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Social Media Exposure and Usage of Cyber Slang: Bases in Examining the Academic Writing Conventions of the Students

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Abstract

The study established the relation of social media exposure and cyber slang usage towards the academic writing conventions of the Grade ten students of Kumalarang National High School, Kumalarang Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines. The study has been conducted in the second semester of the school year 2020-2021 and has utilized the descriptive statistics such as percentage, weighted mean as a measure of average, and standard deviation as a measure of variability of numerical observations in order to determine the levels of the students' exposure to social media, cyber slang, and academic writing conventions. Fifty (50) respondents coming from the aforementioned grade have been distributed with online survey questionnaires based on the concept of several references related to this study. The study found that the Grade 10 students of Kumalarang National High School held the high level of exposure in social media, and usage of cyber slang in social media; and their overall writing convention has a descriptive equivalent of average. The results of the study justified the following; there is no significant relationship between students' social media exposure and cyber slang usage, there is no significant relationship between exposure to social media and students' academic writing conventions, and there is no significant relationship between cyber slang usage and students' academic writing

conventions. The result of the study also signified that even if the students are exposed to social media, yet their use of cyber slang is still controlled. The more they used cyber slang in social media, their academic writing conventions will also increase. Further, the results of the study implied that social media exposure contributes a lot to students' academic writing conventions. Besides it supplied notable entertainment, this can also be a communication channel at their most convenient time, pace and location that teachers cannot afford to overlook. The possibilities to acquire learning with variety of data in social media has reinforced and influenced students' academic writing conventions. Even if cyber slang is already part of human's lives in the modern century, yet this will academically challenge the students to decide as to what form of writing they are going to use in order to fit in the requirements both in school and in the community. With this, students must know how to set limit as to when and when not to use them. By knowing this fact, they may widen their competency in the field of writing without sacrificing the English language. This will also allow them to establish their voice in writing.

Keywords: social media, cyber slang, academic writing conventions

Introduction

Long before the language was created as a tool for communication, hand signs, and body language were served as a medium for communication. The primary function of language is to transfer messages from one to another. English is one of the most extensively used languages throughout the world. Due to its restrictions, most of the messages human beings wanted to express were extraordinarily simple and straightforward. But everything was twisted with the emergence of languages (Yi Kay, 2014).

In the beginning, simple online communication tools like email and MSN (from Microsoft) was developed to ease worldwide communication. Within countless years, these communication tools had been innovated and had advanced into more complex platform with hundreds of distinctive features. The freshly created systems had been labeled such as social web, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are currently the most outstanding social networking internet sites in the

world.

The splendid growth of social networks was once accompanied with the aid of a sequence of new jargons known as cyber slang. Cyber slang is a term used to describe shortcuts, choice words, or even the number of characters an author can use at a time; thus, learners are becoming more creative to get the most out of their confined space. Online phrases can be marked by way of colloquial and nonstandard spellings of phonetic qualities (e.g. “gotta” is alternatively used instead of ‘have to’). Among the commented features of online writing are the use of abbreviations that have made their brand into famous speech like BFF (best friend forever) and LOL (laugh out loud) (Tomaszewski, 2011).

With the fast tempo of modification, people are adopting more words quicker than ever before. Cyber slang turns into an integral part in human’s day by day routine. Basically it has literally taken the world to a complete new type of verbal exchange possibilities (Hord, 2006). To be specific, students are the first group to be affected by this mechanism specifically to those who have wide access on the internet.

Since nearly all students enrolled nowadays are those in the millennial era who interact normally with online sources (Lenhart et al. 2007). Social media has brought on a new sort of communication which resulted to range of Englishes. For millenials, the whole thing goes at brilliant speed. As a result, they do no longer continually follow or obey standard English grammar when they communicate. Most of the phrases they apply in their writing scheme are no longer even documented in Standard English Dictionary or recognized via English language academies (Lorenzen, 2007).

The developing transformation in technology has made the world issue about efficiency and effectiveness. Students’ publicity in social media concerns have been raised about its impact on their literacy skills. The modern-day conversational writings produced by the technologies have led to the emergence of new spellings and casual written texts (Tabuashvili, 2012).

In this connection, conversation becomes problematic by way of the fact

that some abbreviations can be understood differently by a reader. The extended use of online language has basically ruined the formal English language.

They consider that the text messaging type in social media is unfavorable to the schooling of our millennial technology (Allen & Murphy, 2006). Millennials who are exposed to this language to any digital verbal exchange gadget consumes the user like a virus that can't be cured (Thurlow, 2003).

The high-volume utilization and exposure of social media structure amongst the students is an obvious and popular subject among the faculty of Kumalarang National High School, Philippines. The significant idea revolves on the difficulty of the students who spend a good deal of time on non-academic things related to social media. In fact in today's generation, it can simply be a frequent sight to see students chatting in sensitive and distinctly organized locations like church and lecture venues. Some are even carried away that even as they are on foot alongside the streets, they still continue to chat.

Nonetheless this serious issue has also introduced an influence in the English writing competence among the students. This has come to be a source of fear to many who trust that social media exposure can threaten the purity of the English language. Hence, it should be mentioned that social media incorporates cyber slang most of the time for the duration of written language communication. It is plain that publicity can right now develop a language and that language can be an end result of social interaction. This emerging phenomenon has caught the attention of the researcher to take into account on the effects of social media publicity and utilization of cyber slang towards the academic writing conventions of the students especially on their grammar, spelling, punctuations, and abbreviations.

Review of Related Literature

Writing is an integral skill. Out of the four macro-skills in English, writing is viewed the most elaborate and challenging venture a learner encounters and one that few human beings can be thoroughly mastered (Rich, 1990). Beyond the university, robust writing abilities are sought after in the job market regardless of

the profession. The academic success is based upon the ability to actually talk one's ideas through writing. However, teachers and researchers have noted that English language learners face many challenges in the modern world which is frequently guided with the aid of technological advancement. With this, social media has made writing greater famous using brief syntax writings and acronyms. In as much as students are exposed to social media, unintentionally they have a tendency to follow and apply this even to their formal writing in the academe.

1.1 Level of Exposure in Social Media

The degree of social media exposure performs a large position in the learners' language production. Social media is described as a crew of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the advent and change of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

On the other hand, social media has modified the data world with regard to sharing, speed, storage and retrieval of information in whatever way regardless of the person's location. Through the Internet, a number of web technologies emerged, and one technology that is making waves with regard to records sharing and verbal exchange are the social networks. The evolution of social media has cut throughout all sides of society with its high quality and terrible effects (Aghazamani, 2010). The explosion of social media has totally modified the way people talk to each other whether by way of laptop computer, develop cellular devices, Wi-Fi, or stronger 4G wireless networks (Kelly, 2016). Among the many social media systems that are used in communication, Facebook is the most widely used amongst many others as it allows users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family, and colleagues. The ease and accessibility of this new technology make it extremely possible to become dependent or even addicted to them. The use of social media also turns into a higher priority amongst them. Thus, it is undeniable that the frequency of usage among the students in social media is enormously increasing, and are even turning into more alarming. For instance, in the study of Bowman, et al. (2007), it was pointed out that students who instantly messaged while studying passages study slower and scored lower on comprehension

checks than students who immediately messaged before analyzing or those who did not immediate message at all. The research indicates that social media use by teenagers and young adults is time-honored and can affect their movements and conduct which has resulted to poor educational performance.

Although there are many minds who would possibly be quick to blame the poor teaching performance of the teachers. Crystal (2009), claimed that these days' students are so engrossed in the social media that they are almost 24 hours online. Even in classrooms and lecture theatres, it has been observed that some students are always busy pinging, 2going or Facebooking, while lectures are on. Times that ought to be channeled closer to learning, academic look up and innovating have been crushed by the passion of getting collectively with new one through online, and most instances busy discussing trivial issues. Even though most social networking websites has been recognized as an essential aid resource for schooling today, but some studies suggests that students use social networking websites such as Facebook for fun, to kill time, to meet current friends or to make new ones (Ellison, et. al., 2007).

Thus, Internet has slowly changed from something people want, to something people need. According to Crystal (2007) that there were plenty of teenagers and even adults who have issues with writing, reading and spelling despite their intelligence. The length and quantity of time spent on the aforesaid has been pointed out as one of the reason that makes a contribution to the issue at hand. Also, the present day accelerated lifestyle; parents have interestingly had less sufficient time to devote to their children or with their classmates. This may be the reason why the teenagers commonly come home from school and go directly to their personal computers to chat with friends.

2.1 Level of Usage of Cyber Slang

The level of usage of cyber slang refers to the students' degree of application and use of cyber slang in social media. Undeniably, the degree of usage of cyber slang among them is getting greater and higher from time to time. Cyber slang or web slang is a type of language which people most typically use on internet. There

are more than a few kinds of internet slang which includes letter homophones (u r gd) punctuation (!?), capitalization (STOP!), onomatopoeic (hahaha) and emoticons (=).

Social media websites like Twitter that impose a character limit restrict pressured users to condense their ideas. For many, these outcomes in immoderate use of cyber slang. This persona of shorthand includes a total new speech of abbreviations. The sweeping prose of earlier contemporaries is gift way to a new way of writing that is extra concise, leaping right to the point (Chopra, 2013).

Bunce (2010) claimed that social media interaction used to be less fantastic for language learning than face-to-face oral interaction as slow typing can drastically avert language production, negotiation, collaboration... Chat conversations exhibit aspects of both written and spoken language. In a further discussion, Crystal (2006) pointed that chat happens in the written medium (typing phrases on a keyboard and analyzing phrases on a screen), but like spoken language, in particular unplanned language, typically consists of shorter, incomplete, grammatically simple, and often incorrect (grammar and typographical errors) sentences. Though in an actual sense, grammar maneuvers essential importance in writing effectively.

In line with this, Boyd (2007) warned these students today who are not mirroring those of students in the twentieth century are at a greater hazard for being ineffective and inadequate members of excessive society. Professors of colleges and authority figures within the career world are seeing a sharp fall in individuals' committal to composition abilities. The normal use of the English language is either being forgotten, or absolutely no longer being taken into consideration.

On the grounds of this troubling issue, teachers worldwide are dealing with troublesome piece of writing issues as technological tolls come into play. Students are altering the nature of the English language by using and taking some shortcuts. An incomplete sentence structure in their communications online are visibly seen among the users, and most of the time they are relying on science to restore all their writing errors. They take advantage of the spell-check and grammar-check options to ensure that their work is free of spelling, grammatical, and/ or sentence structure

errors. Although these options economize students' time and energy, they lower students' intellectual strength and limit persistence. Technology has become a key element in students' lives, and due to the fact, they can't effectually detach casual writing from formal writing.

Learner in English language face many challenges when studying to write in a second language beyond learning grammatical structures and collecting intellectual lexicon. Competent writers should have willpower and hard work. The competencies can be mastered if the students are ready to work. Writing competencies can be developed for a long length of time. It is not simply in a wink of an eye you can obtain the talent of a desirable writer however you must have a good basis in your grammar rules and structures. The process may take a long time before you may be able to acquire it. Amateur writer must have to endure first the hardship before they can be successful. This further suggests that students need have to pay much attention in utilizing many aspects which may influence them in acquiring effective writing skills.

3.1 Students' Academic Writing Conventions

Writing is a skill older than civilization. If this had not been invented, human may want to no longer have acknowledged how civilization had begun and prospered (Lenhart, 2010). Likewise, students are predicted to be proficient in their writing piece of written material compositions no longer just to express what they wanted to say but to compete in a notably competitive global economy where writing competence is rather required and needed.

Writing conventions refers to the potential of the students in a writing composition. Competent writer comes from simple challenging work, from determination, sweat, and head-on battle. Nevertheless, there is no one-size-fits-all of writing competence as Bayucan (2015) regarded at it. The talent can be mastered if students are geared up to work. Writing competence will be developed over a long length of time, which neither starts nor ends at the university. This potential that there is no specific time but whatever experiences gained while in schooling advance students writing competence at the professional level. The knowledge of

the convention of punctuation mark, spelling, grammar, and mode is beneficial to writers however will not assure writing competence. Since there is so a lot of what desirable writers do routinely and subconsciously, so many things stay to be discovered.

Thus, to grow to be a desirable writer takes a lot of time and exercise and all the hassles that are coupled with it. Novice writers, per se, ought to have to pass the bridge over bother water. This ability is undeniably hard work no longer just for beginners. Other issues that hinder students to write effectively are their terrible history of grammar and syntax, limited mental lexicon, lack of arranges mental technique and manner. This theme is in consonance with what Veit, Gould, and Clifford (1994) stressed that writing is a complex process, involving dozens of separate acquisition from the fundamentals of handwriting and spelling to the subtler shade of tone and organization.

More so, students analyze to write well when they understand the form of piece of composition expected on them, internalize the standards that sketch suitable writing, experience guided practice in which their writing is shaped through the process of revision and editing thus internalizing the efficient and effective composing process, learn to compose with strong awareness of disciplinary conventions and the need, knowledge and attitudes of their audiences and end up steadily higher at self-assessment.

Now, to come to this view, the reality that cyber has come into play, the writer and student must nevertheless use the preferred in order to shape and correct comprehensible paragraph or text. In this view, Mohabir (2013) expressed that writing cannot be simply a pen and paper. Teachers have to charge their students' writing in accordance to the format, content, sentence, and structure, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling.

Statement of the Problem

This study established students' exposure to social media and their usage of cyber slang towards the writing conventions of the Grade-10 students of Kumalarang National High School, Philippines in the School Year 2020-2021.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of students' exposure in social media?
2. What is the level of students' usage of cyber slang in social media?
3. What is the level of students' academic writing conventions in terms of spelling, abbreviation, punctuation, and grammar?
4. Is there a significant relationship between students' social media exposure and cyber slang usage in social media?
5. Is there a significant relationship between social media exposure and students' academic writing conventions?
6. Is there a significant relationship between cyber slang usage in social media and students' academic writing conventions?
7. What is the implication on the exposure of social media and the use of cyber slang in social media to students' academic writing conventions?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested using 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between students' social media exposure and cyber slang usage in social media.
2. There is no significant relationship between students' social media exposure and students' academic writing conventions.
3. There is no significant relationship between cyber slang usage in social media and students' academic writing conventions.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study determined how students' exposure to social media and their usage of cyber slang affect on their writing conventions in English specifically their spelling, abbreviation, punctuation, and grammar.

The study was conducted at Kumalarang National High School, Kumalarang Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines. The sample consisted of 50 Grade 10 students regardless of their gender, and socioeconomic background. The sample was chosen via purposive sampling method. The researcher ensured that the respondents are exposed in the social media. In addition, the researcher also assured that the respondents are currently enrolled in the aforementioned school in Academic Year: 2020-2021.

Methods

A quantitative research approach, specifically descriptive-correlational research, was used in this study. The study employed an online self-made online survey questionnaire from the concepts of notable published works and studies. The questionnaires were validated by experts and underwent pilot testing to ensure its trustworthiness and aptness. The self-made questionnaires were then sent out via email and completed by the respondents. The instruments revealed the exposure of the students in social media and have determined its impact towards their academic writing conventions.

Research Design

This descriptive quantitative research study utilized a survey method to examine the students' exposure in social media, their usage of cyber slang, and academic writing conventions. This study used a non-experimental survey method with the goal of characterizing data from a large sample to the total population. According to Creswell (2013), survey methods have certain benefits: (a) they are fairly affordable; (b) information gathering return is rapid; (c) they are functional testing of a huge population; and (d) as a consequence, large samples are feasible, making the information statistically meaningful even though investigating various factors.

A correlational research design was employed in addition to surveys. A correlational study is a quantitative scientific method in which two or more quantitative variables of the same sample of respondents are being used to establish if there might be a relationship between the variables and the extent of that

correlation (Mitchell & Jolley, 2012).

Population Design

A population, according to Creswell (2012), is a group of people with common similar characteristics. As a consequence, the respondents in this study are Grade 10 students of KNHS, where the researcher is currently teaching. As it is more accessible to the researcher, this population will be chosen. The target respondents utilized in this study has been taken from the four (4) sections on the above mentioned school via purposive sampling method.

Sampling Design

The researcher used the Simple Random Sampling in identifying the number of respondents utilized in the study. Simple random sampling is a sampling technique where every item in the population has an even chance and likelihood of being selected in the sample. Here the selection of items completely depends on chance or by probability and therefore this sampling technique is also sometimes known as a method of chances.

By adopting this technique, fifty students were selected to participate in this study from the general population of 207 via the lottery method in fish bowl strategy.

All the names of the Grade 10 students were written on a sheet of paper and the researchers picked out 50. Those names that were picked out were considered as respondents of the study. Afterwards, online survey questionnaires were sent to the target respondents via email.

Procedures

In observance to the proper technique in conducting the study, the researcher designed the steps as outlined in this section. First, the researcher secured a permit from the School-Principal of KNHS as the head of the institution to conduct the study.

The researcher understood the purpose of the study in such a way that he relied on his judgment to classify qualified respondents in a particular profile. The

various explanations why the researcher has chosen the 50 Grade 10 students are as follows: the first reason was the ease of access for the researcher to collect data due to the COVID 19 situation, which restricted the researcher’s ability to gather data.

The second reason, they are in their last level in their Junior High School years, which means that they need more attention as they are soon to be enrolled in Senior High School program which will require them to demonstrate their skills in writing.

Results and Discussion

This section shows the analysis and interpretation of the gathered data which are presented in descriptive and tabular form. The results and discussions answer the statement of the problem presented in the previous section.

Table 1. Level of students’ exposure in social media

	Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	I do Facebook to kill the time and fight boredom.	3.02	0.80	High
2.	I don’t usually notice the time when I use social media.	3.00	0.73	High
3.	I am more entertained in social media than listening to music, watching videos, and playing games.	3.06	0.77	High
4.	I use social media to create group conversations in order to organize events with immediate friends and enjoy getting back with them	3.06	0.82	High
5.	I keep track on my mobile devices to update and check the profiles of my friends.	3.18	0.66	High
6.	I feel an urge to post new statuses, videos and pictures.	3.04	0.75	High
7.	I use social media to watch news, advertisements and other announcements.	3.22	0.76	High
8.	I use social media to get support from my friends especially during tough times.	3.04	0.78	High

9.	I use social media to be liked by friends and peers.	3.00	0.81	High
10.	I use social media in browsing my wall to see and search for newest friends and followers.	3.18	0.66	High
11.	I use social media because I don't want to be left out.	3.12	0.75	High
12.	I use social media for crowd sourcing.	3.08	0.75	High
13.	I use social media to collaborate with peers on assignments.	3.08	0.75	High
14.	I access social media to watch the stream of updates from friends and of the people.	3.02	0.71	High
15.	I use social media to find old friends and to rekindle old friendships than making new.	3.14	0.83	High
	Over-all Mean	3.08	0.75	High

Hypothetical Mean Range: 1.00 - 1.75 – *Very Low* 2.51 - 3.25 – *High*

1.76 - 2.50 – *Low* 3.26 - 4.00 – *Very High*

The table presented students' exposure to social media was at high levels with the overall mean of 3.08. This supported the fact that the students are highly exposed to social media despite that they just live in rural area. It is undeniable that most of the students who live in this area come from low income family where most of the parents cannot afford to provide their luxury and needs like for instance gadget. But on the other hand, it must be noted that students' exposure in social media were just in its high level. The result may be incomparable to those of the students in urban areas whose level of exposure in social media might have reached to its highest level for majority of them have been coming from high income families who could be able to sustain their needs (Hasan, et al., 2007).

Furthermore, the emergence of social media has created opportunities among them to establish connections not only on campus but with friends outside the school. Their major purpose in using the social media platforms are social interaction, passing time, entertainment, companionship and communication motives. Their usage on social media is getting higher especially that they can easily

access their accounts on their mobile phones. The aforementioned issue has actually received considerable attention from researchers and the general public alike due to the increasing number of users that is mainly young adults and students (Idubor, 2015).

Level of Usage of Cyber Slang

Table 2. Level of students’ usage of cyber slang

	Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	I switch letters to number representations like “4” instead of “for”.	2.92	0.40	High
2.	I replace words with stickers or emojis to correlate with my feelings.	3.00	0.35	High
3.	I use asterisk to minimize vulgarity of the word like “She is like an idio*” instead of “She is like an idiot.”	3.14	0.45	High
4.	I tend to use homophones as “u r gud’ instead of “you are good.”	3.12	0.33	High
5.	I use “...” to show feelings and thoughts that I can’t express.	3.04	0.49	High
6.	I use series of punctuations like “!!!!” in communicating in social media.	3.02	0.47	High
7.	I capitalize words to express a more forceful meaning such as “STOP” instead of “stop.”	2.98	0.59	High
8.	I use series of different punctuations “?+ -=*” to express confusion.	3.10	0.54	High
9.	I use emoticons to make conversations lively.	3.04	0.53	High
10.	I use acronyms like “LOL” instead of “laughing out loud” or “TTYL” for “Talk to you later.”	2.96	0.49	High
11.	I use combination of numbers and letters like “l8r” instead of later; “b4” instead of “before.”	3.04	0.45	High
12.	I delete vowels in words like “gvn” instead of given; “whn” instead of when.	3.12	0.63	High

13.	I shorten my sentence to speed up my conversation like “I will Facebook her” instead of “I will send her a message in her Facebook.”	3.12	0.39	High
14.	I use spoken-like spelling to save time such as “I dunno” instead of “I don’t know.”	3.04	0.53	High
15.	I am not particular with proper capitalization and punctuation marks like “johns book” instead of “John’s book.”	3.02	0.55	High
Over-all Mean		3.04	0.49	High

Hypothetical Mean Range: 1.00 - 1.75 – Very Low 2.51 - 3.25 – High

1.76 - 2.50 – Low 3.26 - 4.00 – Very High

The table demonstrated that students’ usage of cyber slang was at high level with the overall mean of 3.04. The result clearly manifested that it is undeniable that cyber slang is becoming extra famous among the millennial generations. In fact, Gibbons (2003), claimed that the developing quantity of students in modern times whose essential terminology is not English has posed a big task among educators in addressing their wishes in the verbal exchange process. Students embody shortened word as section of an ordinary fashion using awful grammar, punctuation and spelling – all for the sake of comfort and speed. Cyber slang turns into greater famous in an online communication, and students are now not exempted to this issue. Students are altering the nature of the English language via taking some shortcuts, and an incomplete sentence structure in their communications online, and these are visibly seen among them.

Yet there are studies justified that who have even been accusing that millenials are destroying their abilities to use essential mechanics of writing such as grammar, syntax, punctuation, and capitalization. Humphry (2007) defended on the reasons why people no longer use the appropriate language in communication instead they resort to the use of abbreviations when communicating – all for the sake of convenience and speed that we are not capable to defend it. In the very first place cyber slang cannot cause bad spelling according to him because people must know how to spell before the online communication. Instead, it improves peoples’ literacy

because it provides people with the opportunity to engage in the language through reading and writing.

Level of Students' Academic Writing Conventions

Table 3. Level of students' academic writing conventions

Indicators		Mean	SD	MPS	Descriptive Equivalent
1.	Spelling	2.10	1.28	42%	Average
2.	Abbreviation	1.28	0.90	26%	Low
3.	Punctuation	3.14	1.23	63%	Average
4.	Grammar	1.92	1.14	38%	Average
Overall Writing Conventions		8.44	2.34	42%	Average

Scale: 96 – 100% = Mastered; 86 – 95% = Closely Approximating Mastery; 66 – 85% = Moving Towards Mastery; 35 – 65% = Average; 15 – 34% = Low; 5 – 14% = Very Low; 0 – 14% = Absolutely No Mastery

The data has shown that the students' academic writing conventions were at its average level as seen in its overall mean of 8.44. This level might have been achieved because students who live in rural areas are less expose to the use of technologies and facilities. Consequently, their learning process will be less effective also for they will have less exposure to educational issues about the current event and information compared to those who have access to such resources. Hence, technology provides bulk of information and resources which will help them develop their potentials (Hasan, et. al., 2007).

In another sense, Crystal (2007) believed that cyber slang after all is not humiliating and destroying the language, but actually people who send messages and frequently use emoticons, initialisms and other abbreviations, generally know how to spell perfectly well. Although many people enjoy breaking linguistic rules, they also know that they need to be understood by the reader or receiver of the message. If a person abbreviated his message, he has already understood the way it sounds and the way letter combine.

Testing the Hypotheses

H_{01} . The null hypothesis declaring that there is no significant relationship between

students’ social media exposure and cyber slang usage was tested using the Pearson coefficient of correlation. The results in Table 4 showed that there is no correlation between students’ social media exposure and cyber slang usage (Pearson “r” = .030) which means that even if the students are highly exposed to social media, their use of the cyber slang in social media is still not extremely rampant. Consequently, no significant relationship was established between the two variables (p-value > .05). Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted (See Table 4).

Test of Significant Relationship between Social Media Exposure and Cyber Slang Usage

Table 4. Test of significant relationship between social media exposure and cyber slang usage

Variables	Pearson “r”	Interpre- tation	p-value	Interpretation
Students’ Social Media Exposure and Cyber Slang Usage	.030	No Linear Relationship	.835	No Significant Relationship

- Scale: $0 - \pm 0.29$ = *No Linear Relationship*
- $\pm 0.30 - \pm 0.49$ = *Weak Linear Relationship*
- $\pm 0.50 - \pm 0.69$ = *Moderate Linear Relationship*
- $\pm 0.70 - \pm 0.99$ = *Strong Linear Relationship*
- ± 1 = *Perfect Linear Relationship*

The table displayed that there is no relationship between students’ exposure in social media and usage of cyber slang in social media. The fact that in our fast-paced society, almost nearly every person has been using social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. These are most widely used throughout the world. People have been using social media in many reasons. These have been supported with exclusive studies which expose that social media such as Facebook are used to kill time, to meet current buddies or to make new ones (Ellison, et. al., 2007).

Others, to upload some information as nicely as expert data about employment and training (Duggan et al., 2004).

The high level of exposure of students in social media are criticized for their negative impacts on their studies. Many language scholars said that social media language is a disease that affects the mind of the students in using the appropriate language. But there are still some studies disagreed with this and stood against this opinion by claiming and even evidently showing that online communication may actually have a positive effect on the literacy skills of the students. For instance, Crystal (2011) claimed that cyber slang may develop students' spelling and pronunciation skills because using abbreviations makes them think about language phonetically. So when children are playing with these creative representations of language they have to use and practice their understanding of letter sound. This is a skill that is formally taught as phonics in classrooms. It thereby gives students the opportunity to develop their understanding and develop link between sounds of letters and their written spellings.

H₀₂. The null hypothesis declaring that there is no significant relationship between exposure to social media and students' academic writing conventions was tested using the Pearson coefficient of correlation. The results in Table 5 showed that there is a moderate positive correlation between students' exposure to social media and their academic writing conventions (Pearson "r"=579) which implies that social media exposure affects the academic writing conventions of the students. The more the students are exposed to social media, the more this variable influences the academic writing of the students; this correlation between the two variables was deemed to be significant (p-value < .05). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis specifying that there is a significant relationship between exposure to social media and students' writing conventions was accepted.

Test of Significant Relationship between Social Media Exposure and Students' Academic Writing Conventions

Table 5. Test of significant relationship between social media exposure and students' academic writing conventions

in Table 6 showed that there is a moderate positive correlation between students' cyber slang usage and their academic writing conventions (Pearson "r" = .539) which signifies that cyber slang usage in social media significantly affects the academic writing conventions of the students; thus, when students are more exposed to cyber slang, they tend to use them in their academic writing. Further, there is no significant relationship was established between the two variables (p-value < .05). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis specifying that there is a significant relationship between cyber slang usage and students' academic writing conventions was accepted.

Test of Significant Relationship between Cyber Slang Usage and Students' Academic Writing Conventions

Table 6. Test of significant relationship between cyber slang usage and students' academic writing conventions

Variables	Pearson "r"	Interpretation	p-value	Interpretation
Cyber Slang Usage and Students' Writing Competence	.539	Moderate Positive Linear Relationship	.000	With Significant Relationship

<i>Scale:</i>	$0 - \pm 0.29$	=	<i>No Linear Relationship</i>
	$\pm 0.30 - \pm 0.49$	=	<i>Weak Linear Relationship</i>
	$\pm 0.50 - \pm 0.69$	=	<i>Moderate Linear Relationship</i>
	$\pm 0.70 - \pm 0.99$	=	<i>Strong Linear Relationship</i>
	± 1	=	<i>Perfect Linear Relationship</i>

The table revealed the fact that when students are more exposed to cyber slang, they tend to use them in their academic writing conventions. That is why it is illogical to conclude that cyber slang can affect academic writing skills in negative way. Humphry (2007) expressed that cyber slang messages destroys the users' ability to use essential mechanics of writing such as grammar, syntax, punctuation, and capitalization all for the sake of speed which may somehow be beyond our

control. In the very first place cyber slang cannot cause bad spelling because people must know how to spell before the cyber slang; this even improves people's literacy because it provides opportunity to engage in the language through reading and writing.

Linguist also provided evidence by comparing cyber slang to verbal jargon. They state that slang words do not affect English rules and grammar. English grammar has not changed over the years although each generation creates its own jargon. If students learn the foundation of English language in their class, they can distinguish between cyber slang and correct English (Thurlow, 2004).

Apart from the aforementioned, cyber slang can also be of essential to some subcultures like in the Philippines. It can lead to widening the vocabulary capabilities in particular among the students in making a smart alternative whether to use subculture's slang to fit in the conversation or learn proper English without sacrificing it, and thinking about their success along the academic setting.

It will just therefore calls for a serious concern when students could not be able to differentiate between formal usage in English and informal. The danger however, is that those lacking or are average will have the tendency to imitate this language error which eventually makes them worse that they were and ultimately deteriorate the ability of those with a high level of English proficiency. Therefore, the inability of these students to gauge improper, ungrammatical language usage in these mediums, may, in the long run, affect their career in the respective fields. The necessity and the desire of the students to use the type of language in a conversation should not to somehow obstruct them in learning the proper way of using the English language (Crystal, 2007)

Thus, the study implied that in the modern times, students are using social media in communication in their day by day basis for different reasons – entertainment, conversation, sharing and getting information, etc. Along the way, they are also using cyber slang for them to express their feelings and ideas in an online communication. However, this factor becomes optional to them for they can still make a choice whether to use the formal or informal language. It simply means,

whatever the type of language that one is using whether it is formal or informal in an online communication basis has no direct relationship with his exposure in social media. In short, it is not a guarantee that when a student has been already exposed to social media for some time that he is already fond of using cyber slang in his communication.

Further, the study also implied that social media exposure contributes a lot to students' academic writing conventions. Undeniably, aside from social media has supplied notable entertainment, this can also be a communication channel among the students at their most convenient time, pace and location that teachers cannot afford to overlook. The possibilities to acquire learning with variety of data in social media has reinforced and influenced students' academic conventions in writing.

Even if cyber slang is already an integral part of human's lives in the modern century, yet this will still academically challenge the students to decide as to what form of writing they are going to use in order to fit in the requirements both in school and in the society. By knowing this fact, they may widen their competency in the field of writing without sacrificing the English language. This will also allow them to establish their voice in writing.

Conclusions

Students were faced with variety of issues in their academic writing conventions due to the influence of social media brought by the technological advancement. But it must be noted that even if students are highly exposed to social media and in their usage of cyber slang in social media, yet it does not so much affect their formal writing conventions. Although students were not able to achieve their full potential in academic writing, but with their usage of cyber slang, it allows them to be creative in delivering their messages in a shorter way. Besides, social media also allowed them to have writing verbal exchange with one another, aside from they discover ideas upon using it. However, students must still set for limits as to when and when not to use them. And with the proper guidance upon their usage of technology, students will be able to enhance more their ideas and skills needed to face the real world.

Recommendations

Based on the aforementioned conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers are encouraged to be more open-minded and flexible in terms of students' exposure to social media and their usage to cyber slang. They must take this as an opportunity to illustrate the importance of formal communication to be practiced on social media platform so that students may develop and improve their competence in writing. Besides, they must properly guide their students and help them understand the usage of social media sites efficiently.

2. Students are advised to be conscious on the outcomes of their long period of exposure in social media. In the same manner, they must also know and decide when to use the language appropriately in school and in the society. Through this, they will be capable to make a good choice in order to succeed alongside the way without sacrificing their competence in writing.

3. School administrators, teachers, and guidance counselors should lay down, and appropriately orient and guide the students of the suitable utilization of social media and cyber slang. With this, they will be capable to promote holistic development both academic and non-academic extents and stimulate excellence for all students in the school.

4. Researchers may conduct a comparable study using a large range of students to validate the outcomes of this investigation.

5. Tests may be performed on correlating the students' level of exposure in social media and students' writing competence or the degree of students' exposure in cyber slang and students' writing conventions using standardized test.

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