

## History of SMS Language and a Study on SMS in Sri Lankan Society - Ven. Mediyawe Piyarathana

The aim of this research article is to present the history of SMS language and do a study on SMS in Sri Lankan Society. Language is achieving new colours and tones in the world which we live. Technology has become the buzz word in the social network. The requirements in language versatility which are universally understood are overcome by the Short Message Service (SMS) language that is emerging rapidly. Currently, the SMS language is invariably used in every field where communication plays a pivotal role in the social network. In Sri Lankan Society too, SMS plays a vital role when communication through SMS is concerned.

"SMS language is also known as Textese, Chatspeak and Txtk. Talex is a term for the abbreviations most commonly used due to the necessary brevity of mobile phone text messaging. The SMS language does not abbreviate the words only by dropping the letters, but it can be represented using letters, numbers or pictograms as well." <sup>1</sup>

Compared to the standard language SMS, it does not conform to the accepted spelling, grammatical and syntactic structure. Text messaging has enabled the users to communicate what they need with a fraction of second taking out the need for capitalization, punctuation and the use of knowledge of sentence structure which considered to be the characteristics of the common language. This new age of messaging has strengthened the interaction of the society to a wider extent. In fact, it has brought a great deal of convenience, quickness and a new language to our society. Thus, the SMS language has become the most popular means of communication for a whole generation of mobile phone users and an effective and powerful social network has been created in the world. In creating such powerful networks, SMS language plays the most powerful emblems of social behaviour. Especially, there is a social network consisting of mobile phone users who use text messages as the mean of their communication.

The texters use different codes, symbols, syntactic structures in their text messages at present. The use of various secret codes, abbreviations, acronyms and various symbols sometimes make it difficult for the users to comprehend what the texter intends to say due to inadequate knowledge on SMS language. Therefore, a standard set of codings should be formed to create uniqueness of codes in the text messages where both receiver and sender can understand each other well. The texting population come from various strata, cultures, occupations and with different levels of knowledge about

1. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMS\\_language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMS_language) Retrieved on 24th December 2010

technology and English. These factors cause the way they type their text messages in the communication network. On the other hand, sometimes it is considered the nature of the context where the texter send his or her message to.

### History of SMS

Short Message Service (SMS) is the text communication service of the phone, web or mobile communication systems, using standardized communications protocols which have been facilitated to exchange short text messages between fixed line and mobile phone devices. The term SMS is used as a synonym for all types of short messages. It is most widely used data application in the world with 2.4 billion active users or 74% of all mobile phone subscribers.

The idea of adding text messaging to the services of mobile users was not frequent in many communities of mobile communication services at the beginning of the 1980s. The first action plan of the GSM Group approved in December 1982, requested the services and facilities offered in the public switched telephone networks and public data networks should be available in the mobile system. This target includes the exchange of text messages either directly between mobile stations, or transmitted via text Message Handling Systems widely in use since the beginning of the 1980s.

The SMS concept was developed in the Franco German GSM cooperation in 1984 by Friedhelm Hillebrand and Bernard Ghillebaert. The GSM was optimized for telephony. The key idea for SMS was to use this telephony-

optimized system, and to transport messages on the signalling paths needed to control the telephony traffic during time periods when no signalling traffic existed. In this manner, unused resources in the system could be used to transport messages at minimal cost.

SMS was first used in December 1992, when Neil Papworth, a 22-year-old test engineer for Sema Group used a personal computer to send a text message to wish "Merry Christmas" via the Vodafone network to the phone of Richard Jarvis. The texting was originally made for business word at its inception and it was not cheaper like today. Besides, it was only a dream for people who were not wealthy. When texting began, it was possible to send up to 140 bytes that translated to 160 characters of the English alphabet.

### Spread of SMS

SMS is particularly popular in Europe, Asia, United States, Australia and New Zealand. In China, SMS is very popular, and has brought service providers significant profit (18 billion short messages were sent in 2001) It is a very influential and powerful tool in the Philippines, where the average user sends 10–12 text messages a day. The Philippines alone sends on the average 400 million text messages a day or approximately 142 billion text messages sent a year more than the annual average SMS volume of the countries in Europe, and even China and India. SMS is hugely popular in India, where youngsters often exchange lots of text messages, and companies provide alerts,

information, news, cricket scores update, railway/airline booking.

Text messaging has become so popular that advertising agencies and advertisers are now jumping into the text message business. Services that provide bulk text message sending are also becoming a popular way for clubs, associations, and advertisers to quickly reach a group of opt-in subscribers.

In some countries, text messages can be used to contact the emergency services. In the UK, text messages can be used to call the emergency services after registering with the emergency SMS service. This service is primarily aimed at people who by reason of disability are unable to make a voice call.

The use of text messaging for business purposes has grown significantly during the mid 2000s. As companies seek competitive advantages, many employees turn to new technology, collaborative applications, and real-time messaging like SMS, instant messaging, and mobile communications. Some practical uses of text messaging include the use of SMS for confirming delivery or other tasks, and for instant communication between a service provider and a client

Today, text messaging is the most widely used mobile data service, with 74% of all mobile phone users worldwide or 2.4 billion out of 3.3 billion phone subscribers at end of 2007 being active users of the Short Message Service. In countries such as Finland, Sweden and Norway, over 85%

of the population use SMS. The European average is about 80% and North America is rapidly catching up with over 60% active users of SMS by end of 2008. The largest average usage of the service by mobile phone subscribers is in the Philippines with an average of 27 texts sent per day by subscriber.

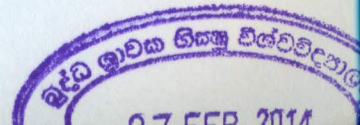
In fact, Hannu Lunshala in Finland has written a novel called *'The Last Messages'* including thousand messages (Lakbima- Mandakiniya (pp26)).

Nonetheless, it is now a living medium. Text messages are used to co-ordinate everyday events to maintain social networks and in a way it helps entertaining oneself in boring moments. The article *'The Sociolinguistics of SMS': Analysis of SMS use by a random sample of Norwegians* by Rich Ling and Telenor R&D states in the words of 17 year old boy "Often when you are sitting on the bus and subway it is boring and you can write messages and that entertains you in those boring moments."<sup>2</sup>

According to Bodomo (2009) new communication technologies do not only generate new forms and uses of language, but also new forms of literacy which are associated with the introduction and uses of new technologies. This holds true for SMS communication.

A major element of SMS communication is its limitation of 160 characters per message has affected the message to be compacted to fit in this limit while managing the communication effectively. Therefore, one has to think how

2. Lyons, J, Semantics, Cambridge University Press, page 63



to best phrase the message in order to fit in the message. This need has led to creativity to follow the methods like word shortening, abbreviations, use of numerals, graphemes and single pronounceable letters to stay within the character limit. This creativity is particularly popular amongst the youth users. Thurlow and McKay (2003) aptly put it that certainly, new communication technologies can empower younger people and many do indeed explore and develop imaginative ways of making technology work best for them. The creativity makes SMS language to be kind of independent written register and it can be used in a free way just like speech between very close friends.

The web article on “Mobile Communication and Society” mentions one of the features that should be highlighted about SMS is that direct contact is not necessary. Therefore, texting turns out to be a more relaxed way of communicating feelings. The article further states “Texting helps teenagers to overcome awkwardness and inhibitions and to develop social and communication skills with more people more frequently than they did before mobiles”.

The following passage is a summary of the plot of *Pride and Prejudice* which has been translated into texting by SMS users. (M. Maphahlele & K Mashamaite, (2005)

“Five sisters wanting husbands. New men in town: Bingley and Darcy. Fit and loaded. Big sister Jane falls for Bingley second sister Liz hates Darcy because he is proud. Turns out Darcy is actually a really nice guy

and really fancies Liz. She decides she likes him. Everyone gets married.”

“5SistrsWntngHsbnds, NwMeninTwnBingly&Darccy. Fit&Loadd.BigSisJaneFals4B,2ndSisLizH8sDCoZhesProud.TrasOutDsActulyARlyNysGuy&RlyFancysLiz. SheDecydsSheLyks Him. Evry1GtsMaryd.”

### SMS as a Discourse

Fairclough (2003) observes that the SMS discourse can be classified with respect to communicative features and the technologies employed in terms of two distinctions: one way vs two way communication and mediated vs non mediated communication. SMS discourse is an example of one way mediated communication which is asynchronous as it takes place in “postponed time” as Crystal (2001:9) refers, where there is a time lag between the composing/sending and receiving/reading of the message. As David Crystal observes, The electronic medium.... presents us with a channel which facilitates and constraints our ability to communicate in ways that are fundamentally different from those situations. Many of the expectations and practices which we associate with spoken and written language... no longer obtain (2001:5)

Similarly, Zitzen and Stein (2004:983) present that a new medium has opened up in addition to the two older media of written and spoken language and SMS is supposed to be the third medium.

According to the findings of Dushyanthi Mendis ,the high degree of linguistic variation that SMS discourse allows causes to situate it within the conventional parameters since SMS discourse is still a relatively a new genre like the language of internet. Besides, David Crystal claims SMS discourse is still in the state of transition and therefore “ .....has no rules in the sense of universally agreed modes of behaviour established by generations of usage” (2001:15)

Further, it is explained how the lack of rules has resulted variations in spelling, abbreviations, and truncations. SMS senders use some of the abbreviations and truncations with the influence of e-mail and chat discourse such as tks (thanks) u (you) nite(night) etc for their ease and promptness of typing. As Crystal observes the small screen size and limited space has motivated the evolution of an even more abbreviated language than that of chat groups and virtual worlds” (2001:228) in the language of SMS.

According to Kasesniemi and Rautiainen messages often bear resemblance to code than to standard language. A text message filled with code language is hardly accessed by an outsider. Further, they point out even a mistake in one letter or typing error would create a new term.( 2002: 183 -184).

The table given in the article later on resembles the SMS dictionary that Vodacom provides to its clients when one purchases a cell phone.

## Features of SMS Language

The researchers have been identified the features of SMS as follows.

**Graphones:** The graphone is a feature of SMS language in which words are written the way they pronounced. This comes from the words graphic (written presentation) and the phone (speech sound) According to the wikipedia on SMS, it was identified below text devices.

### Single letters can replace words. Examples:

- Be becomes b
- See becomes c
- Are becomes r
- You becomes u
- Why becomes y

### Single digits can replace words. Examples:

- Ate becomes 8
- For becomes 4
- To or too becomes 2

### A single letter or digits can replace a syllable. Examples:

- Activate becomes activ8
- Great becomes gr8
- Mate becomes m8
- Later becomes l8r
- Plates becomes pl8s
- For or fore becomes 4
- Before becomes b4
- Therefore becomes there4

There are miscellaneous adaptations of characters.

Examples:

- Ss becomes \$
- -orr- becomes oz
- Oo becomes %

For example, Sorry Soz, and Tomorrow becomes Tomoz

Combinations can be shortened to single or multiple words.

Example:

Your and you are both become ur.

### Emoticons

Emoticons are combination of symbols or characters where the writers can effectively and vividly convey how they really feel through their facial expressions in e-mail, sms and online chat. They are emotional graphics, visual ways to express the way how you feel when word alone just are not enough and one emoticon can be used to replace the whole expression what the texter wants to say. These are so critical in expressing opinions and attitudes in moderating social relationships. Hence, they help to give the reader a sense of the writer's feelings behind the text and also let the writers to save their space in a message. These pictorials are represented by punctuation and letters. The use of emoticons can be traced back to the 19th century, and they were commonly used in casual and humorous writing. Digital forms of emoticons on the Internet were included in a proposal by Scott Fahlman of Carnegie Mellon University in a message September 1982. There are two varieties of emoticons such as Western Emoticons and Eastern Emoticons.

The following two basic types of emoticons represent the positive and the negative attitudes.

:-) or :)    :-( or :(

According to the book 'Mobile communication and society' which was explored on in Netherlands, the use of smileys or the emoticons and various facial expressions has a noteworthy development. These non verbal expressions have been originated from online chatting, instant messaging and e-mail. Therefore, it is mentioned that the mobile communication extends existing practices and by so doing further shapes the technology for the purpose of intimate relationship. The multiple emotions which can be expressed through coded language broaden the scope of interpersonal communication beyond the constraints of standard language.

Although hundreds of emoticons have been proposed, only a few are in common use. These include:

:-)"smiley face" (for humour, laughter, friendliness, occasionally sarcasm)

:-("frowny face" (for sadness, anger, or upset)

;-) "half-smiley" (ha ha only serious); also known as "semi-smiley" or "winkey face".

## Symbols, Abbreviations and Use of Characters in Text Messages

David Crystal, in his book Language and the Internet, has mentioned some features of Netspeak. According to him, the acronyms which are used in sms are no longer restricted to words or short phrases, but can be sentence length.

AYSOS - Are you stupid or something

CIO - Check it out

CID - Consider it Done

### More Details on SMS Terms

#### A

Alwz - Always

ATB - All the best

ATM - At the moment

A3 - Anytime, Anywhere,  
Anyplace

ASL - Age, Sex, Location

#### C

C - See

CU - See you

CMON - Come On

Cmi - Call me

CUB L8R - Cal you back  
later

#### B

B4 - Before

BBS - Be back Soon

BF - Boyfriend

B4N - Bye for now

BHL8 - Be home late

#### D

Dk - Don't know

DNR - Dinner

doN - Doing

Dur? - Do you remember?

#### E

EZY - Easy

E2eg - Ear to ear grin

EOD - End of discussion

EOL - End of lecture

EVRY1 - Everyone

#### G

GF - Girlfriend

GR8 - Great!

B9 - Genius

GG - Good Game

#### I

IAC - In any case

IC - I see

ILU - I love you

IUSS - If you say so

IYD - In your dreams

#### K

KC - Keep cool

KIT - Keep in touch

KHUF - Know how you  
feel

#### F

FAQ - Frequently asked  
questions

F2F - Face to face

F2T - Free to Talk

FITB - Fill in the blank

FYI - For your information

#### H

h2cus - Hope to see you  
soon

Ht4U - Hot for you

H8 - Hate

HAGN - Have a good nite

HTH - Hope that helps

#### J

J4F - Just for fun

JK - Just kidding

JstCllMe - Just call me

JFK - Just for kicks

#### L

L8 - Late

L8r - Later

Lyn - Lying

LOL - Loughing out loud

LUV - Love

<b>M</b>	<b>N</b>
Mob – Mobile	NA – No access
MYOB – Mind your own business	NC – No comment
MUSM – Miss you so much	No1 – No one
MGB – May god bless	NITING – Anything
MU – Miss you	NE – Any
<b>O</b>	<b>P</b>
OIC – oh, I see	PCM – Please call me
OTOH – On the other hand	PLS – Please
O4U – Only for you	poSbl – Possible
	PUKS – Pick Up Kids
	PTB – Please Text Back
<b>Q</b>	<b>R</b>
QT – Cute	R – Are
	RGDS – Regards
	RLR – Earlier
	RUOK – Are you OK?
<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
SC – Stay cool	T+ - Think positive
shopN – Shopping	Tks – Thanks
SK8 – Skate	THNQ – Thank you
SME1 – Someone	Thx – Thanks
SRY – Sorry	TUL – Tell you later

<b>U</b>	<b>V</b>
U – You	VRI – Very
U2 – You too	
Ur4Me – You are for me	
UR – You Are	
UI! - You Idiot	
<b>W</b>	<b>X</b>
W@ - What	XO – Kiss and hug
W8N – waiting	XLNT – Excellent
WB – Welcome Back	XclusvlyUrs – Exclusively yours
W4u – Waiting for you	
W84M – Wait for me	
<b>Y</b>	<b>Z</b>
Y – Why?	ZZZZZ – Sleeping

As Doring points out (2002) the texter should possess a knowledge to understand the abbreviations and acronyms and consequently how to use. Further, he mentions the adept use of these personalized codings is an indicator of group affiliation and a constituent of group identity. Therefore, mass media label SMS communication as the secret code of youth or as the big SMS action against long sentences.

As he has observed, the status of capitalization varies greatly. There is a tendency to use of capitals or no capitals not at all. In fact new spelling convention has emerged, such as replacement of plural -s by -z. For example, downloadz, filez.



Even though non-standard spelling in standard language heavily penalized spelling errors, David Crystal has stated those would not be assumed to be an indication of lack of education in the Netspeak, but purely a function of typing inaccuracy.

Moreover, these non-standard spelling reflect pronunciation to a greater extent such as yep,yup,yay,nope,noooo for yes and no or such forms as kay and sokay (It's Okay), use of varying numbers of vowels and consonants to express shock, horror depending on its ferocity such as aaaaiiiiiieeeee, yyyyyyyyy. According to Sandra Barsa & Maarten Mous have noticed mechanisms which are used to speech like qualities for example stress and tone in order to achieve the intended impact similar to oral speech. Vowels, consonants and punctuation marks are repeated in messages in order to achieve emphasis and verbal impact just like in actual speech. The example given below is based on vowel repetition.

- a) Niceeeeeeee videooooo..... = 'Nice video'
- b) Had soooooo much fun = 'Had so much fun'
- c) Woooooooow = 'wow'
- d) Whaaaaaaat???????????? = 'What?'
- e) Byeeeee = 'bye'

The next few examples display the repetition of consonants in order to stress like in actual speech.

- a) Fffffffyn = 'fine'
- b) it's verrrrrrryyyyyy good!!!!!! = 'It's very good'

According to their findings other instances of non-standard orthography related to representation of the oral reality which is to capture the actions such as :kiss, laughter

- c. mwahhhhhhhhhh = (kiss)
- d. hahahhahahahaha = (laughter)

The dollar sign replaces S as in Micro\$oft, sign can replace L as in AO. Further David Crystal has also introduced several deviant spellings, such as kool (cool) and fone (phone) and the replacement of a lower case O by a zero as in doooz (dudes) and l0zers in (lozers) or percentage sign as in c%l.

K is used as an emphatic prefix producing such forms as k - kool, k awesome and kk- all right

According to David Crystal's view punctuation is minimal factor in most situations and completely absent sometimes. As he defines some e-mailers are scrupulous about marinating a traditional punctuation; others use it when they have to, to avoid ambiguity and some do not use it at all, as a consequence of typing speed. On the other hand, there is an increased use of symbols such as .....

Emphasis and attitude can result in exaggerated or random use of punctuation such as !!!!!1 or .....

Some users mark imaginary actions or facial expressions by asterisks. \*grin) groan but more widely used convention is the angle bracket. E.g ( )

The phenomenon of verb reduplication is not a universally encountered feature. A verb is used twice in immediate succession to express a range functions, such as an expression of pleasure or pain or sarcastic .

*You should see the reaction Flame flame*

*How about Lose, Lose*

SMS can be identified as standard or accepted variety being used in the Sri Lankan context by the mobile phone users. So, there is a high importance of this particular aspect to be addressed and make the avenues for further researches.

### Present Context about Use of SMS in Sri Lanka

While it can be seen a phenomenal growth in the global context, there is a considerable amount of usage of SMS language in the Sri Lankan context too. The text messaging became very much popular in Sri Lanka when the competition such as Sirasa Super Star began. The winners were selected according to the number of SMS votes that they sent via mobile phones and CDMA phones. Later, SMS rapidly caught the younger generation at large. However, the use of SMS population gradually increased in the Sri Lankan context too with the understanding of its fast benefits for all. Today, it is widely used in the fields like banking, channelling services, advertising, business and media to co-ordinate everyday events.

### Some Interviews Regarding SMS

The interviews were conducted with Suranga Perera from Mobitel Partners and Muditha Guneseckera from Dialog. At the interview held with Customer Care Manager-VAS and International services at Mobitel, mentioned that SMS came into existence in 1996 after launching of GSM technology. In fact, to the question whether SMS should be established as a standard language, he suggested to form a SMS dictionary which would be very helpful for the users who do not know the shorten forms and to maintain

consistency among the users of SMS. So he was in favour of establishing SMS as a code within the social network. Muditha Gunersekera from Dialog also mentioned that it is required to have common and shared knowledge of SMS within the social network to have an effective communication among everybody in the communication system. As Dialog has done propagandas to promote SMS from its inception in Sri Lanka, it is much aware about the necessity of having a common and unique code which helps the effective communication.

### Observatory Data about SMS Usage in Sri Lankan Society

According to the observations of my research, the corpus of SMS has been gathered from friends, relatives and service providers. Since the research paper is so limited to a particular number of pages, the full version of SMS is not included here, but the necessary parts are included to focus on the topic.

1) **I gave em 2 my frnds, 2 ppl who wrk @amma's office, 1 2 an undergraduate etc. Prject z fine. tnx. whn d u need e papers back? By tuesday i cn collect ol f em.by.**

The above message was sent by a student who is doing English as a subject for A/L s. Here **<em>** refers to **them in the standard language**. The full word friends has been abbreviated to **<frnds>**. Instead of the word to, the number **<2>** has been replaced. **Ppl, wrk , prject, whn, d, u, e, cn, tnx** refer to the full words people work, project, when, **do, you, the can** and thanks. The symbol **@** is used replace the word at. The word is has been replaced by one letter i.e **z**. The word **all** is translated into SMS language **ol** as it is pronounced. No

capitalizations are used for **I** in the latter part of the sentence and the proper noun Tuesday has been texted as Tuesday without stick into the rules of capitalization.

## 2) Cal me asap

The message was received from an Assistant Director who works at the Ministry of Education to inform regarding a workshop. It is apparent that the SMS is being used for official purposes at the administrative level. The mechanism, acronym is used here to replace "as soon as possible" <asap>. The first letter of each word is used to form the acronym in this mechanism. However, there is a laxness in punctuations at the end the sentence. The use of punctuation in SMS is very selective.

## 3) Hi good morning ur coming 2day?

This has been sent by an executive of a private bank. The sender wants to know whether the receiver is coming today. Instead of starting **Are u** the sender texts **ur** which means to say **you are coming today?** Though syntactical structure is being different from the standard language, the question mark here in the message implies the state of a question what the sender wants to ask.

## 4) Y ur silent?

It has been observed that unlike in the standard language, the syntactic order is highly ignored in the SMS language. Instead of <Why are u silent?> the helping verb <are> has been omitted in SMS language.

5) A text message received by an undergraduate, **gt da 4tocpy & bt da buk hd borrwd by sme1.also it's nly fr da lecturers. Searchd mo. Bt cudnt find any 2dy. wil try 2mrw.**

Syntactic structure is completely ignored where there is no subject at the beginning of the message. Most words are replaced by numbers as the word in the standard language has the phonetic resemblance to a number. For example, photocopy, today, tomorrow and someone has replaced by **4tocopy, 2dy and 2mrw.** **sme1.** Also, the words in standard language has been shortened according to the pronunciations such as **buk, cudnt, da,** more respectively book, could not the and more. The word **I** is dropped in the last sentence without losing its coherence in the text message. In fact, the elision of vowels can be noticed in the following words.

*Got becomes gt*

*But becomes bt*

*For becomes fr*

The elision of vowels can be seen in the formation of past tense verbs to a certain extent.

Here the verbs *Searched becomes Searchd*

*Borrowed becomes borrwd*

It is observed that the latter vowels are being omitted remaining the last letter d in the past tense verb in order to indicate the past tense.

6) **No dear, I askd u to send me ur e mail ad so tht I cn send u d word 4mt of d aplicatn. i '1 b going in a while to pay exam fees. 2 bz today.**

The shortening device clipping can be seen in the above message which has been sent by an English Lecturer.

The word e mail **address** has been clipped into ad. The latter part has been completely omitted. The other shorten forms that can be noticed in this message are: **ur**

instead of your, <tht> instead of that, **aplicatn** instead of application, **bz** instead of busy. Besides, the phonetic resemblance is also one outstanding feature in this text message.

For instance,

- Format becomes 4mt
- Too becomes 2
- Be becomes b

7) **Hey grl@ wht tm r u cmng 2dy? wnt 2 go erly nah? K.K. V r also cmng arnd 3. Bs Tc**

This message has been sent by a newsreader working for a famous TV channel who is in twenties. The use of single pronounceable letter <r> for are. Further numbers have been used in place of words that share their pronunciation, e.g. <2> for to and today. The lexicon also has shortened based on its pronunciation also.

The shorten forms:

- *grl instead of girl*
- *Wht instead what*
- *Tm instead time*
- *r instead of are*
- *cmng instead of coming*
- *wnt instead of want*
- *erly instead of early*
- *also instead of also*
- *arnd instead of around*
- *bs instead of budusaranai*
- *Tc instead of Take Care*

8) **Your ref no is 0015259874**

**Appo. No is 23.**

**Appo.time- 6.42 p.m & date 2011-08-30.**

This is received from the E- Channeling service from the Mobitel partners. The text device clipping is outstanding device in this SMS.

*Reference becomes ref*

*Appointment becomes Appo*

The following text message was a New Year wish sent by an undergraduate to another undergraduate.

9) **KnÖck**

**KnÖck**

(><) knock!

(“(Ö”)

(Ö) (Ö)

**Do u have space in ur inbÖx?**

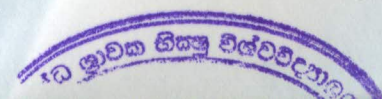
**Can I come in just to sAy**

**“HAPPY NEW YEAR” 2011**

The texters use a lot symbols to add creativity in the message. The symbols such as Ö, >, <, brackets, commas were used to give different shape to the message.

10) **R u ok 2day**

This also has been sent by an executive in a reputed bank which has to be a question but it has been ignored.



- 11) **Xm z k akka.little bit dfflt.bt nt alt. Thnk I v done it well.i  
I be able 2 gt "A" 4 bio. Bs Tc**

<x> is used to incorporate the[k] and [s] sound in the word exam. (an A/I student in suburban area has sent)

- 12) Introducing the new prepaid Mobile internet package from **Dialog!Enjoy 10MB @just Rs 3/- per day!50cents per extra MB. Type DBB3&send to 678.**

The above SMS was sent by mobile service provider.

- 13) **Dear Valued Customer, your bill dated 2010-08-31 is now due. Please make payment. If already settled pls ignored it.**

This is with regard to a bill payment at Mobitel. Here the word please has abbreviated to **pls**. However the messages from the service providers are extremely in formal tone and adhere to standard conventions of grammar, syntax, capitalization and punctuation as illustrated above.

One significant example for dropping of the part of the sentence is: **Whr nw?**

The message was received from a banker who holds an executive post. The helping verb **are** has been left out but still the meaning is remaining.

- 14) The following has been sent by a Course Co-ordinator at a university.

**Gayani, tryd 2 contact u but failed... you r apprvd 4 our course. Pls come 2maro@8 4d lec. Do a general leson on reading 'n' writng.. you can repat d same lec 2 da 10-12 class. Pls confm.**

Past tense verbs were formed by dropping the vowels of the full word. For example, instead of approved the texters use **apprvd** whereas the past tense verb tried was texted according to its pronunciation. Some words are abbreviated by dropping the latter part of the word such as **lec** instead of lecture and other lexical were formed by dropping the vowels such as **leson** instead of lesson, **wrtng** instead of writing, **repat** instead of repeat **confm** instead of confirm.

- 15) **Enjoy BEST ROAMING RATES in INDIA on your Mobitel by selecting AIRCEL. Incoming: Rs 2, Calls within India: Rs 3 & Calls to SL: Rs 20 per min.**

The use capitalization is prominent in this SMS which was received by the Mobitel. Use of capitalization has an emphasis on the receiver. Moreover, the shorten forms are used as such min instead of minute.

- 16) **Aks 'm near da odel.'m up fr shoppin ☺ wil txt u k mwah  
☺ hihi**

The data reveals the instances of non- standard orthography to capture actions like kiss, <mwah>. A smiley face and <hi hi> have also been used for fun and express happiness. Akka which is meant to be sister has been abbreviated into **Aks**.

- 17) **Z amma ok nw? GN BS TC**

This is an SMS which was sent by an undergraduate. The question word is replaced with **Z**. This is due to the phonetic effect which the texter comes across in the spoken variety. The replacement of <s> for <z> is extensively used by the 13-25 age category. The other feature of SMS is the use of initialization such as **GN**

**BS** and **TC** respectively for Good night, Budu Ssarana and Take care is often the result of space constraints.

**18) Fffffffyyyyyn, it's verrrrryyyy good!!!!!!!**

The above example displays the repetition of the consonants in order to achieve stress like in actual speech.

It was noticed the acronyms are very popular among the teens. It seems they are very effective way of expressing one's self. The acronyms used by the teens are , <ROTFL> for Rolling on the Floor, <ASAP> for As soon as possible, <LOL>

**19) Ur call cost is Rs 25**

The other shorten forms commonly and mostly used by the texters as follows.

Word in Standard Language Words in SMS Language

Will	Wil
Check	Chek
Please	Pl, plz
Document	Doc
Converted	Convrted
Education	Edu
download	Download, dounload
sweet	Swt
That	Dat
English	eng
come	com
dictionary	dic

office	ofc
going	gona
university	uni
something	smthin
right	R8
Ok	k

Finally, it is clear from the observed data above that Sri Lankan SMS senders use standard and non-standard ways in sending SMS. It has become so popular due to many programmes conducted by media institutions. With the advanced technology, SMS usage becomes popular in Sri Lankan society.

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