

**THE INFLUENCE OF SHORT MESSAGE LANGUAGE ON COMPOSITION  
WRITING AMONG GRADE 12 LEARNERS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN  
KALULUSHI DISTRICT OF THE COPPERBELT PROVINCE OF ZAMBIA**

By

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Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of  
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## **AUTHORS' DECLARATION**

I **Mary Mulubwa, Chibale** do declare that this dissertation represents my own work and that it has neither in part nor in whole, been presented as material for award of any degree at this or any other University. Where other people's work has been used, acknowledgements have been made.

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**CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL**

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of SMS language on academic composition writing among Grade 12 learners in four schools from Kalulushi District of the Copperbelt province of Zambia. The study sought to establish why learners use SMS language in their compositions despite them being taught formal writing in compositions. Being the final Grade at senior secondary level, Grades 12 learners were expected to attain proficiency in standard academic writing.

The study used both qualitative and quantitative research approaches (mixed methods) and it applied a concurrent triangulation design. This was done by administering mixed questionnaires with both open and closed ended questions to 32 teachers of English language and 100 Grade 12 learners coming from four selected schools. Likert scale questions were used for closed questions for both learners and teacher's questionnaires in order to investigate their perceptions on the influence of SMS on Grade 12 learners' compositions. A composition test was also administered first to Grade 12 learners then questionnaires were administered concurrently. Composition scripts were marked by the researcher paying particular attention to SMS language features. Qualitative data was analysed by marking the essay scripts and by content analysis. Quantitative data from Likert scale questionnaires were analysed using a statistical package of SPSS version 23 to come up with frequencies and percentages on SMS influence and use in compositions. The words that were influenced by SMS language in essays were identified and counted physically by the researcher after finishing the marking of composition scripts. Their total frequency of occurrence in all the four instruments and in each test script used was calculated. The average and standard deviation of the number of words influenced by SMS language in the test scripts were calculated to see how much SMS language influenced composition writing among Grade 12 learners. The researcher took note of all the words that were influenced by SMS language in the essays. The learners' composition with the least number of words influenced by SMS language had four words while the composition with the highest number of words influenced by SMS had 38.

Findings revealed that 77.8% of Grade 12 learners agreed that the influence of SMS language on composition writing was very clear. Learners used SMS language often times in their composition writing. This situation highly influenced learners' essay writing as it was evident on how often their written composition test scripts, book review results and questionnaire responses showed. The majority of teachers of English adding up to 75% perceived the influence of SMS language as negative. This situation highly influenced the spellings, punctuations, grammar, and sentence structure and paragraph length of learners' formal writing. Although the minority of learners perceived the influence of SMS language on their formal composition writing as positive, above 70% of learners agreed that their formal writing were highly influenced by SMS language and this situation jeopardized their final score. This was confirmed by the Examinations Council of Zambia final examiners' report for (2014). Lists and frequencies of SMS words were part of the main findings where over 4500 words were influenced by SMS language in overall data collection instruments. These findings for this study showed how Standard English and the rules of grammar, phonetics and the orthographic rules were violated by SMS spellings and other text features. Some of these SMS word categories identified included number and letter homophones, contractions, G-clippings, punctuation errors, vowel deletion, acronyms and abbreviations as well as non-standard spellings which came out to be the most common.

It was therefore recommended that all teachers of English and other subjects need to ensure that all Grade 12 learners use full forms of words in all subjects when writing formally. Learners also need to use full English words instead of SMS words when texting to avoid transferring the habit of short cuts and unconventional spellings and abbreviations in their written compositions. Workshops and CPDs for English language teachers were also recommended.

## **DEDICATION**

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## **ACRONYMS/ ABBREVIATIONS**

CEL	Conventional English Language
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
E F L	English as a first language
ESL	English as a Second language
ECZ	Examination Council of Zambia
FDG	Focus Discussion Group.
EFL:	English a first language
ESL:	English as a Second Language
F L:	First Language
MOGE:	Ministry of General Education
SML:	Short Message Language
SL:	Second language
SMS:	Short Message System
ZICTA:	Zambia information and Technology Authority

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Overview

This chapter gives the background to the study. It also presents the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the objectives and research questions and discusses the limitation of the study and defines some key words used in carrying out the research at hand.

### 1.1 Background

In the past, formal writing was one of the most respected, reliable and effective means of communication. Learners from all walks of life relied on writing on the floor, clay tablets, papyrus, slates, wax, scrolls, plant leaves, wood, and many other old ways (Baron, 2002). This helped the learners to be familiar with formal language in formal academic writing such as compositions due to frequent formal writing and practice (Bloom, 2010). As technology and economy improved, paper and books became common to every pupil in school to use when writing. Nowadays, it is not a must for pupils to use a pen and paper to write, store or send information in order to communicate either within a given town or abroad. This is because cell phones, Computers, iPods and many other social media gadgets are available than ever before and people send information via texting in form of SMS (Crystal, 2008). This situation has brought the genesis of SMS language in formal writing. It is therefore worrying that this SMS language is filtering into formal compositions for learners (Dogbevi, 2008). The current study intends to find out the learners and teachers' perceptions on the use of SMS language and its influence on composition writing in order to find a lasting solution rather than just remaining worried.

In addition, it is not surprising that not many books have been written on the subject yet in Zambia. This is because cell phones came on the Zambian market after 1992 (ZICTA, 2014). Apart from that, manufacturers of cell phones first originated from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, China and then United States of America (Aziz, Shamin, and Faisal & Avais 2013). This situation rekindled a hot debate in the above mentioned countries on how SMS language impacted on formal writing skills among students (Geertsema, Hyman and Deventer, 2011). In spite of the apparently huge volumes of similar research work already done on this subject abroad and in Africa, the local literature is silent on the phenomenon of SMS use and its

influence on formal writing in Zambia. This is because SMS language pertains to a regional technical tertiary institution where it has not yet been covered in some African countries like Zambia where English is not the mother tongue (FL) of the students. This study seeks to fill in the gaps by finding out whether some of the claims made in the literature holds true for learners who are of a younger upcoming generation like Grade 12 learners.

Moreover, O' Conner (2005) one of the scholars expressed her concern about the use of bad grammar, poor punctuations, and improper abbreviations in academic writing due to use of text language. Like O'Conner, some other scholars have been pushed by their wariness about SMS language use in formal writing to do more research on this phenomenon. Many researchers showed their concern that SMS messages may cause unintentional harm to Standard English. This in turn will cause communication barriers among readers and learners. It is unfortunate that SMS language has taken over the lives of pupils as they write. They are able to do it almost anywhere and anytime be it home or school formal or informal settings (Henry, 2006). This has brought a problem of influencing their academic composition writing.

Of main concern is the Zambian situation. Zambians in general started having mobile phones during or after 1995. It was around this same period 1995 when text messaging commenced. Out of about 14,000,000 people in Zambia, about 11, 000 000 people representing 74 % of the total population of Zambia use cell phones and it may be envisioned that every mobile subscriber uses text message service (ZICTA, 2016). That is why the target population of this study Grade 12 learners have been found to be among the big population in Zambia that is using text language deriving from cell phones. This phenomenon of text messaging has eroded the standard forms of writing among Grade 12 learners such that the rules of English Grammar and syntax among others are being violated in their compositions (Freudenberg , 2009). This situation necessitated this study to find out the extent to which text language influences learners' academic composition writing. The study also intended to establish both the learners' perspectives as well as those of their teachers of English.

In addition, text messaging has caught up so well with mobile phone users, partly because of its convenience. Today, many are those who consider their mobile phones first as text messaging devices, and second as voice calling devices (Wikipedia, 2010). Wherever there is a mobile phone reception, text messaging is possible. For instance, when United States President Obama was delivering his speech in Accra Ghana in 2009, the United States

Department of States communication reached citizens all over the world using SMS. Through SMS, live highlights of speech were received by Africa and international /non-United States citizens around the world in French and English (Geertsema, Hyman & Deventer, 2011). Power and Power (2004) also observed that even deaf people are able to communicate with each other better through SMS language.

Text messaging has also become convenient to many people including pupils since it is done very fast, easily and is very cheap. It allows quick messaging to be sent without people having to commit to a telephone conversation. Many people are now abbreviating words when writing. The language created by these abbreviations is called text speak message language. Many people believe that these abbreviations are affecting the quality of writing for students (Drouin & Davis, 2009). Short Message texting has an influence on the styles of young peoples' writing (Dansier, 2011). According to the National Centre for Education Statistics, only 25% of high school seniors are proficient writers. This means that the whole generation may be raised without communication skills.

Pupils have always been expected to follow the conventions of writing that have been laid down in academic compositions. In fact, the revised 2013 Curriculum, has included the use of SMS language in the summary section of the English language syllabus on the topic; 'Short Messages' in the Ministry of General Education English Language Senior Syllabus (2013:46) and the Ministry of General Education Junior English Syllabus (2013:50) on the topic; 'Advanced Telegrams' respectively. But the use of SMS language should be applied appropriately as much as it has been included in the two English Zambian English syllabuses. The standard format for composition writing does not allow the use of informal Short Message Language in formal compositions. When writing any compositions, pupils are expected to use formal language and not informal language (Asheli, 2014). It seems pupils are not aware that Short Message Language is informal language or they take it casually. According to Tomlinson (1980), formal academic writing is very different from informal writing. Parents and teachers are so concerned about the rampant use of Short Message Language in pupils' writing.

Much as the use of SMS language has been included in the syllabus, teachers and learners have to distinguish between formal and informal writing in terms of standardised acronyms and abbreviations. It should be noted here that the inclusion of SMS language only appear in summary section so as to enable learners acquire the summary writing skills especially at

junior level hence it should not be mistaken for formal writing according to the new Ministry of General Education Junior & Senior Syllabuses for 2013. Some researchers and linguists are saying that the use of acronyms and shorthand texting among learners is to blame for their inability to spell and ultimately write. The use of these acronyms and shorthand texting is a very good example of informal writing. The difference can even be seen from a number of situations. In general, English Language has a number of colloquialisms and conversational expressions that are inappropriate for formal written English and SMSs are inclusive. It is important not to mix the two styles of writing (Borg, 2003).

Pupils struggle to convey emotions in their writing because in text messages, emotions are always sideways smiley faces (Borg, 2003). Texting lacks emotions and feelings because of their tendencies to be short, brief and to the point. Communicating emotions through words is an important aspect of writing. The readers should be able to easily understand the emotions of the author when they are reading any text. Many people apart from teachers and parents are also complaining about some difficulties they are facing in order to get the clear meaning from written texts. This is because texting does not stress on the importance of punctuation marks such as full stops, commas, apostrophes and even capital letters when beginning sentences. One English teacher believed that text messaging had become the second nature to her students. They were so used to it that they were not even able to catch themselves doing it (Carey, 2008).

Since there has been some improvements in form of mediated communication in the last 3 decades among pupils especially Short Message Language; the researcher would like to find out how much this SMS Language influences composition writing in English among Grade 12 learners. Digital literacy has made it possible to use different gadgets such as cellular phones when it comes to writing for communication (Njemanze, 2012). Grade 12 learners have embraced the use of Short Message Language and this has some influence on their writing of compositions in English Language. The researcher was interested in identifying and analysing Short Message Language in learners' scripts. The research intended to fill this gap in this area. The study focused specifically on Grade 12 learners' compositions in selected schools on the Copperbelt Province. Therefore, it is important to highlight the expectations of English compositions among learners.

Composition writing is one of the key components in teaching English apart from summary comprehension and structure. It covers about 40% of the Grade 12 final aggregate marks.

Sometimes, it is referred to as academic writing or formal writing. Basic writing skills are key in composition writing, Ministry of General Education English Senior Syllabus (2013).

Further, according to the Zambian English Senior syllabus (2013) learners are expected to write legibly, confidently and effectively to communicate and interpret messages correctly. The beginning of paragraphs must be well indented. Paragraphs must be consistent. Legibility refers to the handwriting being clear. Capitals and ordinary letters must be distinguished in written work in punctuation. By the end of the learning process, learners should be able to apply punctuation marks and spellings appropriately in their compositions and produce the kind of writing required of them in tertiary education and the world of work (Asheli, 2014; Perutz, 2008; Tomlinson, 1980). Unfortunately, the coming of SMS language by means of cell phones has brought up a great challenge on learners' ability to follow what is expected of them in formal writing. This situation influences their ability to write better compositions free from SMSish language. This is the gap which this study intended to fill.

There are two main types of compositions. These are situational, guided or controlled compositions and the open and free compositions. In situational or guided compositions, the learners are supplied with a number of ideas and guidelines by the teacher. When learners develop necessary skills in the writing of language, the guidance is usually minimised in order to encourage them to write freely (Sidambi, 2012). Guided essays include; letters, reports articles, summary and speech writing. In free and open compositions, teachers usually help the learners to master knowledge and skills that actually agrees with the four discourse types of compositions. These include argumentative, narrative, analytical and Descriptive essays (Asheli, 2014).

Interestingly, both the junior and senior English syllabus for 2013 have covered topics where SMS language is taught in schools. Under the junior syllabus, SMS use is taught under summary where learners are expected to use SMS as part of summary skills but only standard abbreviations are allowed. For example, words like 'something' is written as 'sth' and 'people' written as 'piple'. In the English senior syllabus, SMS language is taught under advanced telegrams. In this case, pupils are expected to interpret the messages from telegrams in SMS using short but complete sentences. They are also taught the importance of using correct acronyms and abbreviations in order to achieve effective communication in telegrams. According to this English senior syllabus, the aim of teaching SMS to Grade 12 learners were to:

Impart knowledge in effective communication, application, values, innovativeness, Critical thinking, creative thinking and creating new knowledge. Therefore, learners are not expected to use SMS language inappropriately just because they are in the two syllabi but the two explained topics are exceptional and SMS use in the two circumstances are allowed when writing ( summary at junior level and advanced telegrams at senior level).

For the purpose of this study, the term ‘text messaging’ was encompassing Short Message System (SMS) from cell phones. Text messaging is the practice whereby users of mobile and portable devices exchange brief written messages via cellular networks (Baron, 2008). While the act of sending a text message is termed “texting”, the sender is called a ‘texter.’ It is used in place of voice calls in circumstances where it may be impossible. Generally, texting is considered more economical (Dansier, 2011).

Dogbevi (2008) and Wikipedia (2010) reported that the relatively short history of mobile phones in general and (SMS) text messaging in particular, from December 1992 to date, was rather amazing looking the level of interest it generated among researchers and authors around the world. According to the above mentioned secondary sources, there has been a bit of controversy as to who actually invented the SMS. They reported that in some cases, credit was given to Neil Pap worth, a 22-year-old test engineer who was said to have been the first to invent the service in 1992, using a personal computer to text “Merry Christmas” through the Vodafone network to the phone of one Richard Jarvis. In some other quarters, recognition was given to Matti Makkonen, a pioneer in Finnish mobile communications. Today, text messaging is considered to be the most widely used mobile data service. Its use around the globe can simply be described as pervasive. By the end of 2007, half of the world’s population (3.3 billion) was going to be mobile phone subscribers.

Some people simply text because it is relatively cheaper compared to placing a phone call to another mobile phone. Originally, SMS referred to messages sent using the Short Message Service (SMS) but as it is a characteristic of most technologies, the service has undergone changes to cover messages that contain image, video, and sound. It has also evolved from person to person messaging to include interaction with automated systems and is available on a wide range of networks. Of late, a computer can also be used to send a text (Dansier, 2011). However, the current study was mainly interested in finding out the influence of the language being born from text messaging using cell phones even if there could be other means of sending texts. About 74% of all mobile phone users worldwide, were active users of the

SMSs and this made a high chance of influencing English language words in the process of writing especially in formal writing (Wikipedia, 2010).

In addition, it is not surprising that not many books have been written on the subject yet in Zambia. This is because cell phones came on the world market and later to Zambia after 1992 ZICTA (2014). Apart from that, manufacturers of cell phones first originated from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, China and then United States of America (Dogbevi, 2008). In spite of the apparently huge volumes of work on the subject, the literature is very silent on the phenomenon of SMS in Zambia as it pertains to a regional technical tertiary institution where it has not yet been covered in some African countries like Zambia where English is not the mother tongue (L1) of the students. The study seeks to fill in the gaps by finding out whether some of the claims made in the literature holds true for pupils who are not native speakers of English but are of a younger upcoming generation like Grade 12 learners.

According to Goldstuck (2006) mobile phones were introduced to the youth's market in the late 1990s. During 2004, 500 billion SMS messages were sent worldwide. In South Africa alone, 85.5 million SMS messages were sent during the 2004 festive season alone (Statistics and News), highlighting the increase in communication through mobile phones. Concerning the Zambian situation, Zambians in general started having mobile phones during or after 1995. It was around this same period 1995 when text messaging commenced in Zambia. Out of about 14,000,000 people in Zambia, about 11, 000 people representing 74% of the total population of Zambia use cell phones and it may be envisioned that every mobile subscriber uses text message service ZICTA (2016). That is why the target population in the current study, Grade 12 learners, has been found to be among the big population in Zambia that is using text language deriving from cell phones. It is also suffice to mention that very few studies have been done in Zambia on composition writing and non-have been done on the influence of Short Message language on composition writing hence this study filling up that gap. This is because mobile phones were not common in Zambia until after 1995 (ZICTA, 2016).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The conventional English language has overtime been taught in schools and has remained the dominant and acceptable language of expression for teaching English and many other subjects. This conventional English language is what is expected to be used in formal composition writing. It has been traditionally guided by the outlined grammatical rules,

encompassing the established regulated tenses and concord agreements (Asheli, 2014). However, the new telegraphic SMS language has been born from a system commonly known as Short Message System (SMS). This Short Message System has been embraced especially by youths such as Grade 12 learners. It has been slowly influencing their composition writing by means of the Short Message language communication which has been enhanced by the emergence of mobile phones. Short Message language is a new phenomenon in communication which has posed a great challenge and threat on conventional English language (Ping (2009). That is why this study aimed at establishing the influence of Short Message language on composition writing among Grade 12 learners. SMS language has been influencing the writing of formal compositions among Grade 12 learners. Despite receiving lessons in conventional formal writing for 5 years in English, Grade 12 learners are influenced by SMS language and still use unacceptable SMS language in their composition writing, contrary to conventional English and the outlined grammatical rules in the new senior English syllabus for 2013. This SMS language influence has caused a lot of problems in academic writing. Studies such as those done by Dansier, (2011), Aziz, Shamin, Faisal & Avais (2013), Ravichandram (2009) and Uzochukwu, Ekwugha & Okafor (2015) have revealed that academic essays for students in examination classes have been contaminated with SMS language. Literature is silent on the influence of SMS language on composition writing in Zambia. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the influence of SMS language and how often this language influences composition writing among Grade 12 learners.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to find out the influence of Short Message language on composition writing among Grade 12 learners in selected schools on the Copperbelt.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.4.1. Main Objective**

To establish the influence of Short Message language on conventional composition writing among Grade 12 learners.

#### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives.**

The study was further guided by the following specific objectives:

- 1) Find out how often SMS language was used to in Grade 12 conventional composition writing.
- 2) Identify the English words influenced by SMS language in academic composition writing among Grade 12 learners.
- 3) Find out the perceptions of Grade 12 learners on the influence of short message language in their composition writing.
- 4) Establish teachers' perceptions on the influence of Short Message Language on composition writing among the Grade 12 learners.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

### **1.5.1 Main Research Question**

What was the influence of SMS language on conventionalized or standard composition writing among Grade 12 learners?

### **1.5.2 Specific Research Questions**

1. How often was SMS language used in composition writing among Grade 12 learners?
2. What English words were influenced by SMS language in composition writing among Grade 12 learners?
3. What were the Grade 12 learners' perceptions on the influence of SMS language on composition writing?
4. What were the teachers' perceptions on the influence of Short Message Language in composition writing among Grade 12 learners' writing skills?

## **1.6 The Significance of the Study**

Ngoma (2006) defines the significance of the study as 'the usefulness of the study to the public such as government, the community, Ministry of education, agencies and other relevant stakeholders'. He further explains the significance of the study as the main reason to show why the study is important. Through this study, findings may generate new knowledge which the Ministry of General Education (MOGE) teachers, learners, and the public and other stakeholders may use and be informed and made aware of the existing problem of SMS language in academic writing among Grade 12 learners in schools. The findings may also

stimulate further research. Further, since some teachers of language were involved in the study, it is hoped that the findings and recommendations presented in this study may be put to good use by teachers of English and all the readers of this work in order to curtail SMS language use in formal writing work.

### **1.7 Study Justification**

This study was inspired by the overwhelming cell phone ownership and use of SMS among youths in Zambia (ZICTA, 2014). Mobile phones have brought about the use of SMS language among Zambian citizens especially secondary school pupils. Other studies that have been carried out already in Asia, Pakistan, United States of America, Ukraine, Sweden and Saudi Arabia, to mention a few, also encouraged the researcher to think about the Zambian situation. Though these studies mentioned in these countries tried to establish the influence of Short Message language on writing skills among students in higher universities, the studies did not investigate the influence of Short Message Language on learners in secondary schools which are the grassroots of potential students in the higher universities Mahmoud (2013). Apart from that, the earlier related studies were done outside Africa and this necessitated other countries such as Uganda, Ghana and South Africa to do similar studies (Geertsema, Hyman and Deventer, 2011). But still, the latter studies were also done outside Central Africa and not in Zambia. That is why this study focused on the influence of Short Message Language on composition writing among Grade 12 learners within South Central Africa and within our country in order to examine the current situation in specific Secondary schools.

### **1.8 Delimitations of the study**

Delimitation is mainly about the geographical area where the study is essential (Kombo, 2006). In other words, delimitation talks about the boundary of the study and with the researcher's control. This study was conducted from Kalulushi district of the Copperbelt province. The area was chosen because the researcher identified the problem to be researched in the specified district. The researcher was also familiar with the area of choice for a research. In addition, this work was not considering short messages from internet or email texts but was sticking to text message features by cell phone.

## **1.9 Limitations to the study**

This study focused on the influence of SMS language on composition writing among Grade 12 learners in Kalulushi district, Copperbelt Province to be specific in order to establish the current situation in specific Secondary schools. This being the case, the findings may not be generalised to other parts of Zambia since only selected schools in Kalulushi provided participants for this study.

## **1.10 Definition of Terms**

**Composition:** A composition is a carefully structured formal piece of written work whose aim is to communicate clearly some ideas.

**Short Message System:** This is a system provided by network providers to enable its customers to send and receive text messages using mobile phones although the internet may also be used to send texts using SMS.

**Short Message Language:** This is the English language slang used as a means of mobile phone text messaging. It is a term for the abbreviations and slang commonly used with other internet based communication such as emails and instant messaging. SMS language is also called textese, txt-speak, texting language, textlingo, SMSish, txttalk, textslang, txtspk, or chatspeak.

**Conventional English language:** This is the typical agreed upon way of constructing written expressions in a manner that meets people's expectations thereby helping to ensure that our spoken and written utterances are received and understood.

**IM:** Instant messaging is a one to one conversation in which your computer is connected to another for purposes of exchanging text messages on the internet. A special software application in realtime is used in order to create a kind of private chatroom with another person on the internet. IM is analogous to a telephone conversation but uses text based not voice based communication.

**Text messaging:** Text messaging is the act of composing and sending electronic messages typically consisting of alphabetic and numeric characters between two or more users of mobile phones. It is the fastest and most reliable means of communication which is done

using a cell phone in most cases. It has achieved universal reputation and fascinated billions of subscribers.

**Written language skills:** These are the skills that should be possessed by all proficient writers. They include the correct use of grammar, tenses punctuation length of sentences, conveying of emotions, spelling among others.

**Influence:** The good or bad that one would get from doing something. It is the power to affect someone positively or negatively and the capacity to have an effect on the character, development or behaviour of someone or something or the effect itself.

**Significance:** This explains the particular and full meaning of something and the quality of being worthy of attention; importance.

**Standard English:** This is the language used when writing formally. The English with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary is substantially uniform though not devoid of regional differences that is well established by usage in the formal and informal speech and writing of the educated and that is widely recognised as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood. It is actually any form of the English language that is accepted as a national norm in particular English speaking country.

**Conventional writing:** This is the acceptable and standard way of writing academic work in a formal way. Conventional writing is a type of formal writing style used by many academic disciplines that has a specific set of rules governing grammar, proper use and organisation.

**Academic writing:** any writing done to fulfil a requirement of a college or universities.

**Language proficiency:** This is the ability to listen, speak, read and write with comprehension, observing grammatical rules, and syntactical as well as grammatical rules. It is also the ability of an individual to speak or perform in an acquired language.

**Text language:** This is the language derived from the use of acronyms, emoticons and the deletion of unnecessary words, vowels, punctuation and capitalization. It is a term for the abbreviations and slang commonly used with mobile phones text messaging but sometimes used with other internet based communication such as email and instant messaging.

**Electronic communication:** Other name for text language which include textisms and squeeze text. It is the transfer of writing signals, data, sounds, images, signs or intelligence sent on electronic device.

**Academic discourse:** This is the manner of communication usually required and used in an educational or scholarly setting. It also refers to the ways of thinking and using language which exist in the academy. It is the specific style of communication used in the academic world.

**Social media:** Are interactive online tools that allow social communications such as cell phones used for texting, Face book, email, instant messaging (IM) – also called chat, and blogging. Social media is also a computer mediated technologies that allow the creating and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.

### **1.11 Structure of the Dissertation**

This chapter gives an introduction and background to this study. The background brings out the gaps which this study intends to fill up. The purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the objectives, research questions, limitations, delimitations, definition of terms and a summary of the chapter are presented in chapter one. Chapter two presents literature review which covers the theoretical framework, background of composition writing in English, origins of text messaging and then it presents related studies to the current study which brought out relevant gaps for the incoming study. Chapter three discusses the methodology that was used in this study and of course the research design which guided this study. Chapter four presents the findings of the study while chapter 5 presented the discussions of the findings of the study. Lastly, conclusions and recommendations of the study are made in chapter six. Other necessary research instruments for this study and ethical clearance letters were appended just after the references.

### **1.12 Summary**

Therefore, it can be said that, the most salient social shift over the past decades has been digitization. The rapid expansion of digital technologies into educational, social economic and cultural life has indelibly transformed communication practices. All over the world, SMS language by use of cell phones has become the order of the day and revolutionary changes in mediated communication have wrought new tools and environments for learning and

communication. This has in turn spawned new discourses and textual forms of writing. It is for this reason that this research intended to examine how conventional composition writing is being influenced by the upcoming SMS language among Grade 12 learners. Chapter one covered background, objectives, research questions, limitation and delimitations of this study. The next chapter 2 will give the necessary literature review in order to identify gaps for this in coming study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Overview**

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature that had covered studies in line with SMS language or text messaging and its influence on academic writing skills. Creswell (2012:80) defines literature review as “a written summary of journal articles, books, and other documents like conference papers and government documents that describes the past and the current state of information on the topic of a given research study”. The main aim of this literature was to inform the study and to identify the gaps so that the incoming study could fill up some of the existing gaps. This chapter aimed at bringing out academic interactions among scholars in the literature review. The researchers’ interaction and views on other scholars’ works blended the whole academic interaction. Two theories made up the theoretical frame work for this study. These were the cultivation theory and the social cognitive learning theory. These were applied in relation to the topic. The definition of SMS language and a background as well as origin of SMSs were given in chapter one. Apart from that, a brief background of the expectations of composition writing was given.

The literature available was organized in line with the following themes; Global Perspectives African and then Zambian Perspective on the influence of Short Message language on English formal composition writing respectively. The three emerged as main themes in this section of literature review in order for the readers to follow easily. In this case, the order of the review started with the studies available around the world, then moved to Africa and then lastly narrowed down to Zambia. A chapter summary wrapped up the chapter.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by two theories for purposes of convenience and complementing each other; the cultivation theory and the social cognitive learning theory. The two theories have been explained in their order in line with the use of text messaging and how it influences standard composition writing among Grade 12 learners

##### **2.1.1 The Cultivation Theory**

This study was anchored on the cultivation theory by (Gerbner, 1980). The cultivation theory is a scientific theory and is based around the idea that media and media gadgets for

communication such as televisions and cell phones have the ability to frame the way media users view the realities of society. It explains that mass communication holds grounds in media effect studies. The central claim of that theory is that persistent long term exposure to media content has small but measurable effects on the perpetual worlds of audience members and the more a person is exposed to a message provided by the media, the more likely that person is to believe the message is real (Chandler,1995). In the like manner, the more pupils are exposed to use of text messages on phone, the more they think it is acceptable in any fora and the more their academic writings are influenced by SMS. Here, the SMS language influence was measured in proportion to the usage by the pupils in their academic writing. It is plausible that the more pupils are exposed to SMS language usage, the more it may affect their writing skills in academic work.

Candler (1995) has explained that the cultivation theory is an attitudinal theory and not a deterministic behaviourist theory. The main concern behind the cultivation theory is the direct effect of social media viewing and usage on audience members. Gerbner (1968:29) argues that “Social media exposure for many hours like television viewing and text messaging has long term effects which are small but gradual indirect but cumulative and significant.” Thus, any frequent exposure to any social media gadget like a cell phone and texting by SMS creates a mental model in the user’s mind which makes one to be easily influenced by looking at it as normal in any given academic work whether formal or informal.

### **2.1.2 Second Theory: The Social Cognitive Theory**

This study also applied the social Cognitive learning theory. This theory was first introduced by Albert Bandura, to connect the behavioural and cognitive learning theories by taking into account how imitable behaviours are affected by cognitive constructs, such as attention, retention, and motivation. It explains that individuals such as learners learn behaviours from one another through observation, imitation, and modelling. Munsaka (2011:24) explains that “the mode of learning in the social cognitive learning theory is through observation, and modelling the observed behaviour.” This kind of learning which involves observation has also been termed vicarious learning.

This theory suits this study as its theoretical framework because the learning and use of Short Message language in formal writing among learners arises from observation, imitation, and modelling fellow learners. It is during the use of Short Messages on phone that its influence

on writing is realised. Uniquely, the social cognitive learning theory explains how behaviours are learned in the context of reciprocal determinism, or the interaction between observed behaviours, cognitive factors, and external environments. This theory has been a widely referenced model of media effects, especially in relation to children and the youths. Thus, it applies to socializing effects of media such as SMS exchange and the adoption of various models of action such as writing styles and habits, clothing, appearance style, eating and drinking, modes of interaction and personal consumptions Graham (1989). The habit of informal and inappropriate texting in through short messages also applies as media effects which eventually trickle down to influencing formal writing among learners.

According to Bandura (1986) the theory only applies to behaviour that is directly represented in symbolic form and on the active engagement on the part of the learners as well as the individuals' self-reflective ability. Applying the theory to this present study, the social learning theory incorporates the gradual process of students' learning of the abridged form of interactive chats. Learners consistently expose themselves to social networks like *face book* and *whats up* and receive texts through their mobile phones, to the application of the learnt SMS languages abruptly to an extent that such shortenings, become integrated into the students conventional writings such as compositions and then with time this actually becomes a part of their formal written communication.

## **2.2 Global perspectives on Short Message Language use and its influence on composition writing**

Freudenberg (2009) investigated the impact of SMS speak on written work of English first language and English second language high school learners at Stellen University in India. He also examined the impact of SMS speak on the written school work of English first language and English second languages high school learners in the above mentioned research. The aims were to see how common the Short Message language was among high school learners and to look for evidence of the use of Short Message language features in the English written work of such learners. Thus, his study is similar to the current study in the sense that both studies had interest in finding the impact of Short Message language on formal writing and to find out the evidence of the use and influence of Short Message language features in learner's written work. The difference lied on the participants in the sense that the previous study used both first language and second language learners of English as participants, the current study was only working with second language learners of English in high schools. The previous

study used a qualitative approach while the current study applied mixed study approach where a concurrent triangulation design was used. The current study also intended to establish teachers' perceptions on the influence of Short Message language on composition writing which the previous study did not cover hence adding new knowledge.

Maclean 2010) also conducted a study in United States of America by taking Short Message language influence and use positively. He did not necessarily leave the readers with a negative question about Short Message language like other scholars, but in his study, he took texts messaging positively. He said the best way to forget something is not to oppose it but rather to harness its own energy and convert that energy into learning. Macleans' study found that Short Message language had a positive influence on the writing ability of learners due to the frequent practice of writing. This current study unlike Maclean's did not take text messaging negatively or positively but was interested in getting perceptions of both learners and language instructors in line with SMS use in academic writing not in other contexts hence adding new knowledge.

In addition, Graham (1989) conducted a study among home scholars in Athens, Georgia at the University of Georgia. The purpose of this study was to find out the ways in which adolescent home scholars used texting and text language in their lives. Graham also wanted to find the ways in which their academic writing practices were being influenced using a constructionism epistemology with theories reflective of social constructionism and sociocultural learning.

This study was conducted through interviews with adolescent participants and their parent-educators, and through the collection of traditionally and digitally written artefacts. The researcher began with eight participants, but due to one participant's limited participation, data from only seven participants were included in the data analysis. It was realized that adolescents were fully immersed in the digital world of social text messaging similar to other adolescents who were more likely to converse online with those people familiar to them (Graham ,1989).

According to her study on home schoolers and texting and how texting influenced the social and academic discourse, Graham (1989) disclosed that there was a disagreement in the literature on the influence of texting and text language on adolescents' literacies. She added that some findings had indicated that familiarity with text language was negatively

influencing social and academic writing both in process and in product. Other results indicated that there was no influence on accomplished writers and that texting could potentially positively influence children in learning to spell because they use three components of literacy, as defined by the National Reading Panel, when they text. The three components include reading, writing, and comprehension. Graham's paper addressed these very divergent studies and examined the adolescent home scholar's use of text language in their social and academic lives. The findings suggested that while more research was needed, home schooled adolescents were modifying language to fit their perceived audience and situational communications according to Graham (1989). This study left a knowledge gap for the current study since it picked home scholars as main participants to be interviewed with their parents since they learnt from home. The current study engaged day school learners who responded using semi -structured questionnaires and their teachers were interviewed. Besides that, Graham's study was done in Georgia where texting and social media gadgets were much more common and very cheap compared to the Zambian situation which is a developing country.

Further on the same study involving home schoolers by Graham (1989), she used social media to extend existing friendships and converse about current personal and public events. Just as Vygotsky (1978) and other sociocultural learning theorists have suggested, the adolescents' social engagement through social media, which often involved texting, contributed not only to the development of their social relationships, but also to their learning. They were digital technology enthusiasts and interacted frequently with their peers and family members about current life happenings.

Graham also observed that despite the confusion in the academic world, linguists believe that far from destroying the language, text language is helping English evolve Graham (1989). In analysing the adolescent home schoolers' academic writing samples, saw the beginnings of the evolution. While some of the errors in her study could potentially be attributed to texting, they did not impinge on the content of the paper. In other situations, she observed that punctuations that were once mandatory were optional in the participants' writings. Commas immediately following the last item of a list or after a word that interrupts the flow of the sentence were missing, apostrophes almost non-existent and hyphens seemed to be forgotten. There were a few abbreviations, but traditional spelling remained unchanged, as did most capitalizations. The adolescent home schoolers were not writing perfect papers, but neither

were their papers full of errors that could be linked to text language. Graham believed that the most that could be said was that there were errors that were potentially more frequent with the onslaught of texting and these errors showed up in the participants' writings as predicted in Baron's (2009) and Thurlow's (2006) previously mentioned.

According to Graham (1989) textisms were used in the home schoolers' written and oral discourses as a preferred immediate communication method, even though misunderstandings sometimes occurred due to unfamiliar language use or lack of social cues. Plester, Wood, and Joshi's research for (2009) supported the home scholars' assessment that text messages can be easily misunderstood if the language used is unfamiliar or due to the lack of social cues available on a digital screen (Ling, 2005; Davis, 2006). Ultimately, this group of home schoolers maintained ownership of their personal and social communications and intentionally used or avoided text language in correspondence with their peer group members, depending on the recipient and the topic of the message (Graham, 1989).

Further, Borg (2003) and also Little, Jordens and Sayers (2003) found that adolescents were typically socially and emotionally insecure. Some of their friends influenced them to get to use SMS language in their social group. They were influenced by the ways in which they believed the members of their social group potentially reacted to a given situation (Burns & Darling, 2002). That is why they were able to imitate friends in their use of SMS language even in formal writing to impress friends and for fun. This situation made their formal work to be negatively influenced by Short Message language. They did not yet have the maturity to navigate daily life with self-confidence, but being a part of the group helped instil the confidence that they lacked as they made their way through their teen years (Burns and Darling, 2002; Frantz, 1970). Adolescents were interacting with their peers and shaping their social exchanges based on the desire to maintain membership in their peer groups and to engage with each other.

The fact that peers influence each other is not new information – but the ways in which peer influence affects academic achievement could be new like is the case with the current study where repetitive exchange of Short messages on cell phone among Grade 12 learners may end up influencing their essay writing slowly but significant like the theories of Gerbner and Bandura have explained in the theoretical framework highlighted earlier in this chapter. During adolescence, especially at secondary school, many young people like Grade 12 learners think more about their future education because according to the social

constructivists' theory, they are metacognitively aware that education is interwoven with potential career choice (Gerbner, 1968).

Moreover, adolescents such as Grade 12 learners who were the key participants of the current study usually discuss future academic goals and plans with each other and there has been a positive relationship shown between improved academics and social interaction. In fact, traditionally school young people believe that they do not differ from their social group in expectations, motivations about success with their education Peers communication with each other and seek out each other's opinions continuously. As a result, peers are influential both in and out of the classroom in social and academic situations. It is possible that within the social realm of the adolescent world, the language they create among themselves such as the SMS language can be found in their spoken, written and digital communications (Ryan, 2001).

Lee (2002) described text messaging as the continuing assault of technology on formal written English. He observed that texting impacts on literacy and standard language use, especially that of young people. Linguists and educators can therefore use the debate on text speak as a legitimate language and the breadth of its grammar, syntax and semantics to spark academic discussion and understanding of all variations of language. Ideas on text speak can be used to promote the art of writing. He believes that interlocutors use abbreviations in texts in new, playful and imaginative ways that benefit literacy. Moreover, users of text speak, specifically teenagers, demonstrate very clearly that their grammatical skills are intact and they very effectively mix it with other types of language. Thus text messaging is a relaxed and often times an informal mode of communication. The current study did not condemn Short Message language but had interest in preserving Standard English. It had interest in finding out how often Short Message language was used in composition writing while Lees' study explained that the linguists' interest was to use Short Message language to promote the art of writing. This study unlike Lee's intended to find out the influence of Short Message language on composition writing and also to establish learners' perceptions as to whether Short Message language provided them with benefits in literacy when writing.

A third school of thought again led by David Crystal and Russell contends that Short Message language has no effect on grammar. They argued that SMS texting should be considered as another language, and since learning a new language does not affect students' ability to use English grammar, it would be wrong to conclude that text messaging can affect

their grammar. They point out that slang words have no effect on English grammar and that even though each generation has its own jargon; English grammar has not been changed. All students need to do, they claim, is learn the basics in English class and they will be able to distinguish between 'slang, texting lingo and correct English (Russell, 2010).

Russell's study like Crystal's leaves a gap for the current study to bridge because the current study intends to bring out English words from composition scripts for Grade 12 pupils by identifying those words whose spelling and grammar have been violated due to text messaging if at all there will be any. This gap comes in because Russell's claims indicates that Short Message language is considered as another language which has no influence on students' ability on grammar use and spellings of words. Some scholars say that SMS like slang language has its own language that has no effect on Standard English (Russel, 2012).

Furthermore, Russell's research intended to answer this question 'Does the frequent use of Short Message language affect pupils' written work and communication skills?' His findings surprisingly indicated that Short Message language has no impact on pupils' formal writing schools. Maybe this could be because he involved learners who used English language as their mother tongue (L1) and also a medium of instruction in school Thus, these gadgets were able to edit all their work including spellings and grammar. This in my view could have been the reasons why Russell's findings indicated that there was no evidence of use of Short Message language in his participants' work. Apart from that, it could be that because Russell used participants who were University students and used computers and laptops to type their work. However, the current study engaged pupils whose mother tongue is not English but a Second language and official language derived from their colonial masters, the British (Kelly ,1996).

While one school of thought argues that the Short Message Service is a curse, because it impacts negatively on student communication skills, particularly writing skills, the other, led by David Crystal, contends that texting is not harmful to student's literacy: rather it enhances it (Crystal, 2008). In his book, *Texting: The Gr8 Db8*, (a logogram which stands for Texting: The Great Debate), Crystal refutes the popular view that SMS language and its profuse use of abbreviations and slang can impact negatively on student language and literacy. His claim was based on six main points; that:

- (1) In typical text messages, less than 10% of the words are abbreviated.

- (2) Abbreviating has been in use for decades, and thus is not a new language.
- (3) Children and adults alike use text language, the latter being more likely to do so.
- (4) Students do not habitually use abbreviations in their homework and examinations.
- (5) Before people can text, they must first know how to spell. Texting can therefore not be a cause of bad spelling.
- (6) Since texting provides people with the opportunity of engaging with the language through reading and writing, it improves people's literacy Crystal (2008).

These claims by Crystal leaves a gap which this current study intends to fill because the latest study has both the perceptions of teachers and pupils to say for themselves whether Short Message language influences their academic writing. This current study showed further evidence from pupils in the sense that the researcher gave a standard composition test to pupils in order to identify the presence of Short Message language if there was any in the test scripts for Grade 12 learners. This was able to assess the claims of David Crystal who especially on his 5<sup>th</sup> claim which stated that for one to manage to text, one has to know how to spell words correctly. The incoming studies will further fill the gap to show whether all who text are even able to spell English words correctly as claimed by Crystal.

In addition, Crystal (2008) in his research explained that in text messaging; only 10% of the words are abbreviated. Further Crystal opined that all the popular beliefs about texting that is, as a twenty first century phenomenon, having a distinctive graphic style full of abbreviations and deviant spellings and use of language, used by the youth who do not care about standards, causing decline in literacy and harmful language as a whole 'are debatable'.

Apart from that, Crystal (2006; 2008) offered a comprehensive look at the linguistic features of several online communication media. Crystal, examined the linguistic conventions used in these separate media and how they differ from not only real life speech and traditional forms of writing, but also how they differ from each other, recognizing that the language of chat groups is not the only 'genre' of the internet. He claims that Short Message language use among learners is a sign of being creative. The current study will fill this gap by establishing whether the SMS creativity among learners works positively for them or not.

Prince (1984) found that with structural fragmentation, mediated discourse is sometimes claimed to be internationally incoherent due to limitation imposed by computer messaging systems on turn taking. Shanon (2007) on the contrary, notes that online communities generally make their social profile explicit and that language variation online is patterned by age and region. In essence, language and social identity contributes to the sociolinguistics of mediated discourse. Other than computer messaging systems (CMS), the current study was also considering Short Message language a type of discourse emanating from cell phones and its influence on composition writing.

Baron (2008) also commented in his research that students suffer very little impact from Short Message text writing. She refers to a recent study done by the British Journal of Developmental Psychology that wanted to investigate the texts of students that displayed a wider range of vocabulary. The research also had interest in finding out the impact of a wider range of abbreviated vocabulary on the reading development of the learners.

Further, according to Baron (2008) as soon as children can distinguish between formal and informal language, Short Message language does not affect their literacy. Baron seems to agree with David Crystal who said that the use of Short Message language is not to blame for the poor academic writing among students. He has further said that the situation has just been exaggerated by a number of scholars who refute that text writing is not an art and an advanced way of literacy. Context helps when interpreting Short Message language. The Objective of Short Message language is to use the least numbers of characters needed to convey an intelligible message to as many telecommunications companions have an SMS character limit, allowing about 160 characters. As seen from the aims of Baron's study just like professor Crystal, he did not ask the students or pupils on their perceptions and whether Short Message language influences their composition writing heavily in his study and neither did he inquire from any group of English instructors like teachers or lecturers which the current study has done.

Moreover, O'Connor (2005) reports that the more students use tools like instant messaging; the less chance there are likely to be able to separate formal from informal English. One may therefore rightly argue that SMS language discourages complex vocabulary and prevents the creation of longer, more sophisticated phrases. A pertinent question that society must answer therefore is – has text message usage affected the way students presently use the English language? And if it has, is it for better or for worse?

Further, Ravichandrian (2009) in New Zealand explained in his study from New Zealand that cell phones (mobile phones) have been in the hands of people, than ever before especially teenagers. Literature provided in-depth evidence of the uses, influences, advantages, disadvantages, impact, consequences and concerns about the use of mobile phones and their influence on formal writing. Why teenagers fancy this device, was an interesting observation for this researcher where the experts attached its significance to teenagers' identity factor. According to his study, the use of mobile phones has influenced, re-shaped, re-organised and altered several academic writings social facets.

Further, the above study focused on teenagers' mobile phone usage. Literature has provided evidence of them being used for both positive purposes and negative reasons. This researcher had these questions in his research: Is the gap between uses and negative impact widening? Are consequences and concerns superseding positive uses? How do parents/caregivers perceive the overall usage of mobile phones by their teenagers? Are there any solutions, possibilities and avenues to address such problems? These are the basic queries that drove this study. This left a gap for the current study because the previous study focussed on parents and caregivers' perspectives on SMS use by teenagers as stated in italics above but the current study focussed on teachers and learners' perceptions on SMS use in line with composition writing.

According to Plester, Wood, & Joshi, (2009) their study suggests that the linguistic creativity of texting poses little challenges to standard spellings. Some of the results from her study showed a positive relation between texting, writing and literacy. Other Scholars argue that this form of communication has systematically revolutionized human communication system the world over and has systematically transformed written communications.

Apart from that, Carey (2008) reported on growing concern about the profuse use of Short Message language endangering the standard form of English language has prompted individuals and co-operate bodies to continuously decry how strong this negative impact is taking its toll on the spelling and punctuation of students in their writings. British Broadcasting Company report of March 4, 2003, blamed Short Message language for the declining standards of spelling and grammar, particularly in essay writing. Even parents and teachers showed great concern that the increasing prevalence of Short Message language among youths was influencing their correct use of English language. This new form of communication taking hold in the linguistic sphere, means new challenges for teaching and

learning as most of the words used in Short Message language are not found in standard dictionaries or recognized by language scholars (Carey, 2008).

Furthermore, Tabatabaei & Gojani (2012) reports from Iran that Short Message language communication styles are harmful to students' writing and grammar; it destroys the ways students read, think and write. It makes them show lazy attitude towards reading and writing as they are incapable of thinking rightly as to decode ideas accurately. This is true since if one fails to consciously avoid its use in formal writing; the inevitable effect is poor performance in academic assessment. Educators have observed that students impulsively transmit text message language in their test and examination without knowing its effects on their academic performance. Ling (2005) asserted that several educators and observers were concerned that the abbreviated language style of text messaging was inappropriately filtering into official school writing.

Henry (2004) reports that the use of Short Message language has also been observed in examination scripts, according to an official report published by the largest examination board in the UK it disclosed that examination scripts were saturated with abbreviated words.

Barker (2011) in his investigations found that the use of short or condensed form of words and expressions, characteristic of the mobile phone text message negatively affects the continuous writings of users especially their spelling system making it difficult for them to familiarize themselves with correct spellings of words. According to Baron (2008), he observed that people unconsciously integrate abbreviated forms of words into formal written communication which creates the impression that the writer is a carefree person who even ignores the cardinal rules of English grammar. Pushed by worries about language abbreviations, word shortenings, acronyms and other violations of grammatical rules, concerns are being expressed by scholars that SMS language is causing severe harm to Standard English, leading to a communication failure and possible death of the English language in the future (Berg, 2011 and Baron 1998). The current study sought to find out the learners and teachers' perceptions on the influence of Short Message language in formal writing.

Besides, in their study, Mathewman, Bligut & Davis (2004) and Lewin (2008) also found that texters were prone to ignore spellings, either intentionally or reflexively and that the accepted credence is that texting has developed as a twenty-first-century trend and as a highly

idiosyncratic vivid style, full of contractions and out of the ordinary use of the language. There is however a broadly voiced apprehension that the practice is nurturing a decline in literacy. Perhaps another research would help to categorically look at the advocates of Short Message language use in formal writing and those who are against it.

Another study done by Rafi (2010) in New York also tried to investigate the influence of new media language on academic reading and whether it interferes with standard literacy. This investigation left a gap since it covered the research to do with Short Message language interference with standard literacy and reading while the incoming study aimed at specifying whether conventional writing is influenced by Short Message language.

Owens (2005) in his study in U.S.A explained that with specific regard to adolescent learners, reading and writing form an essential part of the education system. Spelling and reading, as well as spellings and written composition, are proven to have a significant relationship. Reading and spelling share identical underlying phonological processes but are not simply reverse processes. This scholars' study was similar to Rafi and in agreement with Graham cited earlier, on the importance of reading and spelling in academic work but these skills are being eroded by SMS language use which eventually influences the writing skills of learners. Owens unlike this study did not attempt to find out the influence of Short Message language on composition writing but did try to investigate the relationship between spelling and written composition among adolescent learners.

Another research was carried out by Mahmoud (2013) who is the assistant professor-curriculum and Teaching English language institute, King Abdulaziz University (KAU) in Saudi Arabia. The study aimed at investigating the effects of using English Short Message Service (SMS) on the development of foundation year student's speaking and writing skills at (KAU) University. The objective of this research was to find out whether SMS language affected the students spoken and written communication skills. This study is similar to the current one, although it covered a research on University students while the current research is focusing on Grade 12 learners in a senior secondary school setting. The other gap is that the previous study included the spoken communication as well while the current study had to dig deeper in written academic communication among learners and went as far as analysing documents for learners such as composition books hence adding new knowledge.

In another study from Pakistan by Aziz, Shamin, Faisal, & Avais (2013) revealed that the growing concern about the profuse use of texting has been endangering the standard forms in language. This prompted these researchers to do a research to determine the presence or absence of Short Message language features in the academic writing of the participants. The focus of this study was to find out if there was an impact of SMS on the formal writing of university students as most of their examinations, assignments, reports and assessments were based on written work of students, and if it existed, how strong this impact was on the spelling and punctuation the students use in such writing. This study also tried to investigate whether Short Message language was to be blamed for poor spelling and punctuation habits of students and whether there could be a possibility of the involvement of other factors.

Further, Aziz, Shamin, Faisal & Avais (2013) observed in their study in Pakistan that educators are facing a great challenge due to the fact that learners have a tendency to use Short Message language as an officially accepted and standard way of writing and thus make different errors from incorrect spelling to even ungrammatical sentence constructions. They further opine that the language of texting does not observe grammatical and syntactic rules therefore it is neither formal nor standard because words are spelled as they are spoken. Text and instant messaging are negatively affecting students' writing quality on a daily basis, as they bring their abbreviated language into the classroom. This research would like to get the views of learners and those of their teachers of English language in order to come up with a conclusion.

Furthermore, there has been an increase in the use of text messaging among students and pupils especially teenagers due to the ownership of phones. This has resulted into some worries and concern among educators, parents, researchers and the general public that this practice is damaging the use of language in speaking and writing and will keep on affecting the standard forms in the long run (Aziz, Shamin, Faisal & Avais, 2013). The incoming study established the views of teachers on the use of Short Message language in formal writing and measures to take to curtail Short Message language in formal writing hence adding new knowledge. According to Aziz and others as already mentioned above, SMS is the short term for the abbreviations and rebus- like slang most commonly used due to the essential pithiness of mobile phone text messaging etiquette. It is the context which helps in the interpretation and understanding of Short Messages. The objective of the Short Message System is to use

the least number of words or characters needed to convey the intelligible message since many telecommunications companies have an SMS character limit.

The other findings for the Pakistan study under discussion above were that although text language originating from Short Messages was showing up in school-based writing assignments, the changes in the language were more about structure than anything else. Text users were leaving out commas, apostrophes, hyphens, and other punctuations which essentially change the very foundation of language. Punctuation signals the flow of the written work and word meanings. When the punctuation is missing or incorrect, then the meaning changes as does the manner in which it is read. Changes to the foundation of language could potentially mean that as language evolves so must the ways in which language is written. It was also found that the introduction of text language into print media was widespread and caused panic among researchers. It was also found that literacy skills were declining as a direct result of text language.

In addition, Aziz, Shamin, Faisal & Avais' research was similar to Marmoud (2013) mentioned earlier in that both had University students as the main participants. In addition, Aziz and others' study is similar to the current study in the sense that they both have interest in finding out the influence of Short Message language on the learners. Both studies also have interest in determining the presence and absence of Short Message language features in the academic writing of participants. The difference with the previous study is that it had a specific objective of Short Message language impact on spellings and punctuation habits of participants while the current study would like to discover and identify available Short Message language features in learners' written essays.

While other scholars have stated that their data has shown no relationship between the use of text language and the decline in literacy, other scholars say that texting could actually increase literacy because of the numerous reading and writing opportunities (Crystal, 2008; Plester, Wood & Joshi 2009). This interested the researcher to have more zeal to intensify the research so as to add new findings to the existing ones by inquiring from learners on how often SMS language made them use it in formal writing and to find out whether it helps learners to be better writers.

According to baron (2009), young text messages maneuverer conventional discursive practices with linguistic creativity and communicative competence in order to be intimate and

social. He further says that the earlier concerns about the impact of Short Message System on language appear exaggerated. Its graphic uniqueness is not a new phenomenon and it is not limited to the young. There has been a lot of debate as to whether it helps rather than hinder literacy since only a small part of it uses its distinct orthography. This claim has not shown the side where it belongs in terms of coming out whether SMS improves literacy skills or not but the current study will fill this gap by stating the side where it will belong. The incoming study will also try to find out whether the use of short message system in academic work is just an exaggeration like the way Baron concluded.

Tomlinson (1980) agrees with Baron concerning the linguistic creativity among young ones. They do not follow the orthographic conventions and rules of spellings when writing. They play around with words as they write Short messages. According to Tomlinson, in order to help the learners at secondary school level, the teacher keeps a record of common mistakes for learners and teaches the correct spellings of those words as remedial work. It is true that teachers also find it difficult to teach spellings because of lack of firm rules and guidelines so they teach spellings remedially. Tomlinson's publication has done very well to suggest to teachers of English how to help learners with wrong spellings but did not try to find out the problems which teachers face when teaching such lessons including lessons to do with teaching formal writing in order to avoid Short Message features in academic work like compositions. The current study intended to do that to fill that gap.

Further, Tomlinson (1980:191) defines a style of writing as "the relationship between language used and the purpose for which a particular study has been designed. An appropriate style involves the selection of words and structures to suit the aim of the writer and also the audience the writer has in mind when writing". The Short Message language is also a style of writing and it is informal because it is slang. In informal language like in Short Message language, the writer wishes to establish an easy intimate relationship with his audience. Therefore, style is significant in all writing types (Tomlinson, 1980). This work for Tomlinson has covered style in writing from the general point of view and did not include Short Message language as a style because Tomlinson wrote his book in the 1980s before the advent of cell phones and SMSs in 1992. The current study has defined SMS as a style hence filling the gap.

As learners, such as Grade 12 participants in this present time, they consciously choose to omit any typical "textisms" from their text messages while others use them for fun when they

socially communicate with their peers. They actually construct their written literacy (Berson & Berson, 2002). Adolescents learn from each other and share language in the texting world; therefore, as they text, they are constructing the ways that they write and making meaning from text messages as an affinity group. This is also in line with the social constructivists' theory such as that of Bandura explained in the theoretical framework. They are also very much aware of the impending potential consequences of academic failure, parental disappointment, and peer group exclusion, should they have a lapse in formal language use for academic assignments. It was shown in previous studies that adolescents' avid use of text messaging tends to have an influence on their academic writing. These senior pupils were not only differentiating their discourses and attaining academic success but they were also creating and constructing their language together through the use of social media. Adolescents are the innovators of language, and the current study intends to find out the validity veracity of that statement by covering the pupils' views in the current research.

Ping and others (2011) conducted a study to visualize how the adoption of Short Message language affects writing among its adopters. An analysis was made on the semantic and syntactic aspects of the text messages and e-mails among students. Traces of the impact of SMS on the standard of writing among the participants were also examined from several other aspects. The findings were that both SMS messages on phone and e-mails for students were influenced by Short Message language. The degree of Short Message language in writing among university students might reach an unacceptable state if not curtailed. The current study did not look at the analysis of semantic and syntactic aspects of emails but on Short Message language used in text messages via cell phones and how it influences formal writing.

Furthermore, texting on social media outlet commonly used for communications, has caused mixed reactions from literacy researchers who have studied the use of textisms in student literacy. According to Snowden (2006), she explained that some have embraced SMS use as yet another positive sign of a revolution in communication and some regard it as another step toward the destruction of human civilization, beginning with written language. The current study had the eagerness to analyse both teachers and pupils' perceptions. There are those who perceive text speak as simply a play on language similar to word puzzles or poetry. Poems like "Grasshopper", by Cummings, are said to be a cultural precursor to use text language (Snowden, 2006). In his poetry, Cummings' unique word placements, omissions of letters,

and changes in standard language rules of case and punctuation could be considered a play of language, which Snowden (2006) refers to SMS messages as deliberate and playful manipulation of the text.

According to (Bauerlein, 2010; Drouin and Davis, 2009), the written language of social media, especially with regard to text language, differs from traditional formal language in a number of ways. Social media language is more; '*abbreviated, spontaneous, interactive and Informal like spoken language*'.

In addition, Prensky (2001) revealed that Children and adolescents today are prolific social communicators, they are very familiar with digital language and their outreach seems to be growing. Adolescents see themselves as part of a global community facilitated by online communications (Chandler-Olcott and Lewis, 2010). This would seem to indicate that textisms are more than a passing trend and will continue to have a place in our communicative languages.

Some researchers such as Plester, Wood, and Joshi, (2009) view the use of Short Message language and the actual text language in communication as an aid to reading comprehension because it could reasonably be expected to increase phonological development, phonemic awareness and reading development, three of the components of literacy according to the National Reading Panel (2000), due to the notion that most textisms are using phonics as a basis for language building. Texters may use text language in social media interactions because they have phonological awareness and can build on the phonics and spellings skills they already have in order to create texts for unfamiliar words. The language choices a texter makes could be informed by his/her literacy skills, which could then influence the recipient's language choices. This assertion was rekindled and tested in the current study.

However, the analysis of data from another study by Kemp (2011) suggested that the use of text language had a negative influence on students' formal writing, but a positive influence on their informal writing. The casualness of informal writing was enhanced by their familiarity with texting, according to this researcher. The current study had to ask the learners themselves to state whether SMS language helped them in any way academically. This is the gap which Kemp's study discussed above left.

There are also those who believe text language is infiltrating adolescent literacy and is doing irreparable harm (Jacobs, 2008; Powell and Dixon, 2011). The current study wanted to confirm whether Short Message language could be harmful to learners' formal writing.

According to studies done by (Jago 2009; Brody, 2006), good, skilful composition takes time and writing fast does not produce excellent results. Students could be less skilled at composing complex, thoughtful writings because they have become accustomed to fast written responses. The current study was not necessarily testing the speed of writing among learners but tested the learners in essay writing in order to find out the truth in the claims such as that of Jago and Brody but more clearly to confirm whether Short Message language has an influence on learners' composition writing. Bauerlein (2010) declares that it takes experience and patience to develop the ability to write well and neither of these (experience and patience) is encouraged in the fast-paced world of social media.

Horowitz (2008) writes that there is concern that time with technology is time NOT spent on more academic activities such as sustained reading, building comprehension, composition writing and higher order thinking. The sheer amount of time spent texting is infringing on students' acquisition of academic knowledge, they are not being properly prepared for the reading comprehension skills needed for adulthood. Their out-of-school practices are influencing their in-school performances (Horowitz, 2008; Turner, 2009).

According to Skaar (2009) even though traditional composition of lengthy formal papers is more difficult than interacting with digital technology, it should be the most important form of written expression over all social media communications. Students are saturated with technology, but the above-mentioned researchers hold to the belief that academic writing must be nurtured to flourish and it is in this manner that higher order thinking skills are developed. This was a good point; but the gap here was that the current study was very specific unlike the above just mentioned scholar's ideas because their area of concern has touched many component areas of English language in general but the incoming study focused on composition writing only.

Thurlow and Poff (2002) carried out a similar research in order to find out if some diffusion of Short Message language into formal writing takes place among students. According to the two scholars, text messages which in most cases contain Short Message language may be perceived as non-standard typographic or orthographic forms which spoil conventional rules

of writing. They further explained that during the construction of text messaging; only exclamation marks and full stops are generally used. Moreover, the two scholars observed that several educators and observers were concerned that the abbreviated language style of text messaging was inappropriately filtering into official school writing. Unlike their study, the current study intended to identify any Short Message language words regardless of its type as long as it is regarded as foreign in learners' formal academic essays. This is another gap which this study intended to fill. The current study also aimed at finding out how often the use of short message system in academic writing which Thurlow and Poff did not look at.

In addition, Turner (2009) and Henry (2004) maintained that Young adults who used more language-based textisms in daily writing produced worst formal writing than young adults who used less linguistic textism in their daily writings. This is significant because, when one fails to consciously avoid the use of SMS language in formal writings, the inevitable effect is poor performance in academic assessments. Apart from that, short text users seemingly consider it practically difficult to separate formal and informal Language as they freely use Short Message language in their formal academic work. This is the basis behind some scholars' argument that Short Message language used via text messaging styles is harmful to students' conventional writings.

Text messaging mostly involves the use of pictograms and logograms. Words are either shortened through the use of symbols to represent the word, or using symbols whose names sound like a syllable of the word. A text may consist of a word or an alphanumeric combination. For example, texting "to date" could be rendered as 2d8; "for you", as 4 U; and "before" as b4. To text "to whom it may concern" for instance, one could simply write 'twimc' Wikipedia, (2010:12). It is also possible to use numbers alone to communicate whole passages. This is particularly so in character-based languages like Chinese and Japanese. The SMS technology allows up to 160 characters in length for each short message composed with Latin alphabets, and 70 characters in length for those composed with non-Latin alphabets like Arabic and Chinese (Wikipedia , 2010).

In 2007, Finnish author Hannu Luntiala published the first ever book written solely in text message language, about a business executive travelling throughout Europe and India (Crystal, 2008). The following year, David Crystal, a renowned Linguistics professor came out with his book entitled *Txtng: The Gr8 Db8*. This could be said to be the most comprehensive literary work so far on the SMS text messaging. Berson and Berson (2003)

explained that various researches on the impact of Short Message language via texting have also been carried out and findings published in journals, newspapers, and on the internet. These articles mostly online address the positive and negative impacts of text messaging on various aspects of social life, including the academic work of students. David Crystal is one of the land mark researchers who have written a lot about text language and texting in line with writing and literacy. Other researchers such as (Baron, 2008; Russell, 2010; Thurlow & Poff, 2009 and Aziz, Shamin, Faisal & Avais, 2013) have joined this hot debate of texting and academic writing.

There is no doubt that text messaging and Short Message language has some impact on the way people talk and write- some negative; others positive depending on the content and context (Wikipedia, 2010). An article posted under “Wikinews” reported that in November 2006 the New Zealand Qualifications Authority gave its approval to the move that secondary school students be allowed to use mobile phone text language in the end of the year examination papers. This could probably be ascribed to the pervasiveness of SMS text lingo among the students. However, following the worldwide publication of reports dating back to 2002 on the use of text language in school assignments, some sections of the public became concerned about the decline in the quality of written communication. It was also reported that teachers and professors had started having difficulties in keeping the trend in check (Wikipedia, 2010; Blankenship, 2011).

The researcher intends to fill the gap about concerns that teachers and other educators have about the trend of using text language in formal writing like compositions. Even if the New Zealand Qualification Authority gave an approval to students there to use SMS in their examinations, reports after 2002 showed that teachers and the public became concerned about the decline in the quality of written communication. The New Zealand Authority did not look at the views of the teachers and the public but the current study will fill up the gap by analysing the teachers’ views as well as pupils’ views on the use of text language in academic work even if the results will not be generalized but narrowed down to a single and small district of Kalulushi on the Copperbelt. The current study intends to find out whether teachers of English language could be comfortable to allow their pupils to use SMS in their academic work which the New Zealand Authority did not do.

### **2.3 The African Perspective of SMS use and its influence on Composition Writing**

Concerning the African perspective, Korross (2016) in his study examined the transformative impact of SMS text messaging on written skills among Kenyan University students. The use of the SMS style in communication is a language style which is formed intentionally by means of conscious, systematic patterning and implementation. SMS as a type of new technological communication has brought with it different forms of language use, which break away from the standard language as we know it and has led to a form of new orthography. With the emergence of the SMS communicative style, attention is no longer given to the grammatical rules of the English language. Using the Survey method, the paper examined how pervasive the use of SMS texting was among Kenyan university students; SMS styles and its possible effects on students' writing skills; and what lecturers and students themselves thought about the phenomenon. Based on responses from selected participants, the paper concluded that the use of SMS texting is pervasive, SMS text styles messaging could heighten the tendency among students to adopt non-standard uses and contracted forms of English words in their class work, examinations and research reports. The paper concluded by re-affirming that the frequency of SMS style was influencing students' writing skills and the use of standard British English in their academic environment. This study brought out a gap in the sense that it was done in Kenya and a survey method was used. It also involved students from a University as participants compared to the current study which used G12 learners as participants.

Another sociolinguistic study by Kahari (2014) investigated the patterns and factors of language choice in text messaging from the University of Zimbabwe, Shona-English bilinguals. This study explored and explained the patterns and factors of language choice in text messaging of University of Zimbabwe, Shona –English bilinguals.

According to Kahari (2014), text messaging was very popular among Zimbabwean university students and in their text messages. These 'texters' used a specific language which had a set of features that made it different from the language of standard writing (Ling: 2005, Thurlow: 2003). Generally, text messaging has a distinct pattern in terms of lexical, syntactic and typographical forms that fulfil young people's needs as well as providing for new technology (Doring: 2002). The language of texting has its own style, and the dominant features in SMS language are the use of abbreviations, slang, syntactic reductions, asterisk emoting, deletion of parts of speech, especially subject pronoun, preposition, articles, copula, auxiliary or

modal verbs and contractions (Ling:2008; Doring:2002 ;Sutherland:2002). The language of texting has features from both the written and spoken forms and Crystal (2001) suggests that SMS language is more than just a hybrid of speech and writing which must be seen as a new species of communication called 'a third medium'. SMS is quite unique with regards to language selection since it resembles the written form of speech which is interactive and dependant on shared space, time and background knowledge. Like normal speech, text messages are structurally simple, fragmented, concrete and conditional on situation.

The findings of this study were based on cell phone messages of 50 second year Faculty of Arts students, questionnaires and interviews. The major findings of the study revealed that there were a number of technical elements that were responsible for the wide use of English and switching in between English and Shona. The study concluded that age, sex and perceived ease and swiftness of writing had an effect on the patterns of language choice in text messaging. The gap was that this study included bilinguals as participants from Zimbabwe and its emphasis was on language choice in text messaging which was very different from the current study.

Njemanze (2012) similarly examined the Short Message language style of communication among Nigerian University students with emphasis on its effect on English language usage and concluded that Short Message language style could generate greater linguistic confusion if it is not constrained.

This study left a gap to be filled by this study because it covered University students and the incoming research covered Grade 12 learners. The Nigerian paper came to a conclusion that SMS style will generate greater linguistic confusion if it is not controlled.

Apart from this study done in Nigeria within Africa, another similar study was done in Ghana and it was published as an article published in a journal by (Dansier, 2011). This article intended to examine the transformative impact of SMS text messaging on student written communication skills. Using the survey method, the article examined how pervasive the use of SMS texting is among polytechnic students, it's possible effects on students' writing skills; and, what lecturers and students themselves thought about the phenomenon. Based on responses from survey participants, the article argues that even though mobile phones are handy ICTs for harnessing and disseminating information, they could have their dark sides as well. SMS text messaging function could heighten the tendency among students to adopt non-

standard uses and contracted forms of English words in their class work, examinations and researchers reports especially in an academic environment where English is the L2 of most students ( Dansier , 2011). This research left a gap to be filled since it engaged lecturers and University students in the study. So, there was need for another study to target Grade 12 but now not in Ghana again but within Zambia hence this study.

Dansier further posits that text messaging in itself is not bad. It is its misuse, especially, the unbridled use of abbreviations and non-standard expressions and spellings and their possible negative impact on student writing skills that must be watched. Therefore, there is a need to weigh the pros and cons of text messaging and its potential effects on student writing skills. The phenomenon has brought in its wake three main schools of thought. While some educators and students think that text messaging is one of the banes of mobile telephony because of its possible negative impact on writing skills of student; others contend that it is rather enhances their written communication skills, and therefore is a blessing.

Mobile phone usage and telecommunication has been one of the many successes of the twenty-first century. Those being the case, many people especially teachers have expressed concern at the rate at which literacy levels are dropping among youths and children. Educationists also have observed that text messaging is completely devastating the English language. According to Dansieh (2011), some teachers, parents and students themselves are expressing concerns that students' writing skills stand the risk of being sacrificed on the altar of text messaging. It is arguable that before this mobile technology came into existence, school children in the 1960s and 1970s were far more literate in terms of usage of the English language and essential writing skills than school children of today.

A more recent study in South Africa researched on the impact of abbreviations, non – standard spelling and paralinguistic restitutions in academic work written in English. The research further attempted to examine the content of written compositions in order to see if Short Message Language may influence the learners to start avoiding the use of complete words which the spelling is uncertain, (Silliman and Wilkinson ,2013). Based on these facts, it is plausible to surmise that adolescents who are practiced at condensing their text messaging will also apply this condensing to their written work.

Another similar study was done in South Africa as well. This was done by three scholars. According to Geertsema, Hyman and Deventer, (2011), SMS language is English language

slang, used as a message. This practice may impact on the written language skills of learners at school. The main aim of this study for was to determine the perspectives of Grade eight and nine English (as Home Language) educators in Gauteng regarding the possible influence of SMS language on certain aspect of learners' written language skills. If an influence was perceived by the educators, their perceptions regarding the degree and nature of the influence were also explored. This study was done at PHD level in South Africa and the target population was educators. This information was merged by the three scholars in a South African journal of Education in 2011. There were only 22 participants in this study and it generalized the problem on Short Message language as having a negative influence on the general written language skills for Grade eight and nine learners. As for the incoming study, it was specific in the sense that it picked on composition writing as the main area of concern and it also picked on Grade 12 learners as a specific Grade to study on. Further, this study left another gap in knowledge because it only dwelt on educator's perspectives on the problem at hand. But the current study included 100 learners as its major or target population as much as it included 32 teachers of language and four Heads of Languages Department.

In another study, a survey was carried out among the teachers in the six zonal headquarters of Post Primary School Service Commission (PPSSC) in Anambra State, Nigeria by (Uzochukwu, Ekwugha and Okafor, 2015). A sample of 400 teachers was randomly selected. Two schools were randomly sampled from each zone making twelve schools, and about 33 teachers were sampled from each school. Findings showed that teachers were aware students use SMS communication because they observed that it filtered into their academic writings, particularly in written examinations. The study also identified that the form of Short Message language commonly used among students was replacing formal words with alphabets. Based on the findings, the study concluded that Short Message language in communication was very detrimental to the students' academic writings and recommends that students who use the Short Message language in their written examination should be strictly penalized.

The study showed concern that Short Message language communication was gradually taking over written communication and indirectly jeopardizing students' usage of the Standard English language in their academic writings. Within this context therefore, this paper investigated Nigerian teachers' perception of the pervasiveness of Short Message language among students and how this form of communication was jeopardizing students' formal academic writings.

Further, the above study also revealed that in recent times, the average school child struggles more with spelling, grammar and essay-writing. The three scholars confirmed these facts in their study done in Nigeria among language teachers. According to their findings, these essential skills were before now considered key to a good grasp of the English language. Scholars still insist that SMS language has seemingly destroyed the way school children read, think, and write the conventional English Language.

Finally, on this theme, Uzochukwu, Ekwughu and Okafor (2015) explained in their study in Nigeria that apart from making phone calls, sending messages has become second nature of communication for many people. This mode of communication through texting is a common habit especially among youths who constitute students in New Media and Mass Communication secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Many reasons adduced for this form of communication include that; it is quick in message delivery, it does not adhere to the rules of English grammar, it is relatively cheap, it is more convenient than making calls, it allows for creativity in writing. Apart from covering the information on reasons for Short Message language from University students in this paragraph, this Nigerian study did not look at secondary learners' views on Short Message language use and reasons but it only covered the perception of teachers and university learners hence creating a gap.

In her study in Nigeria, Omedi (2011) found that Adolescents were influenced by their peers. As a result, their choice of who they spent time with was one of the most important factors in their development of language use like Short Message language. She further found that young people create social groups in which there are expectations for entrance into the group and maintenance of membership. Some of these social groups include *whats up* and *face book*. SMS language use is very common in these two groups and learners communicate to each other by means of cell phones. This situation makes learners to transfer Short Message language into composition writing according to Omedi. One of these expectations is based on discourse guidelines established by the peer group. If adolescents desire to become a part of the group and remain members, they must adhere to the established language rules. As such, SMS language is usually applied mostly in groups to people who know each other well and share in a social group.

Short message service (SMS), more popularly known as text messaging, developed as an initial by-product of the cell phone industry, (Faulkner and Culwin , 2006). SMS messaging is closely related to instant messaging, (IM). IM is a function of online chat rooms and has

expanded to mobile phones due to their ability to carry applications that can be downloaded to the handset. The South African market leader of these applications is MX it. MX it is a program that enables an individual to send and receive electronic text message from a computer or mobile phone by means of the internet. MX it is a cost-free platform for sending messages, which was launched in May 2005. This South African program can be used instead of traditional Short Message Service (SMS) technology (Goldstuck, 2006).

#### **2.4 Zambian Perspectives of SMS use and its influence on Composition writing**

To start with ECZ report for 2014 revealed that the use of SMS Language in composition writing final examination script was become common. The report found that many Grade 12 learners engaged themselves into writing SMS and other short forms of writing (ECZ (2014). The ECZ report did not report anything on the extent of the problem. This left a gap for this study to measure the extent to which SMS language was used among the Grade 12 learners and to establish learners' and teachers' perspectives.

Another study within Zambia sought to analyse written English errors made by Grade 11 learners in a multilingual context in Monze and Kabwe Districts of Zambia. This was done by Moonga, (2011) from the University of Zambia in 2011. The study aimed at identifying and categorizing the errors that the Grade 11 learners make in their written English. The study also established which of these errors relate to interference and whether or not these errors relate to a specific L1 or generally cut across languages as used by pupils. This study used a descriptive survey design which applied the qualitative approach both in collecting and analysing data. This study used a different research design from the current study and the two studies differed on the grades they used as participants. Moonga engaged 120 Grade 11 pupils where 20 were sampled from each school while the current study worked with 100 Grade 12 pupils and each school had 25 pupils. The previous study did not engage teachers as participants like the current study which worked with 32 teachers of English teaching Grade 12 and 4 HODs for the language departments.

This previous study under discussion engaged six schools: three in Kabwe and three in Monze while the current study engaged only 4 schools in kalulushi district only. Moonga (2011) left a gap for the current study because she only looked at error analysis in general even if some errors may come from the use of SMS language but that was not the focus of her study. The two studies have similarities in some variables like composition writing in English at senior secondary. They both engaged pupils although the current study had to go

an extra mile by mixing the study using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Besides, she used Grade 11 pupils as her main respondents unlike this study which embarked on Grade 12 pupils. The study areas were also different; the previous study picked on Kabwe and Monze while the current study selected Kalulushi District on the Copperbelt.

The findings for Moonga (2011) revealed that there were 8 types of errors. These included misuse of prepositions, poor punctuations, wrong expressions, wrong word order, wrong time expression, double grammatical errors and poor spellings. The study also identified Interlingua errors due to L1 interference and intralingua errors due to inadequate knowledge of rules in the target language. The findings of this study left a knowledge gap for the current study to find out the extent to which SMS language influence pupils essay writing. The incoming study also intends to look at the views of pupils and teachers on the use of text language in formal writing.

The other related study on composition writing was done by Sidambi (2011) from the University of Zambia as well. He researched on the teaching of composition writing in the Zambian High schools. This was done in Choma as a case study and only two schools were selected. This was done in 2011 just in the same year as Moonga's study. The objectives of the study were: To find out the composition types taught in schools, to identify the discourse types taught in composition lessons, to find out the learning procedures in composition lessons and to find out whether what goes on during in these lessons was anything that could promote the learning of skills needed for a pupil to be able to write a composition.

Sidambi used a cross-sectional case study since it naturally obtained the data expected. The population sample was about 475 pupils and six teachers. This was a qualitative study. Focus group discussions were used for teachers. Observations of composition lessons were done in Sidambi's study while the current study did not observe teachers but analysed the pupil's exercise books for composition writing. He also engaged teachers in focus group discussions unlike the current study which did not use FGDs. Both the current and the previous study interviewed teachers of English language and Sidambi did the interview just after observing a lesson for a given teacher. Qualification of teachers was considered previously but this was not an issue in the current study. The gap which the previous study left is that it had to do with the teaching of compositions in high schools while the current one had to do with the writing of compositions bearing in mind the influence of text language on it.

The findings of Sidambi indicated that teachers taught different types of compositions namely situational, argumentative, descriptive, letter and report writing, narrative and others. The gap that was filled by the incoming study was to identify Short Message language in academic writing be it a narrative or an argumentative composition. It was sad that no teacher taught analytical writing as a type of composition. However, the study revealed that instead of bringing out types of compositions, teachers mentioned discourse types during FDGs. In addition, out of 12 lessons observed, 5 teachers did not know the difference between discourse types and composition types.

Further, according to Sidambi (2011), teachers in some lessons managed to bring out the skills needed when writing a composition. These skills were; organization, that is the right format of a composition, thinking of relevant ideas, good punctuation, capitalization, appropriate use of style, correct sequence, syntax, vocabulary, imaginations and use of idiomatic expressions and figures of speech. Other teachers did not emphasize on these not even mentioning some of the listed important skills. The conclusion of this study was that teachers taught compositions very poorly in the schools that were visited.

The other relevant study from the University of Zambia which covered something similar on composition writing was done by Kalima (2012). The study area had to do with teachers and learners' perceptions on factors contributing to pupil's poor performance in writing Grade 12 examinations. The purpose of this study was to establish factors that were contributing to the poor performance in composition writing in Grade 12 final French examinations. The objectives of this study were to establish the factors that contributed to the poor performance of Grade 12 learners in composition writing in French; establish how composition writing in French is taught and to ascertain the attitude of teachers towards composition writing; ascertain the attitude of learners towards composition writing; Establish how French composition writing is examined.

The research design for Kalima stated already used in this study was both a case study and a survey. This study had similar sample size and categories of the population with what the current study used as well as the participants; 80 former Grade 12 learners, then ten teachers and three education officials though the sample for pupils was slightly smaller compared to that of the current study. The research was purely qualitative. This study for Kalima just like that of Sidambi revealed earlier collected data through lesson observations using an

observation checklist. Interviews were also conducted to the teachers of French and education managers. Questionnaires were also administered to former French pupils.

The findings of this study were that a number of factors contributed to the poor performance of Grade 12 learners in French composition examinations. These included basic high school policy, insufficient time for learning, teacher shortage, learning materials, inadequate preparations, pupils' negative attitude towards French, and also lack of motivation for both teachers and pupils.

This study left a good gap for the incoming study because the language under discussion was French even if the topic was also on composition writing. Another gap is that the previous research dwelt on final examinations feedback whereas the current study has included class work, tests, and direct observations of learner's books.

## **2.5 Summary**

From the studies that have so far been reviewed in line with global, African and Zambian perspectives, it was noted that most of the studies were carried out at global level and in higher learning institutions such as Universities. Very few studies related to this study were conducted in Africa. This left a gap for this study because it is not clear whether anyone has done any study in Zambia to categorically look at Short Message language and its influence on formal writing. Other available studies related to the current one both in Africa or abroad used either university students or instructors such as lecturers as participants and this created another gap to do a similar study but on Grade 12 learners this time. The methods of data collection were totally different from the concurrent mixed method design applied in the current research hence creating a good gap. In a nutshell, these studies showed some various findings of which the majority confirmed in their literature as well as findings that Short Message language has brought more influence and problems to English language and formal writing to be specific some of which are the problems of focus for the current study.



was employed in this study. A concurrent triangulation type of mixed method was applied where two data sets were collected at the same time. This is where a researcher collects both qualitative and quantitative data concurrently and then compares the two data bases to determine if there is convergence, deference or a combination (Cresswell Plano & Clark, 2011). Within this design, both qualitative and quantitative methods were integrated in order to allow the researcher to compare the data that was collected in the field among teachers and Grade 12 learners in the public and private secondary schools within Kalulushi District. Triangulation is a process in which the researcher uses complementary techniques such as interviews of key informants (KIs), observations and questionnaires in order to come up with credible results (Mwansa 2005:9). This is supported by Creswell (2009, 2012) and Denzin, and Lincoln (2000) who agrees that the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches and techniques in research enables the researcher to cross validate the results from all the methods used as well as to offset the weaknesses of the other data sets.

### **3.2 Justification for using a mixed method**

This study has some justifications for using a mixed design. The researcher aimed at reducing the weakness of other data collecting instruments by complementing with other instruments. It is imperative to gather more than one kind of data for a survey study like this one. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), “Many sources of data are better in a study than a single source because multiple sources lead to a fuller understanding...” (p.115). Being able to effectively use multiple sources of data prevents reliance on any one, shallow basis of information, resulting in less chance of either researcher or participant bias (Yin, 2004; Denzin & Lincon, 2000). Thus, the researcher collected data from a number of instruments over the course of four months. These were interviews guides to interview heads of English Department for selected secondary schools, composition writing scripts from a test written by sampled Grade 12 learners, Grade 12 learners’ mixed questionnaires and teachers’ mixed questionnaires. Grade 12 learners’ document analysis table was used to analyse composition books and also field notes. More information about each type of data has been discussed in subsequent sections.

### **3.3 Target population**

Nsabila and Nalaila (2013:37) defines a target population as that to which the findings will be generalised to or that population to which the information is desired.

In this study, the target population included all the Grade 12 learners in Kalulushi District of the copperbelt province. Teachers of English Language who have been teaching Grade 12 classes in Kalulushi District at government and private secondary schools and especially those who mark Grade 12 paper one examinations were part of the target group in this research.

### 3.4 sample size, Categories of participants and sampling procedure

**Table 3 : Categories of participants from the study sample**

The summary of the sample that made up results were as presented in table 1

<b>Categories of participants</b>	<b>Number</b>
Sampled schools 4,	One private and three government schools, (all purposefully sampled).
Grade 12 learners	100, all randomly selected where 25 came from each of the four schools.
Gender Distribution of Grade 12 learners	61 male and 39 female
Ownership of phones by the pupils who were sampled.	85 pupils owned cell phones and 15 did not own cell phones.
Grade 12 learners' teachers of English language. Gender for teachers of English	32, all purposively selected where 8 came from each of the four secondary schools sampled. 13 Male and 19 female adding up to 32.
Heads of Department for English language.	Four HODs purposefully sampled, where one came from each of the four schools sampled.
<b>TOTAL SAMPLE</b>	<b>136 Respondents</b>

Table 1 above gives a full sample size for the participants for this study.

Sampling refers to methods of gathering information from a number of chosen people randomly or purposefully (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). A sample also refers to the number of participants selected to constitute a desired sample. This study used purposive sampling to

select the four schools. Purposive sampling uses techniques where the researcher chooses people who are thought to be relevant to the research topic. Therefore, this research purposefully picked a total of four schools, three government schools and one private school from Kalulushi District. The researcher engaged a total of 100 Grade 12 learners and all of them were randomly selected. From each school, 25 Grade 12 learners were randomly sampled in order to be tested in composition writing. In addition, a total of five Grade 12 learners' marked compositions books per school were also purposively picked and used in document analysis. This meant that a total of 20 books were sampled purposefully from the four schools used as research sites.

In addition, the same pupils who were tested in composition writing were later given semi structured questionnaires in order to find out how they use Short Message Language. Eight teachers who have been handling Grade 12 classes from each of the four schools selected were given semi structured questionnaires in order to get their opinions about the use of text message language in academic writing among the Grade 12 learners. A total of 32 teachers were given questionnaires in this study. Additionally, four Heads of Departments for English Language from each of the 4 selected schools were interviewed individually. Interviews were transcribed in form of ideograms. Ideograms comes from an ideographic approach that allows the researcher to add to scientific research the necessary empirical dimension it deserves using unstructured interviews (Mamabolo, 2002). The researcher took notes during interviews in case of failure of the recording gadgets. This was also done to ensure validity of the recorded data when compared with written notes. When the smaller breakdowns of respondents were added, the total came to 136 participants.

### **3.5 Data collection instruments**

The following instruments were used in this research to collect data;

#### **3.5.1 English Composition test**

This research used a standard composition test which was verified by English language experts to ensure validity of the question in order to test the Grade 12 learners in composition writing. The topic for the standard test was "the use of cell phones and text language among Grade 12 learners influences their composition writing. Do you agree or disagree?" This was an argumentative type of essay and it provided a choice for learners to choose the side on which to write on. The test sought to measure the extent to which Grade 12 learners used

SMS language in composition writing in objective one. It also aimed at identifying SMS words used in composition writing among Grade 12 learners in line with objective 2.

### **3.5.2 Mixed questionnaires for Grade 12 learners**

Mixed questionnaires are questionnaires which consist of both open ended and closed questions. These questionnaires were used on Grade 12 learners to allow them to answer both closed and open ended questions in order to handle objective three of this study on the learners' views on the influence of SMS language on composition writing. This instrument had a question which collected SMS words used by learners on phone and in formal writing in line with objective two for triangulation purposes.

### **3.5.3 Mixed Questionnaires for Teachers**

Another set of mixed questionnaires were used for teachers who have been teaching Grade 12 learners in English language. This research instrument also had both open ended and closed ended questions in order to capture the desired feedback from teachers on their perceptions on the influence of SMS language on Grade 12 composition writing in line with objective four. This instrument like the pupils' questionnaire had a question which collected SMS words used by learners on phone and in formal writing in line with objective two for triangulation purposes.

### **3.5.4 Interview guides for Heads of department for English language**

In order to capture the HODs perceptions, the researcher used a digital voice recorder during the teachers' interviews in order to capture relevant information which other earlier mentioned research instruments may have not covered. Short hand writings of interviews were done in order to back up the recorded interviews. Therefore, HODs' interviews represented both the Grade 12 learners and the teachers of English in the four schools. All the above discussed research instruments were used to validate results in the process of complementing each other and to fulfil triangulation.

### **3.5.5 A document analysis guide**

A document analysis guide was also used in form of a table in order to analyse some features of text messaging in pupils' marked compositions in their books. A total of 20 books were purposively sampled for analysis.

### **3.6 Validity, reliability of instruments and Pilot study**

According to Krishnaswami (1993), Validity may be defined as the ability of a scale or tool to measure what it is supposed to measure. It can also be defined as the accuracy and truth of the data and findings that are produced. Validity has to do with the effectiveness (or successes) of an instrument in measuring the specific property it intends to measure (Nalaila and Nsabila, 2013). To ensure validity of instruments, a pilot study was conducted at a Mission School in Kalulushi District in order to test the instruments. Another pilot study was conducted from one government school in Kitwe. The two pilot studies gave good insight to the researcher to make needed changes to the make the instruments reliable. By so doing, the valid instrument also ensured reliability of findings. After that, the researcher worked with the supervisor in order to make corrections for both pupils and teachers' piloted instruments. There was an observation that some questions in the questionnaires and interview guides were not clear enough to the respondents so piloting made it easier to modify them so as to make them more reliable and valid. The researcher did the marking of the composition test herself to avoid variation in the allocation of marks, scores and actual identification of instances of SMS language. This was done to ensure validity of findings. Validity was ensured when marking since the researcher who marked the composition test scripts was a qualified teacher of English language with 12 years of teaching experience.

### **3.7 Data collection**

#### **3.7.1 Data collection Procedures**

The study collected both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from the field using the already listed instruments. Secondary data was collected from books, journals and other references. Grade 12 learners and teachers of English in the selected schools provided primary data through interviews, document analysis and questionnaires which contained both closed and open ended questions hence the questionnaires were mixed ones Pupils were given questionnaires after selecting them randomly. A full Grade 12 class for the selected schools had more than 40 pupils but the researcher only needed 25 respondents for each school hence selecting learners using simple random sampling for equal chance.

The teachers who were given questionnaires were selected purposefully in order to credible results. The heads of departments for English for each of the four selected schools in this study were interviewed as individuals. The interviews were recorded by the researcher on a

voice recorder for further analysis and transcription. A test in composition writing was also administered to Grade 12 learners in order to get a true reflection of what obtained in schools in composition writing and the occurrence of Short Message Language in academic writing. The topic for the standard test was “the use of cell phones and text language among Grade 12 pupils influences their composition writing. Do you agree or disagree?” This question was taken to experts in composition teaching writing and marking in order to confirm its validity. (Refer to appendix K of this document to see the test). This method was chosen because it facilitated the accurate collection of information with appropriate clarity. The researcher decided to test pupils with a standard test and also to check in their composition books through document analysis because it was convenient and restrictions were very minimal.

### **3.8 Data analysis procedure**

The standard composition test scripts for Grade 12 learners from the selected schools were marked by the researcher. After that, the researcher did a detailed analysis of the marked compositions. By so doing, the researcher was able to compile a list of text language words that Grade 12 pupils used in their compositions. Since the SMS words were too many, the researcher came up with a threshold by picking only SMS words which appeared five times and above in the composition scripts. SMS words which came from learners and teachers’ questionnaires as well as interviews for teachers and the analysed pupils’ books also formed part of some words within the threshold.

The other purpose of this analysis was to examine the Grade 12 learners’ use of Short Message language in their composition writing test. The researcher used both statistical as well as contextual forms of data analysis. Statistically, the researcher looked at the frequency of occurrence of similar Short Messages in pupil’s compositions. The remaining data was analysed using statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23. This was done by using a five point Likert scale in order to measure the degree to which SMS language was used in English composition writing among Grade 12 learners. Likert Scale questions were used for both Grade 12 learners and teachers of English. This generated frequencies and percentages as shall be seen in chapter four. After this exercise, the researcher conducted interviews with the Heads of Languages Departments of the four selected schools in Kalulushi district. Ideograms were used in order to transcribe the interviews of the 4 Heads of Departments for the selected schools.

Comparisons between pupils' and teachers' perceptions on use of short message language were done by the researcher following the findings of objective three and four of this study. These findings of objective three and four had both qualitative and quantitative data. These were analysed and presented separately in chapter four and they were compared in the discussions. This was done since the research design involved converging the findings.

Observations were also done in pupils' composition books randomly in order to establish the use of Short Message Language in their academic work. This was as good as document analysis. A document analysis table was used to guide the researcher to analyse learners' books for composition writing. The table used to analyse Grade 12 learners' books contained columns for SMS features, grammar quality, spelling, punctuation and other key items used to gauge a good essay. This table took care of this activity in order to have a clear focus on what was important to be observed in pupil's books.

### **3.9 Ethical issues**

Permission and clearance by the supervisor, the languages and social science department and other relevant offices of the University of Zambia such as the Ethics Committee were considered. Refer to Appendix F. Permission was also requested from the District Education Board Secretaries (DEBS) for Kalulushi district (See Appendix G). The heads of schools and heads of the English Departments for the selected schools were consulted by the researcher before conducting the necessary research activities in their premises. In addition, for the researcher to uphold a high degree of confidentiality during the research she assured the respondents and all the participants that the data collected would only be used for purposes of academic reference. All the Grade 12 learners engaged in this research were given consent letters in order for them to seek permission from their parents to voluntarily participate in the research. To ensure as W, X, Y and Z were used instead of the original names for the schools that were sampled for data collection. For the teachers who were interviewed as HODs for Languages departments, letters A, B, C and D were used for identity purposes and not their original names. All the necessary authorization documents, letters of permission to conduct a study from The University of Zambia and the districts where research was done from were appended. For data collection instruments, reference may be made to appendices A to D. For ethical clearance, see appendix F. For samples of marked Grade 12 test scripts, see appendix E.

### **3.10 Summary**

This chapter has provided information on the methodology which this research used. The research applied a mixed study design. The study population, study sample, sampling techniques, research instruments, validity and reliability, data collection and analysis procedures and ethical consideration were among the main sub-themes covered in methodology. The next chapter will present the findings of this study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **Overview**

This chapter presents the findings of this study. The results were derived from the data that was collected using teachers and learners' questionnaires, teachers' interviews, document analysis (English composition books) and a composition test in English. The findings of this research were guided by the following research questions which were:

- 1) How often did Grade 12 learners use SMS language in their conventional composition writing?
- 2) What were the short message words used in academic composition writing among Grade 12 learners?
- 3) What were the of Grade 12 learners' perceptions on the influence of short message language on their conventional composition writing.
- 4) What were the teachers' perceptions on the influence of short message language on conventional composition writing among Grade 12 learners?

A summary of the chapter will be given at the end of the chapter.

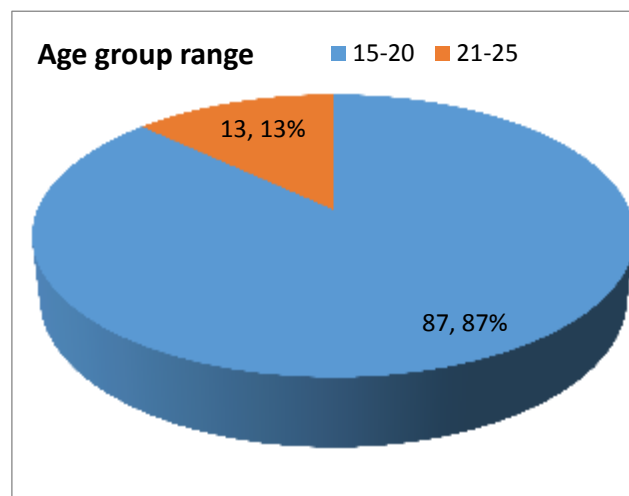
#### **4.1 Demographic information**

Demographic information refers to distinctive characteristics of respondents such as age, educational level, marital status, residential area among others. Therefore, in this report, the demographic characteristics of interest were age, gender, type of school and cellphone ownership status of the respondents. These demographics have been included in the study in order to provide a full understanding of the relevant details of the participants.

##### **4.1.2 Age of learners**

This study found it necessary to collect data on the age of the learners who participated in the study. Figure 2 displays the age range of the Grade 12 learners who participated in the study.

**Figure 2: Age of learners**



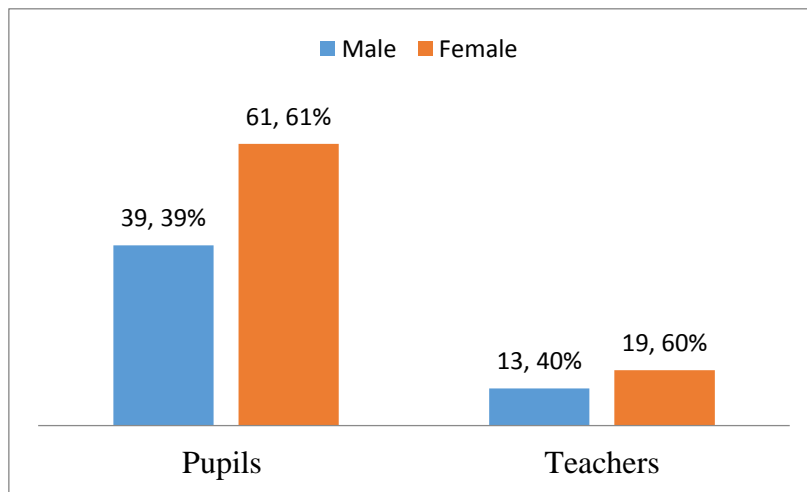
Source: Field data, (2016).

It was found that 13 learners were aged between 21-25 accounting for 13%. The study further found that 87 out of 100 learners that participated in the study were aged between 15-20 years accounting for 87%. Therefore, it can be argued that majority of the respondents were aged between 15 and 20 years of age. This age group falls under a group of youths who enjoy sending text messages using Short message language. The composition test scripts and composition books sampled in four schools confirmed that this age group was influenced by short message language since this language dominated their composition test scripts and it was used often times.

#### **4.1.3 Gender of Grade 12 learners and their Teachers of English**

Gender among the participants was considered as an important demographic aspect of this study. The researcher wanted to find out the distribution of male and female learners in the study. Figure 3 displays the gender of Grade 12 learners and their Teachers of English.

**Figure 3: Gender of Grade 12 learners and their Teachers of English**



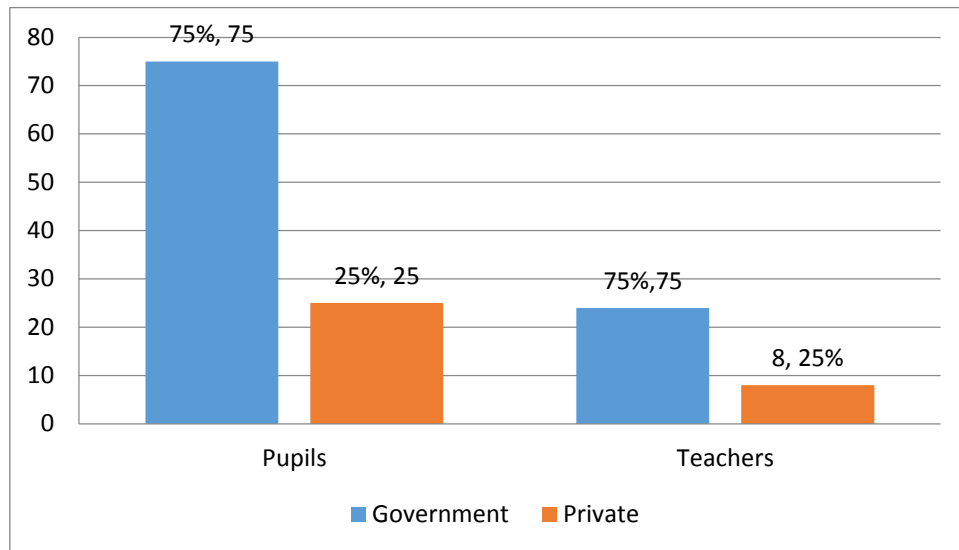
Source: Field data, (2016).

It was found that 100 Grade 12 learners and 32 teachers of English participated in the study. Therefore, of the 100 Grade twelve learners, 39 were male representing 39% and 61 were female accounting for 61% while only 13 (40%) teachers were male and 19 (60%) were female. As shown in the figure above, female participants were the majority in both instances (teachers and learners) as compared to the male participants. Therefore, we can safely conclude that female participants were the majority in this study. For Grade 12 learners, 61 out of 100 were female and this means that only 39 composition test scripts were for male learners. It was further found that male learners used less Short message language in their test scripts compared to female learners. Again, it was found that all female learners sent more short messages than male learners because all female learners owned cell phones.

#### **4.1.4 Distribution by school type for teachers and Grade 12 learners**

The study found it necessary to find out the distribution of participants by indicating how many came from government and those that came from a private school. It should be mentioned that a private school was added to have variety of schools and not for comparative purposes.

**Figure 4: Distribution by school type for teachers and Grade 12 learners**



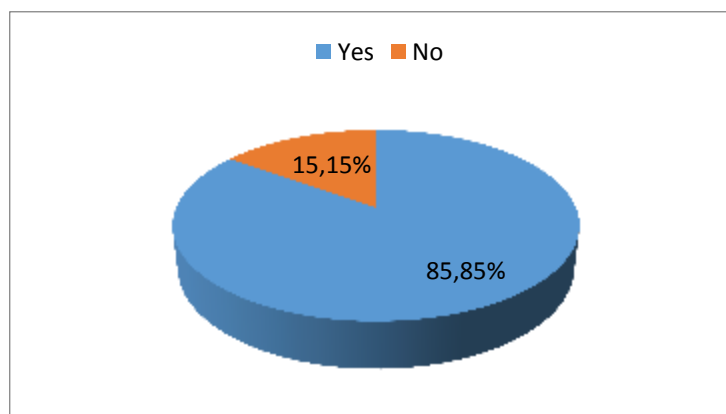
Source: Field data, (2016).

It was found that 25% (25) teachers were in private school while 75% (75) were in government schools. It was also highlighted that 75% (75) of the learners were in government schools while 25% (25) of them were in private schools. Therefore, it can be argued that majority of the teachers and learners were teaching and learning in government schools respectively as shown in figure 4.

#### **4.1.5 Ownership of cell phone by learners**

The study went further to understand the aspect of cell phones ownership among the learners. In this regard, when the learners were asked if they had owned a cell phone before, their feedback was as figure 5 shows.

**Figure 5: Ownership of cell phone by learners**



Source: Field data, (2016).

It was found that 15% of them did not own a cell phone before while 85% had owned a cell phone. Therefore, majority of the learners owned cell phones. Of the 85 learners who owned Cell phones, 61% were female and the remainder were male learners. Ownership of cell phones was very important to this study as it qualified the perception that cell phone ownership could have given the learners an opportunity of using it in short hand text messages as shown in figure 5. The influence of SMS language on composition writing was made manifest among Grade 12 learners due to the fact that almost all learners owned Cell phones.

#### 4.1.6. Number of SMS messages Grade 12 learners sent per day

This study also found it necessary to establish how many messages the Grade 12 learners sent per day. Figure 6 displays the number of messages the Grade 12 learners sent per day using mobile phones.

**Figure 6: Number of SMS messages sent per day by Grade 12 learners**

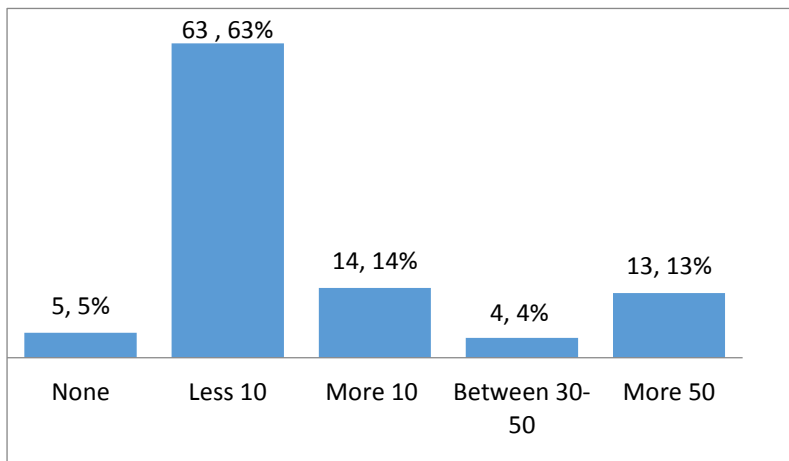


Figure 6 indicates that about 63% of the total Grade 12 respondents send less than 10 text messages per day, 14% more than 10 text messages in a day, 4% of respondents only between 30-50 text messages per day. 13% were of the view that they send more than 50 text messages in a day. It was also found that 5% of respondents never send any text messages at all.

#### 4.2 To establish how often SMS Words were used in academic composition writing among Grade 12 learners

The first research question sought to establish how often Short Message language was used in academic composition writing among Grade 12 learners, To answer this question, a test

was conducted in composition writing to find out how often Grade 12 learners used Short Message language in English compositions. Further, a mixed questionnaire was also used to find out how often short Message language was used in English compositions among Grade 12 learners. This was done for purposes of triangulating the information obtained from tests. The findings presented below presents two sets of information. These were findings from test results in compositions and those from mixed questionnaires answered by learners.

#### **4.2.1 Findings from composition test on how often SMS language was used in English compositions among Grade 12 learners**

Twenty- five (25) Grade 12 learners sampled from each of the four schools were tested in English composition. The compositions were marked and table 2 shows the frequency of words written by each pupil that were influenced by Short Message language in the four schools.

#### **4.2.2: Frequency of SMS words in learners' Composition Scripts in Schools**

**Table 2: Frequency of SMS words' in Composition Scripts from four Schools**

<b>S/N OF PUPIL</b>	<b>SCHOOL W Frequency</b>	<b>SCHOOL X Frequency</b>	<b>SCHOOL Y Frequency</b>	<b>SCHOOL Z Frequency</b>
1	10	28	16	38
2	11	32	9	13
3	13	16	13	22
4	8	11	20	16
5	11	20	11	30
6	4	16	19	16
7	14	14	8	23
8	8	12	14	12
9	12	9	9	21
10	15	31	11	19
11	6	16	20	28
12	11	11	8	27
13	8	12	17	20
14	12	21	11	30
15	9	15	7	11
16	6	30	10	33
17	12	24	16	12
18	9	16	12	10
19	7	30	8	29
20	10	10	11	27
21	13	17	15	33
22	10	11	21	16
23	15	8	7	12
24	6	12	19	14
25	11	16	10	11

Source: field data, (2016).

Table 2 above shows that SMS language was used 38 times by a pupil in School Z and this was the highest, while it was only used four times by a pupil in School W. The pupils were expected to write a composition ranging from 250 to 350 words. Apart from other errors made, only those words with SMS language were picked.

#### **4.2.3 Overall Scores for the 100 Composition test scripts from the four sampled schools**

The actual scores of the composition test for the 100 randomly selected Grade 12 learners were as distributed in table 3.

**Table 3: Overall scores for 100 composition test scripts from the randomly selected Grade 12 learners from four schools**

<b>Range of scores</b>	<b>Number of Grade 12 learners</b>
0-5	47
6-10	23
11-15	21
16-20	09
<b>Total</b>	100

Source: Field data, 2016.

Generally, the composition scripts were marked out of 20 marks. The scores were put in categories as shown in table 3. It was interesting to note that school W, a private school whose learners were allowed to use cell phones even in school and sent more Short messages but scored better marks than learners from the other 3 government schools. This showed that Short Message language did not influence their academic writing much as was the case with learners from the 3 government schools where cell phones were not allowed in school. It was also interesting to find that girls sent more SMS messages on a daily basis than boys but did better in composition writing than boys.

#### **4.2.4 Means and Standard Deviations of SMS words in learners' Compositions**

Means and corresponding standard deviations were calculated from the number of SMS words used by pupils in the four schools. Table 4 displays the means and standard deviations for the number of SMS words used by pupils in the four schools.

**Table 4 Means and S/D of English Words influenced by SMS language in Grade 12 Composition tests**

<b>Table 4: Means and S/D of Words influenced by SMS language in Grade 12 Composition tests</b>		
<b>SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
SCHOOL W	10.04	2.93
SCHOOL X	17.47	7.47
SCHOOL Y	12.88	4.5
SCHOOL Z	20.92	8.38

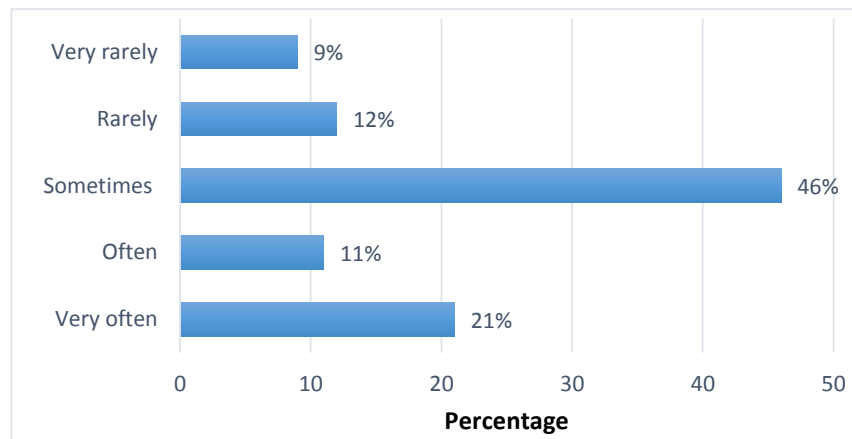
Source: field data, (2016).

As shown in Table 4 above, the composition test conducted on learners showed how often these Grade 12 learners used Short Message language in the composition test. The frequency of SMS use in composition tests scripts for learners showed the level to which SMS language influenced composition writing among Grade 12 learners. Among the sampled schools was school W, a private school whose learners' compositions were less influenced by SMS language compared to schools X, Y and Z which were government schools as their averages and Standard Deviations of SMS language use show in table 4. On average, each learner in School Z used SMS language 20 times in the composition while the same was used 10 times by each pupil in School W. Therefore, SMS language was mostly used by learners in School Z. The above Standard Deviations were derived from the composite frequency of occurrence of SMS language from each school as table 2 of this document displayed earlier on. They were calculated from the figures of total frequency of SMS appearance in each school using the summations of columns of table 4 across schools.

#### **4.2.5 Findings from Questionnaires administered on Grade 12 learners**

A total of 100 mixed questionnaires were also administered to Grade 12 learners to find out how often SMS language was used in their English compositions. This was done for purposes of comparing with the information obtained from tests. Respondents were asked to rate how often they used text language in compositions. Ratings were obtained from a Likert scale.

**Figure 7: displays the answers from the questionnaires.**



Source: field data, (2016).

**Figure 7: How often SMS language was used in academic composition writing among Grade12 learners**

As shown in figure 2, 46% of the respondents stated that they sometimes used Short Message language in their English compositions. 21% of the respondents mentioned that they used SMS language in compositions very often while 11% used it often. 12 respondents representing 12 % of the Grade 12 learners stated that they rarely used Short Message language in their compositions while 9% (9 learners) mentioned that they rarely used Short Message language.

It was noted by the researcher that over 4500 words written by the 100 pupils sampled in the four schools were influenced by SMS text language. Even though the majority of the pupils (46%) mentioned that they sometimes used text language, there was enough evidence that they used SMS language more often as was portrayed in the composition test papers. The fact that over 4500 words were influenced by SMS language indicates that Grade 12 learners were using SMS language often times.

#### **4.3: Identifying SMS words used in academic compositions among Grade 12 learners**

This research question sought to identify SMS words used in composition writing among Grade 12 learners. To answer this question, five instruments were used. A composition test was used in order to identify SMS words by marking. Marking of all the 100 scripts were done by the researcher. A mixed questionnaire also had questions for learners to list the SMS words they used in composition writing. Teachers' questionnaires requested the teachers to list the SMS words they come across as they marked class work, tests and examinations. HODs were asked to mention during their interviews some common SMS words they came across as they marked compositions either in class work or tests. Results for HODs and teachers were presented in one column. Learners' composition books were purposefully sampled in order to identify SMS words from marked compositions. The five instruments were made for purposes of validating and triangulating results since it was a mixed study.

**Table 5: Identifying SMS words used in academic compositions among Grade 12 learners**

*SMS words* Table 5: These words in table 5 were identified from the five research instruments which were used independently to identify the SMSs words in line with this objective. Identified SMS word results from teachers' interviews and teacher questionnaires were grouped together in this table.

ACTUAL WORDS IN ENGLISH	Short form /short hand	Number of times seen in pupils' questionnaire	Number of times seen in composition test	Number of times seen in composition books	Number of times seen in teachers' Questionnaire	Total frequency
Administration	admn	04	06	03	0	13
Afternoon	aftn	18	2	7	1	28
And	n	12	1	03	06	22
	&	16	9	11	7	43
Application	app	16	09	22	0	47
As soon as possible	asap	07	0	0	02	09
Because	coz	18	05	08	5	36
	b coz	11	02	03	3	19
	cause	29	03	10	01	44
Before	b4	17	02	03	05	27
	be 4	10	0	0	01	15
	b for	03	01	0	01	05
	b fore	09	0	0	0	09
	b fo	02	0	03	01	06
Between	btwn	18	2	6	01	27
	btn	10	0	1	0	11
Book	bk	10	0	0	02	12
But	bt	11	00	02	00	13
Call you later	call u l	10	0	01	0	11
Can	cn	06	02	02	01	11
Cannot	can't	4	11	10	03	23
Challenges	callage	6	12	01	0	19
Children	chudren	07	3	2	2	14
	chdrn	8	5	3	0.	16
Come	com	11	13	03	01	28
Control	k2ro	13	0	03	02	18

Cool	cul	0	03	1		
Copperbelt	c/belt	15	04	3	02	24
Daughter	dta	2	1	03	02	08
Dear	diya	08	0	1	06	15
Did	dd	1	1	1	02	5
Do	du	19	1	03	01	24
Do not	don't dnt	3 6	1 3	6	02 12	42
Examination	exams	03	04	28	06	41
Follow	flow folo	02 03	0 0	03 01	1 01	06 05
Forgive	4 gve	01	0	06	2	9
Friend	frnd	11	02	02	00	15
From	Frm 1/2rm	16 12	01 00	11 03	02 00	30 15
Give	giv geev	15 18	02 0	01 04	01 00	19 22
Goodnight	gud9nt gdnyte goodn yt gudnyt e	11 13 11 29	0 0 0 0	0 2 1 03	2 01 01 01	13 16 13 33
Grandmother	grand ma	02	02	1	0	5
Handsome	hd some hndsm e	08 11	0 0	03 06	01 00	12 17
Happen	hpn	08	01	06	0	15
Him	hm	09	03	02	01	14
I can see you	I cn c u	02	0	0	8	10
I love you	lov u I luv ya I liuv yhu	11 02 14	0 0 0	3 0 0	03 0 0	17 02 14
Information	info	12	02	08	0	22
It is	It's its	09 13	15 08	07 15	02 03	33 39
Know	No knw	46 32	02 05	01 04	01 06	50 47

Later	lta	12	00	02	0	14
Like	lk	08	0	1	0	9
Lots of love	lol	07	2	4	0	13
Love	luv	12	0	02	02	16
Message	msge	34	06	11	02	53
Morning	mornn	8	2	6	0	16
My	ma	08	03	05	02	19
Need	nid	8	01	01	02	12
Next	nxt	16	02	06	0	24
Night	n 9it	33	02	06	01	42
	9t	29	00	03	00	32
Normal	nomo	04	0	01	0	0
Or	o	05	02	1	0	8
People	pipo	09	03	2	0	14
Phone	4n	32	0	6	03	39
	phn	31	02	07	05	45
Place	plc	02	01	01	01	5
Please	pliz	33	06	10	02	51
	plize	06	0	0	0	6
	pleaz	04	0	1	0	5
Problem	prblm	13	0	2	01	16
Question	Q	2	0	1	02	05
School	xul	10	0	0	02	12
	sch	44	03	08	03	58
	xschool	4	00	0	02	02
	Skool	1	00	00	01	02
See You	C u	08	0	01	0	9
Sex	sx	12	0	0	01	13
Short Message Service	SMS	04	16	11	5	36
Some	sum	09	1	02	00	12
Something	smthin g	1	1	02	2	06
Sorry	sry	14	0	14	1	29
The	de	12	1	0	0	13
Sweep	swip	06	0	0	01	07
Take	tk	06	0	0	02	08
Talk Time	tt	07	1	0	03	11
Talk to you later	t2ul	09	09	05	01	23

Television	tv	09	09	22	0	40
Thank you	thnk' u	09	02	01	00	12
Thanks	thnx	08	03	08	2	21
	tnx	12	00	08	05	20
	thx	15	00	03	02	20
That	tht	13	22	02	01	38
That is	that's/	08	03	08	03	22
	thats	11	09	12	04	36
That so	tht so	6	6	0	02	14
Then	den	4	1	2	04	11
They	thy	06	02	06	0	14
This	dis	4	1	03	01	05
To	2	6	1	02	02	13
To me	2m	03	6	0	01	12
Today	2day	12	0	08	02	22
	tde	3	0	00	03	06
	tode	2	0	0	03	05
Tomorrow	tomaro	11	2	4	0	17
	2	13	0	2	05	20
	moro	02	01	02	0	05
	2 molo	01	01	01	02	05
Too	2	09	1	6	4	20
	tu	07	00	06	02	15
Understand	unstd	06	10	05	1	22
Wait	wet	1	2	06	01	10
Was	ws	11	0	0	01	12
Watching Television	wtv	02	02	1	03	08
Week	wk	01	01	02	03	07
What	wat	11	03	02	01	17
What	wht	11	02	06	00	19
Where	whr	8	13	18	01	40
Where	were	08	01	02	03	14
Why	y	09	06	2	0	17
Would	wud	11	02	18	01	32
Year	yr	13	03	18	2	36
Yesterday	ystde	7	0	3	01	08

Source: Field data, 2016.

This data from table 5 originates from research question which required identification of the short forms of words which Grade 12 learners used in their composition writing and how the words differed from the actual full forms of English words. The Short Message language words were identified and counted into frequencies by the researcher manually. Since they were too many text words that were collected as findings, a threshold was arrived at by the researcher in order to only pick words which seemed to have occurred at least five times or more in total from all the instruments that were used to gather these SMS language words. These instruments comprised; composition test, pupils' questionnaires, pupils English composition books and teachers' questionnaires. A good number of instruments were used in order to ensure validity and reliability of the findings. This also ensured that the pattern of a concurrent triangulation design was used in order to present identified words from all the applied instruments concurrently.

#### 4.3.1 Identified Categories OF SMS words

**Table 6: Categories of SMS words**

<b>CATEGORY OF SMS WORDS</b>	<b>Explanation of meaning of word as an SMS category</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>1. NUMBER HOMOPHONES</b>	Mixing words and letters for a single word.	Before written as 'B4', 'Control' written as 'Cont2ro', Today written as '2 day'. Tomorrow written as '2moro', Great as 'gr8t'.	Tonight written as '2night', too written as '2' and for written as '4'.
<b>2. LETTER HOMOPONES</b>	Letters standing in for words as a short cut or SMS.	You is written As 'U' as a letter homophone and 'See' as 'C.'	Words such as and written as 'n' or '&,'
<b>3. NON CONVENTIONAL SPELLINGS</b>	Between as 'btwn' School as 'Sch', 'msg' for message.	'Application' as 'apple', 'often' as 'ofn'	'Hpn' for happen, 'den' for then, 'xcool' or 'xcul' for school
<b>4. CONTRACTIONS</b>	Deletion of middle letters or final letters.	Understand as 'undstnd'. Next as 'Nxt'	Mathematics written as 'Maths', examinations as 'exams'.
<b>5. ACRONYMES</b>	Formed from some initial letters of various words and can be pronounced as a word.	For example, OPEC for Organisation for petroleum countries	Laugh out loud written as 'LOL', Rolling on the floor laughing written as 'ROFL'

<b>6. INITIALISMS</b>	Made up of first letters and cannot be pronounced as words	'DVD', for Digital versatile Disk, 'HTML' for hot mail,	'BTW' as by the way
<b>7. G- CLIPPINGS</b>	Excluding the ending –g letter	'Going' written as 'goin' coming as 'comin'	Morning written as 'Mornin' Cooking as 'cookin'.
<b>8. SHORTENINGS</b>	Words formed by following the words which are stressed when pronouncing.	'Afternoon' written as 'aftn', after written as 'aft', October written as 'Oct'.	'Adv' for advantage, 'mdme' for madam for advantage,
<b>9. SYMBOLS/ ICONS</b>	These are usually symbols with meanings in shortcut.	English words such as and, at, percent, star are usually written in symbol form as shown in the next box.	&, @, % ,*.

Source: researcher, (2016).

The above table 6 has categorised the identified type of SMS words which pupils used in composition writing. The explanations of the meaning of each category of SMS words have been given in the table side by side with the examples used in practice. In fact, other related studies revealed similar categories of words.

#### **4.4 Learners perceptions on use of SMS Language in composition writing**

##### **4.4.1 Findings of learner's perceptions from statements in Likert scale questionnaires**

This question sought to answer the question on the learners' perceptions on the influence of SMS language on composition writing. One hundred (100) Grade 12 learners were asked to rank statements regarding their perceptions on the influence of short message language on their academic writing and the results are shown in table 6:-

**Table 7: Learners perceptions on use of SMS Language in composition writing**

<b>Areas of Composition writing.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total Response</b>
(i) The use of SMS language on phone influences your academic writing.	12	23	3	48	14	100%
(ii) Your academic style of writing is highly influenced by use of SMS language.	16	22	9	36	17	100%
(iii) Comments by teachers on SMS language in your marked books are common.	19	31	6	38	6	100%
(iv) SMS language influences your spelling in your academic writing.	8	13	4	46	29	100%
(v) SMS language and texting helps one o improve basic writing skills.	36	31	7	20	6	100%
(vi) Most of your writing in school in influenced by use of SMS language.	19	32	8	33	8	100%
(vii) The length of sentences you write in your academic essays is influenced by use of SMS language.	16	19	9	50	6	100%

Source: field data, (2016).

As shown in Table 7, there were 62 Grade 12 learners who agreed that the use of SMS language on phones influenced their academic writing while 35 learners did not agree. There were also 3 Grade 12 learners who were undecided and did not know whether or not the use of SMS language on phones influenced their academic writing. Further, there were 53 Grade 12 learners who indicated that their academic style of writing was highly influenced by the use of SMS language. On the other hand, 38 Grade 12 learners disagreed and indicated that their academic style of writing was not highly influenced by the use of SMS language. Nine (9) Grade 12 learners did not indicate whether or not their academic style of writing was highly influenced by the use of SMS language.

Out of 100 Grade 12 learners, 44 agreed that teachers of English had written some comments in their exercise books regarding their use of SMS language. Fifty (50) learners however, indicated that their teachers had not written any comments in their books regarding the use of

SMS language. Six (6) learners did not indicate whether or not their teachers had made any comments in their exercise books regarding the use of SMS language.

Seventy-five (75) Grade 12 learners agreed that the use of SMS language influenced their spellings in academic writing while 21 indicated that it did not. Four (4) Grade 12 learners were undecided and did not know whether or not the use of SMS language influenced their spellings in academic writing.

Twenty six (26) Grade 12 learners agreed that the use of SMS language and texting helps one to improve basic writing skills while 67 learners disagreed that it did not. Seven (7) learners were undecided and did not know whether or not the use of SMS language and texting improved basic writing skills.

From the findings above, it can be concluded that the perception which the majority of the Grade 12 learners had was that the use of short message language influenced their academic writing positively and negatively.

#### **4.4.2 Findings of learners' perceptions on the influence of SMS language on composition writing among Grade 12 learners from Open Ended Questions**

The 100 Grade 12 learners who participated in the study wrote that the use of Short Message language had both a positive and negative influence on their academic writing. Those who stated that it had a positive influence on writing stated that the use of SMS language saved time and helped them to keep up with teachers during dictation time. Those who wrote that it had a negative influence stated that it affected their spellings, caused poor punctuation and led to loss of marks in compositions. The positive and negative influences of SMS language that the learners indicated are described further in this section.

##### **(a) Positive influence of use of SMS language on academic writing**

Some of the Grade 12 learners who wrote that the use of SMS language had a positive influence on composition writing stated that it saved time and attracted the reader. One of the Grade 12 learners wrote that the use of SMS language in academic writing saved time. He said, *"I feel the use of SMS language in academic writing is good because it helps me save time when I am writing a composition."* Another Grade 12 participant stated that it was sometimes difficult to spell certain words when writing compositions and this made her use

SMS language to avoid wasting time. She wrote, “Using *SMS language in composition writing has a positive influence on writing because it helps me simplify difficult spellings.*”

Another learner mentioned that the use of SMS language had a positive influence on composition writing because it attracted the reader. She wrote, “I like using SMS language because to me, it attracts the reader. I think it looks attractive.” Another respondent mentioned that the use of SMS language had a positive influence on writing because it looked good and stylish.

From what has been stated by Grade 12 learners in this section, it can be concluded that the use of SMS language had a positive influence on writing because it saved time thinking about correct spellings and also attracted the reader.

#### **(b) Negative influence of use of SMS language on academic writing**

The majority of the Grade 12 learners who wrote that the use of SMS language had a negative influence on composition writing stated that the practice led to loss of marks in exercises and examination, affected the spelling of words, caused poor punctuations and distorted the meaning of words.

One of the respondents wrote that the use of SMS language in composition writing had a negative effect as it resulted in the loss of marks in composition. He mentioned that every time he used SMS language, the score in the composition was low. Another Grade 12 pupil said:

*“Use of SMS language has a negative influence on composition writing because a lot of marks are lost when I use those SMS words. Our teacher always subtracts marks when we use SMS words and he always tells us to avoid the same because he is an examiner.”*

Ten respondents also stated that the use of SMS language had a negative influence on composition writing because it made them write wrong spellings. One of the respondents stated that he was no longer spelling correctly some of the difficult words he used to spell in the past due to the exposure to SMS language emanating from cell phone and texting. Another Grade 12 participant said, “*I sometimes forget that I am writing a composition in class and use SMS language. However, my teacher marks me wrong when I spell words in*

*SMS language.*” Another respondent wrote that the use of SMS language had a negative influence on his composition writing especially when it came to writing correct words. He further mentioned that although teachers were penalising him when he used SMS language, he found it easy to use it especially when the English word to be written down was difficult.

Six (6) respondents indicated that the use of SMS words led to the distortion of some of the meanings of words they wrote in their compositions. One of the respondents said that it sometimes became difficult to know if one means ‘*because*’ or ‘*cause*’ when the SMS word ‘*coz*’ was used. She stated that one learner could use the SMS word ‘*coz*’ to mean ‘*because*’ or ‘*cause*’ and sometimes teachers did not understand what Grade 12 learners meant when they used SMS language in their formal written work.

From what some of the Grade 12 learners stated, it is evident that they perceived the use of SMS language to have a negative influence on composition writing.

#### 4.4.3 Findings from Grade 12 learners’ English composition book analysis

**Table 8: Exhibits of the findings of SMS characteristics in Grade 12 learners’ English composition books**

Valid	School Identity	Spellings quality	Use of SMS and symbols	Use of Punctuati on marks	Use of abbreviations	formal language use	Paragr aphing	Grammar
Schools	W	Poor	Commo n	Good	Common	Good	Good	Good
	X	Poor	Not common	Bad	Common	Poor	Poor	Poor
	Y	Poor	Not common	Bad	Common	Poor	Poor	Poor
	Z	Poor	Common	Bad	Common	Poor	Poor	Good

Source: Field data, 2016.

Table 8 brings out the SMS features which were observed from the 20 Grade 12 learners’ books which were purposefully picked for analysis. The researcher sampled 5 books from each school for analysis. The researcher analysed the composition books by looking at marked essays to see whether SMS language influenced the learners’ compositions at classroom level. It was found that learners’ class composition writings in books were highly influenced by SMS language just like the composition test results showed. However, the private school W showed some variance because their essays were less influenced by Short

Message language characteristics hence the essays were better. The 3 government schools were badly influenced by SMS language and results showed consistency in SMS characteristics in the 3 schools except school W the private one. The researcher used the table columns above as a guide to see whether the SMS influenced punctuations spellings and other features as shown in table 8. The observed situations were gauged by using words such as Good, Bad, Common or Not common to explain what the researcher saw in books collectively at school level hence having 4 rows of school composition results in terms of quality. This was done to compare what the learners wrote in the test, what was answered in the pupils' questionnaire and what their teachers said in interviews and open ended questions for triangulation purposes as table 4 columns 4 of this document has displayed. It was found that learners' books from school X, Y and Z had a lot of poor spellings, poor punctuations, paragraphing and poor grammar as table 6 indicates. School W did better in other areas except for poor spellings like the other three schools. School W being a private school showed some slight differences in the number of SMS characters in the sense that there was less influence of SMS language on composition writing in books examined compared to government schools as shown in table 8 row number 1.

#### **4.5 Findings on Teachers' perceptions on the influence of short message language on conventional composition writing among Grade 12 learners**

The fourth question was aimed at finding out the perceptions of teachers on the influence of short message language on Grade 12 learners' composition writing. In order to get this information, teachers were asked to rate seven statements (perceptions) in questionnaires using a five -point Likert scale. Open ended questions were also used in questionnaires to get teachers perceptions on the use of Short Message language among Grade 12 learners and its influence on composition writing. Further, interviews were conducted with heads of department to find out their perceptions on the influence of Short message language on composition writing. The findings presented below present two sets of data from teachers rating of perceptions and their views from interviews with heads of department. In short, both open and closed questions were used in order to capture teachers' perceptions on SMS language use.

#### 4.5.1 Findings from statements in Likert scale questionnaire

##### (a) Findings from statements in Likert scale questionnaire

Teachers were asked to rank statements regarding their perceptions on the influence of short message language on conventional composition writing using a five point Likert scale and the results are shown in table 9.

**Table 9 :Teachers' perception on the influence of SMS language on composition writing**

Statements	Very High	%	High	%	Average	%	Low	%	Total
(i) What is your perception on the influence of SMS language on conventional composition writing?	5	15	10	30	12	40	5	15	32
(ii). SMS language influences language design, grammar and syntax of G12 learners academic essay.	10	30	10	30	12	40	0	0	32
(iii). Presence of SMS language features in class composition work among G12 learners.	15	45	12	40	3	8	2	6	32
(iv). Presence of SMS language features in end of term composition tests for G12 learners.	3	08	10	30	12	4	7	22	32
(v). Level of SMS influence on final scores for learners' compositions.	16	50	12	40	4	10	0	0	32
(vi). Acceptance on the use of SMS language in formal writing.	0	0	0	0	1	3	31	31	32
(vii). Level of content of English Senior syllabus for Grade 12 teachers of English to handle SMS use in learners' academic writing.	6	19	16	50	2	6	8	25	32

As shown in Table 9, out of a total of 32 teachers, 15 teachers perceived the influence of SMS language on conventional composition writing as high while 12 perceived it on average and only five teachers perceived it as low. This showed that 50% of teachers perceived the influence of SMS language on composition writing as high.

The table also shows that 20 teachers highly perceived SMS language to have an influence on language design, grammar and syntax in the compositions written by Grade 12 learners. While 12 teachers perceived this influence to be average, there was no teacher who perceived the influence of SMS language on language design, grammar and syntax to be low.

Moreover, 28 teachers rated as high the statement that the use of SMS language in compositions has an influence on the final score obtained by the learner. As could be seen from the table above, no teacher rated the statement low. Further, 31 teachers ranked as low the statement that it was acceptable to use Short Message language in formal writing. This means that they did not accept the use of Short Message language in formal writing.

In addition, 27 teachers perceived as high the presence of SMS language in class work composition writing, while 3 perceived SMS language in composition class work as average and only two teachers perceived the same statement as low.

Further, 13 teachers perceived as high the presence of Short Message language features in end of term composition tests scripts. While 12 teachers perceived this as average, seven teachers perceived as low the presence of Short Message language features in end of term composition tests for G12 learners.

Lastly, 22 teachers of English language for Grade 12 learners perceived the level of the content of the English Senior syllabus for Grade 12 learners as high while two perceived it to be on average and only 8 perceived it to be low.

#### **4.5.2 Findings from Open ended questions from teachers' questionnaires**

##### **(b) Findings from Open ended questions from teachers' questionnaires**

Answers provided by teachers in open ended questions revealed that they perceived that the use of Short Message language had a negative influence on Grade 12 learners' composition writing. One of the respondents among teachers wrote, *"Use of Short Message language in formal writing is very common among learners and it is spoiling the vocabulary of learners."* Other teachers stated that the use of Short Message language was common among Grade 12 learners in their classwork and end of year examinations but also stated that it was a tedious job teaching and correcting them because they were getting this influence from cell phones on a daily basis.

Some teachers wrote that the common use of Short Message language had resulted in a number of problems such as failure to write essays in full. Other teachers wrote that some Grade 12 learners thought that writing more words would make them lose marks as the case is with text messaging where they fear more talk time charges. Some Grade 12 learners were reported to have been thinking that writing in Short Message language is a social and

accepted norm among them. Thus, in Short Message language writing had become a basis for the pupils' mental spelling attitude. Another teacher wrote, "Use of Short Message language is common among Grade 12 learners and has become part of them and it is difficult to eliminate."

One teacher also mentioned that the use of Short Message language had a serious negative influence on composition writing as it distorted the meanings of certain words. This respondent further wrote that Grade 12 learners were using wrong spellings, poor grammar, wrong syntax structures and poor punctuations.

Another teacher wrote that the use of Short Message language influenced composition writing because it did not follow the rules of grammar. She further stated that the pronunciations of words written in Short Message language were also compromised due to wrong spellings. Another respondent who gave an example wrote, "*Consonant sounds are heavily affected by Short Message language and words like 'the' are written and pronounced as 'de', in Short Message language.*"

Another teacher indicated that diphthongs in words like 'dear' were written as 'dia' and phonemes like 'eight' were written as '8gt' 'boy' was written as 'boi'. The study also found that syllable distortions were very common in Short Message language.

Others teachers mentioned that the habit of SMS language use in formal writing was not extreme but should be accorded the seriousness it deserved. Only three teachers indicated that SMS language use in composition writing among Grade 12 learners was not that serious. But the three were outnumbered by the majority who said that SMS language greatly affected Grade 12 learners' writing.

#### **4.5.3 Suggestions from teachers of English on control measures for Short Message language at school level**

Teachers suggested buying more books for learners to read widely and also more reference books for teachers was suggested. Introducing more competitions for spellings and essays among learners to boost proficiency in writing was also mentioned. Government needs to intervene in requesting network providers to start charging SMSs and other texts forms equally regardless of their length in order to curtail the use of wrong abbreviations and shortcut text words in the name of saving talk time. Teachers needs to be taught in colleges and universities how to incorporate the emergent skills in learners such as texting as a

platform to teach better ways of writing and not just to keep blaming it. The syllabus provisions were found to be very useful and adequate despite that media gadgets tend to have too much influence and power to dilute what teachers impart in learners.

Teachers of English language need to caution their learners not to be careless when selecting words to use in formal writing. Standardising and formalising some Short Message language words and abbreviations which makes sense was highly suggested. Giving more academic work to learners to practice writing formerly such as dictation and spellings exercises every day to boost good spelling habits and basic writing skills as a control measure was also suggested. Teachers of English language need to complement on what the English Syllabus provides by incorporating other good sources of English teaching materials.

Other suggestions by teachers included penalising culprits, intensifying spelling lessons, emphasis on using full forms of words even in SMS writing at all times, was suggested by teachers. Teaching from mistakes to reinforce correct English standards as well as taking advantage of learners' mistakes to reinforce English writing standards. Teachers were expected to explain the difference between formal and informal writing and when to use each one of them and when not to. Provision of detailed guidelines in formal writing which are expected in school formal writing was suggested. Other suggestions which were revealed included being strict when marking work with SMS language on the part of teachers and also having CPDs in English language Departments. Providing constant reminders to learners including charts on walls talking about the pitfalls of Short Message language in formal writing was also suggested.

#### **4.6 Teachers' suggestions on the influence of Short Message language on composition writing to the Ministry of General Education**

A number of suggestions were made by teachers concerning measures to take in order to eliminate Short Message language use in formal writing. These included revising the curriculum and syllabus for senior English so that it contains more methods and guidelines on control measures on Short Message language use among Grade 12 learners. The syllabus also needs to have latest reference books which should not have old methodologies. Making a policy where all structure lessons should have an activity on spellings and provide composition marking guidelines in English syllabuses for teachers to follow as a teaching strategy in English language was suggested. When teachers are being trained, their courses should include the component of marking compositions in rubric so that when they go to

teach, they know where to emphasise. Inclusion of spelling competitions under Ministry of General Education would also help. More teacher workshops and CPDs at school district and also at national level under LATAZ were suggested. Buying more new teaching materials like books that cover Short Message writing precautions was also a good idea.

#### **4.6.1 Findings from HODs' perceptions on the influence of short message language on conventional composition writing**

##### **Teachers' interviews- (Heads of English Department)**

The teachers' perceptions were reported in form of ideograms by transcribing. The teachers who were interviewed were Heads of Departments from the 4 selected schools in Kalulushi District. The names of schools and teachers were replaced with letters for confidential purposes.

##### **Ideogram 1**

##### **Identification particulars**

Name of educator: Teacher A

Name of school: W

Position: HOD Languages

Teaching experience: 11 years.

Teacher A defined short message language as:

*The conveying of messages in short form where the sender and the receiver are able to understand each other*

When asked to share any information about Short Message language use, teacher A said:

*Learners use common words in spoken English which they transfer in formal writing in form of text language.*

In explaining how often Grade 12 learners used Short Message language words, Teacher A revealed that:

*The error of Short Message language use in pupils' work is not very common but comes up when learners do not take their time when writing. The use of Facebook and what's up together with texting itself makes learners to use short forms of words in formal writing.*

With 11 years of teaching experience and marker of learners' composition work, teacher A explained that Short Message language use influenced Grade 12 learners' writing by:

- *Poor spellings*
- *Being handicapped in punctuations*
- *Distortion of meaning of some words since they are not standard.*
- *Carelessness in sentence construction and poor choice of words*
- *Direct translation*

When asked to indicate how often Grade 12 learners used Short Message language in their class work, teacher A said:

*Senior pupils like Grade 12 learners use Short Message language sparingly compared to Grade 10, 11 and junior classes.*

Concerning how serious the situation of Short Message language is, teacher A said:

*The situation is not very common but it should be made clear that marks are usually subtracted for Short Message language users in formal work which obviously affects their final score in their compositions.*

Teacher A listed the following words as the most commonly used by pupils in academic writing be it class work or end of term examinations;

*'Y' for why, 'u' for you, 'can't' for cannot, 'den' for then, 'b' for be, 'No' for number, 'coz' for because, '&' instead of and, 'Mon' for Monday, 'Wed' for Wednesday, 'Mom' for mother, 'thats' for that is and many others.*

According to teacher A, the Grade 12 learners use Short Message language words because of the following challenges:

- *Exposure to latest gadgets like cell phones and computers*
- *Short Message language use makes Grade 12 learners to dilute what their teachers say about the danger of using Short Message language words in formal writing.*
- *Exposure to too much television viewing which shows a lot of programmes using SMSs to make them to have poor grammar.*

Teacher A made it clear that Short Message language use influenced conventional and proficiency in academic writing because Grade 12 learners were no longer writing in formal ways like letters for communication due to the coming of cell phones where

pupils mainly text and email when communicating. Because of these negative effects of Short Message language use, teacher A said:

*Short Message language should not be allowed in formal writing because each language has its own standard and Short Message language is not part of Standard English.*

Having mentioned that the Senior Syllabus was not adequate enough to combat the use of text language in compositions, teacher A also mentioned that:

*Teachers of English language just need to complement on what the syllabus provides by using other good sources of teaching materials.*

In order to handle this problem, teacher A made the following suggestions to the Ministry of Education:

- *Teachers should be taught in colleges and universities how to incorporate the emergent skills in pupils such as texting as a platform to teach better ways of writing and not just to keep blaming it.*
- *Giving more academic work to learners to practice writing formerly such as dictation and spellings exercises.*
- *Introducing more competitions for spellings, letter and essay writing among learners to boost proficiency in writing.*

## **Ideogram 2**

### **Identification particulars**

Name of educator: Teacher B

Name of school: X

Position: HOD Languages

Teaching experience: 16 years.

Teacher B defined Short Message language as:

*The language that is used in abbreviations and short hand.*

When asked to share any information about the Short Message language, teacher B explains:

*This new informal way of writing has found its way in pupils' formal writing where some Grade 12 learners are conscious when they use Short Message language words in academic work while others are not.*

When requested to rate how often Grade 12 learners use Short Message language in formal writing teacher B said:

*The habit is very common such that these SMS words makes the learner's written work to be non-standard.*

Teacher B mentioned that he does not mark Grade 12 final examinations paper 1 but said:

*The situational habit of SMS language use among Grade 12 learners can be rated at 45% and the situation can be described as serious because marks are lost for using SMS language and the final score is also affected.*

Regarding the words which teacher B came across when marking, the following words were mentioned:

*'Cause' or 'coz' for because, 'gud' for good, 'bn' for been, 'lav' for love, '2' for too, 'adv' for advantage, 'c' for see and 'b' for be*

When asked why learners use Short Message language in formal language, teacher B said:

- *Learners use Short Message language words in formal writing because they lack spelling knowledge,*
- *Learners use Short Message language unconsciously.*
- *Laziness to finish sentences.*
- *Do not know how to punctuate words and sentences.*

In answering whether Short Message language helps learners to improve writing skills and proficiency and whether the habit should be allowed in formal writing, teacher C said:

*In the process of using SMS language, the learners develop telegraphic language instead of standard language and so should not at any time be allowed to be used in formal writing.*

According to this respondent, the content of the English Senior Syllabus which teachers may use to teach learners in order to improve Short Message language habits include:

- *Dictation*
- *Note taking*
- *Spellings*
- *Syllable stress*

- *Prose summary*

In bringing out challenges teachers face in the quest to teach formal writing especially discouraging Short Message language use, teacher B stated that:

*Valid and helpful information which teachers provide adequately to these Grade 12 learners is unfortunately is diluted by social media and their products such as what app texts, Facebook, SMSs cell phones , and other programmes on television which use Short Message language in communicating mostly.*

In suggesting how best Short Message language could be controlled in formal writing teacher B suggested the following:

- *Standardise and formalise some Short Message language words and abbreviations which make sense.*
- *Give more dictation exercises to boost good spelling habits and basic writing skills.*
- *Suggesting more control measures among learners like spelling exercises every day.*

### **Ideogram 3**

#### **Identification** particulars

Name of educator: Teacher C

Name of school: Y

Position: HOD Languages

Teaching experience: 6 years.

Teacher C defined short message language as:

*The shortening of words using abbreviations and short forms of words.*

When asked to share any information about Short Message language, teacher C said:

*Learners communicate in Short Message language form on phones and they also transfer this habit into their written work. This has become a social factor.*

In explaining how often Grade 12 learners use Short Message language words in formal writing, Teacher C revealed that:

*Learners use Short Message language words in their formal work almost all the time consciously as well as unconsciously.*

With the experience as marker of Grade 12 learners' work, Teacher C explained that Short Message Language influenced Grade 12 learners' writing by:

- *Distorting meanings of word and sentences,*
- *Poor spellings*
- *Poor punctuations*
- *Carelessness spellings*

When asked to indicate how often Grade 12 learners used Short Message language in their class work, Teacher C said:

*Grade12 learners use Short Message language very often. We get tired as teachers to keep talking about the same thing so I personally penalise learners who use Short message language words inappropriately.*

Concerning how serious the situation of Short Message language was, teacher C said:

*The situation is very serious sine these Short Message language words are being used in formal work affects not only final marks in Grade 12 learners' compositions but it also compromises on Standard English rules.*

Teacher C listed the following words as the most commonly used by Grade 12 learners in academic writing:

*'U' for you, 'cause' for because, 'maths' for Mathematics, 'Geo' for Geography, 'tcrs' for teachers, 'mdme' for madam, daughter for 'dota' and iz instead of is.*

According to teacher C, the Grade 12 learners use Short Message language words in formal writing because of the following reasons:

- *Spending too much time on social media and its gadgets than on school work*
- *Poor English vocabulary due to a poor reading culture and poor reading foundation.*
- *Exposure to digital literacy by means of gadgets such as cell phones and computers.*

- *Exposure to too much television viewing which shows a lot of programmes using short message language makes learners to use poor grammar..*

Teacher C totally agreed that SMS language influenced conventional and academic writing because pupils get carried away when writing and rarely realised that they were actually using unacceptable ways of writing for academic purposes. Thus, teacher C said:

*Short Message language should not be allowed in formal writing because it is not Standard English but an informal style of writing.*

Having mentioned that the Senior Syllabus is adequate enough to combat the use of text language in compositions, teacher C recommended that:

*Teachers of English language just need to caution their learners not to be careless when selecting words to use in formal writing. What the syllabus provides is very useful and adequate despite that media gadgets has too much influence and power to dilute what teachers impart in learners.*

In order to handle this problem, teacher C made the following recommendations to the Ministry of Education:

- *Giving more academic work to learners to practice writing formerly such as dictation and spellings,*
- *Introducing more competitions for spellings and essays among learners to boost proficiency in writing.*
- *Government to intervene in requesting network providers to start charging SMS and other texts forms equally regardless of their length in order to curtail the use of wrong abbreviations and text words in the name of saving talk time.*
- *Teachers should be taught in colleges and universities how to incorporate the emergent skills in Grade 12 learners such as texting as a platform to teach better ways of writing and not just to keep blaming it.*

#### **Ideogram 4**

##### **Identification particulars**

Name of educator: Teacher D

Name of school: Z

Position: HOD Languages

Teaching experience: 11 years.

Teacher D defined short message language as:

*The use of colloquial language in formal writing.*

When asked to share any information about Short Message language, teacher D explains:

*The habit of Short Message language use is very common among Grade 12 learners' day to day conversations and this situation makes it possible for them to transfer this habit to formal writing. This has made the latest crop of learners to become lazy and they have even stopped writing letters to siblings and relatives.*

When requested to rate how often learners used Short Message language in formal writing teacher D said:

*The habit is very common and usage in formal writing among learners is very high.*

Teacher D does not mark Grade 12 final examinations paper 1 but said:

*The habit of Short Message language use among Grade 12 learners in class and end of term work is common and can be rated at 65% especially that the school is private and pupils are allowed to use cell phones in school and the situation implies that marks are lost for using Short Message language and the final score is also affected.*

Regarding the words which teacher D came across when marking, the following words were mentioned:

*for being written as '4', could for 'cud', book written as 'buk', get written as 'gt', good for 'gud', been being written as 'bin', love for 'luv', too written as '2', for you being written as '4 u', 'next' written as nxt, see written as 'c' and christmas written as 'xmas.'*

When asked why learners use Short Message language in formal language, teacher D said:

- *Learners use Short Message language words in formal writing because of illiteracy,*
- *Learners Short Message language use to be within the allocated space.*
- *Laziness to finish sentences and inadequacy.*
- *For fun.*

In answering whether Short Message language helps learners to improve writing skills and proficiency and whether the habit should be allowed in formal writing, teacher D said:

*No, since Short Message language is heavily penalized and disadvantages the learners.*

According to this respondent, the content of the English syllabus is adequate enough which teachers may use to teach learners to improve Short Message language habits. Teacher D cited some topics in the senior syllabus which are helpful and these included:

- *Dictation. and spellings*
- *Note taking*
- *Prose summary*

In bringing out challenges teachers face in the quest to teach formal writing especially discouraging Short Message language use, teacher D stated:

*While the teaching fraternity has been labouring so much in order to impart formal writing skills in learners, technology in form of SMS language as well as Whatsapp and Facebook have also been undoing whatever teachers been stressing on not to be used by pupils..*

In suggesting how best Short Message language can be controlled in formal writing, teacher D suggested the following:

- *Buying more books for reading and also more reference books for teachers.*
- *Give more spelling and dictation exercises.*
- *More writing competitions should be introduced for Grade 12 learners.*

From the interviews above, the four heads of department interviewed said that the use of Short Message language had a negative influence on conventional writing. One of the heads of department mentioned that the use of Short Message language had influenced learners very much as they were unable to write words in an acceptable way. He further said, “*Short Message language should not be allowed in formal writing because each language has its own standard and Short Message language is not part of Standard English.*” He also mentioned that the negative influence in academic writing was to a large extent caused by the coming of cell phones.

Another head of department said that the use of Short Message language in academic writing had destroyed the writing skills of Grade 12 learners. He said:

*I can describe the use of SMS language as serious and about 45% of my learners use it. This informal use of SMS language has found its way in Grade 12 learners’ formal*

*writing .The habit is very common and I try to tell my pupils not to use this informal way of writing. A lot of marks are lost by learners just because of using SMS language.*

The respondent further stated that words such as *cause* or *coz* were used in place of because, *gud* for good, *bn* for been, *lav* for love, *2* for too, *adv* for advantage, *c* for see and *b* for be.

It was also mentioned by another head of department that Short Message language had a negative effect on composition writing because learners opted to communicate using Short Message language on phones and they decided to transfer the habit into their written work. He stated that the use of SMS language had resulted into poor spellings and poor punctuations. He further mentioned that despite having made efforts to warn the learners about the use of Short Message language, many of them continued using them. He also cited words such as ‘*U*’ which is used instead of *you*, *tcrs* instead of *teachers* and *dota* instead of *daughter*. He further mentioned that the use of SMS language was caused by usage of phones and poor reading culture among learners.

The findings presented above indicate that the majority of the teachers regarded SMS language to have a negative influence on Grade 12 learners’ composition writing.

#### **4.6.2 Summary**

The findings of the study regarding the influence of Short Message Language on composition writing among Grade 12 learners in selected schools in Kalulushi District were presented in this chapter using research questions. Qualitative data was put in themes according to their content while quantitative data were presented in form of tables except table 6 for composition book review which was qualitative. The study revealed that short message language is used by Grade 12 learners to a large extent. The study revealed that learners perceived the use of Short Message language to have both a negative and positive influence on composition writing although the majority perceived it to be negative. Further, the study also revealed that teachers perceived the influence of Short Message language on composition as negative as it resulted into the usage of wrong spellings, poor punctuations and wrong pronunciations. Teachers made good suggestions to the Ministry of General Education and measures to take in order to curtail the use of short message language in formal writing.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### **Overview**

The previous chapter presented the results of the study on the influence of Short Message language on Grade 12 learners' conventional composition writing in English language in selected secondary schools in Kalulushi district of the Copperbelt Province. This chapter presents the discussions of the research findings using the research objectives of the study. This study actually led to a milestone of adding new knowledge to the existing literature. The discussion not only brings out valid answers to the research questions but also integrates the views of other studies done earlier some of which could have already been mentioned in literature review. The theories that were used in this study are included in the discussions. These are the social learning theory by Bandura (1986) and the Cultivation theory by (Gerbner, 1980).

The study was guided by the following research objectives:

- i) To establish how often Message language was used in Grade 12 learners' conventional composition writing.
- ii) To identify the Short Message language words used in academic composition writing among Grade 12 learners
- iii) To find out the Grade 12 learners' perceptions on the influence of short message language in their composition writing.
- iv) To establish teachers' perceptions on the influence of short message language on composition writing among the Grade 12 learners in Kalulushi District.

The findings have been discussed using themes which emerged from research objectives listed above. These objectives made it possible to meet the main purpose of this study through the participants. The findings as earlier mentioned were validated by other studies done from various parts of the world which provided empirical evidence.

Thus, the discussion has been be guided by the four research objectives as themes. A summary of the chapter was given at the end of the chapter.

### **5.1 To establish how often Short Message language was used in composition writing among Grade 12 learners**

From the results that were obtained after administering a composition test to 100 Grade 12 participants from four (4) different schools, it could be seen that all the scripts had a good number of words influenced by Short Message language which clustered around the mean implying that the learners made almost similar short message language errors in composition writing just like table 4 in chapter 4 presented. In school W, it was revealed that out of the 25 test script marked, Short Message language words were used 15 times by a pupil who made the highest number of mistakes while the script with the lowest number of words that were influenced by Short Message language had 4. The Mean or average number of words which were influenced by Short Message language in the same school was 10.04 and the Standard Deviation was 2.93. The second school was school Y where the script with the least number of words influenced by Short Message language had 7 while the highest had 21 with the mean standing at 12.88 while the Standard deviation was 4.5. The third school was school X with a script with 8 words as the least influenced by SMS language and the highest had 32. The last was school Z where the least number of words influenced by Short Message language was 10 and the highest was 38. The average number of words influenced by Short Message language for school Z was 20.92 and the Standard Deviation was 8.38. Learners in School W had the lowest and highest number of SMS words very closely apart and near to the mean, (4-15) Mean =10 while school Z had the scripts with the lowest and highest number of words influenced by Short Message language wide apart and clustered around the mean, (38-10), Mean=20.92. Thus, learners in School Z made more Short Message language errors than those in schools W, X, Y. Again, school W actually had the least number of words influenced by Short Message language. This implied that school W wrote better compositions of the four schools.

Overall conclusions were that Short Message language influence on composition writing was very high following results from the test in the 4 schools where an average of 1534 words in 100 scripts from the test only were influenced by SMS language often times. This finding was similar to studies by Bauerlein (2010) and Kemp (2011) who concluded in their studies that Short Message language had a negative influence on formal writing and a positive influence on informal writing.

The implications of this finding was that Grade 12 learners committed similar Short Message language errors in their composition test scripts since they seemingly shared same teachers who might have not been strict in controlling the bad habit of Short Message language use in formal writing. However, the situation was slightly different in School W, it being a private school compared to the 3 government schools that were sampled for the study. This could be due to teacher- pupil ratio which was lower (35 learners) compared to that of the three government schools which had huge classes (70 and above Grade 12 learners). Most learners who used many Short Message language words in compositions happened to come from government schools. It might also imply that learners exposed themselves to too much social media gadgets and that encouraged a lot of SMS writing. Surprisingly, it was discovered that in the private school where learners were permitted to use phones in school recorded lower Short Message language influence in composition writing. Therefore, despite the pupils' negligence, teachers must not relent but keep on re-emphasising the use of full forms of words in composition writing and other formal academic pieces of writing.

Additional results from the questionnaires were that; out of 100 participants, a total of 77.8% respondents confirmed to have been using Short Message language in composition writing including those who said they did that sometimes. This answers the research question concerning the extent to which Grade 12 learners used Short Message language in composition writing. Figure 2 in chapter 4 showed that the distribution of responses from participants on the use of Short Message language in composition writing was to a very large extent. The 77.8% indicated how often Short Message language in essays were used. This implied that most learners faced challenges in writing essays without any Short Message language words in it. The implication in practice meant that pupils did not get the instructions from teachers clearly that inappropriate Short Message language use in formal writing was not acceptable. It may also imply that learners exposed themselves to too much writing in Short Message language on cell phones which reduced their accuracy in writing. This was in agreement with the findings for Geertsema, Hyman and Deventer (2011) in their study in South Africa and Horowitz (2008) who found that the more learners were exposed to text messages and social networking on phones, the more they were becoming victims of using Short Message language in formal writing.

The findings above were in agreement with the sited literature as well as the two theories which formed the basis of this study. Both Bandura (1989) social cognitive theory and

Gerbner (1980) cultivation theory agreed with the findings of this study that the more children were exposed to a habit such as text messaging, the more they were likely to learn even more and repeat that habit due to a close social interaction among them. This was actually the case with Short Message language use among Grade 12 learners.

Comparing results from the composition test and a mixed questionnaire for pupils, it was clear that the results were speaking the same language in the sense that they both found that the use of Short Message language in formal compositions among Grade 12 learners was very high. The test found about 1544 words to have been influenced by Short Message language in 100 composition scripts while the questionnaire responses indicated 77.8% learners who agreed that they used Short Message language in their composition writing.

The implication in practice on these findings is that learners may fail to attain proficiency in writing by the time they leave school. Many fields of work such as medical doctors, teachers, nurses, lawyers, reporters and police officers to mention few need good communication skills in writing. As such, they really need to be accurate in report writing to avoid distortion of information and its meaning. This is one of the reasons the researcher chose Grade 12 learners as key participants to see whether they graduate as school leavers with quality writing skills as they go in the world of employment. English language teachers have a huge task to groom future leaders and a quality working class in communication skills especially formal writing free from characteristics SMS language.

## **5. 2 Identifying Short message words used in composition writing among Grade 12 learners**

Findings from this research objective indicated that they were a lot of SMS words used in academic compositions for Grade 12 learners. This is similar to what O’Conner (2005), Aziz, Shamin, Faisal & Avais (2013) and Freudenberg (2009) found in their studies that Short Message language has negatively impacted the spellings and general writing skills among students. Since this study required the triangulation of results, it was appropriate for the researcher to collect all Short Message language words which came out from all research instruments such as teachers’ questionnaires, pupils’ questionnaires, teachers interviews pupils’ composition books and a composition test for accountability and comparison. These words have been presented in table 2 of chapter 4 of this document. Thus, it was found that the Short Message language words found from the pupils and teachers’ questionnaires were almost the same. This was the case with Short Message language words that came from HOD

teachers' interviews as well as those that came from document analysis by means of Grade 12 learners' composition books. Over 4500 words were influenced by Short Message language from all the instruments that were used to identify the Short Message language words of which 1544 Short Message language words came from the test alone. A threshold was arrived at by the researcher by only picking those Short Message language words that appeared a minimum of 5 times in all the data collection instruments that collected these words. The next paragraphs will discuss some of these Short Message language words to fully answer the second research objective stated above.

The Short Message language words that were found in learners' academic work included a word like 'before' which was written as 'b4' and it appeared 78 times in all research instruments. This was followed by the word 'between' which was written as 'btwn' and it appeared about 70 times in all the data collection instruments. The next frequently used word in Short Message language was 'school' which was written as 'sch' or 'xul' and it appeared 58 times according to the total frequency. Other words influenced by SMS words were; 'message' which was written as 'msge' and appeared 55 times in all the research instruments just to mention a few. The frequencies of Short Message language words were too many but the ones given above were just a small representation of table 2 in chapter 4 which had given frequencies of occurrence of different words in text form. Thus, to simplify the discussion on Short Message language features in line with objective 2, the identified Short Message language words categories were identified in groups as below.

### **5.2.1 Identified Categories OF Short Message language words**

The explanations of the meaning of each category of SMS words have been given in table 4 of chapter 4 side by side with the examples used in practice. In fact, other related studies revealed similar categories of words. A study done by Moonga (2011) from the University of Zambia did error Analysis among Grade 11 pupils in Kabwe and Monze. She found the following categories of errors made by pupils in composition writing; concord, prepositions, spelling, punctuation, wrong expression, word order, time expression, and double grammatical markers, clumsy expressions, words with similar pronunciation and L1 interference. According to this study, spelling, punctuation, pronunciations wrong expression, word order and grammatical error were among the most commonly used errors among pupils. Most of the listed errors in Mongas' study were also found in the current study especially on wrong spellings.

### **5.2.2 Identified Short Message language words used in Grade 12 books, composition test as well as those that were mentioned in learners and teachers' questionnaires**

Since this study employed a triangulation design, the examples of SMS words below represented a fraction of what learners and teachers' questionnaires collected as well as book review and HOD interviews.

These SMS words included: 'Cause' or coz' for because, 'gud' for good, 'bn' for been, 'lav or luv' for love, '2' for too, 'adv' for advantage, 'c' for see and 'b' for be. , 'bn' for been. Others included 'U' for you, 'c' for see, maths for Mathematics, 'Geo' for Geography, 'tcrs' for teachers, 'mdme' for madam, daughter for 'dota' and is written as 'iz,' for being written as '4', could for 'cud', book for 'buk', get for 'gt'. , for you written as '4u', next as 'nxt', and Christmas written as 'xmas'.

However, Crystal (2008) and Russell (2010) in their studies found that SMS language has no effect on grammar and spellings. They argued that SMS texting should be considered as another language. They still insisted that it would be wrong to conclude that text messaging can affect student's grammar. They pointed out that slang words have no effect on English grammar and that even though each generation has its own jargon; English grammar has not been changed. Thus, there is a contradiction between findings of the current study in the previous paragraph and those that were revealed by the two scholars mentioned above. The current study observed some negative influence of SMS language on writing skills of learners especially on poor and non-conventional spellings as shown by the empirical evidence of non-conventional spellings listed as examples in the previous paragraph. This finding was also not in agreement with what Baron (2008) reported that as soon as children are able to distinguish formal from informal language, SMS language cannot affect their literacy skills.

Baron was in agreement with Crystal and Russell's studies and suggested that the linguistic creativity of texting poses very little challenges to standard spellings. Some of the research from Plester and her colleagues also showed a positive relation between texting, writing and literacy contrary to the findings of the current study (Plester, 2009).

Following the cultivation theory and the social cognitive theory, the findings of objective two have blended well with the two theories in the theoretical framework. Gerbner (1968; 1980) explained in his theory that the more one is exposed to use of media gadgets and habits like SMS, the more likely they are immersed in such a habit. Findings of objective two has

discussed a lot of SMS words emanating from text messaging as the cultivation theory states. Applying social cognitive learning theory to this present study Bandura (1986) incorporated the gradual process of students' learning of the abridged form of interactive chats. Learners consistently expose themselves to social networks like *face book* and *whats up* and receive texts through their mobile phones, to the application of the learnt SMS languages abruptly to an extent that such shortenings, become integrated into the students conventional writings such as compositions and then with time, this actually becomes a part of their formal written communication. This is what came out in the findings of objective 2 thereby agreeing with Bandura's theory.

### **5.3 Learners' perspectives on the influence of Short Message Language on their composition writing**

The results of this study found that the majority of learners agreed that SMS language use on cell phones influenced their composition writing while the minority disagreed. A total of 62 Grade 12 learners agreed that the use of Short Message language on phones influenced their academic writing while 35 learners did not agree and 3 were not decided. This suggested that some learners perceived the use of SMS language on composition writing as positive while others perceived it as negative.

From the same section, it was further found that the academic style of writing for learners was influenced by SMS language and more learners agreed to that statement but few learners disagreed. 53% agreed that their academic style of writing was highly influenced by SMS language while 38% did not agree and 9 did not indicate their responses. It was found that most of the learners did not agree that SMS language influenced their formal writing.

However, when it came to the spellings, syntax and grammar, more learners were highly influenced by SMS language as it was evidently found that the majority of learners used non-conventional spellings as well as poor grammar. About 75% of learners agreed that their spellings grammar and syntax were highly influenced by SMS language. Only 21% disagreed and four were undecided. This finding was more evident in the learners' test scripts where over 4500 words were highly influenced by Short Message language either by spelling or otherwise. This interested the researcher by discovering that even the learners themselves were aware that text language by cell phone SMSs did not in any way help them improve their writing skills as Crystal (2008) and Russell (2012) claimed that Short Message language enhances literacy.

Another finding was that most of the learners did not agree that Short Message language helped them to improve in composition writing and neither did they agree that Short Message language influenced most of their formal writing positively. Only 26% agreed that Short Message language helped them improve their composition writing but 67% totally disagreed that Short Message language helped them to improve in their formal writings.

In another finding, most of the learners agreed that the length of their sentences were highly influenced by Short Message language. About 59% agreed while the minority of about 35% did not agree that their sentence length was influenced by Short Message language. This was in agreement with literature's previous research by Uzochukwu, Ekwughu and Okafor (2015)) who said that in recent times, the average school child struggles more with spelling, grammar and essay-writing. The 3 scholars confirmed these facts in their study done in Nigeria among language teachers. However, findings from Graham's study were at variance with those from the current study as well as that of Uzochukwu et al (2015). This is because Graham argued that Spellings were not affected by SMSs in the home schoolers' academic work and there were a few abbreviations, but traditional spelling remained unchanged, as did most capitalizations. This could be attributed to the nature of the learners who were native speakers of English in Graham's those in Uzochukwu et al from Nigeria who were not native speakers of English.

The above quantitative discussions were in agreement with qualitative findings in the sense that the majority of learners in both categories agreed that Short Message language highly influenced their composition writing. Even if they were few learners who said that the use of Short Message language had a positive influence on composition writing by saving time, being stylish and attracting the reader, their assertions were proved wrong by their poor performance in their test scripts. Reference may be made to (appendix E) for marked sample test scripts. In addition, table 9 in chapter four showed that the majority of the learners' books that were sampled for analysis revealed that learners had a lot of SMS features in their composition books. Their spellings, grammar, punctuation and syntax were poor except for a few in school W which was a private school. Apart from that, Kemp (2011), Henry (2004) and Njemanze, (2012) found in their studies that Short Message language had a negative influence on learners' communication skills in writing.

In addition, these findings and discussions above show that the qualitative and quantitative data have brought out similar findings because they are converging at one point. They both

show that learners' perceptions on the influence of Short Message language is largely to a high extent and many Short Message language words were seen from the learners' test and books just as the learners already agreed in their questionnaires that they used Short Message language in compositions often times (77.8%). These findings are in agreement with Dansier (2011); O'conner (2005) and Lee (2002) who found in their studies that learners' academic writings were highly influenced by Short Message language. Lee explained that Short Message language has been assaulting formal writing for learners and makes their formal writing sub-standard.

From what has been stated above, it can be concluded that the use of short message language had a negative influence on writing because it made the learners to fail to spell English words correctly. The length of sentences, paragraphs, and the compositions themselves were below expected standards. There were too many informal words, non-standard abbreviations, non-conventional symbols as table 6 displayed (refer to table 6 in chapter 4 of this document). Other findings like that of Graham (1989) mentioned that there could be other factors other than Short Message language which could have caused poor writing skills among learners. Suffice to mention that this study found Short Message language by means of cell phones was a huge factor in influencing formal writing.

The implication of these finding may be that learners may fail to attain proficiency in writing academically and even in their future occupations. Poor results in composition writing may also be expected as ECZ (2014) reported that SMS language found its way into final examination composition scripts. Teachers of English may do well to uphold the standards of Examination Council of Zambia and the junior and Senior Syllabus for 2013 in order to avoid the embracement producing a Grade 12 learner who cannot spell simple words correctly.

#### **5.4 Teachers' perceptions on the influence of short message language on conventional composition writing among Grade 12 learners**

The results of this investigation revealed that majority out of the 32 teachers who participated in the study perceived that short message language had a high influence on conventional composition writing. Some of the teachers mentioned that this influence affected areas such as language design, grammar and syntax. Other teachers (12) however, perceived this influence as average and 5 regarded this influence as low. This difference in the perceptions of the teachers over the matter is also portrayed by the different scholars who wrote about this subject. For example, the teachers who had a perception that the use of short message

language had a high influence on conventional composition writing are supported by Uzochukwu et al (2015) who in their study stated that Short Message language communication was gradually taking over written communication and was indirectly jeopardizing student's usage of the Standard English in their writing. Densier (2011) also mentioned that text messaging was destroying the English language. Just like the other teachers who considered that short message language had a low influence on composition writing, there are scholars such as Russell (2010) who also contend that Short message language has no effect on grammar. However, despite this difference in opinion, what was found in this study especially from the tests indicate that the use of short message language had influence on composition writing because it was against the accepted norms of writing standard English.

The study also found that the majority of teachers (28) rated highly the statement that the use of SMS language in composition writing had an influence on the final score obtained by the learner. Some of the teachers mentioned that the use of SMS language had an influence on the final score obtained by the learner because it led to wrong spellings and poor grammar. It is worth noting that knowledge in spellings play a bigger role in the process of writing. It is very difficult for anyone to read words that have not been spelt properly. Therefore, if a learner wrongly spells words, it means that the teacher will have problems reading what the learner has written. What these teachers mentioned was in line with what Aziz, Shamin, Faisal & Avais (2013) found in their study that the profuse use of SMS language was endangering the standard forms of English language especially on the spelling and punctuation. They found that students were using SMS language in writing compositions and this was endangering the standard forms of English. Further, the findings of this study tie with those of the British Broadcasting Corporation (2003) who reported that the use of SMS language led to the declining standards of spelling and grammar, particularly in essay writing.

It was also revealed in the study that the use of Short Message language had a negative influence on composition writing because it distorted the meaning of certain words. Some of the teachers stated that some of the words written in Short Message language become ambiguous and could mean two things. This means that as teachers were marking the compositions, they were having problems knowing the meaning of the words. This further, can contribute negatively to the final score obtained by learners in compositions. These findings were a replica of what the ECZ (2014) examiners reported as reviewed in the

literature review in chapter two of this report. The report mentioned the following as the challenges which learners face in composition final examinations.

- i. Failure to follow instructions better known as infringement of rubric.
- ii. Difficulties in the use of sequence indicators.
- iii. Difficulties in the use of tenses.
- iv. Failure to construct correct sentence structures.
- v. Direct translation from mother tongue to English Language.
- vi. Wrong spelling of words such as ‘suprise’ instead of ‘surprise’
- vii. Failure to select relevant points.
- viii. Inability to amplify given points.
- ix. Poor punctuation and paragraphing.
- x. Use of colloquial words and slang.
- xi. Use of short message (SMS) language for example ‘b4’ to mean ‘before’, gr8t to mean ‘great’ ECZ (2014: 14).

Further, conclusions can be drawn from the above finding. One of them being that although above half of the teachers perceived the influence of short message language to be high; there were equally a number of teachers who considered this influence to be average and low meaning that they considered this influence insignificant. This means that when such teachers were teaching composition writing, they were not going to seriously discourage learners who had a habit of using short message language in their compositions.

Teachers responses also found that short message language in the end of term composition tests were equally very high. This implied that if class work and end of them tests had short message language errors, then chances of finding these Short message language errors in final examinations were very high. In fact, this finding is in line with the report from the Zambian Examination council of Zambia examiners’ report already mentioned above which said that most candidates exhibited the many challenges in English Paper 1. This was at variance with what these two scholars studied. Graham (1989) used social media to extend existing friendships and converse about current personal and public events. Just as Vygotsky (1978) and other social learning theorists such as Bandura (1986) and Gerbner (1968) have suggested, the adolescents’ social engagement through social media, which often involved texting, contributed not only to the development of their social relationships, but also to their learning. they were digital technology enthusiasts and interacted frequently with their peers and family members about current life happenings. Thus, Graham and Vygotsky revealed that

text language enhances literacy due to the frequency in use of SMS by adolescents. The previous findings by the 2 named scholars above did not agree with the findings of this study.

In addition, it was found that the level of Short Message language influence on final academic score in English compositions writing was high for learners. This finding found that 90% which was the majority of teachers highly accepted that Short Message language use influenced the final score of learners' academic compositions. This finding coincides with revealed literature where Henry (2004) reported that the use of Short Message language were also observed in examination scripts, according to an official report published by the largest examination board in the UK which disclosed that examination scripts were saturated with abbreviated words.

Moreover, it was found that Teachers' levels of acceptance of short message language use in formal writing was very low with 97% indicating that acceptance of short message language use formally in written English was very low. Therefore, it can be argued that teacher did not accept short hand text message style that learners use in formal writing just like teachers in the study done by Uzochukwu, Ekwugha and Okafor (2015) showed concern that Short Message language communication was gradually taking over written communication and indirectly jeopardizing students' usage of the Standard English language in their academic writings.

The study further found that more teachers agreed that the senior English Syllabus had sufficient content to handle the problem of Short Message language use among Grade 12 learners. This finding suggested that the level of the syllabus content was good enough to handle inappropriate Short Message language use in learners' composition writing following the 68.75 % of teachers who said the syllabus content was high and very high.

Three teachers of English gave feedback in the questionnaire that Short Message language is not appropriate in formal English because it does not always follow English rules. Pronunciations of words in Short Message language were also compromised due to wrong spellings. Consonants sounds were heavily affected by Short Message language. Words like 'the' are written and pronounced as 'de' in Short Message language. English language has 24 consonant phonemes, and it was actually discovered that Short Message language violated a lot of consonant phonemes and sounds which made educators uncomfortable with it. It was also found that Short Message language does not follow phonetic ways of pronouncing

vowel phonemes like diphthongs in words like ‘dear’ which is written as / dia/ and phonemes like ‘eight’ is written as ‘8gt’, ‘boy’ is written as ‘boi’.The study also found that syllable distortions were very common in Short Message language.

Others teachers mentioned that the habit of Short Message language use in formal writing was not extreme but should be accorded the seriousness it deserved and 3 teachers indicated that it was not that serious. The three were beaten by the majority who said it greatly affects Grade 12 learners’ writing. Similar comments suggesting to educators of English that serious interventions were needed to curtail Short Message language usage in formal writing were made by Freudenberg (2009); Rafi (2010) and Ping (2011). The three scholars reported that both first and second language

The three studies by Silliman and learners should give Short Message language the due attention. Wilkinson (2013), Jago (2009) and Geertsema, Hyman and Deventer (2011) agrees to the previous paragraph in line with their study findings that the appearance Short Message language in formal writing was severe. Thus, Horowitz (2008) concluded that Short Message language is like spoken English where the user ought to know the situation whether favourable or not to use SMS language not that it is inferior to formal language.

The cultivation theory by Gerbner (1980) and the Social Cognitive theories by Bandura (1986) have both agreed with the above discussions in the sense that Short Message language which has brought up this discussion has been spreading among learners through oral and written interactions among learners via phones. As a result, imitation, repeating modelling and learning of this practice according to Bandura (1986) has made formal writing for learners to be contaminated with Short Message language.

The discussion above has shown that there was a convergence of main findings between qualitative and quantitative findings. Teachers’ responses from Likert scale questions as well as their responses from open ended questions and interviews showed that the majority of teachers perceived the influence of Short Message language on Grade 12 learners’ composition writing as negative.

## **5.5 Summary**

This chapter has discussed the major findings of the study. The influence of Short Message language among Grade 12 learners’ written composition was to a large extent.77.8% learners

agreed that SMS language influenced their writing ability in compositions. The test results for learners showed that a lot of words were influenced by Short Message language (over 4500 words). Learners themselves perceived the influence of Short Message language on essay writing as negative. During interviews, HODs mentioned valid facts that were integrated into points as the outcome of use of SMSs among learners: Poor spellings, being handicapped in punctuations, distortion of meaning of some words since they are not standard, carelessness in sentence construction and poor choice of words, direct translation, distorting meanings of word and sentences, as well as carelessness in word use and spacing. The above scenario is a source of worry because it is expected that Grade 12 learners should be proficient writers but the above report shows evidence of Short Message language filtering even in final examinations. It was also found that SMS language made learners develop telegraphic language instead of standard language and so it should not at any time be allowed to be used in formal writing. Apart from that, since Short Message language is heavily penalized and disadvantages the learners, teachers concluded that it should not be entertained in formal writing.

The next and last chapter will conclude the study with main findings and provide necessary recommendations on the influence of Short Message language on Grade 12 learners' composition writing and suggestions for further research will be brought out.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Overview

The previous chapter discussed the findings of this study. This last chapter for this study consists of the main conclusions that have been drawn from this research. Based on the main findings of this study, this chapter makes recommendations and also proposes avenues for further study based on the findings of this study.

#### 6.1 Conclusion

Numerous conclusions can be drawn from the discussion of findings concerning the influence of SMSs on composition writing among Grade 12 learners in four secondary schools in Kalulushi District. But considering the findings obtained from the four objectives and research questions, the following are the four main conclusions of this study in line with main findings:

**6.1.1** The influence of SMS language on composition writing among Grade 12 learners was to a very large extent. The composition test results for Grade 12 learners showed that all learners were highly influenced by SMS language when writing academic composition work. From 100 learners who were tested the one with the lowest number of words influenced by Short Message language had 4 while the highest had 38 words influenced in her test script. Majority of learners agreed that Short Message language influenced their academic composition writing to a large extent. Over 4500 words were influenced by Short Message language among Grade 12 learners from various research instruments used in this research.

**6.1.2** There were a lot of Short Message language words that were identified from all the instruments used in this study as summarized in table 4 of chapter four. They were categorized in table 5 as deletions, non-conventional spellings homophones initialisms, acronyms and G- clippings. The words identified showed that Short Message language highly influences formal writing among learners. Short Message language use away from formal writing is not bad.

**6.1.3** Majority of learners perceived the influence of Short Message language use in formal writing as negative. Few learners perceived the influence of SMS use in composition writing as positive.

**6.1.4** Majority of teachers in this study perceived the influence of Short Message language use in formal writing as negative.

Overall conclusions were that the use of SMS application in formal writing was addictive and so Grade 12 learners used it unconsciously sometimes. This is because texting by SMS has become the easiest and cheapest means of communication for almost everyone. However, other linguists argued that SMS enhances more literacy skills and it is used mostly by the elite who use that register appropriately.

Most of the Grade 12 learners in this study agreed that their formal writing were affected often times by Short Message language to a high extent and this situation jeopardized their final score in composition writing. This was confirmed by the Examinations Council of Zambia final examiners' report. Lists and frequencies of SMS words were part of the main findings where over 4500 words were identified and collected as SMSs in overall data collection instruments. This was evident enough to show how the Short Message language influenced the spellings and structure of individual words in the learners' English compositions. These findings showed how Standard English, the rules of grammar, phonetics and the orthographic rules were violated by SMS spellings and other text features. Some of these SMS word categories included number and letter homophones, contractions, G-clippings, punctuation errors, acronyms and abbreviations as well as non-standard spellings which came out to be the most common.

Major findings suggested that the majority of teachers of English who were engaged in the study and Grade 12 learners too confirmed that SMS use in formal writing is a serious problem and should be given the due attention it deserves in order to preserve the quality of conventional writing skills in English language. The Cultivation theory by Gerbner and Bandura's Social Cognitive theory were in agreement that too much exposure to SMS use and exchange of texts in SMS form among learners brings about learning, sharing, and imitation of such habits to some measureable extents. This study has added new knowledge by revealing how often SMS was used in compositions, its influence in composition writing as well as the perceptions of teachers and pupils themselves on the subject. The majority of teachers of English agreed that SMS and its use affects the spellings, punctuations, and grammar and sentence structure as well as paragraph length in formal writing.

The more students use communication tools such as SMS and instant messaging, the less chance there are likely to be able to separate formal from informal English. For instance, they abbreviate “y-o-u”, as “u”. Another major problem currently being noticed is that students no longer punctuate accurately but instead, their text messages from SMS often contain run on sentences and they are hardly punctuated. It was further found that academic papers are being written with shortened words, improper capitalization and punctuation, and characters such as &, \$, @ and many others due to SMS influence among learners. One may therefore rightly argue that SMS discourages complex vocabulary and prevents the creation of longer and more sophisticated phrases. A pertinent question that society must answer therefore is – has text message usage using SMS affected the way students presently use the English language academic writing? And if it has, is it for better or for worse?

## **6.2 Recommendations**

In view of the observations made in this study, the following recommendations are made so as to achieve communicative competence in written academic compositions free from SMS words.

1. teachers of English need to give more academic work to Grade 12 learners to practice more formal writing through dictation and spellings exercises and introducing more competitions for spellings, letter and essay writing among learners to boost proficiency in writing and cut on SMS language use in formal work.
2. All teachers should insist on learners to use formal English in all their academic writing tasks regardless of the subject.
3. The ministry of general education, through the curriculum development Centre, should ensure that teachers implement the guidelines stipulated in the English junior and senior syllabus on the appropriate use of short message language in writing.
4. Heads of languages departments should conduct regular CPD sessions at school level in order to enhance teachers’ capacity to identify and handle instances and challenges of SMS use in learners’ academic work.

## **6.3 Avenues for further study**

Composition writing is a wide area of study. The area is still fertile for further research since there are few studies that have been done in Zambia on this topic. This study concentrated on

the influence of SMS 1 on composition writing in Kalulushi District of the Copperbelt Province. Further studies may be done on the topics listed below.

1. The possibility of utilizing SMS for pedagogical purposes to enhance the teaching of English language.
2. The influence of SMS language on pupils' written tasks in other subject areas in the secondary school system.

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*The population of the Zambian Mobile Subscribers, Lusaka.*

## APPENDICES

### **Appendix A: Interview guide for heads of department for English language**

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION: Department of Languages and Social Sciences

Interview Guide for Heads of Department for English Language

**Title of research:** The influence of SMS Language on composition writing among Grade 12 pupils in selected schools on the Copperbelt.

#### **Part A**

**To find out how often SMS language is used in Grade 12's academic composition writing.**

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. How would you define SMS language?
2. Could you share the information you may know about SMS language and texting among Grade 12 learners?
3. How would you explain how often Grade 12 learners use SMS language in composition writing?
4. With your experience as a teacher and marker of pupil's work, how does text messaging influence pupil's academic writing?
5. Do you mark Grade 12 Paper 1 final examinations at national level?
  - a. If yes, how is the situation of SMS language features in final examination scripts for English Language?
  - b. If no, how is the situation for the other senior classes of English language you handle, at end of term exams?
6. How often do the grade 12 pupils use SMS Language in their academic writing in class work? Justify.
7. Would you explain how serious the situation is on the use of SMS Language in composition writing among the Grade 12 pupils? How?
8. Explain how any feature of SMS language influences the final score of pupils' compositions when you are marking in class work, tests and national examinations?

## **Part B**

### **Identifying SMS features used in written academic compositions among Grade 12 pupils.**

8. Mention some examples of English words that you come across as you mark class work compositions, end of term test essays as well as National composition writing in English language which are cut short by pupils.

## **Part C**

### **Teacher's perceptions concerning the influence of SMS language on composition writing among Grade 12 pupils.**

9. Why do you think these children use the SMS Language in formal writing?
10. How has SMS Language influenced proficiency and conventionalized writing standards among Grade 12 pupils?
11. Do you think text language should be allowed in formal writing? Explain briefly.
12. What components in the senior English syllabus teacher can be used to address and cover the problem of text language?
13. How best do you think this habit of SMS Language in academic writing can be handled by teachers in their teaching of formal English?
14. What challenges do you face in the quest to teach formal written English?
15. What recommendations would you make to the Ministry of education as a measure to help teachers guide pupils concerning the use of SMS Language in formal writing?

Thank you.

## **Appendix B: Questionnaire for Teachers of English Language**

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION: Department of Languages and Social Sciences

### **Questionnaire for teachers of English language**

**Title of research:** The influence of SMS Language on composition writing among Grade 12 learners in selected schools on the Copperbelt.

#### **Introduction**

I am a student from the University of Zambia pursuing a master's degree in literacy and learning. I hereby seek permission from you to fill in the questionnaire whose topic is on the extent to which Short message writing on phone affects composition writing. The discussion is purely for academic purposes. I therefore assure you that the information to be generated from the questionnaire will be treated with value, in confidence and will be destroyed at the end of this study.

You have been selected to take part in this study because you are directly involved in the control of SMS Language in academic writing in schools.

Be as free as possible as you respond to the questions in this questionnaire.

#### **Instructions**

This questionnaire is to be completed by the participating teachers from selected public and private schools in Kitwe and Kalulushi districts. Please, do not write your name; write the answers in the spaces provided. Immediately you finish, please hand it to the researcher.

#### **SECTION A: Personal data**

**Instructions: Tick or indicate the answer of your choice in spaces and boxes provided.**

Indicate the type of school by ticking in the box provided.

Private  Government  Any other,  
specify. \_\_\_\_\_

## QUESTIONS

1. What is your sex? Male  Female
2. For how long have you been teaching English Language?  Years

### SECTION B

#### **Perceptions of teachers on how often SMS language is used in Grade 12's academic composition writing.**

3. How would you rate how often SMS language influences Grade 12 pupils' use of SMS language in composition writing? [a] Very high [b] High [c] Average [d] Low [e] Very low
4. How would you rate how often SMS language influences the language design and the syntax of Grade 12's academic essays?  
[a] Very high [b] High [c] Average [d] Low [e] Very low
5. How is the situation of SMS language features in end of term composition tests?  
Very high [b] High [c] Average [d] Low [e] Very low
6. How would rate the level to which Grade 12 pupils use SMS language in class work for English Language?  
Very high [b] High [c] Average [d] Low [e] Very low.
7. How would you rate the level at which SMS language influences the final score of pupils' compositions when you are marking?  
[a] Very high [b] High [c] Average [d] Low [e] Very low
8. How would you rate the level of acceptance on the use of SMSs and text language in formal academic writing by teachers of English language?  
[a] Very high [b] High [c] Average [d] Low [e] Very
9. How would you rate the level of content of the senior English syllabus in combating the problem of text language (SMSs) among Grade 12 pupils?  
[a] Very high [b] High [c] Average [d] Low [e] Very low.

**SECTION C**

**To identify SMS features used in written academic compositions among Grade 12 Learners.**

10. List some examples of English words that you come across as you mark class work compositions, end of term test essays as well as National examination composition writing (If you mark G12 final examinations) in English language which are cut short as (SMS words). Use the table below.

Actual word in English	Short forms of words
.....	.....

**Part D**

**Teacher’s perceptions concerning the influence of short message language on composition writing among Grade 12 learners.**

11. Would you briefly explain your experience concerning the use of SMS Language by Grade 12 pupils in their academic writing in class work and in the end of year examinations?

---

13. What are your perceptions on the influence of SMS language on composition writing among Grade 12 learners?

---

14. Explain how serious the situation is on the use of SMS Language in composition writing among senior classes especially the Grade 12 learners?

---

15. Could you state reasons why these learners use SMS Language in their essays?

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_

16. In what ways do you think the coming of SMS Language has influenced proficiency and conventionalized writing standards among Grade 12 learners?

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_

17. How best do you think this habit of SMS Language in academic writing can be handled by teachers to avoid its influence on learners' academic writing?

\_\_\_\_\_

18. What recommendations would you make to the teachers as a measure to help teachers to guide learners concerning the use of SMS Language in formal writing?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

19. What recommendations would you make to the Ministry of education as a measure to help teachers to guide pupils concerning the use of SMS Language in formal writing?

- i) \_\_\_\_\_
- ii) \_\_\_\_\_
- iii) \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you.**

## **Appendix C: Questionnaire for Teachers of English Language**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA**

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**Department of Languages and social sciences**

**APPENDIX 3: Questionnaire for Grade 12 learners on the use of short message language.**

**Questionnaire-** (self-administered).

Title of research: The influence of SMS Language on composition writing among Grade 12 learners in selected schools on the Copperbelt.

**TARGET:** Grade 12 learners from selected public and private schools in Kalulushi and Kitwe Districts.

### **Introduction**

I am a student from the University of Zambia pursuing a master's degree in literacy and learning. I hereby seek permission from you to have a discussion on how often SMS writing on phone influences composition writing. The discussion is purely for academic purposes. I therefore assure you that the information to be generated from the questionnaire will be treated with value, in confidence and will be destroyed at the end of this study.

You have been selected to take part in this study because you are directly involved in the control of SMS Language in academic writing in schools.

Be as free as possible as you respond to the questions in this questionnaire.

### **Instructions**

This questionnaire is to be completed by the participating Grade 12 learners from selected public and private schools in Kitwe and Kalulushi districts. Please, do not write your name; write the answers in the spaces provided. Immediately you finish, please hand it to the researcher.

**SECTION A Personal data**

**Instructions: Tick or indicate the answer of your choice in spaces and boxes provided.**

1. Age group? [a] 15-20 [ b] 21-25
2. Sex [a] Male  or [b] Female
3. Type of your school? [a] Government  [b] Private
4. Have you ever owned a cell phone before?  
Yes  No

**SECTION B Instructions Tick on the letter of your choice with a pencil. Only tick once per question.**

**Respondent's perceptions on how often SMS language is used in Grade 12's academic composition writing.**

5. How often do you use a cell phone?  
[a] Very often [b] Often [c] Rarely [d] Sometimes [e] Very rarely
6. For how long have you been using a cell phone? [a] Between 1 and 5 years. [b] Between 6 and 10 years. [c] More than 10 years. [d] Between 15 and 20 years [e] Above 25 years.
7. When did you know how to send a message by texting? [a] Between 1-4yrs [b] Between 5-8yrs [c] Between 9- 11yrs. [d] Between 12-15yrs [e] Between 16 -23.
8. How many messages do you send per day? [a] None [b] Less than 10 [c] more than 20 [d] Between 30 and 50. [e] Above 50.
9. How would you rate how often you use SMS language in your composition writing?  
[a] Very often [b] Often [c] Rarely [d] Very rarely [e] Sometimes
10. How often do you get the actual meaning of the sent text message in short hand?  
[a] Very often [b] Often [c] Rarely [d] Very rarely [e] Sometimes.
11. How often does short message writing make Grade 12 pupils become careless in any way when writing their academic composition work?  
[a] Very often [b] Often [c] Rarely [d] Very rarely [e] Sometimes
12. How often do you use short hand written messages in your formal writing accidentally?  
[a] Very often [b] Often [c] Rarely [d] Very rarely [e] Sometimes.
13. How often does text message influence your punctuations when writing academic essays?  
[a] Very often [b] Often [c] Rarely [d] Very rarely [e] Sometimes

## SECTION C

**Instructions:** For this section, please tick in the appropriate letter of your choice using a pencil .Only tick once per questions

### **Grade 12 learner's perceptions on the influence of SMS language on their academic writing**

14. The use of SMS influences my academic composition writing.

[a] I strongly disagree      [b.] I disagree      [c] undecided [d] I agree [e] I strongly agree.

15. Your academic style of writing is highly influenced by the use of SMS language

[a] I strongly disagree [b.] I disagree c. undecided [d]. I agree [e.] I strongly agree.

16. The comments and indicators of SMS features in your marked English academic essay are common. [a] I strongly disagree [b.] I disagree [c] undecided [d] I agree [e] I strongly agree.

17. SMS language influences your spellings in your academic writing.

[a] I strongly disagree [b.] I disagree [c] undecided [d] I agree [e] I strongly agree.

18. SMS language and texting helps one to improve the basic writing skills in English.

[a] I strongly disagree [b] I disagree [c] undecided [d] I agree [e] I strongly agree

19. Most of my writing in school is influenced by the short messages language

[a] I strongly disagree [b] I disagree [c] undecided [d] I agree [e] I strongly agree

20. The lengths of the sentences you write in your academic essays is influenced by use of text messaging on phones. [a] I strongly disagree [b] I disagree [c] undecided [d] I agree [e] I strongly agree

### **SECTION C learners' perceptions on the influence of SMS language on their composition writing.**

21. What are your perceptions on the influence of SMS language on your composition writing?

22. Could you state the advantages SMS language has when it comes to writing for school purposes? \_\_\_\_\_

23. Could you list the disadvantages SMS language poses when it comes to composition writing?  
\_\_\_\_\_

24. Could you state reasons why you write words in SMS form when texting?  
\_\_\_\_\_

25. List some examples of words in English that you like cutting short as SMS when texting.

Actual words in full form.

The short form of the words

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

26. What do you think should be done to help learners avoid using SMS in their compositions?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your participation.

**Appendix D: Grade 12 learners' English composition book review table for researchers' use.**

Valid	School Identity	Spellings quality	use of SMS and symbols	Use of Punctuation marks	use of abbreviations	formal language use	Paragraphing	Grammar
Schools	W							
	X							
	Y							
	Z							

Rating was done by indicating either very well, well, bad or poor, common or not common, depending on what the researcher found in a particular composition book during document (book) review.

Appendix E: Grade 12 learners' marked scripts from 4 selected schools in Kalulushi District.

For sample of the composition marked scripts refer to the next page.

The coming of cell phones and text messages / text language influences your academic composition writing. Do you agree or disagree with this statement write between 350 - 500 (35)

AGREE

Cell phones are the tools to technology because they are essential to every human being in the country. Most people use the phones for business activities and researching education things by the pupils in the world.

Cell phones nowadays is being misused by people both adult and children this is becoming a serious problem in our country especially for the children because they are searching relevant things which can not build them up to be responsible adults in future. Nowadays in the 21<sup>st</sup> century especially youths are the one responsible for this acts they are affecting themselves and their future.

people using cell phones there is what they call short hand writing this writing has affect many school childrens because they have started writing words in short form such as night they are writing nyt so this kind of abbreviation is not good for a school going to use them when writing any kind of subjects. Teachers are finding it difficult for those children using those kind of writing because they are really do it know how those pupils are writing.

Even the English curriculum I have never head of short writing. These things are real and I have come across a severe situation where by a pupil was found writing these things indeed those things are true manifestation in our community level.

The government have come up with a special solution by going around schools teaching and enforming about short hand writing should not be adversable by a school going childrens including teachers were among of them telling the children about these writing. Because pupils where finding it difficult to write proper written English.

COMPOSITION QUESTION

10/11/2016

KAL HIGLEY

cell phone and text language influence your academic composition writing. do you agree or disagree to this statement?  
write between 300 - 350 words.

disagree

I disagree because it is help to understand fact and to getting what was saying, for example in the phone we received same message from our friend and ~~the~~ the language she used is the short, when what to say that because we say bcz this is the short term to ~~you~~ use <sup>in</sup> the phone.  
At the phone it also help in our school under stand some word which was difficult to under stand, it help the student in university because some question give or exercise the was go to logical and they understand what was saying.

In this reason it can help in our future life because when we what some things ~~the~~ in ~~me~~ like job and the thing which is important in our life what we can achieved our life the school is important because we know in more things through the phone. ~~so~~ some people using the phone for just, ~~it~~ group but as a pupil we should ~~using~~ their to escape for our life to help how we can achieved the school or the college to under stand fact. At the short period of time.

cell phone it is also to prepare what was current text in our education and it help some the ~~the~~ pupil to know what happened in our country or the out of the country, for the pupil it to escape is also help for discovery and the other things to know faster. But one it is no for your friend message no but it also in some word which we can not under stand freely so we can go to go and when under stand what was saying, so lets the phone used to now more thing ~~about~~ about the school as a pupil of or stand it help us for learn and under stand the

~~Leeds Hatembuse~~

jeek faluair

25

composition

12A

The coming of cell phones and text language influences your academic composition writing. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? write between 350 to 500 words.

The introduction of cell phones in our communities was to ease the mode of communication and this has helped positively:

But on the other hand, this has negatively affected the academic performance in pupils in secondary schools. Specifically the language department are receiving poor results in composition writing during the final exams. Cell phones and text languages influences pupils in a negative way. Examples are that pupils have a tendency of using short cut messages during exams of which at the end of the day, they are penalised with the subdued marks.

The other negative impact in pupils <sup>with concerning the</sup> ~~on the~~ introduction of cell phones and text messages is that spellings are wrongly spelt due to the fact that pupils are fond of using unnecessary wrong spellings while chatting with friends with their cell phones, this actually contributes to their failure in their final examination.

Apart from the two reasons stated above, pupils with pupils using cell phones makes <sup>use</sup> them lazy to write.

As a result they find it difficult to write Compositions in final <sup>SP</sup> exam questions they have been trained with a system of them using cell phones and text languages or messages.

Again they tend to write minimum range of words <sup>SP</sup> because of them having poor vocabulary due this is due to lack of practicing on how to write Compositions and not reading enough so as to <sup>SP</sup> improve the level of understanding challenging words they may come across during their final examination.

Lastly cell phones has also contributed in poor paragraphing of words in their Compositions writing.

The coming of cell phones and text messaging has influenced your <sup>composition</sup> academic writing. Do you agree or disagree?

disagree?

I am <sup>am</sup> disagreeing to this question because it <sup>sp</sup> depends on how someone thinks according to myself ~~am~~ not my academic writing is not influenced by text messaging because when you are texting with someone then that person is writing full words it <sup>sp</sup> fits so boring and it looks like that person is slow in thinking for example instead of writing (how are you) in short text someone will write a word in full <sup>sp</sup> (how are you) for me I think it's just a waste of time.

When it comes to <sup>sp</sup> academic writing we should <sup>sp</sup> differentiate between text writing and academic writing because you cannot write short words in composition as if you are texting even if you are addicted you have to avoid short writing because the missionaries who introduced phones did not bring a bad idea because in old days communication was very <sup>sp</sup> difficult phones were not there there were only writing letters and making fire, bringing phones <sup>sp</sup> was a good idea because it is helping us alot even if some people think it is a bad idea.

Text messaging should not influence our <sup>sp</sup> academic writing as if we don't think properly especially in english language let us not use the same as we use in texting, texting should not influence us in our writing.

Agree:

Cell phone and text language influence your academic composition writing. Do you agree or disagree to this statement?

Cell phone influence our academic stages. I agree that cell phone are too bad things because they we take time on cell phone especially children. ~~now~~ <sup>time</sup> goes to school like grades 9, 10, 11 and 12. When you <sup>are</sup> studying with a cell phone you see a text you stop and start reading a text message. That what cause to academic problem. Children <sup>SP/Form</sup> with phone are so clever he/she can say that am in town <sup>na</sup> she/he is redola. Children have become lies that were children gets pregnant and diseases. Writing language make children not even to speaks English nor writes they just know how to write shortcut words. For example have two sisters their in grad 12 and have phones they spend time busy chatting with boyfriends at the end of the year year they even fail to the exams and they have pregnant and one was sick the disease called Aids.

And those children who take phones in class they even answer the call in class especially grad 12s. When they knock they don't go direct at home they go will go with they boyfriends like taxi drivers and smokers.

Cell phones make children become prostitutes boys to become smokers. Children are suppose to take have cell phone atleast when complete School and go to the college. go

SP Language writing cause children to speaks and was broken English.

And they use a lot of money instead of the food but she buys talktime. Talktime Children become thiefs because they want to buy talktime she/he gets money without asking and sp buy talktime at the end of the she gets pregnated become sick of many diseases. And even fail to sleep because of boys writing broken english. It's too worse for those children who don't even go to school they just become ignorant women in future. Those children who don't think they even write in book short cut of words. They have stoped even obeying parent comment. And another thing is insulting on phones and on just roads and streets. They even became loud and insult on their mouth. When one has a it brings fight and insult if a pupil has left a phone all mind will be to his/her phone thinking that is their any one who is going answer phone day dad or mum, brother and sister. Children may ~~to~~ even gossip ney frien just on phones.

## AGREE

I agree that cell phones and text languages influences our academic composition writing because when you are writing using text languages the teachers may not understand what you are talking about especially during exams the examiners can't mark you when you use text language as well as when you are writing composition text words ~~words~~ can affect your composition for example if they have asked you to write more ~~than~~ 250 words you can't reach such words because you are using short forms. When you are writing using normal language you ~~may~~ can write more sentences than text language. Also when you are writing composition sometimes you might not know the spelling of a word you will just introduce the text form it also affect your composition, sometimes when either a teacher or examiners they can think that you don't know the spellings while you know. Also cell phones are not good when you are writing a composition because it may disturb your attention because when you are writing a composition you should pay much attention for you to write well. When you are writing using a phone, when somebody called you, you can forget what you was writing about. because

**Appendix F: Letter for ethical clearance from the University of Zambia Ethical Committee.**



**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA  
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES**

Telephone: +260 -1- 290258/291777 Ext. 2208  
Fax: +260-1-290258/253952  
E-mail: drgs@unza.zm

P O Box 32379  
Lusaka, Zambia

10<sup>th</sup> February, 2016

Ms. Chibale Mary Mulubwa  
David Livingstone Secondary School  
P.O Box 60030  
**LIVINGSTONE**

Dear Ms. Mulubwa,

**RE: APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE**

Reference is made to your application for ethical clearance for the proposed study entitled:

**"The influence of short message language on composition writing among grade 10 pupils in selected schools in Kitwe and Kalulushi of the Copperbelt Province."**

In spite of your application being given ethical clearance, the following concerns were raised for your consideration: -

- 1) Under Background of Study on page 1, it may be advisable to indicate some statistics on the number of people using Mobile phones in Zambia. ZICTA can easily provide that information.
- 2) On Data collection procedures on page 14, what measures have been put in place to avoid disrupting classes particularly for those who will not be participating in the study? In short, when will the interviews and standard tests be conducted?
- 3) Under study instrument on page 42 Q2, wouldn't it be embarrassing to the respondent to be asked such a question?

Please ensure that you attend to these concerns before you undertake your research/study.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. J. Simwinga  
**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (RESEARCH),  
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES**

cc: Director, Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies  
Assistant Registrar (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies

**Appendix G: Introductory letter to the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS)  
Kalulushi District.**

All correspondence should be addressed to the  
District Education Board Secretary

Telephone: 733810



In reply please quote:

No. ....

**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, VOCATIONAL TRAINING  
AND EARLY EDUCATION**

**Kalulushi District Education Board  
Office of the DEBS  
P.O. Box 260171  
Zambia**

TS/803274

Wednesday, November, 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015

To : All Head teachers  
KALULUSHI

**RE: INTRODUCTORY LETTER: MS CHIBALE MULUBWA**


Reference is made to the above mentioned subject matter.

This serves to introduce to you the above mentioned Teacher based at St. Marcellin's Secondary School who has a field work programme for her to complete her Masters programme in Education at the University of Zambia.

Authority has been granted for her to collect data from a number of schools.

Kindly help and attend to her.

Yours faithfully,

  
**P. KAONGA (A.O.D.)**  
**DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD SECRETARY**  
**KALULUSHI**

**Appendix H: Letter of Authority to collect data in selected schools in Kalulushi District.**



**St Marcellin's Secondary School\***

**The Head Teacher,**

☒: 260209, Kalulushi - Zambia. ☎: +260 212 239228

✉: <[marcellinhigh1@yahoo.com](mailto:marcellinhigh1@yahoo.com)>

Marist Brothers of Schools;  
Chibuluma Community,  
Kalulushi, Zambia

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17<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.

The District Education Board Secretary,

P.O. Box 260171,

**KALULUSHI.**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: INTRODUCTORY LETTER**

As stated above, the bearer of this letter Ms Chibale Mulubwa T.S number 803162 is a member of staff at this school. She is taking a masters programme in education. The programme has a field work component which she has to complete. She needs your assistance concerning permission to collect data from a number of schools in Kalulushi.

We shall greatly appreciate if the necessary assistance is rendered to her.

Yours faithfully,

  
P. Bahda

**FOR HEADTEACHER**

**Appendix I: Letter of Authority to conduct a pilot study in selected schools in Kitwe District.**



**St Marcellin's Secondary School\***

The Head Teacher,  
✉: 260209, Kalulushi - Zambia. ☎: +260 212 239228  
✉: <marcellinhigh1@yahoo.com>

Marist Brothers of Schools;  
Chibuluma Community,  
Kalulushi, Zambia

17<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.

The District Education Board Secretary,  
KITWE.



*Granted!*  
*DEBS!*

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: INTRODUCTORY LETTER**

As stated above, the bearer of this letter Ms Chibale Mulubwa T.S number 803162 is a member of staff at this school. She is taking a masters programme in education. The programme has a field work component which she has to complete. She needs your assistance concerning permission to collect data from a number of schools in Kitwe .

We shall greatly appreciate if the necessary assistance is rendered to her.

Yours faithfully,

  
P. Banda  
**FOR HEADTEACHER**

## **Appendix J: Informed Consent Form**

**The University of Zambia**

**School of Education**

**Department of Languages and Social Sciences Education**

Please read this document carefully. Sign your name below only if you agree to participate in the study and you fully understand your rights. Your signature is required for your participation in this project. You must be a Grade 12 learner taking English language and you are selected to participate in the study.

### **Introduction**

This study is entitled 'The influence of SMS Language on Composition Writing among Grade 12 learners in Selected Schools in Kalulushi District of The Copperbelt Province of Zambia.' This research is directed by a Masters student in Literacy and Learning at the University of Zambia. This document defines the terms and conditions for consenting to participate in the study.

### **Description of the Study**

You are invited to participate in the study on the influence of SMS Language on Composition Writing among Grade 12 learners.

### **Time Frame of the Study**

The process of data collection will take approximately three weeks.

### **Risks and Benefits**

- You may feel uncomfortable being observed and as the researcher tests your pupils.
- You may not get direct benefits but you will have an opportunity to contribute to a study that may change practice in the area of phonological awareness teaching.

### **Confidentiality**

All information obtained from interviews and observations shall not be linked to any school or individuals. No names will be taken down and the information will not be shared with the School administration or the Ministry of Education. The interview guide will not have any identification information of participants to enhance confidentiality.

### **Participation Rights**

- Participation in this study is purely voluntary. If you decide to withdraw at any point, there will be no consequences to you.

All personal identifying information will be kept confidential and information collected during interviews and observations will be kept under key and lock in accordance with the standards of the University of Zambia. In case of publication of the study findings, your identity will still private.

### **Voluntary Consent**

I have read (or have had the information explained to me) the information about this research as contained in the Participant Information Sheet. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I now consent voluntary to be a participant in this project and understand that I have the right to end the interview at any time, and to choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study.

My signature below shows that I am willing to participate in this research:

Participant's name (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Consent Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Conducting Informed Consent (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix K: Composition Test**

The researcher decided to test pupils with a standard test. The topic for the standard test was as shown below;

**Instructions:** Do not use any book or cell phone when writing. Do not write your name on the answer sheet provided. Write the number assigned to you and the name of the School instead.

**Duration:** One Hour.

1. “The use of cell phones and text language among Grade 12 pupils influences their composition writing. Do you agree or disagree to this statement?” Write between 250 and 350 words.

This method was chosen because it facilitated the accurate collection of information with appropriate clarity.