

# **Daffodil International University**

**Research Topic: Impact of Text Messages on Academic Writing at Higher Secondary  
and Tertiary Level in Bangladeshi Context**

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## Table of content

Contents	Page number
Acknowledgement	03
Abstract	04
Chapter I- Introduction	05-06
Chapter II- Literature Review	07-09
Chapter III- Methodology	10
Chapter IV- Data Collection	11-19
Chapter V- Analysis and Discussion	20-24
Chapter VI- Findings and Conclusion	25-27
References	28
Appendix	29-30

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Signature

## Abstract

This paper deals with the impact of text messages on academic writing at higher secondary and tertiary level in Bangladeshi context. The main objective of this paper is to explore how this growing text messaging culture (informal) creates influences on students writing skill (formal); how much students are relying on abbreviations, omitting of vowels and grammatical parts, punctuation marks, auto-correction. The paper conducted quantitative research where data collected through questionnaires to mark the impact of text messages on students writing. The findings showed that though a large number of students do not use texting languages in their academic writing, still texting has some effects on writing. Some of the students' academic writing get affected by their texting manner which is an alarming condition for them. Although the impact of texts is not strongly evident and the number is not huge but as a portion of the survey revealed that they sometimes or frequently or rarely use abbreviations, remove vowels, grammatical rules, in their academic writing, hence, it marks the growing impact of text messages which needs to be avoided and should be careful while writing academic papers.

**Keywords:** Text messages, Academic Writing, Impact, Higher Secondary, Tertiary, Bangladesh.

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

One of the fastest-growing forms of communication in the world is text messaging, commonly referred to as short message service (SMS) or text. Text is a messaging service element of cellphone, computer, laptop; where it is an act of typing and sending messages electronically between two or more devices. It enables users to send and receive text messages on their devices. It is similar to the telegraphic language, which tries to construct words and thoughts that are as concise and inexpensive as possible by using the fewest possible characters. Text messages have wide range of usages from personal to professional, business purposes, even governmental and non-governmental institutions also use SMS to convey their messages to their colleagues, citizens. Moreover, from teenagers to adults to old person, everyone uses text messages for communication purpose. It has become a major part of our everyday communication. While texting most of the time we use language in an informal way for instance, usually do not maintain grammatical structures, mixing/switching languages (we also this in speaking), removing letters especially vowels from words (rsrch= research, gd nght= good night, etc) use shortened phrases or words such as TY= Thank you, ASAP= As soon as possible, OMG= O My God, K=Okay, TTYS= Talk to you soon, BRB=Be right back, etc. As students are also users of text messages, so these languages can affect their academic writing, if they get habitat to texting languages. Hence, the paper wants to figure out the impact of this ongoing texting languages on students' academic writing.

#### **Statement of the problem**

The study presents the impact of text messages on academic writing of Higher Secondary and Tertiary level students. The aim of the paper is to find out what kinds of impact text messages have on academic writing of the students.

#### **Objectives of the study**

The main objective of the paper is to explore and identify the impact of text messages on academic writing.

The supporting objectives-

- To identify how much students are relying on abbreviations in texting and academic writing
- To identify how much students remove vowels and grammatical parts, punctuation marks in texting and academic writing
- To identify how much students use auto-correction in texting

### **Significance of the study**

The style of language that people use in text messages is growing rapidly. The study will bring the concern among the students as well as teachers and guardians regarding academic writing and the consequences of online messages. It will create scopes for the future researchers who will be interested to work on this concept. The research will also help to understand how formal language is getting mixed with informal writing.

### **Limitations**

The study of the research has been done in a short range because it conducted few participants. Further research works can be done by taking more participants.

## Chapter II

### Literature Review

#### Literature Review

There are mixed reviews on text messages effects. Some studies highlighted the negative impact of texting on academic writing whereas some studies reflected the positive sides as well as other factors except text messages.

Dansieh, (2011) published a research paper in International Journal of English Linguistics, titled “SMS Texting and Its Potential Impacts on Students’ Written Communication Skills” to ascertain the veritable impact of SMS language on the writing skill of students of Wa Polytechnic in Ghana. The result revealed students’ struggle with grammar, lexis and structure. Therefore, text messaging which encourages abbreviating and non-conformity with grammatical rules could worsen students’ written communication skills rather than improve them. The point of divergence is in the subject of study.

Several recent studies have looked specifically at the use of ‘text messaging’. The book *The Inside Text* (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 ‘gift-giving’ practices. Both studies emphasize the ‘leisure and fun’ 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 ‘micro coordination’ and organizational practicalities.

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. The massive data from the said countries 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 "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"). Also, Rosen (2009) is of the view that regular use of the service can impact negatively on the everyday language of "texters." In an unscientific poll conducted by Edutopia.org, out of 1028 respondents, 50% were of the view that texting was harming students' writing and grammar. 20% thought that text messaging could have some effect on students' 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 "...my students' spelling is atrocious. Texting does not and has not helped".

In their study that investigated the "linguistic features of e-English," Al-Sa'di and Hamdan (2005) found many characterizing features of e-chatting. They summarize such findings by saying: analysis of the data indicated that the overwhelming majority of the chatters' sentences were short and simple. Analysis also showed that the e-chatters used several word truncation methods, for instance, using one letter for a whole word and eliminating one or more vowels in a word as long as it is still understandable. They also tended to misspell words either intentionally or accidentally. Furthermore, they applied regular methods of word formation, e.g., derivation, coinage, acronymization ... (421).

Baron (2008: 1) who believes that "as soon as children can distinguish between formal and informal language, SMS language does not affect their literacy." In this case, texting enriches literacy and proficiency in language. Thurlow and Poff (2009) report that, according to Crystal (2009), many of the non-conventional spellings found in texting are widespread and pre-date mobile phones. This line of argument is adopted by the authors who, based on the analysis of samples of AOU students' writing, subscribe to this thesis. The discussion presented by Aziz et al. (2013: 12889) indicates that their research findings have "demystified the popular belief or



misconception that the students' writing is adversely affected by the features specific to texting and thus the future of Standard English is in danger." They add that "there can be other factors like carelessness or lack of knowledge on the part of students and the lack of training, feedback or emphasis on the part of educators or the system."

In his book, *Txtng: The Gr8 Db8, (a logogram which stands for Texting: The Great Debate)*, Crystal refutes the popular view that SMS language and its profuse use of abbreviations and slang can impact negatively on student language and literacy. His claim was based on six main points; that: (1) in a typical text message, less than 10% of the words are abbreviated; (2) abbreviating has been in use for decades, and thus is not a new language; (3) children and adults alike use text language, the latter being more likely to do so; (4) students do not habitually use abbreviations in their homework and examinations; (5) before people can text, they must first know how to spell. Texting can therefore not be a cause of bad spelling; (6) since texting provides people with the opportunity of engaging with the language through reading and writing, it improves people's literacy. Another school of thought contends that text message has no effect on grammar rather they argue that SMS texting should be considered as another language. Since learning a new language does not affect students' ability to use English grammar, it would be wrong to conclude that text messaging can affect their grammar. They also point out that slang words have no effect on English grammar, and even though each generation has its own jargon, English grammar has not been changed. They claim, all students need to do, is learn the basics in English class and they will be able to distinguish between "slang, texting lingo and correct English" (Russell, 2010).

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

#### **Design of the study**

This research paper explored the impact of text messages on academic writing at Higher Secondary and Tertiary level in Bangladeshi context, using quantitative methodology. This method allows the researcher to understand the perspective of those studied as a result of data collection through a set of questionnaires and analysis them. The design of the study includes samples, research tools, setting, data collection procedures and obstacles encountered while conducting the survey.

#### **Samples**

The samples or the participants of the survey were Higher Secondary and Tertiary level students. There were 22 students randomly selected for the survey.

#### **Research tools**

The research tool that has been used in this paper is a set of questionnaires consists of 20 questions which includes general to specific question regarding text messages and its impact on academic writing.

#### **Data collection procedures**

The questionnaires have been provided to the participants through email, sharing drive link in different online groups of students. After collecting data their results have been presented in percentage nature through different charts and bars.

#### **Obstacles Encountered**

The biggest obstacle that as a researcher I have faced while doing the survey that most of them were not interested to participate in the survey. Also, I would like to mention that some of the students were cooperative toward the survey and participate in this.

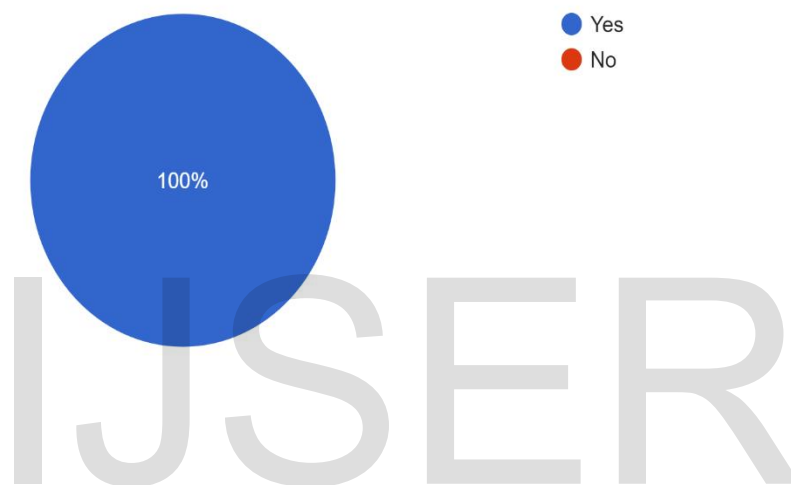
## Chapter IV

### Data Collection

#### Question-01

Do you have a cellphone/computer/laptop?

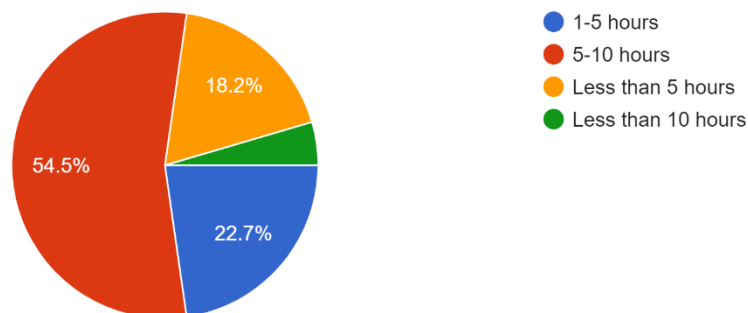
22 responses



#### Question-02

How many hours do you use cellphone/computer/laptop in a day?

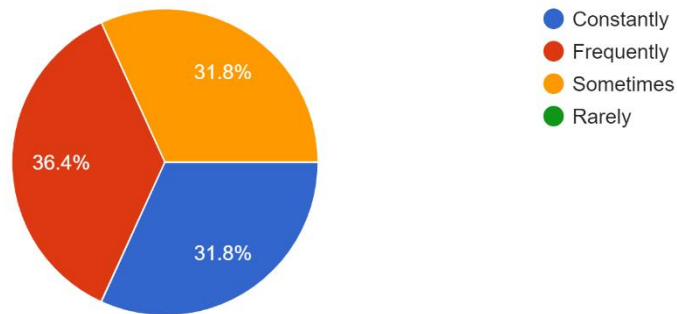
22 responses



### Question-03

How long do you spend time on social media?

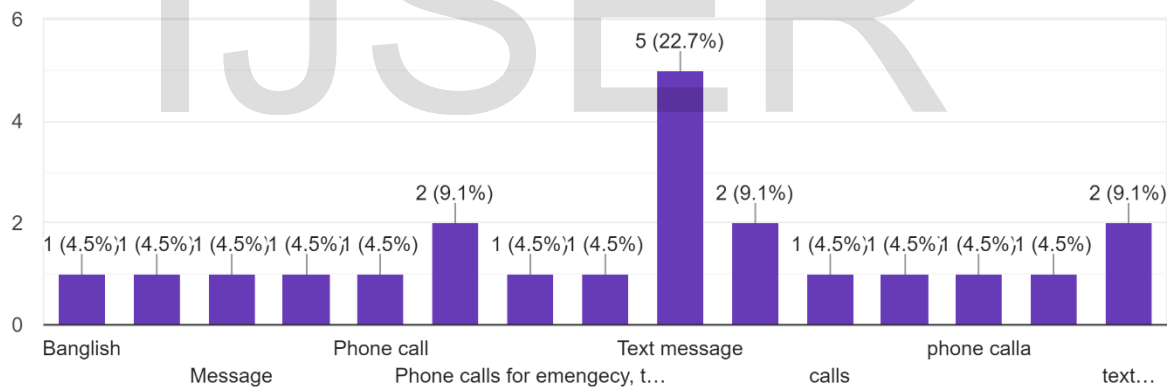
22 responses



### Question-04

Between text messages and phone calls- which one do you prefer?

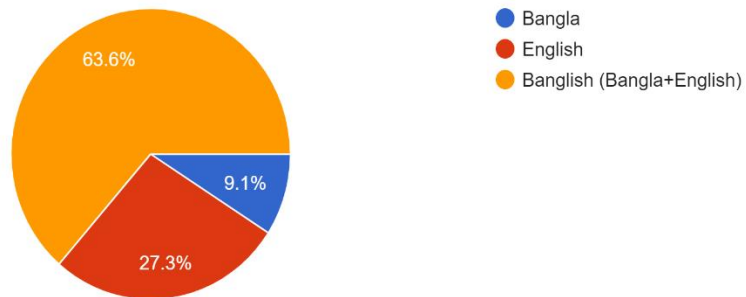
22 responses



### Question-05

What language or languages do you use while typing messages?

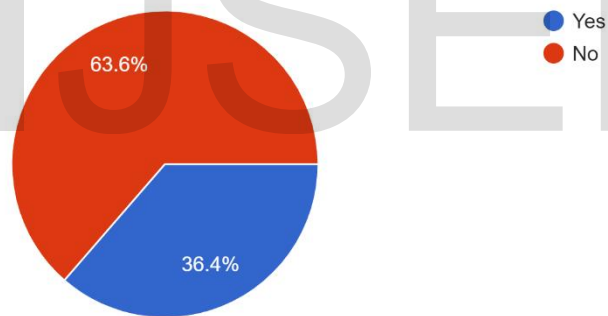
22 responses



### Question-06

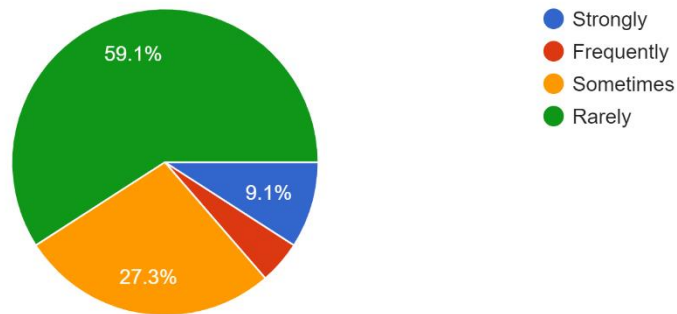
Do you use texting languages in your academic writing?

22 responses



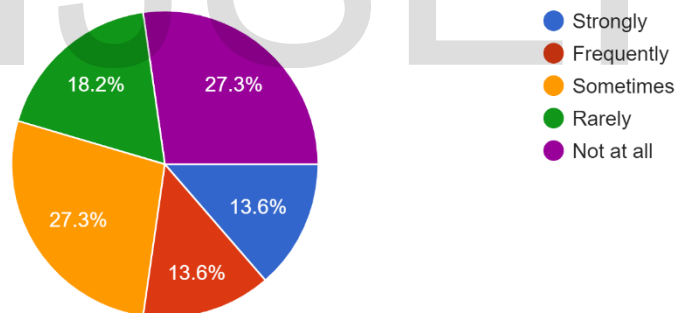
### Question-07

If it is Yes, how many times it occurs-  
22 responses



### Question-08

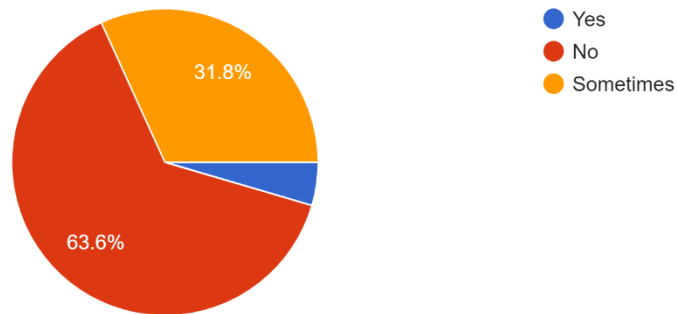
How much do you use abbreviation (a shortened form of word or phrase such as OMG, TY-THANK YOU, etc)?  
22 responses



### Question-09

Do you remove vowels (a, e, i, o ,u) from words while typing texts?

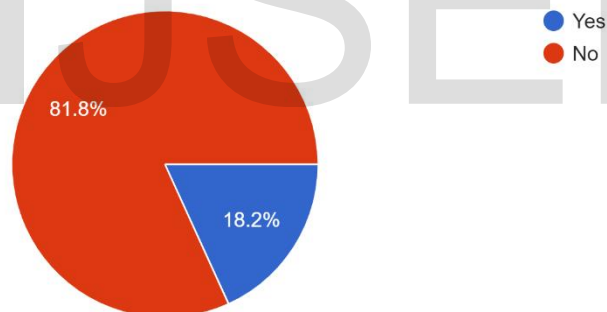
22 responses



### Question-10

Do you remove vowels in your academic writing?

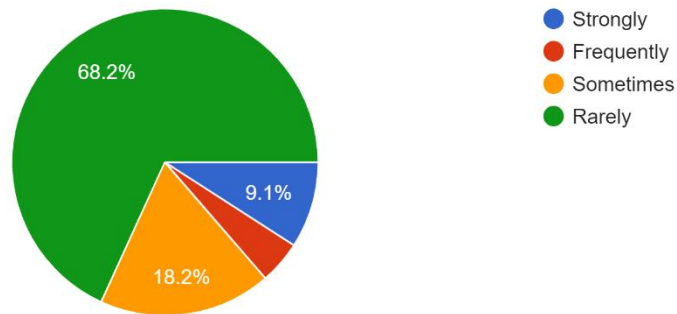
22 responses



### Question-11

If it is Yes, how much it occurs in your academic writing?

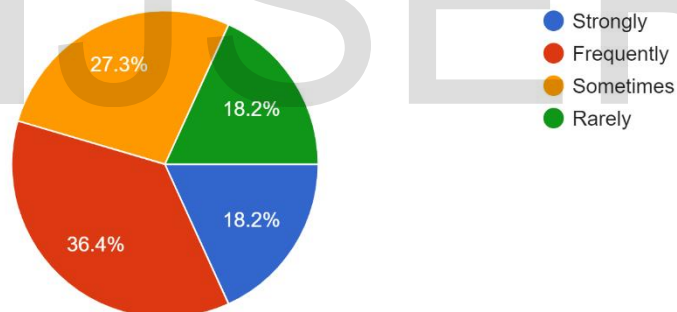
22 responses



### Question-12

How much do you maintain grammatical structures/rules in texting?

22 responses

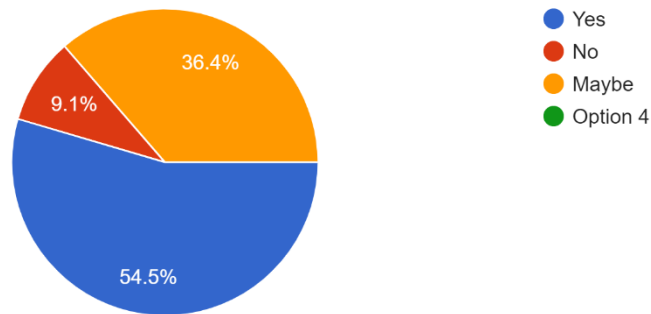




### Question-13

Do you think avoiding grammatical structures/rules can affect your academic writing?

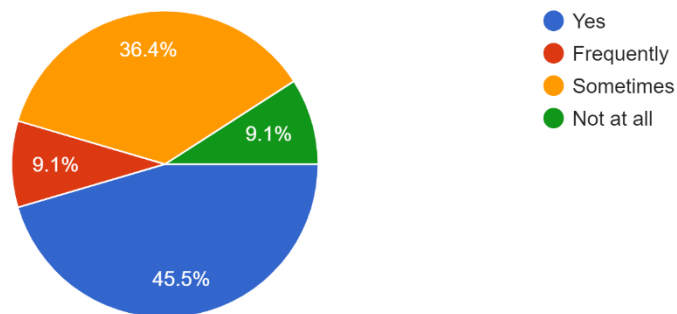
22 responses



### Question14

Do you maintain punctuation marks in your texts?

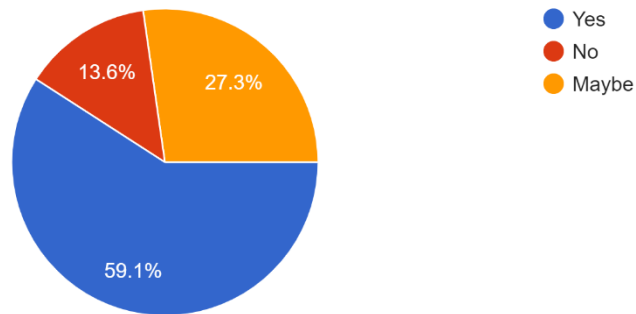
22 responses



### Question-15

Do you think skipping punctuation marks can affect you academic writing?

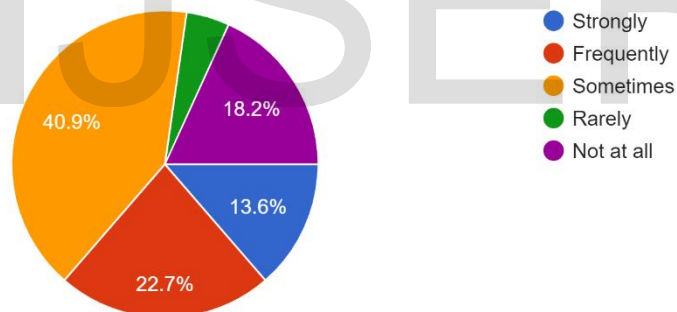
22 responses



### Question-16

How much do you use auto-correction while typing texts?

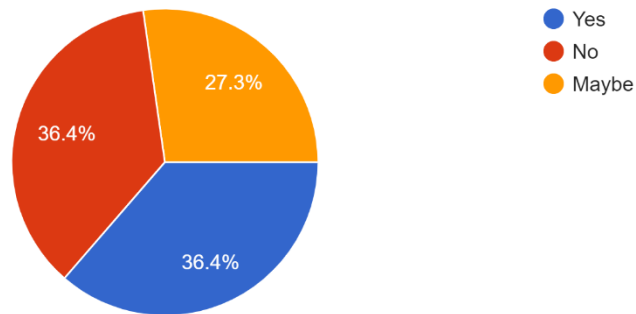
22 responses



### Question-17

Do you think auto-correction has become a habit?

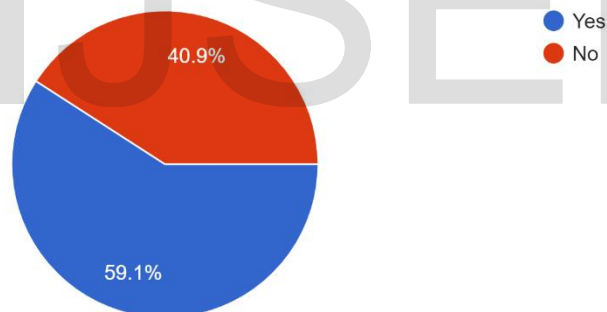
22 responses



### Question-18

Do you think due to auto-correction you cannot write proper words in your writing?

22 responses



### Question-19

Do you think texting hampering Standard Writing English? Results of this question describe in analysis and discussion chapter.

### Question-20

How can someone improve his/her academic writing? Results of this question describe in analysis and discussion chapter.

## Chapter V

### Analysis and Discussion

#### Question-01 responses-

The first question that has been asked to the participants- Do you have a cellphone/computer/laptop? From the findings of this closed ended question, every participant response Yes, they have these devices.

#### Question-02 responses

The second question that has been asked to the participant- How many hours do you use cellphone/computer/laptop in a day? 1) 1-5 hours 2) 5-10 hours 3) Less than 5 hours 4) Less than 10 hours. In this question majority of the participants who are 54.5% responded that they use devices 5-10 hours (option-2). Whereas 22.7% responded to option-1 which is 1-5 hours. In the same question 18.2% showed that they use devices less than 5 hours however 4.5% responses that they use device less than 10 hours. Hence, here we can see variation of time in using devices.

#### Question-03

The third question was How long do you spend time on social media? 1) constantly 2) frequently 3) sometimes 4) rarely. In response to this question 36.4% of the participants frequently spend time on social media whereas 31.4% of the participants spend time on social media both constantly and sometimes. No one gave response to option-4 rarely, which showed they students are in touch with their respective social media accounts.

#### Question-04

The fourth question that has been asked to the participants- Between text messages and phone calls- which one do you prefer more? Here overall 58.9% of the participants prefer text messages whereas 27.1% response to phone calls. In this finding 4.5% participants said that it depends on situation which one they prefer. Also 4.5% said that they prefer phone calls for emergency but usually prefer messages. Hence majority of the participant prefer text messages over phone calls.

### **Question-05**

Fifth question is about- What language or languages do you use while typing texts? 1) Bangla 2) English 3) Banglish (Bangla + English). In response to this question 63.6% of the students use Banglish (Bangla + English) language while typing text messages. The result also shows 27.3% type their messages in English whereas lower portion that is 9.1% use Bangla language. Hence we can see the dominance of mixing two languages that is being called Banglish in text messages among the students.

### **Question-06**

The question that has been asked to the participants Do you use texting languages in your academic writing? 1) Yes 2) No. Here most of them 63.6% responses that they do not use texting languages in their academic writing whereas 36.4% of the students use texting languages in their academic writing.

### **Question-07**

Here the question is related to former question-response that if it is Yes, how many times it occurs- 1) strongly 2) frequently 3) sometimes 4) rarely. In response to this question, majority of the students who are 59.1% in number say that rarely texting languages occur in their academic writing, whereas 27.3% response that this occurs sometimes in their writing. 9.1% of the students say texting languages strongly occurs in their academic writing. 4.5% students say this occurs frequently.

### **Question-08**

The question that has been asked to the participants- How much do you use abbreviation (a shortened form of a word or phrase such as OMG, TY, ASAP, etc)? 1)strongly 2) frequently 3) sometimes 4) rarely 5) not at all. Here we see different responses of the students such as 27.3% say they use abbreviations sometimes and not at all; percentage is equal for both options. 18.2% say they use rarely whereas 13.6% use abbreviation strongly as well as frequently; here the number is also equal for both options.

### **Question-09**

The question that has been asked to the students- do you remove vowels (a, e, i, o, u) from words while typing texts? In response to this question, majority of the students said they do not remove vowels and the percentage is 63.6%. However, 31.8% responded that this omitting vowel happens sometimes and lower portion that means 4.5% said they remove vowels while typing texts.

### **Question-10**

The next is related to the former one that- Do you remove vowels in your academic writing? Here, 81.8% that means majority of the students responded they do not remove vowels in their academic writing whereas 18.2% said that these omitting vowels happen in their academic writing.

### **Question-11**

If it is yes, how much it occurs (omitting vowels) in your writing? 1) strongly 2) frequently 3) sometimes 4) rarely. In response to this question, 68.2% said this happens rarely in their writing whereas 18.2% said sometimes they remove vowels in their writing. 9.1% and 4.5% responded to strongly and frequently this happens in their writing.

### **Question-12**

The question that has been asked to the students- How much do you maintain grammatical patterns/rules in texting? 1) strongly 2) frequently 3) sometimes 4) rarely. Here, 36.4% responded to option 2 that is they frequently maintain grammatical rules/structures in texting. The survey also shows that 27.3% sometimes maintain grammatical rules. However, 18.2% participants said they strongly follow grammar rules, at the same, equal portion said they rarely maintain grammar rules while typing messages.

### **Question-13**

Do you think avoiding grammatical structures can affect your academic writing? 1) Yes 2) May be 3) Sometimes 4) No. In response to this question, the survey shows that a big percentage 54.5% said yes that means avoiding grammatical structures can affect academic writing. 36.4%

said maybe affect academic writing if they avoid grammatical structures while typing texts. However, 9.1% said this will not affect academic writing.

#### **Question-14**

The question that has been asked to the students- Do you maintain punctuation marks in your texts? 1) Yes 2) Frequently 3) Sometimes 4) Not at all. Here, 45.5% said they maintain punctuation marks while 36.4% students said they maintain punctuation marks sometimes. The equal portion of the students that is 9.1% responded to option-2 frequently and option-4 not at all.

#### **Question-15**

Do you think “skipping punctuation marks” can affect academic writing? 1) Yes 2) No, here, majority of the students 59.1% responded to option yes that skipping punctuation marks can affect academic writing. 27.3% said maybe this can affect writing while 13.6% said this will not affect academic writing.

#### **Question16**

How much do you use auto-correction while typing texts? 1)strongly 2) frequently 3) sometimes 4) rarely 5) not at all. In response to this question, the survey shows that 40.9% said they use auto-correction sometimes while typing texts. 22.7% of the students said they frequently use auto correction for texts. However, 18.2% said that they do not use auto-correction at all while typing texts and 13.6% said they strongly use auto-correction. Lower portion that is 4.5% said they rarely use auto-correction.

#### **Question-17**

The next question that has been asked to the participants- Do you think auto-correction has become a habit? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Maybe. Here, equal number of the students thar is 36.4% responded to both yes and no; whereas 27.3% said maybe auto-correction has become a habit.

#### **Question-18**

Do you think due to auto-correction you cannot write proper words in your academic writing? 1) Yes 2) No, here 59.1% of the students said yes due to auto-correction they cannot write proper

words in academic writing. However, 40.9% said they do not think they cannot write proper words because of using auto-correction in texts.

### **Question-19**

Do you think texting is hampering Standard Writing English? In this question students give their opinions where most of them said texting is not hampering Standard Writing English. Again, some of them agree to this that texting is hampering standard writing English.

### **Question-20**

The last question was about their suggestions to those whose writing is getting hampered by texting- How can someone improve his/her academic writing? The students who participant in the survey suggest that to improve writing students should use vocabulary correctly also use active and passive voices in writing. Some of them recommend reading lots of books, articles, newspaper can help to improve writing, also try to use full words while texting or writing anything. One student suggests stop using social especially Messenger and WhatsApp media to improve writing automatically. They also provide suggestion on grammatical rules that needs to be maintained strongly, as well as avoid abbreviation to improve writing. They also believe that more practice will help to improve writing.



## Chapter VI

### Conclusion

#### Findings

The primary objective of the paper is to find out the impact of text messages on academic writing at higher secondary and tertiary level in Bangladeshi context. Above data collection, analysis and discussion of the survey shows that, first of all, every student who participated in the survey they have their own cellphone, computer and laptop which means that they have the privileged to connect with era of technology. Moreover, majority of the students use their device 5-10 hours in a day as well as they constantly and frequently spend time on social media. Also, maximum number of students prefer text messages over phone calls. While asking about which language or languages they use for text messages, the survey shows that a huge number of students use Banglish (mixing of Bangla and English) languages while typing texts. Also, the survey shows that a large number of students (63.6%) do not use texting languages in their academic writing. However, some of the students (36.4%) revealed that they do use texting while writing academic papers. Majority of the students said texting languages occur in their writing rarely might be due to wrong time management, carelessness, stress during conducting academic paper. A lower portion also said that these texting languages happen strongly in their writing, others said this happen sometimes and frequently.

The survey also finds out variation of using abbreviation where equal number of students (27.3%) use the shortened forms sometimes and not at all, whereas some of them use abbreviations strongly and frequently. While asking about removing vowels in texts and academic writing, in both situation majority of the students said they do not remove vowels however, a lower number of students remove vowels in their academic writing. The survey also presents that students remove vowels rarely and sometimes while writing academic papers, yet a lower portion of students do this strongly in their writing. The survey also shows that most of the students frequently maintain grammatical rules while texting. However, some of them maintain rules in texting strongly, sometimes and rarely. While asking about their opinions about avoiding grammatical rules can affect academic writing, majority of the students said yes, this can affect their writing as well. Some of the students disagreed to thus as they think avoiding grammatical

rules in texting will not affect academic writing. The survey also illustrates that maximum students maintain punctuation marks in texts while some of them maintain this sometimes. Moreover, a large number of students said avoiding punctuation marks in texting can affect their academic writing. While asking about how much students using auto-correction in texting, most of them said sometimes as well as some of them said frequently though a lower portion said they use auto-correction strongly. The result of the also shows that equal number of students finds auto-correction a habit as well as not a habit. Moreover, 59.1% students think that due to auto-correction they cannot write proper words in academic writing.

The survey also asked the students that whether Standard Writing English is being hampered by the texting languages. In response to this question students give their opinions where most of them said texting is not hampering Standard Writing English. Again, some of them agree to that texting is hampering standard writing English. At the end, the researcher asked the students to provide suggestions on how to improve writing, in response to this question, participants suggest students should use vocabulary correctly also use active and passive voices in writing. Some of them recommend reading lots of books, articles, newspaper can help to improve writing, also try to use full words while texting or writing anything. One student suggests stop using social especially Messenger and WhatsApp media to improve writing automatically. They also provide suggestion on grammatical rules that needs to be maintained strongly, as well as avoid abbreviation to improve writing. They also believe that more practice will help to improve writing.

## **Conclusion**

In this growing technological, modern era, text message is one of the most effective ways of communicating with near and dear ones. To a large number of people text messages have become a convenient, simple, less time-consuming way of interacting with people. In this growing texting culture, people using writing language in their convenient way such as sometimes Bangla or English language, mixing of these two languages, avoiding vowels, grammatical rules, using abbreviations etc. Students have also become a part of this growing texting languages as they also convey their thoughts through texts. Hence, the research paper wanted to see the impact of text messages on academic writing of students whether their writings get affected by their texting languages. After analyzing the data and findings of the survey, the

paper shows that though a large number of students do not use texting languages in their academic writing, still texting has some effects on writing. Some of the students' academic writing get affected by their texting manner which is an alarming condition for them. Although the impact of texts is not strongly evident and the number is not huge but as a portion of the survey revealed that they sometimes or frequently or rarely use abbreviations, remove vowels, grammatical rules, in their academic writing, hence, it marks the growing impact of text messages which needs to be avoided and should be careful while writing academic papers.

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## Appendix

### Survey Questionnaire

Research Topic: Impact of Text Messages on Academic Writing at Higher Secondary and Tertiary Level in Bangladeshi Context

These questionnaires are to get information for the research paper title above, under the course titled Research Methodology. This survey promises to keep your information private including your email address, your identity.

1. Do you have a cellphone/computer/laptop? 1) Yes 2) No
2. How many hours do you use cellphone/computer/laptop in a day? 1) 1-5 hours 2) 5-10 hours 3) Less than 5 hours 4) Less than 10 hours
3. How long do you spend time on social media? 1) constantly 2) frequently 3) sometimes 4) rarely
4. Between text messages and phone calls- which one do you prefer more? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What language or languages do you use while typing texts? 1) Bangla 2) English 3) Banglish (Bangla+English)
6. Do you use texting languages in your academic writing? 1) Yes 2) No
7. If it is Yes, how many times it occurs- 1) strongly 2) frequently 3) sometimes 4) rarely
8. How much do you use abbreviation (a shortened form of a word or phrase such as OMG, TY, ASAP, etc)? 1)strongly 2) frequently 3) sometimes 4) rarely 5) not at all
9. Do you remove vowels (a, e, I, o, u) from words while typing texts? 1)Yes 2) No
10. Do you remove vowels in your academic writing? 1) Yes 2) No

11. If it is yes, how much it occurs (omitting vowels) in your writing? 1) strongly 2) frequently 3) sometimes 4) rarely
12. How much do you maintain grammatical patterns/rules in texting? 1) strongly 2) frequently 3) sometimes 4) rarely
13. Do you think avoiding grammatical structures can affect your academic writing? 1) Yes 2) May be 3) Sometimes 4) No
14. Do you maintain punctuation marks in your texts? 1) Yes 2) Frequently 3) Sometimes 4) Not at all
15. Do you think “skipping punctuation marks” can affects academic writing? 1) Yes 2) No
16. How much do you use auto-correction while typing texts? 1)strongly 2) frequently 3) sometimes 4) rarely 5) not at all
17. Do you think auto-correction has become a habit? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Maybe
18. Do you think due to auto-correction you cannot write proper words in your academic writing? 1) Yes 2) No
19. Do you think texting is hampering Standard Writing English? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Sometimes
20. How can someone improve his/her academic writing? \_\_\_\_\_