

An Evaluation of Textese in Students' Social Media Engagement and Its Implications for English Academic Writing

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Abstract

Texting language, often referred to as textese or textism, has a notable influence on the writing skills of students, both positively and negatively. As students frequently engage in digital communications such as social media, messaging applications, and online forums, they become accustomed to using informal language styles and strategies. Through an exploratory sequential research design, this study evaluated the use of textese in social media engagement among Grade 11 students from the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) strand and its implications to English academic writing. The results revealed that students frequently used specific texting strategies in their online communication, including emojis, addition and omission of punctuation marks, non-normative capitalization, initialisms or acronyms, contractions, and truncated simplified syntax or abbreviation. In contrast, less frequently observed strategies included clippings, number/letter homophones, and word value characters, apostrophes, phonetic spellings, and logograms or letter-numeral hybrids. These results reflect how digital communication practices can pose challenges for students when engaging in formal academic writing. Additionally, the study determined the extent of textese use in academic outputs such as essays, research papers, reflections, and position papers. The results suggest that textism sometimes appears in these tasks. Students' experiences showed a merging of informal digital language practices with formal academic writing, highlighting the necessity for instructional guidance to help them differentiate between these language registers. In response, the researcher developed a set of guidelines based on learners lived experiences to promote context-aware language use.

Keywords: Evaluation, Textese, Implications, Functionality Guidelines