TEXTISMS: THE PRAGMATIC EVOLUTION AMONG STUDENTS IN LEBANON AND ITS EFFECT ON ENGLISH ESSAY WRITING

By

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Textisms: The pragmatic evolution among students in Lebanon and its effect on English essay writing

Sarah Alkawas

Abstract

The 21st century has brought with it many new and efficient technological advances in the area of communications; most notable are the Internet (CMC) and mobile telephones (SMS). The youth of this generation has advanced communications through various media, although the most popular methods of choice have been text messaging via cellular phones and chatting on the Internet. However, there has been some debate about whether this "new" communication is negatively affecting students' academic writing. This study seeks to discover whether or not Lebanese university students’ constant use of chatting and text language (textisms) has in any way affected their academic essay writing assignments in one English medium university in Lebanon. Through content analysis of academic essays and questionnaires from both students and instructors, findings indicate that texting does not negatively affect English academic writing, since students can differentiate between the appropriateness of using textisms and academic English when writing essays. Recommendations for teaching and learning and future research have been made.

Keywords: Textisms, SMS, CMC, Text messaging, Chatting
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CH 1

INTRO

1.1 - Ovrvw

It w%d B diFicult 2 fdn a hom w/o a prsnl comp, a prsn w/o a blkberry, mob fone, or laptop. TeknoloG hs taken ovr r lyfs, n w/ it hs cum an Ntirely nu lang we uz 2 commC8 w/ ea oder. D days of smply picn ^ a dial-up fone n callN a pal 2 der hom r almst lng gon. Ppl inst on BN acsble @ anytym of dy no m@r whr dey r. Der r so mnE wAz 2 reach a prsn, dat prvcy hs lng bn 4gotn. Der4, w/ such advnces n coms, lang hs evolv n orda 2 kip ^ w/ d vrious 4rms of techno coms methods.

@ d 4frnt of dis nu lang r d yth, hu spnd mosta der tym on d comp ch@iN w/ der frnds or txtN on mob fones. Ntire txtsm (lang of txtng) dxnRes cn B fownd on www n giv d meanngs of all d abbrs, Abetisms, n acrnyms uzd by txtrs, wich sirpass d # of simpl slng wrds uzd by genA8tns passD. Thruout hx, various genA8tns av inventd diFrent typz of slang wrds wich av bn adoptd by almst evry1. In d L8 60s, the genA8tns of ‘free luv’ & cas drug uz adoptD d wrds “gr%vy” and “far out.” D genA8tns of d 80s brawt w/ it slang wrds such as “gag me w/ a sp%n,” “bodacious” or “bogus.”

Tho d 21st century hs brawt w/ it a hol slew of nu slang wrds, nun av bn so populA as d slang wrds uzd wen ch@iN on www or by ppl hu txt ea oder on der mob fons. Der r mnE diFrent names 4 dis nu typ of www n txt lang, bt dis thesis wl refer 2it as txtisms (Plester, Wood, & Joshi, 2009, p. 145). Dis thesis wl xploR d various txtism Dvices dat mnE txtrs n onl9 ch@rs uz wen dey commC8 w/ ea oder. Ea txtism Dvice is uniQ n its own ryt, & servs a purpus 4 fst n eficent comms. Txtisms r growin n populART, esp amng yung adlts, n der influencin varius aspcts of biz, acdmcs, n soc netwrkin.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 - Overview

It would be difficult to find a home without a personal computer, a person without a Blackberry, mobile phone, or laptop. Technology has taken over our lives, and with it has come an entirely new language we use to communicate with each other. The days of simply picking up a dial-up phone and calling a friend to their home are almost long gone. People insist on being accessible at any time of day no matter where they are. There are so many ways to reach a person that privacy has long been forgotten. Therefore, with such advances in communication, language has evolved in order to keep up with the various forms of technological communication methods.

At the forefront of this new language are the youth, who spend most of their time on the computer chatting with their friends or texting on mobile telephones. Entire textism (language of texting) dictionaries can be found on the Internet and give the meanings of all the abbreviations, alphabetisms, and acronyms used by texters, which surpass the number of simple slang words used by generations passed. Throughout history, various generations have invented different types of slang words which have been adopted by almost everyone. In the late sixties, the generation of ‘free love’ and casual drug use adopted the words “groovy” and “far out.” The generation of the eighties brought with it slang words such as “gag me with a spoon,” “bodacious” or “bogus.”

Though the 21\textsuperscript{st} century has brought with it a whole slew of new slang words, none have been so popular as the slang words used when chatting on the Internet or by people who text each other on their mobile phones. There are many different names for
this new type of Internet and text language, but the present study has referred to it as textisms (Plester, Wood, & Joshi, 2009, p. 145). This study has explored the various textism devices that many texters and online chatters use when they communicate with each other. Each textism device is unique in its own right, and serves a purpose for fast and efficient communications. Textisms are growing in popularity, especially among young adults, and they are influencing various aspects of business, academics, and social networking (Tilley, 2009).

1.2 - Purpose of Study

This study explored the use of textisms among university students in Lebanon and its effect on academic English essay writing. Though these terms are used universally, Lebanese university students have gone even further to include Arabic into their web slang and textisms by using numbers to represent Arabic letters, which cannot be found in the Latin letters of their phones and computers. This new language is referred to as Arabizi (a mix of Arabic and Inglizi) (Yaghan, 2008). University students in Lebanon utilize both Arabizi and regular English textism devices when they communicate with each other via mobile phones and online chatting.

There is much debate among many scholars as to whether or not technological communication tools such as textisms thwart the proper education of students. Tomita (2009), a proponent of text messaging, pointed out that "text-messaging encourages students to write more and allows educators to communicate and facilitates the formation of communities of practice" (p. 184). Wood, Jackson, Plester, and Wilde (2009) agree that "Texting sees children explicitly demonstrating an understanding of how words can be manipulated, segmented and blended to allow for succinct and successful communication" (p.1).
Through using this new technological form of communication, students are becoming more aware of how words sound and how to create new words based on their phonology. This is quite an accomplishment, considering most students don't continually practice phonological awareness after acquiring it at a young age. This is one way in which textism devices such as “gr8” (letter-number homophone for great) or “BCNU” (alphabetism for be seeing you) can positively affect student education.

However, there are opponents of texting who argue that the "text messaging community has developed its own language culture in which closing expressions, long-form dialog, and correct spelling and grammar are viewed as inefficient and impractical" (Beasley, 2009, p.89). Carrington (2005) also argues that, "there is also a very strong representation of Standard English as under attack from texting and the ‘addicts’ who use it" (p. 167).

Though this new language seems to be the answer to dealing with technological advances, many educators and scholars worry that this new language may be the end of proper, Standard English as we know it today. Of course the English language has evolved over the centuries, but this transition takes lots of time; and for some reason textisms have progressed at such a rapid pace that it seems the only ones ready for this advancement are the youth, who are at the forefront of developing this new language.

This study explored the use of textisms by university students when they communicate with their peers, family, and close friends. Based on these practices, students' uses of textism devices may subconsciously find their way into their academic assignments, creating essays that do not utilize proper Standard English. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the effects that the daily use of texting and chatting online may have on university students' academic English essays.
1.3 - Research Questions

The study was limited to the following research questions:

1. Do university students' habitual texting communication practices have an adverse effect on their formal writing skills?

2. Can students accurately differentiate between informal (textism devices) and formal writing when writing essays?

3. Do technological communication methods have a negative or positive effect on student writing?

1.4 - Definition of Terms

Textisms are types of text messaging devices that simply shorten or abbreviate words (Plester, Wood, and Joshi, 2009), which are used for their efficacy and simplicity when using various technologies such as mobile phones and computers. Vosloo (2009) defines texting as "the use of abbreviations and other techniques to craft SMS and instant messages. Texting does not always follow the standard rules of English grammar, nor usual word spellings" (p. 2).

SMS is an alphabetism that stands for short message service, which most telecommunication companies provide to their users in order to send text messages to other mobile phones or computers. CMC is another alphabetism that indicates any form of computer mediated communications. CMC's includes the use of e-mail, instant messaging, e-chat, discussion boards, newsgroups, blogging, and mailing lists (Androutsopoulos, 2006). Emoticons are a feature of textism devices that are defined as nonverbal cues that suggest facial expressions using various punctuation marks viewed sideways (Krohn, 2004; Derks, Bos, & Von Grumbkow, 2008).
1.5 - Hypothesis

Textisms have found their way into the lives of many people; interrupting the academic and universal standard of the English language. Proponents for the use of textisms have argued that academic English as we know will not be affected by new technological forms of communications that employ textism devices. However, opponents, mainly educators, media, and parents, are weary of the implications that textism devices may have on education, since mainly teenagers are adopting this method of written communications. Therefore, the research serves to explore if textisms have either a positive or negative effect on the English essay at the university level.

1.6 - Rationale of Study

Since students need to develop academic writing skills to cope with both university work and their professional careers, they must adopt proper academic English skills in order to excel in any area involving communication and professional performance.

However, the popularity of texting may impede on those skills if university students become accustomed to communicating in an informal manner. It is for that reason that this study explored whether or not students are influenced by their habitual use of textisms when they communicate, and if those practices in any way hinder their academic English writing skills. University students may not realize that many professional organizations require formal language skills, and may frown upon the use of informal language devices, such as textisms, when representing their organization.

This study also investigated the texting practices and beliefs of university students, so their future language skills are not negatively affected in any way. University students must be made aware of the distinction between formal and informal
English when composing written texts for university and beyond. Thus, this research will establish whether or not students are aware of the proper situation for using textisms, and the proper situation for using proper academic English. Since textisms are growing in popularity daily, it will be imperative for university students to be aware of their subconscious use of textism devices in inappropriate settings.

1.7 - Methodology

This study is based on qualitative and quantitative research methods. The two quantitative instruments I used for this study are questionnaires for both students and English instructors at the university level. The questionnaires sought to understand the texting behavior and practices of students and instructors, as well as their beliefs about texting and how it affects academic English writing. The qualitative research method I employed is content analysis of English essays written for class in order to discover whether or not texting has any effects on student writing.

A sample of 135 student questionnaires and 18 instructor questionnaires from a private university in Lebanon was obtained. The questionnaires were based on a Likert Scale, which was later analyzed through statistical data by calculating the amount of participants who chose a certain attitude toward a statement. Both questionnaires consisted of 20 statements.

The content analysis examined academic English essays at a private university in Lebanon and established typology of the textism devices that each students used. The typology coded the textism devices into different categories (alphabetisms, acronyms, abbreviations, contractions, clippings, omitted letters, letter-number homophones, world-value characters, emoticons, and phonetic spelling). Then, the types of textism
devices were enumerated and the results established the attractiveness of using certain
textism devices over others when writing.

1.8 - Conclusion

The study aids in providing a foundation for further research as textisms become
more utilized in less formal situations, and in preventing their presence in more formal
writing situations. Students who participated in this study accounts for only a minority of
the greater population of youth who use textisms on a daily basis, and thus results cannot be
generalized.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 - Introduction

Gone are the days of telephone calls and fax machines as a means of efficient communication practices. Today, new means of fast and easy communications have developed, though telephone calls and faxes are still used sparingly. Short message services (SMS) via mobile telephones, e-mail (electronic mail) via the Internet, and instant messaging (IM), have all become the preferred choices for communicating ideas, messages, important information, advertisements, and friendly chats.

Ten years ago, the idea that society would communicate through writing rather than speaking was unlikely, considering how technology was advancing. Yet, today, the idea of writing someone a text seems much more practical to so many people since calling someone on the phone seems arduous, time consuming, as well as expensive. According to Roschke (2008), unlike e-mail, IM and SMS have provided a two-way conversation. Cell phones can also provide the convenience of texting a person from any location at any time, and also helps people avoid phone calls from speakers who do not cease talking (Kleen & Heinrichs, 2008).

There are a few aspects of texting (the use of SMS and IM) that will be explored. The first of which is the history and efficiency of communicating via texting. The second is the actual practices of texting and chatting performed by teenagers. The third aspect to be discussed is the discourse embodied by these forms of communication. The final feature that is investigated is how texting and chatting have positively and negatively affected education practices and student literacy.
2.2 - The History and Efficiency of Texting

There are different accounts of the first actual text message sent to a mobile telephone. Urman (2009) states that many companies claim that the first text message was sent in 1989 via a Motorola pager by a former NASA employee; the message consisted of numbers meant to be read upside down in order to appear as a word. However, there are claims that the first commercial text was sent from Neil Papworth in Paris to Richard Jarvis in England in 1993 (Shannon, 2007). Papworth sent the message from his desktop to Jarvis, who was at a Christmas party near Vodafone headquarters; the message simply read: "Merry Christmas." A couple of years later, mobile telephones were able to send messages and soon teenagers discovered this new form of communication.

Texting was never intended for personal use (Crystal, 2008a), yet it "started being used for commercial purposes, but users quickly evaluated the technology to suit their needs and began to communicate with each other" (Langer, 2008, p. 1). Today, billions of texts are sent every year, and according to Shannon (2007), texts are used to "convey holiday greetings … vote for politicians … play trivia games and enter quiz shows… organize rallies and turn out the opposition, alert travelers to transportation delays" (p. 1) and much more. Texting has turned into a purely commercial means of communications for the public, and yet, texting can still be a very private means of expression. However, texting is practiced by many since "our society thrives upon instant communication, sending millions of text messages and instant messages (IMs) every day" (Barranco, 2009-2010, p.27), and this practice does not seem to be wavering as the years since its beginning have passed.
Texting was not easily accepted by the masses as an efficient means of communication. Consisting of only 160 characters (Grinter & Eldridge, 2003; Grinter, Palen, & Eldridge, 2006; Olsen, 2006; Shannon, 2007; Crystal, 2008a & 2008b; Kim, Park, & Oh, 2008; Kleen & Heinrichs, 2008; Langer, 2008.; Tilley, 2009; Tomita, 2009; Urman, 2009; Rosen, Chang, Erwin, Carrier, & Cheever, 2010; Thurlow & Poff, 2011), people are able to constantly communicate using their mobile telephones or computers. Texting, on mobile phones especially, is quite complicated, since the phone only has about 12 to 15 keys that are required to do everything from capitalizing, punctuating, sending, receiving, navigating, etc. (Balakrishnan & Yeow, 2007). A user must adapt to the "multitap" (p. 86) process of punching a key multiple times just to select a letter from the alphabet, since most keys contain three letters, e.g. the number 2 contains the letters A, B, and C, so if one wants to use the letter 'B', they must punch the number 2 twice.

Yet, the number one proponents of texting today are the youth, namely teens and young adults. Adults rarely use texting as a means of communication, relying more heavily on the traditional phone call, or perhaps e-mail correspondence. It is the youth, the digital generation, or rather the "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001, p. 1), that have adopted the process of communicating efficiently through texting, creating and adapting to an entirely new language that Thurlow (2003) refers to as "webspeak", "textese", or "netlingo" (p. 3); Johnova (2004) and Fandrych (2007) refer to as "netspeak" (p. 152); Crystal (2008a) refers to as "textspeak" (p. 77); Plester, Wood, and Joshi (2009) refer to as "textisms", (p. 145); Tilley (2009) refers to as "txtspeak" (p. 40); Barranco (2009-2010) refers to as "txt" (p. 27); and Turner (2010) refers to as "digitalk" (p. 43). For the purposes of this study, the term "textism" will be adopted.
According to Bryant, Sanders-Jackson, and Smallwood (2006), socially interactive technologies (SITs), like instant messaging and text messaging, are redefining social networks for today's youth since it offers fast-paced, low-priced, online communication. In short, texting is cheap and quick, and hence it provides that instant gratification that the younger generation has become accustomed to due to their exposure to advanced communication technologies. According to a study performed by Kleen and Heinrichs (2008), university students they questioned seemed to acknowledge texting as their primary choice of communicating because of its speed.

Crystal (2008b) has reaffirmed that texting is not only economically advantageous and timely, but also a valued device for communicating. Crystal argues that "texting is far more immediate, direct, and personal than alternative methods of electronic communication" (p. 93).

Social networks such as the ever popular Facebook and Twitter, allow younger people to communicate efficiently, and the membership and utilities offered by the sites are absolutely free. Facebook was developed by a student named Mark Zuckerberg at Harvard University, hence he was able to understand what his generation wanted and needed at the time (Fincher, 2010). According to Tilley (2009) Twitter is a "micro-blogging tool designed with both social networking needs and SMS requirements in mind. "With Twitter, a user can post updates (called "tweets") either through the Web-based interface or by sending text message from cell phones" (p. 40). Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are personal or social in nature, and the exchanges between their users are as well (Judd, 2010). It is this privacy, efficiency, and low cost of advanced technological communications that appeal to the youth. Texting and chatting allow them a medium to communicate without the hindrances that
usually impede on their privacy and ability to afford such available methods to connect with their peers.

The newest change to appear in the world of digital communications is the overlapping that has taken place between the Internet and mobile telephones. With the introduction of Blackberrys and I-Phones, people can now access their e-mail and instant message (IM) with others from their mobile telephones. According to Langer (2008) "soon there will be no distinction between text messaging and instant messaging because people will have access to the same network of people whether they are at their computer or on the go" (p.10).

The efficiency of communications is increasing at an extremely proficient speed, allowing younger users the ability to adapt to any changes they encounter. In 2006 (Kleen & Heinrichs, 2008) claimed that "more than 64.8 billion text messages were sent in the first six months…text messaging will continue to grow at a rapid rate" (p.412).

However, adults, or non-digital natives, are constantly thriving to keep up with their digital native children. According to Crystal (2008a), "Textspeak is largely the language of the young- and a lively controversy has sprung up around its use- mainly from the older generation who seek variously to analyse, interpret, or decry its use" (p. 77). Prensky (2001) believes that adults "as digital immigrants learn – like all immigrants, some better than others – to adapt to their environment, they always retain, to some degree, their "accent," that is, their foot in the past" (p.1). Turner (2010) agrees that the youth are extremely skillful with texting and have come to master the digitally written word with finesse, and have managed to surpass the techo-savvy skills of adults in many ways. Therefore, it is important to address the practices of the youth in the
sphere of texting and chatting, and how this technology is creating a greater generation gap than those of previous eras.

2.3 - The Texting Practices of Youth

Reports of the first users of SMS originated in Scandinavia, which also "emphasized the leading role taken by teenagers in adopting and using SMS" (Grinter & Eldrige, 2003, p. 441). Teenagers around the world quickly adopted this new trend in communication, and have begun contributing to the nearly billion text messages sent daily around the world. Coe and Oakhill (2011) agree that "the younger generation, in particular, is embracing this form of communication. In 16- to 24-year-olds, text messaging and social networking make up 63% of all mobile phone use" (p. 4).

According to Grinter and Eldridge (2003), practices of text messaging by teenagers consist of "collecting messages by transcribing them into special notebooks… collective composition and reading of messages; using SMS to avoid being heard sending and receiving communications late at night; and the need to return a text message within a short time" (p. 442).

Holson (2008) recounts an anecdote about the president of the Walt Disney Company. He was driving his daughter and her friends to a play in Los Angeles, California and he noticed that she was quiet in her seat and texting on her cellphone. When he told her she was being rude to her friends, she responded by saying "But, Dad, we're texting each other…I don't want you to hear what I'm saying" (p.1). It is instances like those that have created an entirely new perspective about texting and chatting among the tech-savvy youth of the world. According to Kleen and Heinrichs (2008), "Cell phones also allow the convenience of being able to text someone while in class, in
meetings, etc., as teens and other frequent 'texters' can skillfully text with a hand in a pocket while appearing to be engrossed in listening or some other task" (p.412).

According to Balakrishnan and Yeow (2007), technology that includes Internet use, mobile telephones, and Internet connections in the house were decreasing among users over the age of fifty, but increasing for young adults. It is the youth that have given surge to the use of technological communications, making it a daily practice that influences the way they socialize with family, friends, and peers. Turner (2010) agrees that high school students especially have grown up in a world consumed by technological communication tools, and since they have "access to computers in their homes and even in their bedrooms, and they carry cell phones wherever they go" (p. 44) they most likely prefer sending a text message than speaking on the phone with their friends.

Why is SMS such a successful medium for communication with today's youth? The answer is simply because it is fast, easy, and cheap. Young adults cannot afford to talk on their cell phones for a long period of time, which is why they turn to SMS or IM, because the Internet is a set monthly bill with unlimited access, while mobile telephones in some parts of the world have unlimited SMS usage per month. According to Grinter, Palen, and Eldridge (2006), "Calling plans that allowed an individual (typically, a parent or guardian) to pay for the phone up front, and then to buy minutes of airtime in the form of vouchers, encouraged teenagers to purchase and use mobile phones" (p. 425). Thus, mobile phones and the Internet are inviting teenagers to engross themselves in an inexpensive medium in which to communicate privately with their friends.

But a clear distinction should be made about preferential use of one medium over another. According to Thompson and Cupples (2008), the mobile telephone is a

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more preferred medium of communication because mobile phones are "quite simply, mobile. One’s friends and their contact details are ever…secondly, cell phones are individually owned by young people, unlike the often communal ownership of the family computer, thus affording an extra level of privacy" (p. 96).

How wired (connected technologically) is this younger generation? In a world where wireless technology allows a person to walk down the street in a foreign country and still be able to access his or her e-mail, check the weather or stock reports online, or receive a text message from clear across the world, it is rare for a person (especially one who is educated and is at least from a middle class background) to not be connected. According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, "close to half of teens (45%) own a cell phone, and 33% have used a cell phone to send a text message…Teens who have cell phones are heavy users of online communication tools" (Lenhart, Arafeh, Smith, & MacGill, 2008, p. ii).

What most people in society view as the deterioration of our youth (due to technology) is simply history repeating itself in a different manner. Holson (2008) points out that "Baby boomers who warned decades ago that their out-of-touch parents couldn't be trusted now sometimes find themselves raising children who—thanks to the Internet and the cellphone—consider mom and dad to be clueless" (p.2). Yet, adults must be aware that this is not "a fashion, let alone a fad, but mobile phones are a real social rather than technological revolution" (Lorente, 2002, p. 7) among our youth. According to Holson (2008), in a survey that was conducted by the American telephone company AT&T, they found that nearly half of a group of 1,175 parents that were interviewed admitted that they learned how to text message from their children; the
parents also mentioned that their children preferred it when they text messaged them, rather than called them to remind them to come home.

Most youth are receiving mobile telephones by the fifth grade, while only a handful are receiving mobile phones by the time they reach high school. According to Tilley (2009), between the years 2004 and 2007 teenagers who own cell phones have increased from "45% to 71%" and "four-fifths" of teenagers between the ages of fifteen and seventeen own a cell phone; the use of and ownership of a cell phone is increasing amid younger children with "46% of eight to twelve year olds" using cell phones and surprisingly "the average age for receiving a first cell phone is about ten" (p. 40).

What is even more interesting about teenagers' use of SMS and IM is that a unique sort of etiquette has been established among advanced communication users. Agoncillo-Quirante (2006) refers to this as "celltiquette" (p. 1), which simply acknowledges that there is a protocol for sending a text message or writing an instant message among friends and peers. One rule of "celltiquette" is that when you receive an SMS or IM, you should immediately reply or respond, and if you do not do so, then you must give an explanation to the sender for your delay. Another rule that Agoncillo-Quirante (2006) discusses is the need for a short greeting to friends in the form of "hello", "hi", "Hey", or "HRU" (How are you?) when you are composing a message. When a message usually ends with a smiley face or emoticon (😊), then that signifies the end of a discussion; while, those whose recipients are family or close friends usually receive a "mwah", which "is used at the end of the message signifying a kiss to parents or close friends, like a face-to-face parting kiss" (p. 10).

A definite rule of texting is that it is inappropriate in the classroom, though students have been able to hide their actions from the instructor and text to their peers.
According to Agoncillo-Quirante (2006), "Cell phone ownership even of school children has created a dilemma with school authorities who… are affected by disruptive calls or texts to and from pupils" (p.1). However, most schools have caught on and collect mobile telephones before class or ensure that all mobile telephones are off for the remainder of the school day.

Even though rules have been established for mobile phone use at school, it does not discourage the amount of texting the young adults partake in on a daily basis. Because of their continuous use of texting on mobile phones, young adults have become extremely adept at texting. Cross (2009) reports a peculiar contest in which 250,000 14-21 year olders competed in texting songs and messages, for a grand prize of $50,000; one event included the competitor walking on a treadmill while texting on a mobile telephone and being hit by foam objects. The winner was a fifteen-year-old girl that Cross (2009) described as having "digital dexterity" (p. 6). Teens are at the forefront of communication technology because of their everyday use, and their ability to adapt to new technologies at a rapid pace.

In accordance, Hafner (2009) claims that teenagers are constantly texting on their mobile phones no matter where they are or who they are with. "They do it late at night when their parents are asleep. They do it in restaurants and while crossing busy streets. They do it in the classroom with their hands behind their back. They do it so much their thumbs hurt" (para.1). There have been negative reports of cell phone usage by many psychologists, who believe that texting or IMing is depersonalized and further withdraws teenagers from the rest of society. Teens are decreasingly associating with each other face-to-face, and becoming more introverted and secluded, becoming recluses by remaining in their bedrooms with their eyes fixated on their computer.
screens, either chatting online, using social networking sites like Facebook, or playing video games. Hafner (2009) wrote in the New York Times that "The phenomenon is beginning to worry physicians and psychologists, who say it is leading to anxiety, distraction in school, falling grades, repetitive stress injury and sleep deprivation" (para. 3).

Another negative feature of texting that has caused serious repercussions, such as teen suicide, is text bullying. Students bully one another either through text messages or online chatting, making the victim feel more awkward, alienated, belittled, hopeless, self-conscious, and desperate to disappear. The Teach Bulletin (2006) discussed the suicide of a New Zealand teenage girl who was a victim of text bullying; she was only 12 years old. Text bullying was described in the Teach Bulletin by the Wellington Girls College principal in New Zealand as "a horrible problem" in which girls at the school "sent nasty text messages to each other without even thinking, spread rumours or revealed secrets via cellphones. If they can’t visualise the person at the end of the phone then they really lay it on" (p. 2).

Mobile phones and computers have introduced new outlets for teenagers to provoke one another and face-to-face communication has seriously decreased. With the new technological advances in communications, teens now have a new medium in which to interact, either positively or negatively, and now bullies can always reach their victims without relenting. According to Brock (2008), when refereeing to text bullying, "Experts and students say it can be more harmful than face-to-face bullying" (para. 7). Brock (2008) explained that text bullying is easier for the bullies, since it is more straightforward than bullying on the Internet, since you can easily delete the e-mail and
use privacy protection on online chatting websites such as MSN (Microsoft Network) or social networks such as Facebook; however a person cannot avoid a text message, because it is on your phone, you cannot block it, and it can be sent to many people at one time.

Obviously, there are encouraging uses of text messaging for young people, such as its low price, immediate connection, and mobility. However, there are harmful side effects to using texting for the purposes of communications for many young people as well. The most controversial issue that is disturbing adults is the language that has come about with the evolution of technological communication. According to Turner (2010), teens have "learned to manipulate written language for social communication" (p. 44). Textisms have been developed by teens to succinctly communicate via mobile telephone and online chatting, as a way to hasten the already prompt form of text relaying that takes place everyday. It is not different than years ago when students were "passing notes in class- documents they were not likely to proofread before sending. The idea that using acronyms like WBS (for Write Back Soon) when writing notes to friends would have a lasting effect on language" (Roschke, 2008, p. 4) is quite surprising, since abbreviating words or writing in shorthand was never a concern before the exploding popularity of text messaging and IMing. Therefore, the language of textisms and how this digital communication discourse has impacted the technological community must be discussed at length.

2.4 - Textisms: The New Digital Communication Discourse

Colloquial slang is not a new phenomenon among the youth; however when technology is added to the equation, an entirely new language emerges that affects the
entire world. According to Roschke (2008), "language adapts to fit the medium, and with 12 billion IM messages and one billion text messages being sent each day, this medium is clearly responsible for much of our daily communication" (p.3). Unfortunately, many Internet language dictionaries have been compiled, but are "never identical, which demonstrates the lack of universally agreed categories or devices" (Coe & Oakhill, 2010, p. 5) for texting. Fandrych (2007) has observed that the language of text is "colloquial and makes ample use of abbreviations, symbols, punctuation marks, re-interpreted graphemes, esoteric blends and metaphors which will be as unintelligible to the non-initiate as a very distant dialect or the insider slang of a youth gang" (p. 147).

However, I have chosen certain devices to focus on in this research, which are all of great importance and exhibit the different linguistic features of this new language. They include the following: emoticons (emotions + icons which consist of punctuation marks creating a sideways happy face or other expression, e.g. :-D); lexical shortenings and abbreviations (e.g. Sun for Sunday); acronyms (e.g. BEG for Big Evil Grin); contractions (e.g. I'm for I am); clippings (e.g. gettin for getting); letter-number homophones (e.g. l8r for later); word value characters (e.g. @ for at) (Bieswanger, 2006); alphabetisms (e.g., TYT for Take Your Time); letter omissions (e.g., abt for about); pictographs (@ { ---- for a rose) (Crystal, 2008b); and phonetic spellings (e.g., tuff for tough), (Shortis, 2007).

I will also be discussing the popular practice of Latin Arabic in SMS and online chatting in Lebanon among university students. As defined by Abo-elezz (2009), "Latinised Arabic is a written form of Arabic that uses Latin or Roman characters as an alternative orthographic form of Arabic language, which normally employs Arabic script" (p. 2). It must be noted that across the Middle East, people have adapted this use
of technological communications to adhere with the universal usage of English through various communication devices.

Textisms do vary from country to country, yet universally, texting is one of the most popular mediums of communication and its discourse has become a language in its own right. Each feature of textisms is unique in its inception and creation, and evolves everyday as more users adopt textisms as a new language for communicating. Although each country may have its own linguistic medium of choice for texting, this research is based mostly on the lexis of English and its digital discourse within the world of SMS and IM communications. According to Turner (2010):

> The manipulation of standard spellings and conventions most often occurs when teens “talk” to each other by writing in texts, IMs, and social networking tools. There are nonstandard conventions that cross these digital spaces. Writing in these venues blends elements of written discourse with those of the spoken word…Whether teens are sending text messages or IMs, they invariably think of the communication as “talking.” Talk, then, is the driving force behind much of the digital writing of adolescents (p. 43).

2.4.1 - Initialisms: acronyms and alphabetisms

According to Bieswanger (2007), initialisms are the shortening of words consisting of either the first letter or letters of the combination of a few words. "The subdivision of initialism into acronyms, i.e. initialisms that are pronounced as one word such as laser or NATO, and alphabetisms, i.e. initialisms that are pronounced letter by letter such as BBC or NHS" (p. 4).

According to Noveck (2011), "Acronyms have been around for years. But with the advent of text and Twitter-language, it certainly feels like we’re speaking in groups of capital letters a lot more" (para. 4). Kleen and Heinrichs (2008) agree that acronyms, "abbreviations used in writing that have typically been pronounced as a word (such as SNAFU, representing “situation normal, all fouled up”), are used extensively in text
messaging and instant messaging” (p. 412). Acronyms are initials that can be pronounced as words, like AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) or SCUBA (Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus). Their use in the discourse of digital communications aids in the effectiveness required for users of SMS and IM, since the least amount of characters used is cost and time efficient.

Some researchers define acronyms differently and consider alphabetisms to also be acronyms, as is the case with Ryker, Viosca, Lawrence, and Kleen (2010) who refer to OMG and LOL as acronyms. However, this is not the case within the present research, since in Standard English, acronyms are defined as "an abbreviation formed from the initial letters of other words and pronounced as a word” (Oxford Dictionaries Online, 2011).

Alphabetisms are much more popular than acronyms in the texting community. There are numerous alphabetisms; some have different definitions to different users. There have been instances of people misunderstanding alphabetisms, for example one may interpret ‘CID’ as ‘consider it done’ or ‘crying in disgrace’; and ‘CYA’—‘see you’ or ‘cover your ass’ (Crystal, 2008a). It is a matter of consistency, which in the world of textisms has yet to be established.

The lists of alphabetisms on the Internet are numerous, and teenagers have expanded that list on a daily basis. In a study conducted by Tagliamonte and Denis (2008), alphabetisms (which they refer to simply as initialisms) listed in order from most frequently used to least frequently used were as follows: LOL, OMG, BRB (be right back), TTYL, BTW (by the way), WTF, GTG (got to go), NP (no problem), LMAO (laugh my ass off), and NM (not much). Crystal (2008a) agrees that LOL is one of the most used alphabetisms among texters. Olsen (2006) adds BRB and TTYL
(along with LOL) as the most frequently used alphabetisms among teens in America. Parents may be complaining about the use of "WTF" in their texting, but as Noveck (2011) points out, Vice President Candidate Sarah Palin and CNN reporter Anderson Cooper, have both been heard using "WTF" on television. It seems that alphabetisms are no longer just a texting phenomena used by teens anymore.

According to Crystal (2008a), there are so many variants for alphabetisms that the choices for the sender seem to be limitless:


2.4.2 - Abbreviations

Abbreviations are different than initialisms because they are a form of lexical shortenings of words in which the word is simply shortened to save time, space, and money when texting. "Why abbreviate? There is ergonomic value in abbreviation, given that the number of key-strokes saved bears a direct relationship to time and energy – and formerly (depending on your service-provider) even the eventual size of your telephone bill" (Crystal, 2008a, p.81). According to Thurlow and Poff (2011), unambiguous abbreviations include "u" for "you" and "r" for "are", while regular abbreviations include "Sun" for "Sunday" and "tomm" for "tomorrow" (p. 5).

Abbreviations take on many forms and are seemingly different to each texter, since "tmr" and "tomm" can both be interpreted to mean "tomorrow". Crystal (2008a) notes the existence of "rebus abbreviations" where "Words are formed in which letters represent syllables, as seen in ‘b’, ‘b4’, ‘NE’, ‘r’, ‘Tspoons’, ‘u’, ‘ur’, ‘xcept’" (p. 80). A common abbreviation used in Standard English prior to texting includes "b/c" for
"because", which is also used in texting, along with "coz" or "cuz". Abbreviations are not a new common lexical feature, but have since been excessively used among texters globally.

2.4.3 - Contractions

Another common feature of texting is contractions, which Bieswanger (2007) defines as "combinations of two words that lead to a smaller number of characters than the spelling of the two words individually. Contractions are similar to medial clippings in that letters are usually deleted from the middle of the new combination" (p. 4). Common contractions are "don't" for "do not" and "I'm" for "I am"; however, a common habit of texters is to delete the use of apostrophes in order to save time and space. Though punctuation within contractions is avoided, some reader may misinterpret "were" as the past tense plural form of "to be" instead of the contraction for "we are" (Bieswanger, 2007).

2.4.4 - Clippings

Texters have found many ways to use language efficiently, and most notably clippings are a frequently used spoken word habit that has found its place in the lexical shortenings of textisms. Bieswanger (2007) describes clippings as:

all forms of shortening by which parts of a word are deleted. Clipping here is thus not only the deletion of letters at the end of a word…but includes forms that show letter deletion at the front, i.e. initial clipping, letter deletion in the middle, i.e. medial clipping, and letter deletion in different places in the same word, i.e. mixed clipping. All forms that are shorter than the original word and preserve some of the original letters without adding extra letters that do not belong to the original word are thus clippings (p. 4).

Turnball (2010), states some examples of clippings, which include g-clippings, in which a texter cuts "off only the final g in a word, e.g. goin, comin, workin, swimmin" and other clippings in which a texter cuts "off other final letters, e.g. I’v, hav,
wil, com" (para. 15 & 16). The most common clippings found in textisms however are the g-clippings, in which people cut off the "g" ending in a word. This is not a new phenomenon, considering that in slang used in the past, many people omit the final "g" from progressive verbs. Some more examples of commonly used "g" clippings in textisms provided by Coe and Oakhill (2010) include: goin for going; havin for having; stayin for staying; takin for taking; givin for giving; dropin for dropping; eatin for eating; and usin for using.

2.4.5 - Omitted letters

Another noticeable shortening practice of texters is the omission of certain letters (aside from contractions and clippings) in which texters usually omit vowels from words. Crystal (2008b) points out that "final consonants are often dropped too, as are 'silent' consonants, and double medial consonants are reduced to singletons" (p. 46). Examples provided by Crystal include: bt (but), year (yr), tmrw (tomorrow), and thn (then). Letter omission has been practiced previously in many areas of the English language, especially with titles (Mr for mister), ranks in the military (Lt for lieutenant), common weight or height measurement (ft for feet), and various other instances such as (asst for assistant) (Crystal, 2008b).

The most common vowel deletion among authors is "txting" which is the term texting without the "e". Crystal (2008a) and Carrington (2005a) refer to texting as "txting", while Shortis (2007) continuously writes "txt" instead of text in two of his articles. Perea, Acha, and Carreiras (2009) have included in the title of their article the words "txt msgng" in which absolutely no vowels are present. Carrington (2005a) also utilizes vowel omission in her title "Txting: the end of civilization (again)?" It would seem that when omitting letters, vowels are the victim, while consonants reign supreme
in the fight for existence within textisms. Crystal (2008b) agrees that "texters have evidently intuited a basic principle of information theory: that consonants carry much more information than vowels" (p. 26).

**2.4.6 - Letter-number homophones**

Usually homophones exist within Standard English to denote words that sound like other words, are spelled differently and have different meanings (e.g. sea or see). However, within textisms, letter or number homophones exist solely to conserve space within a text. Bieswanger (2007) states that "letter-number-homophones are among the most salient features of text messaging. Letters and numbers whose pronunciation is identical with words or parts of words are used to replace words or letter sequences" (p. 5). Some of the most common letter homophones include "b" for the word "be" and "c" for the word "see", while the most common number homophones are "2" for the words "two, too, and to" and "8" which is usually placed in words to replace the "ate" sound (e.g. l8r for later) (Bieswanger, 2007). Coe and Oakhill (2011) give the following examples for commonly used letter-number homophones in textisms: 4 for for; U for you; T for tea; 2night for tonight; 2g2 for to go to; and 2nite for tonight.

Another interesting characteristic of letter-number homophones are the combination of letters or numbers to produce a shortened version of a word or sentence. Some of the more notable combinations of letter-number homophones to produce shortened words are "b4" for "before", "db8" for "debate", and "gr8" for "great". While the actual rebus of letters and/or numbers to form sentences is not a new phenomena according to Crystal (2008b), he gives examples with "c u l8r" for "see you later" or even "I C U R YY 4 ME" which if read letter by letter is "I see you are too wise for me." Another unique rebus of letter homophones is BCNU, which is read "Be seein you,"
which is a unique combination of letters that stand alone and can be a clause without a pronoun and clipping the "g" from the word "seeing."

2.4.7 - Pictograms

Though using pictures to represent words in not a new concept (since ancient Egyptians used hieroglyphics to represent sounds and concepts) texting pictograms differ in that they represent sounds and more often emotions (emoticons). However, Crystal (2008b) points out that there is a similarity in texting and hieroglyphics with concept of rebus, which he defines as "a message which, in its original definition, consists entirely of pictures that are used to represent the sounds of words, rather than the objects they refer to" (p. 39). There are different types of texting and instant messaging pictograms; they include word-value characters, pictographs, and emoticons.

2.4.7.1 - Word-value characters

According to Bieswanger (2007) "word value characters are a special category that is made up of characters or combinations of up to three characters that can stand for whole words but whose pronunciation is not homophonous with a word" (p. 5). Word-value characters can also be referred to as logograms or logographs (Crystal, 2008b), and are not a new phenomena in communications. Typical word-value characters are "&" for the word "and", "x" to represent a "kiss", "@" for at, and "zzz" for "Sleeping" (Bieswanger, 2007; Crystal, 2008a&b). Some word-value characters can be used alone or in combination with other letters to form words, such as "@oms" for "atoms."

2.4.7.2 - Pictographs

Pictographs are similar to emoticons, but they do not usually emit an emotional expression. Sometime pictographs are just characters used from the computer to create a picture, such as a sideways rose "@ {-----" (which is comprised of the "@" symbol,
closed parentheses, and dashes), or a heart "<3" (which is comprised of a less than sign and the number 3). The meanings behind these graphic devices function solely for the shape of the symbol. There is not much literature about pictographs, since they are usually categorized with emoticons as "graphic devices" (Crystal, 2008b, p. 38); however, there are many examples of pictographs on Internet glossaries for web slang. Other examples of pictographs include: "c[T] for a mug of tea or c[C] for a mug of coffee"; "\~/ for glass with a drink"; "%(> for a slice of pizza"; " <<{:}} for an ice cream cone"; and "(_\)__(_\)__(_\) for dancing one's ass off".

2.4.7.3 - Emoticons

Emoticons are simply combination of two words: emotions + icons. The reason people use emoticons is because they "may serve as nonverbal surrogates, suggestive of facial expression, and may thus enhance the exchange of emotional information by providing additional social cues beyond what is found in the verbal text of a message (Derks, Bos, & Von Grumbkow, 2008, p. 99).

According to Krohn (2004), emoticons originated in 1982 at Carnegie Melon University by a man named Scott F. Fahlman, who posted an emoticon on a bulletin board system. Krohn (2004) also points out that three most common emoticons are the 1) smiley face ":)" , which is the colon and closed parenthesis; 2) the sad face ":(", which is the colon and open parenthesis; and 3) the winking face ";)" , which is the semi-colon and the closed parenthesis. However, only the smiley face and sad face are automatically turned right side up (☼ & ☼) by the computer, whereas the winking face remains sideways.

Shortis (2007) describes emoticons as "accents but to inflect semantic nuance rather than grammatical inflexion – to indicate irony for example" (p. 21). According to
Crystal (2008b), emoticons are more commonly used in instant messaging, but are still frequently utilized in most mobile telephones, since phones provide an array of emoticons that one may choose from to send in a text. Derks, Bos, and Von Grumbkow (2008) conducted a study about the motives behind using emoticons and observed that emoticons are primarily used to "to express emotion, to strengthen the message, to manipulate the interaction partner, to express humor, to put a remark into perspective, to regulate the interaction, and to express irony" (p. 100). There is no exact number of how many emoticons exist in texting communications, but new emoticons are developed daily, especially those used while instant messaging, in which emoticons can now perform actions like dancing, jumping, running, etc.

**2.4.8 - Phonetic spelling**

Texters tend to write as they speak to conserve as much space as possible when sending a text message or IMing (Roshke, 2007), which is why phonetic spelling has become a greatly used device in digital communications. Phonetic spelling, or what Crystal (2008b) refers to as nonstandard spelling, has been around for a long time. Though most people tend to misspell words while texting, because of rapidity and lack of concentration, most texters deem it imperative to shorten words as much as possible to save space and time and therefore utilize the phonetic spelling of a word instead.

Crystal (2008b) notes the many common phonetically spelled words in texting that existed in the past, such as "cos" a shortened form of "because" which has existed since 1828; the word "wot" for "what" which is from 1829; the commonly used "luv" for "love" from 1898; "thanx" the shortened version of "thanks" from 1936; and "ya" for "you" which dates back to 1941 (p. 49). He also notes that the words "dunno" for "don't
know”; “gonna” for “going to”; “sorta” for “sort of”; “thru” for “through”; “wanna” for “want to”; and “wiv” for with, all date back more than a hundred years.

According to Shortis (2007), an advocate of text spelling creativity, believes that the respelling in textisms "have worked and have spread because the spelling used in text messages and related text forms is linguistically coherent, logical and creative in its orthographic principles and draws upon pre-existing conventions of non-standard spelling" (p. 23).

Phonetic spelling has a clearly functional purpose, and most elementary students may be equipped to spell words phonetically. However, most people who have a working knowledge of accurate spelling may find phonetic spelling to be ambiguous. However, when texting the word "night" using the phonetic spelling, e.g. nite, nyte, or nyt, the message may be clear to the reader, hence the functional purpose of phonetic spelling in textisms.

2.4.9 - Latinized Arabic

Since the study took place at a private university in Lebanon, the use of Latinized Arabic must be mentioned as a textism device of choice for many students that use textisms for communication purposes on a daily basis. Abo-elezz (2009) notes that the reason for the use of Latinized Arabic, or LA as the author refers to it, is because it is a means for Arabic speakers to communicate with each other, and not for non-Arabic speakers to understand. Yaghan (2008) refers to this new form of communication as "Arabizi" which is a combination "Arabi" and "Engliszi", which is how Arabic speakers refer to both Arabic and English. Some common features of LA or Arabizi is the use of numbers to represent certain Arabic characters (a form of letter-number homophones for Arabic), such as: 7 for the Arabic character ح or "ha”; 3 for the
Arabic character ١ or "ayn"; ٦ for the Arabic character ٦ or "t"; and ٢ for the Arabic character ٢ or "aa" (Yaghan, 2008).

Arabic speaking youth are at the forefront of the creation of Arabizi and are contributing to the evolution of this form of communication. Yaghan (2008) points out that Arabizi differs from country to country, depending on the local dialects. Also, some of the same textism devices of English may apply to Arabizi, namely vowel omission, lexical shortenings, nonstandard spellings, and word-value characters. Additionally, a significant feature of Arabizi is code-switching, since most Arab youths are nonnative speakers of English; they add words like "ok" or "bye" to their Arabizi texts. Arabizi is continually gaining ground in the area of technological communications, but very few studies about Arabizi have been conducted, thus the literature on the subject is scarce.

2.5 - Technology and Education

As Prensky (2001) has pointed out, students born after 1980 are digital natives and because of this, educators must be aware of their advanced knowledge of technology. Students have been raised being exposed to digital technology: "first computers, then the Internet and other ubiquitous information and communication devices such as game consoles, cell phones, PDAs, and iPods—digital natives are considered to be more comfortable with digital technology than previous generations" (Lei, 2009, p. 87). As Prensky (2001) has stated, "Our students have changed radically. Today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach" (p. 1).

Bearne (n.d.) has provided arguments for advancing English education in the classroom, since students are advanced in their technological awareness and ability.
Bearne (n.d.) states that it is quite "common to find more traditional forms of technology in classrooms to accompany reading" (p. 1) such as films, software programs, and editing programs. Technology in the classroom is rapidly evolving, with the advent of affordable and more compact computers, students have access to the Internet or word processors at school, and even in their own classrooms.

Though not all schools can afford computers for each student or LCD projectors for each classroom, students are becoming more familiar with computers, taking IT courses as a requirement at more grade levels. "In some schools, technology-savvy students provide technology support to their teachers, motivate their teachers to integrate technology into classrooms, and even become technology instructors to their teachers" (Lei, 2009, p. 88). Thus, teachers have to be well-trained in order to keep up with their students in technological advances, especially in the classroom.

When I was a fifth grade student in 1988, my class went to the computer lab once a week to learn the proper method of typing; we learned which finger typed which keys. At the time, we were still handwriting academic assignments, but we were properly trained in the uses of the basic Apple or IBM computer throughout the 1990s. Today, students are clearly more advanced with the arrival of the Internet, which allows them to divert the use of the school library and focus on immediate resources from the Internet. Most educators who have training in educational technology are able to expose their students to more assignments involving a computer, such as Webquests, which require students to complete an assignment solely using the Internet and other tools of the computer. However, some teachers are still viewing technology in the classroom as a negative aspect of education.
As Chen, Looi, and Chen (2009) point out, schools must "move to a more technologically integrated approach to teaching and learning…It is an undeniable fact that teachers play a central role in integrating technology in the classroom" (p. 470). It is imperative that pre-service teachers gain the appropriate training in educational technology if they are to properly educate their more technologically savvy students.

The new Interactive White Boards (IWB) or Smartboards are finding their way into many classrooms. IWBs are large boards that are sensitive to touch and are usually connected to a computer and projector (Campbell, 2010). Though IWBs are fairly easy to manage and use, it is of great importance to "note that there are issues associated with teachers using IWBs, including arranging for appropriate training and support, providing sufficient time for some staff to develop confidence in the technology and providing time to organise individual presentations" (Campbell, 2010, p. 69).

As Lei (2009) stated, "Teacher technology preparation has consistently been emphasized in technology policies and reports in the last two decades as “the single most important step” toward integrating technology into education" (p. 87). Congruent with Prensky's (2001) beliefs that digital natives are not going to change the way they perceive the world, it is the job of their teachers, who Prensky calls "digital immigrants" (p. 2) to change they way they view technology and begin training themselves to integrate technology into all subjects of teaching at every level. One area of importance in educational technology to explore is texting (SMS and IM) and education, since many students text on a daily basis.

2.5.1 - Texting and the classroom

Lu (2008) researched the effect of SMS adoption in an English foreign language classroom in Asia. The sample of students who learned vocabulary via SMS had a
better knowledge of English than the students who had been given a simple print paper, which Lu (2008) concluded to mean that "students in general hold positive attitudes towards learning vocabulary via mobile phone" (p. 515). Tomita (2009) states that "some teachers are using instant messaging shorthand to help students spark ideas and creativity", which is in coherence with Shortis's (2007) claims that texting leads to creative spelling.

Cavus and Ibrahim (2009) refer to mobile learning as m-learning and state that it "could be thought to be a form of ‘informal’ learning" that can take place at anytime or anywhere. They add that "learning is through interaction with others. Much of the learning that takes place in organisations is informal, outside of structured learning programs: asking colleagues for help; searching the network and Internet; and through trial and error" (p. 80). Most mobile phones have provided people with access to the Internet, e.g. Blackberry or IPhone, thus allowing students the ability to access any information they seek within any environment at anytime.

Plus, many educators are beginning to utilize texting forms of communications for English language learners. As Alvarez-Torres (2001) points out:

Network technology has found its way into the language classroom, with recent attention given to incorporating synchronous computer-mediated communication technology (CMC), or chatting, into the foreign language study. Synchronous CMC allows language learners to use target language and interact with classmates, learners elsewhere, and native speakers worldwide (p. 313).

It is important for foreign language learners to interact with native speakers, as well as their peers to improve their vocabulary for speaking and writing.

Since laptops and mobile phones are wireless and portable devices, students may have access to them at all times. M-learning (mobile learning) is therefore possible for students, especially since most English language learners lack the exposure to English
needed for them to learn on the basis of practice and repetition. In Lu's (2009) experiment of teaching English vocabulary via mobile phones versus print mediums, the mobile groups gained more vocabulary than the print group. Lu also reported that the results from the questionnaires that were distributed in the study conducted found that students "in general took positive attitudes towards learning vocabulary via mobile phone for its portability, immediacy, novelty, legibility and the spacing effect it generated" (p. 522).

Students' ability to text may be advantageous for their literacy as well, as argued by Wood, Jackson, Plester, and Wilde (2009), since they are exposed to more words in the written form on a daily basis. During the earlier part of the century, most educators and parents were worried about students’ exposure to violence and sex on television, yet now students are being exposed to the Internet, texting, and chatting, all of which require children to read. Hence, students are being exposed to the written word, which has made them more susceptible to phonological awareness, which will increase their literacy. As Wood, Jackson, Plester, and Wilde (2009) point out that "although textisms are ‘misspellings’ in a conventional sense, they are phonologically and orthographically ‘acceptable’ forms of written English" (p. 2).

Student texting habits will not divert their education, but may possibly aid in their adoption of Standard English conventions for spelling. In order to learn how to read and write, most educators argue for phonological awareness strategies, which students are being exposed to when they text, especially when they are using phonological spelling to create new textisms (Shortis, 2007). Students must have a high level of phonological awareness in order to create such texts, which attributes to the connection between phonological awareness and reading and writing achievement.
(Plester, Wood, & Joshi, 2009). Therefore, textisms are allowing students to become literate, as opposed to the assumption that texting is hindering this attainment.

**2.5.2 - The effect of texting on students' academic writing**

What is interesting from the perspective of an English teacher who supports proper English academic writing in the classroom is that students, now more than ever, are writing on a daily basis. Though their daily writing habits take place mainly on social networks like Facebook or Twitter, online chatting sites like MSN Messenger and texting via SMS on mobile telephones, students are still writing. I always ask my students on the first day of class if any of them read for fun, and nobody raises their hands; yet in reality they read on a daily basis: from their screens, whether they are computer screens, Ipads, or mobile telephones. According to the PEW Internet & American Life Project, "teenagers’ lives are filled with writing… teens have eagerly embraced written communication with their peers as they share messages on their social network pages, in emails and instant messages online, and through fast-paced thumb choreography on their cell phones" (Lenhart, Arafeh, Smith, & Macgill, 2008, p. 2).

However, there are arguments that texting and online chatting are hurting their writing skills, rather than improving them. There are those who agree with this assumption, stating simply that texting is destroying language (Humphrys, 2007).

Crystal (2008b) has introduced "doom-laden" prophecies about texting and the effect it will have on the future of education and the English language; they are as follows:

- Texting uses new and nonstandard orthography.
- This will inevitably erode children's ability to spell, punctuate, and capitalize correctly, an ability already thought poor.
- They will inevitably transfer these new habits into the rest of their schoolwork.
- This will inevitably give them poorer marks in examinations.
• A new generation of adults will inevitably grow up unable to write proper English.
• Eventually the language as a whole will inevitably decline (p. 151).

Though some people agree with the above prophecies of language doom, Crystal (2008b) himself does not, nor do many other researchers concerned with texting and education. Roschke (2007) argues that "problems with students sneaking slang or colloquialisms into their formal writing did not begin with CMC" (p.5). Teens should not be accused of something they are yet to perform, such as writing in textisms for academic assignments. The concern is not a new occurrence, since educators are constantly trying to teach students to avoid the use of slang or spoken language in their writing. Writing was established to record the spoken word, and texting is no different in its utilization.

Shortis (2007) argues that text spelling is actually creating better spellers in school and more creative writing habits. Shortis has developed a sort of manifesto for text spelling in which he states that "there is considerable creativity and diversity on the part of the users in the ways they deploy the vernacular resources of Txt and there is a longstanding historical basis for such practices" (p. 21).

Other advocates of text spelling are Wood, Jackson, Plester, and Wilde (2009), who claim that students are well aware of the differences between Standard English spelling and nonstandard spelling or phonetic spelling in textisms. They argue that "the word play that children have in texting offers a rudimentary and informal learning platform from which they can develop sensitivity, confidence and flexibility with phonology and orthography, which may in turn benefit developing literacy skills" (p. 1). They also argue that texting allows students to play with words in a casual and relaxed way, which Standard English would never allow them to do.
Another proponent of texting is Tomita (2009) who argues that "text-messaging tools provide an effective means of teaching students important 21st century skills… Twitter and other text-messaging tools help to motivate and encourage students to do more writing and to express themselves through their writing" (p. 189). Plester, Wood, and Joshi (2009) also believe that even poorer readers who are exposed to texting have the potential to write without the hindrance of teacher expectations for Standard English academic writing.

Reich (2008) also points out that students are more than willing to collaborate with technological tools and education, since for once their writing is not going to just end up in a portfolio for their teacher's use, but will be published in online communities, where many people will have a chance to view their writing. Reich (2008) also argues that failing to use texting as a potential toward better writing would be a mistake in the education curriculum.

Proponents have made convincing arguments for texting as a possible tool to improve writing; but opponents of texting, who are mainly adults (educators, parents, critics, the media etc.), view texting as another means of destroying formal academic English and encumbering the process of teaching proper academic writing to students. Humphrys (2007) has viciously argued against texting by stating that it is the texters "who are doing to our language what Genghis Khan did to his neighbors eight hundred years ago. They are destroying it: pillaging our punctuation; savaging our sentences; destroying our vocabulary. And they must be stopped" (para. 5). He argues fervently that texting is ambiguous and may mislead the reader to interpret text messages incorrectly. Plus, he believes that young people are turning the written language into a written form of constantly changing abbreviations and silly emoticons.
Barker (2007) mentions Ian McNeilly, a high school English teacher of twelve years, who claims that he sees textisms in school written assignments often, and must constantly explain to his students that it is just not appropriate and that some of his students do not understand the difference, since most of them write frequently via SMS and IM. Ream (2005) has been quoted by many from her book KISS: Keep It Short and Simple, as saying "text messaging and the Internet are destroying the way our kids read, think, and write. These kids aren't learning to spell. They're learning acronyms and shorthand...Kids are typing shorthand jargon that isn't even a complete thought" (p. 8).

Drouin and Davis (2009) have claimed that there is "no evidence that textisms aren’t surfacing in formal environments, that students differentiate between the two registers (text speak and SE), or that students think text speak is inappropriate for formal written communication" (pp. 50-51). Although the proponents of textisms may disagree with Drouin and Davis's claims that textisms have yet to be proven to "not" exist in formal writing, mainly media sources would agree that textisms will eventually destroy Standard English in the academic and business arenas. According to Rosen et al. (2010), "educators and the media have decried the use of these shortcuts, suggesting that they are causing youth to lose the ability to write acceptable English prose" (p. 4).

In an article for USA Today, Friess (2003) reported a father who discovered his son was filling out an application for a summer job. When the father read what his son was writing: "i want 2 b a counselor because i love to 2 work with kids" (para. 1), he was horrified. Since a job application is considered a formal document, the child did not differentiate between when it is or is not appropriate to use textisms. Friess (2003) also mentioned a university writing instructor whose students could write fairly well,
but did not know the difference between the use of "y-o-u" and "u" when they wrote their compositions.

Oxley (2010) concurs by stating that "With the relaxed nature of texting it is no surprise that it is finding its way into the academic writing of teenagers, who speak textisms almost as bilinguals, are infusing formal writing with the conventions of texting" (para. 3). Her statement is supported by statistics provided by the PEW Internet & American Life Project reports for "Writing, Technology, and Teens" from 2008. Some of these statistics are as follows:

50% of teens say they sometimes use informal writing styles instead of proper capitalization and punctuation in their school assignments; 38% say they have used text shortcuts in school work such as “LOL” (which stands for “laugh out loud”); 25% have used emoticons (symbols like smiley faces :—) ) in school work" (Lenhart, Arafeh, Smith, & Macgill, 2008, p. 3).

An example of texting appearing in an academic English essay is presented by Carrington (2005a) with a report about a 13-year-old Scottish girl who submitted an essay to her teacher written completely in texting format: "Apparently, the girl’s essay was as follows: My smmr hols wr CWOT. B4, we used 2go2 NY 2C my bro, his GF & thr 3 :- kids FTF. ILNY, it’s a gr8 ple" (p.162). The translation for this essay was as follows: "My summer holidays were a complete waste of time. Before, we used to go to New York to see my brother, his girlfriend and their three screaming kids face to face. I love New York. It’s a great place" (Ibid). A teacher clearly could not grade this essay considering there is no appropriate introduction, topic sentence, main idea, body, or conclusion. Teachers would need to keep texting or web slang dictionaries in order to decipher the student's essay, which seems to be the proposed future of language if teens continue to use it on a daily basis. Some researchers argue that "texting allows children
to experiment with language in an informal and playful manner" (Wood, et al., 2009, p.1). This may be true, but there is a lot of concern from teachers and researchers that this playful manner in which students use textims should not be presented in schoolwork.

Since the issue is quite new, debates are ongoing, and there has yet to be common ground for proponents and opponents of textisms and education. Throughout history, students have been learning slang and colloquialisms within their peer groups, and have made a habit of their use in academic language. Educators are constantly struggling to ingrain in their students some sort of standard for using proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, and writing structure within the academic environment. Spell check, grammar check, thesaurus, etc. in word processors, such as Microsoft Word have contributed to students depending on their computers for producing better academic writing; but how does texting factor into the equation? The proponents are adamant that texting is contributing to students' writing habits, while opponents insist that textism devices will destroy Standard English. This study investigated whether or not student academic essays at a private university in Lebanon are in any way affected by textism devices, and whether or not these students believe texting is to blame for the appearance of textism devices within their academic writing assignments.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 - Introduction

Since texting is a new medium of communications in the beginning of the twenty-first century, literature review alone are not enough to answer the research questions. The study focused on the effects of textisms on academic English essays in the university setting, and therefore data must be collected via other means of research in order to answer the research questions and validate the hypothesis.

3.2 - Research Design

Methods of research are approaches to researching in education in order to collect data, which will later be used to infer and interpret in order to explain and make predictions for the future (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). This research design will be a mixed methods approach (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003), which will include both qualitative and quantitative methods of research. The use of two questionnaires and content analysis are representative of the mixed methods research approach. Mixed methods research is not used to replace either method of research, but to pursue the strengths and avoid the weakness of the qualitative and quantitative methods of research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). It is imperative to use both qualitative and quantitative methods of research in order to collect data that is representative of the study.

Reasons for using a qualitative or phenomenological approach to researching textisms is because, quite simply, textisms are a new phenomena in the area of communications, and very little is known about the effects of using textisms in educational settings. According to Hoepfl (1997), "the ability of qualitative data to
more fully describe a phenomenon is an important consideration not only from the researcher’s perspective, but from the reader’s perspective as well" (p. 49). Hence, qualitative research methods are essential for providing the reader with an understanding of how textisms may affect education, namely academic essay writing.

Since qualitative research mainly involves the use of words (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003), it is important to note that the study is collectively based on pragmatics, thus making it imperative to utilize qualitative research methods. Quantitative research cannot provide the means necessary to analyze documents or interview participants, nor can it analyze the results of the social practice of texting among university students in Lebanon and how it affects their essay writing. In qualitative research, open-ended questions may be proposed in order to sustain the findings of new information (Hoepfl, 1997). The qualitative instrument utilized is content analysis. Content analysis in this case may test the hypotheses about textisms' effect on academic essays; content analysis of English essays will aid in the investigation of the possible relationship between students' texting practices and their academic English essays or writing assignments (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

Quantitative research methods are employed as a way to analyze the data numerically, and validate results through statistics. Quantitative research is performed as a way to explain the causes of the relationship between textisms and academic essay writing by isolating the variables involved (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Since quantitative research is predetermined and produces generalizations about the research setting (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003), it may generate results that will conflict with the qualitative research. Both methods need to be employed in order to establish various results to the research questions.
3.2.1 - Pilot Study

For the pilot study, I interviewed a 17-year-old senior in a high school in Beirut, Lebanon. The reason I initially chose a high school student was because my original population sample was going to be centered on teenagers in high school, yet the signed consent forms may have produced a problem, since most high school students are under the age of 18. My present sample excludes high school students all together and focuses mainly on university students instead.

The student I interviewed for the pilot study spoke both Arabic and English, but the student's studies were conducted in English only. Some of the questions for the interview were as follows: Do you find it easier to SMS or call your friends, which one and why? Did chatting on the Internet improve your typing skills on the computer? When you write essays in school, do you find you would rather use chat language or web slang instead of proper English, why or why not?

I had anticipated certain answers, but was surprised at how unexpected her responses actually were. She explained that she found it easier to call a friend because she wouldn't have to sit there and type on the phone. She also admitted that Internet chatting was extremely helpful with her typing skills on the computer, which she says were not efficient until she began chatting with friends on the Internet. Conversely, she stated that she would not prefer using web slang or textisms while writing an essay for class, because it would be a whole new language to learn, and she does not want to mix it with academic English.

When she was asked about using textisms while she spoke to friends casually, she admitted there were certain abbreviations she used. Some examples she gave were: "BRB for be right back, TC for take care, and TYT for take your time." She also said
that the Lebanese youth have created a whole new language aside from English textisms, which utilizes numbers instead of Arabic letters (Arabizi), and that she often uses these forms of textisms when she communicates with friends.

When asked about emoticons, she admitted that she often has entire conversations using only emoticons with her friends while chatting on Microsoft Network Messenger (MSN). She confessed that if it were possible to speak to people with some sort of emoticon language, she would enjoy that as well. She stated the importance for young people to learn textisms and web slang, since for her generation, it has become the latest trend in communications. Before she learned this means of communication, she was often lost while using the Internet for chatting or texting her friends from her mobile phone. Plus, she thinks teachers will have a hard time in the future, since students are getting lazier and need instant gratification.

Through this pilot interview, I was able to establish more specific questions for both the student questionnaires and the instructor questionnaires. I was able to also conclude the importance of utilizing a specific population (university students enrolled in English classes), because their class work is centered on writing, specifically essay writing. Also, I was able to concentrate on the effects textism devices may have on the daily communication practices of university students, since the pilot examinee was fervent in her adherence of texting and chatting with friends. Therefore, this study explored the use of textism devices in a social and academic setting, as displayed in the questionnaires.

3.3 - Instrumentation

Research is based primarily on data, and to obtain certain data, specific instruments must be employed. It is important to establish what kind of data I would
need in order to answer my research questions (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Therefore, the whole process of collecting data is known as instrumentation (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003), and selecting the instruments are vital toward the measurement of what is going to be studied. An instrument is the device used to collect certain data, and the validity of these instruments is an important aspect of research.

The entire point of methods or instruments is to "gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 44). Therefore, validity is simply the defensibility of the inferences made from data collected with instruments (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Another aspect of instrumentation is reliability, which refers to the consistent results that an instrument provides (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). An instrument is also reliable if another researcher uses it again to measure the same data and reveals the same results (Golafshani, 2003).

3.3.1 - Questionnaires

The first two instruments that I used were quantitative research instruments. I constructed two questionnaires, one constructed for students in English courses in which essay writing was required, and the other for instructors of those English courses. These questionnaires were quantitative in nature, because they sought to analyze numerical data in the form of attitude scaling. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000), "the questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, often being comparatively straightforward to analyze" (p. 245).
The questionnaires I constructed were based on Likert scales, named for the man who designed the scale, Rensis Likert (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003); they were attitude scales directed at discovering the participants' attitudes to certain statements about textisms. By definition, an attitude scale is a set of statements in which the participant circles numbers representing either a positive attitude (definitely agree) through to a negative attitude (do not agree at all) (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

There are limitations to a Likert scale approach to collecting data, since there is no way to know if the participants are telling the truth, or if they fully understand the meaning of the statement in the questionnaire (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). This was the case in the present study, since most of the students questioned were not native English speakers, and there were various question marks on the questionnaires for statements that may have produced confusion for the students. Other limitations with Likert scales is that it is impossible to determine whether participants would like to add comments to the statement; people may not want to be viewed as extreme, and therefore only circle the number of answers with average ratings (i.e. somewhat agree, somewhat disagree); and when using a five point scale (which is what I used), it is normal for participants to utilize the number 3, which happens with an odd-numbered scale (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).

3.3.1.1 - Procedure

Student questionnaires

Based on the pilot study, I was able to determine which questions would be included in the student questionnaire. I established the questionnaire based primarily on the texting practices of the students and their opinions or beliefs about textisms and their
English assignments. The student questionnaire (Appendix I) consisted of 20 statements, of which the students circled a number based on their attitude toward the statement [definitely agree (1); mostly agree (2); somewhat agree (3); mostly do not agree (4); or do not agree at all (5)].

Though the questionnaires asked the students to circle which university they were studying at, and whether they were first, second, or third year students, it became apparent throughout the procedure that these variables would not affect the results, since some of the students were fourth year or masters students. Also, since only one university was being studied, the question at the beginning of the questionnaire about which university the student attended was not applicable to the study.

3.3.1.2 - Instructor questionnaires

The instructor questionnaire (Appendix II) was similar in format to the student questionnaire, with the same number of statements, the same Likert scaling, but the questions were different. While the students and instructors were both asked about their texting practices, the instructor questionnaire focused mainly on the instructors' perceptions about the effects texting had on their students' writing. Student questionnaires asked students about their opinion of their own work, which makes their responses more subjective in nature. However, though instructors' perceptions may also be subjective, I anticipated that their answers would be more objective in nature, since they were evaluating the work of all their past students. However, I cannot be sure about the instructors' motives for answering in a predominantly subjective manner, since the statements do not really allow for a subjective response, unless the instructors have preexisting prejudices against university students' texting practices.
3.3.1.3 - Population and sample

Student questionnaire

The population of the student questionnaire was students from a private university in Lebanon who were enrolled in English courses (either remedial English or English 101). My target population was university students in Lebanon, but my accessible population was university students from the private university in Lebanon, to which I had access to research. I chose random sampling, since I distributed the questionnaires to teachers of remedial English and English 101 courses at the university; I did not know who was enrolled in any of their classes, nor did I know the students’ knowledge of English or about their texting practices. Random sampling is when every member of the population has a chance to be chosen for the research, but a representative sample of the population of university students are selected (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

I chose the cluster random sampling method, since my target population was students enrolled in certain classes at the university. Cluster random sampling, according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), is the "selection of groups, or clusters, of subject rather than individuals" (p. 97). At the time of the research, 786 students were enrolled in both remedial and English 101 courses at the private university in Lebanon. Of the 786 students enrolled, 135 students completely filled out the questionnaires. This number was random, since I only had access to a few instructors who taught the specified English courses, and they were more than willing to distribute the questionnaires in their classes. So, 17% of the students (the sample) who were enrolled in the specified courses filled out the questionnaires, which was the amount representing the total population.
3.3.1.4 - Instructor questionnaire

There were 25 instructors in the English department, who were teaching or have taught remedial English and/or English 101 at the private university in Lebanon. I chose the purposive sampling method for this group of instructors, since a purposive sample are those who have the qualifications (teaching English 101 and/or remedial English) to fill out the questionnaires (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

I must note that only one instructor declined to fill out the questionnaire, without giving reasons for her decline, or even giving me the opportunity to explain the purpose of my study. I was able to acquire 18 instructor questionnaires from those teaching English at the university, the number of instructors who answered the questionnaires would satisfactorily represent this small target population.

3.3.2 - Content Analysis

When it is impossible for the researcher to directly observe acts of communication through written form, then content analysis is usually a proper qualitative research instrument to utilize (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). Content analysis allows the researcher to study human practices based on different written content for the purposes of communication, such as textbooks, essays, magazines, newspaper articles, songs, etc. (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). For the purposes of this research, I employed the content analysis of university students' writing in the forms of essays. Since these forms of writing were done without the students' prior knowledge that they'd be analyzed at a later date, the students wrote them without pre-existing beliefs, attitudes, or ideas about the research subject matter (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003); which made them valid resource materials.
Content analysis allows researchers the ability to explore how people live their daily lives and the way in which they practice different forms of communications (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) agree that content analysis is not only "counting words or extracting objective content from texts to examine meanings, themes and patterns that may be manifest or latent in a particular text. It allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner" (p. 2). Since the study's purpose was to discover the influence of textisms on university students' academic essays, an analysis of the essays in order to answer the research questions was done. This form of content analysis will aid in dealing with education problems that may arise because of university students' daily uses of textisms when chatting; it may aid in helping teachers embrace or combat certain habits students have when using textisms in their formal academic writing (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

Advantages of using content analysis are that the researcher can analyze written texts without the authors being aware that they are being analyzed; a researcher can therefore observe the subjects without being observed themselves (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Content analysis can also allow the researcher to return to the documents whenever necessary; it is time and cost efficient, and the study can be replicated in the future (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

The main disadvantage in content analysis is providing proper categories that will establish validity of the documents (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). The researcher may conclude that the results of the content analysis are the actual causes of the phenomena of texting, rather than the reflection of texting on student writing (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). It is important to analyze the data without bias and pre-existing notions about the effects the phenomena of texting may have on academic writing; I should be aware that
textism devices found in academic writing may just be a reflection of the attitudes and practices that students of this generation may harbor, since they are growing up in the digital era.

3.3.2.1 - Procedure

I was able to obtain essays from one instructor who had assigned essays to her class. The students were not informed that their essays would be analyzed at a later date. I must note that many instructors forewarn students that they should not use colloquialisms in their essays, and unless students listen intently, they may subconsciously insert colloquialisms or textisms into their assignments.

The essays collected were first drafts, in order to collect work that was not corrected and truly representative of the students' work. If I were to collect corrected assignments, then students would be aware of mistakes they've made and the samples would not aid in the investigation of the hypothesis. Therefore, students' essays represented the hypothesis and were usable in analyzing whether they inserted textisms subconsciously because of their habitual use of textisms when communicating through texting or chatting.

Since more than one essay was being analyzed, reliability could be checked. Through the categorization of the predominance of certain textism devices used in the writing assignments, I was able to explore the frequency of certain textism devices present in the essays; this eventually led me to the reliability of the sources (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). The validity was present when the content analysis was being tested against the student and instructor questionnaires. If the essays correlate with the results of the questionnaires, it may prove a valid instrument (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).
3.3.2.2 - Population and sample

The sample essays chosen were purposive in nature, since I was only looking for those samples that contained textism devices. Therefore, I used a purposive sampling design (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003), which later proved helpful when analyzing the essays. The analysis methods I applied determined whether there were certain common textism devices that students used when writing their academic writing assignments. I chose a sample of 36 essays from a private university in Lebanon. It can be deduced that of the population of 786 students, a handful of their essay were chosen for analysis. Of the 36 essays, five essays contained textism devices, which was 14% of the total essays analyzed.

3.4 - Data Analysis

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), the data collected should be "scored accurately and consistently. If they are not, conclusions a researcher draws from the data may be erroneous or misleading" (p. 142). When analyzing the data from the two questionnaires, it was up to the researcher to tally the number of times the participants circled an attitude on the Likert scale for a certain statement. This represented a quasi-statistics form of analysis, since I was counting the number of participants who chose a certain number on the Likert scale for a certain statement (e.g. for statement 1: 34% of students somewhat agree). Since there were five attitudes to choose from, there were five columns in which data was tallied and tabulated from the questionnaires. I used Microsoft Excel to input all of the data, but I did not use this program for any of the calculations. I calculated the number of students who circled a certain attitude toward the statement, then divided that number by the 135 student respondents, and multiplied that number by 100 to receive the total percentage of students that either definitely
agreed, mostly agreed, somewhat agreed, mostly did not agree, or did not agree all with the statement.

Significant statistical testing procedures, using SPSS for example, was not found necessary for this study. The Likert scaling method used in the questionnaires gave me the opportunity to tap into the perceptions, feelings, behavior, and opinions of the respondents, and therefore revealed more about the practices of texting than a regular dichotomous questionnaire would reveal (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).

However, the data from the content analysis was quite different from the data produced by the quantitative questionnaires. Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) agree that counting is of great importance in content analysis. There were various categories for the content analysis, so each time a textism device was found in the writing assignment, it was counted as it pertained to a certain category.

In order for the analysis to be replicated, it was imperative that I chose a system of coding that was consistent and applicable to the study. Though people may assume that content analysis is just a word frequency method of research, Stemler (2001) explains that content analysis is based mostly on coding and categorizing certain words that are related to the research questions and/or hypothesis. According to Hoepfl (1997), when applying a system of coding "the researcher must identify and tentatively name the conceptual categories into which the phenomena observed will be grouped. The goal is to create descriptive, multi-dimensional categories which form a preliminary framework for analysis" (p. 57).

The data analysis methods used for content analysis were enumeration and typology. Typology was used to decide whether there were common textism devices that were used by students in their academic writing (e.g. most students used the letter
"u" instead of the word "you"). Typological analysis allowed me the opportunity to separate the data into subgroups, which in this study were the various textism devices that have been used. Typologies, as defined by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000), are "a set of phenomena that represent subtypes of a more general set or category" (p. 152). Therefore, the phenomena in the case of the content analysis were the use of textisms in academic essays, and the subtypes or categories were the various textism devices that were discussed at length in the literature review.

Enumeration was used to count the frequency of the words pertaining to the different textism device categories that appeared in the essays. Enumeration, though quantitative in nature, is often used in qualitative research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Enumeration sought to establish that textism devices appeared in academic writing; hence supporting the hypothesis that texting does influence student academic writing. In order to use enumeration, I needed to create an a priori code (Stemler, 2001) based on the textism devices (which was done beforehand when I established the typological analysis), which was explored in the literature review.

In order to establish valid and relevant categories, they have to be based on the hypothesis set forth by this thesis (White & Marsh, 2006). The categories were based on the following textism devices: alphabetisms, acronyms, abbreviations, contractions, clippings, omitted letters, letter-number homophones, world-value characters, emoticons, and phonetic spelling. Since the definitions of the categories of textism devices have been established, they were reliable in relation to the content being measured (White & March, 2006). The textism devices that were most common will be discussed and reported. I was able to determine which textism devices had a more
important role among university students' communication practices, and may have a lasting effect on the students' writing habits.

3.4.1 - Triangulation

To discourage any discrepancies in the results, I employed the method of triangulation, which is the use of two or more instruments, in order to establish results that coincide with each other, or help validate claims introduced by the hypothesis (Olsen, 2004). Triangulation requires multiple sources of data (Stemler, 2001), and since this study utilized three instruments (a student questionnaire, an instructor questionnaire, and content analysis) the results were correlated to show a relationship to the hypothesis, thus allowing for validation of the initial claims made by the pilot study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

The data produced via content analysis is reliable if it is consistent, and to do this, the researcher must establish a set of unambiguous recording instructions (Stemler, 2001). This method of data collection is valid if it is used alongside other measurable instruments. Therefore, content analysis was valid when used with the questionnaires.

3.5 - Ethical Considerations

This study did not named any individuals or institutions, nor in any way, committed any unethical practices. The respondents were all over the age of 18, so they were responsible for their own participation in the study. The methods used (questionnaires and content analysis) have not threatened the validity of the research, since participants were not coerced and were aware of their participation in the study (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). The research questionnaires provided an explanation to the participants at the beginning clarifying that responses were
anonymous, and would only be viewed by the researcher and the thesis committee. The research will not be publicly published, and no names were mentioned.

There was no need for informed consent, since there was no possibility that students or instructors would be exposed to any risks by participating in the research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). Also, the institution being studied would in no way be mentioned, and therefore it was not necessary to receive informed consent from the institution itself (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). The participants' privacy was guaranteed since the questionnaires did not ask for the name of the respondent; I am not aware of which questionnaire belongs to which respondent (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). However, I am aware of the writers' identities for the content analysis, but will assure their anonymity by removing their names from any copies distributed to the thesis committee, so there will be no opportunity for the writers to be traced (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS AND RESULTS

4.1 - Student Questionnaire Results

Based on the first thirteen statements of the questionnaire, students rated their behaviors and practices on a five point attitude scale: 1 for I definitely agree; 2 for I mostly agree; 3 for I somewhat agree; 4 for I mostly do not agree; and 5 for I do not agree at all. Each student circled their preference to the statement. Table 4.1 refers to the student questionnaire results of the practices and behaviors of the students when they communicate via online chatting, SMS texting, and their use of textisms in English class.

Table 4.1: Behaviors and Practices of students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Definitely Agree (1)</th>
<th>Mostly Agree (2)</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree (3)</th>
<th>Mostly Do Not Agree (4)</th>
<th>Do Not Agree At All (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student respondents' texting and chatting practices are quite similar in statements 1 through 10. Their practices were revealed through these statements, in order to get an idea of their habitual uses of CMC and SMS in order to communicate.

Statements 11 through 13 refer to student practices in the English classrooms, which seek to answer the first research question posed by the thesis, which is "Do university students' habitual texting communication practices have an adverse effect on their formal writing skills?" Statement 11 refers to the students' use of textism devices.
when taking notes in class. The majority of students (35%) did not agree at all and 18% mostly did not agree, while 47% of students agreed (definitely, mostly, or somewhat) that they used texting abbreviations in English class notes). Statement 12 refers to constant use of textism devices in English class assignments, in which 64% did not agree at all that they used any textism devices in their work; 17% mostly did not agree with statement 12. Conversely, only 18% agreed to some extent that they always used textism devices in their English class assignments. Similarly, statement 13 refers to the constant use of textism devices in students' academic English essays. The majority of students (67%) did not agree at all and 11% mostly did not agree with statement 13, while only 22% agreed to some extent that they always use textisms in their English essays.

There is a consensus among the total sample of students that their habitual texting communication practices do not have an adverse effect on their formal writing skills, since most of them do not use textisms in their English note taking, academic writing assignments, or academic English essays.

Table 4.2 refers to the beliefs and opinions students have toward statements 14 through 20. Those statements reflect the students' opinions about texting and how it affects their English essays and assignments.

Table 4.2: Beliefs and Opinions of Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Definitely Agree (1)</th>
<th>Mostly Agree (2)</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree (3)</th>
<th>Mostly Do Not Agree (4)</th>
<th>Do Not Agree At All (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statement 14 in Table 4.2 denotes the concept of texting and online chatting improving typing skills. Of the 135 respondents, 41% definitely agree that texting and chatting have improved their computer typing skills, while 45% either mostly or somewhat agreed with the statement. When asked if they believe that texting and chatting have improved their spelling skills in English class in statement 15, the majority of respondents (27%) somewhat agreed. Statement 16 asks if students believe that texting and chatting should be applied to everyday English when used for writing, as opposed to formal English. The majority of students (34%) did not agree at all with statement 16.

Statement 17 asks students if they believe they are able to differentiate between formal English and texting and chatting (thus not using textisms in English class). The majority of students (57%) definitely agreed that they are able to differentiate between informal and formal English. Only 9% of respondents believed they mostly did not agree or did not agree at all that they can differentiate between formal and informal English. This statement single-handedly answers the second research question "Can students accurately differentiate between informal (textism devices) and formal writing when writing essays?" It would appear that students believe that they are able to differentiate between informal textisms and formal English when they write academic essays.

In statement 18, students were asked if they believed that technological advances in communication has a positive effect on their education; 32% somewhat agreed. However, 20% of respondents did not agree with statement 18, and 47% agreed either mostly or definitely agreed. This statement seeks to answer the third research question, "Do technological communication methods have a negative or positive effect on student
writing?" The majority of students believe to some degree that technological advances in communication have a positive effect on their writing skills.

Statement 19 asked if students believed they understand all web slang (online chatting language) and textisms (mobile phone texting) language, and could actually call themselves experts. Only 32% (the majority) somewhat agreed with this statement, while 50% definitely or mostly agreed with this statement. The final statement in the student questionnaire asks if students believed that if they were required to write an English essay only using textisms, they would be able to do so. The bulk of students definitely agreed (33%) that they could write such an essay. Students who mostly or somewhat agreed made up 52% of the total respondents.

4.2 - Instructor Questionnaire Results

The instructor questionnaires consisted of twenty statements, similar to the students’ questionnaires, using the same Likert scale of attitude measure. Table 4.3 contains statements 1 through 15, which denote the behaviors and practices of instructors; and Table 4.4 contain statements 16 though 20, which refer to the beliefs and opinions of instructors. Eighteen of twenty-five English instructors at the private university in Lebanon completed the questionnaires for this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Definitely Agree (1)</th>
<th>Mostly Agree (2)</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree (3)</th>
<th>Mostly Do Not Agree (4)</th>
<th>Do Not Agree At All (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Like the student questionnaires, there were two categories within the questionnaire, one that discusses practices and behavior (Table 4.3), and the other which refers to the instructors' beliefs and opinions (Table 4.4). Instructor respondents were more unified in certain areas with their responses to certain statements than the students. The statements reflected about behaviors and practices of instructors were solely used to understand the background of the instructors and their everyday uses of CMC and SMS. However, the results do not answer the research questions, but were utilized in order to observe if instructors are able to identify textism devices when they assessed their students' work.

Statements 10-15 turn to the issue of classroom practices that include abbreviation techniques often found in textism practices. In statement 10, instructors rated their use of textism when writing notes on the board for their English classes. The majority of instructors (72%) did not agree at all to the use of abbreviations either on the white erase board or in Power Point presentations. Statement 11 affirms that instructors encourage their students to use abbreviation while writing notes in their English class. A total of 55% of respondents did not agree at all with this statement.

Statement 12 questions whether instructors have received English class assignments containing textisms or web slangs such as letter-number homophones. 33% of respondents definitely agreed that they have received assignments containing textism devices, and 27% mostly agreed. However, 16% mostly did not agree and 16% did not agree at all with statement 12. This statement aids in answering the three research questions. However, the instructors' responses differs from the students' responses, and
shows that either students or instructors are being subjective when choosing an attitude on the Likert scale.

Statement 13 is similar to statement 12, but refers to receipt of first draft essays rather than English class assignments. A total of 54% definitely and mostly agreed that they have received first draft essays containing textism devices. 16% of instructors somewhat agreed and 16% mostly did not agree with statement 13. Only 11% of instructors have never received first draft essays with textism devices. This statement also reflects the three research question, since receiving first draft essays with textism devices does represent texting having an adverse effect of English essays, that students cannot properly differentiate between textisms and formal English, and technological communications have a negative effect on English writing skills.

Statement 14 asks if instructors clarify to their students that they must only use formal academic English when writing any assignment in class. 77% of instructors definitely agreed that they make this clarification to their students. Statement 15 is similar to statement 14, but refers to English essays rather than class assignments. Again, 77% of instructors definitely agreed that they made this clarification to their students.

Table 4.4: Beliefs and Opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Definitely Agree (1)</th>
<th>Mostly Agree (2)</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree (3)</th>
<th>Mostly Do Not Agree (4)</th>
<th>Do Not Agree At All (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statements 16 through 20 (Table 4.4) refer to the beliefs and opinions of the instructors based on the use of textisms. Statement 16 asks if instructors think it is okay if students include textism devices in their English essays. The majority of respondents
(88%) did not agree at all with this statement. Statement 17 asks if instructors become frustrated when students do not use proper English when they write their essays. 55% of respondents definitely agreed to the feeling of frustration at receiving essays not written in proper English. Statement 18 refers to the belief that instructors’ text and web savvy students will be at the forefront of changing the English language forever. The results were mixed, without a true dominating response: 38% somewhat agreed, 11% definitely agreed, 16% mostly agreed, 5% mostly did not agree and 27% did not agree at all.

Statement 19 testifies to the worry instructors may have about the future of formal English writing, since the new generation has created a new language for written communication purposes. The majority of instructors (38%) definitely agreed to this concern for the formal writing. The final statement says that because of technological advances in communications, instructors believe that academic English essays may be in jeopardy. Only 22% definitely agreed with this statement, but 38% definitely agreed with the statement. Meanwhile, 11% somewhat agreed, 16% mostly did not agree, and 11% did not agree. This last statement seems to answer the third research question that technological communication methods do not have a negative impact on English writing.

4.3 - Content Analysis Results

The qualitative data that was collected consisted of English essays written for an academic writing course at a private university in Lebanon. Of the 36 essays that were submitted, 5 essays contained some textism devices. The students were expected to write essays using academic English; however five essays did not adhere to the outlined rules set forth by the instructor. The amount of students that inserted textism devices in
their essay represents 14% of the total essays received by the instructor. The content analysis of the essays answers all three research questions, since habitual use of texting does adversely affect some student essay, some students do not know how to differentiate between textisms and formal English, and technological communications has a negative impact on some students' English essay writing.

Tables 4.5 through 4.9 show the category of textism devices used in each essay and the amount of times each textism device appeared within each essay.

Table 4.5: Essay #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textism Device</th>
<th>Acronym Ex. (ASAP)</th>
<th>Letter- Number Homophone Ex. (2 for to)</th>
<th>Word- Value Character Ex. (@ for at)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of times appeared and example of use</td>
<td>2- scuba for self contained under water breathing apparatus</td>
<td>1- u for you</td>
<td>1- 10 for ten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student #1 wrote an essay (Appendix III-a) about their favorite past time, which is SCUBA diving, in which the student uses the acronym SCUBA once. The student does not explain the meaning of the acronym in use. The student also uses the letter-number homophone "u" for the word you once in the essay. The student writes the number "10", instead of the word ten, which is considered a textism device for word-value character, because in other areas of the essay the student does write the word for other numbers, which shows inconsistency and improper use of academic English.

Table 4.6: Essay #2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textism Device</th>
<th>Contraction Ex. (I'm, I'll)</th>
<th>Letter - Number Homophone Ex. (2 for to)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of times appeared and example of use</td>
<td>5- it's for it is 1- don't for do not 1- you'll for you will 1- that's for that is 1- I've for I have</td>
<td>1- b for be 3- u for you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student #2 wrote an essay (Appendix III-b) about music being the most beautiful thing in the world. The student uses nine contractions in the essay, which is considered informal use of English, as well as a textism device. The student writes "it's" five times
in the essay, and there is one account for the use of "don't," "you'll," "that's," and "I've." Ordinarily, essays allow for using contractions a few times, but the student over uses contractions. The student also uses letter-number homophones in the form of "b" for be once, and "u" for you a total of three times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textism Device</th>
<th>Letter- Number Homophone Ex. (2 for to)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of times appeared and example of use</td>
<td>2- ur for your 6- u for you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Essay #3 (Appendix III-c) in Table 4.7 shows many accounts for the use of letter-number homophones. There were two appearances of "ur" for the word your and six appearances of "u" for the word "you".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textism Device</th>
<th>Contraction Ex. (I'm, I'll)</th>
<th>Clipping Ex. (Jumpin)</th>
<th>Omitted Letters Ex. (yr for year)</th>
<th>Word-Value Character Ex. (2 for two)</th>
<th>Phonetic Spelling Ex. (nyt for night)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of times appeared and example of use</td>
<td>1- i'd for I would</td>
<td>1- somthin for something</td>
<td>1- evry for every 2- continu for continue 1- funy for funny</td>
<td>1- 2 for two 1- 5 for five</td>
<td>1-ower, 1-ouwr, 1- awer, 1- owr for our</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Essay #4 (Appendix III-d) contains many textism devices. The student uses the contraction "i'd" without capitalizing the letter "I." The student also combines clipping and letter omission for the word "somethin," in which the student omits the letter "e" and clips the letter "g" from the end of the word. The student utilizes letter omission four times, once in the word "evry" by omitting the second "e", twice in the word "continu" by omitting the letter "e" at the end of the word, and once in the word "funy" by omitting the second "n". The student also uses word-value characters twice, once in the number "10" and once in the number "2"; the reason this is suspicious is because the student writes the words for other numbers in other areas of the essay. The student also
shows instances for phonetic spelling, in which the student phonetically spells the word "our" with different variations: 1 ower, 1 ouwr, 1 awer, and 1 owr.

Table 4.9: Essay #5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textism Device</th>
<th>Word-Value Character (Ex. @ for at)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of times appeared and example of use</td>
<td>6- &amp; for and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student who wrote essay #5 (Appendix III-e) used the textism device: word-value character. There were six instances in which the student substituted the word-value character "&" for the word "and".

**4.4 - Conclusion**

Though not all statements in the questionnaires were pertinent to answering the three research questions, they did aid in establishing a background of the student and instructors' behaviors, practices, beliefs, and perceptions when using CMCs and SMS. The beliefs and opinions of students and instructors seemed to be mostly subjective, since instructors and students did not agree with all the practices of the students. While instructors believe that students used textism devices in their academic assignments and English essays, most students believed that they did not use textism devices in their formal English work.

The content analysis was limited, which reflects that only 14% of students do use textism devices in their English essays. Of the 14% of students, the most commonly used textism device was the letter-number homophone "u" for the word "you". This signifies that textism devices most commonly used in CMC and SMS communication methods are present in a small percentage of academic English essays.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

5.1 - Discussion

The first research question asks if university students' habitual texting communication practices have an adverse effect on their formal writing skills. According to the student questionnaire, 14% of students somewhat agreed that they always use textism devices in their English essays. Of the 36 essays analyzed, a total of five essays showed uses of various textism devices, which represents 14% of the essays analyzed. Therefore, the student questionnaire and content analysis corroborate the hypothesis, which is that texting negatively affects formal writing at the university level, but only to a minimal degree.

Instructor questionnaires supported the hypothesis, since 70% of instructors agreed to some degree that they have received first draft essays that contained some textism devices. However, this does not corroborate with the results of the student questionnaires. Therefore, the first research question has still not appropriately been answered, since mostly instructors believe that students are adversely affected by textisms, while a majority of students do not believe this to be true. This does however concur with the research that opponents of texting are mainly educators and adults, while students are proponents of texting.

While students believe they can differentiate between textisms and formal English, a majority of instructors believe this not to be true. Therefore, the second research question was not adequately answered, since neither populations agreed with each other about the question. Shafie, Azida, and Osman (2010) conducted a study about the effects of SMS language on college writing. Their research revealed that
students were able to differentiate between SMS language and formal English language when writing for assignments and exams for English class. This finding corroborates with the findings of the student questionnaire, which a majority of students definitely agreed that they can differentiate between textisms and formal English, and when to use either in the correct situation.

Drouin and Davis (2009) also agreed that their results corroborated with the previous mentioned results and that a majority of university student participants in their study agreed that most textisms (such as alphabetisms, clippings, phonetic spelling, etc.) do not belong in more formal contexts of written communications. Rosen, Chang, Erwin, Carrier, and Cheever (2010) conducted a similar study of educated college students who were asked to write a formal business letter. The students were not forewarned about the use of textisms in their writing sample, and only 1 in 20 students used a textism device in their sample, which were usually capital letters to demonstrate their strong feelings.

Though a total of 13 of 18 instructors believed that the future of formal English writing is in danger, the students did not agree with this statement. Roscke (2008) believes that English has always been evolving and CMC and SMS language is just another feature language evolution. Crystal (2008a) agrees that textspeak is language evolution and is "linguistically creative" since it is able to "adapt language to suit the demands of diverse settings" (p.6). Shortis (2007) concurs that students' creativity with textism devices should be lauded and not scrutinized, since they reflect the ability present in higher order thinking skills. Shortis believes that students will continuously be taught Standard English skills, but their right to develop a new language is just a
reflection of the progression of their generation; which may true, since language has constantly evolved through centuries due to trends and environmental effects.

The third question asks if technological communication methods positively or negatively affect English writing. Students believed that CMCs and SMS positively affected their writing, while instructors believe that technological communication methods negatively affect their students' writing.

Most of the opponents of textisms are educators, who are worried about the implications texting may have on formal writing skills, which supports the hypothesis. However, Wood, Plester, Jackson, and Wilde (2009) believe that the ability students have to play with words and experiment with language is a positive effect on their education. They also believe that textisms aids in phonological awareness and positively impacts reading and spelling ability, thus contributing to better writing skills.

The content analysis was based on only 5 essays that had textism devices present, which only represents a small percentage of students influenced by their daily uses of texting. I must mention that the students were not forewarned as to the consequences of using textism devices in their English essays, and perhaps if they had been told not to use any textism devices, fewer would have appeared in the essays.

The three research questions were adequately answered with the results of the questionnaires and content analysis. The opponents of texting may have their arguments, but most were made in theory rather than practice. The actual results of various studies conducted by certain authors cited above clearly presents a lack of despair for the relationship between texting and formal academic writing. Opponents like Beasley (2009), Carrington (2004), Humphrys (2007), Barker (2005), and Ream (2005) made claims that texting is the end of formal English as we know it, but
proponents like Crystal (2008a; 2008b), Roschke (2007), Shortis (2007), and Wood, Jackson, Plester, & Wilde (2009) have all provided data that has supported their theories that texting aids students' writing rather than hindering it.

The results of the data analysis show that students believe that texting does not have an adverse effect on their writing skills, since they are able to distinguish between texting and formal English. Students do not believe that technological communication methods negatively impact their writing. However, instructors disagreed, which supports the argument previously made that most opponents of textism devices are educators and adults. Based on the content analysis, very few devices were present, and the ones that were did not seriously hinder the students' writing. Since only 5 essays showed textism devices, the 31 other students knew not to use textism devices in a more formal writing situation.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 - Conclusion

The research set out to explore the effects of texting on academic English, especially in the area of essay writing. The literature was quite mixed, especially since no clear unified research existed for coding textism devices. Therefore, I had to establish, based on research collected from Bieswanger (2007), Fandrych (2007), Shortis (2007), Crystal (2008a;2008b), Coe & Oakhill (2011), a code of my own when establishing various textism devices.

The idea of web slang and textisms becoming an entirely new language in the future may be quite dreadful for those certain adults who believe that proper English usage should thrive in all areas, both academic and social; yet the youth of today will be dictating the changes that take place tomorrow, so it may be inevitable that web slang and textisms are the language of tomorrow. As pointed out by Roschke (2009), even if "it may seem detrimental to students’ ability to strengthen their formal writing skills, educators should acknowledge CMC (computer-mediated communication) as a valid form of communication alongside others taught in the classroom" (p.4).

Businesses are constantly using IM (instant messaging) and SMS chatting in order to relay messages with instant replies, yet there is still a need for formal writing skills within letters, contracts, CV’s, marketing campaigns, etc. However, it will be important for students in university to know how to send IM’s and SMS’s in order to keep updated on communication practices in the workplace. It would be beneficial for students to be trained in this method of communication for the future, but knowing how to write a formal business letter or presentation will also be highly beneficial; and some students without these skills may not
be hired into these businesses. The practical implications of CMCs will be an issue in the future as more businesses start to use more efficient means of communication.

So, Roschke (2009) is correct in assuming that students need to be taught these formal written skills, but teachers should also be aware of them as well through training, in order to teach their students about the differences between using web slang and textisms in their informal communications, and utilizing formal language in certain situations. The data collected from the questionnaires show that the majority of students believe they do understand when textisms should be used and when formal writing should be used. These students claim that they recognize who their audiences are, and at which instance either method is appropriate for use.

This research discusses future negative effects on formal language that have yet to negatively impact students' education, as the student questionnaires indicated. However, the instructor questionnaire results contradicted the results of the student questionnaires, which support the theory established in the literature review that educators are part of the opponents of texting. Wood, Jackson, Plester, and Wilde (2009) would disagree with most educators, since their research provides results in which students' recognized clear differences between textisms and formal academic writing. Though Humphrys (2007) and Ream (2005) may disagree, the issue is still new that many opponents may need to conduct more research in the future to establish whether textisms are indeed harming academic writing on a large scale. But, the arguments are mixed, and as Lee (2002) points out "some teachers see the creeping abbreviations as part of a continuing assault of technology on formal written English. Others take it more lightly, saying that it is just part of the larger arc of language evolution" (p. 2).

Therefore, a clear argument cannot be established until more research is conducted and a clear influence, whether positive or negative, must be established about the impact of
texting on education. Though the content analysis shows that 5 of 36 essays showed presence of textism devices, this is not enough to ascertain a clear distinction between negative or positive influences of texting on students' academic writing. What can be concluded from the research is that textisms affect the everyday life of people from all age ranges, most youth prefer texting as a form of communication, and education can benefit from this new trend in technological communication through phonological awareness and creativity with words, spelling, and writing.

6.2 - Limitations

Of the total number of students at the university, only 135 filled out the student questionnaires, which is a small sample size of the population. Given more time, I would have been able to distribute more questionnaires during different semesters in order to garner more variety among the students. Also, the sample size of the instructors was limited, since there are not many English instructors in the department. However, since most of the instructors' responses were unilateral, it seemed that the majority of instructors were like minded in their responses.

Time was another limitation to the study. The university allows graduate students two years to complete the thesis, but I have elected to complete the research in only one year. Therefore, time was limited and I could only manage to collect a limited samples of questionnaires and essays for analysis.

The essays that were collected only represented one class. If I had access to more essays, perhaps results would have differed. There were also limitations in the recognition of what constituted a textism device. When a student uses contractions, it is deemed more colloquial than a textism device, but it still does reflect an informal use of English.
Another limitation to the study was language. Students at the private university of Lebanon are not native English speakers, and this may have many implications on the study. Students in Lebanon in general are not native English speakers and speak multiple languages. Hence, students may misread certain items on the questionnaire and choose attitudes that do not truly reflect the statements read. Results may not have been truly accurate in reflecting how the student really felt about the items on the questionnaire. They are also beginners at essay writing and have not had time to hone this skill. Therefore, they are simultaneously learning to write English essays while learning different grammar skills that they did not possess before university, such as varying sentence beginnings, using compound and complex sentences, and writing different essays such as narratives, compare/contrast, and persuasive.

Students also preferred to communicate using Arabizi when they text, so they do not apply Arabizi language to their essays because of the clear distinctions. If they were native English speakers that did not possess the means to text using Arabizi, then perhaps there would have been more textism devices in their essays. Another limitation could be that I was unable to test their knowledge of common English textism devices, thus allowing me to diagnose their ability to communicate without using Arabizi when they text.

The final limitation is that instructors warned students to not use colloquialisms or textisms when they wrote their English essays. Since most students were forewarned, then they heeded the demands of the English instructors and avoided using textism devices in their academic English essays. If they had not been warned, perhaps more essays would have contain textism devices than had been the case.
6.3 - **Recommended Further Research**

Texting is a new phenomenon and most textism devices have yet to be universally agreed upon; therefore, until an agreement has been reached about the uniformity of textism devices, thorough and accurate research is still difficult to conduct. I would suggest that research wait until textisms have reached a universal standard before conducting research on the topic. It was difficult to choose accurate labels and definitions for the textism devices, since many researchers have varying opinions about the codification of textism devices.

I would also suggest that the study be longitudinal in nature, since the data was collected in a span of only one year. If the data had been collected over a span of two years, perhaps the results would vary. I would advise future researchers to study younger generations, perhaps students who are still in high school, since that generation utilizes textisms more so than university students for the purpose of online chatting. University students have more freedom to socialize with friends, while high school students depend on the Internet at home to have access to their friends.

Finally, I would suggest that the data be collected from students who are more proficient in the English language, and do not also use Arabizi or any other texting language beside English to communicate. I found it difficult to analyze essays, since so many contained grammatical and structural mistakes. It would have been preferable to analyze essays written by students who have been writing essays for a longer period of time, perhaps since the early secondary level of education. Therefore, it would be advisable to collect data from students in English medium schools around Lebanon in which students do not learn three language simultaneously.
References


Appendix I  MA Research Questionnaire for Students

University Name: (circle one)  LAU  AUB  AUL  Haigazian

Year of study: (circle one)  First-year  Second-year  Third-year

Online Chatting and Mobile Phone Texting

Please read the following questions and indicate which statement you agree or disagree with about online chatting and mobile phone texting. Your answers are completely confidential and will not be shared with anyone aside from my thesis advisor. Your answers will be used for the research of my MA thesis: Web slang and textisms: The pragmatic evolution among students in Lebanon and its effect on English essay writing.

*Please circle whether you:* definitely agree (1), mostly agree (2), somewhat agree (3), mostly do not agree (4), or do not agree at all (5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I do not agree at all</th>
<th>I mostly do not agree</th>
<th>I somewhat agree</th>
<th>I mostly agree</th>
<th>I definitely agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I prefer to communicate with my friends through mobile phone texting.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I prefer to communicate with my friends through online chatting (MSN, Facebook, etc.).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I prefer to communicate with my friends using BBM.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I prefer to communicate with my friends by just calling them on my mobile phone.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I like to insert emoticons (😊) when I communicate with my friends through online chatting or mobile phone texting.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I prefer to communicate with my friends in Arabic using Latin letters (7а taje?) when chatting online or texting.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I prefer to communicate with my friends by using abbreviations such as brb, lol, omg, etc. when chatting online or texting.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I spend most of my time chatting online with friends (3-5 hours a day).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I prefer using MSN when I chat online.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. I always use texting abbreviations when I write my Facebook status or write on people's walls.  

11. When I take notes in English class, I always use abbreviations like I do when I am texting or chatting online.  

12. When I write English class assignments, I always use abbreviations like I do when I am texting or chatting online.  

13. When I write English essays for class, I always use abbreviations like I do when I am texting or chatting (u for you, ur for your, @ for at, y for why, r for are, etc.).  

14. I think that texting and chatting have improved my typing skills on the computer.  

15. I think that texting and chatting have improved my spelling skills in English class.  

16. I think that texting and chatting should be applied to everyday English, instead of formal English, when I am writing for English class.  

17. I am able to differentiate between formal English writing and chatting and texting, so I never use abbreviations for my class assignments.  

18. I think technological advances in communication have a really positive affect on my English education.  

19. I understand all web slang (online chatting language) and textisms (mobile phone texting) language; I could actually call myself an expert.  

20. If I were required by my English instructor to write an essay only in web slang or textisms (without using formal English), I would be able to do so.  

Thank you for participating in this study. I greatly appreciate it. Your honesty will benefit this study greatly.

Sincerely,
Sarah Alkawas
MA student in Education (TESOL) at LAU
## Appendix II
### MA Research: English Instructor Questionnaire

University Name: (circle one)  
LAU  AUB  AUL  Haigazian

**Web Slang and Textisms in English Essays**

I am writing the following thesis: "Web slang and textisms: The pragmatic evolution among students in Lebanon and its effect on English essay writing" and would greatly appreciate your participation in the research process.

*Note that all questionnaires are confidential and will only be used for the purpose of academic research. You may request a copy of the final thesis once it is completed for your own records.

*Please circle whether you: definitely agree (1), mostly agree (2), somewhat agree (3), mostly do not agree (4), or do not agree at all (5)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I often use online chatting to communicate with friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I often use mobile phone texting to communicate with friends.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I prefer to communicate with friends by just calling them on my mobile phone.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I have working knowledge of web slang terminology (brb, lol, omg, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I have working knowledge of mobile phone texting abbreviations of words (u for you, ur for your, r for are, 2 for to, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I understand texting when it is in Arabic using Latin letters (7a taje?).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I use MSN to chat online with friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I use abbreviations when I write on Facebook walls or update my status.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I insert emoticons (😊) when I send an SMS or chat online.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. When I write notes for my English class (either on the white erase board or through Powerpoint), I often use abbreviations (b/c for because, w/o for without, b2n for between, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I encourage or allow my students to use abbreviations in their English class notes.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>I have received English class assignments from students that included web slang terminology or textisms (mobile phone texting language).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>I have received first draft English essays from students that included web slang and textisms (u for you, ur for your, r for are, 2 for to, etc.).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>I clarify to my students that they must use only formal academic English when they write any assignments for class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>I clarify to my students that they must not abbreviate any words in their English essays.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>I think it is okay if students include web slang or textisms in their English essays.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>I am frustrated when my students do not use proper English when they write essays.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>I believe that my text and web savvy students will be at the forefront of changing the English language forever.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I worry about the future of formal English writing, since this generation seems to be creating a new language for communicating.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Because of technological advances in communications, I believe that academic English essays may be in jeopardy.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for participating in this study. I greatly appreciate your honesty and this study has been greatly benefited from your participation.

Sincerely,
Sarah Alkawas
MA student in Education (TESOL) at LAU
E-mail: sarahalkawas@hotmail.com
Appendix III-a

The Most Beautiful thing in the world

The Ocean is one perfect peaceful place to be in when needed. It is also relaxing for some people, just by listening to the rhythm of the waves off shore. To me, the ocean is another place like home. Sometimes during the day or night thinking for long hours without distractions. Sometimes people think they should be alone thinking about what's on their mind and just want to think things over. I suggest the one and only place to be in except your room is the ocean.

Scuba Diving is a sport which I enjoy doing most of my free time. Scuba diving is an underwater sport that you can do night and day. It also includes studying for your safety and how to use your diving gear throughout your dive without any problems. It's a risky sport if you don't take serious precautions, but with it...

One of the reasons why Scuba Diving is just because the most beautiful thing in the world to me is looking at the creatures and fish that are living deep down in the ocean. Underwater is a place where you could just relax, flex your body, and swim. Enjoy looking at all the living corals that you pass through with all the fish you could ever imagine living in. Most of the old living corals that have been living there for more than 10 years are incredible to just look around and see all the big small fish protecting...
Appendix III-b

My Secret Talent

We all have a secret talent, if you don’t think so, that means you have to dig more deeply to get there. My secret talent is about something we all share. It’s a universal language that has the ability to speak to us deeply and uniquely. It’s my secret world as well, and I call it “danusic”.

No matter where you are and where you come from, no matter what your nationality and your political or religious views. You should know that we all share one thing and that is music. It’s the only way in which we can express our feelings when words cannot be said and when actions cannot be done. Music is all around us. All you have to do is listen and you will find it everywhere in the street, at work, at home etc. Music is what makes us move, dance, love and sometimes fight. It’s the spirit of this universe.
Music is a universal language but it’s the only one you can speak without saying a mean thing. On the other hand, it can help you in a different way; for example, if you’re stressed, there should be music of music can help you relax. Sometimes, if you feel bored, then music comes to tell you a story. Sometimes it comes to brighten your way when you’re lost and sometimes if you’re escaping from something, you feel that it’s just the right place to hide in.

The best thing about music is that you can create your own world. You can’t make your own music, at least you can listen to any kind of music that fits your personality.

Someone said, “Music is the art of thinking with sounds.” That’s something I learned when I was young. I used to practice in my mom’s kitchen using the kitchen utensils to make compatible sounds and all my concerts were in the same room as my mom visited our neighbor. At that time, I discovered something in addition to the sounds, and that is my mom has an incredibly high notes in her voice, and I think that was the main reason for her being a study music.
In one condition, and that was staying away from that kitchen. So I had to choose different kinds of instruments, the official ones. At that time, I created my danmusik world; it was all about expressing my feelings and my rhythm through my fingers, they were and still my musical Oliv...
A million dollars, two words...that's every single person's sweet dream. It's extreme luxury, as if someone shuts their brains down for ten seconds. For me, it's such a drag. I don't plan to just spend it, but to make ten times the luxury.

If you have a million dollars, you have many options. Like, make a factory of your own. A cotton factory will be great, and for an advanced level, shift it into iron. Factories make profit, sometimes more than you imagine, and it's a fountain of money.

There is a little story about an old rich man who had a villa on the coast of Mexico. This man sits at his balcony at sunrise to drink coffee and watch a young fisherman who used to go out on his boat for fishing by pushing his boat to shore. After three hours of that, the fisherman return from the wide sea with a good catch. One day, the old rich man talked to the fisherman.
hello! he said, I'm the owner of this wonderful Villa. After the fisherman replied, "I'm a very rich man as you see, I own factories and companies, anyone dreams of and I want to give an advice. The fisherman allowed the old man to talk, "If you just fishing for 3 hours a day, if you worked for 12 hours, you could buy a bigger boat and for more work, you could make a fleet, then a canning factory, in the end, you could be like me."

The fisherman said, "I return after fishing, I sell some fish to the others. Home for eating, I play with my children, then sit with my wife, and at night I go and have fun with my friends. So, if I do as you said, I wouldn't do anything until I'm very old when everything is gone. We really can find people who buy their happiness and joyness, if it costs them million dollars, because in one life, and no one take a cent in his grave."
IF I WERE PRESIDENT

Due to my frequent criticism of our president's submissions, I am often asked what I would do if I were president? If I were president, I would strive to accomplish the initial major things that serve the citizens of Lebanon.

First, I would have to amend the constitution of election on the basis of free will, democracy not theocracy, and to eliminate the sectarian policy that harmed our relationship with each other and with the global community. Until it became the dominant over qualification. So, we elect the leadership that represent our sects, not our ideology. The voice of the people must be first foremost on the minds of the elected officials, giving people the ability to get rid of ineffective leaders. People deserve not only leadership, but great leadership that hold to represent their needs and dreams. In other words, the appropriate leader in the appropriate position.

Second, I would strengthen our educational system by better financing public schools, to grant the poor that cannot pay money sufficient education. I would set up universities that specialized doctorate to allow students to study in their country, and not to study abroad, the monopoly of rich students. Our country does not fund our educational foundations adequately.

Third, I would make certain that all people have equal fair treatment whether they are men or women, by amendment the personal rights laws, give the woman the right to have her children, and her nationality if she had married of foreign husband, the man's right.
I would like to stimulate the retirement savings law because it is indispensable for working men and women. The law is to make sure that employees are able to obtain quality medical care for themselves and their families when they are retired. It is also necessary to establish more factories to create job opportunities for the villagers and to decrease the level of unemployment. I would improve the infrastructure in the village by reconstructing the cemetery and the infrastructure of roads. I would also urge the government to preserve the historic places because our economy depends on tourism. Finally, I feel myself to be a precious but...
Most Memorable Trip

Two years ago my professeur of frensh wanted to do a trip around Europe, so I loved the idea and worked 2 months to get the money for that trip.

In 22/7/2009 we went to the earport and got abord the plane and the trip began.

The trip was to Roma, France, Spain and Belgium. We land in Roma to take the train to France, in an five stars hotel, we spanded over first day in europ. second day in the morning we went to the train, it was my first time to get in the train, it was a great filing to try somthin new. We arrived to France puted our stuff in the hotel and gone to explore PARis the Country of art. After ten days of exploring and having fun we nided to continu ouwr trip to Belgium.

Belgium is a big contry playnt of statius and old bildings. The funy in Belgiumis the pitgins they are evry where in the sky on the flore on the road I wonted to know where they came from!

A torest like us told us about a kid that saved Belgium in the time of wars, that kid is now the symbol of that country. The subways are dangerous there are people that kill still and kidnap people in there so we didn't took the subways, lukely in Roma there were subways.

The next ten days we spanded it in Rome, the Colesse was the best thing we sow it is a great ruins we spanded 5 days there, because we wanted to continu awer trip to Spain but we were out of money and we had alot of european stuff so we decided to get to Lebanon, and the trip was finished in Roma.
We've gone to the airport, on board and to home swift home. There is nothing like European countries.

'It was a wonderful trip I'd like to redo it again in the next year.'