



Impact of using abbreviation and homophone words in social networking amongst Malaysian youth

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The usage of abbreviation and homophone words is worrying since this situation give impacts to the youth when writing in the assignments or even test. This research will identify about the factors that lead youth using abbreviation and homophone words while writing in social networking. Besides, this study also attempts to describe the impacts resulting from the usage of abbreviation and homophone words in social networking. The findings revealed that the factor that contributes to the use of abbreviation and homophone words is simplicity which means that type of words are very simple to use while writing in the social networking. The understanding of the factors and impacts from the use of abbreviation and homophone words in writing will give awareness and conscious to the youth regarding the usage of abbreviation and homophone words as well as to provide clear distinction between the cyber world and reality in the usage of proper writing communication.

Keywords: abbreviation, homophone, social networking, impact

1. INTRODUCTION

Social networking is become very famous nowadays and widely used by people as one of the platform for them to communicate because current technology allow people to use social networking anywhere and anytime as long as they are connected to the internet. Social networking is being used by people from the age of early 10 years old until the people who are 50 years and above (Saleh, Jani, Marzouqi, Khajeh, & Rajan, 2011). However, previous survey showed the most user of social networking resulted to be people from the age of 15 to 25 years old or this group of people being known as youth (Goethem et al., 2012). One of the most popular which is having more than 900 million users' throughout the world is Facebook which has been founded by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 (socialbakers.com, 2013). In Malaysia, user of social networking sites (SNS) already hit 17 million of user until half-year of 2013. The most users of social networking sites (SNS) in Malaysia are the youth which age ranks from 15 until 29 years old (socialbakers.com, 2013).

Youth who are also social networking users, most likely to use abbreviation and homophones in their social networking (Kadir, Idris, & Husain, 2012). Abbreviation in social networking can simply defined as short form of words such as 'bcoz' is use to define because, 'pls' for please, 'esp' for especially and many other words (Mcwilliam, Schepman, & Rodway, 2009). Meanwhile, according to Farina & Lyddy (2011), homophone is known as words that sound similar but sometimes have different meaning and spelling, in example, 'c' is define for see, 'Ur' is a sign for your, '2' is for short form of to, 'eppy bufday' is for word Happy Birthday and etc.

According to Farina & Lyddy (2011), has been reported that from past decades the online communication and text language become a form of youth communication consist of predominantly of non-standard language forms. The non-standard language forms and computer-mediated messaged can be categorized as heavily abbreviated, symbolically rich and occasionally undecipherable sentences.

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) involve in the exchanging messages synchronously or asynchronously by using applications such as e-mail, instant messaging (IM) and social networking. The most concern feature of text message is the combination of standard and non-standard forms of language in one sentence. However, those language used in youth's computer-mediated communication were assigned as "teen-talk", "textism", "netspeak" and "weblishM".

According to Thurlow (2006) analysis regarding the report on text and CMC language, the language has been used in a negative way where youth has been labeled as "generation text". Researcher also stated that SMS become a problem which reflects the stereotype of the writer as the inferior communicator. According to Blair (2004), it stated that the too much dependency on the technology has brought down youth with the deficient communication skills which become a cause of the downgraded youth's language and lowered the standards, too.

However, there is research mentioned about the positive sides of this problem. Based on previous research, most of the usage of text language whether in standard or non-standard form has been used in a creative way that resulted to a communicative function and also showing the skilled of the command language.

Farina & Lyddy (2011) mentioned that textism is higher in English than in some other language. In the same study also stated that teenagers who aged between 12 until 17 years old bring a higher percentage of 34% regarding the usage of abbreviation and textism words in the writing. In this case, those teenagers have been asked to compose a text message with a written scenario given to them.

2. ISSUES ON THE USAGE OF ABBREVIATION AND HOMOPHONE WORDS

Nowadays, social networking is being used by people in the world to communicate and sharing information or knowledge. Mostly, Social Networking is being used by youth who are at the age within 15 to 25 years old (SocialBakers.com, 2013). During the conversation with their friends in social networking sites, they usually like to use abbreviation and homophone words (Kadir, Idris, & Husain, 2012).

Regarding the issue in presenting the meaning of message between friends of their age there may not encounter any problem, but in case when this group of youth having conversation with people which are much older than them and not familiar with these forms of writing, that person may misinterpret the real meaning of the message or at worst that person does not understand at all what these teenagers write in that message. An effective and success communication is when the receiver understands the message send and gets the real meaning

of the message send by the sender (Usun, 2009).

Another problem arise when youth often using abbreviation and homophone words in their social networking communication is their writing and language culture which may lead to poor grammar skills or misspelling errors in their writing (Tsai, Meng, Hung, Chen, & Lu, 2011). Furthermore, increasing number of students using abbreviation and homophone letter in writing their homework or assignment which is this issue affected their performance in their education especially in the writing task of language subject (Price, Ward, & Wolff, 2012; Bloxham, 2010). Thus, using abbreviation and homophone may reduce the original value of that language which is being used by them. Figure 1 shows an example of the usage of abbreviation and homophone words in Social Networking sites (in Malay conversation).



Fig.1. Example on the Usage of Abbreviation and Homophone Words in Social Networking Sites

According to Pew America and Life Project (2013), 89% of social networking sites user are come from youth aged of 18 until 29 years old which are become the largest percentage compared to others.

Furthermore, with the increasing of social networking users also can be causes which lead this problem to occur. Malaysia also no exception involved in the problem mentioned above. The social networking users among Malaysian people also increased day by day. According to Socialbakers.com (2013), the largest users of social networking are come from people aged between 18 to 34 years old which brought almost 64.9% that has social networking accounts.

The increasing number of the social networking users amongst youth will also lead to the increased use of abbreviation and homophone words which has been mentioned before that youth become the highest

percentage that using abbreviation and homophone words in writing whether in texting, messaging, e-mail and also social networking.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research approach

This research has been used Quantitative approach. According to Sukamolson, (2000) quantitative approach defined as manipulation of observations and numerical representation for the purpose of explaining and describing the phenomena that those observations reflect. In addition, this approach is describing the phenomena by collecting all the numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods, in other word named as statistics (Pharm, 2010).

This approach has been applied to identify the factors that lead youth using abbreviation and homophone words while writing in social networking and the impacts amongst the youth resulting from the attitudes.

B. Research process

Table 1 stated the four phases that has been followed in order to complete this research. The phases are feasibility study, data collection, data analysis and documentation.

Table.1. Research Process

Phase	Activities	Method	Deliverables
Phase 1- Feasibility Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss research background Identify research problems Define Research Objectives, Scope, Questions and Significance Literature review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review related articles and journals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research title Problem statement Research questions Research objective Research significance Research Proposal Research Model Research Proposal
Phase 2 – Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct questionnaires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute questionnaires to the assigned respondents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected to be analyzed.
Phase 3 – Data Analyzing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the raw data gathered through questionnaire s/ survey session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using SPSS software to analyze the data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the correlation findings. Descriptive study from the analyze data.
Phase 4 – Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documented all the analyzed data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write the report based on the right format. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Report

D. Research design

Research design is the work plan details which have been prepared in order to complete the research and to ensure the evidence obtained throughout the study will give feedback to the initial question as unambiguously as possible (Hodkins, 2009; Creswell, 2003).

This research followed to use a descriptive survey design. A survey will gather the data and information from a sample of respondents which means the respondents will respond to the series of questions prepared by the researcher (Hodkins, 2009). In this research, the data will be collected through self-administered questionnaires which will be distributed to the respondents by the researcher.

This descriptive survey has been selected because this design provides accurate explanation to portray the characteristics towards the behavior, beliefs, knowledge and opinions of the individual, situation or group. Besides, it also is being chosen because it can help in order to meet the objectives of the study (Hodkins, 2009).

Table 2 represented the research design that consists of research questions, research objectives, and method used and deliverables. This research deploys three research questions together with the research objectives respectively. In order to get the answer of those research questions and objectives, the questionnaires survey has been distributed to the respondents among university students.

Table.2. Research Design

Research Questions	Research Objectives	Methods	Deliverables
What are the factors contributing to the use of abbreviation and homophones words while writing in social networking?	To identify the factors that leads Malaysian youth using abbreviations and homophones while writing in social networking.	Literature Review Questionnaires survey to the respondents	Identification of the factors that lead youth to use abbreviation and homophone words in social networking
What are the possible impacts on the frequent usage of abbreviation and homophones words to the social networking user?	To describe the impact resulting from the usage of abbreviations and homophones words in social networking amongst Malaysian youth.	Literature Review Questionnaires survey to the respondents	Identification of the possible impacts resulting from the attitudes of using abbreviation and homophones word while writing

E. Sampling strategies

This research population consisted of university students. The university students were selected because of some criteria which are the age of university students will be on the age range of youth, most of the university students are social networking sites (SNS) user and the

convenience factor also comes into consideration because the universities are around Selangor area.

The sample of this research is 150 respondents which were selected from two universities. According to Polit & Hungler (1993), convenient sample consider the subjects included in study because respondents should be in the right place and at the right time. The sample included 80 students from Management & Science University (MSU), Shah Alam and another 70 students come from UiTM, Shah Alam. The sample size of 150 students altogether was the total of subjects who were willing to participate in the research and who met the sampling criteria during the data collection phase.

F. Data Collection

1) Primary data

Primary data can be defined as a data that was collected or produced specifically to address the research problem. The primary data will be collected through questionnaire. The respondent for the research are 150 students which 80 of them are from MSU, Shah Alam and another 70 students come from UiTM, Shah Alam.

a) Instrumentation

Questionnaire has been chosen as the data collection instruments in order to completing this research. Questionnaire is being chosen as instrument to obtain data from respondents because the data obtained through questionnaire is similar with the data obtain from interview. However, questionnaires have been discovered to have less depth than doing interview (Gomez, 2010). The questionnaires were written in the in English because the respondents are from university students and come from various race. The questionnaires consist of five section which are demographic, social networking sites user, factors, and impacts. The questions from section social networking sites user onwards is Likert scale questions where two of the questions contain of 1-never, 2-rarely, 3-occasionally, 4-frequently and 5-Very frequently. Meanwhile, other Likert scale questions contain of 1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree as the answer.⁷

b) Participants and procedures

The questionnaires have been distributed personally by the researcher to the respondents which are mentioned as the universities students to be filled by respondents. Permission to distribute the questionnaires has been asked first to the lecturers who is conducted the classes and the students have been invited to participate in the

research. The completion of the whole questionnaires has been estimated around 15 minutes for each respondent.

c) Reliability and validity

Reliability defined as the instrument's consistency degree which the instruments measure the variables that has been assigned to be measured in the study. Besides, reliability also can be determined by minimizing the sources of measurement error such as data collector bias (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). According to Kimberlin & Winterstein (2008), validity refers as the degree to which an instrument measures what is intended to measure. In order to achieve the questionnaire validity, the reliability test was carried out by using Cronbach's alpha where the statistical test will measure the consistency.

2) Secondary data

Secondary data will be obtained through revising existing journals and articles related to the topics and also revising related sources from Internet. This secondary data will be used as additional information in the study of the primary data. It will be divided into offline resources and online resources. The offline resources will be collected from journals. Journals that will be reviewed are based on the following topic; social networking usage, social networking purpose, abbreviation and homophones impact, and youth. Information from books served to give detailed definition of some terms and to provide comparative study in the literature review. Resources from online will be conducted from websites and online library database which provide journals, articles and the current issues.

G. Data Analysis

After all the data were collected, it was reviewed, organized and analyzed. For the data analysis, a software named as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. The raw data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics. The results of the descriptive statistics are consists of the frequency statistics were shown related with the demographic information and the usage of social networking sites and the use of abbreviation and homophone words. Another techniques use in data analysis is correlation coefficient which being used to find the correlation of the factors with the attitudes towards using abbreviation and homophone words in social networking sites.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A. Reliability Analysis

The data collected from 150 respondents that come

from Management and Science University (MSU), Shah Alam and UiTM Shah Alam through survey questions that consisting of 54 questions. Cronbach Alpha is a method to measure the consistency (reliability). This method is commonly used when you have multiple likert scale in survey questionnaires (Allen, 2004). The statistics value shows that Cronbach Alpha is $\alpha=0.75$.

B. Regression analysis

1) Demographic factor analysis

For the demographic factor analysis, R² value shows the amount of variance in the Attitudes that can be explained by the demographics. The R value is 0.358 which indicates the multiple coefficients between all the entered variables (demographics) and Attitudes. In this analysis, the independent variable, demographics can explain 35.8% of the variance in the dependent variable, Attitudes.

For the analysis on Relative Contributions of Demographics (Predictors) that predicting Attitude (Dependent Variable) it shows that Gender and Race are significance where the p-value is 0.008 and 0.024 respectively, which less than 0.05 of significance level. The Coefficient for Gender and Race has negative value of -0.134 and -0.109 respectively, which implies that these factors have a negative relationship with the dependent factor.

2) Factors of abbreviation and homophone analysis

As for the analysis on factors of abbreviation and homophone, the R² value shows the amount of variance in the Attitudes that can be explained by the demographics. The R value which is 0.289 indicates the multiple coefficients between all the entered variables (Factor 1-7) (Refer Table 3) and Attitudes. In this analysis, the independent variable, Factor 1-7 can explain 28.9% of the variance in the dependent variable, Attitudes. Based on Table 3, Factor 5 which is simplicity is significance where the p-value is 0.031 which less than 0.05 of significance level. The Coefficient for Factor 5 has positive value which is 0.073. The value implies that Factor 5 (simplicity) has positive relationship with the dependent factor.

Table 3 Relative Contributions Of Factors (Predictors) Predicting Attitudes (Dependent Variable)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	3.236	.328		9.881	.000
	Factor 1	.034	.044	.063	.766	.445
	Factor 2	-.055	.029	-.155	-1.880	.062
	Factor 3	-.017	.044	-.035	-.390	.697
	Factor 4	-.041	.034	-.126	-1.234	.219

Factor 5	.073	.034	.233	2.182	.031
Factor 6	.048	.035	.113	1.360	.176
Factor 7	-.035	.025	-.122	-1.396	.165

a. Dependent Variable: Attitudes

C. Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire (Impacts)

Table 4: Impacts towards Youth

Impacts	M	±SD
I sometimes facing problem to spell words	2.793	.822
I ever mistakenly use abbreviations words in my assignments and test	4.447	.562
I sometimes cannot understand the real meaning of the messages or comments that I received in my social networking sites	4.547	.526
I am depending on spell checker when using Word Document	2.807	.775
I am using software to check my spelling when writing for my assignments	3.207	.745
I ever got low mark for my assignments/test because I misspelled words	2.653	.934
I know that frequently use of abbreviations words can destroy the originality of the language	3.787	.917

Table 4 represents the mean of all the items in the Impacts towards Malaysian Youth. There are 7 impacts stated and the impacts are obtained through literature review.

The highest mean score was 'I sometimes cannot understand the real meaning of the messages or comments that I received in my social networking sites' with the score of 4.547, followed by 'I ever mistakenly use abbreviations words in my assignments and test' with 4.447, 'I know that frequently use of abbreviations words can destroy the originality of the language' scored 3.787, 'I am using software to check my spelling when writing for my assignments' scored 3.207, 'I am depending on spell checker when using Word Document' (2.807), 'I sometimes facing problem to spell words' (2.793) and the lowest was 'I ever got low mark for my assignments/test because I misspelled words' (2.653). This questionnaire was scored using the Likert scale; from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The highest mean score shows that the respondents has been sometimes cannot understand the real meaning of the message, status post or comments that received in social networking account since it might be contained abbreviation and homophone words that respondent could not understand. This situation may lead to miscommunication between the sender and the receiver of that message, status post or comments.

5. DISCUSSION

From the analysis done, the demographic factors that contribute to the use of abbreviation and homophone words while writing in social networking are gender and race where the significance value are 0.008 and 0.024 respectively. As for the gender, where significance level is 0.008 shows that the female is more intended to use the

abbreviation and homophone words in Social Networking. Meanwhile, for the Race factor, the significance value come out as 0.024 which means that Malay students have more intend to use the abbreviation and homophone words while writing in Social Networking.

Factors that contribute to the use of abbreviation and homophone words in social networking has been proven is simplicity. That is because from all the factors listed as the independent variables, simplicity is the most significant towards the dependent variables (attitudes) where the p-value is 0.031 less than 0.05. Simplicity is being chosen as the factor that lead youth using abbreviation and homophone words while writing in social networking because youth mentioned the abbreviation and homophone words is very short and simple to use. Thus, youth will not take a lot of time in order to write a message or comments to the receiver. However, other factors that also being tested are a trend among youth, faster speed in writing, a creative ways to relay the message and easy to write does not significant towards dependent variables (attitudes) because the significance value is more than 0.05.

The impacts resulting from the usage of abbreviation and homophone words while writing in social networking sites are obtained through literature review and through Likert scale questions. The impacts being analyzed by using mean value. The highest impact chosen by respondents is about the miscommunication between the sender and receiver of the message where most of respondents agree sometimes respondents cannot understand the real meaning of the messages, status post or comments that received in the social networking sites. The highest mean score is 4.547 followed by 4.447 where respondents ever mistakenly use abbreviation and homophone words in my assignments and test. The third highest impact that has mean score with 3.787 is respondents know that the use of abbreviation and homophone words in writing can destroy the originality of the language itself.

6. CONCLUSION

The findings from this research would provide information regarding the social networking usage and the problem occurs from the use of abbreviation and homophone words in social networking sites amongst youth in Malaysia.

Besides, it also would be useful to the teachers, lecturers or academic institutions since this research also give information regarding the impacts that related with the student's performance in academics. It also provides method to overcome the impacts resulting from the usage of abbreviation and homophone words in social networking. Moreover, it may help to give clear

distinction between the cyber world and reality in the usage of proper writing communication.

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