

Text Messaging as an Instruction Support on Spelling Performance of the Learners

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to explore the effect of text messaging on the spelling performance skills of the learners in selected elementary schools. It utilized the descriptive method of research to explore the prevailing or existing condition as to the extent of text messaging and the spelling performance of the learners. The findings revealed in the dictation and written test of the learners that their spelling skills highest frequency was “Good.” Further, the results showed a highly significant relationship between the extent of cellphone use on text messaging and the spelling performance of the learners. However, some of the participants contradicted the views mentioned, according to them, using a cellphone in texting can be used as a tool to enhance the spelling performance of the learners due to the built-in features of grammar and spelling. Therefore, it is concluded that text messaging can be used as a tool to support instruction in the spelling skills of the learners. Further, it is recommended to give full guidance on the proper usage of a cellphone to appropriately correct the learners’ spelling skills.

Keywords: Spelling, Performance, Text messaging, Instruction support

1. Introduction

Today, technology is the most common way people communicate with one another. It has been evolving over centuries. It’s incredible how a person can quickly receive a message. It is an extremely fast-paced mode of communication. Many people believe that the Short Message Service (SMS) language makes people lazy and is destroying our language. Texting has become an integrated part of our lives, particularly among teenagers, which has been at the forefront of the rapid modern world of technology and has been practiced by people all over the world. Texting has grown in popularity as a primary means of written communication among school-aged students [1].

Furthermore, there has been a rapid increase in short message service (SMS) text messaging (IM or IMing) among younger generations as a result of increased ownership of mobile phones and personal computers, including by school aged children. Texting, which began around the turn of the century, is

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the exchange of short text messages between mobile phones. IM gained popularity at the start of the twenty-first century. It is the online exchange of text messages between two or more people: (i) using a mobile phone or internet application; (ii) via a social networking site; or (iii) within an online game. Both are forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC), the difference being that I Ming is real-time, that is, synchronous, and texting is asynchronous CMC [2].

Moreover, factors that can affect the spelling performance of learners are using shortened words or initial letters in messaging. Wood *et al.* [3] asserted that the effect of text messaging on the spelling skills of learners by way of using the shortened words of communication in sending text messages may result in low or poor spelling and academic performance remains to be seen, hence this study was proposed to be conducted.

Likewise, cellphones are being used in the hopes of improving learners' overall educational performance. Students are using cellphones for activities such as answering questions, examining visualizations, taking notes, researching, and communicating (*e.g.*, via email) [4]. As technology usage has increased, there have been more reports of a decline in spelling performance. Using cellphones in the classroom has been linked to decreased recall and learner satisfaction with instruction [5]. Another reason why learners use their cell phones in class (*e.g.*, for messaging, social media, and gaming) is that they believe they can "multitask" [6].

Additionally, the use of cellphones in the classroom has decreased as students use electronic devices. On the other hand, research has shown that even learners who are close to other learners who are close to other students who use this technology are more likely to perform poorly in the classroom even if they do not use technology themselves [6]. When teachers have to focus on delivering information to attentive students, their mental effort may be at full capacity. However, if a teacher witnesses the students using their cellphones during classroom instruction, it may be considered distracting and may lead to the teacher delivering a lower-quality lesson.

Furthermore, there is a discussion about the potential for dictation technologies, which translate voice into text, to improve classroom learning. For example, it has been suggested that dictation technologies can be used to improve reading instruction support, assist dyslexic students, and make providing feedback to students easier [7]. Dictation can help develop all four language skills in an integrated manner. Dictation helps to improve short-term memory. Learners practice remembering meaningful phrases or entire sentences before writing them down. Despite the fact that the word "dictation" has negative connotations, the practice itself has been found to be beneficial. It encourages students to learn not only context-based spelling, but also proper sentence structure and punctuation [8].

Many teachers, administrators, and parents continue to wonder whether or not texting in class has a negative impact on students' spelling abilities. Dictation and writing have the advantage of bringing together in different ways in texting through giving instructions, especially when there is an announcement that can be easily sent through texting, but they also have the disadvantage of being used in many ways, such as games, sending short messages, and not using it properly. Thus, a study to determine the learners' spelling performance through dictation and written tests will be conducted. The findings of this study could be used as baseline information or to measure their spelling performance using dictation and a written test. The outcome of this investigation is to determine the spelling performance or skills affected on a certain aspect related to grade 4 learning on academic performance.

In view of the foregoing, the study aimed to explore the effect of text messaging as instruction support on the spelling performance of the learners in the three (3) selected schools of Libertad, Mahayag, and

Matlang Elementary of Isabel District, Isabel, Leyte. The dictation and written spelling could serve as guidelines of information for the enhancement of the learners in spelling as their instructional support for the spelling performance of the learners.

This study is anchored on Stuart Hall's reception theory [9] that asserts media texts are encoded and decoded. The producer encodes messages and values into their media, which are then decoded by the audience. Encoding strategies enable the development of writing and spelling capabilities. Decoding strategies are techniques that help learners develop reading capabilities. Encoding and decoding theory have a common base, starting with phonological awareness and understanding of phonemes. Adults can use analogies to words that the child knows to help him learn a new word. Developing knowledge of root words is another way to develop spelling and writing skills [10].

Furthermore, the theory also pointed out the need to strengthen the learners in reading and spelling performance and measured the test scores of learners using the dictation and written spelling tests. Therefore, there are many factors that influence a learner's spelling performance, and those factors, such as the teacher, the school, and the home environment, may vary in lockstep with the peer group, making it difficult to isolate the influence of any given element [11].

Finally, Stuart Hall's reception theory [9] indeed is a value guide to identifying the affective, cognitive, and behavioral skills affecting the spelling performance of learners and the school in general. Stuart Hall's theory is to help the learners and teachers in media. Through media and the encoding and decoding theory, the learners are able to receive and send messages through media like texting and sending messages easily.

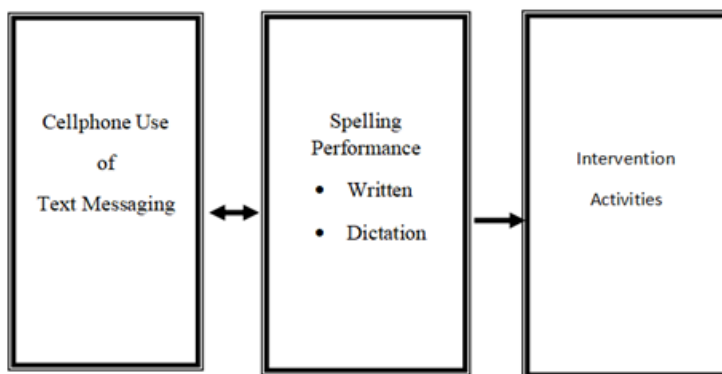


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1 shows the cellphone use of text messaging of the learners as the independent variable, while the dependent variables are the spelling performance of learners, such as written and dictation. Eventually, the results or findings from this endeavor were expected to provide valuable information useful for the enhancement of the spelling performance of Isabel District, Isabel Leyte.

This study aimed to explore the relationship of text messaging as instruction support on the spelling performance of learners in selected elementary schools of Isabel II District, Isabel, Leyte. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the extent of cellphone used on text messaging of the learners?
- 2) What is the spelling performances of the learners?

- 3) Is there a significant relationship between the extent of cellphone used on text messaging and spelling performance of the learners?
- 4) Are the teachers aware of the effects of text messaging as an instruction support?
- 5) On the basis of the findings of the study, what intervention activities can be developed in the conduct of spelling tests?

2. Methodology

The main purpose of this study was to explore the effect of text messaging as instruction on the spelling performance of learners, and it was conducted during the school year 2020-2021. This study utilized the descriptive method of research design. The participants were the selected elementary schools of Isabel District, Isabel, Leyte and the survey was limited due to many restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was conducted through a written test and dictation. The written spelling test using a pen and paper test for 10-item scramble words with meaning, 10 seconds each number to answer the questions in order that the learners can easily arrange the words to identify the spelling. The chosen participants were the grade four pupils of all selected elementary schools, with a total of 65. Each participant was required to bring their own pen and paper as a way of preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The study used the descriptive method of research to explore the prevailing condition or situations for the purpose of description and interpretation as regards the extent of text messaging of the learners, the performance of the learners in spelling, as well as the relationship between the extent of text messaging and the performance of the learners in spelling tests. The word survey signifies the gathering of data regarding the present conditions.

In this study, the independent variables are specifically the cellphone use of text messaging, spelling performance of written and dictation. The dependent variables in the study were the intervention of activities for the enhancement of the spelling performance of the three selected schools of Libertad Elementary School, Mahayag Elementary School, and Matlang Elementary School of Isabel District II, Isabel, Leyte.

The participants of this study were the Grade Four pupils from 3 selected elementary schools in Isabel District, Isabel, Leyte. There were 10 participants from each respondent school who were enrolled during the school year 2019-2020. The 10 learners were selected through the use of purposive sampling since only those learners with cell phones were selected. To substantiate the findings of the study, the teachers handling English subjects were interviewed. An interview schedule was formulated.

The questionnaire was constructed using the learners spelling tests in writing and dictation using a cell phone to get the data on the profile of the research respondents. Another set of questionnaires of teachers interviewed of 3 selected elementary schools on spelling skills of Isabel II District. The test was given through dictation, and they were given specific time to answer the test items using paper or pencil. The learners are given time to answer the 10-item written spelling test, which was also given by the teacher and answered by the learners using their pen and paper.

The first set of questionnaires basically required the learners to indicate name, gender, age, and grade in school. The learners asked for having their own cell phone. How old were they when they got their own cell phone, how often they text a message, how long they have been texting, whom they text most,

have they used an abbreviation in texting, and what are some reasons you abbreviate words in texting a message and have texting jejemon in the message.

The second set of questionnaires primarily required the learners to specify the performance on spelling skill in written and dictation tests of the three selected schools of Libertad Elementary School, Mahayag Elementary School, and Matlang Elementary School of Isabel II District, Isabel, Leyte.

The last set of questionnaires was the teachers interviewed. The personal data of the teachers, age, sex, name of school, address, appointment, designation, length of service, and the assignment of the teachers. The data on the effects of text messaging on the spelling skills of grade four learners. Like how many of the learners have cell phones, what was the policy using the cell phone by the learners, how frequent the learners use their cell phone, learners allowed to use cell phones in the classroom, observation on the spelling skills of the learners, are learners misspelled due to the effect of texts. The validation of the unstructured interview was done by two pupils and two teachers via Messenger.

A letter was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent of Leyte and Schools District Supervisors of Isabel District II in order to seek approval to conduct the study. After the approval of the request was granted, the researcher had coordinated with the principal and class advisers of the respondent schools regarding the conduct of the performance test in spelling given to the participants as well as the schedule of interviews for the English teachers. The researcher personally asked the parent's consent and gave proper instruction protocol with alcohol and wearing a face mask and face shield before conducting a spelling test. There are 20 spelling test items that were administered to the learners through dictation, and the learners were going to answer the correct spelling using their pen and paper test. The learners were going to write the correct spelling of the words in their answer sheet in order to determine their performance in spelling. The learners are required to wear their face mask and face shield during the test. The learner was given a 10-item test, both the written and dictation tests. After each test was administered, the papers were collected, recorded, computed, analyzed, and interpreted. To substantiate the findings of the study, the English teachers from each respondent school were scheduled for an interview since they are knowledgeable on the topic spelling.

The data gathered from the different participants were tabulated, recorded, analyzed, and interpreted. Appropriate statistical procedures and formulas were used to come up with the reliable interpretation, findings, and conclusion.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Extent of Cellphone Used on Text Messaging of the Learners

Table 1 presents the extent of cellphone use on text messaging of the learners. The table shows that the highest in sending messages were "10 times a day" (30, 46.2%), followed by "once a day," "once a week," "never" (9, 13.8%), and lastly "3-4 times a week" (8, 12.3%).

It further indicates that the results showed that most of the learners send text messages 10 times a day, and few of the learners send text messages 3-4 times a week. It suggested that the learners used the cellphone as a tool to communicate with their classmates or teacher regarding their assignment or activities; due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions such as lockdowns and health protocols, they cannot ask their teachers and classmates personally. This means that all the learners at the time of the study were within their specified value, most using their cellphone as their communication during the

pandemic. In addition, their assignment through communication in sending text messages was timely in their circumstances.

Table 1. Extent of Cellphone Use on Text Messaging of the Learners

Extent of Cellphone Used	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Once a day	9	13.8 %
10 times a day	30	46.2 %
Once a week	9	13.8 %
3-4 times a week	8	12.3 %
Never	9	13.8 %
Total	65	100 %

3.2 Spelling Performance of the Learners

Table 2 and Table 3 present the spelling performance of the learners. It shows the dictation and written test, respectively.

3.2.1 Dictation test

Table 2. Dictation Test

Spelling Skills of the Learners	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Excellent	2	3.1 %
Very Good	24	36.9 %
Good	31	47.7 %
Fair	8	12.3 %
Not at all	0	0 %
Total	65	100 %

Table 2 reveals the dictation test of the learners. It shows that the learners spelling skills with the highest frequency were “Good,” with the frequency and percentage of (31, 47.7%), followed by “Very Good” (24, 36.9%), then “Fair” (8, 12.3%) and “Excellent” (2, 3.1%), respectively.

It indicates that the learners of spelling skills in dictation were good considering that most of the participants got a good rating. It is confirmed with the interview with the learners that using a cellphone as a support for instruction really helps the spelling skills of the learners because of the built-in spelling and grammar. This finding implied that those learners were preferred to the dictation test. This study of Westwood [12] teaching spelling was exploring commonsense strategies and best practices that equipped teachers with the vital knowledge and skills needed to help their learners become proficient writers and spellers.

3.2.2 Written test

Table 3 reveals the written test of the learners. It shows that the learners spelling skills with the highest frequency were “Good,” with the frequency and percentage of (27, 41.5 %), followed by “Very Good” (19, 12.3%), then “Excellent” (9, 13.8%), followed by “Fair” (8, 12.3%) and “Not at all” (2, 3.1%), respectively.

Table 3. Written Test

Spelling Skills of the Learners	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Excellent	9	13.8 %
Very Good	19	12.3 %
Good	27	41.5 %
Fair	8	12.3 %
Not at all	2	3.1 %
Total	65	100 %

It specifies that the learners spelling skills in the written test were also good; it shows consistency of the results with their dictation test. It is confirmed that using a cellphone as a support for instruction can be used as a tool to enhance their spelling skills due to the built-in features of grammar and spelling checker. The findings of this study are confirmed with the findings of Massengill-Shaw *et al.* [13] that college students with greater reading and spelling abilities use text messaging more frequently, and those with poorer literacy skills may be using text messaging less frequently.

3.3 Significant Relationship between the extent of text messaging and spelling performance of the learners

Table 4 presents the significant relationship between the extent of cellphone use on text messaging and the spelling skills performance of the learners.

Table 4. Results

Factor	Correlation	
	r-value	Interpretation
Spelling Test Scores using a Cellphone vs Spelling Skills of Learners	0.930	High significant relationship

Note: High significant relationship at 1% level, if $r > 0.317$ or < -0.317 .

The results show a highly significant relationship between the extent of cellphone use for text messaging and the spelling performance of the learners. It is confirmed with the study of Drouin and Davies [14] that the frequency of use of texts on social network services (SNSs) and in emails to professors had significant relationships with measures of literacy.

Further, the majority of the interviewees answered that it will affect the study of the learners' considering that it has also built-in games and they will tempt to use it, and some of them will misspell the word in texting due to laziness to spell the whole word. However, some of the teachers also contradict the views mentioned, according to them, using a cellphone in texting can be used as a tool to enhance the spelling skills of the learners due to the built-in features of grammar and spelling.

The views and opinions of the interviewees were confirmed in the findings of the study of Drouin and Davies [14] that using a cellphone for texting does not eventually affect the spelling performance of the learners but likewise enhances their spelling skills, and therefore using a cellphone in texting can be used as support for instruction. Further, it is recommended to give full guidance on the proper usage of a cellphone to appropriately correct the learners' spelling skills.

4. Conclusion

Text messaging as an instructional support, can definitely affect to the learners' spelling performance by presenting regularly, immediate, and informal way of practice. The conciseness and colloquial nature of text messaging can motivate learners to captured more frequently with spelling task, in terms of conversational message like, to strengthen the word recognition, and can accurate spelling. Regardless, how this means of communication may also introduced challenges to the learners', in such as showing to non-formal languages or abbreviations in terms of spelling skills, which could affect their formal spelling performance. Hence, its structured of productiveness may be dependent on structured guidance and the stability between formal and informal way in terms of texting that can be used within in their learning activities.

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