Presentation Title: The sociolinguistic influence of text messaging on writing English

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Introduction

• “The popularisation of writing in text-messaging style, coupled with students’ failure to read widely has been credited at least in part, for the poor results of this year’s Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) English Language examination across the region”

(Jamaica Observer, August 26, 2012)

Introduction

• "The text-messaging style is a very big problem; it comes over into students' style of writing. Instead of writing 'you', they write 'u'; they can't get out of text-messaging mode. I appreciate that while texting you abbreviate for speed and so on, but you have to appreciate the difference between the two and adjust to what is required at the time“, (Jamaica Observer, 2012)
Sociolinguistics

There are several possible relationships between language and society. One is that social structure may either influence or determine linguistic structure and/or behaviour.

(Wardhaush, J, An Introduction to Sociolinguistics, Wiley, 2005)
THE STUDY
“children as linguists”

THE DATA ANALYSIS
Data Analysis:-
“Children as Linguists”

- Phonological Reductions
- Homophones
- Symbols
- Abbreviations
- Jamaican Creole
- English
Phonological reductions, homophones, symbols, Jamaican Creole and abbreviations

TODAY’S FOCUS
Data Analysis - Phonetic Reducions

1. Spelling reduction
2. Spelling reduction + rebus
3. Spelling reduction + Jamaican Creole
4. Rebus
5. Rebus/Jamaican Creole
6. Quasi reduction
Spelling Reduction

Reduction in the spelling of English words.

Sample instances in data

• Away --------- Away
• Bathrm--------bathroom
• Bcuz---------because
• Njoyable----enjoyable
• Xcited--------excited
• Xplain-------explain
Quasi Reduction

The number of letters in the words remain the same, but the word is spelt differently.

**Sample instances in data**

Fare--------- Fair

Eventually------Eventually

Famili----------Family
Spelling Reduction/Jamaican Creole

Reduction in the spelling of English words.

Sample instances in data

- Wusn’t—-wasn’t
- Jum--------jump
- Meri-------merry
- Skool------school
- Ocajon-------occasion
- Ting------thing
Rebus

Use of numerals or symbols instead of corresponding word

Sample instances in data

• $c$ --------- see

• $\text{inno}¥--------inocent$

• $\text{N}---and$
Rebus/Jamaican Creole

Rebus principle applied to JC pronunciations to produce abbreviations, involves replacing the sound value of JC words with letters, numbers or symbols.

Sample instances in data

• d--------the
• e--------he
• 3--------tree
HOMOPHONES
Homophones/English

Replacing an English word with another that is pronounced the same, but different in meaning and spelling.

Sample instances in data

- Meat----Meet
- An---And
Homophone/Rebus/Numeral

Rebus involving a numeral to represent a syllable

Sample instances in data

• 4-------for

• B4-------before

• 2marrow---tomarrow
Homophone/rebus/letter/Numeral

Rebus involving the use of a consonant letter for the onset, and a numeral for the vowel + coda, quite a sophisticated intra-syllabic representation

Sample instances in data

• L8-----late
Complex 
Homophone/Rebus

Complex rebus involving 4 for 'f' and the non-contiguous vowel /o/ with two consonant /r/ and /m/ intended to be separated by that non-contiguous vowel.

Sample instances in data

• 4rm-----from
Homophones/numeral/English

The use of a numeral to represent a number concept, rather than the equivalent word in English.

K is Abbreviation for 'kilo' - thousand

Sample instances in data

0---None

2k10----2010

30K----30,000
Homophone/rebus/Jc

For JC 'wan', i.e. both rebus and JC, reflected in the English translation 'a'

Sample instances in data

1boy----a boy
SYMBOLS
Symbols

Usually used to represent the writer’s state of mind ( :@--shouting), but in this study were used to replace English words.

Sample instances in data

• ❤-----heart

• @---------at
ABBREVIATIONS
Abbreviations

These were use in place of both English and Jamaican Creole expressions.

Sample instances in data

- LOL----Laugh Out Loud
- Bbsot ---Buss out [Buss Out A Laugh]
Data Analysis cont…

JAMAICAN CREOLE (JC)
Jamaican Creole

A spelling change which has no sound value relevance. The 'z' spelling is intended, by contrast with the 's' spelling for English, to signal Jamaican.

Modification of spelling to a more phonemic model for Jamaican, using /ons/ which directly represents a Jamaican pronunciation, by contrast with the English spelling, with its use of 'c' and a silent letter 'e'.

Sample instances in Data

• Az--------as

• bons abot ----bounce-about
Jamaican Creole

The omission of 'n' deviates from JC and English pronunciation, but produces one less letter, i.e. this is a product of texting abbreviation.

A reduction in letter numbers which is a result of the texting medium. The use of 'u' here is consistent with the spelling of the same vowel in the English word 'cut', and seems aimed at spelling Jamaican phonemically, i.e. in a consistent manner, similar to 'cum' ` went previously.

Sample instances in Data

• dace—dance

• cumpar—compare
Conclusion

• Educators are turning a solution into a problem: Text messaging qualifies as a New Literacy because it is based on a communication medium, Language Choice and the use of orthographic conventions in a diglossic situation.

• The text messaging style of writing requires use of a range of linguistics and literacy skills, which are not necessarily required by regular writing.

• The texting medium is fairly new, but is an integral part of the digital world.
Recommendation

• The Caribbean education system needs to find ways to use this writing system in the teaching learning process as the skills that it requires are the same ones that educators say children need to hone, if they are to be considered functionally literate citizens.
Questions

R u cum in round
18r. I got sumin 4
ur ;-) xx