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An Appraisal of the Use of the Cellphones and the Short Message Service (SMS) Language as a Teaching and Learning Aid in a Tertiary Learning Environment

Mobile learning emphasizes the use of portable electronic devices to enhance learning, in contrast with the traditional use of learning aids such as the chalkboard, overhead projectors, and flip-charts etc. which are confined to a classroom environment. This paper advocates for the use of cellphones as an aid to enhance learning. Emphasis is put on the importance of the short message service (SMS) language by both the educator and the learner to facilitate learning especially in a tertiary environment.

The short message service (SMS) language is an interlingual act of communication. It amalgamates numerals, symbols and letters to convey a message. This language does not adhere to the grammatical rules and structure of the English language in an academic situation. According to Houghton Mifflin Company (2004) "grammar is the study of structural relationships in a language, including pronunciation, meaning and linguistics history".

The primary advantage of the use of cellphones and the SMS language is that teaching and learning takes place even outside the classroom situation. This provides a convenient environment of learning to learners who because of working commitments and time constraints could not sit behind the desk all day long.

The emerging SMS language is widely used socially by children, adults and the advertising companies for communication purposes. It is convenient, affordable and it saves time. It is an undisputable fact that the accelerating SMS language influences the English language. It affects the students as it is neither a standardised nor a recognised language that is acceptable in the learning situation. The students use the SMS to communicate in classrooms, through reports, tests and assignments given. The SMS language affects the students in the sense that teachers do not accept it as it is not a standard language. The purpose of this paper is to appraise the use of cellphones and the SMS language, and advocate for the use of the device to complement the traditional methods of teaching and learning. Lexicographers should also be brought on board to standardise and record this SMS language.