

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY: APPLIED BUSINESS AND EDUCATION RESEARCH

2022, Vol. 3, No. 7, 1267 – 1273

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.03.07.06>

Research Article

Text Messaging and English Writing Proficiency of Grade Six Pupils

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Article history:

Submission July 2022

Revised July 2022

Accepted July 2022

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive correlation study determined the influence of text messaging to the English writing proficiency of Grade Six pupils in Nagustan Elementary School in the District of Nabas, Aklan, Philippines during the School Year 2019 - 2020. Data about the participants' profile and frequency of text messaging were gathered using a survey questionnaire to 41 Grade VI pupils. Results showed that majority of the pupils have Very Satisfactory grades in English during the 3rd grading period. A greater number of the pupils spend 2 to 3 hours in text messaging while only few spend less than 1 to 2 hours. Generally, the pupil participants have outstanding English writing performances in sentence structure, idea development, and understanding of literature/texts, and very satisfactory in organizational pattern, text support, transitional devices, word choice, and language mechanics. Only a few of them have satisfactory performance and a lesser number needs improvement in all criteria. A very high positive relationship was found between the grade in English and frequency of text messaging to the English writing proficiency of the participants. This implies that the higher the grade of a pupil in English and the more frequent they engage in text messaging, the more proficient they are in writing.

Keywords: elementary pupils, English grade, text messaging, writing proficiency

Introduction

The Philippines is tagged as the “texting capital of the world.” It is the country that sends the most text messages in a day. The fact that most texts are sent from this country is surprising to some because of the population differences between the Philippines and larger countries, such as the United States and India.

However, in the Philippines, texting is one of the most vital and necessary means of communication compared to other countries (Van Dijk et al., 2016)

The short message service (SMS) technology which is commonly associated with cell phone text messaging has provided a range of conveniences to society. Many people today

How to cite:

Dalisay, M. T. A. & Biray, E. T. (2022). Text Messaging and English Writing Proficiency of Grade Six Pupils. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*. 3 (7), 1267 – 1273. doi: 10.11594/ijmaber.03.07.06

find it hard to live without their mobile phones. However, many concerns about the impact of these transformative new technologies on the standards of communication have been practiced for so long. Written language is an invention in that which must be taught to children, who will pick up spoken language (oral or sign) by exposure even if it's not specifically taught (Crystal, 2008).

The advent of SMS has devised existing linguistic forms deviating from the established ones and by reshaping all the conventional communicative practices. Being the popular medium of communication among the young, thumb generation, the language of SMS has evolved and reinvented its unique stylistic features, which violate the rules of Standard English. Therefore, electronic English among the people is one of the informal situations of education and it opens the door for all people because it breaks the barriers. Moreover, some people feel shy and hesitant so through text messaging they can easily communicate without any problems or restrictions (Albasheer & Alfaki, 2016).

Many parents are alarmed that the pupils' engagement to gadgets and the use of SMS in sending communication with their peers may affect their writing proficiency. Much has been said about this concern but no scientific study has been conducted to verify the issue, thus, the significance of this study.

Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted to determine the influence of text messaging to the English writing proficiency of Grade Six pupils in Nagustan Elementary School, District of Nabas, Aklan, Philippines during the school year 2019-2020. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of Grade Six pupils?
2. What is the grade in English subject of Grade Six pupils when classified as to gender?
3. What is the frequency of use of text messaging when classified as to gender?
4. What is the pupils' English Writing Proficiency according to gender and as a group in terms of:
 - a. format;
 - b. understanding of literature/text;
 - c. idea development;
 - d. text support;
 - e. organizational pattern;
 - f. word choice;
 - g. sentence structure;
 - h. transitional devices; and
 - i. language mechanics?

5. What is the level of relationship between the grade in English and English writing proficiency?

6. What is the level of relationship between the frequency of text messaging and English writing proficiency?

Methods

The study utilized the descriptive-correlation research design. The participants were all the 41 Grade Six pupils of Nagustan Elementary School, District of Nabas, Aklan, Philippines during the school year 2019-2020.

For the purpose of this study, an essay writing test was used to measure the pupils' English writing proficiency.

A three-part researcher-made questionnaire asking for the profile of the respondents, frequency of using text messaging, and the English essay writing assessment was used in gathering data.

The English essay writing assessment was validated by experts in language, and research. Their suggestions and recommendations for improvements were incorporated as revisions of the test. The standard rubric for the essay writing assessment of the Department of Education (DepEd) was used to measure the pupils' English writing proficiency.

The permanent record (Form 137) showing the academic grades in English of the participants during the previous grade level was considered as a secondary data reference for the study. Ethical consideration was practiced to protect the privacy of the participants.

To determine the level of relationship between grades in English and English writing proficiency; and frequency of text messaging and English writing proficiency, Gamma coefficient was used. The level of relationship adopted the scale of coefficient of correlation and interpretation by Vizcarra (Vizcarra, 2003).

Results and Discussion

Table 1 showed that there were a higher number of female participants, with 24 or 58.54% of the total participants, than the male with 17 or 41.46% of the total respondents.

Table 1 showed that there were a higher number of female participants, with 24 or 58.54% of the total participants, than the male with 17 or 41.46% of the total respondents.

Table 1. Profile of Grade Six Pupils in terms of Gender

Gender	N	%
Male	17	41.46
Female	24	58.54
Total	41	100.00

Table 2 shows the third periodic grade of Grade Six pupil participants in the English subject.

a. Most of the pupils 18 or 43.90%; with 9 males and 9 females belonged to the grade range of 85-89% or very satisfactory, while thirteen (13) or 31.71% of purely female pupils

attained grades between 90-95 or outstanding. Only 10 or 24.39% of the pupils (8 males and 2 females) had a grade between 80-84% or Satisfactory. This result means that Grade Six pupils are good performers in English, with the female pupils outperforming the male pupils.

Table 2. Grade in English Subject of Grade Six Pupils in terms of Gender

Grade	Gender of Pupils						Description
	M	%	F	%	Total	%	
90 -99	0	0	13	31.71	13	31.71	Outstanding
85 - 89	9	21.95	9	21.95	18	43.90	Very Satisfactory
80 - 84	8	19.51	2	4.88	10	24.39	Satisfactory
Total	17	41.46	24	58.54	41	100.00	

Frequency of Use of Text Messaging in Terms of Gender

Table 3 revealed that majority (21 or 51.22%) of the pupils where 12 are females and 9 are males spend 2 to 3 hours in text messaging.

Nine (9) or 21.95% where 6 are females and 3 are males of the pupils spend 1 hour to less than 2 hours in text messaging while there were two pupils, one male and only one female who does text messaging less seldom.

This result showed that almost all but 2 of the pupils spend hours in text messaging.

Table 3. Frequency of Use of Text Messaging of Grade Six Pupils in terms of Gender

Number of Hours	Gender of Pupils						Frequency of Use
	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%	
2 – 3 hrs	9	21.95	12	29.27	21	51.22	Always
1 - <2hrs	3	7.32	6	14.63	9	21.95	Sometimes
30mins-<1hr	4	9.76	5	12.20	9	21.95	Seldom
< 30mins	1	2.44	1	2.44	2	6.60	Less Seldom
Total	17	41.46	24	58.54	41	100.00	

Table 4a presented the English writing proficiency of Grade Six pupils in terms of gender. It revealed that majority (22 or 53.66%), 10

males and 12 females were rated very satisfactory. There were 3 males and 9 females

or 29.27% who have shown an outstanding English writing proficiency.

Two males and 2 females or 9.76% obtained a satisfactory result. Furthermore, there

were 2 males and only 1 female was rated needs improvement in the English writing proficiency.

Table 4a. English Writing Proficiency of Grade Six Pupils in terms of Gender

English Writing Proficiency	Gender of Pupils					
	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Outstanding	3	7.32	9	21.95	12	29.27
Very Satisfactory	10	24.39	12	29.27	22	53.66
Satisfactory	2	4.88	2	4.88	4	9.76
Total	17	41.46	24	58.54	41	100.00

English Writing Proficiency of Grade Six Pupils. Table 4b established the writing proficiency of Grade Six pupils based on the standardized Rubric Assessment Tool for Performance Task in Essay Writing in the Elementary Level attached to Department of Education Order No. 031, s. 2020. The writing proficiency was rated based on the following writing assessment criteria:

Format. Table 4b shows that 15 pupils, 6 of which are males and 9 are females, have an outstanding rating in terms of format. On the other hand, 5 males and 12 females were rated very satisfactory, while 8 pupils, where 5 males and 3 females garnered a satisfactory rating. Only one male pupil was found out to be needing improvement in terms of format.

Understanding of literature/text. As to understanding of literature/text, 7 male pupils and 11 female pupils have an outstanding rating. 14 pupils, 6 of which are males and 8 are females, were rated very satisfactory, while 2 males and 5 females achieved a satisfactory rating. Two (2) out of 41 pupils need improvement in terms of understanding literature/text.

Idea Development. It was disclosed in Table 4b that all almost half of the total respondents, 5 males and 14 females, were able to get an outstanding rating as to idea development criterion. 16 out 41 pupils were rated very satisfactory, while 2 males and 2 females had a satisfactory rating. No Grade 6 pupil was found out to be needing improvement in terms of idea development criterion in the writing assessment.

Text Support. Nineteen (19) pupils, 8 are males and 11 are females, were rated very satisfactory in terms of text support. There were

more students who got very satisfactory rating than those who got an outstanding rating. There were 17 pupils (7 males and 10 females). A total of three pupils, 1 male and 2 females were able to get a satisfactory rating. Only one male was recorded as needs improvement in terms of text support.

Organizational Pattern. Half of the total population (21 pupils) was able to get a very satisfactory score in terms of organizational pattern. While 13 pupils (5 males and 8 females) were able to achieve an outstanding rating. It was also disclosed that 4 pupils, where 2 males and 2 females, were able to get a satisfactory rating and there were 3 pupils, 2 males and 1 female, got a needs improvement rating.

Word Choice. It can be gleaned in Table 4b that 14 pupils, 6 males and 8 females, were scored outstanding on the criterion, word choice. 17 pupils were rated very satisfactory, while 9 pupils, 4 males and 5 females, were rated satisfactory. Only one female pupil needs improvement in this criterion.

Sentence Structure. Table 4b showed that no pupil needs improvement in terms of sentence structure. There were 21 pupils, 6 males and 15 females, who were rated outstanding while 12 pupils scored a very satisfactory rating. A satisfactory rating was given to 8 pupils, wherein 6 were males and 2 were females.

Transitional Devices. There were 18 pupils rated as very satisfactory while 12 were outstanding. Five males and 4 females were given the satisfactory rating while 2 pupils, in which only 1 male and 1 female needs improvement.

Language Mechanics. Ten (10) pupils, 5 are males and 5 are females, were able to get an outstanding rating in the criterion language mechanics. On the other hand, 16 pupils (7 males and 9 females) were able to get a Very

satisfactory score. Four males and 10 females were rated satisfactory in the abovementioned criterion while only one male needs improvement.

Table 4b. English Writing Proficiency of Grade Six Pupils in terms of Gender and Writing Assessment Criteria

Writing Assessment Criteria	English Writing Proficiency											
	Outstanding			Very Satisfactory			Satisfactory			Needs Improvement		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Format	6	9	15	5	12	17	5	3	8	1	0	1
Understanding of Literature/Text	7	11	18	6	8	14	2	5	7	2	0	2
Idea Development	5	14	19	9	7	16	2	2	4	0	0	0
Text Support	7	10	17	8	11	19	1	2	3	1	1	2
Organizational Pattern	5	8	13	8	13	21	2	2	4	2	1	3
Word Choice	6	8	14	7	10	17	4	5	9	0	1	1
Sentence Structure	6	15	21	5	7	12	6	2	8	0	0	0
Transitional Devices	5	7	12	6	12	18	5	4	9	1	1	2
Language Mechanics	5	5	10	7	9	16	4	10	14	1	0	1

Level of Relationship between the Grade in English and English Writing Proficiency

Table 5 revealed the level of relationship of the grade in English and the English writing proficiency of the respondents. Using cross tabulation, it shows that there is a very high positive relationship ($\text{Gamma} = 0.870$) between the

grades in English and the English Writing Proficiency of the students. This implies that the grades in English is a determinant to the pupils' proficiency in writing. Furthermore, the results also imply that the higher the grade in English the more proficient is his/her writing skills.

Table 5. Level of Relationship between the Grade in English and English Writing Proficiency

Grades in English	English Writing Proficiency				Total
	Outstanding	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	
Satisfactory	0	4	5	1	10
Very Satisfactory	4	13	1	0	18
Outstanding	8	5	0	0	13
Total	12	22	6	1	41

Gamma Value = 0.870

Interpretation: Very High Positive Relationship

Relationship between the Frequency of Text Messaging and English Writing Proficiency

Table 6 shows the relationship between the respondents' frequency of text messaging and

English writing proficiency. The results showed that there is a very high positive Relationship between pupils' frequency of texting and English writing proficiency as shown by

the *gamma* value of 0.989. The results imply that pupils' frequency of texting is a contributory factor in their English writing proficiency.

Furthermore, the results show that the more frequent the students send text messages the better their writing skills become. This is in agreement to the studies conducted by several researchers which revealed that texting has a positive influence on the writing and grammar proficiency of students (Belal, 2014;

Titanji et al., 2017; Dupa, 2018; Aventajado, 2016), and does not affect students' ability to write (Madison, 2019).

Further, it also strengthens the claim that the increase use of texting enhances the literacy of users, especially the youth (Dansieh, 2011), and has a negligible impact on the overall writing abilities of students (Bostina-Bratu, 2015).

Table 6. Level of Relationship between the Frequency of Text Messaging and English Writing Proficiency

Frequency of Text Messaging	English Writing Proficiency				Total
	Outstanding	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	
Seldom	0	4	4	1	9
Sometimes	0	9	0	0	9
Always	12	9	0	0	21
Total	12	22	6	1	41

Gamma Value = 0.989

Interpretation: Very High Positive Relationship

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has revealed that there were more female pupils than male pupils in the Grade Six level of Nagustan Elementary School, District of Nabas, Aklan. Most of these pupils were rated Very Satisfactory in their grade in English subject, which implies that most of the Grade Six pupils were good performers in English. It was established that the frequency of using text messaging does not affect the writing proficiency of Grade Six pupils. Likewise, majority of the Grade Six pupils have achieved skills in essay formatting, understanding literature/text, developing ideas, organizing correct pattern, selecting appropriate words, writing sentence structure without errors and observing language mechanics. Only a few pupils need improvement in the use of transitional devices. Finally, the grade in English is a determinant factor to the writing proficiency of pupils.

From the conclusions made, it is recommended that: (1) An English writing proficiency test appropriate for the grade level using the rubrics adopted by the Department of Education may be given to other grade levels to find out whether the practice of texting among the learners may also reveal the same result; (2) Since it was established that texting has not

influenced the writing performance of elementary pupils, school authorities may consider the use of electronic gadget as a medium in the delivery of classroom instruction, particularly at times of emergencies such as the pandemic; (3) Teachers, in coordination with parents, should look into and monitor the texting practices and other gadget related activities of pupils as they may be spending excessive time which may be detrimental to the health of these children; (4) School authorities may consider coming up with policies that restrict the use of gadgets in school until such time that these are considered as allowable tools for instructional purposes; (5) Teachers should always be on the alert and lookout on the writing and speaking practices of their pupils while inside the school so that they clearly delineate what is formal from informal language as used in the texting attitudes of learners; (6) *English teachers should engage pupils in a weekly writing activity that will focus on developing certain skills such as creative vocabulary use, the correct format of an essay or spelling activities*; (7) *Pupils should be given different positive opportunities inside or outside the classroom to strengthen both their written communication skills*; (8) The Department of Education through the Schools Division

Superintendent and Education Program Supervisors must come up with other trainings and teaching strategies for teachers in improving the English proficiency of pupils; and (9) Teachers should keep the parents updated on the problems regarding their children's academic standing so that these can be addressed properly.

Acknowledgement

Profound and sincere gratitude is extended to the pupil-participants, parents, teachers, and administrators of the Nagustan Elementary School, District of Nabas, Aklan, as well as the Aklan State University, College of Teacher Education for the all-out support extended during the conduct of the study. To the family and to God, the Almighty Father for the inspiration and love, unceasing indebtedness is warmly expressed.

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