

A Study on Text Messaging Affects Teen Literacy and Language

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ABSTRACT

Cell phones have become one of the necessities in today's modern life style for every teenager and adults. We can't even think of to stay away with it for few hours. Human beings are growing at increasing rate with these devices.

People are depending on cell phones for accomplishing their day to day activities related to their professional and personal lives. Nowadays, we are taking advantage of cell phones for sending text messages to our colleagues as well as friends at very rapid speed. Wherever you go, you may find that people around you, are always engaged with their cell phones screens, either they are sending messages or receiving it. For example, schools, colleges, malls, and cars, sidewalks, streets, we usually see them as head down and fingers glued to phones keyboard or touch screen and doing something. Sometimes, we may be one of those people.

Basically, our motto to do this research is to find out the positive and negative aspects of text messaging on teenagers and whether it affects the literacy. The research is based on primary data.

Key words: SMS, Text Messaging, Teenagers, Language, Literacy

“Text Messaging is just the most recent focus of people anxiety; what people are really worried about is a new generation gaining control of what they see as their language”

---DAVID CRYSTAL

“A good head and good heart are always formidable combination but when you add to that a literate tongue or pen, then you have something very special”

---NELSON

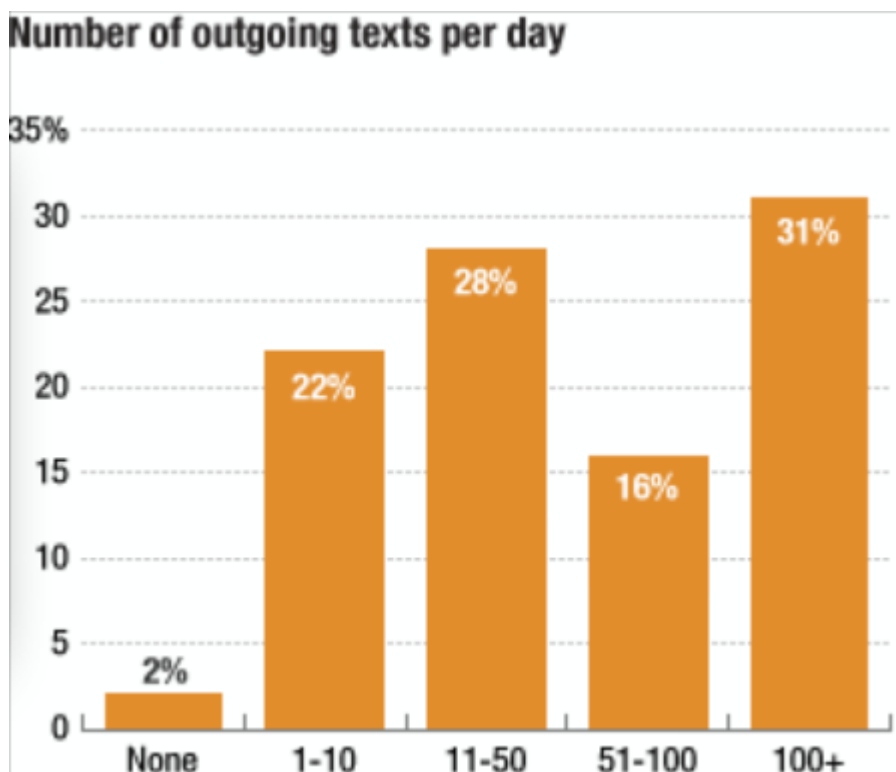
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INTRODUCTION

In today's era almost everyone in our society has cell phone and they are using it regularly. Most of them who use cell phones also use the SMS text messaging which is one of the best features of the mobile phones. This study focuses on some of the effects and potential problems arising out of the use of these text messaging. A survey was conducted on students and instructors and it was found that 70% of them believed that texting had harmful effects on student's language and teen literacy. However, through literature review it was found that texting is actually beneficial, while 54% of teenagers text others on a daily basis and only

33% of teenagers talk to others face-to-face. This study will examine that whether texting SMS will impact on language and writing skills of the teenagers and their social lives, and other related issues.

The evolution of technology over the last decade or so has happened at rapid speed. Not only innovative gadgets have been introduced but also popularizing it with new languages among young generation. In the modern technological world, people have become so accustomed to the idea of sending and receiving information almost instantly.



(Source: Hindustan Times, New Delhi, National dated NOVEMBER, 2013)

Text messaging has been widely used by cell phone users specially by teenagers in order to get conversation easier and quickly said by English professor SARAH THATCHER at the debating topic recently. Though this powerful service has many benefits, but it has also created several important negative issues as well as the main issue is of literacy (the effect on teen language).

For quick messaging short word, misspellings are used. There is the fear that this “new language” may replace standard English and young people will become unable to use language properly.



Many of us fear that text messaging and the use of “textese” may be adversely affecting children and adults’ and use of Standard English. Use of these abbreviations in the professional writing the individuals may be the outliers, and texting and textisms may actually serve as a way to increase reading skills, literacy, and spelling fluency.

Textese is an abbreviated vocabulary that includes letter/number, contractions or shortenings of words, emoticons (symbols for representing emotions such as ☹ for sad), and vowels, punctuation, and capitalization. This vocabulary stems from text messages originally only being able to contain up to 120 characters, and forcing users to form a more economical mode of communication within this limitation. Abbreviations such as “2nite” for tonight is common occurrences in this abbreviated language. The language does not end with just words, but some of the most common “textisms” are often whole phrases, such as “lol” for laugh out loud, “C u l8r” for see you later. These abbreviated phrase can even be as complicated as “idc wots ur add cwot” meaning I don’t care what your address is – complete waste of time.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study reviews empirical studies in the last decade on the effect of text messaging on teen literacy to determine whether they positively or negatively affect literacy. Although the majority of studies found a negative correlation, while still others report conflicting findings or no significant correlation at all. The study recalls that literacy scores may correlate differently with frequency of texting, use of textisms and knowledge of textism; that there may be different correlation for reading, writing and spelling and that the correlations may differ for formal and informal writing.

Texting may seem like nothing more than another distraction for our fast-paced youth, it turns out this rapid means of communication may be more than just a nuisance.

Teens usually text about 2272 times a month and make only 203 calls. Out of that 31% teens send 100+ texts each day. 16% sends 51-100 texts each day. 28% sends 11-50 texts each day. 22% send 1-11 texts each day. 3% sends no texts at all (1).

The study found that the adolescents sent fewer text messages than their typically developed peers. They also responded in lesser amounts. Sixty-eight of the SLI adolescents compared to 87% of the TD adolescents responded. The adolescents with SLI that responded scored higher in reading than the non-senders. The study also found that the senders and non-senders in the TD group were similar in language and literacy. (2)

One of the studies has revealed that 5 billion text messages are exchanged everyday for personal or professional use (3).

Pew study, which included 800 teens from around the United States, said 64 percent of teens with cell phones have texted in class (4).

Researchers have found there are actually positive effects of texting for teens, from improved language skills to emotional relief, and even added benefits for the especially introverted teen (5).

"TIME" magazine offers that texting and other means of electronic communication have positive effects for introverted teenagers. It allows teens who are overwhelmed with thoughts and emotions, but not the most socially savvy, to get straight to the point with friends without having to make uncomfortable small talk or converse in large groups, which may be an additional source of discomfort for the introverted teen (6).

In addition, the analyses conducted in most of the studies do not warrant conclusions about causality. All this suggest that there is a need for further research preferably longitudinal studies with experimental intervention, on the relationship between text messaging and literacy.

OBJECTIVE

To Analyse the positive and negative aspects of the text messaging in Teen literacy.

POSITIVE ASPECTS:

- It improves language skills and emotional relief
- It enhance learning
- We get to interact with people, their views , and their knowledge.

NEGATIVE ASPECTS:

- Most people claim that texting makes teen lazy because it doesn't force them to use proper grammar and spellings.
- Sometimes, teenagers write the way they text as it becomes permanently stored in their brain.
- Errors in spelling are also seen in examination papers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Our research is on Text Messaging Affects Teen Literacy and Language is carried out for guiding specific decisions and its results are useful only for taking particular decision regarding the affects in Delhi. Hence the nature of my research study is “**APPLIED RESEARCH** “.

METHODOLOGY

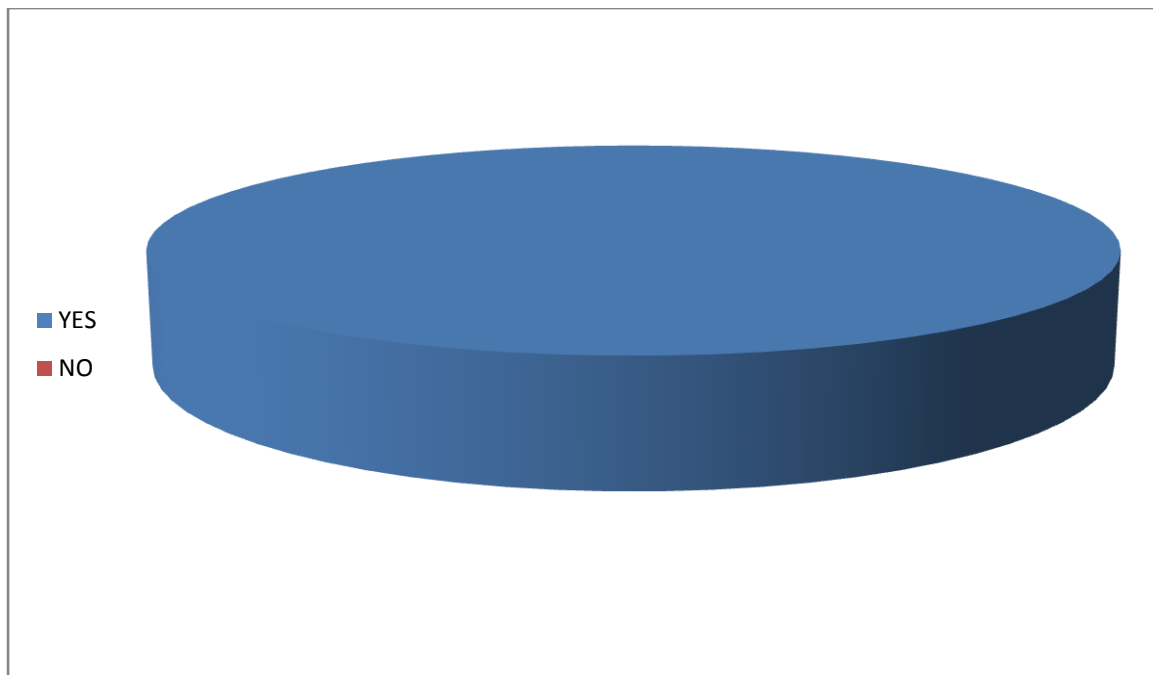
The methodology adopted to fulfill the objectives of the research with the help of a structure questionnaire. To get the data observations have also been done and interview was

conducted. The survey was done on 50 students in Delhi. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the student. Graphical Representation of Analysis is shown with Pie Chart.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

QUES 1- Are you aware about text messaging (SMS) ?

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummalative percent
YES	100	100.0	100.0	100.0
NO	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
TOTAL	100	100.0	100.0	

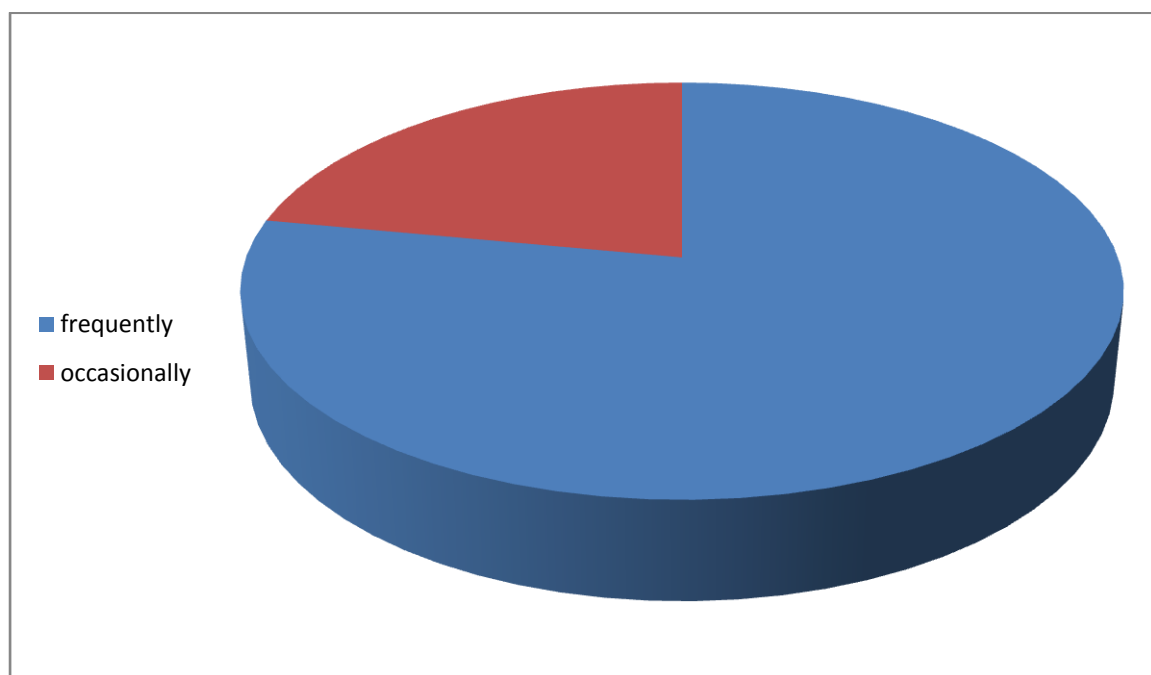


INTERPRETATION

From the above table we analyzed that 100% of the studentssays YES that they are aware about text messaging.

QUES 2- If yes, then are you using it frequently or occasionally?

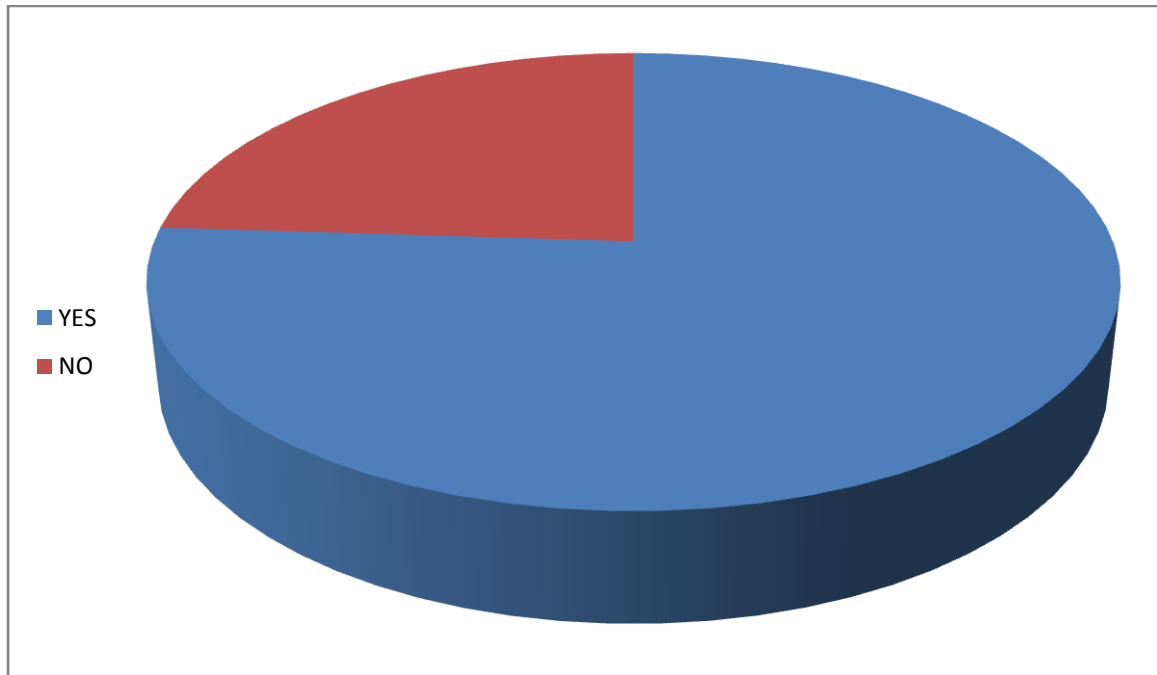
Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummalativepercent
FREQUENTLY	78	78.0	78.0	78.0
OCCASIONALLY	22	22.0	22.0	100.0
TOTAL	100	100.0	100.0	

**INTERPRETATION**

From the above table we analyzed that 78% of the students says that they use text messaging frequent whereas, 22% of the students says that they use it occasionally.

QUES 3- What do you think does SMS affects people being literate?

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummalativepercent
YES	76	76.0	76.0	76.0
NO	24	24.0	24.0	100.0
TOTAL	100	100.0	100.0	

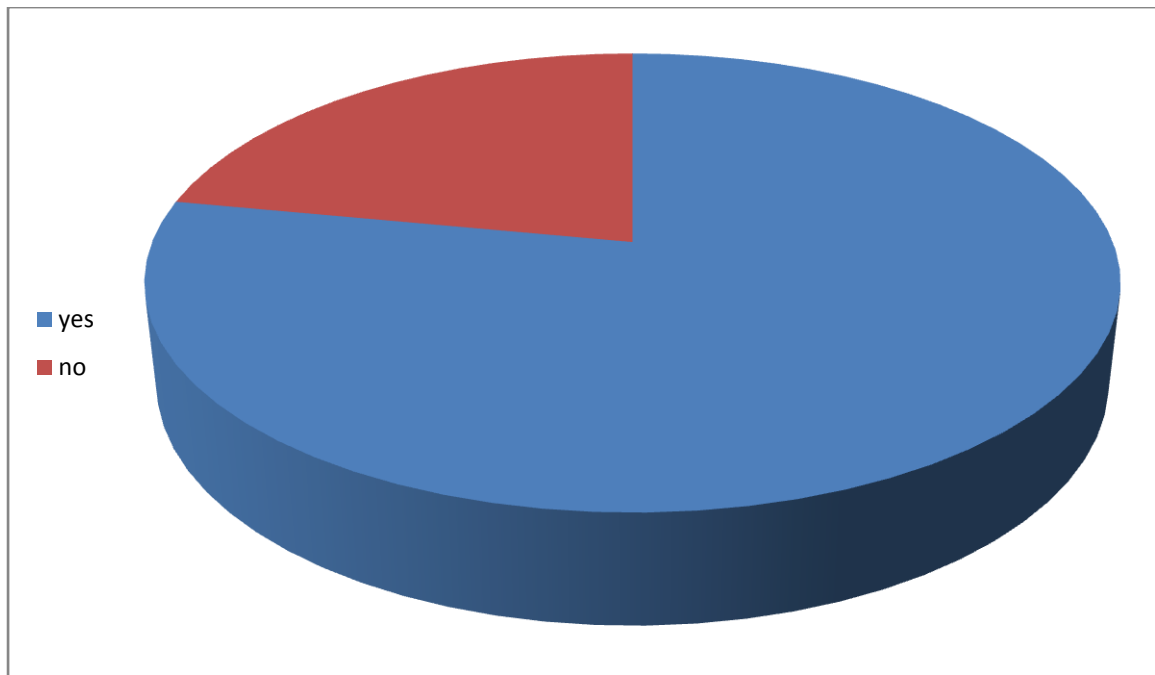


INTERPRETATION

From the above table we analyzed that 76% of the students says that SMS affects people being literate whereas, 24% of the students says that SMS does not affect people being literate.

QUES 4- Does it affect over the language (spelling)?

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummalativepercent
YES	78	78.0	78.0	78.0
NO	22	22.0	22.0	100.0
TOTAL	100	100.0	100.0	

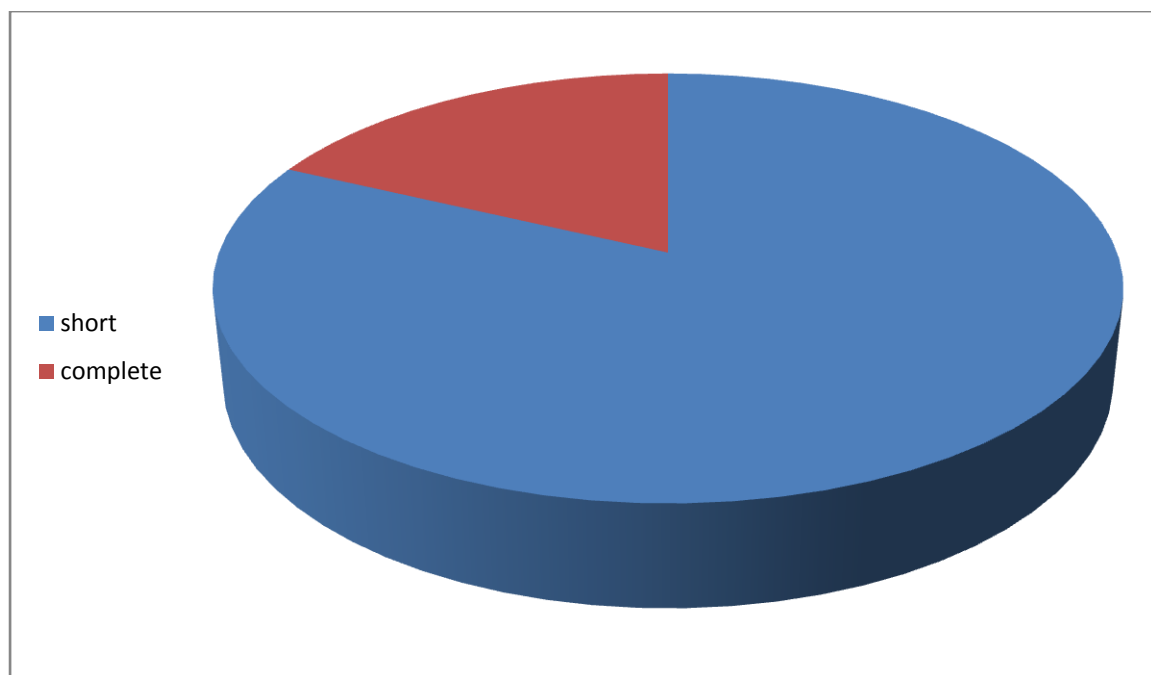


INTERPRETATION

From the above table we analyzed that 78% of the students says that SMS affects over the language (spellings) whereas, 24% of the students says that SMS does not affect over the language (spellings).

QUES 5- Do you write the complete words or short forms in SMS?

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummalativepercent
SHORT	82	82.0	82.0	82.0
COMPLETE	18	18.0	18.0	100.0
TOTAL	100	100.0	100.0	



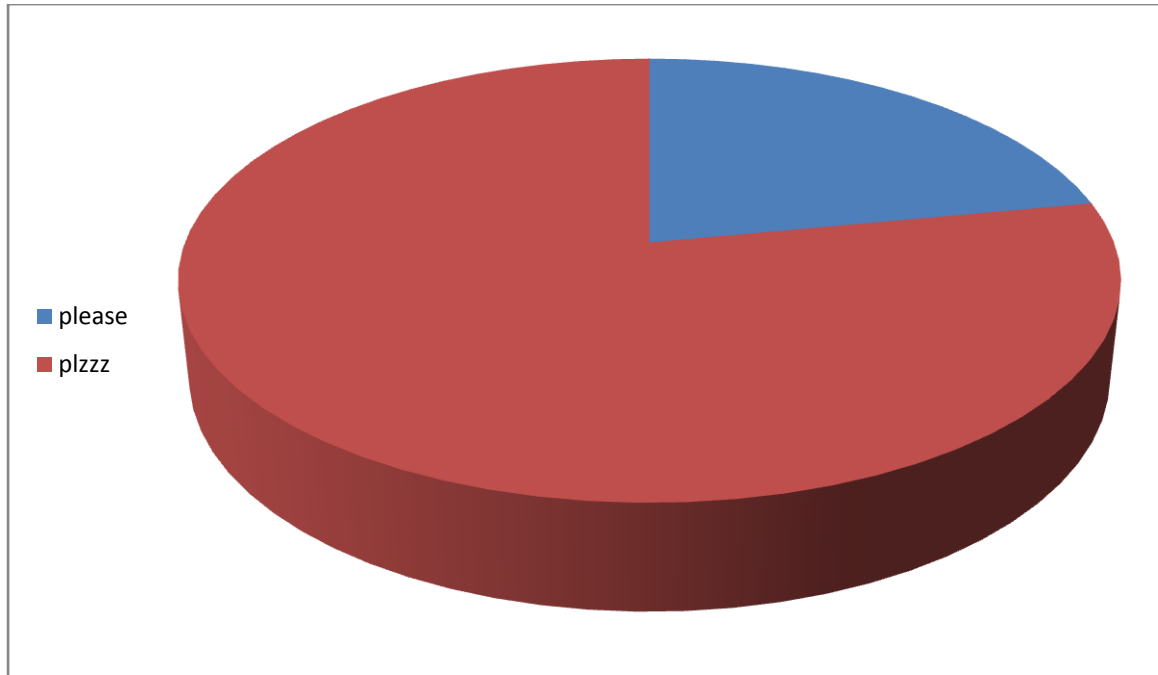
INTERPRETATION

From the above table we analyzed that 82% of the students says that they write short words in SMS whereas, 18% of the students says that they write complete words in SMS

Ques 6- Out of the following what will you use mostly while writing the text?

a) Please or plzzzz

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummalativepercent
PLEASE	22	22.0	22.0	22.0
PLZZZ	78	78.0	78.0	100.0
TOTAL	100	100.0	100.0	

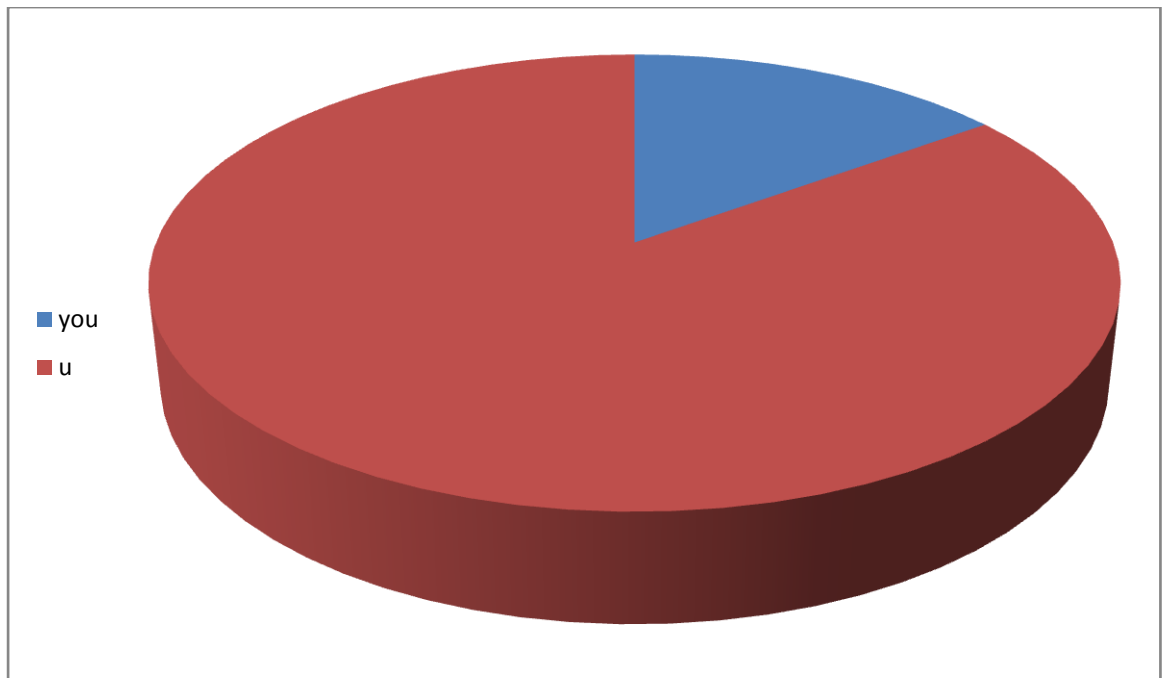


INTERPRETATION

From the above table we analyzed that 22% of the students says that they write ‘please’ in SMS whereas, 78% of the students says that they write ‘plzzz’ in SMS.

b) You or u

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummalativepercent
YOU	15	15.0	15.0	15.0
PLZZZ	85	85.0	85.0	100.0
TOTAL	100	100.0	100.0	

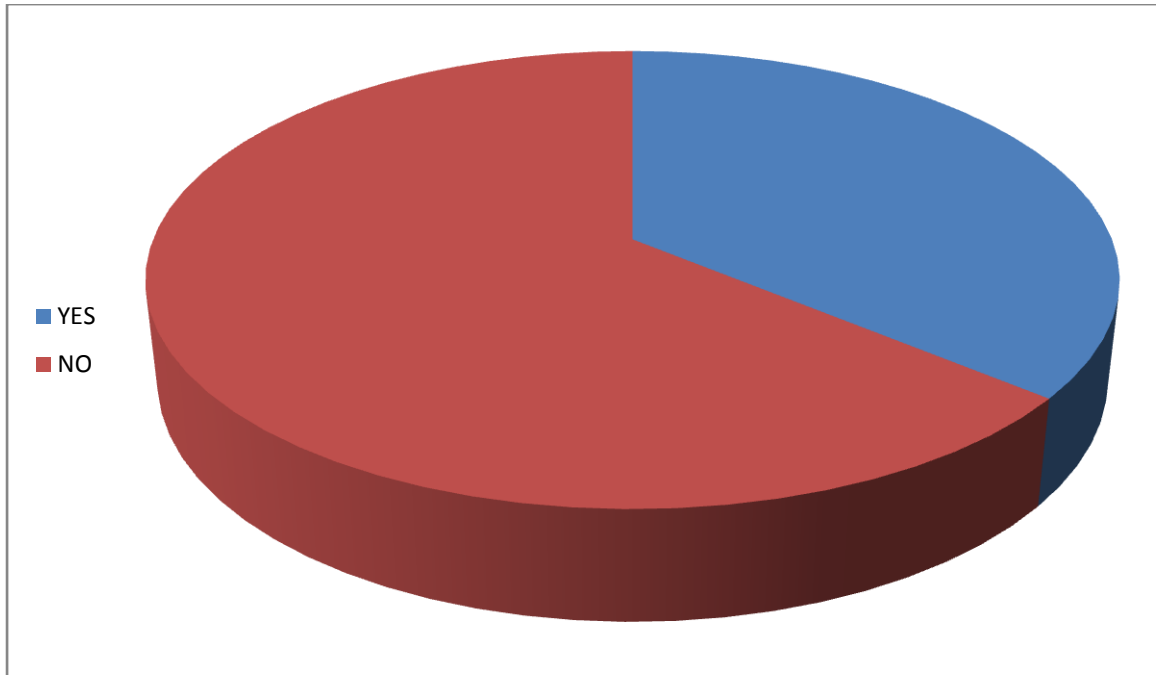


INTERPRETATION

From the above table we analyzed that 15% of the students says that they write ‘you’ in SMS whereas, 85% of the students says that they write ‘u’ in SMS.

QUES 7- While writing the examination paper, do you use the short form of the words?

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummalativepercent
YES	36	36.0	36.0	36.0
NO	64	64.0	64.0	100.0
TOTAL	100	100.0	100.0	

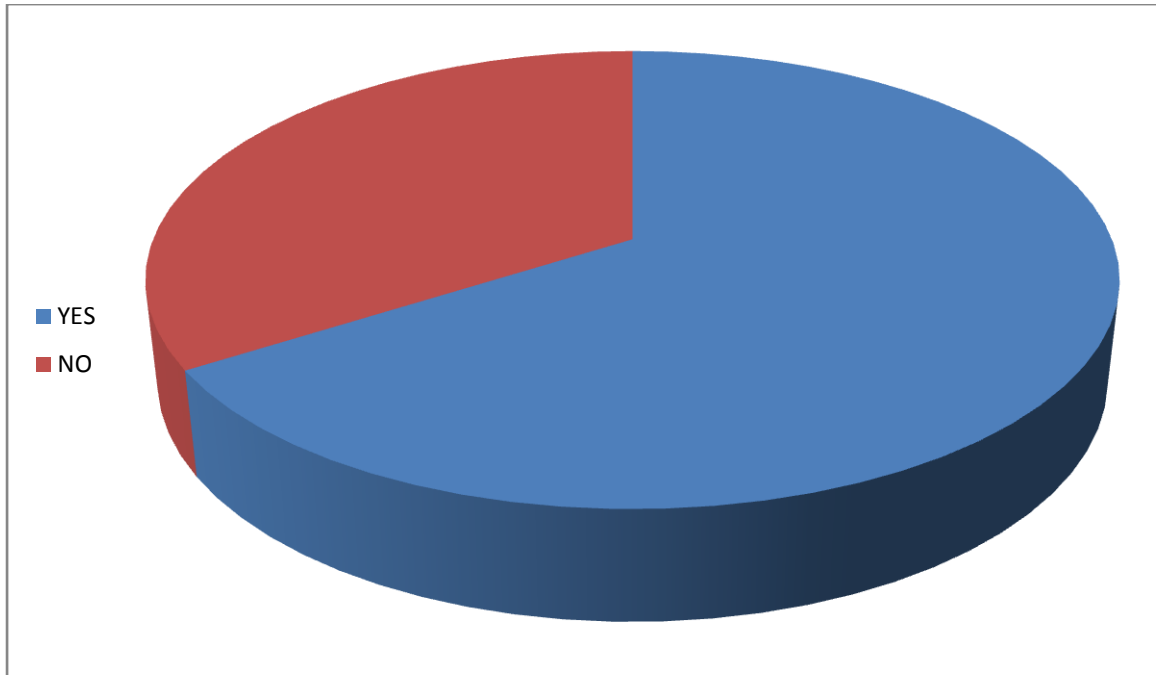


INTERPRETATION

From the above table we analyzed that 64% of the students says that they do not use short words whereas, 36% of the students says that they use short words in the examination papers.

QUES 8- Does SMS help in improving the language while interacting with different people?

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulativepercent
YES	66	66.0	66.0	66.0
NO	34	34.0	34.0	100.0
TOTAL	100	100.0	100.0	

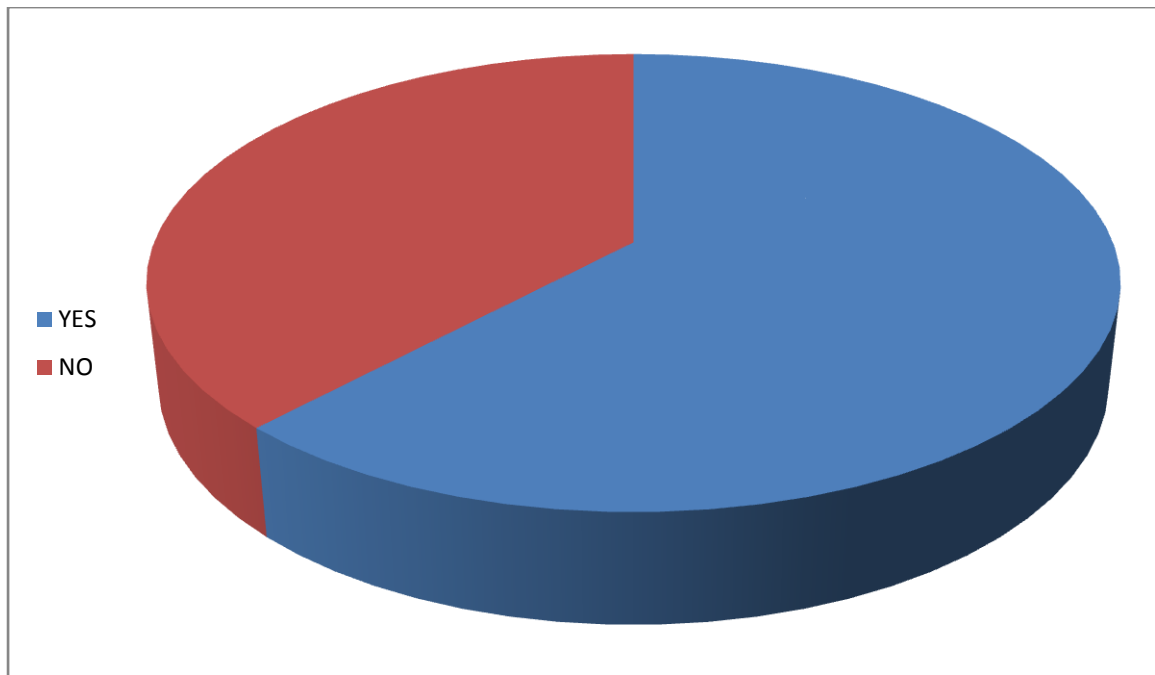


INTERPRETATION

From the above table we analyzed that 66% of the students says that SMS help in improving the language while interacting with different people whereas, 34% of the students says that SMS does not help in improving the language while interacting with different people.

QUES 9- Through SMS, do you think illiterate people are also able to read and write?

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummalativepercent
YES	62	62.0	62.0	62.0
NO	38	38.0	38.0	100.0
TOTAL	100	100.0	100.0	



INTERPRETATION

From the above table we analyzed that 62% of the students says that through SMS illiterate people are also able to read and write whereas, 38% of the students says through SMS illiterate people are not also able to read and write.

FINDINGS

1. From the study it is found that 100% of the teenagers are aware about text messaging.
2. 78% of the teenagers use text messaging frequently.
3. 76% of the teenagers think that text messaging affects people being literate, rest of the teenagers i.e. 24% do not agree that text messaging affects people being literate.
4. SMS affects the language (spellings) was accepted by 78% of the teenagers.
5. It was found that 82% of the teenagers use short words while writing SMS and rest i.e. 18% teenagers use complete words while writing SMS.

6. From the study, it was found that teenagers do not use short words while writing the examination paper.
7. 36% of the teenagers argue that text messaging helps in improving the language while interacting with different people.
8. Text messaging helps illiterate people to read and write says 62% of the teenagers.
9. Teenagers have some positive and negative aspects of text messaging.

CONCLUSION

We conclude on the basis of our research that the text messaging affects teen literacy and language on both the aspects i.e. positively and negatively which was set as the objective of the research. We found that through text messaging, we get to interact with different people and gain their views and knowledge and it also helps in making people literate, whereas it has negative aspect too i.e. teenager get lazy and use short words rather than complete words, which gets stored in their brains and hence becomes a habit which later on affects in examination writing and communication.

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