides and controls their entire activity. It is carrier of civilization and culture as human thoughts and philosophy are conveyed from one generation to the other through the medium of language. Language is ubiquitous in the sense that it is present everywhere in all activities.

Language is, today, a medium of literature, science and technology, computers and cultural exchanges between social groups, and the most powerful, convenient and permanent means of communication in the world. It is only through language that knowledge and culture are stored and passed on from generation to generation. Thus, all human civilization and knowledge are possible only through language.

Humans convey and receive an infinite number of messages through space anywhere at any time. But some messages are typed and sent carelessly, fashionably, ignorantly which degrade the quality of English language. Of course, language is modifiable, extendable and open-ended but to a certain extent only. Today, Language is an inseparable part of human society. Human civilization has been possible only through language and its usage. It is through language that humanity has come out of the Stone Age and has developed science, art and technology in a big way. So, let us preserve the Standard English.

The Digital Age

The development of digital technologies and supporting infrastructure could herald the beginning of a 'digital age'. Like the industrial age, there have been a series of related innovations which appear to be significantly altering how communities, nations and societies function and interact. The changes and innovations are likely to continue to reoccur over decades and the complex systems within society will evolve.

The innovations that have emerged at the start of the digital age include home computing, the World Wide Web, online social networks, mobile or wireless capability, and communication technologies. Each is underpinned by numerous inventions. This sample of innovations may not be the most significant in the digital age but they are a selection which is influencing society from the community to the global level.

Mobile phone technologies have influenced how families and friends communicate. Ten group interviews were undertaken in 1999 in Norway to gather information on the way that teenagers used cell phones. Ling and Yttri (2002) found that cell phones were used for micro-coordination: organising meetings, transport arrangements and so forth with family and friends. The introduction of mobile technology to the family and social group has seen this ability to keep in regular easy contact, to arrange when and where to meet and to send messages such as what is needed from the supermarket. This has changed the way that families can operate in that all arrangements do not need to be made during face-to-face contact prior to the start of time away from each other, which could increase flexibility with time and alter the dynamics of family organisational processes. This is an example of how the introduction of digital technologies to societies changes the way communities or groups operate. As the coin has two sides, the digital age too follow the same. Though we are happy to welcome communication technologies to lead a comfortable life, on the other hand knowingly or unknowingly we lose the values, quality of the Standard English and morality.

Text messages altering the English language

Sending text messages has become a medium of choice for mobile phone users. SMS (Short Message Service) minimizes space, time and cost constraints which attract the attention of wide users. The trend of SMS language evolves and seeps into the daily lives of individuals. Typing on a phone is normally slower than with a key board and capitalization is even slower. As a result, punctuation, grammar, spelling and capitalization etc are largely ignored.

Abbreviations:

| TEXT | Abbreviations or SMS language |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Have a nice day | Hand |
| Long time no see | Ltns |
| Complete waste of time | Cwof |
| You are okay | Urok |
| At work all weekend | @wrk all wk |
| American Association Against Acronym Abuse | AAAAA |
| For the fun | FTF |

| | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| What do you mean by that | WDYMBT |
| As Soon As Possible | ASAP |
| Oh my God | OMG |
| By the way | BTW |
| At The Moment | ATM |
| Because | Bc |
| In My Opinion | IMO |
| What The Hell | WTH |
| Tears In My Eyes | TIME |
| Look at this | luk@dis |

Trans-literature:

Veetel Irunthalum,
Vasalil Irunthalum,
Theruvil Irunthalum,
Park Irunthalum,
Kovil Irunthalum,
Thettaril Irunthalum,
School Irunthalum,
Engirunthalum,
Good Evening to you all!

Grammatical Error:

Dear hw r u ? Hw s laif?
I'm fine
Wt abt u?

Bilingual construction:

It is too aruvai.
Why are you kathing

The trend of SMS language is threatening. It has been used by the majority of the users and seeps into the daily lives of individuals. Typing has been minimized. As result, punctuation, grammar, spelling and construction are largely avoided by the users.

There are many reasons for change in culture, technology, history but the most influential catalyst for change in today's era is technology. Technologies like email, texting and face-book have led to new words forming, new grammatical changes and other modifications that are both subtle and noticeable. Technology could eventually help the language become easier to follow, growing similar to other languages, and stray away from the numerous irregularities that we all struggle to master. The most prominent trend in the language is a direct result of the technological world in which we live.

Punctuation symbols such as '&', '@' and abbreviations have become a constant not only in typing, but also in hand written papers. Though abbreviations do allow for faster communication, they take away the eloquence of the language and lead to a less professional impact and potentially a loss of understanding between people.

David Crystal is the author of numerous books on linguistics and the development of the English language, he in his article entitled “Texting”, he details that the abbreviations have been introduced into our language and he explores in detail how it is changing due to technology. He refers to the language of texting as “textspeak”, and explains why textspeak differs from traditional English in the following examples:

| | |
|-------|-----------|
| 2moro | tomorrow |
| kwl | cool |
| bc | because |
| R | are |
| & | and |
| 10q | thank you |
| W8 | wait |

Crystal explains that textspeak is like decoding a message; they require a different interpretation of the language because of the technology and the speed that messages can be delivered. There is a different adaptation of symbols and punctuation that the traditional language does not use, and it’s a whole new way of thinking about language that has never been used.

The character of a text messages reflect the uses of abbreviations and acronyms, the use of certain punctuation marks and the noticeable lack of other punctuation marks, the numerous spelling mistakes, grammatical errors, the usage of bilingual and the craze for trans-literature, the influence of one’s culture, the introduction of slang phrases etc., These changes are certain to drastically influence the future of the language, and are having a dramatic impact on the language presently.

While these changes are beginning to reoccur and take a semi-permanent hold on the norms of the English language, these changes cannot yet be deemed as permanent, as they have not existed for long enough. Certain variations are becoming increasingly common and are integrated more frequently into formal writing than others, such as “to” for “too”, or even “2” for either “to” or “too”. Other forms of abbreviations aren’t used as frequently, such as long acronyms that have not yet found their way into everyone’s language yet. However, the trends in “textspeak” are now becoming in themselves a new language or a variation of the English language that a new generation is being introduced to and becoming more fluent at younger age.

Report

Use of ‘SMS’ language in schools tended to be seen as negative effects. There have been some reports in the media of children using ‘SMS’ language for essays in examinations. Welsh journalist and television reporter John Humphrys has criticized SMS language as “wrecking our language”. He cites ambiguity as one problem posed, illustrating with examples such as “lol”, which may either be interpreted to mean “laughing out loud”, “lots of love”, and “little old lady” depending on the context in which it is being used. However, it should be noted that ambiguous words and statements have always been present within languages. In English for example, the word “duck” can have more than one meaning. It could be referring to either the bird or the

action, and such words are usually disambiguated by looking at the context in which it was written.

The proliferation of SMS language has been criticized for causing the deterioration of English language proficiency and its rich heritage. Opponents of SMS language feel that it undermines the properties of the English language that have lasted throughout its long history. Furthermore, words within the SMS language that are very similar to their English-language counterparts can be confused by young users as the actual English spelling and can therefore increase the prevalence of spelling mistakes.

Humphrys describes emoticons and textspeak as “irritating” and essentially lazy behaviour, and surmises that “sloppy” habits gained while using textspeak will result in students’ growing ignorance of proper grammar and punctuation.

Suggestions

- The speed and shorthand of SMS has irreversibly changed our use of English.
- As mobiles have developed, we have been able to use them for more and more modes of communication – writing, speaking, filming, image sharing and this has profoundly affected our use of English.
- Many teachers in primary and secondary schools have expressed concern at the number of children whose literacy levels are dropping.
- Some texting terms have even made it into common parlance:
‘omg’ (oh my god)
‘pls’ (please)
‘TTYL’ (talk to you later)
The craze for shortening words, absorbed from texting, is also changing we speak. These are largely teenage usages that are becoming main stream.

- ❖ Recent education statistics reports that text messaging is completely devastating the English language. Recent findings have suggested that school children in the 1960s and 1970s were far more literate than children of today. In 2013, the average school child struggles more with spelling, grammar and essay writing.

Summation

A language is a systematic means of communication by the use of sounds or conventional symbols. It is the code we all use to express ourselves and communicate to others. It is a communication by word of mouth. It is the mental faculty or power of vocal gestures, signs or marks. A language is the written and spoken methods of combing words to create meaning used by a particular group of people.

A language attracts people because of the wealth of literature and knowledge enshrined in it. English poses no damage to Indian languages. The Indian languages are vibrant and are developing by the contributions of great minds using them as their vehicle of expression. English is available to us as a historical heritage in addition to our own language. We must make the best use of English to develop ourselves culturally and materially that we can compete with the best

in the world of mind and matter. English language is our window to the world. English language is one tool to establish our viewpoint.

No doubt, English language has a prominent role in the life of a man using technology. It is an internationally accepted language. BY having command over this language it would become easy for a sender to transmit the idea to any part of the world without any hindrance. Every student, who is going through technical course, dreams to be a successful person someday. But success can never be achieved without hard work. In the world of cut throat competition it is compulsory to be multitalented. Only technical knowledge cannot make the dreams true. For it, its proper presentation is required. Now, especially for Indian students, whose mother tongue is not English, it is quite difficult to have excellence over it. But nothing is bigger than true dedication. If a person has sincere desire to be skilled and successful completely, then no hurdle can stop him.

Basically, students have knowledge about English grammar. They know most of the basic rules as they are a compulsory part of the syllabus of all courses. The difficulty is that they feel hesitation while using in to the practical lives. There is an old proverb ‘Practice makes a man perfect’. It is old proverb but very useful because it guides us the right way of becoming perfect. Another famous proverb ‘There is no shortcut to successes’ conveys the same meaning by a different angle. It is impossible to infuse perfection into anyone overnight. On the other hand, perfection can be achieved by proper education and correct presentation. One should keep itself dedicated towards the use of Standard English language in daily life. Sooner or later he would find himself perfect at it. Although in the starting it would be difficult to implement such practice but by continuous efforts and hard work this quality can be cultivated into the personality. As in the dictionary of winners, there is no word IMPOSSIBLE, as it says itself, I’M POSSIBLE.

Teachers, parents and media need to encourage the mobile users to discern the right time and place for casual language. Children also need to hone their proper English skills so that they can call upon correct spelling and grammar when it’s needed. Text-speak in pupils’ essays may be amusing nowadays. It’s not as amusing to imagine our children 10 years from now, as adults, texting “can u plzs c me?!?” to their bosses.

The revolution in communication didn’t bring only good things for us, but it also opened new ways for the ‘bad guys’ to attack on communication through cell phones. So many changes came about in such a short time that we couldn’t even really understand what happened to us. From one side our life became more comfortable than ever before. We receive more information (news, family photos, films, sports, health tips, etc.,) faster and easier than ever before. Those who were far before came closer to each other (we are living in a global village), we can reach anyone anywhere in an instant. But at the same time the language used in messages degrade the language itself. Many inventions were made for our comforts, so it is in the hands of the users to bring out the best or the worst. So it is a little bit like the fight between the good and the evil, and we just hope that the good side will triumph at the last.

So, Standard English is the variety employed by the education system in every English speaking country all over the world. If Standard English is not emphasised, then communication may break down and collapse. Communication is a two way process of mutual understanding. It is a means of connecting people and places. Written communication is one of the most important types of communication. It is nothing but sending a message by the use of symbols that are understood by both the sender and receiver of the message. If the receiver does not understand

the text message (SMS) means, ultimately the communication is utter failure and meaningless. Considering all these problems, personally I believe that there should be one standard form which is perceived as the most privileged and effective communication which should be in oral and written through various medium.

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