Today 8:32 AM

The new texter's guide to the language of text messaging :)

Written by the students of ALDS3202 Language in Society

Winter 2016

Text Message   Send

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"The poem is a form of texting... it's the original text. It's a perfecting of a feeling in language - it's a way of saying more with less, just as texting is."

- Carol Ann Duffy

1   Introduction

Have you ever seen someone texting furiously on their phone and wondered "How do they do that?" Have you ever thought maybe you'd like to participate in the world of texting but felt overwhelmed by the idea of learning a new way to communicate? The language of texting is indeed complex, but it is learnable, and you can learn it too. Much of the complexity of texted language mirrors the complexity of spoken language, which you already understand.

Although when you text you are technically writing, the quality of texted language has much more in common with spoken language than with written language. Part of this is due to the conversational nature of texted language: you send a message to a friend and your friend responds as soon as they can. You respond back and a conversation occurs. Of course, there are also differences between texted language and spoken language. When talking face to face with a friend you can see their facial expressions, observe body language, hear tone of voice, notice pauses or sharp intakes of breath, see hand gestures, hear snorts of laughter or contempt, and detect sarcasm, among many other things. When texting, we only have what's on the screen; we can't hear or see the other person. Fortunately, the language of texting has developed many ways of representing these kinds of things, frequently co-opting aspects of punctuation (such as the period or use of capital letters) and spelling (such as using creative spellings or repeating letters) to generate these kinds of meanings.

Like spoken language, the representations of these kinds of meanings can be very subtle and depend hugely on the particular social context in which a message is sent or received. For example, the social distance between sender and receiver matters. Are you texting your mom? Your significant other? An acquaintance in a class? A potential landlord? How well you know the other person will have an impact on how you text. In addition, differences in power or authority will also have an effect. Are you texting your little brother? Or your boss? Also, the reason for the text plays a role. Are you texting to find out specific information or to set up a meeting? Or are you texting to find out how someone's day went and just chat?

The purpose of this guide is to help the new texter develop an understanding of how to use these language patterns to text successfully. You'll be introduced to many different characteristics of texted language, learn what kinds of social meaning are encoded in these characteristics, find out about variation in how others might text with you, and discover how to do the pattern yourself in your own texting. The social meaning behind a particular language pattern in texting is complex and contextual. As we said many times in researching and writing this guide: it depends.

A recurring theme in this guide is that in virtually every aspect of texted language there is an element of personal style that overlies any type of prescriptive rule. Texting is at its root a creative way to use language. As you text more and more with people, your own style will develop and others will learn to recognize it. In addition, you'll become better at recognizing others' personal styles.

Good luck and enjoy your first steps into the world of texting.

2   Greetings and goodbyes

In this section, we will highlight the greetings and goodbyes that can occur during texting. This opening and closing pattern exists beyond texting, such as in formal letter writing and other variations of digital communication. However, its usage in texting is very particular, and can vary due to texting straddling written and spoken language.

Greetings and goodbyes are not always necessary in texting. This will depend on the context, social distance and relationship between texters. Generally, it is found that the social distance you have with someone in real, face-to-face, life should inspire the understood social distance that you communicate with during texting.

The standard text does not have any greetings or goodbyes, which is why is it important to notice when the exceptions come into play. There is social meaning behind using greetings and closings, and omitting them may also have implied meaning. Formal conversations via text messages usually more closely resemble letter writing or even e-mail writing, with a clear greeting. Informal texting can happen without any greeting at all. Overall, we have seen that goodbyes are less frequent in general, but they are also put to use for specific purposes.

2.1   When greetings are required

For people you text frequently and have an informal dynamic with, each text exchange does not require an opening salutation. However, these are important in some specific circumstances.

2.1.1   Initial text messages

Much like a first introduction, first texts are usually more formal and will include a greeting. First-time text exchanges usually include the first sender's name as well, as in Text 2.1 and Text 2.2. This allows the receiver to save the sender's name right away, and will label any texts with the sender's name.
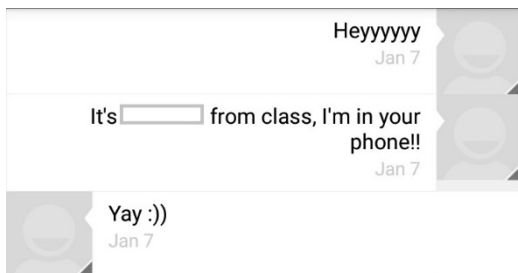
Text 2.1
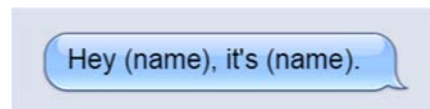
Text 2.2

2.1.2   Group messages

Some group messages function as communication hubs for making plans or addressing a number of people at once. Many platforms allow you to do this, and texting applications are included. If this is a group with which you communicate infrequently, and are thinking of introducing an idea to, addressing the whole group with a greeting at the beginning of the new conversation is helpful to redirect everyone's attention to your message. It also makes all receivers aware that this new message is addressed to every single one of them, especially if the group messaging has a lot of contacts. See Text 2.3 for an illustration of a multi-person text conversation.

Cell phones users are not always able to attend to every single message right as they are receiving it. Therefore, beginning a new conversation with a greeting allows users to scroll back up to the correct point where the conversation was beginning in order to catch up to what they've missed. In this case, greetings offer a checkpoint of sorts to indicate breaks between conversations.

Text 2.3

2.1.3   Formal texting

Increasingly, text messaging is becoming a way of communication between employees and employers. It allows for quick communication and can be more interactive and instantaneous than e-mail. For this kind of formal situation and others, such as speaking with someone older or with someone with whom you do not speak often or are getting to know, beginning a conversation with a greeting can help incorporate politeness into the somewhat informal nature of texting. This can also allow you to get to know the other person's texting style. Slowly, there may be a move away from formality for some relationships. For others, such as professional ones, the formality may be essential.

    These formal situations don't always necessitate a closing or goodbye message, but they may also require it if it is the case that you and this person do not message frequently or if the message is more formal (see Text 2.4). As mentioned above, these formal message more clearly resemble letter writing, and more traditional ways of communicating. Use your judgement to decide on the formality of the conversation you are going to have with, let's say, your boss or your mom.

Hi
Happy birthday to you!
Wish we could be together today, but you're too busy and I can't get around much yet. Let's make a date for later, ok?
Love, mum
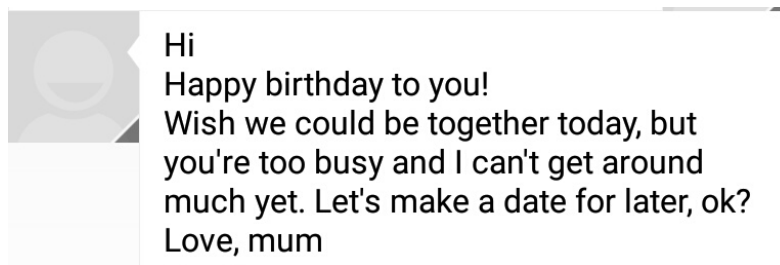
Text 2.4

2.1.4   Added greetings

Since text messages develop into informal means of communication, occasionally that level of informality can overcome the interpersonal connection you may want to make. As well, sometimes a text may have a more time-sensitive or pragmatic nature than a friendly one. In situations like this, tacking on a greeting can soften the message, as in Texts 2.5 and 2.6.

Do I want curry or greek? Answer fast
Aug 14, 2015

Also, hi
Aug 14, 2015

Text 2.5

Can you get me Twizzler's?

Also, hi, I love you, and thanks
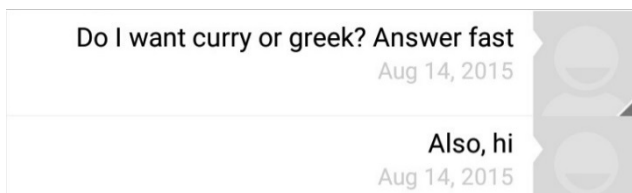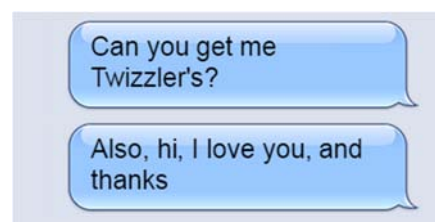
Text 2.6

2.1.5   Attention-getting texts

Depending on personal style as well as the content of the message, some texters wait for a response before sending their message. If someone sends a greeting without a message body as in Text 2.7, they are waiting for a reply before starting the conversation. In a friendly relationship, someone may also send multiple messages to get your attention, whether they have a message or not. See §12 for an example of this.
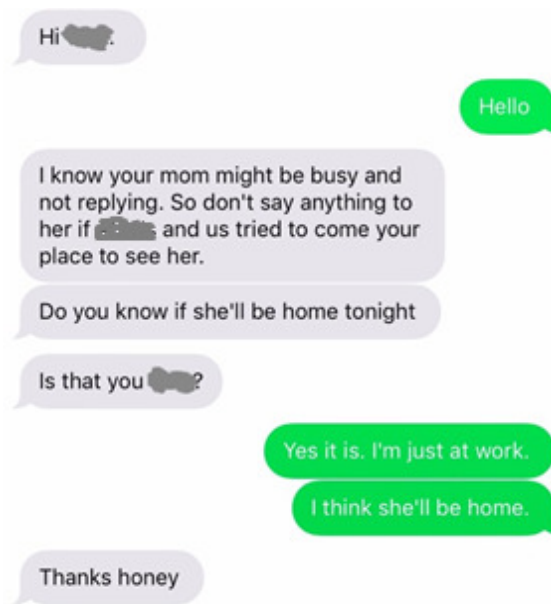
Text 2.7

2.2   When greetings are not required

As mentioned above, many people develop their own style of texting and will have personal quirks. Some people will always open with a greeting that does not require a greeting in response, in contrast to §2.1.5. A text sent with a greeting in the body of the message, as in Text 2.8, does not require a greeting in response.
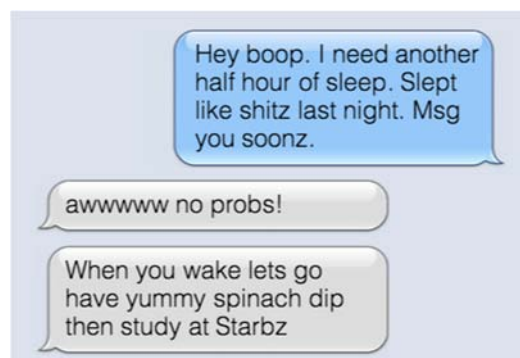
Text 2.8

2.2.1   Informal or frequent texting

If a formal relationship becomes more informal via texting, it is possible that greetings will no longer be required to begin new conversations. Many informal conversations may also tolerate when users leave a string of conversation for a while, to then reply after extended periods of time. Therefore, conversations can happen over longer courses of time, and beginning with a greeting every single time would be out of place, as in Text 2.9 below (see also §12).

As stated above, social relationships in real life are reflected in text messaging. Any relationship that is informal in face-to-face situations will most likely not require greetings in text messages as in Text 2.10 below. Sometimes, it is essential to go through the process of getting to know someone's texting style, as users may like to use greetings but not expect them in response (see Text 2.8 above).

Text 2.9   **Text 2.10**

Informal situations that do have greetings, however, may have more variance in the type of greeting that is had. The standard 'hi' 'hello' or 'hey' may be replaced with other words, shared jokes, or simply with a different spelling depending on, again, the type of relationship (see §7 and §8).

2.3   Closings

In general, goodbyes, or 'closings', are less frequent in text messaging. There is no need to sign your name off at the end of a text messages, as the advancement of technology allows cell phone users to save phone numbers of contacts and these contact names are displayed at the top of your screen during a conversation with that person (see Text 2.3 above for an illustration). As shown above in §2.1.1, including your name in your initial text exchange with someone helps remove the need for signing your name at the end of a text.

The practical function of a goodbye message would be to very clearly end a conversation. The user initiating the 'goodbye' string of messages is making a point that they will no longer be available to answer messages or will be away from their phone. Using closings is very useful to do this if you do not see the conversation ending any other way (like simply trailing off), and need to politely opt out. Although formal text messages that begin with greetings may more likely also have closings, this is not a necessary part of the exchange. Lastly, if someone does send you a closing, sending a goodbye in return to acknowledge their closing is a good way to sign off politely and acknowledge their message.

Text 2.11

3   Emoticons/Emojis

One of the features available for texting is Emoticons and Emojis. These features were created as a way to help represent information people get in face to face conversations such as tone, feeling, and humor (Carney, 2015). It is unclear who created Emoticons, however Scott Fahlman has been socially identified as the person responsible for the first digital Emoticons in 1982 (Carney, 2015). Emoticons themselves have been developed over time. The early Emoticons used colons or semicolons (eyes) paired with a dash (nose) and a bracket (mouth) to represent a human face/emotion. Since the first appearance of emoticons there have been two main changes: the use of the dash as the nose has become obsolete, and users have a catalog of basic cartoon faces to represent a wide range of feeling. Emojis didn't appear till until later on in 1998, first widely used in Japan then become became popular in other parts of the world (Houston, 2013). Much like Emoticons, Emojis are basic cartoon images. However, Emojis differ from Emoticons because they have full thought and/ or meaning behind them (Bobology Staff, 2015). Though there are differences between Emoticon and Emojis the terms are used interchangeably to represent these images, thus for this guide it can be assumed they mean the same.

Examples of emoticons: 😊 😂 😐 😠 😢 😍 😘 😷

Examples of emojis: 👭 🐘 ☀️ 🧀 ⚾ ✈️ 🏠 🎥

The purpose behind Emojis is to provide emotional context to a message; however, they provide a lot more social meaning than just emotion. This section will explore the different social meanings attached to the different ways Emojis are/can be used. Specifically, how to §3.1 Show Emotion, §3.2 Word Replacement, §3.3 Visual Representation, and §3.4 Additional Information. In addition to having a functional purpose, users feel that Emojis are enjoyable to use, adding a bit of fun to texts (Huang, Yen, & Zhang, 2008).

3.1   Showing Emotion

Over time, Emojis have expanded from being expressive faces to representations of objects and actions. Although they have expanded, the Emoticon faces are still widely used in everyday texting. Emojis serve many purposes in texting language, one of them being to show emotion.

With face-to-face interaction, a speaker and a hearer can infer meaning from the interlocutor's body language, tone of voice and body language. However, with texting as a platform, these paralinguistic features are lost as the medium is set up to deliver the words exactly the way they appear. This can be an issue for many texters. Misinterpretation of messages are all too common without the emotional context being explicitly shown. This is where Emojis can help distinguish how a speaker is feeling, what their face might look like, or the reaction they had to a message. With Emojis ranging from happy, sad, angry, confused, and everything in between, they can clarify meaning for the receiver and help them understand all those paralinguistic features that get lost without face-to-face communication. This section will identify the different ways that Emojis add emotional context to texts and how to use them depending on the purpose of the communication.

From the examples that we collected, we determined that the instance of Emoji use that was most popular was adding emotional context by inputting an expressive face at the end of a thought of or sentence. This is done to show the mood of the texter. Adding a smiley face to a message can inform the reader that the speaker is in a good mood, or that they're happy. Possible other interpretations of a smiley face can include politeness or not wanting to seem rude. Emojis that express emotions are most commonly found at the end of a sentences, however they can also appear at the beginning of a message or they can stand alone and just be a message in themselves.

Text 3.1
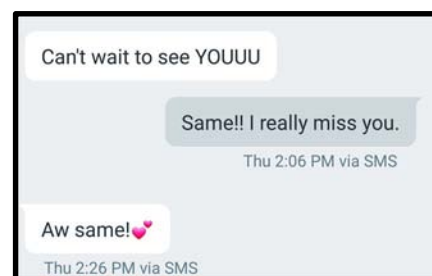
Text 3.2

As you can see from the examples in Text 3.1 and 3.2, Emoji faces let the reader have a clear interpretation of the message and the mood of the texter. This type of Emoji use has a very literal

interpretation of the speaker's emotional state and facial expressions. If you receive a text message with a smiley face, you can almost always assume the sender is in a good mood or is smiling.

3.1.1   Tone

Through our research and analysis, we determined that the mood and the tone of a message are two separate entities. Where putting an Emoji at the end of an emotionally- charged message add to the emotion recognition and context, the tone of a message can be severely misinterpreted if an Emoji is not present. The difference we found was that for tone, an Emoji is vital for the comprehension of a message. Although the two are very similar, when analyzing our text samples, we found that the interpretation differs between the two. In a message that is exemplifying emotion to compliment complement the message, the Emoji will be coordinated with the words included in the message. For tone, the Emoji has no connection to the words that are used but add the speaker's feeling towards what they said. These are different because for tone, the understanding of the message is based off the Emoji used. While texting, you would add an Emoji to give emotional context so that the receiver knows how you feel or how to react. Again the placement of the Emoji appears at the end of the words in a message.

Text 3.3
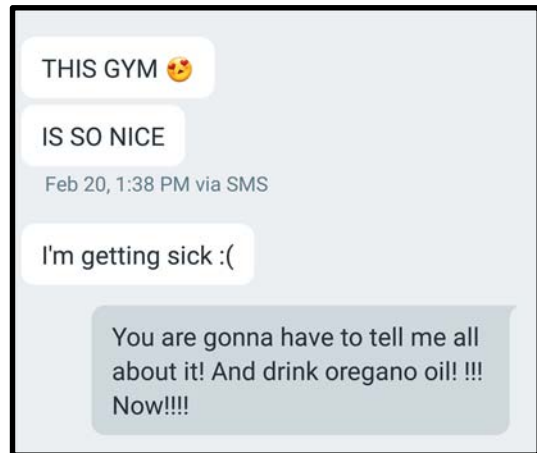
Text 3.4

The examples illustrate how important the Emoji is for comprehension of the message and gives social context/meaning to what the speaker is talking about or referring to. If the speaker were to change the Emoji for one that expresses the opposite face, the meaning of the message would completely change.

3.1.2   Sarcasm

Emojis can be used as a way to indicate sarcasm within texts messages because they can represent human facial expressions. Sarcasm is showed when the texter writes something that is opposite to how they really feel. Emojis are then added to the end of the message to show a texter's facial expressions or true feelings, and thus contradicting the texted words. For example, in Text 3.5 the text below, the person texted something that seems enthusiastic. However, with the Emojis it is clear that are not actually excited to study. In order to convey sarcasm and have it be understood, the Emoji must come at the end of the text or in a separate text message right after the comment has been sent. Sarcasm in text should only be used with people you would be sarcastic with in person; there should be a close social distance and low power difference.
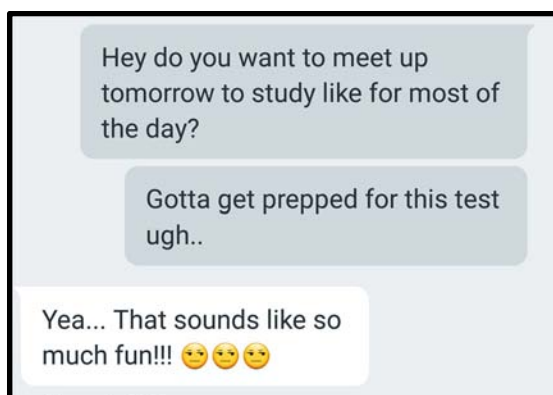
Text 3.5

3.2   Word Replacement

When texting, people have the option to type out a full word, use a short form if there is one (reference see §7) or use Emojis to replace the words. Rather than typing out a word, texters can just insert the Emoji of the object. The images used must be iconic symbols that have a standard meaning. Depending on the word, sometimes two Emojis might be required in order to properly represent it. For example, in image 7Text 3.7 the texter had to use two Emojis to represent the word bombshell. The reason people do this is for convenience; to shorten a message, it can also show playfulness/creativeness or just as a way to make the message more fun. Texts are at their foundation are just words which can make conversations a bit dry; word replacement is a way to liven up the conversation. This type of use of Emojis is commonly used between friends; this is not something you would do with someone you do not have a close social distance and power distance with.
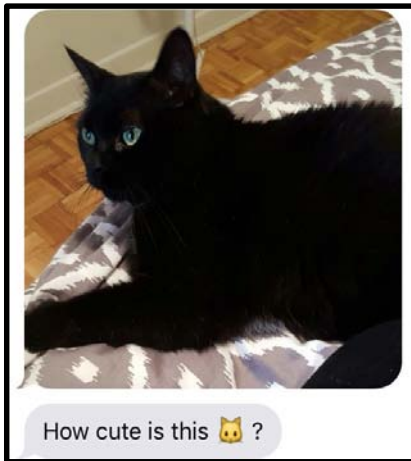
Text 3.6
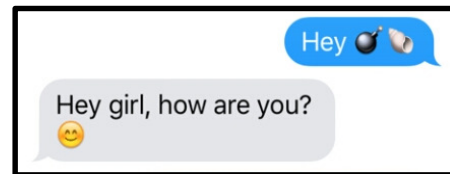
Text 3.7

Text 3.8

3.2.1   Developed Social Meaning

Similar to word replacement, rather than typing out a word, a texter can inserts an Emoji. The difference is that some Emojis that are used have a socially- determined meaning. For example, the peach Emoji generally represents a person's butt/ass. Similarly, the eggplant and or banana can represents the male genitalia. However, this style is not just used in a sexual context. Other examples include the graduation cap to symbolize graduating, three leaf clover to represent luck and on March 17th to represent the Irish and St. Patrick's Day. The meanings of these Emojis have developed an alternate meaning that is widely accepted in society among young adults. People over the age of forty are not likely to use the Emojis with an alternative sexual meaning.

Daaaaaaaaaaamn girl 🍑

Text 3.9

Happy 🍀 day!

Text 3.10

3.3   *Visual Representation*

This section refers to when, in addition to writing out a word, the texter includes the Emoji that matches it. The Emoji generally follows the word it is connected to, however it is possible to have the Emoji(s) appear at the end of a sentence that they are related to. The latter is the most common form that will appear in texts; however, both do exist. This can be used as a way to emphasis your point see §3.3.2 for further ways to use Emojis as emphasis. Again, this is a way to make texts seem less dry.

So I just finished a workout and literally used my pain to fuel it 💖😥💪🏻

Mar 8, 10:46 AM via SMS

I'm happy you are putting you hurt somewhere that benefits you and doesn't hurt you

Mar 8, 12:13 PM via SMS

Text 3.11

FEB 8, 10:10 PM

Oh my goodness... All the gin slushies 🍸 🍸 🍸 🍸

hahaah those actually look bomb

I'm hundo making them

i want to try it when you make it!!

Down we'll have a slushy margarita night and watch new girl 💁🏻

Text 3.12

3.3.1   Action

Emojis can be used as a way to show action of either the texter or of someone else, including but not limited to the listener. In this context, Emojis represent what the person actually did. It is a way to show understanding of what happened or to demonstrate it. This adds playfulness to the conversation and can even add humor depending on the context. Text 3.13 demonstrates how the texter recipient (green text boxes) of the original text (green text boxes) illustrates what they have just been told in a fun/playful way. Text 3.14, on the other hand, depicts a situation in which the listener shows a representation of their actual physical response to the funny story they were just told (white text box). The use of Emojis this way helps to illustrate what would happen in a face-to-face conversation.
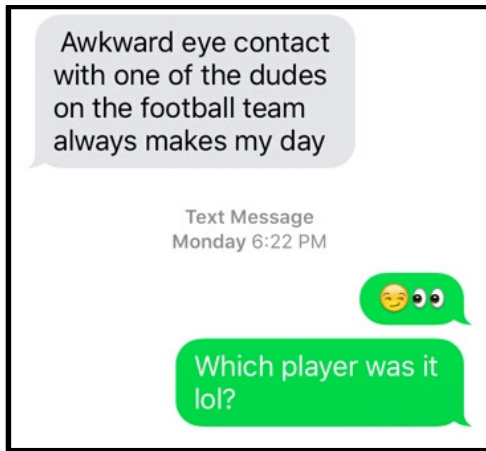
Text 3.13
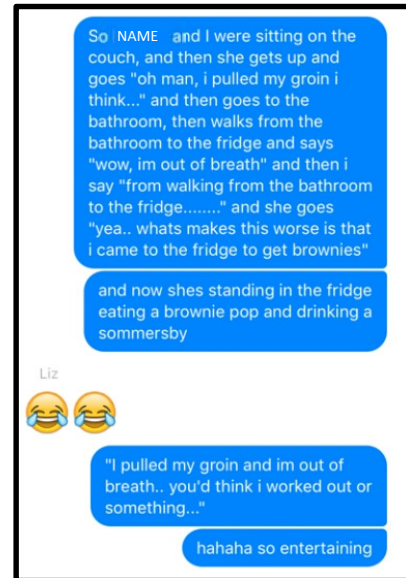
Text 3.14

3.3.2 Adding Emphasis

In spoken language, when someone wants to add emphasis to the words they're using they change the intonation of their voice and their body language. In informal texting, emphasis can be added by repetition of letters in a word (see §8), spelling everything in caps, or adding excessive punctuation (see §6). For Emojis, adding emphasis is most commonly seen in the repetition of the same Emoji or the addition of an Emoji when the context is already obvious. This can symbolize that you feel very strongly about a certain emotion, a specific object or that you're adding visual representation for the comment. Adding emphasis with Emojis can be interpreted as being playful or serious.
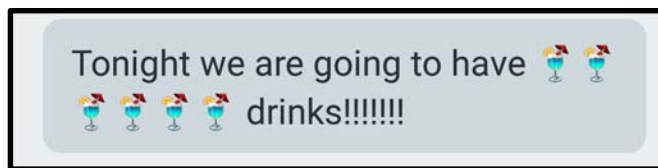
Text 3.15

Text 3.16

3.4 Additional Information

3.4.1 Possible Multiple Interpretations

It's important to note that not all Emojis mean the same thing universally; there are always other factors that can affect how an Emoji is interpreted. For example, there is the options to include a thumbs up Emoji. In North American culture, this can be perceived as 'good job', 'way to go',

'yeah' etc. however in certain other cultures thumbs up is a way to insult someone/ has a very negative meaning attached to it. Users must be aware that such differences exist.

One Emoji can also satisfy multiple purposes. For example, one Emoji can show emotion as well as add emphasis if it was to be repeated multiple times within the same message. Depending on personal ties, the nature of the relationship, and the context of the conversation, many people can interpret the same message differently.
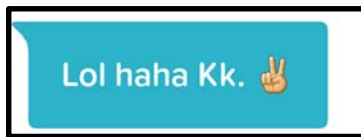
Text 3.17

3.4.2 Differences in Platform Usage

Another issue that a texter can come in contact with is the issue of exchanging Emojis over different platforms. Emojis look different depending on where the original message is produced. Miscommunication can occur if the symbol comes up as something different on another device. Similarly, if a device doesn't have an equivalent symbol on their platform, the Emoji might not come up at all. In this situation the receiver will see an empty box, symbolizing that the device can't display the Emoji.

Text 3.18
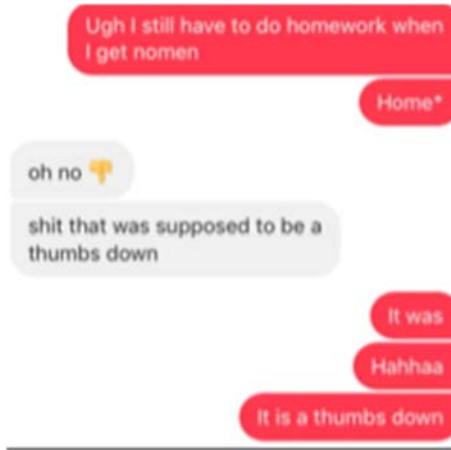
Text 3.19

3.4.3 Personal Style

Texting differs among most people; different people won't use the same message to express the same thing as someone else. How someone texts is greatly dependent on their personal style. During the analysis of our text messages, we came across multiple instances where people prefer to use linguistic symbols to express their emotions as in: :), :(, :O, or -_-. The uses of these symbols serve the same purpose as the yellow- faced Emoji; however, the use of them is texter dependent. Another important fact to make note of is that some platforms such as Facebook messenger do not give users that option to use :). It will automatically change it into a yellow smiley face Emoji.

Huge storm -___-

(That's my not impressed face) lol

Feb 29, 8:56 PM via SMS

Text 3.20

I'm good, just at work. And how are you?

Tired lol

Are you tired cuz I only got that message 4 times haha 🥴

What why is my phone being stupid :(

Whatever it means it is almost impossible to ignore me lol

Yeah you're right such a pest 😊

Yup that's me lol

So whatcha up to????????????
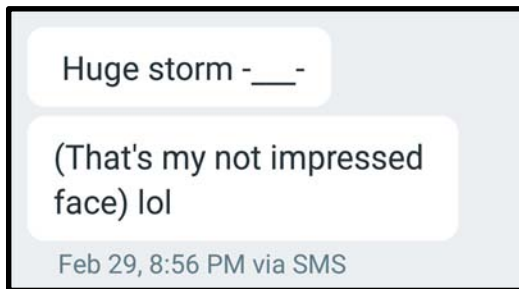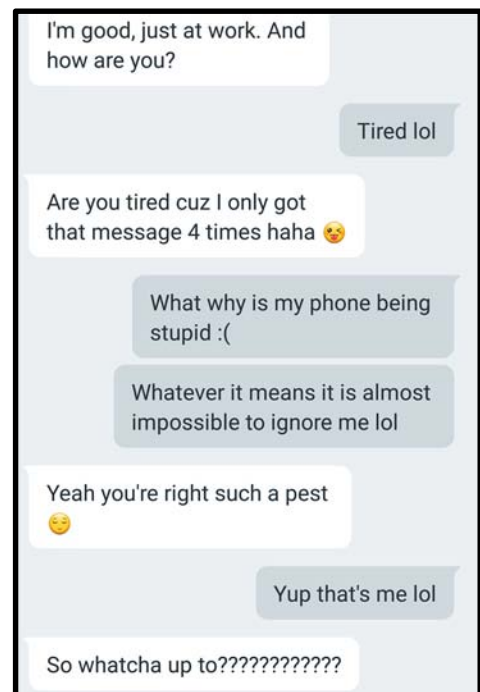
Text 3.21

3.4.3.1 Personal Connection & Systematic Texts

Since Emojis are playful and fun in texting, they can also act as a way to show a personal connection to someone else. When you have a relationship with someone, whether it be intimate, familial or friendship, you start to develop a personal connection with them. This personal

connection can be realized reflected through the use of specific sentences or phrases that you both use, or meaning can be represented through the use of Emojis. Developing these personal connections or systematic texts will take time, however it is something to be aware of when looking at social meaning. Any Emoji can take alternative meaning than what it actually represents by establishing a social meaning with the other person.
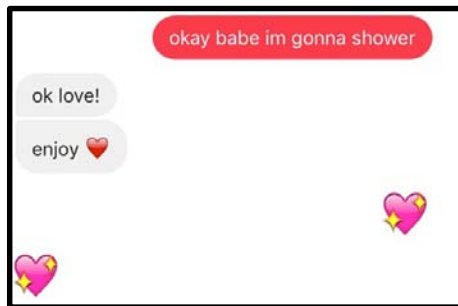
Text 3.22

Text 3.23

3.4.4   *When Not to Use Emojis*
It is important to understand that the use of Emojis generally do not appear in texts that are more task orientated. Adding Emojis to texts takes some time; therefore, when there is limited amount of time to set up a plan or communicate something that needs to get done, Emojis are less likely to be used up until the last message regarding that topic (Derks, Bos, & Von Grumbkow, 2004).

3.4.5   *Emojis as Punctuations*
Often the use of Emojis at the end of a text eliminates the need for punctuation (Provine, Spencer & Mandell, 2007). For further information, see §6.

3.4.6   *Gender*
Our research has shown little to no differences in Emoji use between men and women. Other research however suggests that women use Emojis more frequently and men use a wider variety of Emojis (Tossell, et al, 2012). Taking all this under consideration, it is important to note that this is more person specific rather than gender specific.

4 Non-Verbal Communication in Texting

Non-verbal communication in face-to-face (FTF) conversations includes an extensive variety of features and strategies in order to communicate effectively. In order to understand how to use non-verbal communication features in text messages it is important to briefly go over how non-verbal communication may be used in FTF conversations. Many forms of non-verbal communication have been also been partially covered in other sections of the guide, as there is a significant amount of overlap in the usages of non-verbal forms when it comes to texting. Therefore, this section is meant as a brief overview of how FTF non-verbal communication forms have been translated into text, as well as basic methods on how to use the texting version of the forms. Some of the main types of non-verbal communication include eye contact, kinesics (body language), proxemics (distance), paralanguage (voice quality, pitch, volume), chronemics (time), and prosodic features such as rhythm, intonation, and stress. While many of these forms of non-verbal communication cannot be replicated in text messages, this guide will focus on how non-verbal communication has been integrated and rearranged in order to fit the texting context, as well as how people may convey forms of non-verbal communication through texting themselves. This section of the guide will look at how specific FTF forms of non-verbal communication may be conveyed through text. Specifically this portion of the guide will be going over how one may translate the FTF forms of kinesics, chronemics, paralanguage, emotional responses, and prosodic features into texting language.

4.1 Kinesics

The basic idea of translating kinesics into texting is to find a way to represent physical movement through written words. In general, this may be represented by actually typing out the physical movement within the text. Some ways of accomplishing include just writing the movement (e.g. shaking my head), writing the movement within asterisks (e.g. *shaking my head*), or by using a common acronym if the movement is something which is frequently represented in text (e.g. SMH). Most often, due to the nature of text messages being short, if an expression is something commonly used like 'SMH', it will have an acronym associated with it which is the most common and most appropriate version of the expression to use. As these acronyms are often trends, they commonly go in and out of style and the only way to be sure of which acronyms are trendy at the current time is to either ask friends who frequently text or use Google. Aside from that, the usage of popular acronyms to represent physical movement is knowledge that is acquired implicitly through exposure to the texting genre, and is best acquired simply by texting. Some acronyms which are common at the time of writing this guide are: 'lol' (laughing out loud), 'smh' (shaking my head). 'Lol' may be used in situations where something is funny, but there are many different ways to express this which are covered in §5. "Smh" is used when something is very embarrassing for someone else, or you really disagree with something which has been said or done by either the subject of the conversation or the

interlocutor. A previously common acronym which has fallen out of style more recently is "rofl" (rolling on the floor laughing), which was meant to be used when something was hilariously funny, i.e. so funny that you are rolling on the floor laughing. Aside from these uses, if you want to convey a specific action it is possible to just portray this by putting the written action in asterisks. The example provided is: *throws knife in neck*, which in this text message was meant to portray one friend betraying the other by throwing a knife in their neck.

However, the most simple and least complicated way to represent kinesics in text messages or instant messaging for the unexperienced texter is to simply to find an emoticon/emoji (see §3) which represents the action you wish to convey.
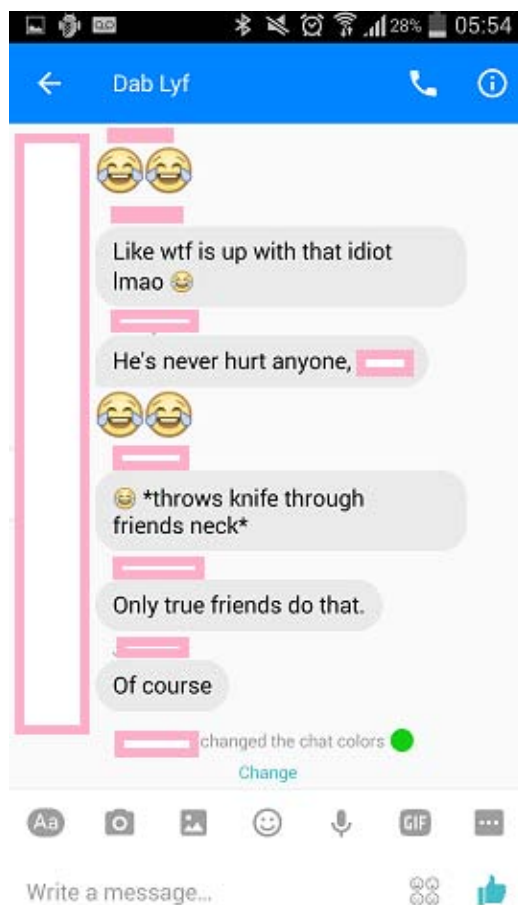
Text 4.1

Text 4.2

4.2 Chronemics

The second non-verbal communication feature we will be going over is chronemics. In FTF non-verbal language forms this is accomplished by simply pausing between replies or words. For example, if a friend says to you something really awkward or weird, you may just pause to imply that it was not exactly an acceptable response. The less acceptable the comment or response was,

the longer you may pause, and in the worst case scenario, you may choose to not respond at all. In text messages, this is very easily portrayed by using ellipses. While ellipses are discussed further within this guide in §9, the basic concept is that the dots are used to represent the pause. When texting you may also choose whether you would like to convey your refusal to respond with ellipses as well. For the most part, the normal ellipses length is three periods "…", which may convey a slight pause as though you are taken aback by the comment. The more ellipses, the longer the pause, so if you are very taken aback you may use more periods "………………..", you may even take it one step further by adding spaces between the periods "…. …… ………" to convey that you are so taken aback it is three times the amount.
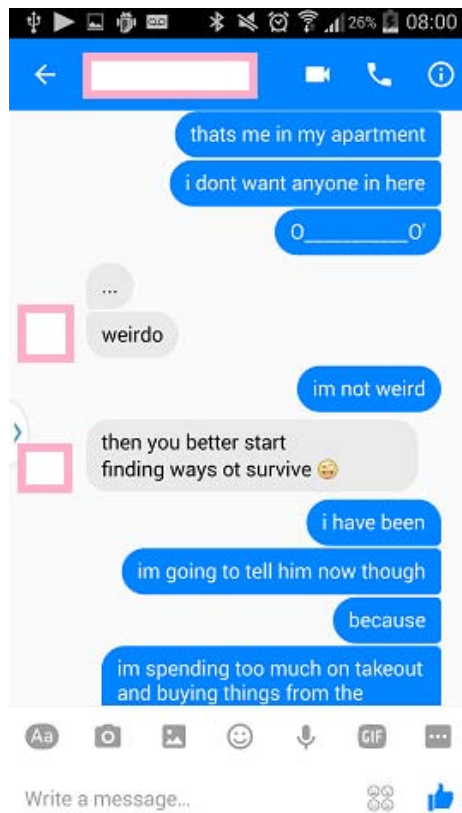
Text 4.3

After you have decided on the number of periods you want to use to show just how taken aback you are, you may then choose to either respond or not respond, i.e. you are taken aback but not so much that you have no reply, or, you are so taken aback you refuse to respond to the message. If you decide to add a response to your ellipses, as though you were pausing to add effect to your following comment, simply write the periods and then the response: "….[insert response]?". While this may seem similar to not responding a text message at all, there is a difference in that if you choose to use the ellipses to convey that you have no response, the use of ellipses implies that you still want a text back from the other person. If you want to exit a conversation

completely, it is best to not text back at all, and this would imply to the other person that you do not want to continue a conversation with them at all whatsoever.

4.3   Paralanguage

One aspect of nonverbal communication through texting is known as paralanguage. Paralanguage in real life communication involves a number of vocal techniques that alter the content of one's speech, without changing the vocabulary used. Some examples of paralanguage are prosody, volume, intonation, etc. When bringing this over to texting, we must look at what aspects of paralanguage can apply to the new format, and which must remain unique to face to face communication. Thus brings the question, how do you use paralanguage while texting? The answer is to keep the applicable elements that can be translated into a purely textual form; in this case, we chose to focus on volume and stress. To communicate volume and stress through text, you can employ a few techniques which indicate a change.
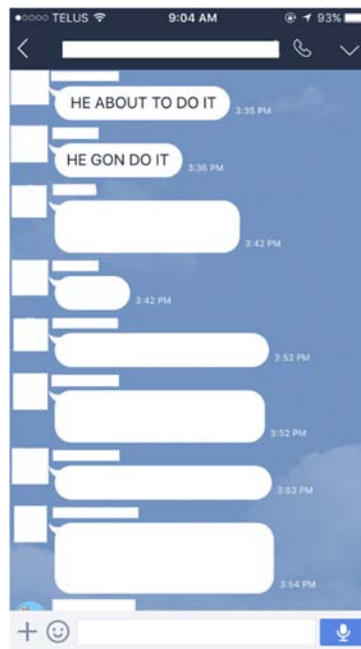
Text 4.4

For example, one can write their text in all capital letters, which can indicate to the reader that the speaker is putting special emphasis on the words written out. Capital letters in texting quite often also indicate volume, words are perceived as "louder" if they are written out in capital letters. For example, the difference between "That's enough" and "THAT'S ENOUGH", one can be perceived as a passive statement while the other comes off more like an order. Punctuation or more specifically, exclamation marks can also be used to indicate volume and stress on a certain word, as when a speaker writes words followed by an exclamation mark, they are often trying to put volume or emphasis on what is being written.

4.4   Emotions

Next on the list is emotions, and while this may be a quite simple process in real conversations, it has a few differences when translated over to texting. In face to face communication, showing emotion practically comes naturally, and we often do it without consciously thinking about it.
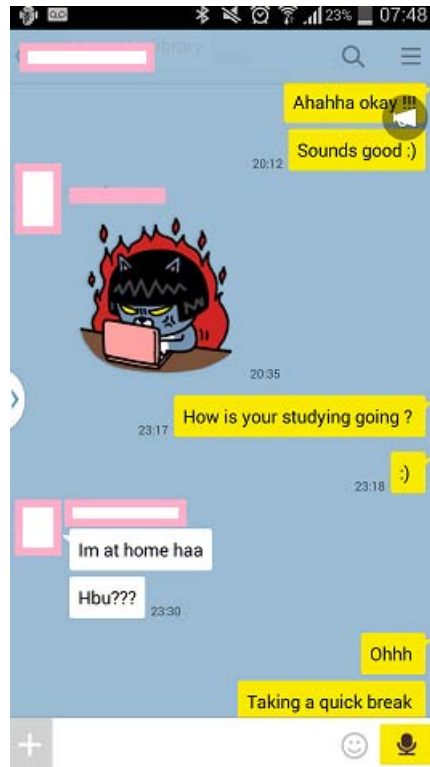
Text 4.5

In these conversations, we can often simply look at the speaker's face to determine their current mood. When displaying emotions through texting, it is often a little more difficult as we cannot physically see the other person's face. Therefore, to display an emotion while texting, the speaker will often have to explicitly state an emotion such as "That makes me happy". While emoji's (see §3) are also applicable to this context, emoji's are often seen as less "serious", so when stating a mood that the speaker wants the listener to know is a serious matter, the speaker would be better off using an explicit statement of emotion.

4.5   Prosodic Features

Finally, we look at our last feature of nonverbal communication in texting: prosodic features. In real life discourse, prosody is something like the "rhythm" of our speech, the way we string words together to create an even flow. Of course, in texting, we cannot carry these exact features over, as texting has no audible component. Therefore, we must find ways to use prosody that

appropriately fit the texting format. To do this, the speaker must often place emphasis on certain words and syllables in their messages, similar to how one would use volume and stress, but instead of indicating commanding or volume emphasis, one would use stress emphasis. This is accomplished often by elongating a word in a sentence (see §8), indicating to the reader that this specific section has a different flow from the rest of its subset. For example, how does one read in their own head, "I kneeeeew it" compared to "I knew it". Of these two examples, the latter sounds like a simple affirmation of knowledge, while the former can be interpreted with a playful tone, or with a certain amount of jest.
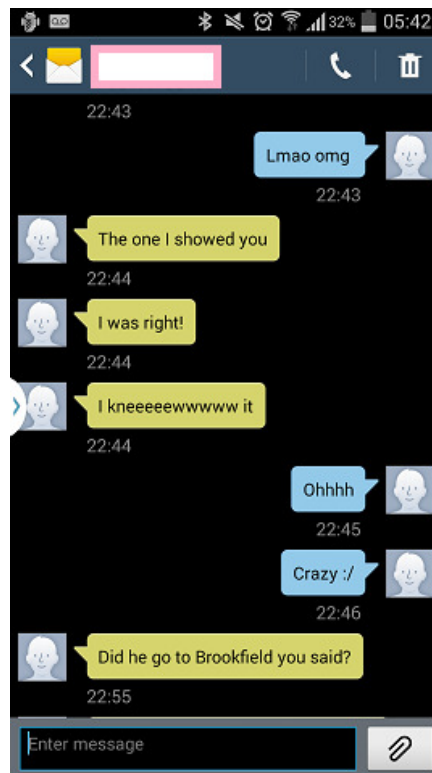
Text 4.6

Now that we have identified the different types of nonverbal expressions in texting, we must look at their social meaning, and the patterns they exist in. Specifically speaking, we must look at why these expressions are used, and whom are they used by. While they mirror quite well the nonverbal expressions used in real life conversations, the main difference between the two is that, through text, these expressions are a purely conscious and deliberate processes, while the same is not true in real life. In texting, these expressions are used as they can change the meaning of the text being read, and these changes can vary from slight differences in interpretation, to changing the tone of the text entirely. Take the differences between saying "That's great" and "THAT'S GREAT". The first can just be a statement that the speaker is pleased by a recent occurrence, while the second one would rarely be interpreted as the speaker being happy, and is

instead often seen as anger or frustration. Using all of these different aspects of nonverbal communication adds a new dimension to our written speech, and allows us to explore a various number of ways to express our thoughts at a given time.

Through our texts we also found a pattern upon which these expressions are often used through real world examples. Instances of nonverbal expression in texting between two people will often indicate a degree of social closeness between the speaker and the listener. People who are more comfortable around each other will tend to use more nonverbal expressions than those who share a fair degree of social distance. It was also found that nonverbal expressions in texting also indicated a certain degree of informality within the conversation's setting. One will quite rarely find examples of these nonverbal expressions in say, a conversation with their boss. Most often they are found between conversations with a more casual nature, like making plans between friends or speaking to a parent.

5   Laughter

In this section we will explain the instances of laughter in texting. Unlike in spoken discourse, the use of laughter in texting is open for interpretation between the receiver and sender. Some instances the text may mean that it pertains to a comical response or may mean something other than laughing.

   With these patterns of laughter use in texting, we will strive to explain what are the possible instances of how laughter is used and what are its possible social meaning so that you, as a texter, can use this guide as a gauge on how to produce your own laughter when texting. In the succeeding subsections, we will explain the representation of laughter in texting; that is, an attempt to explain the possible ways of representing laughter; and provide an explanation on actual ways wherein laughter literally meant there is an actual laughter involved in the text.

5.1   *Personal style*

The use of the different forms of laughter, e.g., lol, haha, hehe, ROFL, varies on personal preferences or styles. In terms of gender and age (18-25), there are no known differences in the ways they use laughter. You can be a "LOL" person and some prefer using "HAHA" when they express laughter. And for others, they use ROFL and LMAO in their texting. For the purposes of this section, we will be referencing LOL and HAHA as the basic examples for they are the most commonly used ones.

   Further, some people elongate the laughter, e.g, looooolll, hahahaaa, and some capitalize the words, e.g., LOL, HAHA. At this juncture, we want to emphasize that you can express your own preference of laughter because these ways of representing laughter connote your self-identity as an interlocutor in texting or computer-mediated platform of communication. It means that the laughter style that you use is part of who you are as a texter, so people attribute you with what you use like "Jane is more of a LOL person when she texts and Joe uses HAHA most of the time". The kinds of laughter you use exhibit your identity towards the other person on the line about how they should respond to your text and how they should understand the schema of what you are trying to convey.

5.2   *Social Distance/Power Dynamics*

Social distance refers to power relationship between you and the sender of the text. Let us say you text your best friend, boss, professor, and parents and in all cases each person has different power status. When you are texting with your boss and when you are texting your girlfriend, you can tell the difference that there is a shift of register use in the ways you convey your texts.

   Typically, "lol" is used in most instances when there is close social distance between the sender and receiver. In the text 5.1 below, the exchanges happened between two people who are in a relationship for two years. As you can see, the texts are short, plain, simple, and direct. Most

texts of people who are together for years reflect this kind of exchanges because the topic is just a continuation of prior conversation or it is just a repetition of what has been routinely done, e.g., when they want to go out and eat. The use of "lol" and "haha" in here are just discourse marker in the whole conversation. In spoken discourse, we use "uhuh", "uhm", and "yeah" to signify that we comprehend what the speaker is saying. In the same context in texting, "lol" or "haha" can be used to organize segments of the text exchanges and somewhat does not change the whole meaning. For instance, you can take "lol" in the 3rd response and it will still hold its meaning (that the choice of cuisine is Asian suggesting that the receiver may be Asian or someone who likes Asian food). You can place "lol" or "haha" in the beginning or last part of the sentence or phrase.
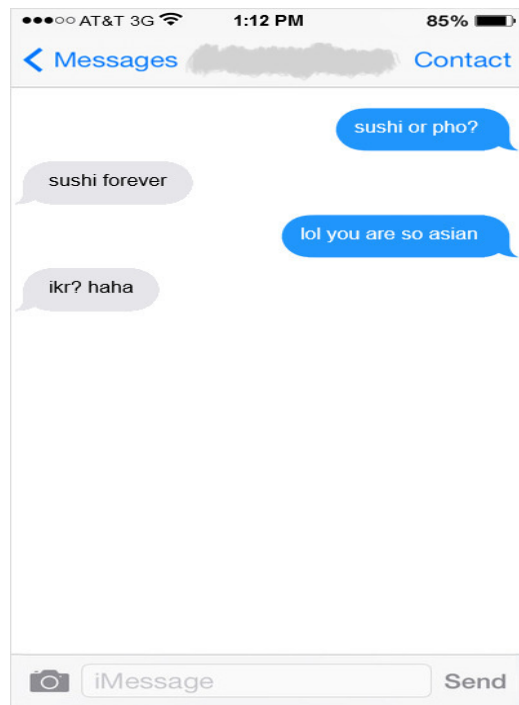
Text 5.1

There can be some instances too that "haha" and "lol" are used by people who are friends but not considered close friends or they do not go in the same inner circle. You can still use these laughter as a discourse marker but you have to make sure that you established a clear topic and intention in your text so that the receiver can respond accordingly to what you implied. For instance, in text 5.2 below you can see that the exchanges centered on school related questions, i.e., reading week and research paper, and the sender made sure to include "Hola" as a form of greeting to signal a more formal relationship between them (for more information on greetings please see §2) and the sender also included a possible topic (i.e., about reading week) so that the receiver knows what exactly to respond. The "lol" and "haha" in 2nd and 3rd responses are again the same with its usage when you are texting with someone whom you share equal power dynamics as discussed in the previous paragraph.
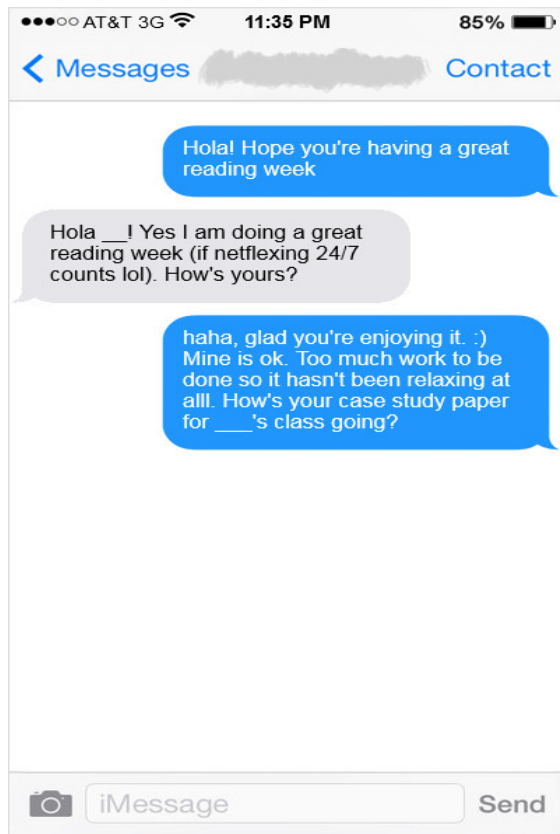
Text 5.2

5.3   Dismissive and sarcastic

It is inescapable that you will encounter texts that are offensive, condescending, kind of smirk, and or you want to make a vague compliment as a form of being polite. In any of these experiences, you may have to use laughter as part of the text.

If you are trying to be dismissive and sarcastic, most likely you will have to use appended and elongated laughter (more information can be found about letter repetition in §8). Take a look at text 5.3. In this text, the sender is worried that he missed the job interview he is looking forward to. It indicates that he likes the job so much and missing the job interview would mean he may no longer get another chance. The response from his text was a long "hahahahaha". Now, if you get this response from a person that you do not really know well, you will feel insulted and most probably get offended. But given these exchanges happened between close friends the impact of "hahahahaha" is not totally insulting at all (see §5.2 for more information on social distance). In this example we can say that the 2nd line is a form of being dismissive but in terms of being positively dismissive. What we meant is that the receiver is assuring the sender that everything is going to be fine and there is no need to panic. Remember that the texters are close friends and they are aware of how to make things easy for each other when things do not feel

right. So in this sense, the "hahahahaha" response can be interpreted as "don't worry and don't think about it, just stay positive".

In the same vein, look at text 5.4 and you can see that the second response was an indication the receiver was trying to be sarcastic. As we mentioned about social distance, the degree of sarcasm used in text between close friends are not considered threats or condescending because they hold equal status in their friendship and both have established the same level of responses from their communications before. The appended "haha" or elongated "lol" in both sample texts symbolized the degree of dismissiveness and sarcasm with their use of laughter. In other words, the more elongated and appended the laughter is the more sarcastic and dismissive the laughter means.
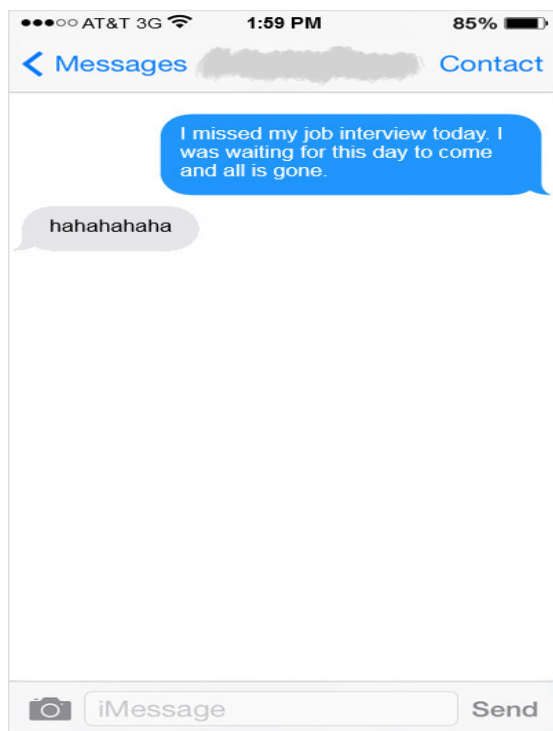
Text 5.3

Text 5.4

5.4   *When it really means laughter*

After we have explored the possible ways laughter is used in texting and what are their corresponding social meaning, we will turn to the real use of laughter in a situation when laughing literally means laughing. The use of laughter in a legitimate laughing intance can be put on a funniness scale. This is a scale that we used to gauge the degree of funniness and what laughter to use when you are texting in this kind of situation. The scale is really simple. You have to respond to either a really funny situation or to a slightly funny one.

In a given situation, you always know what is a funny text and what is not so funny. What constitutes a funny situation is it has to be a shared knowledge from the interlocutors. It can either be a favourite character in a movie, someone in popular culture or anything as long as both of you know the context of what it is about. For instance, in text 5.5 the exchanges are about a familiar guy who comes in the retail store where both texters are working. It is about a weird guy who comes in their workplace and demands a lot of questions and wears colorful shirts. In essence, the flow of the conversation takes place on the funny times when this guy was in the store and the form of their conversation is more of like an inside joke that only them know what it means.
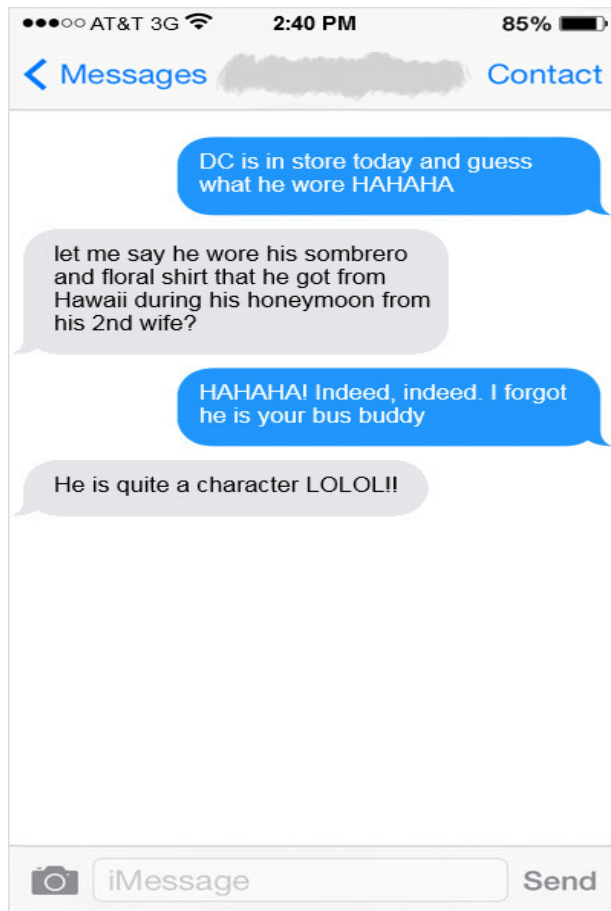
Text 5.5

Evidently in text 5.5 the texters were referring to a guy whom they both know; hence, they shared a knowledge about any peculiarities and funny instances that they can use to talk about him. Maybe you have observed too that "lol" and "haha" are appended and capitalized. The more appended words you put on the laughter it can clearly state a very funny reaction to the given context. It tries to mimic a typical spoken conversation when the speaker is making funny comment and the response was a burst in laughter. The capitalization of the letters have a social meaning too because in texting, the response is not seen by the sender (for more information on non-verbal cues and facial expressions please see §4) so when you are laughing in text you have

to capitalize the laughter in order to highlight it as a receipt from the previous funny comment. It also acts as a cue that the funny comment the sender made was acknowledged and so the expectation is that the receiver has to share his or her own funny comment from their shared knowledge to maintain fluidity of their conversation.

On the other hand, when you are confronted with a slightly funny situation it can be classified as a situation where one of you may not share the funny experience so the funniness level is only high on the one sending or to the one sharing it. In other words, it meant you are talking about something that may not be experienced yet by the other person. So for instance, in text 5.6 it happened in the grocery when the sender dropped a pack of eggs and slid it under the cooler. The sender finds it funny but the receiver has not taken the funniness yet as we can see in the 2nd line. The sender then made another "lol!" on the 3rd line signaling he is amused by what he did and on the 4th line the receiver got the funniness of the situation and made a response with "haha". The difference here is that it took a while for the receiver to acknowledge the funniness of the situation so the context has to be unpacked more so that both texters can share the funny situation.
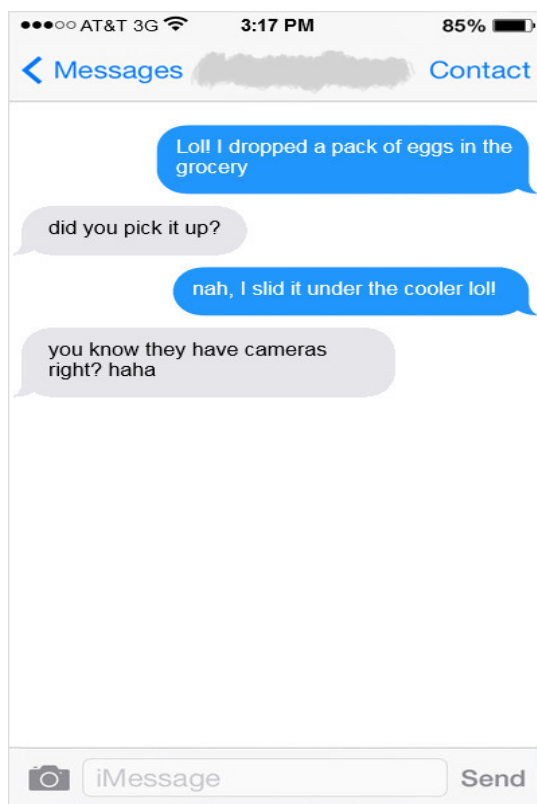
Text 5.6

6 Punctuation

6.1 Introduction

This section focuses on the dynamic characteristics of punctuation in texting. As the practice of texting has become more accessible to more people, and is now the most frequently utilized form of computer-mediated communication, the way we use language has been influenced and changed. The use of punctuation in texting can be used to convey interpersonal communication including tone, pauses, and emotion (Gunraj, Drumm-Hewitt, Dashow, Upadhyay, & Klin, 2016). With such strong pragmatic meaning allocated to punctuation in texting, this section discusses the characteristics particular to punctuation use specific to texting. We will be investigating the use of periods (.), exclamation marks (!), and questions marks (?), and the interabang (!?), comparing their use and meaning within standard, prescriptive English to their use and meaning within texting language.

6.2 Periods

Prescriptively, the period is used to end a sentence in written language. It signals to the reader that thought has ended, or to pause if reading aloud. According to Gunraj et al. (2016), 39% of text messages contained sentences that ended with a period, 54% of texts containing multiple sentences had texts ending non-terminal sentences, and 29% of the message-terminal sentences ended with a period. In texting, the use of periods vary in meaning. This section will discuss the insinuations of not using a period to end a sentence, using one period to end a sentence, using more than one period to end a sentence, and how these could have a suggested interpersonal, or subliminal, meaning.

6.2.1 Without Periods

There are many situations in which the sentence final period is being omitted. In some cases a period will be replaced by an emoticon/emoji (see §3). In many cases a period is simply left out when it could be misconstrued as rude, angry, or sarcastic. The period has recently become colloquially viewed as being aggressive with the receiver. In casual texting, the period will either be replaced by something seen as more playful such as an emoticon (Text 6.1) or a laughter discourse marker (see §3 and §5) (Text 6.2), or just simply omitted entirely.

Text 6.1

This first text shows the omission of a period at the end of a sentence. The second text shows the use of an emoticon in place of punctuation.

Cs get degrees lol

yes they do!! its funny becuz every one in my program is just done lol its halarious to talk to people - female 20
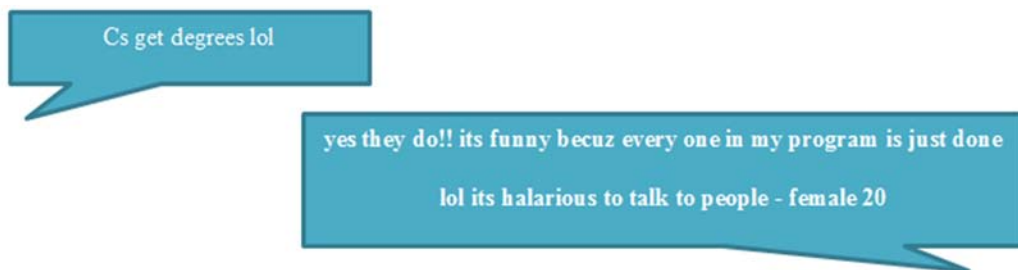
Text 6.2

Writing without periods should only be reserved for texting with a friend as it imposes an informal register. Writing without a period doesn't impose any form of intonation, so this kind of writing is best reserved for people that you know well as sending a text to someone you have a more formal or professional relationship with may be seen as unprofessional or even disrespectful. You can also substitute an emoji for punctuation to make your intonation clear, like a happy face or a crying face, or to add onto your message in a way that doesn't impose a register but rather confirms an attitude, like a thumbs up emoji (see §3 for more).

6.2.2 With One Period

"The period was always the humblest of punctuation marks. Recently, however, it's started getting angry." (Gunraj et al., 2016). We've seen that in many cases, especially in the younger generations that the period is being used less and less in texts. When a period is used its meaning could be interpreted as malicious, sarcastic, or it could be to indicate irritation or anger, as shown in Text 6.3. Sometimes a period will be used if a text message has more than one sentence to indicate the separation of the thoughts (though some people will prefer to use emoticons – see §3 – instead of punctuation in this case, or if the context calls for it). However, among people having casual conversations, text-final periods tend to be omitted, as mentioned in §6.2.1

Um no. Why? -female 20 (asked an uncomfortable question)

Text 6.3

One period can be used a few different ways. When using one period, be aware of how much you're writing. When writing a few sentences, using periods to separate your thoughts is normal and doesn't often impose a negative connotation. When sending a text as one sentence or utterance, only use a period if having a conversation with someone you have a more formal relationship with. When texting someone with whom you have a more formal relationship,

texting using English more in line with its prescriptive use is best to keep a more professional conversation.

When texting a friend or someone you are more familiar with, the period has the most opportunity to be perceived as negative. The period can be used to show frustration, irritation, anger, and/or sarcasm. It can also be used to indicate a lack of desire to continue the conversation. The period is best reserved for arguments or situations when you wish to come across as sarcastic or irritated.

6.2.3   With 2 or More Periods

The use of more than one period can exist two fold. The use of two periods (e.g. '..') is rare as a standalone coupling of period markers. It is, more often than not, a mistake or typo as the person intended either one period or three. The use of three or more period markers is termed "ellipsis" and often indicates a pause for thought or effect. When using ellipses as punctuation, use it to indicate a pause or an unfinished thought. The ellipsis is further discussed and defined in §9.

6.3   Question Marks (?)

The question mark (?) is prescriptively used to indicate the presence of a question. This is presented in spoken word with an upward inflection, or upspeak, in yes-no questions. In written language, the question mark is predicated by the syntactic structure of a sentence. It is often obvious when a question is present by the way the sentence is built, as well as the presence of certain adverbs words such as "how", "why", "what" etc. In the realm of texting, however, the question mark sees a more diverse utilization, including the use of a question mark on a statement, the traditional use of one question mark to indicate a question, and more than one question mark to end a statement or question. This section will also discuss the absence of question marks in sentences syntactically structured as a question.

6.3.1   Statements with Question Mark

Sometimes a statement will be made with a question mark at the end. The use of a question mark in this context doesn't necessarily indicate a question. Statements with a question mark could have two meanings: to indicate confusion or uncertainty or imitate up speak, rather than a question that needs an answer.

my code is emberb1ue I think?
Let me confirm

Text 6.4

Using a question mark as a punctuation marker for a statement is a more informal trend within texting. You would use this informally with a friend or someone you're familiar with the receiver as indication of intonation or prosody can be assumed to be unprofessional or disrespectful. If

you want to denote up speak, as if you were speaking and wanting to convey doubt or confusion, and want to convey it in texting, adding a question mark to your statement would be the best way to do it.

6.3.2   Use of More Than One Question Marks

While a question mark serves its function for indicating a question, in texting it is common to see the use of multiple questions marks to end a question rather than just one. When a question or statement is ended with more than one question mark, it shows more enthusiasm or emphasis than just one question mark alone, as shown in Text 6.5. The use of the question mark does not change; the use of multiple question marks can be paired with a statement that does not syntactically imply an actual question or a statement that is formulated as a question.

Text 6.5
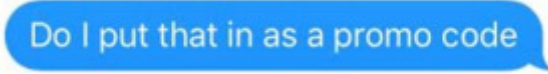
The use of many question marks follows all the same rules as the prescriptive use of question mark as well as statements with question marks. You would use more than one question mark to show enthusiasm, positive or negative.

6.3.3   Questions without Question Marks

Many questions tend to have other markers that show that they are questions, such as wh-questions, or statements beginning with an auxiliary verb such as 'do' or 'will'. In these cases it can be seen as superfluous to add a question mark at the end of these phrases since they are already marked as questions. Taking these types of phrases in texts and adding a question mark at the end can be a sort of extra emphasis on the question, or it can be just a more formal way of expressing said question. Of course, personal style comes into this distinction as well, where some people prefer to be formal rather than informal and will always add the question mark to the end of a question no matter the context whereas some people are more relaxed about the format of their questions.

Text 6.6

When neglecting to use a question mark when you are asking a question, the person you are texting should be someone you're well acquainted with, as it is assumed they know you well

enough to understand your intended message. Leaving out a question mark in a formal exchange can be seen as unprofessional or lazy.

6.4   Exclamation Marks

The exclamation mark is the most uniformly in line with its prescriptive use in relation to texting. It is used after an interjection and meant to signal a higher volume, akin to shouting but not as severe as caps locks (see §3.4). Exclamation marks can also indicate strong feelings or enthusiasm (positive or negative).

6.4.1   Statements with Exclamation Marks

An exclamation mark is generally used to show excitement or enthusiasm in general. It is also sometimes used instead of a period at the end of a sentence in order to make it sound more engaged. Use of an exclamation mark in texting is fairly limited for the most part. It is generally used as it is prescriptively indicated.

Sounds great! I'm so excited to help!

Text 6.7

You can use an exclamation mark whenever you are looking to put some excitement and enthusiasm into it. Though this is a more informal punctuation and used more often in casual exchanges, it can also be used formally. In a formal context, the exclamation mark can still be used, however it is important to be aware of the frequency as too many exclamation marks can seem unprofessional.

6.4.2   Use of More Than One Exclamation Mark

Similar to the section about more than one question mark (see §6.3.3), when a sentence has more than one exclamation mark, it is used to add emphasis, show excitement, or add extra enthusiasm (Text 6.6).

Amazing thank you!!! You will hear from her 😊

Text 6.8

Exclamation marks follow the same rules as the prescriptive use of the exclamation mark, however using more than one isn't grammatically correct. When using extra exclamation marks,

make sure you're messaging someone you have an informal relationship with. While one exclamation mark is acceptable in a formal context, the use of more than one exclamation mark is not acceptable when texting someone you may have a more formal relationship with as it can seem immature and unprofessional.

6.4.3 Interabang

The combination of the question and exclamation marks (usually shown as ?! or !?) tends to be used similarly to the use of more than one question mark. It shows excitement or enthusiasm. Where a question mark would suffice, the interabang is used to combine the enthusiasm insinuated by an exclamation mark with the question mark to create its own marker. The interabang appears at the end of a question or statement and, while the interabang can be substituted for an exclamation mark or question mark in their own respects, it implies a greater emphasis than the question mark or exclamation mark alone (see §6.3.2).

      Note that the rules of punctuation can vary by age and gender. Older people are more likely to utilize the prescriptive standard for punctuation, including periods for short utterances may seem rude, but this is not intentional but rather a generational gap. In the case of gender, women appeared to use multiple punctuation markers for one utterance more frequently than men (e.g. !!! and ???). We also observed that women tend to use emojis more than men to end a sentence, while men were more likely to use text based emoji. Texting style can vary a lot depending on your personal relationship with someone, gender, and age, so do your best to take this into account while writing.

7   Spelling Variation

In this section, we examine the spelling variation that can be found in texting. Variations include creative or phonetic respellings, abbreviations, and acronyms.

These variations may reflect a change in tone, an expression of personal style, levels of formality, playfulness, or simply an attempt to save time and effort. In §7.1 we will look at creative and phonetic spellings. §7.2 covers abbreviations and acronyms. Both sections will explain how to use these variations.

7.1 Creative and Phonetic Respellings

Texters may choose to alter their spelling in order to convey social information or as a means of self-expression. Texting is similar to conversation in many ways, but as a written mode of communication it is inherently lacking paralinguistic cues. Phonetic respelling is one way to help mitigate this, wherein the spelling is changed to mirror how the word might actually be pronounced. This is often accomplished by changing the vowel to indicate a change in tone. This change may express emotions such as disbelief or confusion as in Text 7.1. Here we can see a short exchange where the texter on the left is extremely confused by the other texter's initial messages, using "whut" instead of the standard "what" to express this by mimicking a flat, lower tone of voice. The texter on the right recognizes this to mean that their first messages have not been at all understood, and corrects the following message accordingly.

Similarly, while "yep" is generally seen as upbeat and positive, "yup" is used to signal unhappiness on the part of the sender, as seen in Text 7.2.

Text 7.1

Text 7.2

Alternatively, consonants may be changed. Consonant replacement can be used in order to portray archetypal voices. In Text 7.3, the texter on the left is disappointed to hear their plans won't work out. The texter on the right shows their contriteness by replacing 'r' with 'w'. This is an attempt to imitate a typical child-like voice in the hopes that the "cutesiness" will mitigate any annoyance or anger on the part of the receiver.
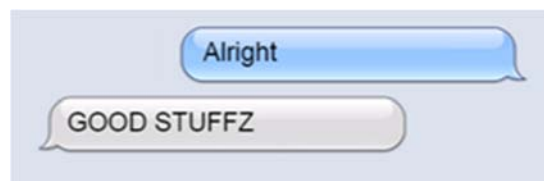
Text 7.3

Colloquial respellings are a mix of creative and phonetic spelling that mimic the pronunciation of certain language varieties, evoke shared identities, and reflect the status of relationships. These respellings may accurately reflect the sender's dialectal speech instead of the more formal standard, expressing a casualness and closeness with the receiver. They may also be an approximation of a groups stereotypical speech patterns for the purpose of playfulness.

Text 7.4 spells "so cute" as "suh cyoot" in an attempt to copy a valley girl type accent in order to express silliness. These kinds of variations are accomplished by letter replacement, deletion, or addition, but there is no one right way to do them. Texters simply attempt to approximate the speech pattern they wish to emulate.

Text 7.4

Finally, purely creative spellings are usually used in very informal relationships for fun, silliness, or to show personal style. These types of variations can differ widely as they are often unique patterns that individual texters have developed. Text 7.5 shows one such pattern. This texter frequently adds a superfluous 'z' to the end of words simply because it is eye-catching and fun. In other cases, 'z' may be used to replace 's', 'is', or contracted 'have' or 'are'. Other patterns may add unnecessary letters as in Text 7.5, rearrange letters, delete them, or replace them.

Text 7.5

It is important to note that variations should not be so extreme as to cause a lack in readability or understandability. The conversation in text 7.1 demonstrates this. Even small changes, if they are

not common, can result in confusion, as in Text 7.6. Generally, decisions about spelling variation are made based on the relationship with the receiver and what the sender assumes they will understand.
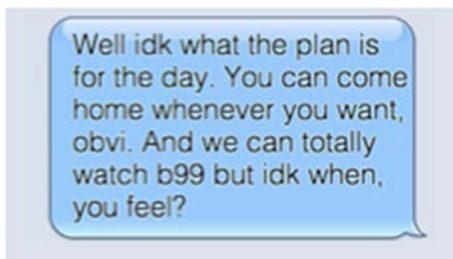

Text 7.6

7.2 *Abbreviations and Acronyms*

Many spelling variations present in texts started because they were easier to type due to the constraints of the technology at the time. When texting first became popular, the only way to type was using the T9 keyboard where the texter would have to press a button several times to get the correct letter. These days touch screens allow a person to use whichever keyboard layout they prefer. The most popular English layout is the QWERTY keyboard so it's easy enough to type full words, especially with autocorrect. Even though it's just as easy to type the full words, short forms are still popular, though not everyone uses them. Short forms can carry social meaning, especially if a person deviates from their personal norm.

Whether or not you use short forms will depend partly on your personal style but can also depend on who you are texting. Abbreviations can indicate register of formality, friendliness and closeness through shared knowledge. Most short forms come across as informal. This means that using abbreviations and acronyms are generally a standard when someone is texting a person they know well and with whom they feel like equals. Some examples of informal standard abbreviations are given in the table below.

Short Form	Full form
Idk	I don't know
Tbh	To be honest
Brb	Be right back
omg	Oh my god
Cuz	Because
Prob	Problem
Plz	Please

Text 7.7 (below on the left) is an example of one that uses "idk." The text was sent between two people who know each other well and have a familial relationship. "idk" for "I don't know", in this context, is a standard abbreviation. A person will most likely spell out the full words when texting someone with whom their relationship is more formal. This parallels how, in a more formal, oral conversation, a person will use fewer contractions when speaking. This formality is exemplified in text message 7.8. Text message 7.8 was sent by the same person but to their boss. The sender types the complete "I don't know" instead of "idk" and that shows the formality and power distance in the relationship.

Well idk what the plan is for the day. You can come home whenever you want, obvi. And we can totally watch b99 but idk when, you feel?

Text 7.7

I know I can reprint it but I don't know the invoice number
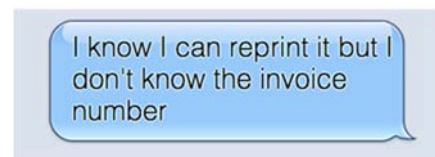
Text 7.8

Another example where not abbreviating is significant is when a person generally does use a short form but chooses to spell out the full word(s). In text message 7.9 (below), you can see that the sender (the same as in texts 7.7 and 7.8) writes "I don't know." Typing the full words takes more effort than their standard acronym so it gives more weight to the words, making it more serious.

HOLY F*** (from mom)

I don't know how I feel about this

Text 7.9

Some short forms used in texts are not as standard across the board but are ones that indicate group membership or shared knowledge between the people involved in the conversation. There is an example of this in text 7.7. The sender says "we can totally watch b99." This short form is not immediately recognizable to anyone so it not only saves time and effort, it also demonstrates a sense of closeness and familiarity because these two people both know what it means.

The word "okay" is slightly different because it is used frequently by many people. The standard in texting seems to be "okay" or "ok" depending on your personal style. There are some deviations from these spelling which carry social weight. Many times you will see "k" on its own or even "kk". 'k' is used to show annoyance or lack of interest, as if the sender couldn't be bothered to spell out the full word. "kk" conversely is much lighter in tone and possibly a signal to move on with the conversation—a quick affirmation. See the examples below.

Text 7.10
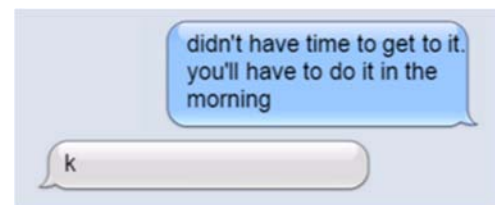
Text 7.11

In both texts one person is telling the other that they didn't have time to do something they said they would and they will do it later. You can see that, in text 7.10, the tone is lighter with the use of "kk," as well as other contextual indicators, whereas, in text 7.11, the person seems much more annoyed.

Not everyone uses abbreviations and acronyms, but if you do choose to, remember that they are generally more informal in register. Generally speaking, you should use them with friends and family. Using the full words when you normally shorten them is reserved for more formal situations or when you need to add emphasis or gravity to what you are saying.

As we have seen, there is a lot of freedom for creativity in spelling variation. Whether or not a texter uses creative or phonetic spelling and short forms is entirely up to their relationships with their interlocutors, their reasons for texting, and their own preferences. It is important to be aware that using phonetic and creative spelling may indicate certain tones of voice, silliness, or an informal register. Short forms are extremely common in texting, and those that are not standardized in formal writing also indicate a more informal register. The choice to not use them may indicate a higher degree of formality, or add gravity to the text's meaning. This section has explored some common patterns encountered when deviating from the standard spelling, but overall variations are down to the individual texters.

8   Letter Repetition

This section looks at a pattern in texting that never occurs in formal writing. The understanding of this pattern is very important to for new texters. Letter repetition involves the repetition of a single letter within a word to indicate some form of familiarity or emphasis. The letters that tend to be repeated are usually a vowel or an end of word consonant, with a preference to consonants such as: 'l', 'r','w', or 'y'.

This explanation of letter repetition will be divided into four sections. §8.1 will explain to a new texter how this pattern can be performed in texting. §8.2 will discuss what factors affect the perception in an instance of letter repetition as well as what social meanings occur because of letter repetition. §8.3 will show how speech patterns affect the perception of letter repetition in texting. §8.4 will show how letter repetition works in words that cannot be pronounced.

Text 8.1 is an example of what letter repetition is and how it is used. Text 8.2 is placed beside it to show that there is a difference in the writing of these texts. How a text like 8.1 will be achieved will be discussed in §8.2 and the meanings of text 8.1 and 8.2 will be further discussed in §8.2.

Text 8.1

Text 8.2

8.1   How to use letter repetition

To use the pattern in letter repetition in texting, select one letter in the last syllable in a phrase final word and repeat it until you feel it matches your emotional sentiment. The most common letters affected by repetition are: stressed vowels, as well as 'l', 'r', 'w' or 'y'. Although multiple letters can be repeated in a single word, it is better to not over use letter repetition and only repeat one letter in a single word. Otherwise the emphasis would be lost if every letter in the word is repeated. As can be seen in text 8.3 the repetition of multiple letters is acceptable but it requires more effort to achieve the same effect that can be done with the repetition of a single letter. Text 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5 all use letter repetition as a positive response to the previous statement. Comparing text 8.5 which has fewer repetitions of the letter 'e' to text 8.4 which has more repetition of the letter 'e', the more times a letter is repeated the more legitimate the emotional sentiment is.

Text 8.3

Text 8.4

Text 8.5

8.2   The social meaning of letter repetition

Letter repetition is used within texting to emphasize emotional sentiment, familiarity, or measurements of time or distance. For example in text 8.6 the 'l' in the word 'all' is repeated to emphasize that the sender's phone has been dying for the entirety of the day. This letter repetition is representing the length of time that the phone has been dying.

Text 8.6

The context of the conversation as well as the word chosen to have a repeated letter heavily influence what sentiment is portrayed through an instance of letter repetition. In text 8.7 the meaning of 'loove youuu' changes depending on the reply given after it. The meaning of 'loove youuu' in 8.7 is sarcastic because there are no stars in the sky to show that the sender of the text actually loves the recipient of the text message. If the text was sent at night instead of the morning like in text 8.8, the meaning of 'loove youuu' would then emphasize the legitimate emotional sentiment of love for the other person. The heart sent by the same person that said

'loove youuu' in text 8.8 proves that the sentiment of love was the original intended sentiment of that sender. Emoticons like hearts are discussed further in §3.

Text 8.7

Text 8.8

Letter repetition is never used in formal writing as a result it is become an indicator of familiarity in the language of texting. Text 8.1 repeats the letter 'y' in the word 'hey' which indicates that the sender of the word 'hey' is familiar with the other person in the conversation. Comparing text 8.1 to text 8.2 the lack of repetition in text 8.2 shows that the conversation participants are in a formal relationship of some sort or are unfamiliar with one another.

8.3   Letter repetition in relation to speech

Many of the restrictions that apply to the pattern of letter repetition in texting are caused by the pronunciation of the word that is affected by this pattern. One notable restriction is on the repetition of consonants that have complete closures such as 'd', 'p', or 'g'. Because these consonants close the airflow, there is no way for them to be pronounced for a longer duration of time. For example if a 'p' is repeated at the end of a word the vowel that precedes the 'p' will still be the pronounced emphasis of the word, because of this there is no purpose in repeating letters such as 'd', 'p', or 'g'.

In words that can be pronounced letter repetition shows that a specific sound should be pronounced or a longer period of time compared to its normal pronunciation. The choice of which letter is repeated can affect the way the word is pronounced. The pronunciation of the word 'sorry' in text 8.9 stresses the vowel 'o' while the sorry in text 8.10 emphasizes the final syllable and the 'y' at the end of the word. As seen in both texts that change in pronunciation can also change which sentiment is perceived by the sender of the text.

Text 8.9

Text 8.10

8.4   Letter repetition in words that cannot be pronounced

While the pronunciation of words is important to the pattern of letter repetition in the language of texting letter repetition interacts with several other patterns that occur in texting to communicate sentiments that cannot be pronounced in speech. In texts that cannot be pronounced, it is almost always the final character that is repeated. Text 8.11 contains a smiling emoticon that repeats 'D' after a colon to indicate that the sender of this emoticon is very happy. This instance of letter repetition interacts with emoticons which are discussed in §3 as well as non-verbal cues and facial expressions which are discussed in §4.

Text 8.11

Texts 8.12 and 8.13 show the contrast in the sender's level of confusion through the repetition of punctuation alone. Punctuation is further discussed in §6. The punctuation is not repeated in text 8.12 which indicates that there is not a lot of confusion of the sender. While in text 8.13 the repetition emphasizes that the sender is more confused compared to the sender of text 8.12.

Text 8.12

Text 8.13

9   Ellipsis

In this section we will examine the various uses of ellipsis (…) in current texting practices. While traditionally in other forms of writing ellipses tend to denote the omission of redundant information, an interruption of speech, trailing off or a pause, there is very little overlap between these established uses and how ellipsis is employed in texting.

Currently, according to our studies, ellipsis appears to be used for three main purposes: indicating emotion, expressing non-verbal cues, and conveying grammatical information. In order to fully instruct new texters on how to best understand and make use of this pattern we will outline each purpose within its' own section, paying special attention to how to recognize and replicate the patterns through the use of detailed explanations and several examples.

In §9.1 we discuss the use of ellipsis in conveying emotion. In §9.2 we touch upon using ellipsis to convey non-verbal information. §9.3 covers ellipsis as a grammatical cue and finally §9.4 addresses additional information pertinent to the topic.

9.1   Indicating Emotion

Showing emotion in texts can be difficult by default of the limitations of written communication. However, despite this limitation, texters have evolved ways of conveying their emotions in other forms, in the absence of body language, facial expression and tone.

Although this can be accomplished through several different means (see §3, §5, and §6) ellipses is perhaps most suited to conveying emotions that are more serious and sincere. As such, in this section, divided into three sub-sections, we will explain the use of ellipses in conveying disbelief (§9.1.1), confusion/uncertainty (§9.1.2) and sympathy (§9.1.3).

9.1.1   Disbelief

In order to convey disbelief when texting, ellipses should occur either alone or text initially (i.e. at the very start of the message). Insertion anywhere else will convey a different meaning (each of which will be discussed in the following sections). It is also important to note that, in some locations, improper use of ellipses will convey no meaning whatsoever, examples generally being, within a single word (ex: Wh…y) and between individual letters either within words or abbreviations (ex: T…T…Y…L or H…e…l…l…o). Please be aware however, that context also plays a factor, as will be discussed later in §9.3.

Beginning with ellipsis occurring alone, in Text 9.1 below we see a short exchange between friends where the friend texting in blue informs the friend texting in white that her brother has, what is perceived to be, a ridiculous homework assignment to complete. The texter in white responds, indicating their disbelief with a single unaccompanied ellipsis. Blue then goes on to assure white that their statement is true and provides evidence, to which white responds with continued disbelief, again through the use of a single unaccompanied ellipsis.

Text 9.1

Next, examining Text 9.2 below, it can be seen that ellipses in text initial position act in exactly the same way. In this example the texter in blue is relating to a friend an odd experience that befell them and conveys their disbelief at the oddness of the situation through the use of text initial ellipsis.

Text 9.2

9.1.2   Confusion/Uncertainty

Continuing on to confusion and uncertainty, while admittedly, when examined closely, the two are slightly different, the general nature of the implicated emotions led to their being grouped together. That being said, texters looking to communicate confusion should note that, in texts indicating confusion, ellipses occur exclusively in the text initial position and are often followed by WH question words such as: who, what, when, where, why and how; as can be seen in Texts 9.3 and 9.4 below; whereas the conditions for uncertainty are slightly different as will be discussed shortly.

In Text 9.3 we can see that the texter in white sent a message that contained some grammatical issues causing the texter in green to become confused and to indicate this confusion through text initial ellipsis (accompanied by the question word "What" and a request for clarification).

In Text 9.4 we see a similar scenario wherein, upon hearing that the word for flamingo used to be a completely different word that bears no similarity to the one in current use, the

texter in blue conveys their confusion through the use of text initial ellipsis and the question word "why".

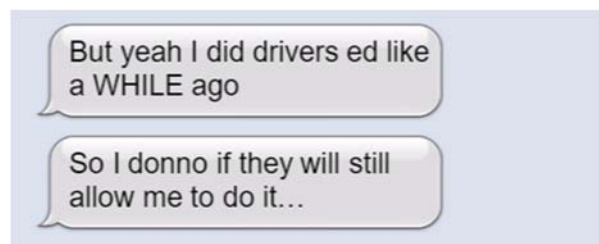
Text 9.3
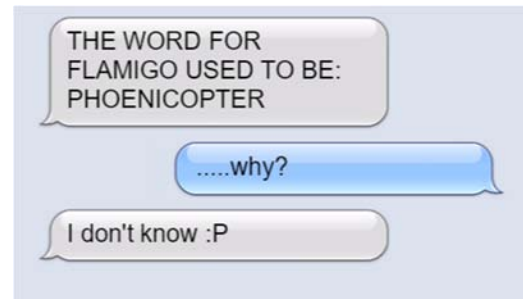
Text 9.4

Looking now at uncertainty, similar to confusion it also makes use of text initial ellipsis, however it is much more common to see it used following certain key indicators such as "ummm", "probably", "maybe", "I don't know" and before "?"; along with, occasionally, text finally (i.e. at the very end of a text message).

Text 9.5 is an example of the most common presentation of uncertainty with ellipsis; in it we see a conversation between two people where the texter in blue is asking the one in white if they'll be attending a party. The texter in white conveys their current uncertainty as to whether or not they can attend by using the key word "maybe" followed immediately by an ellipsis.

Text 9.6 on the other hand shows the slightly less common, text final ellipsis where, in discussing whether or not the texter will be able to finish their in car driving practice lessons due to the large amount of time that has passed, they convey their uncertainty by ending the last message with a text final ellipsis.
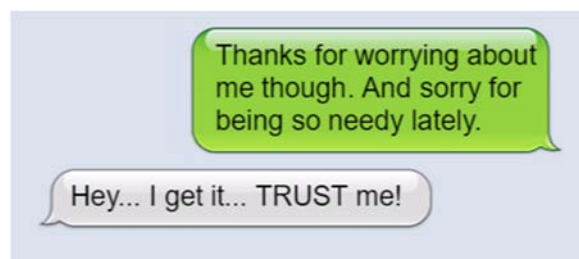

Text 9.5

Text 9.6

9.1.3   Sympathy

Conveying sympathy is perhaps one of the more difficult emotions to express non-corporally without stating it explicitly. However, as the use of periods in texting is often seen as conveying negative emotions such as anger (see §6), the use of ellipses in place of periods and commas has developed special social meaning in that it tends to convey a sense of concern, caring and sympathy towards the recipient.

See example Text 9.7 below where the texter in green is apologizing and thanking the texter in white for all their support lately. The texter in white responds positively, with two ellipses in place of commas, showing both sympathy and care for the sender that may not have come across had commas or periods been used instead.

> Thanks for worrying about me though. And sorry for being so needy lately.
>
> Hey... I get it... TRUST me!

Text 9.7

9.2   Conveying Non-verbal Information/Actions

In a similar vein to emotions, conveying non-verbal information and actions presents a similar problem to texters. While this dilemma is discussed in more detail in §4, ellipses are a part of one of the many solutions to this problem. In particular ellipses are used to represent three specific non-verbal acts: clarifications (§9.2.1), thinking (§9.2.2) and pausing/hesitation (§9.2.3), each of which are discussed in the sub-sections below.

9.2.1   Clarifications

Often when texting we end up saying things that aren't quite one hundred percent true or that we realize could be misinterpreted and as a result we sometimes feel the need to add a clarification.

Sometimes we may be in the middle of typing a message when the reality of the situation changes. In these instances, rather than deleting everything you've written so far, most tend to finish the thought and then continue on to add a clarification. As such, the presence of an ellipsis between two complete ideas/utterances, usually in place of a comma, indicates a clarification is being made.

Take for example Text 9.8 where the texter in white is informing their friend that a baby on the bus had finally stopped crying, however while they were in the process of writing the baby started crying again so they ended the thought with an ellipsis and followed it with a clarification stating that the baby had started crying again.

Text 9.9 has three instances of clarification and begins with the texter in blue informing their friend that they finished an assignment. However, it turns out that they haven't in fact completed the entire assignment so they clarify their first statement by following with an ellipsis and "kinda" as a clarification. Unfortunately, this seems to not be quite true either so this is followed by another ellipsis and "sorta" which is then followed by a more complete clarification, again after an ellipsis, in which they explain that, in fact, they've only finished one part of the assignment and not the entire thing.
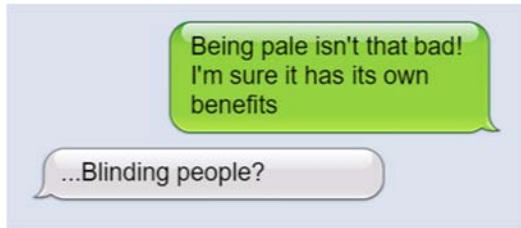

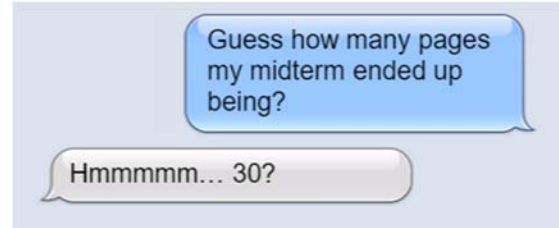**Text 9.8**
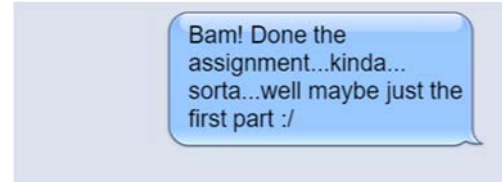
Text 9.9

9.2.2   Thinking

Just like in real life conversation, in texting we often have to pause to consider something someone has said or to think about how to respond. In face to face interaction this silence lets the other person know we are taking what they said seriously and sincerely thinking about our response, however leaving a long silence when texting can be interpreted as a lack of response or that you do not see the conversation as important (see §12). In order to avoid this negative interpretation we make use of ellipses.

To communicate to a person that we are thinking, ellipsis is used either text initially or after key words like "Hmm" or "Uhh". In Text 9.10 we see an instance of the first option, where the ellipsis occurs text initially. In this conversation the two friends are talking about the one friends' lack of tan, with the texter in green reassuring the texter in white that there's nothing wrong with being pale and that it likely has hidden benefits. The texter in white shows that they are thinking about the possible pros of being pale through their use of text initial ellipsis before they make a somewhat sarcastic suggestion as to a possible benefit (i.e. that it is good for "blinding people").

Sample two (Text 9.11) on the other hand shows the use of ellipsis after a key word. In this situation the texter in blue is asking the texter in white to guess the number of pages in their midterm paper. The texter in white then shows they are thinking about what the possible page count could be by using the key word "Hmm" followed by an ellipsis, before making their guess.
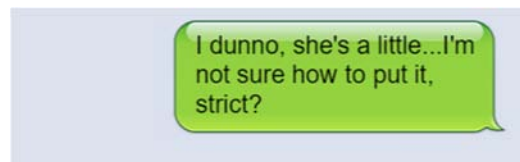
Text 9.10

Text 9.11

9.2.3 Pausing/Hesitation

Similar to other forms of written communication (specifically written dialogue), texting also makes use of ellipses to indicate a pause/hesitation, with the general meaning seeming to be to indicate that a person is hesitant to reply, usually (but not always) because what follows the hesitation is something negative.

To communicate this hesitation/pause, there are two possible options, the first being that the ellipsis is placed after a fragment or incomplete thought and is followed by a continuation of that thought, or, option two is to put the ellipsis text initially; however this is much less common.

Starting with Text 9.12 we see an example of the more common usage, ellipsis after a sentence fragment. In this exchange the texter in green is trying to describe someone to their friend but the description they are about to provide is a little unflattering. As such they show their hesitation to be rude in describing the person by placing an ellipsis after the first fragmented part of the sentence before they reluctantly continue on to complete the idea afterwards.

Text 9.12

Comparatively, Text 9.13 demonstrates the uncommon text initial pattern with the texter in blue asking the texter in white whether or not they know how to get to a particular restaurant or if they should bring another means of getting directions (i.e. a GPS). The texter in white, aware that their answer is negative and perhaps the opposite of what the texter in blue would like to hear, uses initial ellipsis before replying to the question to show their hesitation in revealing this fact.
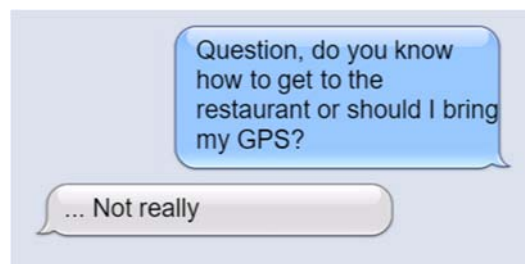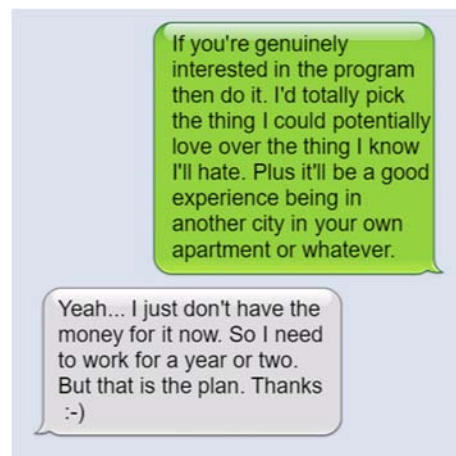

Text 9.13

9.3   Acting as a Grammatical Cue

9.3.1   Elongation of a Sound

Although there are other, more common, ways to indicate the elongation of a final sound/letter (see §8) it should be noted that, when the sender is trying to convey a more serious or sincere pronunciation of the elongated sound rather than a sarcastic or whiney tone, ellipsis tends to be preferred.

Typically in these instances the ellipsis is placed at the end of the word being lengthened (usually "hmm", "umm", "okay" or "yeah") to indicate that its reading is slightly more drawn out. It is important to note that this usage often overlaps with others such as indicating "Thinking" (discussed in the previous section) and that it is possible for an ellipsis to have more than one interpretation (this issue is discussed further on in this section in §9.4.3).

Examining Text 9.14 below, we see a conversation between two friends where the texter in green is encouraging the texter in white to pursue additional schooling in a program that interests them rather than immediately starting in the workforce in a job they hate. The texter in white shows a sad sort of agreement by using the ellipsis after "Yeah" to draw out the pronunciation and convey the seriousness of their tone. Use of letter repetition instead in this case (i.e. Yeahhhh) might come off as more frustrated or sarcastic in comparison.
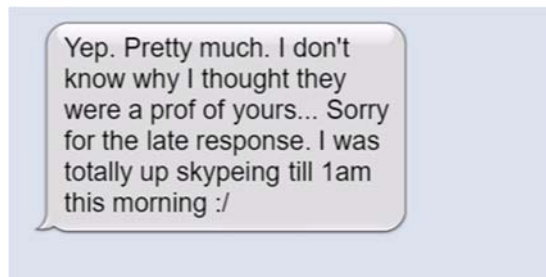

Text 9.14

9.3.2   Subject Change

Changing subjects, just like in everyday conversation, can sometimes be difficult or awkward to achieve if done too abruptly, as this can leave other participants in the conversation feeling lost and confused. As a result, ellipsis is used in order to quickly and easily indicate that a complete change of subject is occurring, without having to type out an explanation or use lead-ins like "by the way" or "on another note".

In order to achieve this, the ellipsis is placed between two complete, unrelated ideas. For example, in Text 9.15 below we see that the texter in white is talking about how they mistakenly thought the recipient had had a class with a certain professor before. They then, following the

end of that thought, use an ellipsis to bring up a completely different subject, which in this case is an apology for their failure to reply to the opposing texters' previous message within a reasonable time frame (see §12 for more information on appropriate time delays in responding).

Text 9.15

9.3.3   Indicating a Continuation

Sometimes, in order to let the recipient of a text know that our story hasn't finished so that they refrain from responding to the individual pieces before it is told in its' entirety we will use ellipsis to indicate that there is more to come. This is because other methods of indicating that a continuation is to follow often take up more space (which can be a concern if texters have character limits) or are potentially more time consuming to type out.

Because of this, a text final ellipsis after a very long text, especially one which comes after a obviously unfinished sentence fragment (ex: And then… , So I said… , etc.) is preferred for indicating to the recipient that the story will continue/that the sender is not finished "talking" and that they need to wait to respond.

This phenomena is demonstrated in Text 9.16 below where the texter in green is composing a rather long text about an incident they saw at a nearby elementary school and wants to let the receiver know that they haven't finished explaining what happened quite yet. In order to communicate this, they end the first half of the message with a text final ellipsis which occurs in the middle of a sentence fragment (i.e. following an "and"), clearly indicating that there is more to come.

Text 9.16

9.4   Additional Information

9.4.1   Length of Ellipsis

It is important to note that the length of an ellipsis, while traditionally three dots, can be represented as anywhere from two to nine or more dots depending on the texter's personal style. This number may be a multiple of three, as would traditionally be expected, or it may not, it all depends on the sender.

In this way, multiple ellipses in a row (………) may, in some cases, serve as an intensifier (ex: Hmm……… indicates more time spent thinking than Hmm...). However it is also possible that the use of multiple ellipses is simply a stylistic choice devoid of any additional meaning (for more on repetition see §8). This is why it is important to be familiar with those you are texting in order to accurately decipher their messages, as will be mentioned in the sub-section below (Personal Style).

Parallel to this it is also good to be aware of the fact that some messaging applications automatically format the use of three dots in a row to become the slightly closer together ellipsis, and some even automatically insert a space immediately afterwards which may or may not have an effect on a person's texting habits that is unrelated to their personal style and instead due to the applications' formatting settings.

9.4.2   Text Forthcoming Indicator

While not technically a voluntary aspect of texting, several texting applications, such as those installed on IPhones, make use of the ellipsis as an indicator to show that a participant in the message is typing. This is done in order to avoid participants in a conversation unwittingly interrupting each other, or assuming the other has failed to reply after a significant amount of time has passed when, in fact, a reply is forthcoming.

Different applications tend to choose different stylistic representations, however all platforms that offer this feature seem to favor the use of the ellipsis, examples being Text 9.17 below which shows an IPhone iMessage conversation, where an animated ellipsis appears (with each of the dots darkening in turn from left to right repeatedly) when the opposing texter is typing; and Text 9.18, which is a snapshot of a Facebook chat conversation (which while not part of traditional texting can be accessed using a cellphone) where, although they do explicitly state that the other party is typing, they also accompany this statement with a small picture of an ellipsis in a speech bubble.
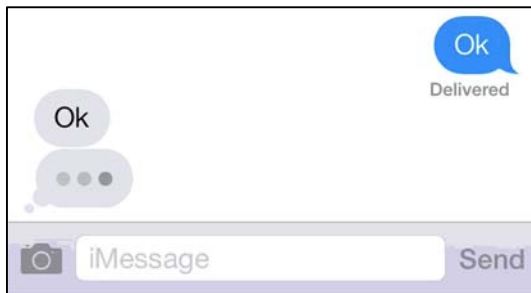
Text 9.17

Text 9.18

9.4.3 Personal Style

Lastly, although we attempt to be as comprehensive as possible in outlining the rules and uses of ellipses, it is important to note that these are observations about the general population and may not hold true in every case every time. Additionally, there is often overlap between potential interpretations of an ellipsis, making it important to have a good grasp of the participants and the context of the conversation in order for accurate interpretations to be made.

As people become more comfortable with texting they tend to develop their own personal styles. As such, it is necessary to get to know those you text and familiarize yourself with their style in order to accurately interpret what each individual instance of ellipsis means for them.

That being said, it is also important to develop your own personal style as well and find what works best for you; don't feel like you are required to use ellipses to express things like sympathy if you think an emoticon suits your personality better. Experiment and see what works for you!

10   Codeswitching

The purpose of this report is to present information in this section, we explain how to code-switch in texting, based on our own experiences and findings. The texts used for this project were based off three languages: Arabic, Bemba, and English. Arabic is a language that hails from several Middle Eastern and part of some Northern African countries. Bemba is a language from the country Zambia in the Southern part of Africa. Below is a series of text we gathered and described from conversations in our phones that used code-switching. English appears in black font while Arabic and Bemba appear in red.

Code-switching can be defined as moving back and forth between languages within the same sentence or conversation. To code-switch, texters usually mix different words and sentences of two or more languages together, or add them as the initial, middle or the end word/phrase/sentence. This is done for several reasons. For example, it can be done for convenience when a word or phrase in one language is too long to type or when it is quicker to access mentally. This would be executed for some similar reasons when speaking or writing. However, in this section, we intend to display how it is done through text messaging and why. In the next section, §10.1, we will describe how this pattern is used with practical examples. Each example will have its usage instruction. In §10.2 we will talk about some reasons people code-switch with different examples that someone may encounter during texting, depending on how formal or informal their text conversation is.
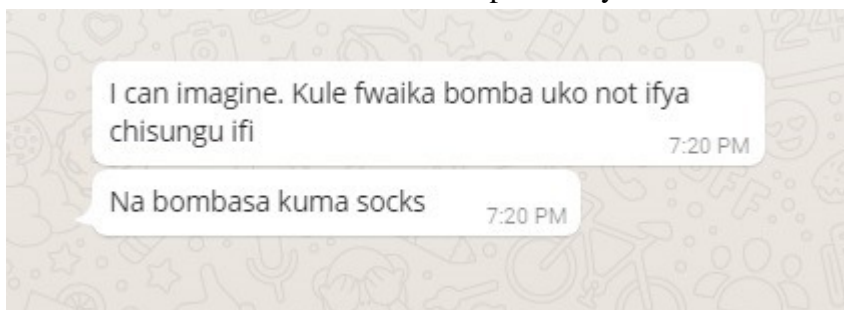
10.1   How to code-switch

Codeswitching in texting can be done by anyone regardless of age. For codeswitching between English and Bemba/Arabic, the texter can either add a Bemba/Arabic word/phrase in an English sentence and/or vice versa at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the text. We assume that this is the way it is done between any two languages being code-switched in texting. This can be done to show playful moods or seriousness within the text, to display social distance or closeness, or for emphasis on something.

The texter can initiate codeswitching within their text. However, it can only be done if both texters have the two (or more) languages in common. Also, not anything and everything can be code-switched, as we will discuss further on in this section. To identify the languages within the text, we will call the dominant one the primary language and the inserted one, the secondary. To begin, add the word/ phrase of the secondary language to the primary language where it fits. For example, adding 'Shopkins' to the end of 'عندهم' to code-switch. Be aware though that the Arabic alphabet is different from languages that use the Latin alphabet for their writing system. Because Arabic uses its own script, when texting, texters may have to switch their keyboard between the two languages or spell out the secondary language word in the primary language. The example can be seen in Text 10.1.
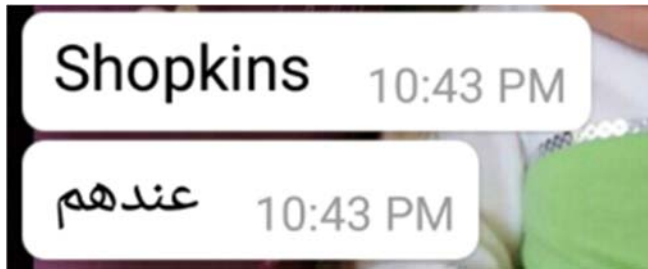
Text 10.1

In the example above (Text 10.1) the texter uses English letters to spell out an English brand within an Arabic conversation. So the primary language here is Arabic and the secondary language is English. In Text 10.2, both languages use the standard English alphabet so there is no need to switch keyboards. In this example, Bemba is the primary language and English is the secondary. The first phrase is in English, then we have Bemba. Notice that here, you have the English word "not" in the middle of the first Bemba phrase, then you have the word "socks" at the end of the second one. We will explain why this is so in the next section.
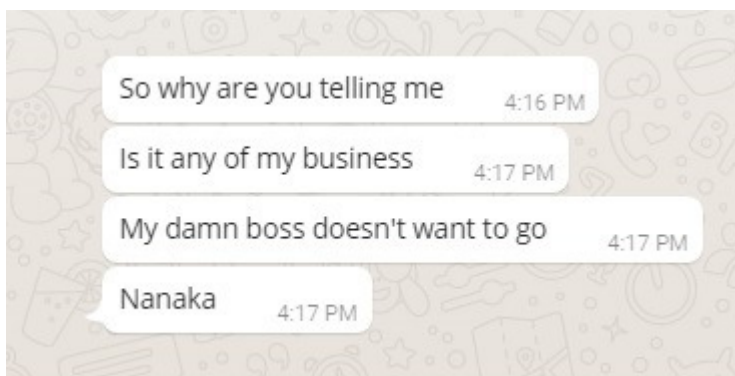

Text 10.2

10. 2   Reasons to code-switch

In the previous section, we showed *how* to code-switch. This section looks at some reasons as to *why* texters may code-switch. After we gathered our text samples, we looked at the main reasons for code-switching. We identified three: emphasis, efficiency, and lexical knowledge. Texters code-switch when there is shared knowledge. Under shared knowledge, there could be several subsets. The ones we listed that the texter may use are swear words, pop-culture references (see text 10.1 as example) and contextual knowledge. Below are examples.

Text 10.3

In text 10.3, the swear word used might be out of preference for what the texter knows. But note that the swear word that is Arabic is typed in English letters instead of using the script for it. The use of the word might be preferred but not switching the keyboard is convenient. For pop-culture references like in text 10.3, a texter can use such a term in the secondary language if there isn't any word for it in the primary language. Pop-culture references may be a word or phrase made popular by people often referring to it. When looking at shared contextual knowledge, both the texter and the recipient of the text must have prior knowledge to make meaning out of the text. For example, in text 10.4, the sender of the text sends a message saying that his boss does not want to leave work. The receiver of the texts knows that the senders of the texter is at work, however, they are tired and want to leave but the person has to wait for his boss to leave first. The texter sends another text saying he is tired but in a secondary language. Had he just sent a text saying "Nanaka", the recipient still knows that they are tired but may not know why it matters.
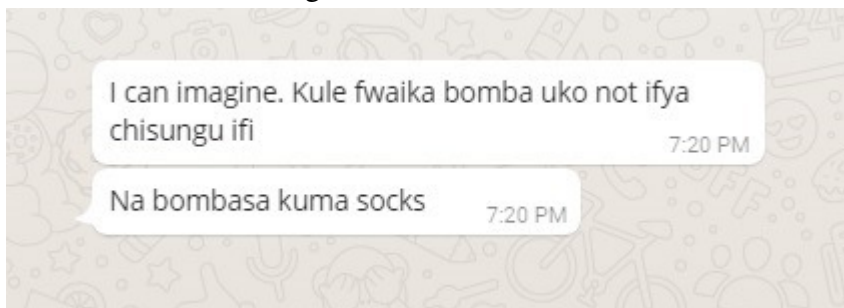

Text 10.4

Texters can also code-switch when they want to signal subject change. The texter can either send a text having both languages in one text separated by a period, or in the primary language first then send a different text in the other language immediately after as shown in text 10.5.
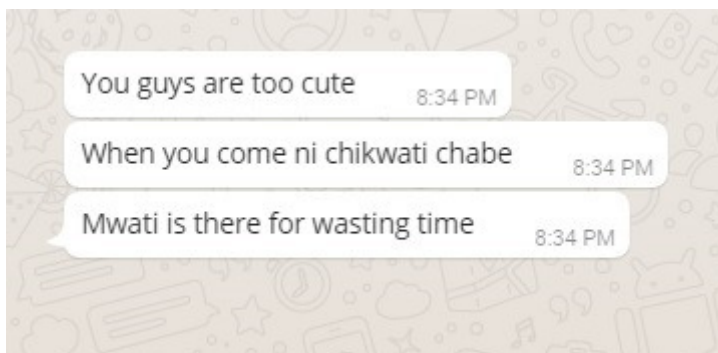
Text 10.5

A texter may also code-switch to shorten phrases, sentences or the overall text message. In text 10.6, the texter uses English to shorten the text.

Text 10.6

Writing "I can imagine" in Bemba would be a longer sentence, taking up much more space, so writing it in English is faster for the texter. (Please note that this might vary for other languages, therefore it might be vice versa.)

In certain languages, there are some words that can be used like punctuation marks or for emphasis. In text 10.7, the word "mwati" in Bemba is used to emphasize the question which is rhetorical.

Text 10.7

Overall, we came to realize that mostly, codeswitching in texting can be done for convenience and often, it is very informal. See text 10.8.

Text 10.8

The text is casual between friends. This can be noticed by the use of the word "man" in English which generally means friend in slang. The first word is an Arabic word written using English letters and a number that represents a certain sound in Arabic. This is explored further in §11.

In sum, for code-switching, the texter may choose to code-switch depending on whom they text. Relationships and formalities can be displayed through this pattern of texting. Our environment may influence how we text and just how much we can code-switch. For us, English is our default when it comes to texting and so we use it more often. Not only does it come naturally when texting, but unlike texting in Arabic or for example, Chinese, it does not require a change in keyboard. Codeswitching may come into play when there is a change of relationships, subjects, formalities, or even environments. If the texter has no time to chat via text, they may only text in one language for convenience and efficiency. We hope this information on codeswitching was helpful and that any reader could learn a little bit about code-switching in texting.

## 11   Codeswitching using English numbers in Arabic

In this section, we highlight interesting aspects concerning the English and Arabic dialects and how they are employed into texting. In contrast to §10 on codeswitching in general, this section focuses on a writing system that involves the insertion of English numbers and symbols in substitution for Arabic counterparts that do not exist in the English language. Modern standard Arabic was never used within a digital mediated context, so as a result, a new form of communication was created. Furthermore, this language, termed "Arabizi", is a blend of codeswitching utilizing conversational Arabic written in English numbers and letters. Arabizi was originally popular with those in the Middle East who had been educated and lived abroad in countries where the first language was English, hence the merging between both the two languages. This code switching system is exclusive to texting and social media use, and while other forms of code switching can be used verbally this form will never be used in spoken language or traditional written texts. In this writing approach, there are several English numbers that represent specific sounds in Arabic. For example, the number 7 represents the sound (haa) in Arabic; however, the difference between these sounds is that in Arabic there is a heavy stress on the H. In §11.1, we will illustrate how to use this "Arabizi" code switching technique with the application of various texting examples. In addition, §11.2 will be based on a discussion about the social meaning behind this technique, including three major aspects the texter might come across such as formality/informality, group membership, and cross cultural communication for non-Arabic speakers.

### *11.1   How to use insertion of English numbers in codeswitching*

The chart below showcases the relationship between the English numbers and their Arabic counterparts, as well as the description of the sounds they produce in English. Using this guide, we will explain both how Arabizi texting is produced, and how non Arabic speakers can learn to use it. Written Arabic has 28 letters which include sounds that are not found in English. Some of these common sounds are represented with the usage of the Arabic numbers displayed in this chart.

| Arabic Letter	Transcription English Number	Comments
ح	7	**the letter Haa' looks quite similar to a 7**
خ	5, 7'	**the apostrophe represents the dot on the letter khaa'; alternatively the numeral <5> is used**
ص	9	**imagine a <9> lying on the side, in which case the numeral looks very similar to the letter Saad**
ض	9, 9'	**the apostrophe represents the dot on the letter Daad**
ط	6	**the shape of the numeral <6> is not too different from the shape of the letter Taa'**
ظ	6, 6'	**the apostrophe represents the dot of the letter Zaa'**
ع	3	**the letter 'ayn looks like a mirrored <3>**
غ	8	**the numeral <8> represents the letter ghayn**

The most common numbers that are used within this written form of communication are 7, 3, 5, and 8. Each number has a unique Arabic sound that does not exist in English so it is written in number form or spelled out. In most cases within texting, these sounds are written as numbers. The number 7 represents the sound 'Haa' in English yet has a heavy stress on the 'H' when speaking Arabic. For example, "7abibe" in Arabic portrays an expression of love to a person and is equivalent to "habibe" in English, except that the initial 'haa' sound is not quite captured with the English spelling. Furthermore, the number 3 is used in Arabizi for the sound "Ayn" in Arabic, which may be an English "A". For example, "3arabi" which means Arabic can also be represented as "Arabi" in English written form. The number 8 is used for the sound "ghayn" in Arabic which represents the letters "Gh" in English. For example, "8alye" in Arabic means special, and can be written as "ghalye" in English. Moreover, the number 5 represents the sound "Khaa" in English and is pronounced in English as "Kh". For example, "5alene" in Arabic means "let me", which can also be represented as "khaleene" using English letters.
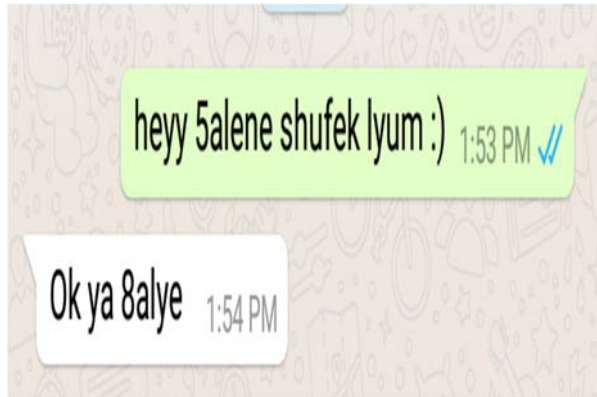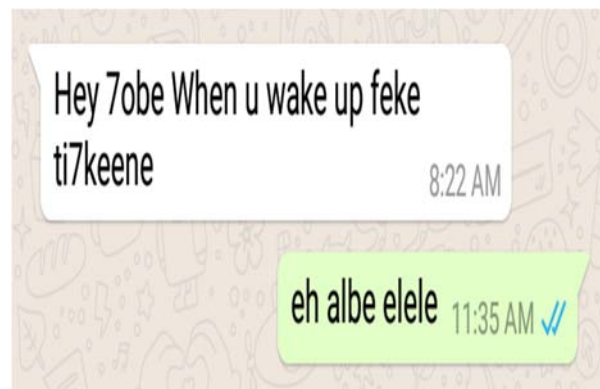
Text 11.1
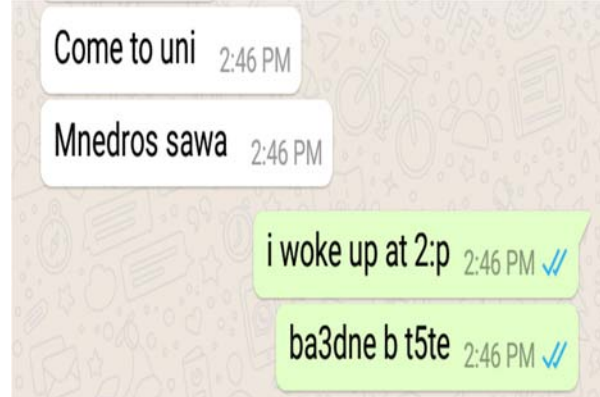
Text 11.2
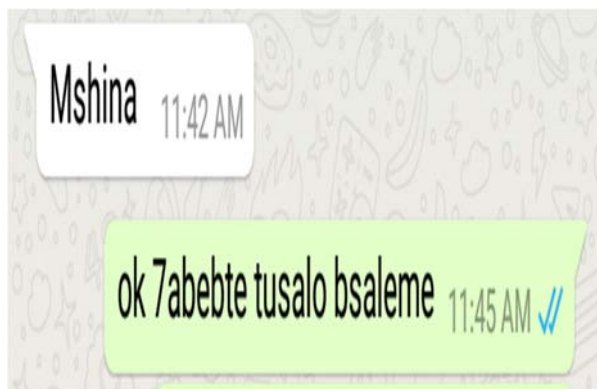
Text 11.3

Text 11.4

*11.2   Variations illustrating social meaning*

11.2.1 Group membership

Arabizi is a common trend used for texting that has largely spread among young Arabs who use Arabic numerals and Latin characters to communicate and express their feelings which they cannot do using classical Arabic writing. The younger generation of Arabic and English bilinguals use Arabizi because it makes it easier for them to communicate and blend in with other group members that use that same writing system. Furthermore, it is easier for them to access an English keyboard which they are used to rather than an Arabic keyboard which is more difficult and affects their communication within texting. However, the older generation feel that Arabizi has affected their traditional language by weakening it and fear the consistent use of Arabizi because it might even replace traditional Arabic in the near future. Some even fear that the young generations' use of this addictive writing system may be the cause of their lacking their traditional writing system, and also leads to their language loss in Arabic.

11.2.2 Formality/Informality

Arabizi varies across diverse groups of people, usually involving the younger generation of Arabic and English speakers. Although Arabizi is only a form of written communication in

texting, it is similar to verbal communication in the sense that formal and informal communication are present and are influential factors when it comes to using the Arabic and English code switching system. Formal texts, which often avoid the use of the Arabic numbers are mostly used with the older generation due to the notion that the Arabizi is perceived as a "slang" form of communication. As mentioned before, avoidance of the use of numbers with elders is more common within this texting approach since elders do not adapt to Arabizi and do not find it convenient in the ways the younger texters do. In addition, formal texts also vary in the closeness of a relationship the texter has with the receiver of his/her messages, and that also affects the choices in language use, greetings, and personal style. On the other hand, informal texts consist of more utilization of English number substitutions for Arabic sounds, rather than the written form of the sounds of those numbers. For example, in an informal text a person is more likely to use the number "7", rather than write out the sound that number produces which would be "Haa". Informal texts are also influenced by the closeness of relationships, and in that sense affects word choices within texts, greetings, and a texters personal style when texting.
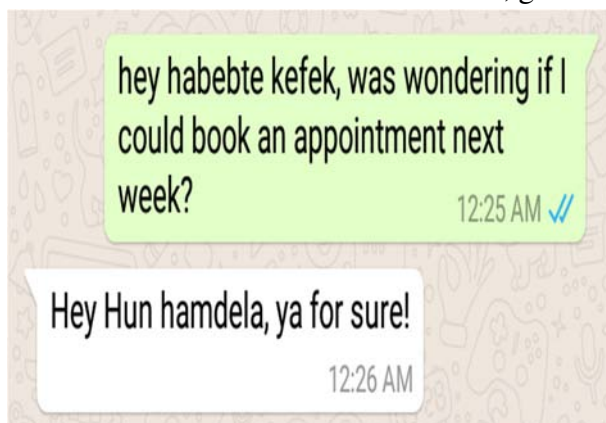
Text 11.5
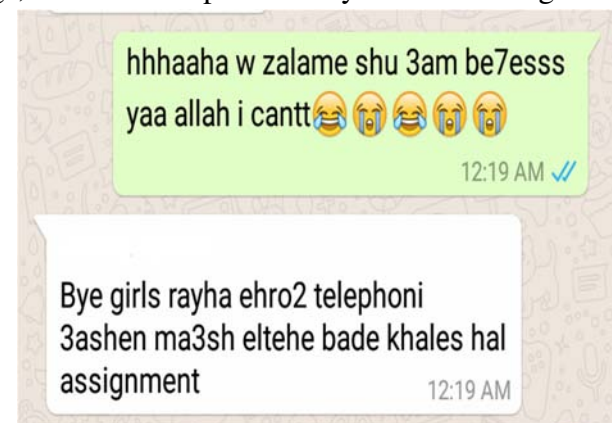
Text 11.6

11.2.3 Cross Cultural communication

The prominence of Arabizi holds great implications for cross- cultural communication and second language learners. Due to its wide use, Arabizi is common among all levels of Arab society and nowadays has even adapted into non-Arab society. In addition, English speakers seeking to learn Arabic more can use Arabizi as a stepping stone to help them understand Arabic pronunciations in similar ways that other codeswitching writing systems do. For example, "Hanyu pinyin" is used to help children and second language learners learn Chinese. According to Lee et al. (2011), seeing pinyin on screen can help learners learn more quickly. Perhaps the same will be true of Arabizi with the utilization of this guide and all the symbols that are showcased. Moreover, a non-English speaker who can become familiar with Arabizi can learn to communicate with others in Arabizi without needing to actually speak Arabic.

12   Text Response Delay

For this section of the guide, we will be focusing on text response delay, and how we use delays in our text to signify social meaning. The first section, §12.1, will be a brief introduction. §12.2 and §12.3 will outline the main differences between 2 main kinds of text. §12.4 and beyond will be a set of loose guidelines to help you on your way to using delays appropriately in texts.

12.1   Introduction

As mentioned above, this section of the guide is to provide an introduction on how to use and interpret delays during a text conversation. Depending on what the situation is, delay in a text conversation can mean many different things. Text communication allows users to communicate with each other very quickly. This did not use to be the case, but because of improvements made to cellphone technologies, messages are delivered basically instantaneously to the receiver; this allows users to have text conversations in real time. However, the nature of text conversation is different; unlike spoken conversation, we are not limited to the range of things we can do whilst holding a conversation. In other words, we are able to multi task a lot more when we are having text conversations, and the amount of attention we give to our texts, shows in the amount of delay between responses. If someone is responding to your texts instantly with long, thought out replies, you can assume that he or she is doing little else but tending to that text conversation. Conversely, if someone is responding every few hours or so, with one word replies, chances are, they are not really interested in the conversation or they are really busy with something else. Another scenario could be that the person you are texting might want to end the conversation with you, but wants to avoid hurting your feelings so he or she is simply replying slowly in hopes that you would stop texting them. There are several factors that influence the amount of time expected between texts, one of the biggest factors being social distance. In the sections below, we will provide a few examples of delayed response between people of different social distances and explain how to interpret and respond to them.

        Before we get to that, there is an important distinction to be made. There are two main types of texts to keep in mind: purpose driven texts and social driven texts. Understanding the differences between these two is crucial in interpreting and using delays properly.
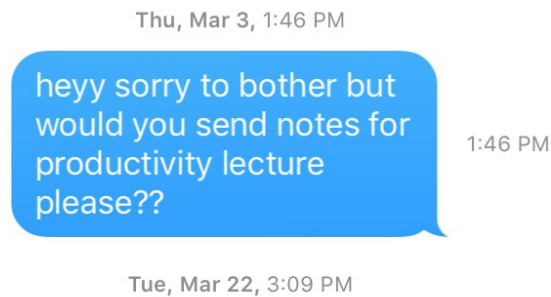
12.2   Purpose Driven Text

Texting can be used for two main functions; purpose driven and social driven. Purpose driven texts are used as a means of communication. Since texting is virtually instantaneous, text communication is a great way for communicating quickly and discreetly without much notice of others. When engaged in this type of text conversation, users on both ends usually expect a small amount of delay between responses. This is due to the fact that the conversation is a means to an end for both parties and they are trying to accomplish something, be it setting up a meeting time

for lunch or a reminder to pick up milk on the way back from work. Remember, when engaged in purpose driven text conversations, try your best to respond quickly or run the risk of appearing disinterested or rude.
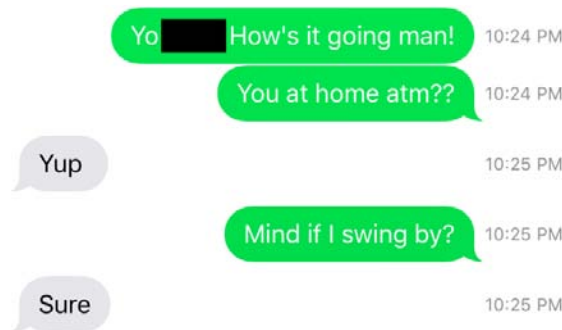
Text 12.1

As you can see from text 12.1, the initial texter wants to meet up with a friend. In this scenario, both participants have the intention of getting something done. As a result, we were both are invested in the conversation and expected quick replies from one another. Failure to do so would be considered rude and harmed the social relationship. Notice the lack of greetings from the receiver (grey, text 12.1). This is also characteristic of purpose driven texts since the purpose is to accomplish something, not to socialize. Consider this next case.

Text 12.2

The person who sent this text (12.2) expected a quick reply as the message was a purpose driven one, something of importance or significant. From the time stamp, you can see that the receiver never even replied to the message. This would be a failure to respond to a purpose driven text in a timely fashioned and might have put strain on the social relation because of it. So remember, regardless of social distance, when engaged in purposed driven text, it is best to respond quickly. Also it is unnecessary to add in too many greetings (see §2) or express feelings (see §3 and §4).

12.3   Social Driven Texts

Social driven texts are completely different from purpose driven texts. They are still a means of communication, but it is mainly 'for fun'. For social driven texts, the content of the messages is

usually akin to the chit chat you would hear at a coffee shop: people telling each other how their day was, how a customer was being rude to them, etc. In spoken conversation, how you talk about your day and recount events to your mum, compared to your boss, would be very different. Similarly, in text, how we carry out casual/social conversations varies from person to person, depending on the social context. In other words, social distance affects how we converse in text.

For the purpose of this guide, we will be splitting up social distances into 3 categories: acquaintance, close relationship/romantic partner, and potential love interest. Within these categories, our expected response times and how it can affect our interlocutor can vary a lot. We will tackle each of these categories one at a time.

12.4   Social Driven – Acquaintance

Text 12.3

This is an example (text 12.3) of two acquaintances trying to chat and maybe hang out for a bit. As you can see from the time stamps, each 'conversation session' lasts a short duration, either in 1 or 2 texts, followed by a large gap of time. Neither one of them are is expressing any annoyance that the other person did not respond, nor is there is any follow up to the responses. Due to the comparatively larger social gap between these two texters, they did not invest too much time into the conversation. This was a mutual understanding and no one was upsetting at the other for not replying.
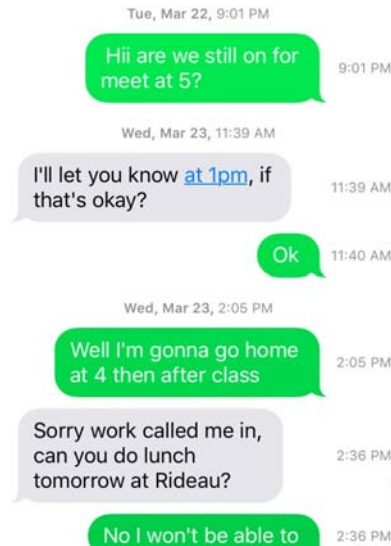
Text 12.4

In this example (12.4), a similar situation is happening. Person in green is trying to meet up to hang out, and person in grey tells them they will let them know at 1pm. 2pm rolls by and person in green gets nothing. Green then notifies grey that she is going to go home and doesn't bother to try to reschedule. Since the social distance was relatively large, the delay in response meant little to person in green and she just decided to alter her plans. There was also a lack of follow up from both sides, as you can see grey responds half an hour later to the change in plans. Both users were not invested in the conversation and delays were acceptable. Remember, when having a text conversation in text with an acquaintance, it is not of the utmost importance to respond quickly and the expectation is not there. Furthermore, if no response is heard, further inquiry is usually not called for.

12.5   Social Driven – Close relationship / Romantic Partner

Just like in spoken conversation, when talking to a close friend or romantic partner, we tend to use less formalities and cut each other off in speech simply because we are so excited to talk to each other. We observe less politeness strategies and freely talk speak our mind.

Texting is no different, and the way we use delays for this social distance is more aggressive. There is the expectation that, because the person you are talking *should* be more emotionally invested into the relationship, he or she should respond within a reasonable time, and if they fail to do so means green lights for us to badger them until they respond. Note that you would not do this with an acquaintance simply because it might be seen as rude, however, social distances do change over time depending on how your relationship with that person has developed.

Text 12.5

In this example, 12.5, green and grey are having a conversation about their day. Notice the time stamps. At 1:55, green asks a question, at 1:56, grey responds. Green follows up with another response at 1:56 but doesn't get an immediate response. After a mere 5 minutes, green starts pestering grey to respond, seeking attention. For this social distance, it is okay to fire off rapid fire texts to try to get attention and is an acceptable thing to do, sometimes even found to be humorous.

Text 12.6

In this example, 12.6, blue and grey are making plans to meet up. Grey is confused at the plans, and blue replies sarcastically with 'uh yeah….?' Using the ellipses to reflect inflection (See §9 for more details). Then blue follows up with another response, expressing her confusion. This example is not as extreme as text 12.5 but is similar in the way the person on the delayed response side expressed their feelings, unlike texts 12.3 and 12.4 where no follow up was sent.

Text 12.7

Here is another example, 12.7, of an extreme case of responding to delay in texts. Grey is trying to figure out what to buy at the grocery store and bombards blue with messages. But because blue was taking a nap, he failed to respond appropriately for this social distance; there was an expectation of quick response. So blue apologizes and explains why there wasn't a response sent. This is in contrast to text 12.3 where green/blue responds days later to a text without explanation of the gap in time.

*12.6   Social Driven – Potential Love Interest*

There are many 'lists' constructed on the internet about the 'top 10 mistakes when texting your crush' or 'what to do when texting your crush'. This social relationship is special in a sense where you want to create a sense of familiarity with this person, but you still don't know them well enough to know where the boundaries lie. In this situation, it is best to gauge when to reply by looking at the content of the responses.
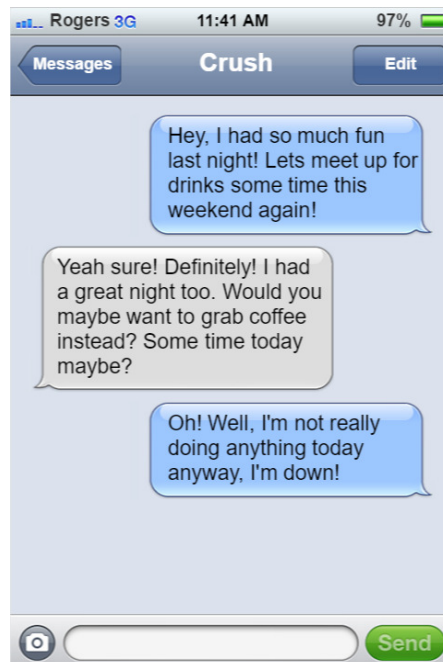

Text 12.8

This screen shot is just one of the many sites on the internet giving advice on response speed. When it comes down to it, it's all dependant on the content. If the person you are texting is responding at a reasonable speed, 10-15 minutes, and responding in thought out sentences, then you can safely assume that the other person is at least interested in the conversation and is

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actively engaging in the conversation. But if the person is responding in a very off hand, one-lined manner, then you can safely assume that this person is either very busy or is just not very interested in the conversation.
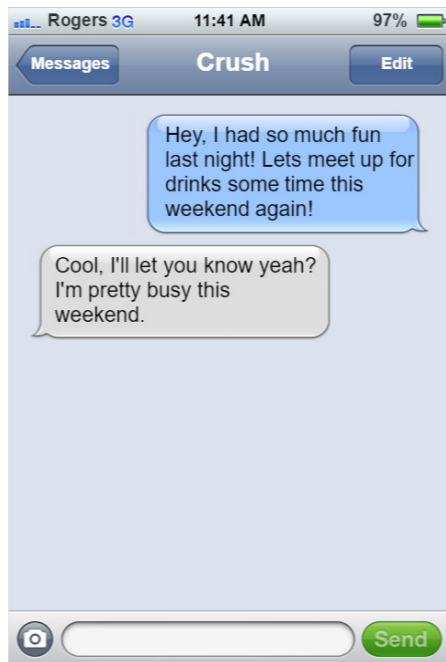
Text 12.9

Text 12.10

These generated messages do not show time stamps but imagine these two scenarios. Let's just pretend that there is little to delay between the sent and received text. Obviously the person in grey in text 12.9 is a lot more comfortable with the idea of meeting up again and is positive about the experience. In text 12.10, grey is obviously not having it and does not want to meet up again. Just remember, when you are texting a potential love interest, do not get caught up in the amount of time delay between texts and focus on what the person is saying in their text.

12.7   Conclusion

The above sections are merely to act as a guide to how to use delay in texting, not a hard set of rules that everyone abides by. People's personal style and what they are doing at the time of text conversation is very important in understand why there is a time delay between responses too. Remember, when engaged in purpose driven texting, always try to respond quickly and promptly to make sure the task is accomplished. When engaged in social driven text, keep in mind the social distance between you and the receiver, and gauge what the expectations are.

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