

**Orthographic practices in SMS
text messaging as a case
signifying diachronic change in
linguistic and semiotic
resources**

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Abstract

Orthographic practices in SMS text messaging as a case signifying diachronic change in linguistic and semiotic resources

From 1998, SMS text messaging diffused in the UK from an innovation associated with a small minority, mainly adolescents, to a method of written communication practised routinely by people of all ages and social profiles. From its earliest use, and continuing to the time of writing in 2015, SMS texting has attracted strong evaluation in public sphere commentary, often focused on its spelling.

This thesis presents analysis of SMS orthographic choice as practised by a sample of adolescents and young adults in England, with data collected between 2000 and 2012. A three-level analytical framework attends to the textual evidence of SMS orthographic practices in situated use; respondents' accounts of their choices of spelling in text messaging as a literacy practice; and the metadiscursive evaluation of text messaging spelling in situated interaction and in the public sphere.

I present analysis of a variety of representations of SMS orthographic choice, including facsimile texts, electronic corpus data, questionnaire survey responses and transcripts of recorded interviews. This mixed methods empirical approach enables a cross-verified, longitudinal perspective on respondents' practices, and on the wider significance of SMS orthographic choice, as expressed in private and public commentary. I argue that the spelling used in SMS exemplifies features, patterns, and behaviours, which are found in other forms of digitally-mediated interaction, and in previous and concurrent vernacular literacy practices. I present SMS text messaging as one of the intertextually-related forms of self-published written interaction which mark a diachronic shift towards re-regulated forms of orthographic convention, so disrupting attitudes to standard English spelling. I consider some implications represented by SMS spelling choice for the future of written conventions in standardised English, and for teaching and learning about spelling and literacy in formal educational settings.

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List of abbreviations

AQA	Assessment and Qualifications Alliance
ASCII	American Standard Code for Information Interchange
CMC	Computer Mediated Communication
GSM	Global System for Mobile communication (originally <i>Groupe Speciale Mobile</i>)
HO	Hyperstandardised Orthography
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
IRC	Internet Relay Chat
IRL	In real life
ITA	Initial Teaching Alphabet
IWD	Interactive Written Discourse
LOL	Laughing out Loud
MLA	Modern Languages Association
NML	New Media Language
NOP	Normative Orthographic Palette
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
OMG	Oh my God
OOP	Occupational Orthographic Practices
OpRF	Oppositional Recontextualising Field
ORF	Official Recontextualising Field
POP	Popular culture Orthographic Practices
PopRF	Popular culture Recontextualising Field
PPRF	Popular and Pre-emptive Recontextualising Field
PreRF	Pre-emptive Recontextualising Field
PRF	Pedagogic Recontextualising Field
RP	Received Pronunciation
SES	Standard English Scholarship
SMS	Short Message Service
SNS	Social Networking Sites
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
T9	Text on 9 keys (or predictive text entry)
VOP	Vernacular Orthographic Practices

VRF	Vernacular Recontextualising Field
WAP	Wireless Application Protocol

Key to phonemic symbols (RP and similar accents)

Consonants

p	<i>pick, leap</i>
b	<i>break, bark</i>
t	<i>tea, taste</i>
d	<i>dog, wide</i>
k	<i>king, cupboard</i>
g	<i>get, giggle</i>
tʃ	<i>chirp, fetch</i>
dʒ	<i>judge, jam</i>
f	<i>find, laugh</i>
v	<i>view, heavy</i>
θ	<i>think, teeth</i>
ð	<i>there, breathe</i>
s	<i>sleep, pass</i>
z	<i>zest, laze</i>
ʃ	<i>ship, fish</i>
ʒ	<i>leisure, pleasure</i>
h	<i>history, hope</i>
m	<i>make, ham</i>
n	<i>noise, pin</i>
ŋ	<i>ring, think</i>
l	<i>listen, fall</i>
r	<i>rattle, wriggle</i>
j	<i>yellow, young</i>
w	<i>water, wait</i>
ʔ	<i>(glottal stop)</i> <i>depart<u>ment</u>, foot<u>ball</u></i>

Vowels

ɪ	<i>fit, intend</i>
e	<i>dress, bed,</i>
æ	<i>trap, bad</i>
ɒ	<i>lot, odd, wash</i>
ʌ	<i>strut, mud</i>
ʊ	<i>foot, good</i>
i:	<i>fleece, feet</i>
ɑ:	<i>start, father</i>
ɔ:	<i>thought, law</i>
ɜ:	<i>nurse, stir, learn, refer</i>
ə	<i><u>a</u>bout, standa<u>rd</u></i>
ɪ	<i>happy, radi<u>a</u>te</i>
u	<i>infl<u>u</u>ence, situ<u>a</u>tion</i>
u:	<i>goose, two</i>

Diphthongs

eɪ	<i>face, take</i>
aɪ	<i>price, time</i>
ɔɪ	<i>choice, boy</i>
əʊ	<i>goat, show</i>
aʊ	<i>mouth, loud</i>
ɪə	<i>near, here</i>
eə	<i>square, fair</i>
ʊə	<i>poor, jury, cure</i>

Note on transcription and other presentational conventions

Phonemic and orthographic representations are enclosed in different types of bracket with lexical items shown in capitals.

- 1) Phonemic / / , for example, /v/ in [wɒt] or [hwɒt].
- 2) Orthographic <>, for example <wot> or <what>.
- 3) Phone keypad text entry sequences for letters: <you> is <999[pause]777 [pause]88> in body text and <999_777_88> in tables.
- 4) Lexical or dictionary entry items are capitalised. For example, WOT or WHAT.
- 5) Specialised software applications are set out in capitals and italics. For example, *CONCORD*
- 6) Codes applied to data in Chapter 7 are capitalised and underlined. For example, Code PHONETECH for classificatory coding of a phone technology contextual pressure.
- 7) The transcript in Appendix VIII uses no specialised linguistic conventions and is set out in the manner of a script; similarly, the transcribed interviews excerpted from the *All Talk* materials (Blake & Shortis *et al.* 2011).
- 8) Titles of books and related resources are set out in italics. For example, *All Talk (ibid.)*
- 9) Some key terminology is set out in bold. For example: **respelling**

Orthographic choices in this thesis

Choices of spelling, hyphenation and related presentational details are salient in a thesis focused on orthographic choice. The aspiration of consistency is problematic in a field of enquiry which features so many respellings, neologisms, brand hypernyms and partially-assimilated variants, often from US or globalised American-English contexts. I have followed the current normative conventions of British standard English, with some more specialised terms and concepts spelt as they featured in their original sources. I have hyphenated certain compounds that are collocated frequently. In a study of spelling developed along historical principles, *OED* citations are valuable for juxtaposing normative conventions over time: <tea spoon> in the eighteenth century became a <tea-spoon> before becoming a <teaspoon>. In the late twentieth century, <electronic mail> became <E-mail > and <e-mail> before it became <email>. Normative forms change over time, inevitably.

Websites and other sources of online reference

I accessed the referenced websites in October 2014 unless otherwise specified.

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Orthographic practices in SMS text messaging as a case signifying diachronic change in linguistic and semiotic resources



Figure 0.1 Stock image of texting on a mobile phone using a twelve button keypad from around 2004

Volume I: Thesis

FINDING that, of this Child, which I have so long nourished in private, some imperfect rumours are spread abroad; and, exciting curiosity, have moved my friends and others to discourse variously about it; I have thought proper to let it go into the world, and speak for itself. And though it may appear awkward or deficient, for want of that farther education which I intended to have procured for it, under the advice of those learned persons, to whom I made it known last year; yet reflecting on the many advantages of a more public schooling, I am resolved to keep it at home no longer:

Figure 0.2 From prefatory letter to Sir John Pringle, President of The Royal Society, September 1775, (Steele 1779:v)

1. Introducing the argument and its temporal framework

Setting SMS orthographic choice in the mediascape of related varieties

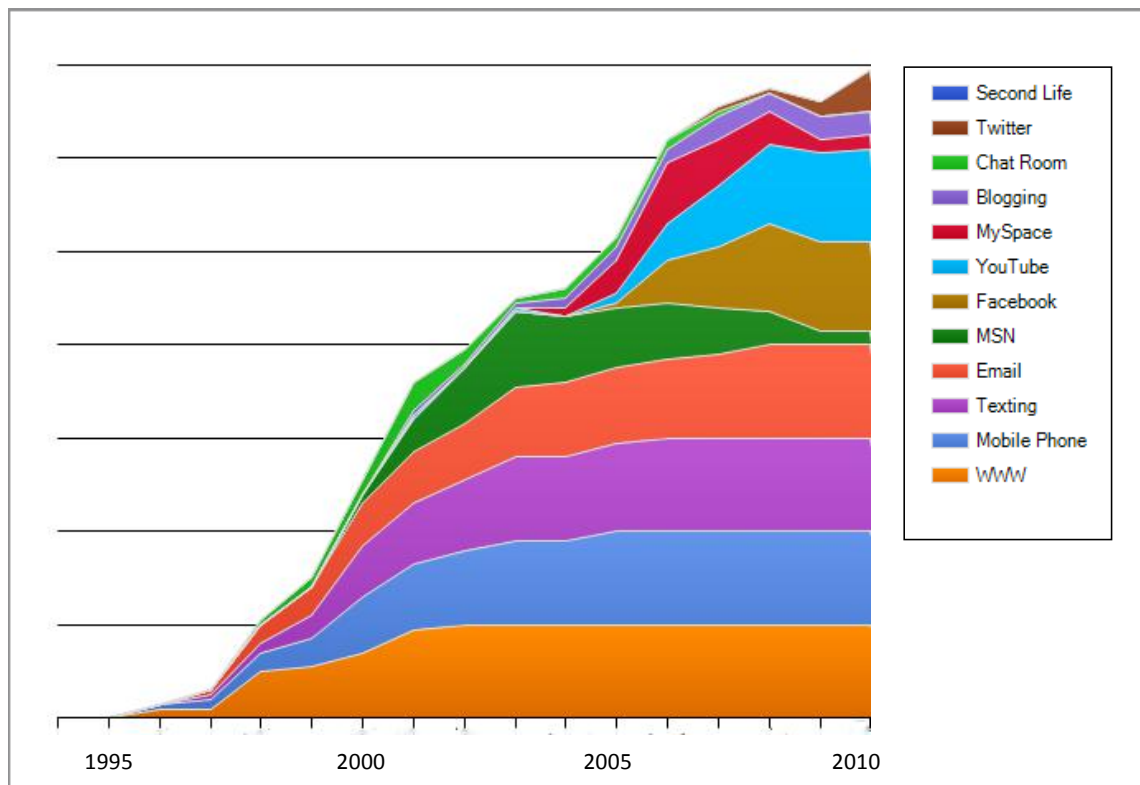


Figure 1.1 The aggregated digital 'mediascapes' of 45 UK undergraduates in their early twenties (2010)

[There is a] tendency for CMC scholarship to follow in the wake of the latest popular technologies, in an attempt to get a descriptive fix on their affordances and emergent cultures of use....Yet, although this technology-driven agenda may seem justified, it suffers from a systematic bias: it overestimates the novelty of much CMC, and underestimates the effects of social forces such as mass popularization, according to which mundane uses of technologies tend to co-opt their destabilising potentials over time.....Could it be that the CMC of chatrooms, web boards, text messaging on mobile phones, blogs, and such like is also on its way to becoming mundane and ordinary? If so, how can this trajectory be reconciled with the perception of seemingly endless technological innovation?

Herring 2004;27

[R]esearchers would do well to take a step back from the parade of passing technologies and consider more deeply the question of what determines people's use of mediated communication. In addition to technological determinism, the effects of time, familiarity, and mass popularization would need to be theorised and investigated.

Herring 2004;34

1.1.1 SMS orthographic choices in time and over duration

From the time of their popular uptake in the UK in the second half of the 1990s, mobile phones transformed the means of social interaction, with the possibility of perpetual contact and relatively low economic barriers to user participation; advantages which afforded their rapid spread from a luxury to a mass accessory (Agar 2002, Aakhus & Katz 2002, Taylor & Vincent 2005, Baron 2008). From 1998 SMS text messaging diffused in the UK from an innovation localised to a minority of ‘early adopters’, mainly adolescents, to a literacy practice used routinely by people of all ages and social profiles, with broadly comparable patterns of abrupt, rapid spread to near ubiquitous use in many other settings across the globe.¹ By comparison with all other digitally-mediated writing, texting on mobile phones has been taken up with an exceptional pace and scale of diffusion, in spite of the earlier unfamiliar and awkward modes of text entry associated with writing on phones.

SMS texting has attracted strong evaluation in the public sphere discourses of news media commentary and related coverage, often focused on the practices around choices of spelling (Thurlow 2006, Carrington 2005b, Crystal 2008). Orthographic practices in SMS have been evaluated as being esoteric and problematic in the context of popular debates about claimed falling standards of literacy, especially among young people (e.g. Sparks 2012). SMS has attracted equivalent metadiscursive controversy in many other nation-states and languages (Fortunati 2002, Ling 2002, Castells *et al.* 2004, Spilioti 2006, Frehner 2008). The evidence offered in this study suggests such discourse also reflects divergent, often strongly-held opinions, as expressed in interactions between peers, colleagues and family members; these reveal a common anxiety, contestation and discord about what is thought to constitute literate accomplishment in digitally-mediated forms of writing. According to the evidence presented in this thesis, such anxieties appear to persist and alter in the course of respondents’ unfolding biographical trajectories, suggesting the lived difficulty in settling on appropriate literate and orthographic choices for a new sociotechnological practice in the absence of established conventions of usage. In contrast, empirical study of textual data has suggested that notions of SMS as a radical innovation in language are exaggerated, and that texting is linguistically unremarkable, while offering new communicative affordances (Thurlow 2003). Although it may be that the spellings used in SMS are ‘linguistically unremarkable’ and can be found to have pre-existing antecedents, as I show, the phenomenon of mass-diffused, screen-mediated, dyadic interactive writing, conducted remotely using handheld accessories, does represent a new sociotechnological innovation, and is new from a sociolinguistic perspective.² It seems that SMS spelling choice has functioned as a focus for social concern about what constitutes accomplishment in literacy and legitimate orthographic choice in new sociotechnological forms at a time of ‘accelerated social and technological change’ (Herring 2004, above). And such change can appear ‘seemingly endless’, to use Herring’s formulation, in the successive waves of different forms of digitally-mediated communication introduced over the past twenty years (*ibid.*).

1.1.2 Texts in time: the temporal context of this study

In this study I am concerned with orthographic practices in SMS as a case signifying contested, sociohistorical, ‘diachronic’ change in linguistic and semiotic resources.³ The reference to semiotics alludes to the provenance of the argument in ‘social semiotics’ (Hodge and Kress 1988, 1993, Kress 1997). The reference to ‘practices’ situates this study in the approaches developed by those engaged in approaches to literacy as a social practice (Street 1984, 1995, Street & Lefstein 2007, Barton 1994, 2006, Pahl & Rowsell 2006, Blommaert 2008). So while I examine the spelling and related graphological effects found in SMS text messages and other digitally-mediated vernaculars, my focus encompasses the social practices, perceived affordances, and ideological valuing which led respondents to make certain choices and for some of those choices to become variably ‘enregistered’ (Agha 2003, see below) in wider recognition and appropriation. My focus is on understanding the issues by close scrutiny of this study’s respondents and their orthographic choices, rather than identifying a language of text messaging (e.g. Thurlow & Poff 2010), a discourse of text messaging (e.g. Tagg 2012) or the notion that text messaging amounts to a determinate archive of linguistic variation from which empirical patterns can be extrapolated and compared. I am also concerned with linguistic and semiotic change seen in a temporal perspective, reflecting the longevity of my observational record, with data sampled back to 1999. Such lengthy duration may act as a corrective to the comparatively short time-frames of empirical studies focused on a field of enquiry which is still nascent. As Herring observed in 2004 (see chapter epigraphs), studies of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) have tended to focus on early diffusion of particular novel digitally-mediated text forms immediately following their introduction. Such constraints have led to a serial record of the features and affordances of texts from particular digital media observed before they have diffused into wider circulation, and without sufficient reference to the texts generated in pre-existing and successive innovations, or to the social processes and practices which might lead to the domestication of such sociotechnological innovation in unremarkable, unremarked ongoing routines, themselves subject to further change. In contrast, the data analysed and presented here has been gathered over the fifteen years which followed the introduction of text messaging in the UK. I examine textual, questionnaire and interview evidence; I consider orthographic choice in SMS by comparison with pre-existing and succeeding digital forms in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and I offer comparison with longer-standing practices in commercial popular culture and in the vernacular life-worlds of home and street.

Fifteen years remains a comparatively short period, but one long enough, perhaps, to observe the beginnings of a process of **‘enregisterment’**: the social dynamic of cultural transmission by which an innovation comes discursively into common, if contested social recognition (Agha 2003, 2005, 2007, Adams 2009). In this study, the focus is on the process by which the spelling choices deployed as part of a new way of doing writing may have started to sediment into conventions which have variably altered the meaning-making repertoires available to

interactants. I will delineate the orthographic choices of SMS spelling made by respondents and show the evidence for these attaining wider socially valued recognition. I present this ‘extended case’ study (Burawoy 1998) as demonstrating an early and ‘fractional’ phase of enregisterment, with continuing contestation experienced publicly in the realm of public sphere debate, and privately in the anxiety and instability of evaluations made by interactants about their own spelling choices and the choices of others.

In this chapter, I consider the temporal perspective offered by considering the succession of digitally-mediated communicative forms most commonly reported to be in use by this study’s respondents, so starting to situate SMS in its orthographic intertext. Next I offer a graphical representation of the volume of SMS communication in the ten years immediately following 1999, showing its comparative novelty and rarity in the earlier period from which the data-set is sampled. Thirdly, I outline the age of a selection of the study’s key informants, showing how the research focus attends to the longer duration of its participants’ roles and trajectories, with SMS orthographic choice operating as one dimension of an interactant’s (ongoing) **behavioural script**: one resource by which they might manage impressions of their personae. Consideration of these three temporal focuses leads to a discussion of the argument as it is manifest in the sequence of chapters which follows.

1.1.3 SMS in the *mediascape* of digital platform choice over time

The chart on the title page of this chapter presents the results from questionnaire data generated by a sample of third-year UK undergraduates in 2010, reporting their totalled claims of year-by-year use of a selection of various digital media back to 1995, when these 45 students were then aged around six years old.⁴ Each horizontal band represents the claimed use of a particular digital form, with the thickness of the band at the bottom, for example, representing the respondents’ reported use of the web. The chart is constituted by the sequence of the main communicative media which these students had identified as becoming available for early adoption over the fifteen years when they were growing up. The list is not exhaustive but it is representative of the trend of their views. Each of these various media would have presented issues of novice unfamiliarity and informal uptake at a time when each respondent’s command of standardised written English was still emergent. Some of the media which had attracted comparatively extensive academic commentary by the time this survey was administered are relatively scarce in the collective experience reported here. For example, *Internet Relay Chat* (IRC). Others, such as the social networking site *MySpace*, appear to have faded from use as other forms of branded social media became available (e.g. *Facebook*). Others, such as the web, mobile phones, email and text messaging, were reported as having longstanding use by all of the cohort (See Blake and Shortis 2011, Appendix 1).

The chart can be seen as representing the altering mediascape typically reported as being accessed and experienced by the young people in this study: their various options of computer-mediated discourse as these emerged over a comparatively short time, each entailing a complex sociotechnological learning of how to be perceived as credibly literate by other interactants. Most of these CMC forms were learnt about and distributed informally by peer-group pressure rather than by schooled instruction.⁵ Several are referred to by their brand name rather than a more generic hypernym, reflecting a more specific description of which technology was in use, and also denoting the provenance of many digital media in globally-sited commercial agency, rather than sites of print publication, schooling and nation-based linguistic authority. Each form reported here makes its particular demands of the technological and literate capacity of its users without their being offered a programme of guidance in what constitutes preferred literate choice in that particular medium. All make demands on users' familiarity with both sociotechnological procedures and emergent sociopragmatic conventions. For example, the demands of how to navigate a phone's address book or 'T9' options, or the social expectation that a text message or email will receive a swift response. All present their users with choices to be made in literacy practices yet to be established in widely recognised conventions or codified into prescriptions of usage. This situation can be seen as giving rise to a condition of **'literate indeterminacy'**, in which the person concerned makes one-by-one choices of literate accomplishment, including orthographic choices, in the context of a particular sociotechnology of peer-to-peer, self-published interaction. These novel and localised circumstances appear to disturb ideologically-valued, 'sedimented' understanding of there being universally applicable preferences of spelling choice, such as those relayed in schooling and other institutional settings, and defined in authoritative linguistic reference such as dictionaries. They have the potential to give rise to new anxieties about the social differentiation entailed in orthographic choice, including access to a repertoire of forms which will be deemed appropriate in context.

This is not to suggest that this lack of settled, enregistered convention was only a source of anxiety. Respondents in this study gave plenty of evidence that they enjoyed the freedom of participating in a situated literate practice which had not been territorialised by codification, enforced transmission in schooling or other pressures extrinsic to their business of communicating in the way they chose using their preferred, extemporised repertoire of choices.

This study's respondents were engaging with the novelty of the contemporary communicative landscape while undergoing formal education, with its associated apparatus of curricula, testing and meritocratic evaluation of socio-economic capacity by the proxy of examination performance. This included encountering evaluations based on performance in standardised English spelling. Conversely, some older adults using communications technologies – this study's respondents' parents and teachers, for example – had made their own journey through the changing media landscape depicted in the chart, having already undergone the enculturation associated with an extended educational formation. That older demographic group will also

have found themselves novices as they started to read and compose their first text messages, emails or social media postings, with relatively little instruction, so unsettling prior well-established identities and cultural capital earned from performances in previous settings. Being able to write an academic paper does not guarantee technical and literate access to the resources of a social networking site, as Blommaert has argued in his formulation of the construct of ‘truncated repertoires’ (2010;103): linguistic and semiotic signs function as mobile, socio-economic and sociocultural resources, learned in the course of engaging in particular genres of social interaction.

The study presented here has a wider focus. It seeks to place the issue of orthographic practices in the longer perspective invited by Herring in her 2004 article, and to relate aspects of literacy in digitally-mediated vernacular written interaction to the provenance of those forms in global commercialised production at a time when the structures of the nation-state, such as schooling, coexist with social and economic forces which are located outside such institutional frameworks. The argument about this alteration has been made by many scholars of literacy and of globalisation (Gee *et al.* 1996, New London Group 1996, Carrington 2002, 2004, Lankshear & Knobel 2003, Kress 2003, 2010, Pennycook 2003, 2007, 2010, Blommaert 2005, 2008, 2010, Garcia & Wei 2014). It was adumbrated by Louise Pound in her comments on the development and distribution of new conventions of trade spelling in the United States (1923, Chapter 2a below). Herring also suggested that social forces such as ‘mass popularization’...‘tend to co-opt the destabilising potentials’ of particular forms of CMC in a trajectory which ‘slouches’ ...‘towards the ordinary’ (2004;27, epigraph above). By that analogy, innovative orthographic choice in SMS was predicted by Herring to be likely to accommodate towards normative forms of standardised English; meanwhile, such sociotechnological change is ‘seemingly endless’ (*ibid.*).

Figure 1.1 is also a reminder that SMS practices have always been situated as only one medium for the conduct of digitally-mediated interaction among other related options, with the implication that choices innovated and conventionalised in one ‘platform’ might be expected to have some intertextual bearing on choices made in others. As Herring observed (*ibid.*), this likelihood has escaped the attention of the short temporal frames and single-medium focuses characterising CMC research. This study’s respondents routinely reported intertextual influences of other CMCs on their SMS choices, and especially *MSN* instant messaging (Chapters 5, 7 and 8 and appendices). It is possible, then, that the ordinary towards which SMS orthographic choice is ‘slouching’ is in itself a set of social expectations innovated by the successive impact of a sequence of digitally-mediated vernacular forms of writing. In a society in which mass literacy is more commonly framed as a matter of programmatic instruction by the state, out-of-school vernacular literacies will also carry the inevitable contrastive comparison with the normative practices arrived at in schooled and print-based conventions for spelling. This raises two questions examined in the course of this thesis: to what extent do those texting find it

necessary or desirable to have the unitary single spellings that characterise the typesetter's craft in modes of mass publication, in the context that digital writing is screen-mediated, self-published and often narrowcast to peers? Conversely, to what extent do the notionally more permissive orthographic regimes characterising digital media constitute a subordinate register which keeps those texting in such localised vernacular forms from achieving the kind of literate accomplishment which gives access to participation in more powerful domains of interaction, such as those pervading institutional settings? A more heterogeneous set of orthographic practices may be inevitable, but without scrutiny and critique, the social possibilities afforded by this more permissive regime may be misleading, especially in educational settings.

The timescale of this chart is also a reminder of such implications as these apply methodologically to the investigation of research questions in this thesis; what can be seen will depend in part on the temporal window through which it is apprehended (Lemke 2000). This has a particular resonance in a field sometimes termed 'new media' in which the novel, dynamic and mutating nature of the object of study makes it hard to generalise out from findings extrapolated from a particular moment. For example, how would the SMS orthographic choices of the respondents in the chart in 2000, as they became adolescents, compare with those made in their early twenties; how would these data-sets compare with those drawn from their younger siblings? Respondents frequently commented on the choices made by those older and younger than themselves. The importance of such temporal nuances of contextual attention informs some of the critiques of earlier CMC studies: exhaustive logging of technological and linguistic novelty often focused on microlinguistic features such as spelling, extracted from data-logs drawn from particular contexts, and then generalised as if these were representative of a particular CMC medium (Androutsopoulos 2006, Georgakopoulou 2006, Dürscheid & Frehner 2010). It is also the focus of Herring's complaint of a multiple telling of the same story about the early co-option of a novel technosocial form. In order to remain generalisable, a thesis aspiring to characterise the orthographic practices in SMS text messaging will benefit from a data collection method and theorisation which can accommodate and frame such social variation over time.

1.1.4 The diffusion of SMS from niche to mass literacy practice

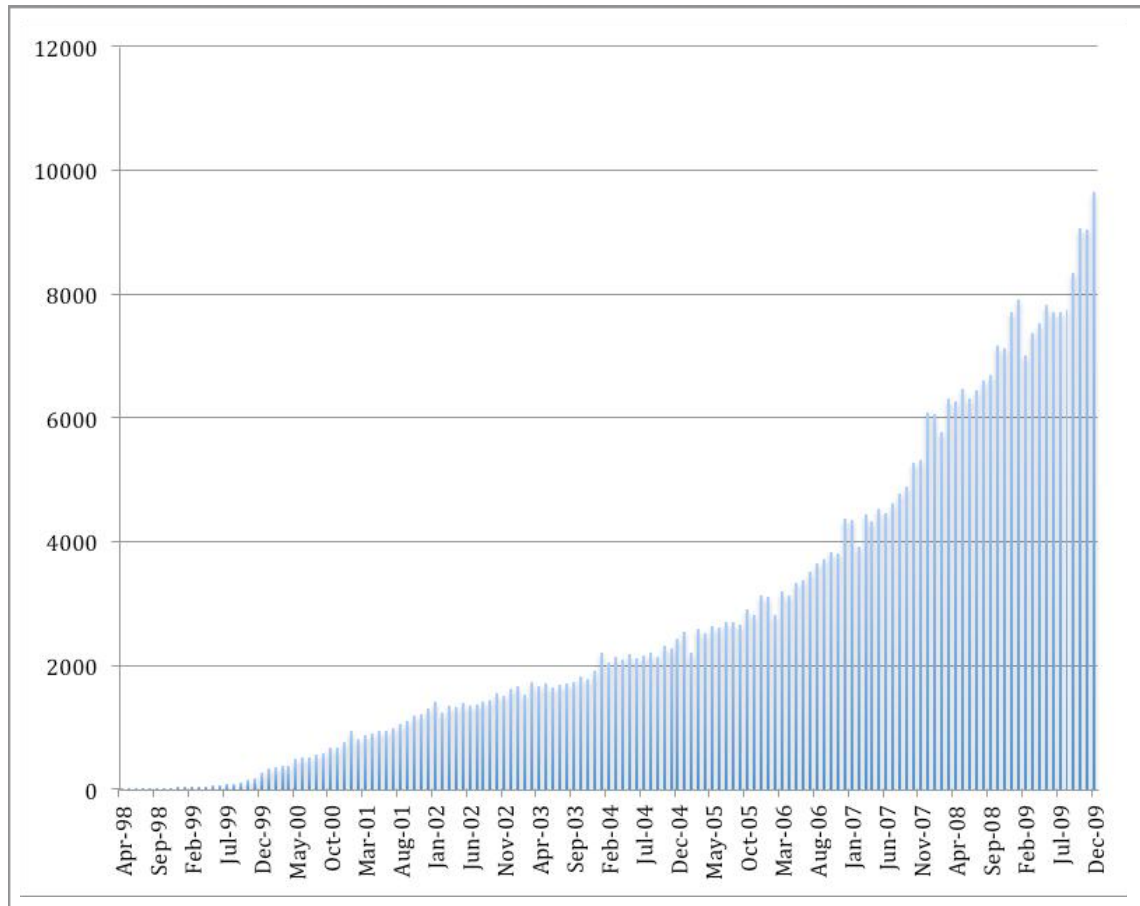


Figure 1.2 The sudden diffusion of SMS in UK monthly totals of text messages (in millions of messages)

This study has a temporal dimension borne of its duration, including the circumstances of its sampling of SMS texts from close to the point of the medium's practical accessibility in the UK (1999), through to its domestication as a mass consumption commodity. Figure 1.2 presents the spread of SMS in the UK, using the proxy of the numbers of text messages sent monthly (THEMDA 2009). The data-set on which this chart is based supports the claims made by respondents in this study that texting was a minority practice in early 2000, when I collected my first SMS corpus in Bristol (SBC 2000, Appendix VI). Numbers of SMS sent increased to about 25% of 2009 levels by 2003 and grew sharply after 2005, a trend which accords with various data-sets in this study which point to SMS as having spread into mass commoditised use by late 2007, when the main questionnaire surveys and college site interviews were administered. In the context of its later popular diffusion in the US (see figure 4.2), European and South Asian adolescents and young adults are believed to have innovated SMS communicative practices, including its associated re-conventionalised spelling choices (Grinter & Eldridge 2001, Ito *et al.* 2005, Baron 2008, overviews in Katz & Aakhus 2002, Thurlow 2003, THEMDA 2009, Figure 4.2 below). Following the diffusion and domestication of SMS, as predicted by Herring (2004), such practices now need to be seen in that context of popular diffusion. Figures for later years say something about the manner of conventionalisation which might be expected along this timeline. For example, some respellings found in 2000 and also frequent in 2007 may have

inscribed a relatively unremarked pre-existing convention in SMS. <U>/<u> for ‘you’ has long featured on UK high streets - for instance , in the brand name <Spud-U-Like> - but attracted a commonplace use and **iconised** status in SMS and related media choice (Sebba 2007;37). In contrast, the lack of fully capitalised text messages in the data-set after about 2003 appears to indicate a transitional practice, in this case in part caused by earlier technological protocols, which then become obsolete. Data-sets drawn from a college in South London may also echo patterns of interlingual ‘crossing’ and merged regiolectal forms observed in contemporary London vernaculars (Sebba 1993, 2003, 2007, Rampton 1994, 2006, Cheshire, Kerwill, Fox, Torgersen 2011). Such correlations may not be found in rural Somerset, one of the other collection sites. Conversely, following Herring’s prediction, as SMS spread out from its early user-base of adolescents and young adults, social expectations of its spelling norms may have broadened or become differently contested, to reflect this wider constituency of participation; in spelling, as in all social interaction, differing profiles of audience participation enregister differing variegated contextual pressures. In Chapter 6, I examine the comparison to be made with Tagg’s contemporaneous corpus of text messages written by slightly older respondents (2009, 2012).

In sum, these two charts illuminate issues of the chronology, sequence and levels of diffusion for SMS and related digital media - examined in chapters five to eight - which give this study a claim to examine changes in linguistic and semiotic resources using a diachronic lens focused on sociocultural contestation over time. They give outline contextual indices for what Herring termed the issues of ‘time, familiarity, and mass popularisation’ (2004;34) which act on people’s communicative choices, including the orthographic dimensions of such preferences, and they suggest the complexity of developing a meaningful account of the idealised construct of ‘orthographic practices in SMS.’

1.1.5 Ages of principal respondents over the study’s duration

It will be seen that I am seeking to locate the study of orthographic choices in SMS from the emic perspective of the respondents in the study and their practices in related digitally-mediated vernacular forms (Duranti 1997;172; chapter 4 below). In a study which samples data longitudinally, there is the related issue of how respondents’ choices, attitudes and practices change over time. If such variation is both patterned and variegated (and I shall demonstrate that it was), what motivates such change and the principles underlying its heterogeneous appropriation? The table below presents a third temporal representation offering a point of reference for reading the data-set presented. It maps the ages over the main phase of data collection for five of the principal interview participants, who also contributed to the textual data scrutinised in Chapter 5 and to the corpus and attestation data. There is a particular focus on respondents born between 1988 and 1990 such as Pete, Marna and Victor, who are from the same age-cohort surveyed for Figure 1.1, and in addition for the main questionnaire surveys undertaken between 2007 and 2009 (Chapter 6). Nine of the main interviewees and contributors

of textual data are from this age group. They started secondary school between 1999 and 2002, just as SMS began to come into popular use. Typically they reported going on to make extensive use of instant messaging on *MSN Messenger* before adopting social networking and content sharing sites (e.g. *Facebook*, *YouTube*) as they progressed to higher education and/or employment. In contrast, Joe and Gemma are two of the four older respondents observed over the duration and represent the earliest adopters of texting in 1999 to 2000; they were in their early thirties as the study finished and well-established in their adult occupational identities. This third table shows that the study has a particular veracity in its description of practices reported by respondents from a particular age range and role: a particular group of the earlier adopters of SMS. These people offered various texts and metadiscursive commentaries between 1999 and 2003 and since. Samples of their texts, including SMS, and their self-reported attitudes and practices around related digitally-mediated vernacular writing have been tracked over the duration. In interviews, all of them reported the same broad sequence of immersion in CMCs outlined in Figure 1.1 although each was also inflected by a particular individual's configuration of experience, repertoire, resources and dispositions. By chance, the focal age range also offers opportunities for comparison with the biographical sample of the slightly older respondents who provided the bulk of the SMS data sampled in Tagg's major corpus-based study of UK text messaging (2009).

Item	Year	Joe	Gemma	Peter	Marna	Victor
1	2000	18	18	12	11	12
2	2001	19	19	13	12	13
3	2002	20	20	14	13	14
4	2003	21	21	15	14	15
5	2004	22	22	16	15	16
6	2005	23	23	17	16	17
7	2006	24	24	18	17	18
8	2007	25	25	19	18	19
9	2008	26	26	20	19	20
10	2009	27	27	21	20	21
11	2010	28	28	22	21	22
12	2011	29	29	23	22	23

Table 1.1 Ages of five of the key respondents over the duration of data collection

1.2.1 Overview of argument

The thesis which follows offers close observation of a period of comparatively sudden diachronic change in linguistic and semiotic resources occasioned by the innovation and subsequent rapid diffusion of a novel, sociotechnologically-mediated method of writing,

distributing and apprehending written, screen-displayed, graphical texts.⁶ Orthographic practices in text messaging are defined as the patterns of choice about spelling and related graphical details made in acts of reading, writing and evaluating choice in SMS. My approach follows the literacy as a social practice model espoused by the *New Literacy Studies* (e.g. Street 1984, 2005), and the application of that framework to orthography considered as a social practice (Sebba 2003a, 2007; chapter 2).

Each act of such reading and writing is treated as a literacy event and, following Agha's construct of the process of enregisterment (2003, 2007), the patterns in such events are envisioned as both specific to their particular contextual motivation, while in accretion, sedimenting into the emergent conventions which develop a pattern of expectation of socially valued choice. Agha's social model of cultural transmission is based on the premise that evaluation of choice, including orthographic choice, is inevitable in any act of cultural production or reception (2003;247, 2007, Chapter 3 below). While the prime focus is on text messaging on mobile phones and this study's data-set draws mainly on that medium, the theoretical and empirical approach situates SMS as the encapsulating example of successive innovations in digitally-mediated written forms. These have come to prominence since the mid-1990s in a technologically-enabled expansion of potentials for remote, synchronous, written, graphical and multimodal interaction. These media, depicted in Figure 1.1, include multimodal assemblages such as websites and video content-sharing in which linguistic resources are combined with (and sometimes subordinated by) extralinguistic and paralinguistic modes.

By way of contrast with such multimedia artefacts, SMS, like email, is a text-based medium and the focus of this particular study is primarily on orthographic resource, subject to comparison with the framing of writing in its standardised forms. By the theoretical perspective of this study, adapted from Bernstein, these new media digital practices are presented as 'horizontal discourses' in which spelling resources have intertextual provenance in each other and in pre-existing conventions sourced in domains of popular culture, vernacular literacy practices and occupational specialism (Bernstein 1996, Shortis 2007a).⁷ In contrast to the trend by which CMC researchers have tended to focus on a particular CMC medium observed over a comparatively short time, the longer perspective deployed in this study provides evidence for the commonality and longstandingness of 'new media' orthographic choice: choices seen deployed in SMS have often been seen before (and since) in other new media, back to those observed by scholars of early forms of CMC (Nelson 1974, 1987, Reid 1991, Jones 1995, Lanham 1993, Turkle 1995, Werry 1996) and before and since in other forms of vernacular literacy practice (Chapter 2).

1.2.2 SMS orthographic choice in its material manifestation

Orthographic practices in SMS lie in the interstices between linguistic and graphical classification, in part because, in popular and vernacular contexts, users may appropriate linguistic and semiotic resources without great regard for discrete distinctions between linguistic and graphical resources. Respondents' testament suggested a focal interest in managing self-presentation by whatever resources were to hand which might achieve intended recognition: linguistic, graphical, temporal, affective including the public performance of the communicative act. In this study, the linguistic design in an exchange of SMS is understood as being situated in its graphical and material realisation, following Jewitt and Kress's formulations of a theory of multimodal social semiotics (Jewitt 2009, Kress 1997, 2010). Any act of notionally linguistic meaning-making in its situated form remains embedded and realised in its material and **geosocial** instantiation, whether that is the sounds and gestures of a conversation, or the remote digitally-mediated interaction of a text message exchange mediated in bodily proximity on a small screen, with constraints of screen representation and awkward text entry: text becomes meaningful in relation to its material situatedness in geographical and social space (Scollon & Scollon 2003, Jewitt 2009). In the case of SMS, the intimacy of address of a particular text seen and manipulated on a handheld device may intensify its localised modality of affect, and the associated semblance-of-intimacy. Such materiality of SMS as graphical instantiation informs the decision to provide graphical information in the representations of the texts quoted.

There is the related issue of the disjunction between a standardised **orthography** which makes systematic, disciplinary and regulative differentiation between scripts, orthographic choices of legitimated spelling, and conventions for the defined use of graphical symbols, and the way this may be operationalised in **hetero-graphic** situated practice. Disciplinary distinctions which assume ideal conditions for standardised composition may be subordinated by other motivational pressures as interlocutors respond *in situ* to localised conditions of socio-economic resourcing and localised social interest in the course of digitally-mediated vernacular interaction extemporised with polyfocal attention to contiguous activity (see Blommaert 2008, 2013 for heterography, Shortis, *in press*, appendices). The orthographic categories honoured by the disciplinary definitions of well-resourced and expert linguists and lexicographers may not achieve an equal measure of recognition or valuing by such participants. Heterogeneous interlocutors engaging with digitally-mediated vernacular interaction will have diverse and differential access to the pre-existing defined boundaries between spelling, font or punctuation devices which might be found in academic discourse. Some respondents, especially adolescents, with a more flexible literate disposition, extemporised freely with the linguistic and semiotic resources they found to hand. Their social interest was a 'mash-up' appropriation, customisation and re-representation in the interests of the user as she operated in her matrix of contextual pressures. Kress identified a similar phenomenon in the indifference of very young children to the demarcation of writing from drawing (1987, 2000). Spitzmüller demonstrated related

permissive freedom of meaning-making in his analysis of Germanic print fonts and punctuation devices in heavy metal texts in popular culture: the semiotics of graphic elements are ‘floating’ with meanings determined by the user (2007, 2012). Harris and others have theorised an integrational approach to communication which focuses on the co-constructed inference of meaning in preference to its modes of transmission (2014).

For example, punctuation conventions, especially those in the ASCII graphabet, have been routinely re-appropriated by interactants in a hybrid sociotechnological syntax where characters both construe meaning and electronically trigger process, as in the repurposing of the aroba <(@)> or the forward and back slash </> (OED, Nelson 1987, Norton 1986, Shortis 2001).⁸ Other punctuation symbols have been appropriated and recombined in **emoji** (Squires, forthcoming), or the prosodic punctuation of initial points (Petrie 1999) without primary regard for their regimented and legitimated denotations as insisted on by pundits (e.g. Truss 2003, Humphrys 2006, 2007). So in this study, SMS is represented as a mainly written form of interaction with some level of play between linguistic and graphical signs. Although a text message will be apprehended by a user as a situated, ‘multi-modal assemblage’, the focus here is primarily on orthographic choice, and therefore mainly-written, graphical choice.

1.2.3 Writing, its circumscription and regulation

The more playful and transgressive innovations in meaning-potentials observed in SMS can be seen as representing an extreme on a continuum of written regulation (Sebba 2007;47). Writing has a very particular status, institutional symbolism and regulative connection with the modern nation-state and its manifestation in schooling, linguistic codification, and print production (Anderson 1991, Joseph 1987, Milroy & Milroy 1991, Crowley 1996, Kress 2000, Blommaert 2010). I develop the argument that spelling choices used in digitally-mediated vernaculars are necessarily juxtaposed with the previously naturalised consensus of words spelt in standardised forms prescribed by authorised institutions; typically a project of codification and transmission associated with developments in Europe between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries (Scragg 1974, Joseph *ibid.*, Leith 1997, Crowley 1996, Mugglestone 2006).

SMS orthographic choice, iterated variously *en masse* in mundane but ubiquitous small acts of meaning-making, appears to have refocused a pre-existing relatively sedimented settlement by which the written word and its spelling have sometimes come to be conflated with their normative exemplification in standardised languages as codified in prescriptive linguistic authorities. Following Agha’s argument about common understanding as enshrined in institutions and other sociocultural artefacts, it is possible that the processes of schooling, print production and institutional effacement of **variational forms** have combined to establish this understanding to the point of its reification: the particularities of ideological choice inherent in standardised forms appear naturalised; variational forms are rendered invisible by their

exclusion from public representation (Langer 2014, Langer & Havinga 2015).⁹ Such misrecognition may lead to the understanding that standard forms of spelling choices are the inevitable preferred and proper approach, in the default model of autonomous literacy (Street 1984, 1995, Sebba 1998). The phenomenon of SMS and its routine disruption of normative expectations may have refocused and disturbed that popular understanding. As Sebba has demonstrated, regulation of spelling in standard language forms co-exists with more permissive variation in less regulated regimes, with some registers more strictly regulated than others (Sebba 2007;47, Chapter 3 below). These zones of regulation remain a matter of emergent but continuing contestation, certainly in the case of digitally-mediated texts. For some respondents in this study, SMS was reported to be a relatively relaxed regime of literate choice, allowing them greater optionality, at least for a while. For others, or for those same people at other points in their social and biographical trajectories, spelling choice in SMS appeared to offer another opportunity for the demonstration of accomplished standardised English, often with corresponding deficit evaluations of different choices made by others. So the picture to be delineated by the analysis of the data-sets depicts an uneven, rippling phase of diffusion in contested expectations about the norms and variations of SMS orthographic choice, prior to their sedimentation into more conventionalised common understanding. Even in less regulated domains, variational spelling can attract considerable contestation in private choices and evaluations (Chapter 7a and b below), as well as in ‘public sphere’ commentary (Appendix V).

1.2.4 The wider processes of cultural transmission

In this thesis I am concerned with identifying the wider processes of cultural transmission underlying a possible historical shift in the linguistic and semiotic resources available for written and graphically-mediated interaction. The impetus underlying that enquiry - about spelling choices in just one form of digital media - is how to identify what is new about such innovation in the context where, as Herring suggests, the ‘new media’ of today, here SMS, are rapidly altered beyond recognition by the new media of tomorrow. Lexical and orthographic resources may be seen as having a connection with the material means by which they are realised, and by which choices might be motivated (Hard af Segerstad 2003). In the case of SMS, conditions of greyscale *Courier* font, obligatory capitalisation, 160 character limits in messages, metered message charging, and twelve-button text entry were common limitations in 2000, and all were reported to influence interlocutors’ choices (e.g. Crystal 2008). In 2015, these conditions no longer applied in the UK, leading to different configurations of affordances and constraints, such as the pressures of the default intrusive spellcheckers and their automatic correction of text composed on Smartphones (Nishimura 2011). Conversely, social conventions of orthographic choice established under the conditions of contextual pressures which were subsequently superseded, may continue to be sustained without that original impetus. As I show, <U>/<u> for <you> offered particular affordances of text entry on early twelve-button keypads (Chapter 2b), but was in common use before SMS, and now persists beyond twelve-button text

entry. Choice may be motivated by a number of contextual pressures. Alternatively and additionally, a particular digital medium may be subsumed in successive waves of sociotechnological innovation and the social innovation of the uses to which these forms are put. For example, the ‘homepages’ of young people in 1998 appear to have been differently configured to the template entry determined by newer social media such as *Facebook*, with its shaping by commercial gain (Chandler & Roberts Young 1998, Androutsopoulos 2010, boyd & Marwick 2011, Gelles 2010). Such conditions of accelerated change lead to a related question: how to establish the grounds of deeper connection in the ‘breaking news’ commentaries found in public sphere discourses which describe and evaluate these changes, so feeding back into the perceptions of individuals and their social groups. In a time of rapid sociotechnological change, what are the deeper processes of signification underlying the episodic running commentaries in news reporting and popular culture representations (Thurlow 2006, 2007)? News media have often focused closely on the moving target of a particular CMC medium using a deficit comparison based on criteria derived from the ossified monument of absolute compliance with standard language (Carrington 2004, 2005, Mackay *et al.* 2005). The evidence and theoretical argument presented in this thesis will suggest more complex perspectives pointing to the relationship between nation-state framings and the regulation of writing, and especially the regulation of spelling. As Sebba has noted, ‘the study of non-standard spelling derives much of its interest from the fact that spelling generally is so highly standardised and rigorously regulated’ (2003;151). Spelling has been reported as comparatively easy to regulate by comparison with lexis, grammar or pronunciation (Milroy & Milroy 1991;56) and has even come to be seen as synonymous with standardisation and regulation (Kress 2000, Shortis 2007a), in what Bernstein would term a strongly ‘regulative pedagogic discourse’. Such a consensus has enjoyed a level of stable recognition in what Kress terms ‘the high age of print’, but all such institutions are themselves subject to influence and change over longer duration (1998, Cameron 1995). Such change in consensual discourse has been demonstrated by Agha in his reanalysis of Mugglestone’s data, revealing the dynamics driving the enregisterment of received pronunciation in the nineteenth century as a common consensus recognition of prestigious accomplishment (Agha 2003, Mugglestone 1995):

[while] schools, states and markets play a critical role in processes’... [which determine enregisterment], such institutions are themselves arrangements reconfigured periodically by external discourses, even though, in local phases of the process, the perception of their own inviolability and autonomy is a form of misrecognition they invite, and upon which their continuance so often depends. (Agha 2003;270)

In order to understand the processes by which the framing of literacy and orthographic choice by ‘schools, states and market’ has been reconfigured by external discourses, I synthesise Agha’s general explanatory model of cultural transmission from a tradition of linguistic anthropology with Robertson’s revision of Bernstein’s model of recontextualising fields, and their account of recontextualisation, and of what Langer has termed ‘invisibilisation’ (Bernstein

1996, Robertson *et al.* 2004, Langer & Havinga 2015). Bernstein's theorisation focuses on the processes by which valued knowledge is recontextualised, selectively filtered and transmitted in pedagogical settings in ways which circumscribe it, with Robertson reworking the model to acknowledge digital media and their provenance in global markets. Although primarily concerned with analysing the patterns of detail, the sample respondents' choices of spelling, and their interpretation of those choices, the analysis presented here relates detail of texts, practices and commentaries featuring SMS orthographic choice to the wider sociohistorical processes in which digitally-mediated vernaculars are situated. Drawing on related theoretical ideas from the sociolinguistics of globalisation (Pennycook 2007, 2010, Blommaert 2010, Coupland 2011), SMS respelling is set against the backdrop of national framings of literacy and the effect on those of the influence of the global commercial markets which sold the relevant technology. By that extension of the argument, recent intertextually-related forms of digital self-published interaction mark a shift towards extended and re-regulated forms of orthographic practice, in which evaluations of literate competence are not determined so inevitably by comparisons with the traditional benchmarks of nation-state standard language codification, its distribution and valorisation.

In short, respondents making choices about their orthographic practices in SMS may be able to draw upon a wider range of options than are circumscribed by the prescriptive dictionaries designed to support attainment of accurate standard English writing in formal institutional contexts, provided those normative options are accessible to them. Their choices will be contingent and variegated. An extended set of orthographic options may be available from prior, tacit experience of orthographic phenomena outside the representation of prescribed standard forms: popular culture, trade spelling, home and street-life vernacular literacy practices and 'linguistic landscapes', occupational specialisms and globalised interlingual influences, all reinforced by these provenances being drawn on and recycled in other digitally-mediated vernaculars (Shortis 2007a, Thurlow 2011). Potentially, variational forms may contribute to an enhanced orthographic rhetoric of choice, provided it *is a choice* and one made by a subject whose repertoire of registers gives them access to the symbolic capital accruing to access to the normative forms valued in more prestigious sites of influence. The hegemonic framing of spelling established by the relays of nation-language, education and print production over recent centuries has been disrupted but not effaced by these changes: in many contexts, standard language representation remains the most powerful and prestigious register (Blommaert 2008, 2010, Crystal 2008). Heterographic practices in text messaging may be the only literate performance available, as analysed in studies of texting from African contexts (see Blommaert & Velghe 2012, Blommaert 2013).

1.2.5 Aspirations and profiles of respondents in the longer view

By global comparisons of literacy, this study draws its data-set from a comparatively privileged, metropolitan, first world cohort of respondents¹⁰. The majority of those who contributed data were UK school and college students in formal education in post-compulsory settings who intended to move on to higher education and into professional occupational roles, and many subsequently did so. Most of those observed over time continued to show close attention to the value of standardised spelling forms, as inculcated by schooling and its associated saturation in print literacy and they were sufficiently well-resourced to develop their choices. As I argue in Chapter 2a, digitally-mediated CMCs share formal spelling features with uneducated nineteenth-century vernaculars except that these people had little instruction in standardised forms, and the prevailing evaluation of their peers was less well resourced by access to formal schooling. In the connected case of contemporary migration, standard literacies matter differentially depending on the distribution of resources, including levels of educational attainment and economic opportunity. Writing about ‘grassroots literacy’ in African contexts, Blommaert’s analysis shows how people, their semiotic artefacts, and their literate accomplishments are increasingly mobile but evaluative criteria do not transfer as easily, being preserved to make social and economic distinction.

The kinds of evaluative criteria fostered by the literacy prized by the institutions of modern European and North-American nation-states show more limited discursive space to acknowledge and frame vernacular practices drawn from other contexts; indeed following Blommaert, their function may be to set the shibboleths which connect literacy with inequality of economic opportunity (2003, 2008a and b, 2010, 2013, Trimbur 2013). In spite of the apparent mobility of semiotic resources, access to standard language prestige registers still determines the credibility of articulated ‘voice’, including educational and economic ‘cultural capital’. Blommaert’s cases come from peripheries such as grassroots autodidact practices in the Congo or the text messaging of Africans with multilingual repertoires and differently configured access to prestige forms (Blommaert & Velghe 2012, Deumert & Lexander 2013). In this study, with its more privileged setting in sites of post-compulsory education in southern England, respondents followed a trend of becoming increasingly concerned to moderate the choices and practices they deployed in the adolescent appropriation of digital-mediated vernaculars so that these met standard forms of spelling: adherence to standard conventions intensified as respondents encountered the kinds of literate accomplishment valued by higher education and professional employment. I show a trend in which an ideology of aspiration oriented to peer-group evaluation gave way to an ideology of normative prestigious social accomplishment in a market-driven economy of competition. The temporal lens gives an account which differs from the great debate of texting reported by Crystal and others in the accounts which characterised popular commentary in the earlier years of the millennium (2008, Appendix V), although the pressures reported in those accounts may well have shaped the general direction of subsequent attitudes and practices around spelling choice.

1.3.1 Deregulation, re-regulation and ‘viral diffusion’ in ‘horizontal discourses’

The study reported here deploys a number of cartoons, schema, visual and verbal metaphors and diagrammatical models in order to illuminate the abstract socio-economic and sociotechnological processes which, it is argued, underlie the surfaces of empirical focus on small screen spelling choices. For example, I refer to the ‘**deregulation**’, subsequent ‘**re-regulation**’ and ‘**viral diffusion**’ of estimations of literate accomplishment, as evidenced in spelling choices and their evaluation over time.¹¹ The notion of the ‘deregulation’, of what is agreed as acceptable spelling in SMS alludes to the use of that word for the abandonment of previous regulated structures as determined by the institutions of the modern nation state, here standardised national spelling (see Anderson 1991).¹² The notion of ‘re-regulation’ and its attribute of being ‘viral’, denotes the sense of SMS orthographic choices being diffused and evaluated informally by situated, ‘**horizontal discourses**’ (Bernstein 1996).¹³ Choice is mediated and evaluated at **idiolectal** scales in the course of situated interaction, usually of a spontaneous and informal variety. Evaluation is contingent on affordances of spelling choice as these are perceived by interlocutors, arising from the conditions of localised address, rather than by the degree of their compliance with normative, standardised forms of the sort inculcated programmatically by the **vertical discourses** of schooling. As in the case of the term ‘viral marketing’, cultural transmission appears to operate in ‘relays’ (*ibid.* 1996) which align commercial markets with home-life and street-life settings (Chapter 3 below). I argue that digitally-mediated vernaculars such as SMS are constructed in exchanges of self-published extemporised interaction, composed increasingly in mobile settings, using recently innovated sociotechnologies, in temporal conditions of near synchronous communication which approximate imagined experience of speech. Their materially reconfigured modal affordances imbue writing with new meaning-potentials of ‘conceptual spokenness’ in graphical form (Koch & Oesterreicher 1985, 1994, Frehner 2008, Chapter 2 below). Their digital distribution across time, space and regulative pressures increases the degree of optionality enjoyed by participants in making and evaluating spelling choice, subject to their access to a personal repertoire of options to choose from. Such conditions put communicators into a new relationship with the pressures of print literacy, with its origins in the seventeenth century and before (Moxon 1683, Scragg 1974, Brengelman 1980, Nevalainen 2006, Mugglestone 2006, Horobin 2013). The abruptly reconfigured conditions of ‘late modernity’ (e.g. Rampton 2006) and the digital instantiation of the ‘written turn’ (Baron 2005) invites those communicating to engage in making localised ‘**microlectal**’ choices which suit their particular ‘judgments of taste’, social accomplishment and their underlying marking out of social distinction: a configuration of their performance of identity, audience, socio-economic resourcing, associated access to the resources of standardised literacy, environmental pressures and other technological affordances and constraints.¹⁴ Following Agha, I argue that these choices are still subject to an insistent and persistent social process of evaluation, made in one-by-one acts of evaluation by participating writer/readers with reference to their particular mores and sense of social and literate distinction (2003, 2007).

Earlier studies of orthographic choices in subcultural contexts presented orthographic variation with a primary focus on the social semiotic of resistance, covert prestige or the extreme case of anti-language (Halliday 1976, 1979, Androutsopoulos & Scholz 1998, 2000, Androutsopoulos & Georgakopoulou 2003, Sebba 2003, Chapter 2b below). By such a stance, SMS respelling could be interpreted as an argot, antilanguage or other socioliterate code of resistance, as it has featured in the techno-utopian and dystopian claims of popular coverage (see Carrington 2005, Thurlow 2003, 2006). Recent sociolinguistic scholarship has also identified modal affordances and meaning-potentials in respelling which are not available in the standard forms of those words (e.g. Kataoka 1997, 2003 a & b, Kress 2000, Jaffe 2000, Knas 2009). While some of these are bound up with the reader-writer's knowledge of the standard forms being deviated from, it has been argued that respelling in digitally-mediated vernaculars such as SMS gives writing something of the immediacy, vibrancy and vividness of speech (e.g. Yates 1996, Crystal 2002, 2004, Spilioti 2006, Tagg 2009, 2012). The term **re-voicing** as a working idea used in this thesis points to the multiple impact of spelling choices on previously settled ideas about writing; it alludes to the notion of **conceptual orality** in written form. By this interpretation, the spelling choices made in SMS and related digitally-mediated vernaculars have re-articulated the meaning-potentials of written text, in particular giving to graphically inscribed acts of meaning-making a quality of imagined spokenness such that these texts are written and read in ways which intimate effects and affects previously associated with face-to-face speech. By such practices users appear to have extended the meaning-potentials traditionally associated with writing and typed script beyond the symbolic relationship of spelling variation as social and linguistic deviation derived from users' infringement of normative expectations.

Such choices have also unsettled common understanding of the regulatory boundaries around spelling and writing and around writing and graphical form. In 'the high age of print' and mass schooling, formal public writing of the sort used in institutional contexts has usually been conducted using a relatively regimented and circumscribed set of spellings. As Kress has noted, those who write have appeared to seek the aspiration of perfect standard spelling, even when we and they have not been able to attain its perfect form of attainment without considerable resourcing. Without access to reference, few can spell all their repertoires' words with perfect standard English accuracy. In this context standardised spelling is naturalised as a general expectation: a prestige form but beyond the unaided full accomplishment of most users (Kress 2000, Cameron 1995). Minor public deviations from absolute, consistent orthographic rectitude carry heavy penalties of evaluation.

I argue that the relatively unregulated, unschooled social domains from which the SMS data were drawn from this study can be seen as a form of 'unregimented writing' (Shortis 2007a) and use the term '**digitally-mediated written vernaculars**' to indicate the distinctiveness of this emerging sociotechnological rhetoric. These unregulated settings typify the social contexts and

greater permissive freedoms of vernacular writing and its reciprocal expectations of markers of solidarity and affect. Most of the text messages, and the commentaries on messaging in this study refer to relatively mundane, day-to-day interactions between peers and families in a manner of vernacular performance which lies outside the more formal and regulative demands of formal writing in institutional contexts. The SMS data on which this study is based is generally focused on maintaining informal social relationships and the co-ordination of their associated arrangements (Ling and Yttri 1999, 2002), even when this takes the form of the data elicited for the corpus of hypothetical messages collected for Chapter 6. This can be seen by scanning through the representative sampling of the textual data in the appendices (VI). Such is similar to that described by Thurlow in 2003 or Tagg in 2009. Yet data-sets generated from just such contexts also elicited the ‘moral panic’¹⁵ to be observed in the public sphere commentary analysed in this study, and treated by both Carrington (2005) and Thurlow (2006). Here the interaction examined remains mundane, low status ‘small talk’ in its written manifestation, while also being socially significant for affording evidence of a new trend in writing in localised address (Werry 1996), and the ‘public sphere metadiscourse’ it has attracted (Agha 2003).

1.3.2 Summarising the temporal context of this study

In this chapter I have outlined the temporal setting of this study and its location of SMS orthographic choice as a typifying example of the changing literacy practices thought to have been innovated by younger people in the UK and elsewhere in recent years. I have outlined three dimensions of the temporal context surveyed: the emergence of related text types over time, the diffusion of SMS text from its earlier socially restricted location to its becoming a mass literacy practice, and the tracking and sampling of data from key respondents over twelve years. I have introduced and discussed the theoretical and thematic approach taken, including the explanation afforded by the construct of ‘enregisterment’ (Agha 2003) and the tension between linguistic, semiotic and technologically-generated dimensions of meaning-making in recent digital sociotechnological innovations diffused to mass co-option. I develop these outlines in the chronologically sequenced stylistic analysis of orthographic choices presented in Chapter 5; the comparisons between the corpus attestation data-sets identified in Chapters 6 and 7; the qualitative data of respondents’ testimony examined in Chapters 7 and 8. I have introduced and discussed the theoretical argument to be developed further in Chapters 2, 3, and 9, with its location of orthographic choice in SMS as an instantiation of differently motivated choices of literate identity performance, conducted in the shadow of the enduring influence of popular attitudes to standardised linguistic forms. These innovations are presented as arising from the altered material resources and economic conditions of SMS and their associated social practices, themselves intertextually located in related successive forms of ‘conceptually spoken’, mainly-written, graphical interaction mediated by mobile digital technologies.

1 This thesis treats SMS texting samples and related observational notes collected as early as 1999 which formed part of the SBC 2000 corpus examined in Chapter 6 (see also Chapter 4). See Brockes (1999) for evidence of early SMS diffusion in the UK, as reported in news journalism.

2 Thank you to Jan Blommaert for this observation.

3 In the the thesis title, I use the term ‘diachronic’ as formulated by Saussure (1916/1977) and discussed by Crowley (1996). Saussure distinguished between ‘synchronic’ and ‘diachronic’ accounts of language variation and change in order to differentiate linguistic changes in a moment of time from changes made over longer temporal duration. See Saussure 1916. Saussure and those who have followed his structural approach to linguistics have been principally concerned with form-focused, synchronic accounts of linguistic variation, tending to subordinate attention to a diachronic focus, although Saussure’s own earlier work was philological (Crowley 1996). The term ‘diachronic’ locates this thesis in the disciplinary field of *Linguistics*, broadly defined. As Crowley, Blommaert and others have observed, ‘diachronic’ can be interpreted as a formal construct which downplays the pressures of sociohistorical contestation which act on actual situated linguistic and semiotic choice, as also demonstrated in this thesis (see Lee 1992).

4 See Appendix I for further explanation of this questionnaire survey, administered in 2010 and 2011.

5 Some respondents reported that email had been taught to them in school.

6 See Harris for observations about the ill-defined notion of what is referred to as ‘writing’ (2014) which may in its actual diverse manifestations function differently in the way social meanings are apprehended materially and by inferences cued. See related discussions in Kress 2010, Blommaert 2013, Lillis 2013.

7 There are many instances in both popular and academic literature in which the respelling <txt> for <text>, as used by interlocutors in earlier SMS interaction, was appropriated for use in the titles of public sphere commentaries treating orthographic behaviour in SMS (e.g. Mander 2001, Carrington 2005, Crystal 2008). Shortis sought to formalise this in a neologism for the enregisterment of a novel and distinctive sociotechnology and its associated kinds of written-graphical inscription. By this interpretation, the term ‘Txt’ could function as a generic description of digitally-mediated vernacular interaction: deregulated, self-inputted, often dyadic, peer-focused, self-published, interactive and ‘conceptually-spoken’ (2007:4, see Appendix X here). The term ‘Txt’ in this sense was used by (Tagg 2009, 2012). It reflects an earlier phase of this study and is not used in this thesis. The notion that digitally-mediated written and graphical interaction represent a distinctively different kind of sociotechnology and ‘writing’ to that found in the prior and contiguous practices associated with handwriting and print production continues to be productive (see Harris 2014 for the general argument). See Lillis 2013, Blommaert 2013, Maybin 2013 for arguments about the overgeneralised and unspecific accounts of what constitutes writing and its infrastructure in Sociolinguistics to date. See also Jewitt 2009 and Kress 2010 for multimodal perspectives on these issues.

8 See introductory discussion in Shortis 2001: Chapter 1.

9 See Langer 2014 and Havinga & Langer for explanations of ‘invisibilization’ in historical sociolinguistics (2014:3, discussion in chapter 1). Note the related construct of ‘erasure’, as defined by Irvine & Gal (2000:38). In this thesis, *invisibilisation* pertains to writing and to the representational effacement of a linguistic variety or feature achieved by differential legal framing and socio-economic resourcing of its representation in schooling and statutes.

10 See Trimbur 2013 for discussion.

11 See the related terminology in Robertson et al. (2004) which provides an analysis of what is termed the deregulation and re-regulation of pedagogic space.

12 To take a specific case of deregulation: the deregulation of financial markets in London in the 1980s, the so-called ‘big bang’ (see lexical entries in *OED*).

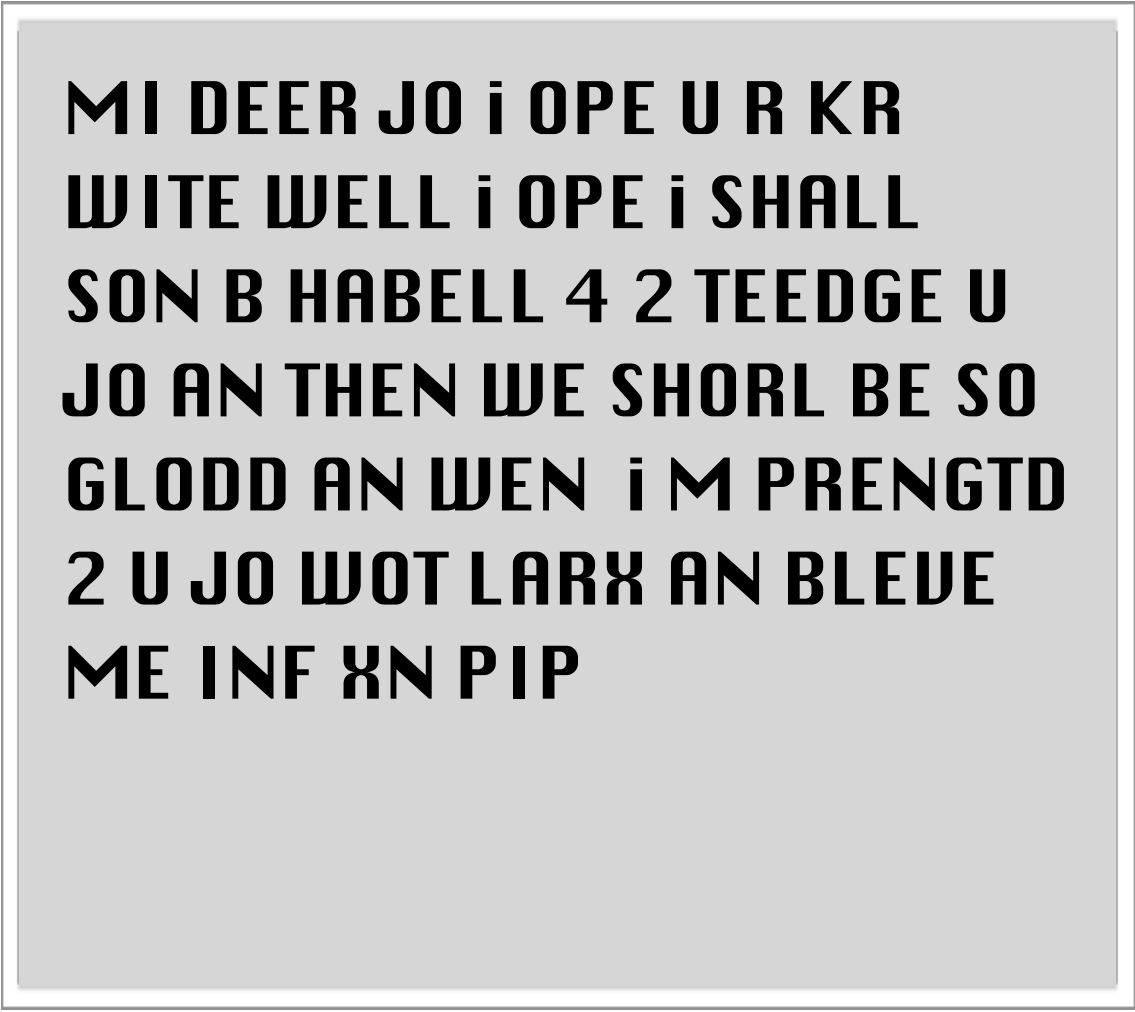
13 See the related idea of unplanned, spontaneous diffusion by ‘memes’ in Dawkins 1976.

14 The wording ‘distinction’ here alludes to Bourdieu’s argument that judgment of taste is rooted in the persistent inequitable manufacturing of social distinction (1984), reflecting the persistent reproduction of socio-economic inequality.

15 See Cohen 1992.

2a). SMS practices in the tradition of 'oralised scripts'

Adumbrations in previous and concurrent vernacular practices



MI DEER JO i OPE U R KR
WITE WELL i OPE i SHALL
SON B HABELL 4 2 TEEDGE U
JO AN THEN WE SHORL BE SO
GLODD AN WEN i M PRENGTD
2 U JO WOT LARX AN BLEVE
ME INF XN PIP

Figure 2.1 Pip's self-taught writing in Charles Dickens' novel *Great Expectations* (1861) represented as early SMS

The discipline of the literate is marked by its rules of correctness, particularly those of syntax and spelling. An oralised script has no need of correct spelling and syntax. Its markers of oralization are its errors, its deviations (deliberate or ignorant) from the discipline of literacy...Oral language is context and function oriented rather than rule oriented...

Fiske 1989;112

Erasure is the process by which ideology, in simplifying the linguistic field, renders some persons, or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible. Facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away. So for example a social group or language may be imagined as homogeneous, its internal variation disregarded. Because a linguistic ideology is a totalizing vision, elements which do not fit in its interpretative structure - that cannot be seen to fit - must be either ignored or transformed. Erasure in ideological representation does not, however, necessarily mean actual eradication of the awkward element, whose very existence may be unobserved or unattended to.

Irvine & Gal, 2000;38

2.1.1 Orthographic choice in pre-existing and contiguous genres

This chapter is one of two in which I situate this study in its empirical and theoretical fields. I represent the potential optionality of SMS spelling choice as being inevitably embedded in, and resourced by a wider landscape of varied orthographic practice. That landscape includes the singularly well-resourced and influential ‘prestige register’ of normative standardised spelling.¹⁶ In this section, I focus on vernacular orthographic choice and its popular and commercial recontextualisation. In the next, I present two schematic representations of the domains of orthographic resource from which choices seen in SMS interaction may be seen to draw, before examining more specific affordances and meaning-potentials of normative and vernacular options. I adopt an historical sociolinguistic focus which situates SMS spelling choice as one case of diachronic change in an under-documented tradition of vernacular meaning-making resources. The approach provides an opportunity to consider the deeper points of connection between digitally-mediated interaction and other forms of **‘oralised script’**, as these are termed by Fiske in his prescient comments, made some years before CMC diffused (1992, Chapter 2a epigraph).

Fiske claimed that the rhetorical affordances of an oralised script operate differently to those found in a text written in standardised forms. They may evoke an imaginary orientation to spokenness, perhaps in an informal, spontaneous mode, in which choices are contingent on social purposes and contexts. Normative writing is presented as encased in a regulative discourse, which seeks to constrain the forms by which credible meaning can be made by social expectations of compliance. In contrast, an oralised script construes social difference from the regulative preoccupations of written language. Its errors, ‘deliberate or ignorant’, create symbolic social distance from regulative constraints, and construe a sense of embodied orality not possible by fettered compliance with the strictures of standard English. His argument calls to mind the earlier observation of text-based forms of CMC, such as *Internet Relay Chat*. Researchers noted that interlocutors were interacting with a strongly interpersonal function mediated by the innovation of the alphanumeric symbols found on a keyboard (Jones 1995, Turkle 1995, Werry 1996). Their ‘screen presence’ was managed as a mode of imagined orality intimated by graphical cues. So a notational system of alphabetical symbols may enable an interlocutor to cue meanings simultaneously in a variety of ways, rather than within a single representational system (see Chapter 5, Harris 2010, 2014). By such an argument, orthographic choices in SMS raise issues of regulation, optionality, cross-mode ‘transduction’ (e.g. Kress 2003), and the construal of meaning-potentials not legitimated or defined by regulated normative forms. Their expressive options come with social penalties; there is a long-documented association of accomplishment in standardised literacy with economic opportunity, and conversely, of ‘illiteracy’ with poverty and ignorance. In the context of this study, this association plays out in a complex way: interactants frequently chose vernacularity from a repertoire of orthographic registers. Unlike Dickens’s Pip, they were not constrained by want to

vernacular choice and they reported seeking affordances of ‘screen presence’ projection not available from normative compliance (Chapters 7 and 8 below).

Written vernaculars are a frequent and familiar encounter (e.g. Cook 2004 a and b) but are relatively under-documented, perhaps reflecting the process of ‘erasure’ proposed by Irvine & Gal (2000;38). In this chapter section, I seek to re-insert exemplification of such familiar types of spelling to support an argument that these semiotic resources feed many choices and practices sometimes considered as particular to SMS and related CMCs. I locate the provenance of SMS orthographic choice in three theoretical developments: the recent theorisation of spelling as a sociocultural practice (Jaffe & Walton 2000, Jaffe 2000, Sebba 2007, Jaffe *et al.* 2012); the related re-theorisation of young children’s early orthographic choices as ‘multimodal social semiotic design’ (Kress 1997, 2000); the rethinking of vernacular creativity in everyday spoken language, and as recontextualised in digitally-mediated interaction (Cook 2000, Carter 2004, Goddard 2006a, Swann 2006). I propose that those engaged in SMS interaction co-opt linguistic resources in a creative reworking of orthographic designs experienced in other registers and forms of graphical communication. In doing this, respondents followed the extemporised practices of those engaged in unschooled domains of literacy, including infants (e.g. Kress 2000), and those engaged in ‘grassroots literacy’ (Blommaert 2008), as well as choices innovated in earlier ‘unregimented’ forms of digitally-mediated interaction (Shortis 2007a). I begin with close examination of three samples of vernacular writing, or ‘oralised scripts’: one a mass-published fictive representation from the nineteenth century¹⁷, and two from the earlier years of this study. This contrastive analysis shows how vernacular choices may offer close grounds of linguistic comparison, which nevertheless signify differently in their distinctive temporal and socio-economic contexts of literate production and reception.¹⁸ This leads to a discussion of the contradictory ways in which written vernaculars, including those drawn on in SMS and related CMCs, are principled and ‘polysystemic’; they are also eclectic and contingent: ‘context and function oriented’, to use Fiske’s description above (1989;112). They appear to represent a broadly sourced, tacit opportunism which eludes the kinds of systematic classification found in externally codified conventions of prescriptive written usage. They achieve recognition but appear to be based on different principles of legitimated meaning-making (Barton & Hamilton 1998;253).

2.2.1 Dickens’ Pip’s adumbration of SMS in an ‘oralised script’

Dickens’s fictitious, ash-smeared letter from Pip to his uncle (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2) epitomises how the linguistic and semiotic signs which feature in SMS are not as new as is sometimes thought. There are specific types of linguistic and semiotic sign associated with adolescents or young adults, or presented as typifying communication mediated by digital technology, such as the ‘grapheme substitution’ and ‘lexical homophone spellings’ found in this example, which appear to have occurred at routine levels of frequency in texts written in the

historical past by uneducated people (Barret-DuCrocq 1993, Fairman 2007, Keseler & Bergs 2003), or in imaginative representations of such practice (Appendix II).¹⁹ This phenomenon has been observed in other European languages too, in close comparisons made between older vernacular writing and recent informal email production (Elspaß 2002). Such spellings as Pip's also feature in the recontextualisation of vernacular orthographic choice in the designed artefacts of advertising and trade names, documented back to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These practices appear to form part of the varied repertoire of the written word in other registers and languages (e.g. Androutsopoulos 2000, Sebba *et al.*, 2012 Shortis, in press); their orthographic features have attracted relatively limited academic coverage until the recent development of sociocultural treatments of orthography as social action (above) including related developments in historical sociolinguistics (e.g. Vorsters *et al.* 2012, Wright 2010).

Pip's 'grassroots literacy' exemplifies conflicting issues of extemporised orthographic choice, access to literate and economic resources, and differential social evaluation. Although it has some surface grounds of similarity to choices made about spelling in early SMS messages, it also illustrates the different signification of these older forms of written vernacularity as found in nineteenth-century England, before mass schooling (1870). These offer points of contrast with the social and material conditions experienced by this study's respondents, and as a consequence, the same signs come to mean very differently. Such contrasts can be seen in the linguistic and semiotic designs and by the intimation of context to be inferred by the intended audience.

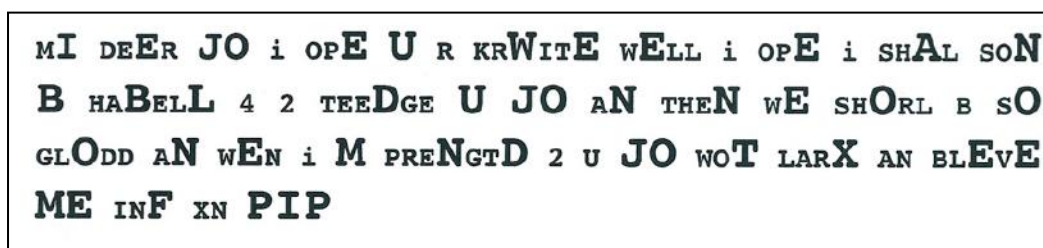
Pip's letter includes four of the most frequent lexical letter and number homophone respellings found in the SMS corpus compiled for this study (see Chapter 6): <U>, or <u> for <you> ;<2> for <to>; <R> or <r> for <are>; <4> for <for>. These co-exist with other frequently occurring features of SMS, including the use of phonetic spelling to suggest idiolectal and regiolectal pronunciation (see Chapter 5 for analysis of forms of digitally-mediated interaction).²⁰ Pip's note also shows types of respelling which do not feature in CMC as a matter of routine, including idiosyncratic representations of word boundaries, which suggest both a principled observant creativity, and lack of access to the conventions of standardised written language. For example, following the kind of social semiotic analysis applied by Kress to the spelling of young children, <KRWITE> for <quite> could be claimed to be an 'accurate' extemporised transcription, if not 'correct' standardised English (Kress 2000;8; see *ibid.* 194). The orthographic choices figure a closely observed, precisely realised representation of spelling out loud, in slowed-up deliberated speech, as Pip writes while speaking under his breath. In a related choice, <PRENGTD> for <apprenticed> realises a spelling backformed from elided regiolectal 'aphetic' pronunciation of this higher register polysyllabic loan-word (*OED* 2015). Such assimilated pronunciation and its spelling was apparently common among uneducated people, leading to the conventionalised vernacular 'aphetic' written form, documented in the word's entry in *OED*. Without the resources of formal literate instruction, Pip can experience

words only through speech, rather than by knowledge of the formal word structure rendered in its (standardised) written form. Some examples call to mind related features in SMS. Many respellings show a trend of removing word boundaries in frequently occurring compounds or collocations: <cu> for ‘see you’, or the iconic but infrequent collocation <CUl8r> for ‘see you later’. Similarly, Grinter & Eldridge observed an adolescent making sense of an unfamiliar spelling by sounding it out in the way Pip describes sounding out his writing: ‘You have to sit there thinking l-8-r, or oh, later.’ (2001;16). There are also variations found in SMS not to be found in Pip’s letter, including ‘eye dialect’ (Bowdre 1964, 1982, Sebba 2007, Chapter 2), more recently innovated appropriations of punctuation symbols in semi-conventionalised rebuses such as emoticons (e.g. Werry 1996), and initialisms abbreviating formulaic language in frequent collocations, or ‘key bindings’ (Werry 1996, Tagg 2012). These forms of vernacularity show a principle of aesthetic design and choice not obvious in Pip’s orthographic fumbblings. They are differently resourced and distributed.

Dickens’s crafted ‘markers of oralisation’ convey a sympathetically observed, uneducated vernacular which marks it apart from the SMS spelling choice analysed in this study. The character is rendered spelling as he might speak in an indexical illustration of Pip’s limited literacy resources. His use of lexical and number homophone spellings signifies a naïve, opportunistic resourcefulness in devising shallow orthographic correspondences from symbolic resources to hand, rather than demonstrating exercise of more deliberated discretionary choice: the consequence of inequitable economic circumstances, including lack of access to schooling. Interestingly, there is no glossing of meaning; vernacular writing appears to have been recognised by a nineteenth-century audience, even when the particular conventions were not codified or put into general circulation (see Appendix II). This may also indicate a general tacit principle of vernacular spelling: that the referent can be recovered intuitively without glossing, typically by grapheme-phoneme correspondences based on **shallow orthography** (Katz & Frost 1986). That recognition may also be accompanied by evaluations of their imaginary author as uneducated. Such an evaluation presupposes that others with knowledge and resources will be oriented to an aspirational performance directed to prestigious accomplishment in standard English, as mastered by the older Pip seen later in the novel and in the narrative voice throughout.

By contrast, the respondents in this study were adolescents and young adults who could draw on semiotic resources and cultural understanding from extensive schooled literacy, while also innovating choices oriented to in-group preferences, as documented by Eldridge and Grinter (2001, 2003). Their peer-group interlocutors were also more likely to make and read texts constructed and adapted from well-practised written conventions modelled by standard forms: the accurate but idiosyncratic aphetic realisation of ellipsis and idiosyncratic word boundaries signalled by <IN FXN> for < yours in affection> would be less likely. The imagined Pip does not have the social experience or schooling to know the RP realisation of [ə'fɛkʃən] or the

orthographic source code to render [kʃən] as <ction>. He may have insufficient experience and reflective appreciation of standardised forms for more than a crude approximation of normative patterns of writing in standard English, further suggested by the way his message is usually set out in its typeset form, foregrounding unschooled capitalisation and ignorance of normative word boundaries (Dickens 1861).



MI DEER JO i OPE U R KRWRITE WELLL i OPE i SHAL SON
 B HABELL 4 2 TEEDGE U JO AN THEN WE SHORL B SO
 GLODD AN WEN i M PRENGTD 2 U JO WOT LARX AN BLEVE
 ME INF XN PIP

Figure 2.2 Pip's letter to his uncle as set out in printed copies of the novel

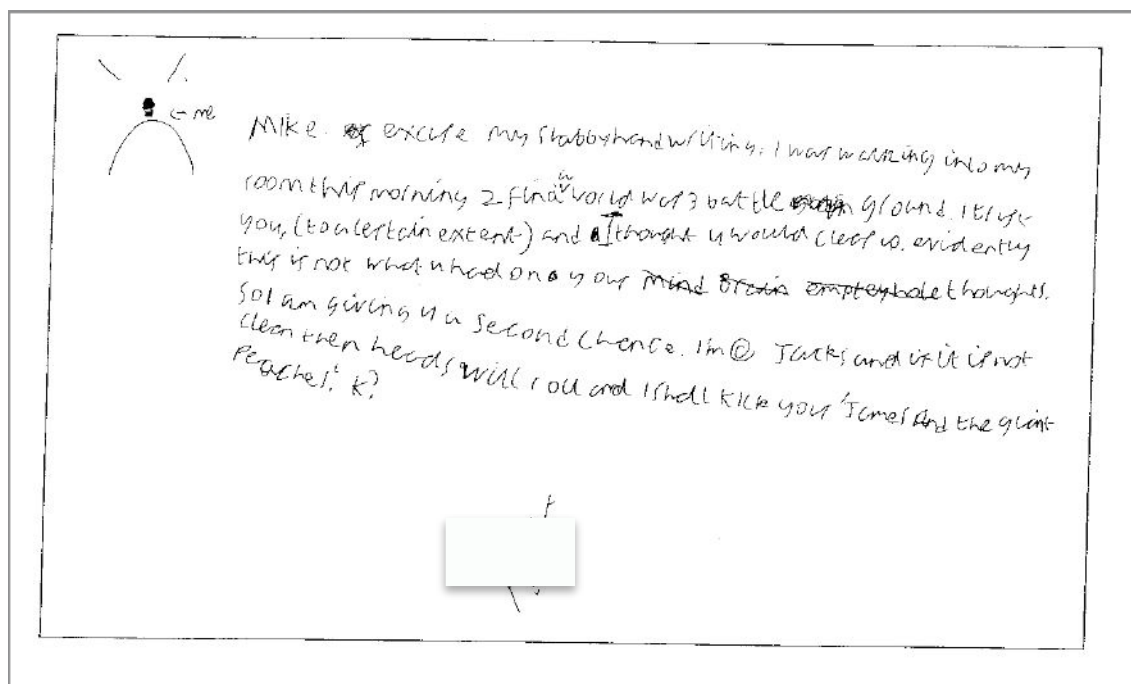
Dickens' orthographic choices for Pip may also be intended to convey a sense of authenticity and vividness not found in the standardised transcript below, or in the elaborated style of the representation of Pip's older persona, relating the story of his younger self with a priggish evaluative tone; intimations of vernacularity may have affordances beyond the deficit evaluation:

My dear Joe I hope you are quite well and I hope I shall soon be able for to teach you Joe and then we shall be so glad and when I am apprenticed to you Joe what larks and believe me in affection Pip.²¹

2.2.2 Contemporary examples of handwritten oralised scripts

Dickens' imagined letter offers grounds of similarity and difference with the evidence afforded by instances of written vernacularity sourced from respondents. Below is a facsimile of a handwritten message to a sibling by Pete, a key informant observed throughout this study and then aged thirteen, as he and his friends experimented with the meaning-potentials of the new forms of digitally-mediated interaction which had become available in their homes and schools around that time. Like Pip, Pete makes ingenious choices but fewer of them, and at a notably higher level of resourcing in education, technology and opportunities for peer-to-peer contact. His stylistic choices comprise a powerful if localised address made by a comparatively small proportion of orthographic innovations and graphical effects, which combine to form a playfully oppositional youth identity. The appropriation of non-normative, or heterodox, ortho-graphic choices enables Pete to engage with the contextual problem of seeking to direct the behaviour of a sibling without compromising peer-group and kinship loyalties. The jokes mitigate the possibility of being seen as officious, in the manner of adult/parental authority. So, unlike Pip, Pete draws optionally on the affordances of spellings realised by homophone letter names, numbers and symbols, by then enregistered in his peer-group's understanding as conventionalised markers of digitally-mediated text: <2> for <to>; <u>for <you>; <@> as

logographic homophone rhyme; <k> for <OK>. Such choices signify a deliberate stance of playfulness, digital knowhow and freedom from constraint, in contrast to Pip's resourceful but innocent efforts. Pete uses no spelling such as the intimation of rhoticity in Pip's realisation of <shall> as <shorl>. <k> for <OK> may represent a spoken elided pronunciation heard used by the writers' peer-group but also appropriates the enregisterment of a routine, stylised and widely distributed written convention, observed in digitally-mediated interaction, including the SMS corpus in this study.²² There are a small proportion of designed respellings and a smaller number of accidental slips in a text of sixty words, mainly written in standard English.²³



Mike. Excuse my shabbyhandwriting. I was walking into my room this morning to find a world war 3 battleground. I trust you, (to a certain extent) and I thought u would clear up. evidently this is not what u had on your Mind Brain emptyhole thoughts. So I am giving u a second chance. I'm @Jacks and if it is not clean then heads will roll and I shall kick your 'James And the giant Peaches'. k?

Figure 2.3 Handwritten note to an 12-year-old sibling by Pete, with transliteration.

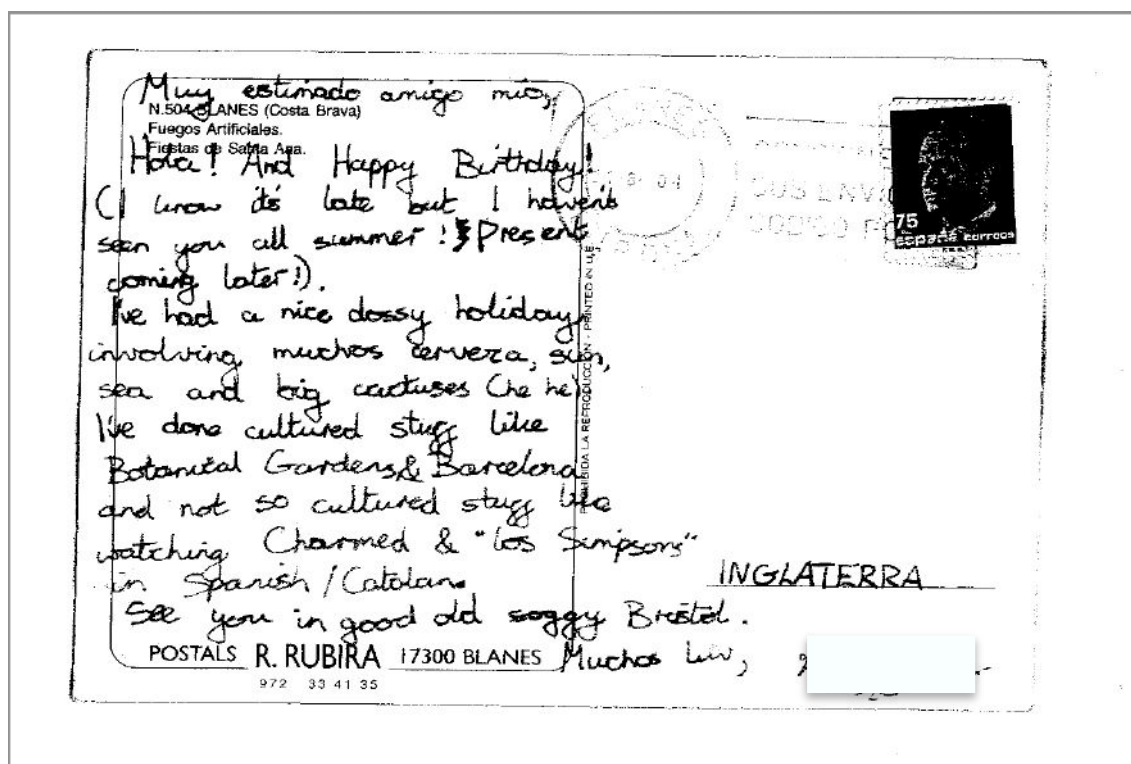


Figure 2.4 Postcard to sibling of Pete from peer, both aged 18 in 2002

By comparison, the older writer of the postcard above uses more standardised English spellings, while maintaining a layer of informalised orthographic playfulness typical of the informal digitally-mediated interaction observed throughout this study. The text is excerpted from interaction between more academically-advanced school students from the same social group as Pete. It is characterised by the kind of deliberated semiotic craft seen in the examples of other digitally-mediated vernaculars examined in Chapter 5 and in the text message corpus analysed in Chapter 6. The writer's choices function cryptically with mixed social purposes of convivial greeting, 'birthday card' delivery, non-canonical micro-narrative (Page 2012), and a vague social arrangement proposal (contrast with Ling and Yttri 2002), alluding to some future unspecific meeting arrangement. Stylistically constructing and reinforcing notions of social solidarity and shared identity through its deictic context-bound references and allusions, it also foregrounds an aesthetic performance of a stylised multilingual blending. This can be seen in the embedded phrases crossings and 'mock-Spanish'. This has occurred in the context in which both the writer and the reader study Spanish at school, offering a topical connection and implied evaluation of the holiday picture on the other side, by implication collusively evaluated as crass and clichéd.²⁴ Its author's banter is predicated on multilingual, multicultural resources mediated by cable and satellite TV and increased travel tourism. Allusions that show interlingual cultural influences include globalised pop cultural feeds by which the Sky Satellite TV comedy *The Simpsons* has been encountered in both Spanish and Catalan. These young people also represent a cohort increasingly drawn from a wider pool of ethnicities and associated multilingual resources, in the decade in which this study was undertaken, in the context of accelerating migration into the UK, following changes in European Union employment law, among other

pressures.²⁵ By 2014, 30% of young adolescents went home in Bristol to families speaking languages other than English.²⁶

In sum, Figure 2.4 exemplifies mixed register and mixed languages with stylised artful, crafted effects, cultural allusions to lifestyle and to globalised popular culture, with a minor undercurrent of digital youth sociolect allusions (<he he>. For example, the ‘mock-Spanish’ represented by ‘Muchos luv’ alludes to the earlier reference to ‘muchos cerveza’: see Hill 1998).²⁷ It exemplifies the informal stylisations seen in the out-of-school literate practices generated by respondents in this study, in handwriting and in texting. It epitomises their social concerns, dispositions, and levels of implied educational attainment, and offers comparisons of stylistic choice and thematic concern with the samples of SMS messages analysed in Chapter 5 and further exemplified in Appendix VI. Sixty words of accurate standardised English are accompanied by nine words of simulated Spanish/Catalan, and two features of vernacular English: <he he> and <luv>. In contrast to imagined-Pip’s sublocalised idiolectal choices, or to the articulation seen in Fairman’s ‘Poor Law’ letters (2007, Appendix II below), there are the emergent beginnings of the practices observed in contemporary multilingual settings (e.g. Lam 2009, Garcia & Wei 2014).

2.2.3 Dissonance between in-school and out-of-school literacy practices

Educational researchers have prized the creativity of young people’s digital literacy practices, observing that these are no longer usefully compared by close comparisons with forms oriented to the replication of standardised national registers (Lankshear & Knoebel 2003, Merchant 2003, Carrington 2003, 2004, 2005b, Carrington & Robinson 2009). Such creativity and transgression in ‘oralised script’ is not particular to digital manifestation. It has also been observed that young people’s literacies are subject to differently distinctive pressures in schooled and out-of-school contexts (Moss 2001, Dowdall 2006). The innovators of a poetics of new literate and orthographic practice also underwent intensifying testing of their writing and spelling in standard English in standardised attainment tests introduced in England from 1994, and becoming more prominent in schooling since then. This is likely to have contributed to some sense of dissonance, as Dowdall has argued.²⁸ Examining Pete’s note (Figure 2.5) more closely, there are indications of a self-consciousness about capacity in what might be valued by schooled literacy: the minor unwitting deviations in standard English grammatical principle – concord. He misses some punctuation markers, and capitalisation conventions. He apologises for ‘my shabby handwriting’ but claims he likes his chosen sloping handwriting style, off the page displayed here. Such undertones may intimate the pressures of operating in contested discourses of in-school and out-of-school literate expectation. Bold acts of creative appropriation in less regulated contexts made under the influence of peer-group evaluation appear to coexist with experience elsewhere of the normative evaluative framework of Fiske’s observation, by which those same writers’ literate production is measured for its graded

evidence of transitional accomplishment, in the exacting normative performance of schooled literacy. In Chapters 7 and 8, I show how adolescent and young adult respondents reported vacillating between welcoming permissive choice and its opportunities for creative personal expression, while retaining anxiety about vernacular choices and the evaluations accruing to these. Semiotic choices are made in the light of cultural knowledge of their valued recognition. While all the data-sets show a trend of age-graded accommodation to standardised forms, this was an individual differentiated journey for each interlocutor, differentially resourced by socio-economic and cultural resources.

2.2.4 Vernacularity as a semiotic resource

Vernacular writing in general, and vernacular spelling in particular, have not attracted the same level of scholarly attention as spoken vernacular interaction or standardised spelling (Jaffe 2000, Jaffe & Walton 2000, Sebba 2007, Jaffe *et al.* 2012). Data-sets are difficult to identify since vernacular varieties tend to be localised to the interest of their participants, due to the nature of their socio-economic modes of production (Besnier 1993, Street 1993, Barton & Hamilton 1998, Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic 2000, Fairman 2007). They are usually untreated by expert processes of classification by lexicographers and, given the manner of their derivation and distribution, it seems likely that their principles of formation are arrived at tacitly in situated interaction. As a consequence, vernacular spelling is comparatively under-documented by comparison with standard forms. It is also difficult to generalise about an extemporised vernacular practice of spelling since much will depend on the particular interlocutors' purposes, situated context and access to repertoires. The sites of provenance from which derivation can be sourced in an opportunistic and eclectic method will in part depend on what resources are known by interlocutors, and this is compounded by the potentially limitless variation of such circles of interaction.

2.2.5 Vernacularity, uneducatedness and creative respelling

Vernacular heterodox choices may not have the status and power indexicals of 'prestige registers'; conversely they may invoke solidarity, intimacy and credibility in the minds of interlocutors and contribute to the differently powerful tenor of address associated with interpersonally-focused speech (Brown & Gilman 1960, Bernstein 1996, Jaffe 2000). Although not codified or regulated like standard forms, some vernacular spellings appear to have formal principles of semiotic motivation – notably, 'shallow orthography' – which extend across domains of social practice, enabling a level of enregistered recognition, without the extrinsic application of codification, instruction and institutional legitimation. Before mass schooling and its associated industry of instruction, measurement and evaluative correction in matters of spelling, uneducated writers extemporised choice with restricted access to guidance about standardised forms, with consequences of social hazard beyond the confines of their microlectal circles of interaction. However, in spite of this scope for infinitely varied spelling, some of the devices innovated by Dickens' Pip appear strangely enduring, given their lack of codification. They recur in other nineteenth-century settings and across time, in popular music, and digital contexts (Barret-DuCrocq 1993, Ryan 2010). Inspection of the respellings which feature in this study shows many to be motivated by de-etymologising the deep orthographic correspondence associated with standard English in forms which substitute the morphological and etymological information of standardised legitimation with an intuitive, shallow correspondence between sound and symbols (see Ryan 2011).

Elspaß compared the lexical, grammatical and orthographic variations used in German artisan US migrants' correspondence with the patterns of linguistic variation in twenty-first-century informal emails, observing similar conventionalised shallow orthography, and related semi-conventionalised low register features (2002). It has even been even argued that the representation of nineteenth-century writing in scholarly sources has been skewed towards standardised forms by insufficient documentation of such practices (Keseler and Bergs 2003). Such phenomena can also be observed in contemporary journals of philological observation of the US context in the early twentieth century, particularly *Dialect Notes* and *American speech*. Sandwiched between articles about jazz terms, seamen's occupational lects, or the solecisms of 'negro'[sic] seamstresses with homemade autodidact literacy practices, there are accounts of deliberated, designed vernacular spelling, modelled and distributed to an audience of millions by manufacturers for mass consumption (Pound 1913, 1923, 1925; Alexander 1930).

The choice to respell by educated social actors and well-resourced commercial organisations, both with other choices available to them, marks out the respelling later associated with SMS from the popular stereotype of vernacular spelling as an index of ignorance and want. Respelling by design functions differently to vernacular default choice enforced by lack of access to orthographic accomplishment. Yet, as the examples above suggest, there are orthographic commonalities in linguistic and semiotic form which operate across social practice, time and space, and social evaluation. This has implications for whether spelling in SMS should be treated as a discrete subfield of CMC studies; it may be just one case in the larger and wider socioliterate processes of 'post-standardised' variation (Androutsopoulos 2011). By that interpretation, practices of SMS respelling operate as a fractal instantiation of a more general creative principle by which users may customise their spellings to suit identity preferences in a 'pastiche personality' in which subjectivities are 'constantly borrowing bits and pieces of identity from whatever sources are available and constructing them as useful or desirable in a given situation' (Gergen 1991;150).²⁹ So deregulated spelling choice may reflect a larger scale fragmentation in social trajectories and repertoires at a time of accelerated sociocultural change (Carrington 2002). In Chapter 9, I return to consider SMS orthographic choice in relation to these larger scale constructs of possible paradigmatic change in the social and semiotic conditions of contemporary communicative practices.

2.3.1 Grouping vernacular orthographic practices and specialised lects

SMS respelling can be framed as an act of creativity and cultural recycling with the 'source code' resources coming from texts generated in a range of other settings: vernacular practices in domestic and community settings, trade and popular culture including entertainment; more specialised occupational practices including, but not limited to, orthographic variation conventionalised in literate practices using other digital media (Cook 2004 a and b, Shortis 2007a and b, Crystal 2008). Pre-existing conventions of orthographic practice can be located in

informal settings, including: the everyday literacies in domestic settings documented by ethnographic researchers of situated literacy; children's 'transitional orthographies' before and while they struggled to learn standard English conventions; variational forms in popular culture entertainment genres including comics, popular music, gaming, television and film; mass consumption discourses of public notices and advertising, or as these feature *in situ* in linguistic landscapes. These will not be contained within a single language in the current conditions of accelerated migration, travel for leisure purposes and electronically-mediated interaction (Rampton 1999, 2006, 2008, Pennycook 2007, Blommaert 2010). Longstanding vernacular practices of language contact and multilingual mixing are likely to have intensified, although they did not feature in this study's data-set as much as I expected (Sebba *et al.* 2012).

In addition, there is a tradition of more specialised spelling methods acquired from occupational practices, including stenography and secretarial shorthand, workplace-related acronyms, and Morse Code-mediated telegraphy (figure 2.5 below). These differ from informally circulated practices because they depend on immersion in close, shared experience, programmatic knowledge, or the availability of glosses of meaning. In extreme, the representation of a word, or words by letters may take the form of a code or cipher, as in the example below, excerpted from a book of 'service code' used for telegram-like communication by railway employees in the 1960s.



Figure 2.5 Specialised text reduction methods in telegraphy, British Rail service code, 1960, UK

Taken together, such approaches foreground the variety of orthographic practice in the potential peripheral awareness of each interlocutor's everyday experience, especially in contemporary conditions of accelerating migration and multilingual crossings, including those afforded by digital mediation (Herring & Danet 2007, Sebba *et al.* 2012). And this phenomenon pre-dates CMCs. For example, the following UK telegram from the context of the Second World War exemplifies specialised conventions relayed to a mass audience of readers and writers under particular circumstances of surveillance, anxiety, rationing of resource and geographical separation of family members.³⁰



Figure 2.6 Telegram using numbers to stand in for modular collocations, 1942

Such coded systems may resource the frequent misrepresentation of SMS in what Agha terms ‘public sphere metadiscourse’ in the putative exemplification of SMS orthographic variation in lexical lists of ornate initialisms and abstruse emoticons, which depend for intelligible meaning on glossing (e.g. Mander 2001, Crystal 2004, Appendix V).

There are also the designed orthographies, exemplified in the spelling reform movements of the past one hundred and fifty years, and recontextualised in the simplified spelling used in experimental educational contexts such as the designed orthographic translation of the Initial Teaching Alphabet (ITA).³¹ Earlier US commentators on trade spelling and its sudden diffusion associated its popularity with the spelling reform movement (Pound 1923, Alexander 1930).

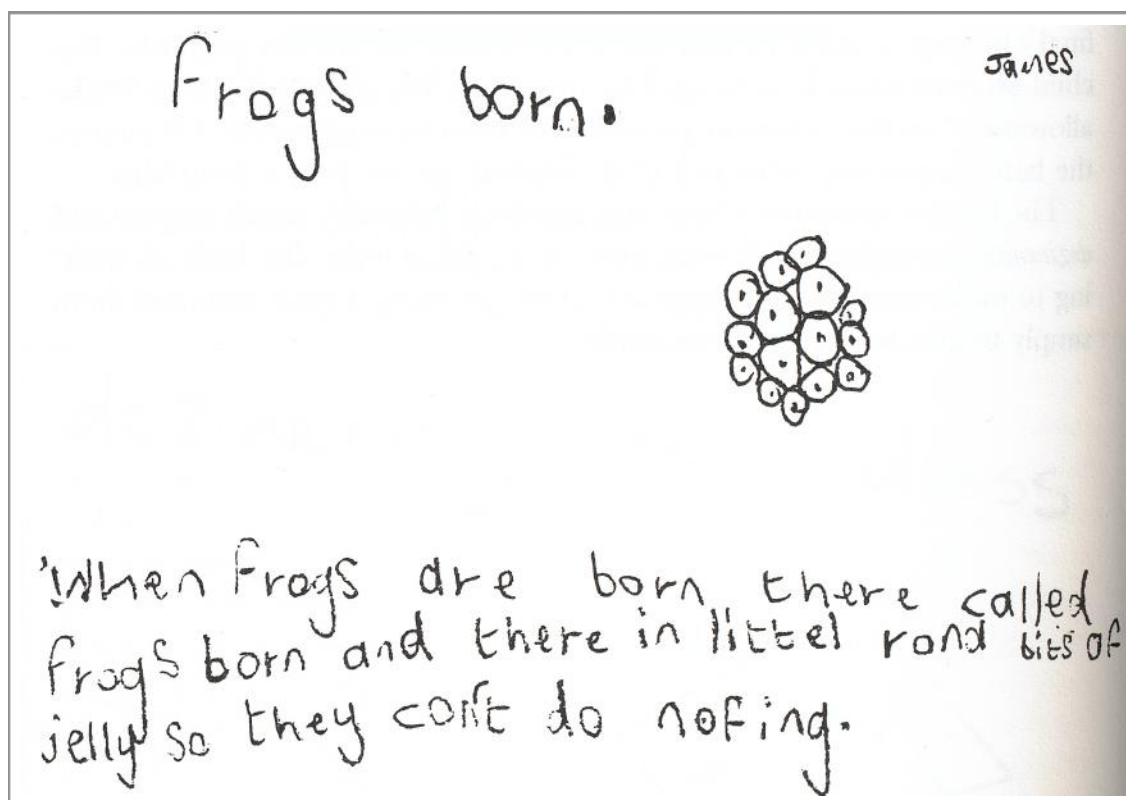


Figure 2.7 Child's graphical re-etymologisation of <frog spawn> as <frogs born> in Kress 2000;44

2.3.2 Vernacular creativity in children's early spelling

The respelling observed in SMS bears comparison with children's creative spelling (Bissex 1988, Reid 1996, Treiman 1993). Using close examination of texts composed by infants, in conjunction with observation of those children's make-believe and material craftwork, Kress depicted the semiotic vividness of emergent orthographic practices (Kress 1997, 2000;8). Differentiating between closely observed, 'accurate' creative spelling and 'correct' standardised spelling, his analysis demonstrates the precision of reference and expressive power of orthographic and graphical artefacts made with limited material and semiotic means by those still innocent of the regulative valuing of standard forms. Such imaginative feats of production and interpretation might be dismissed in evaluations founded autonomously on deficit criteria, so ignoring the powerful localised address of these fabrications. Kress noted that his subjects had not yet learned how writing would be prized over drawing, so in later years segregating graphical meaning-making practices from their infant 'integrative' graphical mode. Their orthographic choices were observant but localised in orientation and reader address. Such observation has wider application to the transitional literate practices of adolescents caught between childhood and adult formations, but equally capable of powerful localised address in communicative artefacts (e.g. Pete's combination of linguistic and graphical content in Figure 2.3).



Figure 2.8 Business card design from the mass-marketing of the ‘Uneeda biscuit’ brand, early twentieth century US

2.3.3 Trade name respelling as mass distributions of vernacular choice

In contrast to the comparatively domestic contexts in which infants’ early spelling is conducted, the innovations associated with trade spelling broadcast such variation across the public sphere by the relay of industrialised mass-consumerism. Davies’s 1987 study of four thousand trade names offered a linguistic overview of trade spelling, which she interpreted as manifesting advertisers’ awareness of the salience and vividness afforded by creative non-standard coinages. Her references follow the documentation of trade names back to equivalent study in the 1960s (Jacobson 1960, Praninskas 1968) through to Pound’s earlier accounts of the newly-developing conventions of commercial respelling and mass-marketing in the US in the early twentieth century (1923). All these studies show the level of conventionalised linguistic patterning in such respelling. Pound’s typology provides the template for trade names, reworked in SMS and related digital media (Appendix II): ‘Krazy’ <k> for <c> and <ck>; simplification of <i> for <igh> in <nite> or <mite>; humorous consonant substitutions such as <ph> for <f> as in <phat> or <phool>; and a then-new subgenre of newspaper columnists writing ‘in character’ in stylised regiolectal spelling, replete with contextualisation cues intimating the vividness of spoken address and informal tenor (*ibid.*, Appendix II, Figure II.vii). Such methods can be found in Ryan’s much later archive of spelling in popular music, to give but one example (Ryan 2010, Sebba 2015).

Pound speculated whether respelling conventions in US trade names would diffuse into standard forms, noting her surprise at the speed of change driven by what she termed the ‘commercial linguistics’ of branding and mass-marketing.³² Spellings might now originate in a localised occupational context and could then be diffused by the public sphere broadcast of industrialised

marketing, rather than being coined in academic contexts of expert knowledge, and privileged encoding in linguistic authorities and reference. These innovations may also show multiple motivation. So, in the logo above, imagined obligation, transgressive word-boundary marking in a collocation, and the use of logographic homophone spelling, combine to construe a level of direct address not available from <You need a biscuit>. The innovation is spread in any future reference to this mass-market product, and may generate further creative extensions (e.g. <4> for <for>). By 1930, Pound's contemporary Alexander had located the diffusion of <U> for <you> in the US - later the most frequent respelling in this study's SMS corpus - to these branded biscuits and other related trade names. Pound also speculated about whether the sudden changes she observed in the nature of orthographic innovation indexed a phase in the collapse of a more deferential respect by the mass of people for nation-state authority, and therefore both linguistic and political authority, after the First World War. She suggested the emergence of a subjectivity less pliable in its following of received schooled traditions, and the contiguous susceptibility of mass audiences to the appeal of commercial design. Such awareness points to the influence of audience expectation as orchestrated by mass consumerism and to the possible influence of economic and political circumstances on attitudes and practices around spelling choice. Both Pound and Alexander make connections between the popularity of respelling and contemporary social developments, including popular movements for spelling reform, the diffusion of commercial shorthand and general interest in the 'phonetic transcription of words.' (*ibid.*)

2.3.4 Vernacularity and CMCs

Earlier approaches to SMS commonly treated it as a subvariety of CMC, with two empirical approaches salient in that phase of study. Following the application to CMC of corpus methods derived from earlier studies of speech and writing, sociolinguists sought to identify various CMC media as discrete and comparable linguistic varieties, adapting the model of 'dimensions' of mode drawn from study of large data-sets (Biber 1988, Yates 1996, Colmot & Belmore 1996, Herring 1996, Hawisher & Selfe 1998). That approach saw rich development in a number of later corpus approaches, notably those by Frehner (2008) and Tagg (2009), and subsequently in the development of very large 'live corpus' data-bases (see Chapters 4 and 6). A subdisciplinary facet of this approach took the form of compiling lexical lists based upon corpora of interaction drawn from those particular medium subvarieties (Crystal 2002, 2004, 2008). That earlier method of logging CMC linguistic features drawn from data-sets of unknown provenance has been criticised for showing insufficient attention to participants' interests, designs and the general surrounding social conditions in which interaction takes place (Dürscheid 2002, Androutsopoulos 2006b, Dürscheid & Frehner 2010). This criticism was met in part by the more sophisticated theoretical and methodological models developed by Herring, which balanced contextual evidence of linguistic variation, including orthographic choice, motivated by demands of situation and register with factors motivating variation caused by the affordances

and constraints of particular media (2007). There was a separate development of approaches built on ethnographic research methods applied to digitally-mediated interaction (e.g. Androutsopoulos 2008, 2012, e.g. Jones 2009). A third approach conceptualised the linguistic and discursal innovations found in a particular CMC medium through the theoretical perspective of creativity, as this concept was developed and invigorated by the corpus analysis of informal talk, and of related forms of digitally-mediated interaction (Carter 2004, Goddard 2003, 2006a & b, 2009, North 2006). In those approaches, the higher-level creativity associated with valued literary production provided a basis of comparison with comparable sociolinguistic behaviours found operating in interaction which might typically have been deemed as mundane, casual and low status. For example, Goddard examined the ‘literariness’ of the rhetorics used in internet chat interaction (Goddard 2003, 2006a, cited in Carter 2004).

2.4.1 Orthographic choice in SMS as digitally-mediated vernacular address

CMCs, such as SMS, can be thought of as offering opportunities for ‘oralised script’, with little certain ‘need of correct spelling or syntax’. The context does not necessarily require that level of regimentation to be credible and engaging for its intended audience. More than this, respelling may offer some of the properties found in the differential aesthetic of vernacular writing identified by Fiske. Notional deviation from standard forms may function as ‘markers of oralization’: signs recruiting localised vernacular affect, and the kind of evaluations of authenticity and honesty found by sociolinguists to be associated with covert prestige.³³ As observed, such markers are indicative of the kind of spoken vernacular which achieves credibility by invoking appeals to social solidarity rather than status. Fiske reminds us that errors may arise out of design or ignorance but their impact remains broadly equivalent in intimating a direct spoken manner of address. Whether such choices are witting or unwitting is in part based on the correspondence between the resourcing of the social and material conditions in which discursal acts are composed and social consensus around what constitutes literate accomplishment. By treating SMS spelling choice as digitally-mediated vernacularity, the object of enquiry is framed as vernacularity rather than a phenomenon determined by the technological affordances and constraints of a particular CMC medium.

2.4.2 ‘Post hoc ergo propter hoc’: after this, therefore, because of this - a caution

I have argued that orthographic innovations found in SMS show a degree of enregistered commonality and convention, deriving in form from analogies based on aural principles of shallow orthographic word formation: <wot> for <what>, <2> for <to>, <luv> for <love>, <dat> for <that> can be found across space and time (see Appendix II). There is also the potential for over-reading evidence about the hetero-graphic provenance of such prior spelt forms.³⁴ So, to illustrate the point, I am not claiming that Pete is drawing from such examples as Dickens’s Pip when he writes <u> for <you> or <r> for <are> in Figure 2.3. While SMS and other vernacular choices reflect a level of routine convention, their means of distribution is by

its nature heterogeneous and hard to monitor. Furthermore, the resources being drawn on may be multiple in provenance, and in motivation. In chapters 5,6 and 7, I show how specific SMS variational choices are often distributed by informal means of uptake which lie outside the contexts of schooling, print and those other relays of institutional context. The evidence presented in that empirical section of this thesis is that such choices are likely to be innovated in the course of situated interaction occurring at an idiolectal, ‘microlectal’, or sociolectal level. According to my respondents, frequent vernacular choice may have various motivations: intuitive analogy, casual allusive reference, accommodation to in-group norms, exemplification in popular culture artefacts such as comics, or some other combined process of happenstance (see Chapter 7), including extemporising shallow orthographic principles from an extended ‘graphabet’ (see Shortis, in press). In arguing that there may be an individual realisation of a collective experience of variational spelling, I am emphasising that spelling conventions are not circumscribed by what is recorded in standardised English, although they also feed indirectly on the patterns to be found in that inscribed regularity.

So, to give another example, the use of the initialism <OMG> evident in the corpus (see chapter 6, Appendix VI) may have a complex provenance. It is not in any simple or direct way resourced by its citation in a 1917 letter with its sly joke about the profusion of initialisms spawned by the profusion of military decorations occasioned by the First World War, or, for that matter, by anecdotal claims and folk theories made by some respondents about the enregisterment of the exclaimed <OMG> by 1990s US talk show host Whoopi Goldberg, supposedly to play on its affordances in marking a dramatic interjection while avoiding blasphemy. <OMG> may have a complex mixture of provenance and motivation. Acronymy is associated with twentieth century scientific, military and industrial social practice; interjections may take euphemistic forms, including those afforded by initialisms. At some level, the etymology of spellings used in vernacular contexts is fluid and unknowable, and possibly irrelevant, except by their recognition and evaluation in a moment of localised interaction.

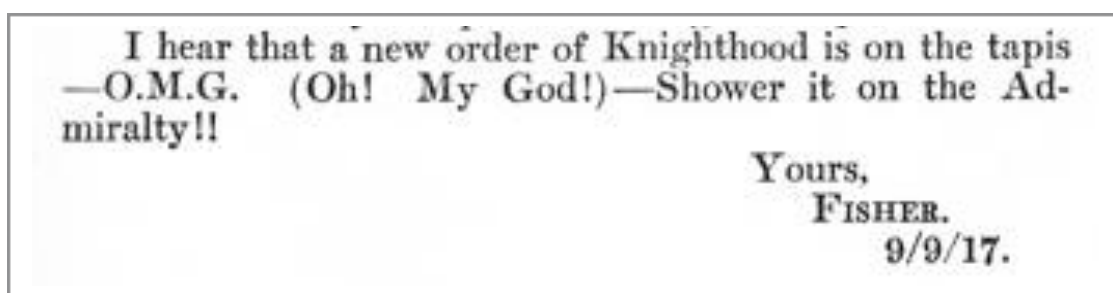


Figure 2.9 Early citation of OMG in personal letter, 1917

2.4.3 Vernacular ‘hetero-graphy’ as a semiotic resource

In this chapter I have presented the issue of ‘variational’ spelling choices in SMS as a recent iteration of an under-documented but longstanding tradition of vernacular orthographic practice, as instantiated in home and community settings, and formalised and disseminated more widely by its recontextualisation in commercial domains (see also Pound 1923, Cook 2004 a and b, Shortis 2007a and b, Crystal 2008). Such choices may have meaning potentials which differ from those circumscribed by standard English. Also, although adumbrated by vernacular written varieties from the historical past - the nineteenth century, for instance - and sharing some routine linguistic and semiotic forms, such choices now operate with different signification. Building on analysis of three representations of vernacular texts featuring respelling, along with a critical survey of relevant studies, I have suggested that the SMS spelling which features in this study can be viewed as a selection made from the active and passive repertoires of interactants, which are likely to shape, and to have been shaped by those respondents’ socio-economic resources and their access to repertoire which follows from that, their attitudes to pre-existing and contiguous practices, and by their being enregistered and relayed by commercial popular culture, as well as by schooled choices. I have proposed that standardised choices of spelling, although unique in their level of resource, representation and influence, are situated in a landscape of other ‘orthographic registers’, which remain influential and ‘uneradicated’, although subject to representational ‘erasure’ over historical duration (Irvine & Gal 2000:38).

¹⁶ See Agha's application of the concept of 'prestige register' to received pronunciation (2003).

¹⁷ Charles Dickens's '*Great Expectations*' (1861) presents a first person narrative of Pip, an orphan, who tells the story of his growing-up into early adulthood, including his early years being raised in poverty by his aunt and her blacksmith husband uncle Joe Gargery. The young Pip is depicted as coming from an impoverished social background and without formal schooling, although he shows curiosity in puzzling out the wording of a gravestone and he attempts to write a letter to his uncle, as quoted here. His text is presented as an example of how low levels of literacy were enregistered in imaginary representations in popular fiction rather than as a documentary example. Readers are invited to make their own comparisons with the actuality documented in poor law letters, such as those collected and analysed by Fairman (e.g. 2007 in Appendix II), or with the examples of foundling mothers cited by Barret-DuCrocq. '*Great Expectations*' has never been out of print since its publication and has sold many millions of copies without commentary on the intelligibility of Pip's letter to Joe, which appears to need no gloss.

¹⁸ See related discussion in Blommaert 2008, 2013.

¹⁹ See application of respelling typology innovated by Androutsopoulos (2002:522) discussed in Sebba (2007:34) and discussion of Anis (2007) in Androutsopoulos (2011).

²⁰ See Shaw 2008 for discussion of regiolectal stylisation in CMC interaction.

²¹ As with much vernacular writing, not all dimensions of meaning are translatable into standard English and the lexical and grammatical details are particular to its realisation in geosocial context (see Jaffe 2000, Jaffe & Walton 2000 and other articles in that special edition of the Journal of Sociolinguistics).

²² See *Urban Dictionary* (urbandictionary.com).

²³ The word before <James And the giant Peaches> may look like 'you' but is more productively interpreted as 'your' which makes it easier to understand as 'a jocular threat and a rude allusion' and not an error of any kind. <James And the giant Peaches> is a realisation of the title of the popular children's book by Road Dahl (*James and the Giant Peaches*). Thank you to Mark Sebba for this observation.

²⁴ These are not the resistant rituals and behaviour analysed by Rampton (2006) but share with 'Deutsche' the sense of a recreational crossing, or stylisation, not prepared for directly by formal schooled instruction.

²⁵ See related discussion in Rampton (2000:introduction), Harris et al. (2011) and on LDC website via kcl.ac.uk.

²⁶ See The Population of Bristol, April 2012 at <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/population>.

²⁷ 'Muchos luv' - muchos (cf muchos cerveza) is mock Spanish not real Spanish, which the author must know. Also 'muy estimado amigo mio' seems archaic, in the manner of a deliberately ponderous and obsolete literary formula. (See Hill, J., 1998). Thank you to Mark Sebba for this observation.

²⁸ Contemporaneous studies featuring teaching and learning of school English in urban settings include Kress et al. 2005, Rampton 2006, Harris et al. 2011 See note above. There is little evidence in any of these sources of out-of-school digital literacy practices functioning as a curriculum focus. See also research outputs from the ESRC TLRP programme (interactiveeducation.ac.uk, for example).

²⁹ See Kataoka 1997, 2003a and b.

³⁰ See Appendix II for facsimile image of glossary required to access the telegram's coded textual input.

³¹ Used in UK schools experimentally in the 1960s. See <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/ita.htm>.

³² See <http://freepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~bradytrilogy/memories/images/bibliography/na-bis-co/nabisco-history.html> .

³³ See Labov 1972, Trudgill 1972, 1974, Cheshire 1982, or summaries such as Trousdale 2010.

³⁴ Thank you to Jan Blommaert and Mark Sebba for raising this issue in my Viva.

2b). Locating this study in its empirical and theoretical fields

The reservoir of orthographic resources from which SMS draws



Figure 2.10 Graphical representation of the provenance of domains of orthographic resource re-appropriated in SMS

We spell...because orthography is part of the elaboration of our culture; because there is a natural tendency for all human activities which involve choice to take on social meaning; because literacy itself is embedded in and important to our culture and social actions, and orthography is essentially bound up with literacy

Sebba 2007;160

The fact is that notationally-based writing is a flexible and resilient tool because it allows for a variety of structural patterns that can be exploited in different ways. In order to give this fact its theoretical due it is important to distinguish between the notational identity of a character & its functions in a script. It is precisely because, in written English, alphabetic letters are units of notation and not simply phonetic symbols that they have the capacity to fulfil a variety of functions.

Harris, 1997;107

2.5.1 SMS spelling choice presented as orthographic recycling

This study is focused on digitally-mediated vernacular literacy practices of adolescents who were simultaneously attending well-resourced formal schooling, with its focus on the acquisition of normative spelling. As I showed in Chapter 2a, immersion in schooled literacy had an impact on the orthographic resources available to be co-opted and evaluated which marks out these interlocutors' options from those available to Dickens's Pip. My respondents' cultural knowledge of valued literacy came in part from their experience of the hegemony of standard English in the written forms which characterise what is valued in public discourse and schooled instruction. Their familiarity with these standardised English spellings also offered a potential for regular patterns of sound and spelling correspondence to be adapted for orthographic innovations based on analogy with standard forms, as observed in previous studies of younger children's 'creative spelling' (Read 1986, Treiman 1993). The orthographic resources of standard English orthography have received recent systematic documentation, and retheorisation (Albrow 1972, Carney 1994, Rollings 2004, Ryan, 2011, below) which sets out the nature and extent of those patterns, which also resource designed optionality in respelling.

In order to probe these complex relationships between creativity, system and convention I begin with a hypothetical model of the potential orthographic resources in circulation before offering consideration of the opportunities for creative orthographic choices which may appear 'well-formed' in their patterned relationship with the 'English writing system' found in standardised English, as conceived by a theoretical linguistic perspective. Next I survey a number of other approaches which treat vernacular spelling choice as constituting distinctive affordances, meaning-potentials and 'environmental' advantages which cannot be realised equally by normative spelling. These include spelling choice functioning as an indexical of social resistance, its construal of affect, and its affordances for text entry reduction. I conclude by summarising the multiplicity of motivations and symbolic resources which aggregate in the 'reservoir' of potential spelling choice optionality.

In the previous chapter section, I argued that digitally-mediated vernaculars draw intertextually from the orthographic practices found in trade names, other forms of popular and commercial culture, including popular music, children's transitional 'creative spelling', emergent ICT text forms, and codified and uncoded occupational shorthands (Shortis 2007a). This list is open to other additions, such as modernist literature (Jelsbak 2010); dialectal influences in earlier literary writing (Chapman 1984), including realist fiction and poetry (e.g. Barnes 1841); writing for children (Willans 1953 in Sebba 2003); or comic strips from the early twentieth century US (e.g. Inge 1990, Herriman 1991), or the D.C. Thompson imprint of comics in the UK.³⁵ There is also a burgeoning of case studies theorised by orthography as social action (Sebba 2007, Jaffe *et al.* 2012), and the related field treating spelling in accounts of 'writing systems' (Venezky 1970, Albrow 1972, Ryan 2011, Cook 2004a, Cook & Ryan eds. forthcoming). More recent studies of multilingual contexts (Sebba *et al.* 2012) include SMS 'supervernaculars' found in multilingual

communities with limited access to standardised forms (Deumert & Oscar Masinyana 2008, Blommaert & Velghe 2012, Deumert 2015). Wide-ranging examples of domestic vernacular respelling are surveyed in compendia of ‘novel spellings’ found in: Cook (2004 a & b); fanzines (Androutsopoulos 2000, German); Sebba’s observations of several domains of respelling, especially relating to representations sourced from African-Caribbean varieties (1998, 2003a, 2003b, 2007, 2009); hip-hop and globalised flows of language and semiotic resources in youth subcultures (Pennycook 2003, 2006, 2007, 2010; Alim *et al.* 2009); and aspects of multilingual context (Lee 2007, Fung & Carter 2007, Lam 2009, Hinrichs 2012, Vold Lexander 2012, summarised in Tagg 2012;200).

There are also exceptional cases of temporary script system variation *en masse*. For example, Tseliga (2003), Spilioti (2009) and Androutsopoulos (2012) analysed the ideological challenge of young Greeks responding to nation-state prescriptions of script standardisation in an orthographic practice termed ‘Greeklish’. Here Roman characters were used as substitutes for the Greek alphabet not available on earlier mobile phones. Ironically, the normative use of the Greek alphabet had been developed as a symbol of linguistic and ideological nationalism codified in the nineteenth century (Spilioti 2009). As noted previously, extemporised vernacular spelling practice, by its nature, allows for selections which are eclectic; in theory, those choosing to spell in this way may subordinate resources from every possible provenance on the basis of the interlocutors’ repertoire and its perceived affordances for creative re-appropriation (e.g Fung & Carter 2007, Lam 2009). Vernacular choice is not constrained by the documentary apparatus of codification and reference associated with standardised written language; practice is patterned but unframed.

Figure 2.10 shows groupings of the main domains and distributions of orthographic resource observed in this study, which I am arguing offer potential derivations for SMS choice by feeding into a ‘reservoir’³⁶ of potential orthographic optionality.³⁷ By this interpretation, respellings have been routinely innovated and diffused in a range of domains of varied social practice. This unremarkable and historically demonstrable state of affairs has often not been reflected in linguistic authorities, which commonly avoid representation of orthographic forms other than standardised spellings, and thereby naturalise normative forms. This situation can be illustrated by comparing the representation of standardised spelling situated in its historical context, as offered the philological and lexicographical scrutiny of the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*.³⁸ The representation of standard English spelling in a dictionary such as the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* operates prescriptively. *OED* citations offer evidence which shows variation in relation to time, context and other particularities of setting. In contrast to its *OED* informational source, ‘*The Concise*’ offers an ideological representation of authoritative, normative prescription of autonomously valued choice which does not attend to such information. I term this kind of representation as ‘**hyper-standard**’ orthographic practice in order to denote its meticulous frame of circumscription and evaluation. Figures 2.10 and 2.11 offer a representation

of the hegemonic centrality of normative forms in conjunction with other options, familiar enough to many interlocutors although not defined in dictionaries, including those from which normative forms derive.

2.5.2 Orthographic economies of resource and distribution

The flows of orthographic resource shown in Figure 2.11 schematise the semiotic economy found in contemporary modernity.³⁹ This cartoon presents standardised, historical variation recorded in philological and lexicographical scholarship, commercialised popular culture, vernacular orthographic practices and specialised occupational practices (*ibid.*) and interlingual influences (e.g. Androutsopoulos 2000). It depicts a normative written variety such as standard English, with its normative spelling, operating in a triangular relay of institutionalised literacy practices and their regulated distribution of spelling in schooling and print.⁴⁰ This is juxtaposed with more localised streams of practice outside regulated distribution. All varieties flow into a central reservoir of potential orthographic resource.⁴¹ They cross domains of social practice, language and jurisdiction, so foregrounding the permeability of influence afforded by material and social conditions of intercultural and interlingual contact. These flows are intensified by globalised mass consumption and changes to patterns of migration and settlement. Orthographic practices are now distributed by digital mediation (signalled by the mobile phone mast), across increasingly distant and porous linguistic and political boundaries (e.g. Cook 2004 b, Blommaert 2005, 2008, 2010, Pennycook 2003, 2007, Alim *et al.* 009). Such a model emphasises the variation experienced by this study's respondents, and with the primary focus on spelling in prescriptive print standardisation in the background, although that variety remains singularly influential.⁴²

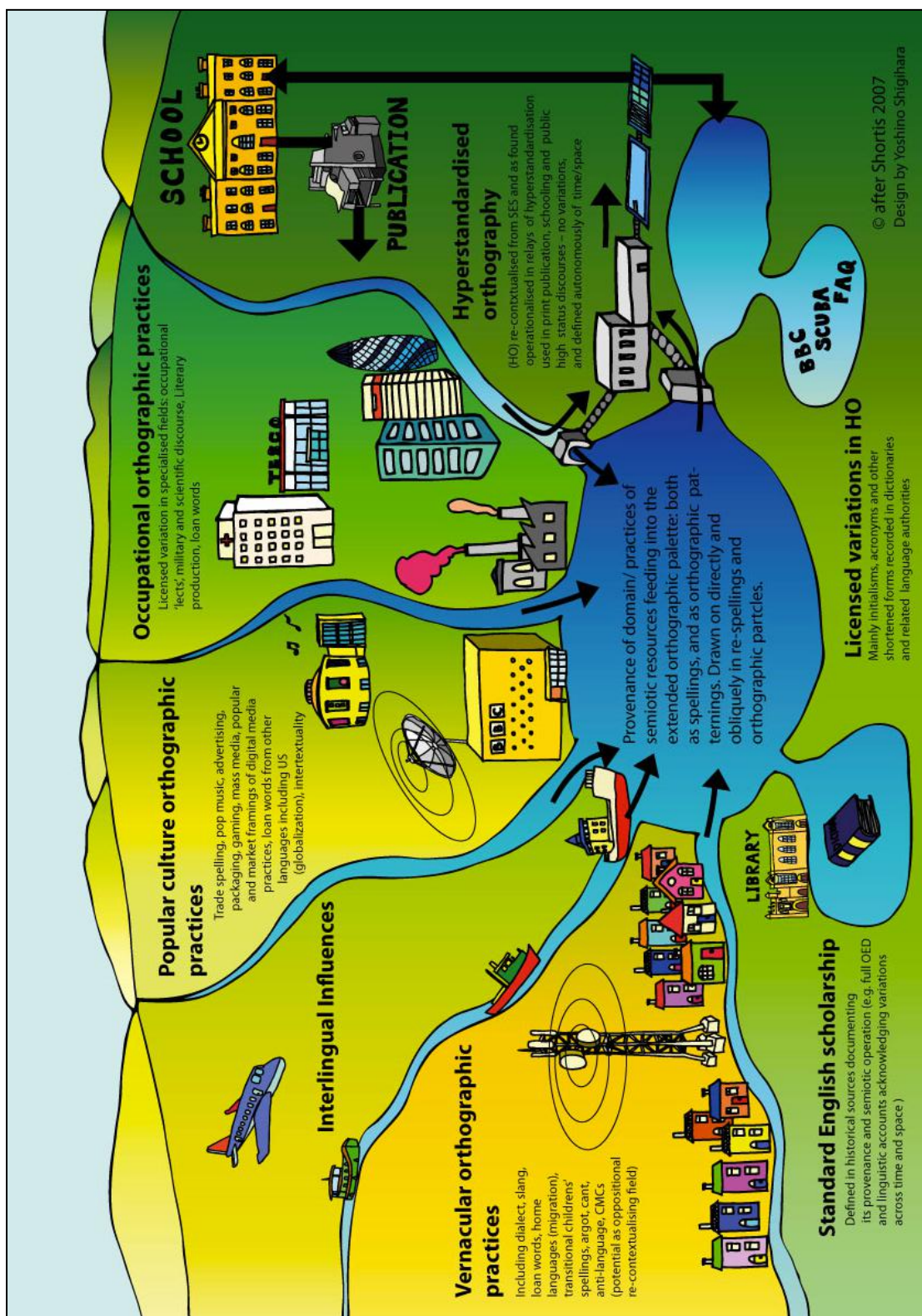


Figure 2.11 A diagrammatic scheme of orthographic economies of resource and distribution

2.5.3 Patterns of orthographic choice in vernaculars

In Harris's formulation, a 'notationally-based writing is a flexible and resilient tool because it allows for a variety of structural patterns that can be exploited in different ways' (1997;107, epigraph above). Those ways will take on localised social meanings and estimations of cultural value (Sebba 2007;160, epigraph above). The nature of orthographic information represented in text spelling shows a complexity of relationship with normative options: in part drawing its extemporised creativity from the patterns found in standard forms. Orthographic forms may also exhibit a complex relationship between alphabetical symbols and what Harris terms 'units of notation'.

Since the sixteenth century, normative English spellings have tended to be codified in a process of expert scholarship by morphophonemic prioritisations of etymological derivation rather than by shallower correspondences between sound and sign (Scragg 1974, Horobin 2013, Brown & Brown 2009, Upward & Davidson 2011).⁴³ This 'deep orthography' (Katz & Frost 1992) can be seen in *OED*, in which words are documented by their provenance in historical attestation with accompanying linguistic rationales based on descriptive linguistic principles. These entries are accompanied by extensive citations, showing the different ways in which a word has been spelt in time and over time, often tracing back provenance and implied rationale to an original Anglo-Saxon derivation, or one sourced in other languages (Durkin 2009, 2014, Figure 2.12 below). Etymological and morphological information accompanies simpler principles of notating a word by its imagined sound in a manner of codification arrived at by expert system.

By contrast, in the orthographic innovations associated with SMS and related digitally-mediated interaction, respellings may break with the rationales and structured principles arrived at by language authorities, whether from linguistics or lexicography. Vernacular choices may be innovated by interlocutors in wilful ignorance of the encoding of linguistic and etymological information in normative forms. They may also be motivated out of calculated design. There are also typifying orthographic conventions which appear to operate across domains of vernacular literacy practices, such as the tendency to de-etymologise standardised spelling into forms showing shallower orthography, often (but not always) in an orientation to imagined speech. Vernacular spelling may re-etymologise the structures encoded in synonymous standardised spellings by creative appropriations.

Such insights were established in a number of earlier, isolated studies focused on drawing out the potential meaning of 'variational' orthographic resources, and the longevity of such practices in the relationship between verbal and graphical dimensions of a given sign. That earlier scholarship was necessarily piecemeal and tended to take the form of single papers (e.g. Bolinger 1946, Balhorn 1998, Bowdre 1964, 1982, Hall 1960, Skousen 1982, Weber 1986). More recently, rethinking about creativity and about the social function of orthography have been developed on a collaborative scale of synthesis. The recent rethinking of vernacular

creativity has examined discursive features of verbal play identified previously in Chapter 2, including the affordances of non-standard spelling for novel kinds of meaning potential not available by standardised choices (Fiske 1989, Crystal 1998, Cook 2000, Carter 2004). Recently developed sociocultural approaches to orthography (e.g Jaffe & Walton 2000, Jaffe *et al.* 2012, Sebba 1998,2007, Blommaert 2008, 2013) can be applied to the localised case of SMS choice.

2.6.1 Standardised English spelling as a polysystemic resource

Davies suggested the neglect of spelling in scholarship was a consequence of the prioritisation of speech over writing in twentieth-century linguistics, leading to a lack of an ‘adequate framework of analysis to deal with variation at the level of spelling, punctuation, arrangement, and so on.’ (1987, see Sebba 2007 for related argument). She cited Crystal and Davey’s observation that ‘there is no agreed terminology for the discussion of graphetic and graphological contrasts’ (1969;23). Since then, a number of treatments of English spelling have been developed, which combine theoretical structural approaches with quantitative methods to explain patterns of English spelling, including its apparent vagaries, or systemic seeming-inconsistencies, relating these to the construct of an English ‘writing system’ (Cook 2004a for overview). Such approaches foreground norms and variations of standardised English spellings with reference to the indexing of sounds realised in Received Pronunciation (RP), identifying the degrees of well-formed structural correspondence between the sounds heard when words are spoken and the graphemes used to realise those sounds. Carney provides the most extensive mapping to date (1994). Elaborating Albrow’s account of normative English spelling model as a **polysystem** of ‘basic English’, ‘loan words’, and ‘exotic words’, he posited a more sophisticated and resilient polysystemic basis for his identification of statistical patterns of competing and conditioned variation in his spelling corpus. His work has in turn been developed in an adapted systems-based elaboration, identifying more precise principles of conditioned variation (Rollings 2004). Both Carney and Rollings discuss the importance of social and historical forces in determining systemic etymological derivations and, as Carney terms it, ‘philological approaches’, while making these factors subsidiary to their focus on formal orthographic correspondences. So they elaborated Albrow’s systemisation of multiple provenances for the derivational groupings which constituted the ‘polysystem’ of English spelling. They applied number-based demonstration of degrees of orthographic correspondence. Their interest appears to be in supplying statistical demonstration of theoretically-oriented analyses of English spelling functioning as a normative, linguistic system.

Preferred forms emerge as from a process of natural selection as optimum conditioned variants (Carney 1994;467). There is less attention to the impact of ideological factors and their contestation as these determine the selection, distribution and enforcement of a normative form, as argued in sociohistorical accounts of lexical change⁴⁴ (Leith 1997, Hughes 1988, Crowley

1996, Wright 2000, see Mugglestone 2006). There is an exception made in Carney's treatment of variant spellings of people's names where he observed the greater ownership and control people have in determining preferences (1994:443 and following, Anderson 2007).⁴⁵ Although both Carney and Rollings cite *OED* evidence in general terms, there is less attention to the lexically-individuated documentary record *OED* routinely furnishes of pre-standardised variant forms, further exemplified in citations. For example, see this illustration of pre-standardisation spellings of YOU:

1–3 eow, (1 ieow, iow, 2 3eau, heou, heow, how, 3ehw,) 2–3 eou, 3eu, 3ew, 2–4 ou, hou, 3u, 3 iou, æu, ew, heu, eo, oeu, howe, 3eow, 3uw, ov, 3–4 ow, owe, 3iu, 3–5 eu, yu, (6 Sc.) 3ou, 4 iow, 3ue, 3uu, 3ou3, yuu, youu, yhow, 4–5 3owe, 3how, 3o, (6–7 Sc.) 3ow, 4–7 yow, 5 3oue, 3ewe, 3hu, yowe, yoow, yw, yo, yewe, Sc. yhu, yhw, 5–6 youe, 6 iow, 7 yew, 4– you, (9 dial. & vulgar yah, yer, also yez'.

Figure 2.12 *OED* 2 dictionary entry account of pre-standardisation spelling of YOU.

Pronunciation is examined systematically for its connections with a standardised spelling system with unmarked RP functioning as the benchmark. Here there is an historical issue of empirical evidence and the problem of developing synchronic correspondences in the absence of balanced attention to diachronic provenance. RP diffused between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries well after spelling stabilised into its normative patterns in the late seventeenth century (Scragg 1974, Mugglestone 1995, Agha 2003, Upward & Davidson 2011). Some variants, such as those for <you> above, are likely to be indexical of older forms of variant pronunciation. Even in the twentieth century, as Carney notes, use of a regional dialect is likely to give differential access to standardised spellings. For example, the relationship of medial postvocalic <r> to past more widespread diffusion of patterns of rhoticity is something which is evident in standard spellings of words no longer pronounced usually in this way except in rhotic dialects (e.g. the post vocalic 'r' in <cart>, <part> in Bristolian). The phenomenon of medial 'r' in contemporary normative forms requires historical explanation. Such significant exceptions raise the issue of RP as a problematic benchmark in synchronic accounts of English spelling as linguistic system which do not attend to social, philological and diachronic records..

Summarising, Carney and Rollings developed accounts of system in English spelling understood in its relationship to contemporary patterns of speech in its prestige varieties. The contested social and historical processes by which English spelling came to be standardised, and the ideological relationships underlying the dominant representation of sound-spelling correspondence, as outlined by Scragg (1974), are inevitably bracketed off by the selective focus on linguistic system, as it focuses synchronically, and by implication, organically, on the pool of normative spellings. Their work remains relevant to this study in the adaptation made of Albrow's construct of standardised English spelling functioning as a complex polysystem rather than some unitary single system of correspondences, which is hard to support in the case of standard English. In short, the agentive production of sociohistorical contestation was presented

as a multi-system linguistic process in a way which foregrounded aspects of that linguistic system while backgrounding historical provenance and social agency.

2.6.2 ‘Constructed homophony’ as a theorisation of respelling

For Ryan, the systemic patterns in standardised spellings and pronunciation identified by Albrow, Carney and Rollings can be interpreted as offering a linguistic resource for creative respelling. The multifarious polysystemic complexity by which sounds can be spelt in standard English offers a rich orthographic resource for creative adaptation in unlicensed variation. Ryan built on Carney’s systemisation (adapting the typology he reworked from Albrow). Those respelling in the method he termed ‘constructed homophony’ can draw on the sources for homophonous variation located in the constituent orthographic subsystems of standardised English Ryan elaborated from Carney. These are labelled §DEFAULT, §GEMINATE, §GREEK, §FRENCH, §ITALIAN, §ROMANCE, §EXOTIC and §NONCE. A single phoneme may be realised in standardised forms by a set consisting of its various spellings. These are shown in their simpler manifestation in Figure 2.12, which shows the construct he terms the /f/ ‘**grammaphoneme**’: the sets of ‘derived spelling method by which a unit of sound can be realised’ in standardised English spelling.

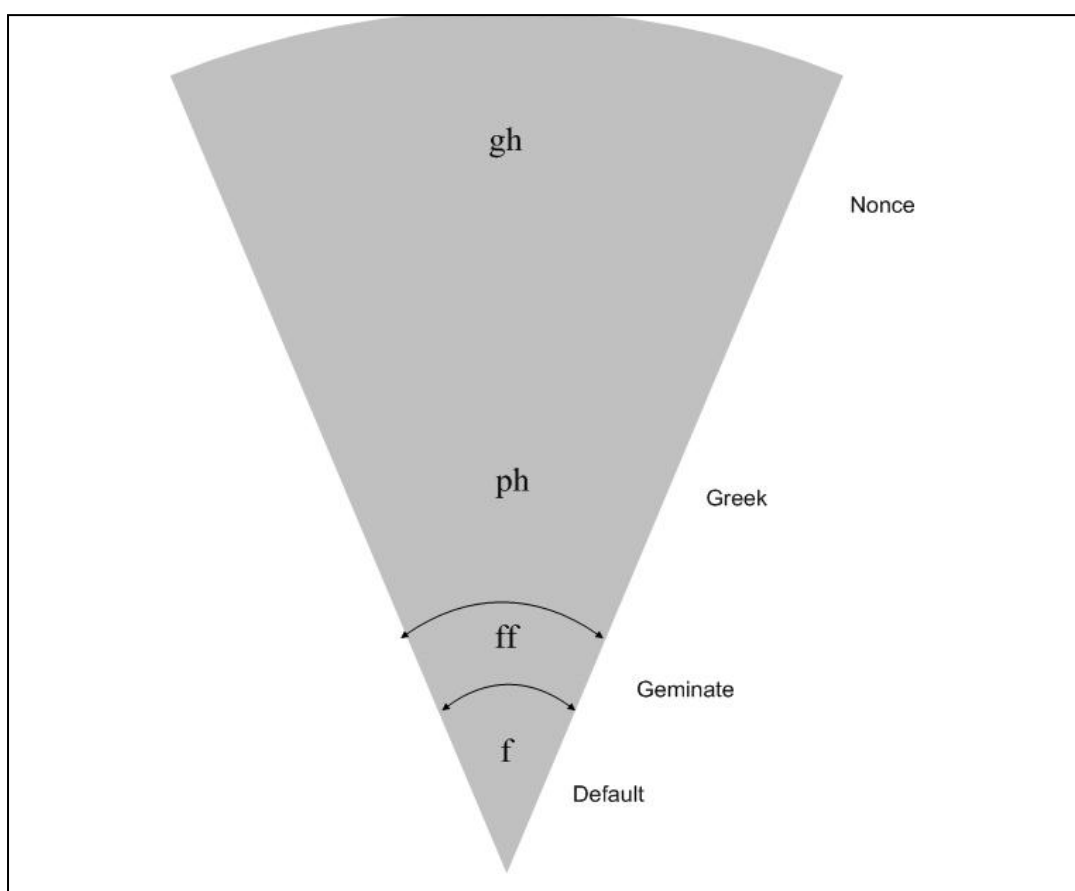


Figure 2.13 Ryan’s representation of ‘the /f/ grammaphoneme’ (2011;18)

By this interpretation, patterned orthographic resources in standardised English offer a resource for playful systemic innovation of homophony and homography. By this theorisation, those texting may be seen to access grammaphoneme sets of all the orthographic variants known to them that can be used to spell a particular phoneme. They may draw on spelling symbols which relate to ‘phonological tiers’ higher than the phoneme. Ryan exemplifies these larger ‘orthographic particles’ with an example associated with an archetypal SMS respelling: <CUL8R> for <SEE YOU LATER>. The five constituent letters are suggested to be functioning linguistically in four distinct ways: <C> and <U> as **morphograms**; <L> as a **phonogram**, <R> as a **syllabogram**, and <8> as **rhymogram** (*ibid.*:3).

Ryan focused on well-formed hypothetical orthographic potentials. As with Carney and Rollings, that theorisation has less scope for a scrutiny of agency as manifest in the social, economic, material and historical processes by which choices may be judged as ‘well-formed’, and whether this is indexical of enregistered social value, or a measure of consistency with an imaginary ideal of logical linguistic system. Inevitably, actual data-sets are messier than the schema offered. For example, adolescents in Bristol used the spelling <todai> for <today>, possibly by analogy with words such as <bait>; in standard written English <ai> is found in initial and medial position only. Does this make such a realisation ill-formed? What are the criteria and legitimating process which make it so? The interest appears to be focused on the linguistic logic of potential optionality with inevitably less empirical attention to the plethora of factors which may determine choice - social, economic, material, historical and linguistic- and why comparable variants may attract differential uptake. There can be no allowance in such a theoretically-focused method for the notably varied motivations which will be found in an eclectic, uncoded, vernacular practice where a word may sometimes be spelt by principles other than, or in addition to, constructed homophony (e.g.. <what>, <wat>, <wt>, Chapters 5 and 6, Appendix VI). There is the additional limitation of the monoglot language model shown in the figure above in the conditions of contemporary multilingualism (e.g. Blackledge & Creese 2010). The diagram focuses on norms arrived at from multilingual derivation over historical time. There is less discursive attention to treatment of factors arising from contemporary multilingual contact, including the kinds of idiolectal and sociolectal script-shifting practices observed in recent research examining multilingual interaction in digitally-mediated vernaculars (Lee 2007, Lam 2009, Fung and Carter 2007, Sebba *et al.* 2012). In short, as with Carney and Rollings, there is less consideration of the processes by which social actors make and evaluate the actual orthographic choices which become habitual and enregistered..

Grammaphonology, and its associated process of **constructed homophony**, show the principled linguistic basis of a type of respelling to be found frequently across all the data-sets collected in this study, including SMS, CMC, and texts from vernacular and popular cultures. Well-known, frequently occurring respelt forms, such as <u>; <2> and <nite>, exemplify constructed homophony, and also draw intertextually from their previous frequent iteration in

vernacular and popular culture contexts, with the derivational impress of being etyma as well as morphemes.⁴⁶ As such, these forms, may recruit the metapragmatic dimensions of meaning associated with that derivation, which cannot not feature in Ryan's theoretical model. Although the evidence of this thesis is that such connotations are focal for interlocutors; for example, the connotations of a linguistic provenance, with all its connotative resonances. As Androutsopoulos observed of German fanzine writers, interlingual borrowings into German from English were usually sourced in American varieties, and by implication US popular culture, rather than British English (2000). Given the globalised diffusions of such influence, this is likely to be true for the UK-based respondents in this study of orthographic behaviours in a British English setting.

In contrast to such language-as-system approaches, spelling can be seen as a practice determined and distributed by regulative social processes and the material means by which certain forms are selected, relayed and replicated by audiences in an ideologically-motivated enactment of collective linguistic and social unity (Anderson 1991, Leith 1997, Hughes 1988, Crowley 1996). Principles of etymological, morphological or phonological rationale may operate as a kind of post-hoc disciplinary legitimisation. That social and semiotic approach might connect levels and means of standardisation of English with the emergence of the modern nation-state, material conditions of print production and changes in levels of literacy through changes in the distribution of *socio-economic* resources and symbolic capital, especially by mass education (Smith 1984, Joseph 1987, Anderson 1991). Variation may relate to sociocultural agentive processes by which formal features of written language carry traces of their social and material conditions, including testing regimes governing ideological cohesion around what constitutes socially acceptable variation. Yet standard forms derive their legitimacy in part by being encoded in language authorities which refer to principles of morphological and etymological derivation and which legitimate ideological choice on the basis of appeals to logical linguistic system. There is a tension between spelling seen as an agentive regulative enactment or as a logical 'organic' linguistic system. I am arguing the evidence suggests the prioritisation of a social focus in determining the forms of spelling which come to have valued recognition in extemporised practice.

2.7.1 Sociolinguistic indexicality in 'spelling rebellion'

Earlier phases of this study drew on theories presenting variational spelling as an indexical enactment of resistant social attitudes. Potentials for social signification of this kind are attested by the longstanding identification in sociolinguistic studies of stigmatised vernacular and subcultural forms of speech, especially taken from regiolectal and sociolectal varieties, which have been subsequently re-appropriated by marginalised groups and re-oriented for their affordances in intimating solidarity with a localised peer-group ideology. So, German Punk fanzine writers use of 'non-standard choices' was an indexical of their 'subcultural

capital' (Thornton 1995), construing social distance from mainstream values and identities (Androutsopoulos 2000). The sociolinguistics of **covert prestige** is reworked in its written and spelt forms (*ibid.*, Labov 1968, Trudgill 1976, Cheshire 1982). This approach to spelling as resistance is amplified and extended by the analysis presented in two edited collections of case studies illustrating orthographic variation as discursive constructions of youth identity (Androutsopoulos & Scholz 1998, Androutsopoulos & Georgakopoulou 2003). It is further exemplified by studies African-Caribbean varieties, as they feature in stylised representations marking stance, subcultural affiliation or enregisterment (Sebba 2003 a & b, Hinrichs 2012). A more extreme version of a related idea can be seen too in Halliday's earlier theorisation of a lexical and orthographic **anti-language** as a performative register of subversion; this informs some studies of internet chat and popular attitudes about SMS language as an argot (Halliday 1976, 1979, Donath 1999, Stevenson 2001). Androutsopoulos's study of fanzines is also significant for its delineation of a typology of respelling which focuses on the social conditions giving rise to innovation, and the affordances which might be achieved, rather than the more common previous approach of using terms and concepts for spelling primarily driven by deficit, form-focused comparison with standard forms. The approaches to corpus data classification taken in this study derive from such socially-conceptualised approaches (see Werry 1996, Jaffe 2012, Chapter 4 below).

The earlier reporting of this study presented analysis of small corpora of SMS and instant messaging as 'systematic innovation and deviation' in teenagers' use of language (see Chapter 4).⁴⁷ That work used the sociolinguistic concept of 'covert prestige' as the social motivation for the deployment of some linguistic variants, including those which model established covert prestige accent features such as 'g'-dropping in written form: 'g-dropping' in Trudgill (1976) becomes 'g-clipping' in Thurlow (2003). Such motivations are attested in the questionnaire and interview comments with fine-grained idiolectal claims of preferences and dislikes for variants such as <wat>/<wot>/<what>, <soz> for <sorry>, <dem> for <them> and <skl>, <skool>, <school> (see Chapters 6, 7 and 8). As SMS diffused beyond its early adopters' social and generational profiles, claims of respelling as ritualised resistance could not explain evidence for more heterogeneous views, including the linguistically conservative attitudes reported by a quarter of the sample, or markedly transgressive choices by some with high levels of educational attainment. Some expertly literate, culturally-accomplished older people, including teachers and academics, also claimed respelling preferences. The argument that lexical and orthographic non-compliance is a rhetorical performance of oppositional social stance can only explain some of the potential of vernacular choice.⁴⁸ The focus on youth and its rituals of respelling collocates youth, subculture and social resistance and presents a homogenising construction of youth as norm-resisting and oppositional (Thurlow 2005b, 2006, 2007, Thurlow & Marwick 2005). The actual heterogeneity of young people's appropriation of all aspects of digital technology including its associated spelling choice is evident in the data-set examined in the surveys and interviews used in this study, in which respondents report diverse attitudes and

practices in SMS spelling, and where their attitudes and practices appear amenable to change in relation to changing social role and aspiration.

2.7.2 ‘Variational spelling’, processing and ‘affect’

There is a subtler argument about the social and semiotic advantages of innovative orthographic choices made by scholars who have commented on the potential of respelling for construing affect, and a more direct mode of address in orthographic intimations of spokenness in conjunction with a more vivid sense of reading. Reaching for an explanation for the respellings which featured so strongly in her study of 1960s trade names, Praninskas cites a memorable image taken from I.A. Richards, likening the psychosocial effect of non-standard spelling choices to that of walking over flat, even ground giving way to difficult terrain, with all the attendant refocusing and emotional re-engagement associated with that. Such potentials may be invoked by the designed apparently ‘jumbled’ respellings shown in Figure 2.14, as part of a discursual strategy to manage customer expectations. Here the popular awareness of the intelligibility of variational forms, as found in a commonly cycled email meme about the intelligibility of a principled reconfiguration of spelling (Davies 2003, Appendix IIb) is combined with the affordances of such spellings for semiotic vividness. The designed respellings function to intimate a mimetic simulation of actively experienced disorientation.

**“I’ve been
shuoetd at,
spat at and had
cmomnets mdae
aobut the coulour
of my sikn...
I shuodln’t hvae
to put up wtih
tihs knid of
aubse”**

It doesn’t make sense

**Six rail staff are physically assaulted on trains or at stations
every day just for doing their job.**

**We will not tolerate verbal or physical attacks on our staff.
They will be given total support in any prosecution.**

Help us to ensure a safer environment for everyone.

If you see anyone assaulting staff or passengers, call 0800 40 50 40 making a note of date, time and location.



Figure 2.14 Designed ‘jumbled spelling’ as a discursal tactic for construing affect, 2006.

Kataoka presented related analysis of the effect of orthographic and graphological innovations and transgressions in the domestic settings of informal letter-writing by young Japanese women. In the context of gendered expectations of formulaic conventionalised linguistic (and social) behaviour, she suggested that powerful intimations of loyalty and intimacy may be construed by small speech-like innovations and script-switching (Kataoka 1997, 2003a, 2003b).⁴⁹ Similarly Jaffe argued that respellings can have powerful localised meaning-potentials:

re-embod[ying] the linguistic sign, de-familiaris[ing] reading experiences formed mainly in practices which engage with standard English orthography, and can be powerful in eliciting active, engaged modes of re-reading and de-coding.... non-standard orthographies can graphically capture some of the immediacy, 'authenticity' and 'flavo[u]r' of the spoken word. (Jaffe 2000;498).

Focusing on the 'expressive power' of a 'home-made' poster written in unconventional spelling and capitalisation, Jaffe demonstrates how the same object of focus can be looked at in deficit, with forensic audits of non-compliance, carrying the value judgement loadings of 'incompetence' while, using an ideological lens of fitness for purpose, still being vivid and effective beyond the meaning-potentials possible in the standard forms. The ubiquitous hegemony of normative spelling renders it naturalised to the point of invisibility, so offering contrastive affordances for variational choices, which may have meaning-potentials particularly well-suited to the localised context of address, as here.

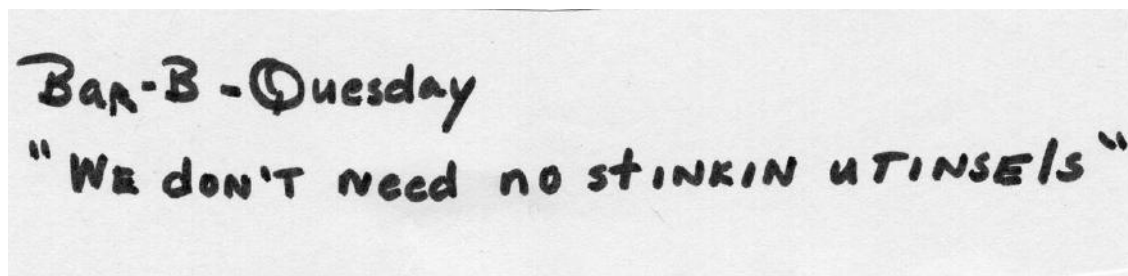


Figure 2.15 Jaffe's re-drawn canteen notice, with remembered original spelling (2000;497).

The appeal of that 'affect' isn't easily articulated in standard English, as evinced in the inverted commas Jaffe deploys around the words she uses to characterise the powerful, yet elusive effects, of vernacular respelling: 'authenticity', 'flavo[u]r' and 'genuine.' All seem to point to some sense of connotative potential which is lost in the regimentation of standard English which, it appears, is weaker in its potential to invoke immanent spoken simulation and localised social loyalty. As the references above indicate, these phenomena can be found in the institutional contexts of UK English but also operate across other languages and cultural practices, sometimes with a greater politicised import (Johnson 2005, 2012, Sebba 2006, 2007). Vernacular respellings can embody text with complex psychosocial nuances of emotional affect which evoke localised loyalties to the point of intimate address (Knas 2009). Such appeals may also imply affective dimensions in the experience of the standard. The connotations of normative forms may not be neutral, calling up as they do past experiences, and current

evaluations, of imposed instruction in literacy regimes which may not acknowledge local literacy conditions in a geographical location remote from the origins of standard English (Besnier 1993, 1995). Choices may be received as indexical of a lack of respect for the vernacular norms, forms and ways of life of students from under-resourced inner-city contexts in the US (Camitta 1993). Such arguments resonate with the fieldwork data in this thesis, especially when respondents reported a hostile evaluation of schooled literacy and its exclusive focus on a standardised linguistic performance found inimical to peer-group values (Chapters 7 and 8, Appendix VIII).

2.8.1 Environmental pressures in awkward text entry and metered output

Popular and academic commentary on SMS has frequently explained respelling conventions as arising from reconfigured material conditions for textual production such as: awkward and unfamiliar physical manner of text entry; limitations of 160 characters per message; metered cost on that ‘packet’ size; and small screen display. These all combined to create pressures affecting orthographic choice. For example, particular graphemes such as punctuation symbols required a shift into a specialised text-entry menu making it more attractive to omit these discourse markers. Altered material and economic conditions reconfigured the familiar, naturalised routines associated with handwriting and keyboarded text entry. Conversely, since 2007, respondents using smartphones often commented on the difficulty of choosing ‘non-standard’ SMS spelling options because of semi-automated spelling correction in conjunction with the less direct pressure of screens and instructions which simulate computer word processing rather than more ephemeral small-screen messaging (see Chapter 5).

These ‘environmental’ factors presented earlier SMS users with practical problems of text entry which had a practical bearing on spelling choice. There was a particular problem with letters requiring entry by multiple numbers in sequence: here slight mistiming would automatically cue another letter, leading to arduous sequences of correction for those wanting to use the standard form accurately. In frequent cases, these technologically-sourced problems were randomly overlaid onto etymological spellings of less obvious sound and spelling correspondence, which had already attracted conventionalised respelling by analogy or eye dialect. Examples included words likely to be in frequent use given the interpersonal functions associated with texting. The difficulty is made more apparent by keypad transcription.

For example:

- the common digraph <gh> for /f/ in <tough> or <enough> realised as <4[pause]44>
- double letters such as <rr> for /r/ in <tomorrow> realised as <777[pause]777>
- letters like <y>, <o>, as in the frequently occurring pronoun <you>, pronounced [ju] or [jə], requiring sequences of number repeated three times: <999[pause]666 [pause]88>

As I show in Chapter 6 and its appendix, environmental factors appear to have given rise to contextual pressures on the selection of certain respellings which avoided these difficulties. For example, the options around standard sequences around <night>, <tomorrow>, <you>. This issue is treated by the phone-pad transcription of the forty-word sample with variant forms. It appears that ‘ergonomic’ factors may also have motivated certain new respellings which emerged in preference to established vernacular options as in the case of <wat> in place of <wot> for the metathesis spelling <what> more usually realised as [wɒt] than its RP [hwɒt].

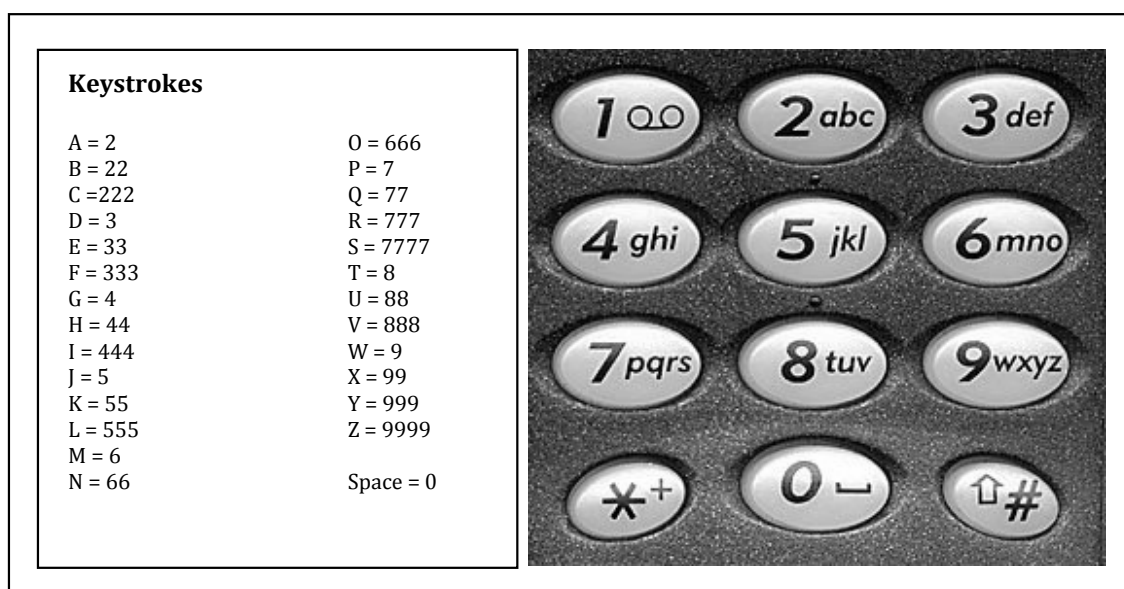


Figure 2.16 Alphabetic ‘key strokes’ on the alphanumeric buttons of the ‘graphab’ of an earlier mobile phone

These issues feature in questionnaire and interviews comment that constraints of text entry, message length and pricing tariff for SMS motivated and legitimated abbreviated forms. In one of the first empirical studies of scale to examine SMS and related digital media by systematic sociolinguistic comparison of digitally-mediated written interaction, Hård af Segerstad used a framework of adaptivity to new situational constraints: the altered materiality of a new text form alters the conditions to which users must respond, logically leading to new patterns of adaptation, routinised by elided spellings, elliptical grammatical forms and shortenings, and omission of discourse markers including punctuation (2003, 2005a, 2005b). Silvestrie arrived at a similar foregrounding of the instrumental advantages of reduced text entry in her analysis of a corpus of 160 Spanish text message samples arrived at by elicited data experimentation, replicated in the elicited data ‘hypo’ sub-corpus collection in this study (2005, Appendix VI). Kress extended such analysis of the awkwardness of text entry in an argument about an intrapersonal transformation of what it means to be writing. Following close observation of using a phone ‘keyboard’ to text, he observed the greater flexibility of younger people’s SMS spellings as a consequence of that demographic group being less habituated to previous conventions of writing, so ‘teaching themselves what the old will cannot or will not’:

In text messaging the alphabet is reconfigured in line with different demands: not as a transcription system but as a system of information: pressing five times on the letter marked 6, in the mode of *write messages* produces the letter ö. (Kress 2003:175)

The reconfiguration of text entry leads to divergent generational appropriation of the new modal affordances of SMS: older people treating the phone-pad as an alphabetical keyboard; young users adapting fluidly to altered affordances, slipping between entering traditional alphabetical forms and extemporising emoticons and logographic script appropriated from the reconfigured material conditions of graphical meaning-making, so disrupting deeply ingrained perceptions of socially valued writing, spelling and literate habitus.⁵⁰

2.8.2 Abbreviation, deixis, ‘performativity’ and construal

Adapting the theorisation of performativity in gendered interaction (e.g. Butler 1990), Tagg suggested that choices of brevity by abbreviated spelling, or ellipsis in SMS, often interpreted as motivated by practical considerations, may be better understood as a rhetorical styling of a social stance achieved by performative construal (Tagg 2007, 2009, 2012). A styling of ‘brevity’ and suggestion of implicit, context-dependent communication may function as a rhetorical orthographic deixis which implies shared context, shared values and more active modes of reading, so intimating the social closeness of its interlocutors (*ibid.*, Spilioti 2006, 2011 2012, forthcoming). Drawing on methodologies from interactional sociolinguistics and linguistic ethnography focused on informal talk, and building on Georgakopoulou’s identification of contextualisation cues deployed for ‘interactional alignment’ in email (1997, 2011), Spilioti presented deictic reference in SMS as intimating localised address, with the oblique patterns of respelling cueing localised understanding by more vivid reading demands, so contributing to those affordances in discursual intimation of close friendship. By such interpretation, orthographic conventions repopularised and recontextualised by commonplace awareness of environmental pressures of message space, financial economy and awkward text entry become re-entextualised as tropes construing interiorised imaginings of identity and stance.

2.8.3 ‘Conceptual orality’ for cross-modal social interaction

This study makes frequent reference to the related concept of ‘conceptual orality’ to denote the social imagining of spoken interaction, often mediated by graphical means. This is developed from the study of much older forms of vernacular writing by historical linguists (Koch & Oesterreicher 1985, 1994). The value of the theorisation of conceptual spokenness is that it distinguishes between how a text is experienced intrapersonally and imaginatively by a writer or reader, the material resources by which it is made, and the social expectations which may come to be associated with a mode conflated as a medium. This idea informs studies of CMC by German language scholars such as Dürscheid, but is less frequently cited in studies from the US

and UK, where, following Biber's notion of 'dimensions', CMC has been treated as a mixed-mode register drawing from patterns in speech and in writing (Biber 1988, Yates 1996a, 1996b). In Figure 2.15, the manner of material realisation is shown as an imaginary construct in the cline of social expectations of a language of proximity (conceptually spoken), and a language of distance (conceptually written). It is interesting to note that the modes are realised graphically and phonically, not by writing and speech, so framing writing and speech as they are constituted by their social and material embodiment. In its application to this study, a graphically-mediated mode would have to attend to orthographic choice by which writing is made manifest (conventionally, a 'language of distance'), and also to the social expectations of how it is apprehended imaginatively (conventionally, a 'language of proximity'). Following Dürscheid and other German scholars, I am arguing that the intrapersonal experience of 'conceptual spokenness', as typically associated with digitally-mediated interaction and its perceived invitation for orthographic choice, is mediated by written and graphical means, which were previously associated with distancing, hierarchical, social proxemics.

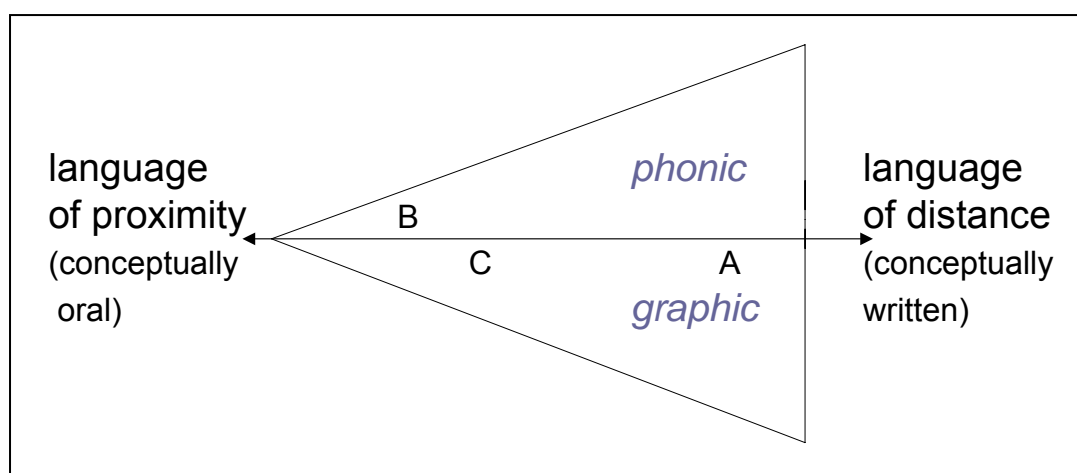


Figure 2.17 Representation of orality-literacy model of Koch & Oesterreicher (1985, 1994) by Dürscheid.

The notion of 'conceptual orality' is applicable to many CMCs to which SMS is related technologically and by intertextual association. It has been noted that interlocutors found that the semi-synchronous conditions associated with email altered the expectation of a tenor of social distance, as previously associated with the written mode, while invoking expectations of the spoken mode, by its happening in real time, like speech. This led to an alteration in the pre-existing social expectations concerning the degree of formality in writing (Petrie 2009, Crystal 2002, Dürscheid & Frehner 2010). Changes in contextual pressures acted on social expectations in an invitation to use vernacular forms which intimated informality and the prioritisation of an 'interpersonal metafunction' (Halliday 1979). The phenomenon of informalised writing has been reinforced by contiguous developments in the tactical value of the construal of speech in other genres. Fairclough observed a new rhetorical design in previously formal public writing which became increasingly constituted by an orientation to 'synthetic personalisation'. This is manifested in 'discourse technologies' of 'informalisation' and 'conversationalisation' in the innovation of a contemporary public rhetoric in which choices are made in institutional registers to construe a tenor of informal spokenness by graphical means (Fairclough 1992, 2004). Such

developments show the inter-relatedness of SMS spelling with the contemporary social and material conditions in which literacy is conducted.

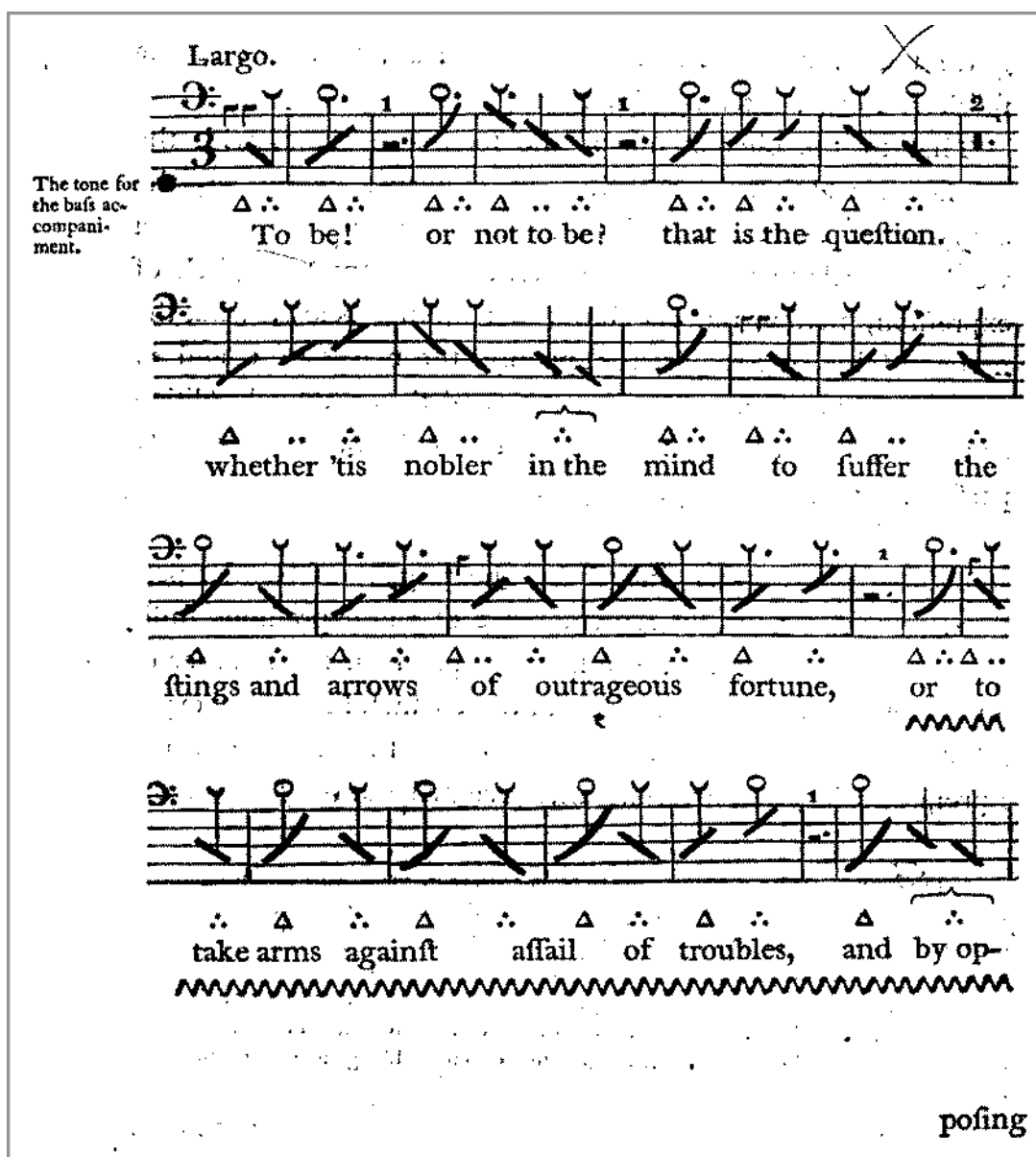


Figure 2.18 Earlier experiment in conveying the auditory by graphical means (Steele 1779)

2.8.4 Patterns of spelling in CMC that foreshadow SMS

Respondents observed the commonality between their SMS orthographic practices in earlier and subsequent CMCs, especially instant messaging such as *MSN*, itself sourced in the conventions of media such as *Internet Relay Chat* (IRC, see Chapter 5). Werry's treatment of the language of IRC uses the superordinate framework of 'addressivity', abbreviation, paralinguistic and prosodic cues, and actions and gestures, in order to locate subsidiary patterns in interaction (1996). In a parallel argument to the application of the notion of conceptual spokenness by graphical means, the paucity of representational resource in the IRC screen image is juxtaposed with the immediacy of its pace of synchronous interaction. Orthographic innovation provides a

means of figuring a more vivid representational impact by revivifying semiotic import in spite of the semiotically depleted 'bandwidth' of the IRC representation. Werry notes the use of what he terms 'stage directions' to re-supply stylised paralinguistic context:

'Interlocutors frequently construct graphic simulations of sounds such as laughter explanations, snarls, barks, singing, the sound of racing cars and various other noises'(1996;58).

The collective experiment is likened to Joshua Steele's 1779 innovation of a graphical method for showing spoken stress, pitch and pattern in English writing, as illustrated above in a rendering of Hamlet's 'To be or not to be' soliloquy (Steele 1779;40). This argument about variational innovation re-supplying vividness to an interface of meagre semiotic interest informs the decision to represent texts visually in Chapter 5.

2.9.1 The argument derived from empirical and theoretical study of spelling

It seems that orthographic designs in SMS may be innovated in a 'polysystem' of orthographic practice, which operates tacitly, uncoded, and in a web of contextual pressures. These motivations include the impetus to shallower orthographic correspondence; the creative appropriation of other options of 'constructed homophony' by analogy; issues of ergonomic and economic convenience; 'audience design' (Bell 1984); intertextual exemplification and stylistic allusion. There is also the context of altered social and material conditions, which have problematised the conventional association of writing with social and geographical distance. The notion of 'conceptual orality' by graphical means is a key premise of the theoretical argument presented here. Respondents' choices of spelling may in part depend on whether they perceive themselves to be engaged in 'writing', or interacting graphically in a mode of imagined spokenness.

I have hypothesised that the advent of vernacular, digitally-mediated writing may have altered the regulative boundaries between domestic and institutional domains of spelling choice in a manner analogous to the crossings and stylisations observed by others of recent patterns in vernacular speech (Rampton 1995, 1998, 2006, Blommaert 2005, 2010) and in public writing (Fairclough 1992, Blommaert 2005, 2010). This distribution of previously localised choices may be disseminated by commercial interests at both local and supranational scales. These interests operate outside schooling, and across the social expectations of genres and registers, and the jurisdictional administrative boundaries of nation-states and mono-lingual distributions so creating an orthographic 'relay' not licensed by the state. Orthographic forms might be seen as being motivated by multiple affordances offered by this broader tradition of vernacular literacy practices, including potentials for intimation of spokenness, regiolectal and sociolectal cues, and properties eliciting more active, affective styles of reading, which function to recruit more vivid, localised semiotic impact and construal. There is also the potential for the indexing

of opposition to standardised registers as proxies of mainstream values in forms of ‘covert prestige’. Respelling may also be shaped by what I have termed ‘environmental pressures’ arising from the material conditions in which SMS is conducted, such as awkward text entry and metered cost. Here I suggest (following Tagg 2007, 2009) that such instrumental pressures are difficult to disambiguate from emergent social practices, by which participants may construe localised address in performances of brevity in the commentaries on live action afforded by handheld communication technologies. In contemporary conditions of accelerating multilingual contact and cross-border interactional flows, interlocutors may also experience the influence of other registers, languages, script systems and ways of spelling, which place normative conventions as only one orthographic method (Blommaert 2010); all this apprehended through ongoing screen-mediated interactions cradled in the body, and displayed on a handheld accessory which is ‘always on’ (Katz and Aakhus 2002, Baron 2008), even in the bedroom (Deumert & Lexander 2013).

Normative forms of English spelling continue to have a singular status as the most prestigious and influential orthographic register, with an attendant well-resourced apparatus of schooled induction and dominant institutional representation in printed forms. Standard forms therefore provide a dominating and familiar literacy model, and one that, in this study’s fieldwork, dissuaded some less confident respondents from choosing other hetero-graphic options. Its enregistered patterns can also be appropriated creatively in shallow orthographic correspondence based on analogy with regular patterns. It seems that vernacularity is boundless in its potential resources drawn from local, national and supranational provenances and contacts. I am concerned to show the social dynamic by which the symbolic resource of potential choice is perceived and from which it is extemporised, and the choices not perceived because not seen as visible or available. That focus requires attending to the social process of cultural transmission, by which choice is selected from the reservoir of optionality, which is the focus of the chapter which follows.

35 See dcthompson.co.uk.

36 I use this word interchangeably with ‘pool’ in this sense, in which it also occurs in Bernstein 1996 and Robertson *et al.* 2004.

37 See Appendix III for listing of references supporting these domains of orthographic practice. See Chapter 9 for more detailed explanation of the two visual representations which open this 2b chapter section: Models 1 and 2.

38 See Durkin 2009, 2014; *OED*; see Murray 1995, Jackson 2002, Brewer 2007, Gilliver forthcoming

39 See Chapter 9 for further discussion of these theoretical models.

40 In principle, this could be any modern European language but in practice few if any other written languages have the well-resourced, expert historical lexicographical method associated with Murray’s innovation of *OED* lexicography and its subsequent innovation by successors and especially Simpson’s *OED3* update. Scholarly Standard English orthography would not exist in the same way in its French equivalent.

41 See Sebba’s related construct of a ‘zone of social meaning’ (2007, 2012;6).

42 See Androutsopoulos 2011 for related discussion.

43 See Brown & Brown 2009 for an account based on extensive, specialised pedagogical experience which argues that English word formation is primarily etymological and morphological structuring, which operates something in the manner of the ideographic meaning-potentials found in Kanji.

44 Carney cites Brengelman’s account of standard spellings as the rational cultural production of linguistic expertise (1980).

45 Shortis & Blake 2008 for a polemical critique of the approach.

46 See Algeo 1999 and summarised in Shortis 2001 54,55.

47 See Shortis 2003, Stevenson 2001.

48 As I show in Chapters 7 and 8, some of the respondents in this study evaluated orthographic innovations in SMS by the established deficit model of difference as foolish.

49 See related explanations of the construal of affect in Fouser, Inoue & Lee 2000, Suzuki 2009, Knas 2009.

50 See Petrie 1999 for a related discussion of profiles of emailers and their distinct stylistic practices.

3. Theoretical prequel

The conceptual framework, its provenance, rationale and application

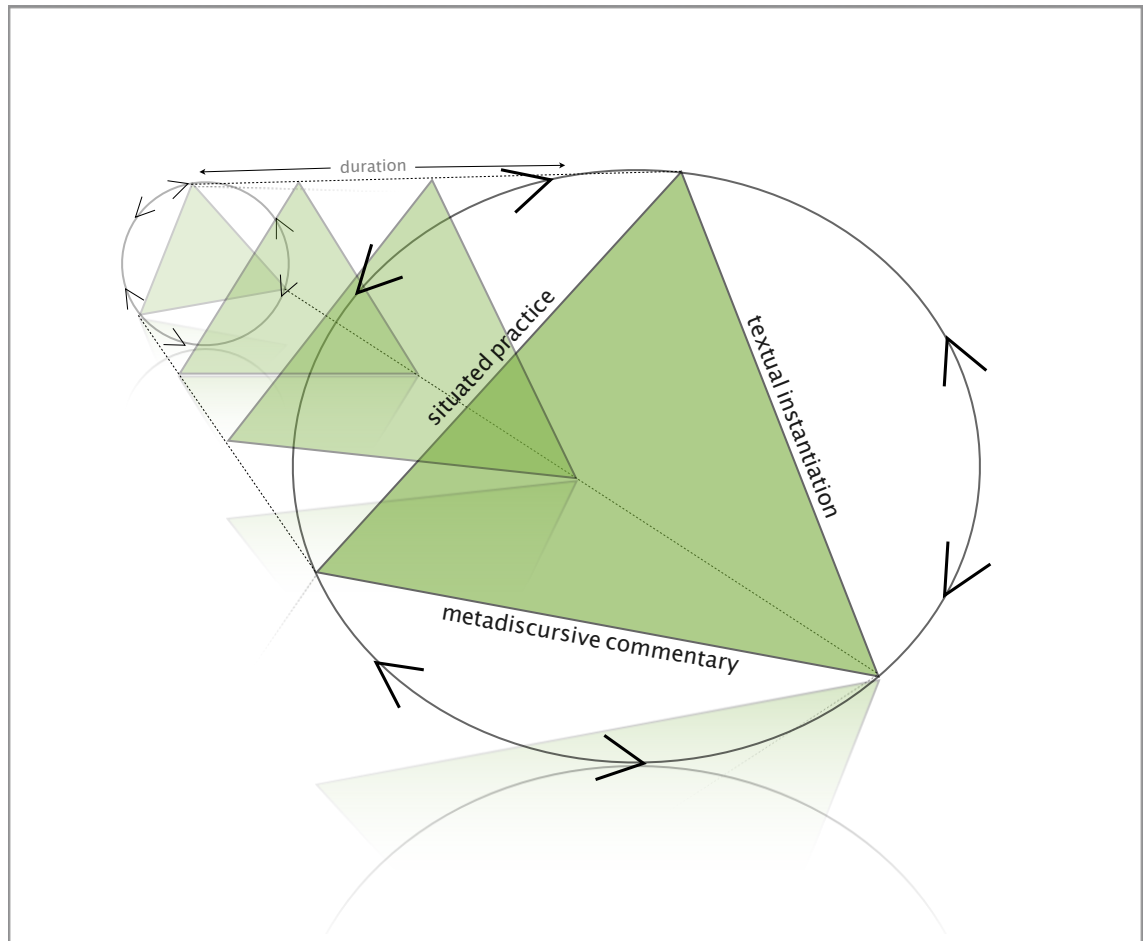


Figure 3.1 The conceptual framework: a three dimensional representation of textual instantiation, situated practice and metadiscursive commentary, in time, and over duration.

What we call semiosis is not the signifying activity in all its complexity but only one of the signifying acts, such as the filter of judgment allows it to pass through.

Kristeva 1971

(T)he social life of the habitus is mediated by discursive interactions. The linguistic habitus is mediated largely by metalinguistic processes, i.e. by discursive events that typify and assign values to speech, though sometimes in ways that are highly implicit; in this type of case, the effects produced may be shaped entirely through discursive activity, and be highly concrete and palpable in the event at hand, but difficult to report out of context. They are therefore non-transparent to the kind of decontextualised reasoning characteristic of Bourdieu's work.

Agha 2003;270

3.1.1 The social dynamic of cultural transmission

In this chapter, I introduce the conceptual framework which underpins the selection, arrangement and analysis of the data-set. Previously, I explained the significance of diachrony to this study and the implications for the argument about intertextual connections between orthographic choice in SMS and other digitally-mediated vernaculars. I also introduced an argument about ‘biographical trajectory’ and the influences over time which act on constructions of a subject’s literate identity, including the orthographic dimensions of that. I presented schema by which spelling choice in SMS can be visualised in its landscape of orthographic practice and exemplified the impact of social and material conditions in vernacular texts from the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I argued that that empirical and theoretical studies show orthographic choices may be multiple in motivations, affordances, constraints and effects. Now I examine the processes of ‘enregisterment’ by which choices and evaluations accumulate and ‘sediment’ into the conventions of common recognition and social value. This theorisation establishes the basis for the analytical frameworks applied to the empirical analysis in subsequent chapters.

SMS and related digital media present their users with opportunities for apparently extended repertoires of orthographic choice, in conjunction with a lack of settled social convention about how to use these. In the absence of clear guidance, interlocutors may feel uncertain about what constitutes valued literate accomplishment: they may find themselves operating in conditions of ‘literate indeterminacy’. In the case of orthography, making choices in a more permissive ‘orthographic regime’ (Sebba 2007;47) may be accompanied by a sense of anxiety. For some participants this might lead to an unsettled, persistent watchfulness or anxious self-surveillance in the absence of authoritative reassurance. Others may make decisions with greater creativity or lassitude, but without understanding how such choices may be evaluated. Others still may continue with well-established routines in a demonstration of Street’s autonomous model of literacy (1984,1995). Respondents exemplified all these choices and more, as reported below in Chapters 5 to 8. How, then, to represent such variation?

I begin with a conceptualisation of orthographic choice in SMS as it may be represented in a three-part model consisting of the evidence afforded by **textual exemplification**, reports of the literate and orthographic **social practices** by which interaction in SMS is conducted, and examples of **metadiscursive commentary**, by which choice is evaluated. This model is synthesised from accounts of literacy as a social practice in conjunction with Kress’s social semiotic argument presenting communicative acts as design, with spelling choice functioning as a fractal instantiation of the moment of choice encountered in any such act (1997, 2000). Street and others have argued for the potential of a more text-based account of literacy as a social practice and a more practice-based account of social semiotics (2005, Street and Lefstein 2007, Street, Pahl, Rowsell 2009, Blommaert 2008;13, Lillis &McKinney 2013, Maybin 2013;552). This attempted synthesis is presented in conjunction with Agha’s model of the process of

enregisterment as a social dynamic of cultural transmission (2003, 2005, 2007a). I outline a second set of prospective diagrammatic models identifying the extended repertoire of available orthographic resources. Here I seek to extend Sebba's argument about differential orthographic regimes for different domains of literate practice (2007), by considering the processes by which those regimes are enacted; in particular, how these are experienced and used by an interlocutor. I suggest the degree of discretionary choice open to a participant is in part arrived at by the contextual pressures perceived by that subject in intrapersonal acts of self-monitoring. By an extension of Agha's argument about speech chains (2003, 20007), these can be seen as the internalised consequence of the memory of past choices and feedback received, in conjunction with the 'proleptic' apprehension of future imagined evaluations by others.⁵¹ Following a social semiotic interpretation of communication as design, each interlocutor makes their own configuration of how to act at the point at which choice and interpretation are made, as formalised by the construct of the 'speech chain' (*ibid.*;224). These factors may be environmental pressures, such as perceived ease of text entry, or reduction of costs in management of relatively unfamiliar apparatus, or they may reflect emergent conventions of discursal expectation which have their origins in instrumental factors, social aspiration, or 'interactional alignment'. Spelling choice may be motivated by reducing text entry demands, reducing metered costs, or may indicate choices which perform socially acceptable rationales for spelling choice, such as economy, reducing superfluous effort, or accommodating to audience, so supporting a construct of selfhood as rational. Choice is also contingent on what Bernstein has termed the 'symbolic ruler of consciousness': the social semiotic of what is likely to be deemed acceptable determines the availability in conscious thought of those resources as legitimated options, or, to use Kristeva's formulation, 'signifying acts such as the filter of judgment allows ... to pass through'.⁵² Those engaged in selecting and evaluating orthographic resources in SMS respond to environmental pressures but may also engage in serial acts of self-surveillance as a corollary of their evaluation of others' choices. Drawing on Bernstein's theorisation of 'recontextualising fields' (1996), this second set of heuristics seeks to identify (re-) 'distributive', 'recontextualising' and 'evaluative' 'rules' which constrain the selection, and influence the deployment, of spelling choice at idiolectal and sociolectal scales (*ibid.*;224).

3.2.1 The changing research context for the conceptual framework

This study began as a text-focused investigation of SMS spelling using corpus methods based on an electronic data-base, in conjunction with stylistic analysis of some encapsulating examples of texting interaction. Such methods identified the salient features and patterns of linguistic and semiotic choice found in a body of SMS data, but could not, of themselves, offer insight into the causes of the divergent variation in particular respondents' attitudes and practices in time and over time. A corpus could not explain why, when texting, some users changed from the routine orthographic practices used in their other forms of writing, while others did not, or how and why people changed their habits over time. For this I needed to

attend to respondents' accounts of SMS as a literate social practice, including their reported evaluations of their own orthographic choices, and those of their interlocutors. This re-focused the previous text-based study with a new perspective on choice located as situated practice conducted in particular settings, and subject to constant evaluation. The private attitudes and metadiscursive evaluations fostered by the dyadic intimacy of SMS interaction also needed to be located in relation to the larger and louder claims of public coverage in what Agha terms '**the public sphere metadiscourse**' found in news journalism and popular accounts, such as those found in the SMS glossaries which emerged as a popular subgenre in the earlier years of SMS.⁵³ There appeared to be slippage between SMS spelling choice as manifest in localised actuality and as represented in the public sphere. Here it seemed likely too that some users' private attitudes would both feed into, and be fed by, the commentary encountered in the public sphere discourses of broadcast evaluation; especially given the pattern of exaggerated popular accounts about SMS spelling in journalism. Following Agha's theorisation of cultural transmission, it seemed reasonable to posit some level of individualised and aggregated change over time.

3.2.2 Texts, practices, metadiscursive commentary

Figure 3.1 presents a triangular figure of an act of making orthographic choice, suggesting this consists of: 1) a choice of textual production and material instantiation; 2) contextual pressures arising out of situated practice and shaping that choice; and 3) social evaluation of choices made in metadiscursive commentary, as localised in synchronic time, and as evaluated extrinsically over duration. Textual evidence (in texts and electronic corpus bodies) is represented by the right-hand side of the triangle. The equivalent record of evaluation in private and public sphere metadiscursive commentary acts as the base, while the reported location of the texts as literacy events in ongoing social practices forms the left-hand side. Each act of textual design and/or interpretation is therefore located in a specific social context, and its accretion in the habituated norms of social and literate practice; each act is sourced and legitimated by the influence of the evaluative commentaries featuring in 'public sphere metadiscourses' and by the microlectal narratives and evaluations of localised users in dyadic interaction. Each act of meaning-making design and interpretation also feeds back into these resources, so altering the wider and more localised social consensus around recognition of legitimated conventions of meaning-making; in this case, spelling choice. The flow of production, interpretation and re-conventionalisation is expressed, with the front face representing the contemporary conditions of a synchronic 'now' of enacted possibility, while the background triangles represent the accumulating record of that enacted 'now' in the 'then' of diachrony: of how it existed in previous synchronic moments, or temporal snapshots. This attention to situating the synchronous in the historical conditions from which present practice is derived attends to theorisation of the relationship between synchronous and diachronic perspectives (Volosinov 1993, Hodge & Kress 1988, Agha 2007, Blommaert 2010;138). In a critique of recent theorisation of globalisation, Blommaert has argued for the synchrony of the present and recent moment being considered as cultural

production shaped by socially-contestation over longer historical duration (2008, 2010;14). In the case of SMS, as I have shown, the orthographic resources in use now were in part to be understood and constructed in longer-standing textual traces and commentaries on previous practices, such as those represented by the design of Pip's letter, or trade name spelling in early twentieth-century US literacy practice domains, or the construction of an ornate elaborated model of prestige standardised forms with its associated apparatus of shibboleths of deficit evaluation of social and linguistic difference in the eighteenth century (Smith 1984, Milroy & Milroy 1991, Crowley 1996) .

Following Agha (2003), these enactments of orthographic choice in synchronic moments of optionality build up over duration into patterned likelihood and its associated generalised social expectation: its enregisterment in emergent socially valued choice. These operate at the level of convention while in turn being subject to further patterns of mass innovation and re-conventionalisation (*ibid.*). That process is represented by the dotted lines on the model, marking three invisible planes joining the triangles over duration. These can be thought of as representing the probabilistic dimensions of likely orthographic choice over time; the aggregated choices shaped by the semiosis of what Bernstein termed 'the symbolic ruler of consciousness'. The invisibility of the planes stands in for the semi-porous boundaries with wider influential fields, including resources absorbed by interlocutors' contacts with other registers, languages and communicative acts in increasingly globalised flows of interaction (Carrington 2002, 2005, Blommaert 2010, Sebba *et al.* 2012). As documented most exhaustively in *OED*, all conventionalised bodies of authorised lexical resources are subject to geographical and temporal influences of different scales. These are now made pervasive by the perpetual contact afforded by digital distributions of interaction at local and supranational scales, including flows of self-published digitally-mediated interaction such as SMS.

3.2.3 Provenance of the analytical framework in scholarship

This model of textual representation and cultural transmission is synthesised from ideas taken from stylistic analysis of linguistic data in texts (e.g. Carter & Nash 1990, Hodge & Kress 1988), social semiotic, multimodal and geosocial treatments of situated text (Kress 1995, 1997, 2003, 2010, Jewitt 2009, Jones 2009, Scollon & Scollon 2003), ideological approaches to literacy and orthography treated as social practices (Street 1984, Street 2005, Sebba 2007, Jaffe *et al.* 2012), and studies of texts as these are understood in disparate social and economic settings, including contexts of migration and globalised multilingual contact (Rampton 1999, Pennycook 2007, Alim *et al.* 2009, Blommaert 2007, 2008, 2010). It draws on arguments which treat the re-conventionalisation of meaning-making as an agentive social process carried out under changing material and ideological conditions. It alludes to the reworking of ideas about literacy as a social practice under conditions of globalised digitised interactional flow (Fung & Carter 2006, 2007, Lee 2007, Lam 2009, Barton & Lee 2011). It is also influenced by the

arguments presented in linguistic and cultural anthropology for a general process for understanding cultural transmission in the action of chains of evaluative interaction leading to enregisterment of common understanding as embodied in social and socioliterate convention, among other sites (Agha 2003, 2005, 2007a).

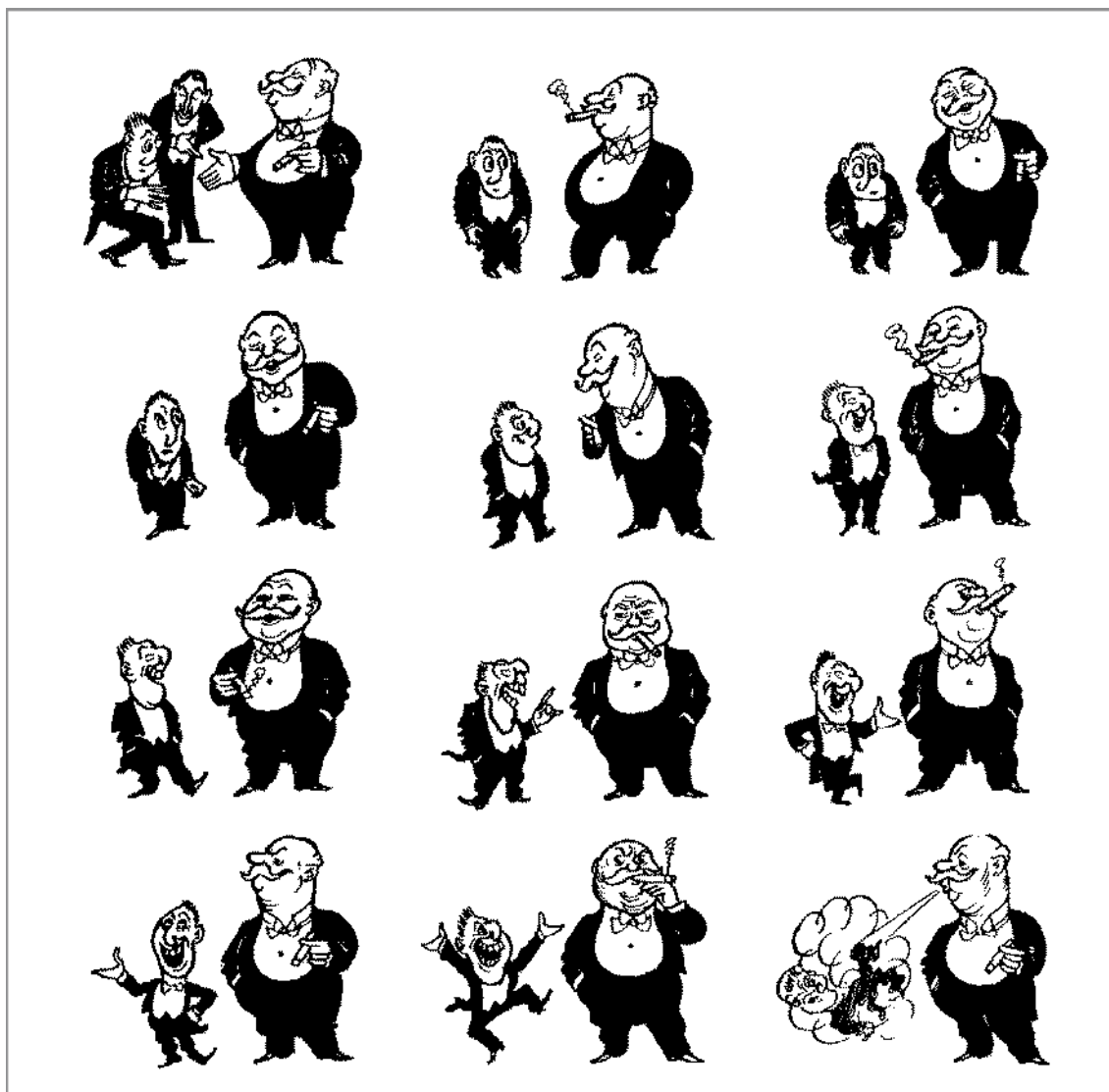


Figure 3.2 Bainbridge cartoon, 1920s: 'metadiscursive representation of improper discursive behaviour'

Agha uses the image depicted in Figure 3.2 to introduce his claim of a general mechanism for cultural transmission (2003:238-239), which this study applies to the case of spelling choice in SMS and related digitally-mediated vernaculars. It is suggested that the evaluation of all cultural artefacts by all social actors is an ongoing social inevitability. It is typified by larger patterns of 'public sphere discourse' and evaluative commentary, for example, in representations to be found in journalism or popular sources of reference, while being made operational at the local situated level in the lived act of choices made by participants in any interaction with a person or text. The approach can be understood as an identification of the microcosmic agentive processes which manufacture social distinction and its attendant industry of inequitable distribution of

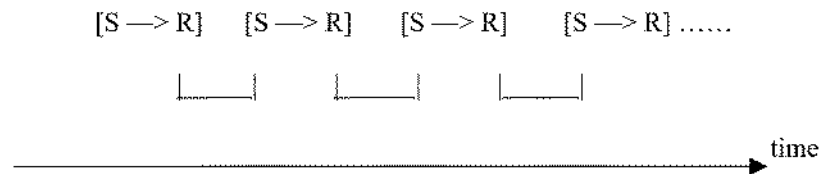
symbolic resources, as theorised by critical sociology (*ibid*;270; Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu, Passeron & Nice 1977). Agha has specifically commented on the failure of that theorisation to locate the localised social processes which give rise to its analysis (2003;270). He illustrates the inevitability of this process of situated evaluation in conjunction with possibility of social humiliation in the cartoon above, which he explains as showing a bystander's evaluation of access to indexicals of status, and the recognisability of the particular sign-indexicals on display to 'any British reader of the cartoon', especially in the 1920s of its original provenance.

It depicts the social perils of improper demeanour in many sign modalities (dress, posture, gait, gesture)...[and] 'reflexively formulates cross-modal icons or images of personhood': here the paradigm of 'ill-fitting, clothing, toothy grins, wild gesture, obstreperous (and, perhaps crude) speech' going together in 'Mr Slim', on the one hand; and the 'elegant dress, graceful bearing and well intoned speech,' coalescing in Mr Round, on the other. (Agha 2003;238)

In other words, evaluations of access to particular status-indexicals easily spread to more stereotyped evaluations of worth: Mr Round is established as higher status by all details of his appearance, demeanour and behaviour. Note the related concept of 'iconisation' (Irvine & Gal 2000;37).⁵⁴

Agha used the data and references in Mugglestone's sociohistorical account of Received Pronunciation (1995) to illustrate the process of 'enregisterment' of RP as the pre-eminent prestigious social register of accent in 19th and early 20th century UK (2003, 2007). He classifies the defined instantiation of evaluation found in 'public sphere metadiscourses' of etiquette and usage guides, dictionaries, and commentary in fiction and journalism. He identifies a second more critical process of social transmission in the situated evaluations of everyday interaction enacted in a series of widely-distributed, one-by-one localised communicative events. He argues that these acts of situated evaluation are the means by which all behaviour and commentary are graded, including the lived practice of situated encounters and the particularity of a person's interpretation of representations found in public sphere commentary. He refers to this insistent, tacit, sequential process as a 'speech chain' which takes place on a one-by-one sequence of instantiation. He builds a history of practice and disposition, which may gather into a more general consensus of recognition of its object of gaze as this becomes ritualised and formulaic in the enregisterment of a social convention.

Definition: A **speech chain** is a historical series of speech events linked together by the permutation of individuals across speech-act roles in the following way: the receiver of the message in the (n)th speech event is the sender of the message in the (n+1)th speech event, i.e.



where the terms 'sender' and 'receiver' (or 'S' and 'R') are variable names for interactional roles, specified in different ways at different points along the speech chain

Figure 3.3 Agha's explanation of 'speech chains' as a 'mechanism for social transmission' (2003;247)

In Chapter 7, I report the application of the notion of the 'speech chain' to the informal policing of sociolinguistic norms evident in the reports made by participants about orthographic choices. In the course of Chapters 5 to 9, following Squires's exploration of the enregisterment of 'internet language', I treat the public sphere metadiscursive commentary focused on SMS orthographic choice, showing how this operates distinctively in the manner of its argument and exemplification from the situated practice to which it purportedly refers (Squires 2010, 2012, forthcoming). Respondents made their evaluations in relation to the localised values of peers and to the evaluations of more public artefacts, such as those emanating from their schooling, family members, or encounters with public sphere representations in news media commentary. Here I am contrasting the spontaneous, unstructured social evaluation of lived practice with the defined, institutionalised, framed expectations, transmitted in the programmatic relays of schooled literacy. I am suggesting a fragmented 'polycentric' pattern of ongoing evaluation occurring in the context of localised address (Blommaert 2010;39) as SMS respelling is enacted in the course of attendant peer-by-peer evaluation of interlocutors' choices in situated contexts. In an early stage of enregisterment, this process appears to be a notably contested discourse, attracting commentary with relatively unsettled consensus about established preferences for socially valued choice. For example, in 2003 there was no archetype in SMS orthographic choice as assured as the complacent solidity of Bainbridge's 'Mr Round', and the actuality of SMS orthographic choice found in situated interaction proved to be of a qualitatively distinct register from that found in public commentary, as observed by Squires (2010); see Chapters 5-9).

3.3.1 ‘Orthographic regimes’ and their means of distribution

Sebba has observed that those making orthographic choices in SMS are less pressured towards compliance with standardised English spelling than those writing formally in institutional settings such as schools. The popular stereotyping of spelling practices in digitally-mediated interaction (see Appendix V) is fuelled by the perception of a greater likelihood of respelling in such contexts. This line of argument is rendered in a tabular representation of ‘orthographic regimes for different kinds of writing’, which sets out correspondences between fields of activity and their associated expectations of degrees of normative orthographic choice. In Sebba’s description, orthographic ‘regimes’ are associated with particular genres (writing types) and contextual functions (institutional order), including their levels of status, their field of public or private operation, their designated audience, and their discoursal orientation, or ‘focusing’, on standard or non-standard forms (2003, 2007:47). The typology depicted here reveals a social dynamic of pressure to spell in standardised forms made up of a number of clines where status, institutional order, audience, public manifestation, and the means of production (publication by paper-print processes or self-published digitally), all contribute towards varying degrees of pressure to spell using normative forms. This focusing trend may elicit a mirror world of ‘second life’, ‘anti-language’ practices in contexts of social rebellion, subculture and localised address, such as fanzines, ‘samizdat’ and graffiti (Halliday 1976, 1979, Androutsopoulos 2000).

Sebba’s representation prioritises dispositions to social evaluation focused on the level of orientation to standardness or non-standardness (variational forms), as distinct from earlier discussions (Chapter 2) about approaches which conceptualise the semiotic affordances of varied orthographic forms for purposes outside their indexical relationship with: normativity; semiotic vividness (Praninskas 1968); localised address (Jaffe 2000); construal of affect (Besnier 1993); observational accuracy (Kress 2000) or subcultural affinity (Camitta 1993).

3.3.2 ‘Orthographic regimes’ and the condition of ‘literate indeterminacy’

The notion of an orthographic regime, with its connotations of a settled and broadly-agreed order, can be examined from the perspective of the participant in a given SMS interaction, and her subjective experience of the degree of permissive variability in orthographic choice as perceived intrapersonally, and in a particular moment. When imagined in this way, it can be seen that a ‘regime’ may be functioning out of intrapersonal conditions of self-surveillance, as well as of those of direct institutional pressure, and this in turn may be related to an interactant’s generalised perceptions of the risk of adverse social judgments about non-normativity in any register or social context. If so, then such perceptions may refract some sense of the person’s own imagining of judgments of choices made by others. This is an argument developed in the analysis of respondents’ interviews and questionnaire answers where there is a frequent pattern of strong evaluation of orthographic choice, often expressed with brutal directness. Throughout

fieldwork in this study, respondents connected their experience of public sphere commentary stereotyping (in journalism) to their evaluative practices: to judgments about their own present and past SMS orthographic choices, and their evaluation of choices made by others.

REGIME	WRITING TYPES (examples)	INSTITUTIONAL ORDER	READERSHIP	ORTHO- GRAPHY
most highly regulated	texts for publication	Publishing, journalism etc.	General public	focussed on standard
	texts for circulation (memos, business letters etc.)	Business, employment	Colleagues /competitors	
	↓ “school” writing	School	teachers	usually focussed, not always on standard
	poetry, ‘literary’ writing	publishing	identified readership	
↓	personal letters	not institutional	self/intimates	least focussed zone
	private diaries	not institutional	self/intimates	
	personal memos (notes, lists)	not institutional	self/associates	
	electronic media (e-mail, chat rooms)	not institutional	self/in-group	
least regulated	SMS text messaging			
	fanzines, ‘samizdat’	oppositional	in-group	focussed on anti-standard
	graffiti	oppositional	in-group/ general public	

Figure 3.4 Orthographic regimes for different types of texts (copied from Sebba 2003. See also 2007;47).

These appear to be the source of the anxiety underlying what I am terming ‘literate indeterminacy’: how to act in social judgment of what constitutes literate value, without the support of cultural convention, as relayed by schooled instruction or authoritative licence. Evaluation operates in the context of informal viral evaluation and not in the optionality of ‘free variation’, and it is shaped by wider and more localised pressures, as well as by time-space and regulative discourse, inevitably changing over duration in response to reconfiguring contextual pressures, including the subject’s construal of ideological belief and social aspiration.

3.3.3 Orthographic space, density and centrality

Sebba develops an additional representation of orthographic regimes as imaginary social and literate space, as copied in Figure 3.5 below, with SMS circled in this version (ibid.;41). Here density of pixillation and centrality of position represent the level and orientation of pressures towards normative choice. Again fields of activity are grouped, with the degree of proximity to the centre functioning as an indicator of the levels of permissive variation. This manner of representation hints at the porous, crossover influences between these fields. Following the larger-scale studies of email and other CMCs, the diagram distinguishes between audience and function within the same new medium (Petrie 1999, Herring 2007, Dürscheid & Frehner 2010). By disambiguating genre expectations accruing to social function from technoliterate affordances and constraints of the medium, the model identifies the more nuanced relationship between technology and stylistic variation, especially once that medium diffuses into more general use in a wider variety of registers.⁵⁵

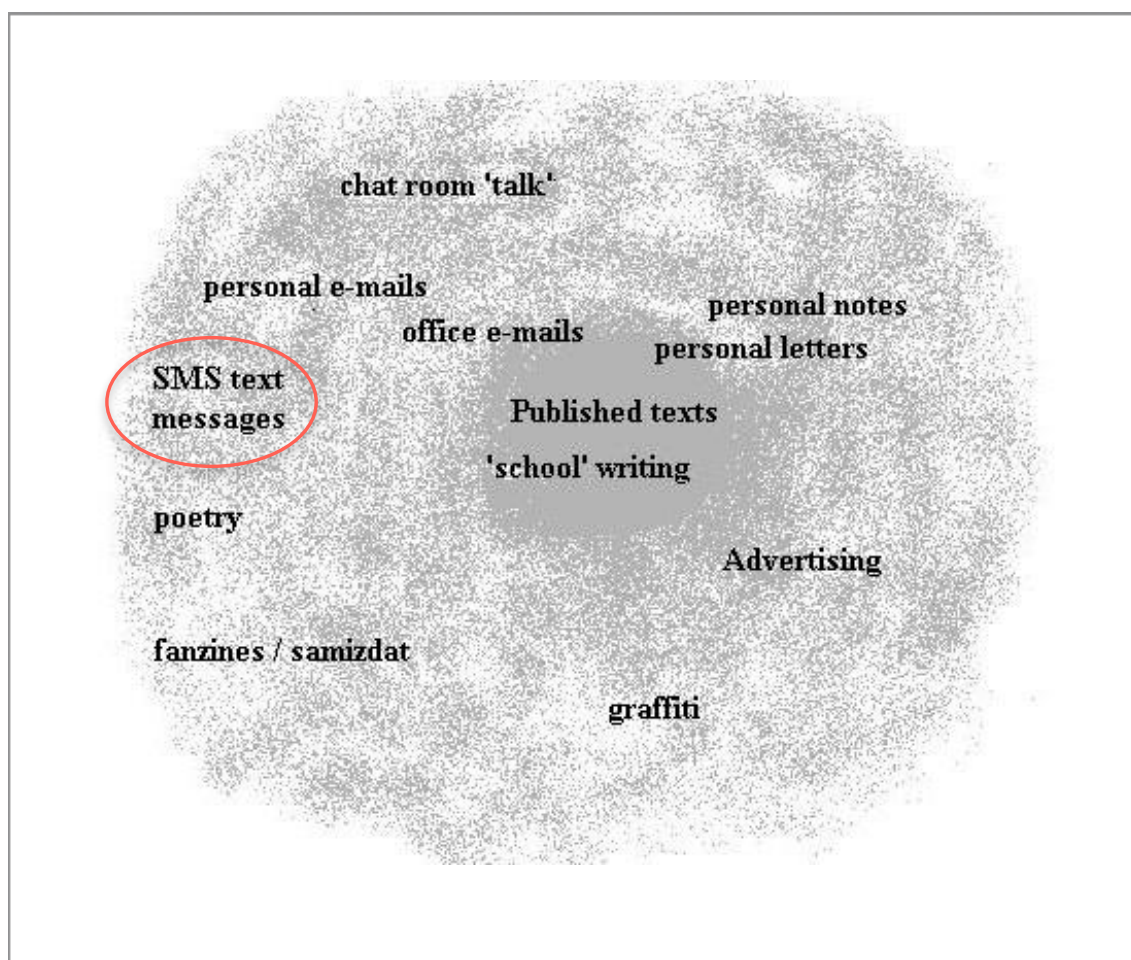


Figure 3.5 Orthographic regimes for different types of writing in Sebba 2007;43

This identification of regimes calls for an examination of how these are enacted in situations where there is no pressure on the user/chooser of orthographic variation to choose standardised spellings. As argued above, the diverse attitudes and practices of actual SMS users suggest

contingent social pressures. Here the playing out of structure and agency in the dimensions of Sebba's representation of this imaginary space of regimes is opaque: showing the contextual pressures in the 'regimes' in a representation of density and centrality of social evaluation while implying the processes and agency by which such dynamics are enacted.

In some situations, spelling compliance is enforced; in other contexts, there is greater discretionary choice. In extreme cases of pressure from instrumental power, orthographic expectations may be monitored by 'gatekeeping' access, as in the conventionalised requirements of practice for printed copy, or by practices of surveillance and imposed correction, especially in public institutional contexts. Examples might include: the spelling choices demanded of students; digital spellcheckers in newer mobile phones; the procedures of high status, normative standard language and prestigious register fostered by academic writing; printers' style sheets and proofreading practices in typeset printing; the contexts of institutionally regulated discourse in many forms of paid employment, including 'the professions' and public administration. In these genres and their associated social rituals, orthographic choice is managed intensively. In such cases, evaluation of orthographic choice may even gate access to participation. For example, a document deemed to be inadequately proofread may not go to print. In the UK, this ideological and material configuration of craft practice and the division of labour has been in operation since the seventeenth century and earlier (e.g. Moxon 1683, Cameron 1995, Leith 1997, Grafton 2011).

3.3.4 Domestic vernacular orthographic practices

Sebba's visual representations and accompanying commentary also acknowledge the unremarkable, routine practices of home life and private life, here 'personal notes' and 'personal letters', where there is less evidence of externally imposed pressure for performances of normative orthographic compliance (Philips 2000, Barton & Hall 2000, Gillen & Hall 2010, Gillen 2013). As Sebba observes, citing Strang (1970;107), toleration of orthographic variation in such private contexts may lag behind institutional and public norms, or be defined more flexibly in toleration of difference (See Osselton 1963, 1984;125; Tiekens Boone Van Ostade 2006;255; Nevalainen 2006; Nevalainen & Tanskanen 2007). In peer-to-peer written communication conducted primarily for interpersonal functions, there may be less pressure to spell in a manner valued by institutional demand. Conversely, variational choices may present particular affordances of affect, or may act as 'contextualisation cues' to mark out 'affinity spaces' which recruit a more specific localised audience response.⁵⁶ Pressure towards normative choice may still be experienced, in that case coming from aspiration to social accomplishment or by imaginary consciousness, and memory, in previously inculcated orientations to self-monitoring. In such cases, pressures may restrict choice in a discretionary space of orthographic practice, both in the recognition of options available, and in their selection and deployment. Such behaviour is hard to monitor since it may be manifest intrapersonally, rather than in

publicly-witnessed speech. Or it may feature in ‘backstage’ commentary between interlocutors, or below the line of textual instantiation in choices not made out of self-censorship: the roads not followed, the choices not made. Anticipatory strategies may be calculated to pre-empt the negative evaluation of the judgments of an imagined readership. This complex set of conflicting pressures is precisely what some respondents reported in their answers in interviews and questionnaires. There was a commonality in the themes of what was reported, showing a possible emergent but contested enregisterment of patterns of consensus around SMS spelling choice.

3.4.1 The social model of competing discourses of contextual pressure

Sebba’s notion of regime can be related to Lee’s related analytical lens: the social model of ‘competing discourses’ which shape the representation of contextual pressures of social influence acting to structure and constrain agentive choice (1992). The dialectic implicit in that theorisation is drawn from Lee’s depiction of multiple-sourced ideological discourse functioning in an ongoing live contestation which acts on agentive choice and on its aggregation over time into social influence. Agentive choice is always subject to a competing array of contextually situated social pressures and contingent limitations of resource which act on decisions of design and interpretation. In the diagrams of social contestation which follow in this chapter, the configuration of putative imaginary domains, or ‘force fields’ of social influence, is a means of representing structure and agency in such contestation. Participants’ choices are influenced and constrained by contextual pressures, including those arising from material conditions and always mediated by social processes. Interlocutors are resourced differentially, and will respond differently to these pressures in a context where a permissive regime around respelling still offers some level of discretionary choice.

3.4.2 Competing discourses in Bernstein’s recontextualising fields

The configuration of the force fields and the production of influence follow an imaginary schema adapted from Bernstein’s model of recontextualisation, as developed by Robertson (Bernstein 1996, Robertson *et al.* 2004). In examining how knowledge becomes circumscribed and legitimated in ways which delegitimise or marginalise other social possibilities of knowing and recognition, Bernstein posits an extended systemic model, refined over years of re-theorisation based on systematic reflection on iterations of empirical application. This study draws on just one thread of that theorisation. In the case of spelling, the variety of orthographic practice and social possibility evident in an exhaustive scholarly historical record such as *OED3*, or the contemporary vernacular variation and possibility indexed by a viral ‘WIKI’ reference source such as *Urban Dictionary*, are defined, filtered, reshaped and regulated into the more restricted option of authorised standard forms. These restricted but legitimated representations are evaluated and distributed by a cycle of institutional practices instantiated by the triangular ‘relay’ of authoritative discourse, print technologies and schooling. Here I am

interested in establishing the operation of what Bernstein terms the ‘symbolic ruler of consciousness’ as it applies to orthographic choice.

Bernstein’s construct of recontextualisation allows a way into understanding Sebba’s ‘regimes of orthography in different types of writing’ as these may operate at the more localised level of an interlocutor’s orthographic choice at the point of text entry. It also has some bearing on accounting for the decisions of choice in the here-and-now as these are influenced in the longer run of familiar, naturalised, ‘second-nature’ orthographic practices. These function as a form of orthographic habitus, and its enregisterment into conventional expectation, or possible codification. These considerations focusing on considering the interlocutor’s accounts of attitudes and practices, are based on an analytical framework which considers the means by which Sebba’s regimes are enacted by what might be described as a collectively held, and individually realised, policing of orthographic choice. In seeking to understand these practices as they are interiorised and practised in the sense of what is orthographically possible, Bernstein’s concept of recontextualising fields is presented in conjunction with an adaptation of that argument about the destabilising potential of new social and literate practices built around digitally-mediated vernaculars; here SMS interaction between young people in recreational contexts. Bernstein’s argument about pedagogic discourse acting as a ‘ruler of consciousness’ is applied to the impetus to ‘deregulated’ literacy, and permissive orthographic choice, inherent in the social practices around the altered materiality of digitally-mediated vernacular interaction.

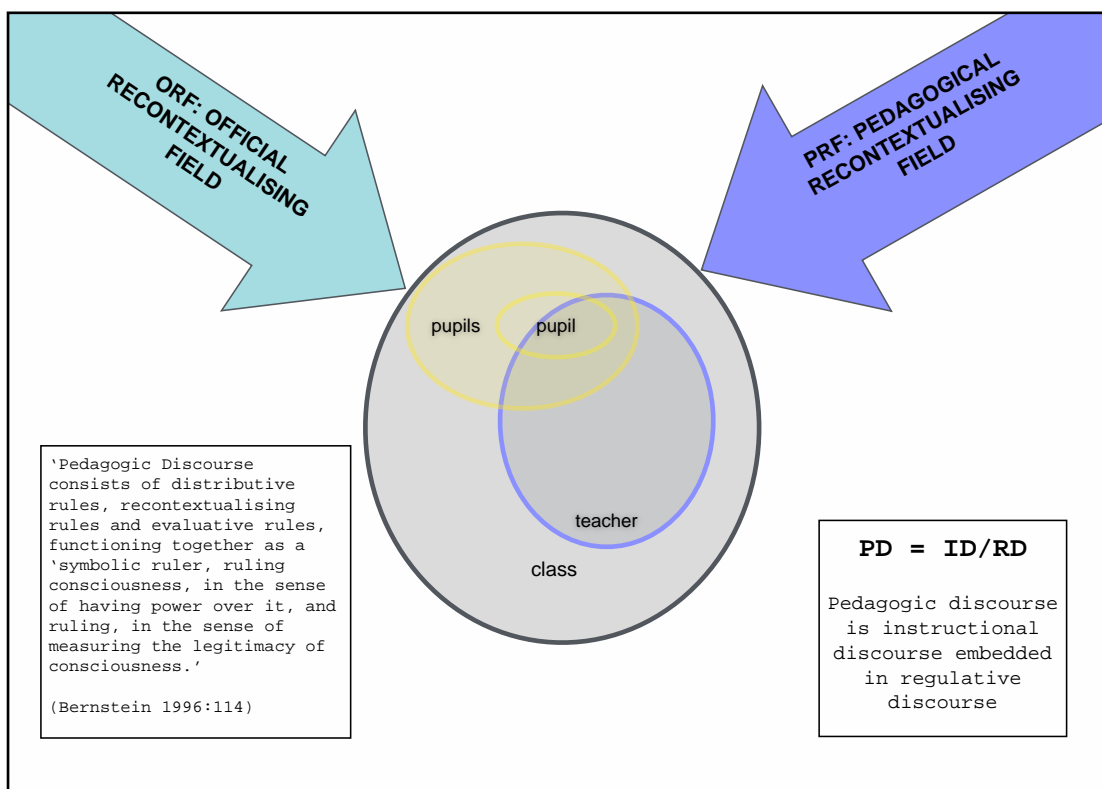


Figure 3.6 Recontextualising fields: a representation of Bernstein (1996), as depicted by Robinson (2004)

Bernstein argues that routine pedagogic practices function as a 'relay' of permissible ideas which restrict consciousness by legitimating what counts as knowledge. The grammar of the pedagogic device 'official discourse' consists of:

distributive rules, recontextualising rules, and evaluative rules ... functioning together as a symbolic ruler, ruling consciousness, in the sense of having power over it, and ruling, in the sense of measuring the legitimacy of consciousness (Bernstein 1996;114).

Bernstein argues this is a continually contested dynamic between competing social groups, a struggle between social groups for ownership of the device' as a means of perpetuating their power through discursive means and establishing, or attempting to establish their own ideological representations (*ibid.*). [In these discursive means] pedagogic discourse is an instructional discourse embedded in a dominating regulative discourse (ID/RD). (1996;103;161)

In other words, the instructional, legitimating discourse of ideas, argument and curriculum is always predicated on, and embedded within, a regulative discourse which seeks to arrange, direct and contain social behaviour. The rationales for the choices around instructional discourse are secondary to the issues relating to the determination of power and control. In the representation above, this is shown by the way the official recontextualising field is mediated through the pedagogical recontextualising field. Bernstein's model is primarily concerned with the entity of 'the state' as this acts to pressure and control agency through the means at its disposal, including mass schooling, or what Bernstein terms as 'pedagogic discourse'. The dialectic is worked out in the contestations of the relationship between the 'Official Recontextualising Field' (ORF), created and dominated by the state for the construction and surveillance of state pedagogic discourse, and its mediation by the Pedagogic Recontextualising Field (PRF) 'consisting of trainers of teachers, writers of textbooks, curricular guides, etc [sic.] specialised media and their authors' (*ibid.* 117).

The regulative dimensions of such processes of standardisation can be observed in the state-current and past educational practices in the UK in hegemonic codification and enforcement of licensed, linguistic usage in lexis, grammar and orthography. By such interpretation, this codification and its transmission stand in representationally as an enactment of national unity and controlled social solidarity (cf Anderson 1991). This is filtered, interpolated and mediated by agents of the state in the arrangements for teaching spelling, for instance. Such a pedagogic recontextualisation imposes a restricted recognition of the nation-state defined standard forms recognised as permissible. In concrete terms, practices such as those promote the learning and valuing of standard forms and excluding or marginalising the representation of all other varieties, including those arising out of dialectal or sociolectal variation, popular culture, or influenced by 'unformed' behaviours of those who have not undergone, or responded sufficiently to, state formation of literacy. Such ideology might be realised by such practices as: national and classroom spelling tests as numerical indices of literate competence; corrections of student errors in standardised realisations in their writing; therapeutic repair routines, such as

‘look, cover, check’; or mnemonic rituals for remembering standard forms without seeking to understand their provenance or origins in sociohistorical contestation, and a representation of spelling in texts studied in school which excludes those featuring variational forms. Such a model has some application to the early privileging and treatment of spelling by the state in mass schooling, for example, in England, intensifying following the Education Act of 1870 and continuing to the time of writing (e.g. Sullivan 1847, Peters 1995, Ott 2010, Stone 2014).⁵⁷

3.4.3 Robertson’s adaptation of Bernstein to frame ‘ICT in the classroom’

For Robertson and Dale, working on a critical sociology of education in the context of contemporary globalisation, Bernstein’s argument lacked sufficient discursive recognition of exercises of influence which emerge out of bases of power not defined by a polity of nation-state governance (Robertson *et al.* 2004, Robertson and Dale 2007). Using the notion of ‘scale’ to indicate the ways in which power is manifest at supranational levels above the state, and affecting practices at sub-state scales of localisation not subject to nation-state circumscription, Robertson sought to adapt and augment Bernstein’s 1996 model of recontextualising fields to understand the disruptive, destabilising effects observed in the impact of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) on pedagogic discourse in formal education settings.

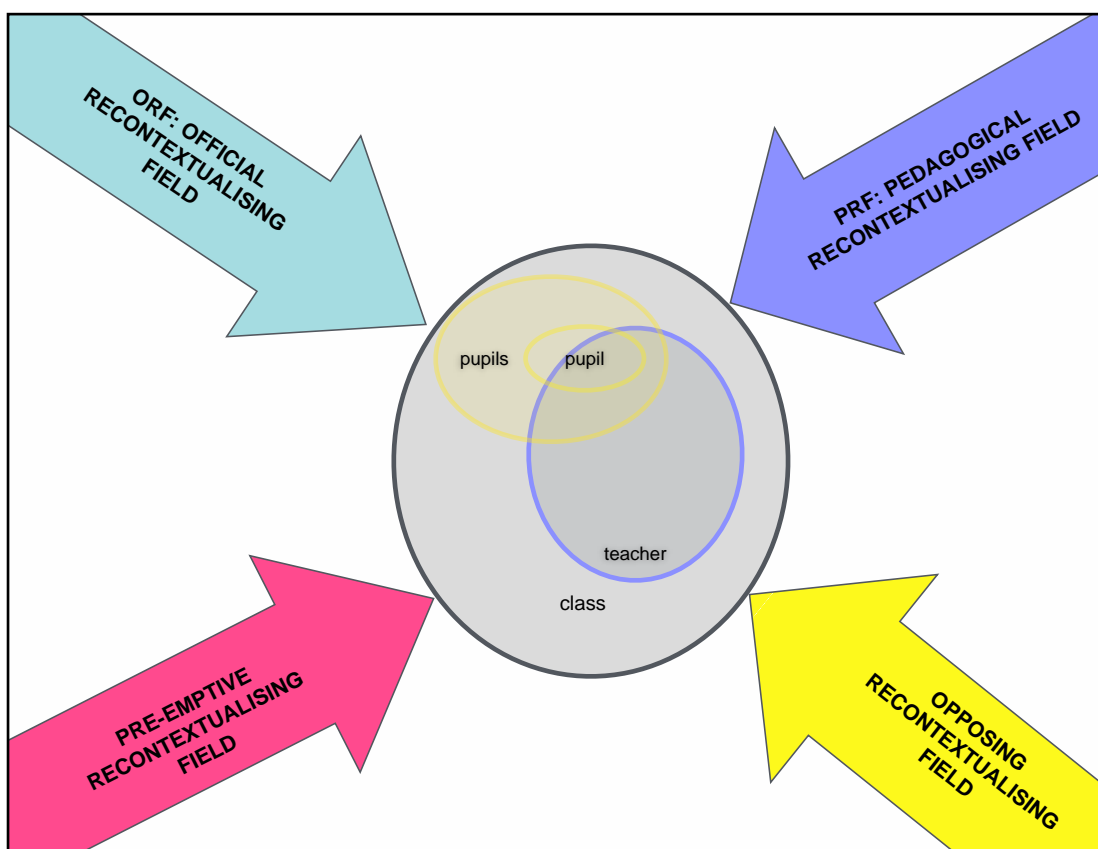


Figure 3.7 Recontextualising Fields as adapted by Robertson et al. (2004)

Robertson is relevant to the argument here for seeking to work with Bernstein's framework by supplementing its model of theorisation with one giving greater recognition of the influences of late modernity in markets, along with digital relays of semiotic transfer across time/space, in conjunction with home-life and street-life discourses of individualised consumerism. She and her colleagues added two additional 'force fields' of recontextualisation, broadly standing in for globalised commercial interests such as those marketing digital technologies, and the home and street vernacular cultures of social actors, as these affect pedagogic settings. Additionally the focus of these social forces was shown to act differentially with pupils as individuals and in the collective formation of the class, and with teachers, often with the effect of digital technologies in ICTs being to reduce the collective citizen-formation entity of the class, and intensify the autonomy and atomistic identity of the individual learner as an educational consumer.⁵⁸

This alteration in the representation of the agency acted upon allowed a more explicit sense of how these social forces may play out differently on the various social actors in their ascribed roles, with the attendant effect of destabilising the traditional collective sense of the teacher and class participating in a commonly-understood role of nation-state enculturation of the unformed individual into the schooled, literate citizen. It also shows the power of markets in destabilising the pre-existing pedagogic settlement. For example, a teacher without home-life vernacular-based practices of ICT activity would be differently equipped to handle the pressures coming from technology and its use than one who did, irrespective of their having equal disciplinary knowledge (*ibid.*). In short, ICTs introduce social and material conditions into pedagogical settings which disrupt established distributions of time-space, regulation and symbolic resources (Robertson *et al.* 2004).

3.4.4 Robertson's model adapted for the case of orthographic variation

The choice of Robertson's augmented version of Bernstein's recontextualising fields allows a means of representing the potentially disruptive impact of ICTs and new media on pre-existing cultural arrangements; here, literacy as a social practice and its fractal of orthographic choice in SMS. It identifies the contradiction between an expansion of choice and a potential intensification of informal regulation through Bernstein's concept of the 'symbolic ruler of consciousness'. Digital materiality offers conduits for interdiscursive influences relayed outside those prescribed and legitimated by nation-state power. Such disruption of a pre-existing settlement inevitably foregrounds intensified acts of evaluation, influenced by the pre-existing legitimisation of consciousness of 'what counts as spelling', relayed by the pedagogic recontextualisation of mass schooling and related institutional discourses.

In terms of the argument of this thesis and its focus on SMS spelling, my starting point here is a model of the 'force fields' identified by Robertson as these might be re-worked in an explanatory model of orthographic choice, situated in the educational context of 'schooled

literacy’. This model adapts the two new fields of influence identified by Robertson and interprets them so they apply to the case of orthographic choice from an expanded repertoire of available possibility: the ‘reservoir’ (Bernstein 1996) of possible semiotic resources from which an orthographic choice may in principle be made. This provides an organising principle for grouping the heterogeneous orthographic practices scrutinised in Chapter 2 in a hypernym structure more pertinent to this argument. In the adaptation set out below, the space Robertson articulated as the Pre-emptive Recontextualising Field (PreRF) has been renamed the Popular Culture Recontextualising Field (PopRF). There are analogous social presences and pressures deriving from commercial interests and also the interests and practices with a provenance in vernacular cultures and consumption. The interests of large scale global capital and commercial interest operate as a ‘pre-emptive’ domain of social pressure operating both in and out of alignment with the interests of the state, and in and out of alignment with vernacular cultures, with the potential of contesting and disturbing the relays of its ‘symbolic ruler’.

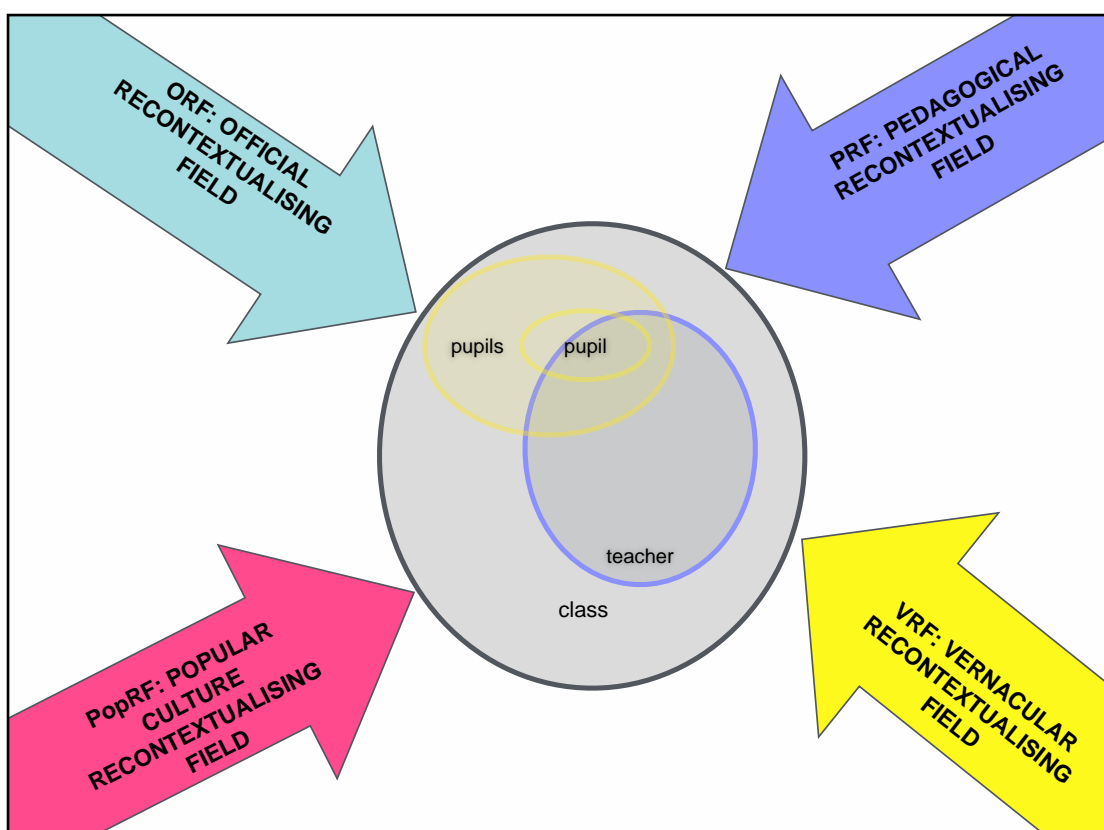


Figure 3.8 Modelling contextual pressures as they act on orthographic choice

In empirical application, this can be seen as being instantiated in interconnected, commercialised forms of popular culture and their attendant orthographic practices, in conjunction with the marketing of the digital media apparatus by which these are distributed: new intertextually connected forms of digitally-mediated interaction, subcultural music genres, video gaming and older CMCs, grouped together in Carrington’s ‘Shi Jinrui generation’ tag (Carrington 2004. See also Green & Bigum 1996, Lankshear & Knobel 2003, Kenway & Bullen

2003, Facer 2006). This coexists with more longstanding orthographic traditions found in popular culture: those represented by stylised recontextualisations of twentieth-century African-American and Afro-Caribbean popular music genres and related iterations, children's comics, trade names, and advertising, as surveyed in Chapter 2 (Shortis 2007a & b, Crystal 2008, Ryan 2010). As documented in Chapters 5 and 6 and appendices, many of the spelling choices made in SMS were adumbrated by and modelled on respelling found in popular culture, and from similar spellings and orthographic practices found in vernacular and domestic literate social practices. Popular culture may distribute localised practice beyond its original provenance: social actors in the recontextualising field of popular culture appear to have appropriated and broadcast semi-conventionalised variation found in localised practises so distributing them more widely. This distribution becomes more rapid and frequent in the context of self-published digitally-mediated vernaculars which can amplify and multiply localised usage beyond locality, ultimately in global flows across jurisdictions, and their associated standardised registers of authorised written and orthographic convention (e.g Pennycook 2003, 2007, Alim *et al.* 2009).

Such popular culture orthographic practices draw eclectically from vernacular orthographic sources by simulating the potential of the latter for invoking loyalty: its potentials for spoken rapport, localised address, and on occasions, collusive resistant transgression to mainstream norms, as described by Bernstein's identification of the power of mundane 'horizontal discourses'. By contrast with vernacular practices and their 'authenticity' of status and 'spontaneous' uncultivated derivation, popular culture is a designed 'discourse technology' of deliberated semiotic design, often associated with higher production values and oriented towards moneymaking by its intentions of mass market appeal. Pound's early description of trade spelling as a 'commercial linguistics' (1923) is pertinent. By this argument, vernacular orthographic practice, as instantiated in popular culture and trade spelling, is then represented as functioning as a potential meaning-making resource in a 'discourse technology' (Fairclough 1989;213; 1992) which simulates the 'oral, local, context dependent and specific' 'horizontal discourses' of Bernstein's description (1996;157) so imbuing commoditised exchange with intimations of localised social solidarity. The stylised, informalised 'digital tenor' observed by Posteguillo is associated with many informal uses of digital media in interactive written discourse, especially by young people, appearing to invoke localised peer-group rapport, creativity and spontaneity (2003). The Popular Culture Recontextualising field set out to the bottom left-hand side, is bound up in a symbiotic relationship with vernacular orthographic practices in the multiple iterations of buying and selling in a society oriented to mass-market consumption, and to accumulation of capital by globalised agency.

The space Robertson articulated as the Oppositional Recontextualising Field (OpRF), at the bottom right of the model, has been renamed the Vernacular Recontextualising Field (VRF) to indicate its operating in situated, localised social contexts, including those in private domestic life, usually relatively unrecorded, and deployed with less expensive resources, and without

formally designed composition and publication. This is the life-world of localised literacy practices in home and street life. These have less expensive and stylish ‘production values’ and are naturalised by their invisibility in the ‘common sense’, ‘horizontal discourses’ of family and community. The corresponding orthographic practices, some catalogued in Cook’s popular compendium (2004b), represent the kinds of spelling choices featuring in localised literacies, which feature in the community-focused research of the Lancaster Literacy Research Group (2004 b). In Bernstein’s terms, these literacy practices often take the form of weakly-defined ‘horizontal discourses’ with limited transfer to public domains of power. They are ‘contextually specific and context dependent, embedded in ongoing practices, usually with strong affective loading, and directed towards specific and immediate goals, highly relevant to the enquirer in the context of his or her life’ (Bernstein 1996;159).

3.5.1 Models of normative and extended repertoires of orthographic choice

Robertson’s model can be seen as offering an overarching framework for representing the orthographic equivalent of Street’s autonomous and ideological models of literacy, transposed onto, or restricted to, the case of available orthographic resources and their potential deployment in repertoires. Sebba (2007:Chapter 2) has argued the case for re-applying the insights about literacy derived from Street, Barton, Gee and colleagues to the case of spelling. Following that line of argument, Shortis (2007a) invoked the image of the ‘**normative orthographic palette**’ as a metaphoric representation of a repertoire constituted by, and constrained to an autonomous model of literacy in orthographic choice, and the ‘**extended orthographic palette**’ as a diagrammatic representation of the more expansive and flexible repertoire enabled by a social and ideological model of literacy and its attendant orthographic variation (Figure 3.10)⁵⁹. This was a means of representing two opposing paradigms of permissible orthographic choice, as seen by the interlocutor in their regimes of self-surveillance. The first of these, the ‘normative orthographic palette’ (Shortis 2007a, Figure 3.9 here) is manifested in practices found in formal, regimented domains of writing such as those inculcated by schooled literacy, and encouraged in public institutional transactions of powerful discourse and paid employment, and represented to the near exclusion of other options in proofread, printed publication.

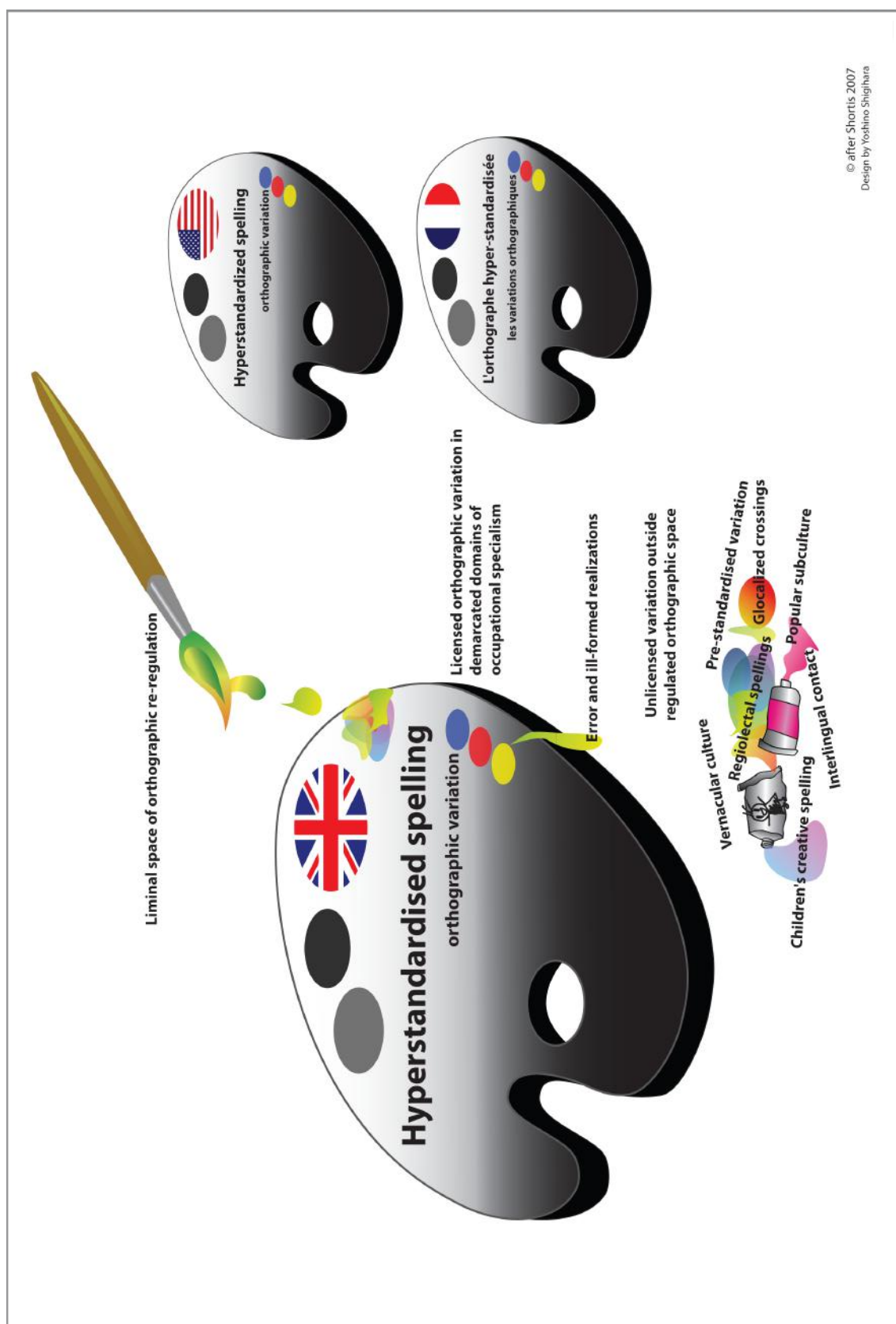


Figure 3.9 The 'normative orthographic palette' used in the context of 'regimented writing'

In turn, this is based on the common ‘deficit model’ of linguistic prescriptivism by which varieties other than defined standardised forms are evaluated using deficit criteria, and expunged or transferred to the periphery of public representation and valued symbolic recognition: the ‘erasure’ of Irvine & Gal’s description (2000:38). Following arguments presented by Cameron, these cleansing acts of ‘verbal hygiene’ maintain the ideological foregrounding of linguistic uniformity, including what I am terming the imaginary of ‘hyperstandardised orthographic practices’ (Cameron 1995). Nonetheless, some circumscribed variation may be licensed in bracketed special cases: codified, and framed as permissive options in defined domain subfields, for example, the lists of initialisms and other specialised shortened forms as set out in dictionaries, or the lexicons of occupational specialisms and other field-specific practice found in glossaries. Standard forms may have to admit neologisms, recently from computer domains, or loan words in a restricted set of revisions (e.g. Shortis 2001: Chapters 5 and 6).

The alternative to this is the ‘extended orthographic palette’ (Shortis 2007a), the repertoire used in SMS and related digital media: orthographic resource in all its potential vernacular and popular culture provenances, and extending to cross-linguistic and graphical meaning potential outside the circumscriptions of standardised written orthographies and script systems (Kataoka 1997, 2003a, 2003b, Kress 1998, 2000, Palfreyman & al Khalil, 2004, Vaisman 2011). Orthographic choice is drawn on pragmatically, and eclectically, for its situated meaning-making potentials. Here spelling and related choice operate as an uncircumscribed ‘resource’ for localised semiotic ‘design’. They may function in a social semiotic symbolising disposition, affect, or invoking other imaginings of social reality (Berger & Luckman 1968, Halliday 1979, Hodge & Kress 1988, Jaffe 2000, Androutsopoulos & Georgakopoulou 2003). The sign is not limited to an ‘English spelling’ script in the sense of an alphabetic sequence, least of all as defined in standardised forms: in digitally-mediated vernaculars, meaning-potentials previously allocated to demarcations of graphical, orthographic, and symbolic mediation become more intermingled. Numbers can be appropriated for logographic homophone affordances; punctuation symbols redeployed in the iconic rebus etymologies of emoticons; Roman letters inverted for a de-familiarised effect which alludes to the transitional orthographies of children; other languages and registers can be sampled, ‘ripped and burned’ (Pennycook 2003, Alim et al 2009). Such respellings are motivated by their recognition in routinised cultural practices achieving recognition, and a corresponding potential for diffusion by informal means, even when not legitimated and defined by standard sources of linguistic authority and their distribution in schooling. Historical study would suggest this is not new. For example, sociohistorical scholarly study of punctuation through a diachronic framework reveals a strong variation of socially valued practice and choice over time (Parkes 1992). Differences are to be found in scale, extent, speed of diffusion and agency.

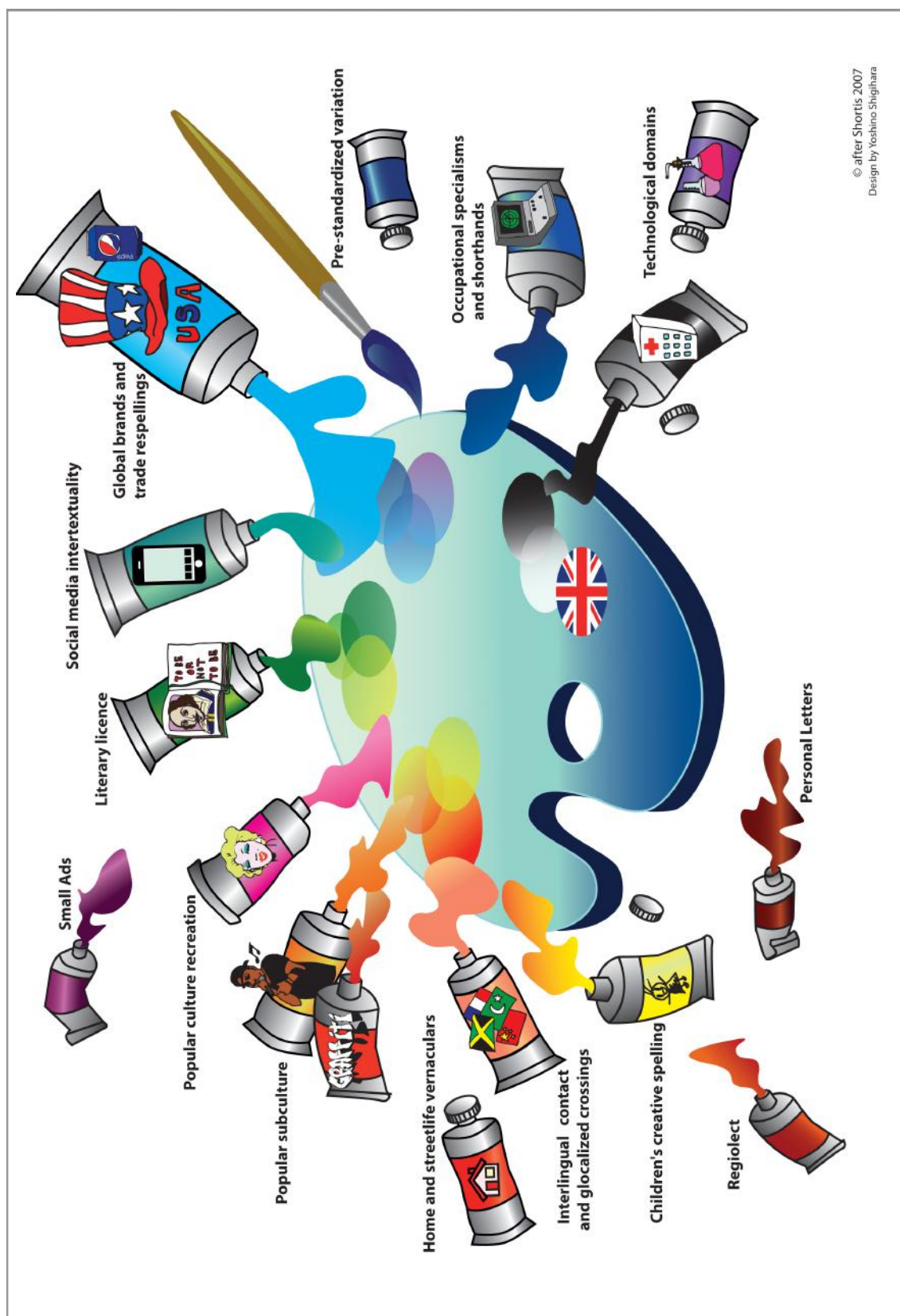


Figure 3.10 The 'extended orthographic palette' used in the context of 'unregimented writing'

3.5.2 Respelling as multiple motivations and meanings

Respellings can be motivated by the internal mimetic logics of analogy in a semiotic and linguistic ‘system’ manifest in conventions and frequencies of sound-spelling correspondence.⁶⁰ They may follow newer popular conventions of vocabulary formation such as acronym and initialism-constructions for compound nouns and noun phrases and especially those found in occupational and technological domains, including ICTs. They may also achieve recognition through cultural allusion and reinforcement through their representation in popular culture, or other examples of orthographic intertextuality. Alternatively, they may be fused in multi-motivated cases. So, in the South London college data-set (Chapters 5 and 6), a vernacular innovation of a more shallow orthography which represents sounds in graphemes may operate in conjunction with experiences of sociolectal and dialectal features of speech found in that site (<dis> for <this>). This offers a polysemic semiotic resource by which interlocutors can signal identity, allegiance, referential precision, dispositional preference and social distance (see Hinrichs 2012, Volosinov 1993)⁶¹. Motivations and meanings may be inferred which are distinctive for different profiles of audience. By such claims, the variety of spelling options available to the user is a ‘palette’: a repertoire of more open possibilities drawing from a wider range of cultural influences, social possibilities, sites of exemplification and implied authorisation. Following social semiotic rationale, it may be thought of as functioning with multi-accentual potentials (Volosinov 1993, Hodge & Kress 1988). Variation from such forms may be variegated, and may function in orchestration with other modes, such as the visual in graffiti and pop music-related texts (packaging, merchandising, labels, posters). This contrasts with the other end of the continuum: the comparatively fixed, ‘closed pool’ of defined standard English spelling ‘types’, typically legitimated by single licensed spellings for each word, and associated with typeset production. The analysis of data in this thesis is derived from this analytical framework, which schematises altered social and material conditions in conjunction with the contrasting sets of orthographic resources dependent on an interlocutors’ stance towards autonomous and ideological models of literacy. It is an argument congruent with Sebba’s account of orthographic regimes, but viewed inside-out from the perspective of user subjectivity and the impact of contextual pressure on intrapersonal selection.

3.5.3 Discretionary choice understood as liminal space

The positioning of orthographic choice in SMS shown in Sebba’s hierarchical schema can be seen as indicating a liminal zone of unstable and unsedimented cultural expectation: a fractious discourse at a point in the earlier processes of enregisterment. Using the adaptation of Bernstein’s model of recontextualising fields suggests discretionary choice will be subject to contested, even contradictory pressures. Possible optionality of semiotic resource opened up by the circulation of orthographic practices in popular culture and vernacular life-worlds, is simultaneously constrained by influences of an invisible ‘symbolic ruler of consciousness’ which has naturalised hyperstandard orthographic practice as legitimated spelling. There is a

dynamic of contestation between a settlement of hyperstandardisation which operates through restricting consciousness of possible choice to legitimated choice. Meanwhile, the horizontal discourses of SMS circulation draw from traditions of vernacularity which operate outside the limits and relays of schooled literacy, so offering meaning-making resources from beyond the boundaries of such circumscription.

3.5.4 Summarising the dynamic of cultural transmission in orthographic choice

In this chapter I have argued that orthographic choice in SMS can only be partly understood by studying textual evidence. That sole manner of apprehension occludes attending to the social and material processes which motivate textual choice, including factors behind the choices not taken, and the social dynamic by which choice is legitimated and sedimented into enregistered convention. Those processes are manifest in the orthographic subset of the literacy events and practices which act on textual choice: the social settings, participants, genres and institutional orders shown in Sebba's depiction of the clines shaping permissive variation in orthographic regimes. There is also the 'invisible hand' of persistent socio-economic evaluation conducted in each moment of production and interpretation at an idiolectal level in the kind of process characterised by Agha as a 'speech chain'. These moments build into patterns of generalised metadiscursive commentary, as circulated in localised opinion and uptake in dyadic contexts, and manifest too in the broadcast record of public sphere metadiscourses (see Chapters 7 and 9). The three-dimensional triangular model at the head of this chapter schematises the data records and social processes described. Robertson's model and its associated argument adapt Bernstein's idea of pedagogical recontextualisation to foreground structural alterations in the contemporary conditions of modernity as these pertain to orthographic choice. This includes those pertaining to schooled spelling which arise out of social pressures accruing to globalisation, mass-marketing and the material affordances of digital mediation.

51 See Blommaert's explanation of 'proleptic' design in Blommaert 2013.

52 Kristeva 1971.

53 A search of the British Library catalogue showed eleven of these popular dictionaries published between 2000 and 2003. See examples in Appendix V.

54 'Iconisation' as the 'transformation of the sign relationship between linguistic features or varieties and the social images with which they are linked'. (*ibid.* 2000;37).

55 See the construct of 'ausbau' as discussed by Androutsopoulos 2011.

56 See Gumperz 1982 a & b for 'contextualisation cues'; see Gee 2005 for explanation of 'affinity spaces'.

57 See Clark 2013 for a related discussion of the hegemonic processes underpinning normative forms.

58 Robertson's model allows each of these entities - pupil, teacher, class - to be foregrounded in different scalar perspectives of analysis (Robertson *et al.* 2004)

59 Earlier drafts of this thesis over-depended on the terminology derived from the visual metaphor of the 'palette', as sourced in Shortis 2007a and depicted graphically in figures 3.9 and 3.10. Thank you to Jan Blommaert for suggesting this neologistic use of the term 'palette' might be helpfully related to linguistic and semiotic constructs of 'repertoire' and to 'social scripts'.

60 See Appendix III for supporting references for the domains featuring in the schema.

61 The term 'multi-accentual' is drawn from Hodge & Kress (1998, 1993) and adapted from Volosinov 1993. See Parrington 1997 for overview of Voloshinov.

4. Research design and data-collection

Explaining the evolving methodology and its empirical application

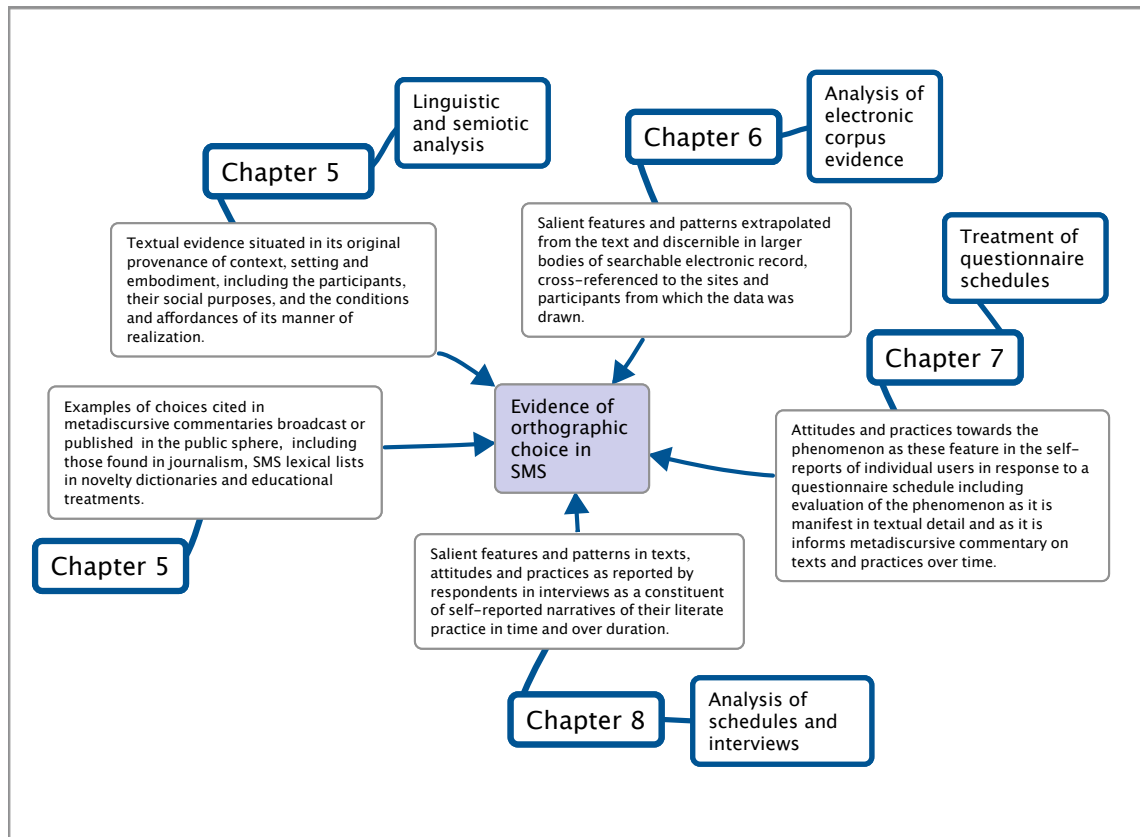


Figure 4.1 Research design, data streams and modes of data collection

Premised upon our own participation in the world we study, reflexive science deploys multiple dialogues to reach explanations of empirical phenomena ... [It] starts out from dialogue, virtual or real, between observer and participants, embeds such dialogue within a second dialogue between local processes and extralocal forces that in turn can only be comprehended by a third expanding dialogue of theory with itself. Objectivity is not measured by procedures that assure an accurate mapping of the world but by the growth of knowledge; that is by the imaginative and parsimonious reconstruction of theory to accommodate anomalies....

The extended case method applies reflexive science to ethnography, in order to extract the general from the unique, to move from the micro to the macro, and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future, all by building on pre-existing theory.

Burawoy 1998;5

The emic perspective is one that favors the point of view of the members of the community under study and hence tries to describe how members assign meaning to a given act or to the difference between two different acts. [In contrast] The etic perspective is one which is instead culture-independent and simply provides a classification of behaviors on the basis of a set of features devised by the observer/researcher.

Duranti 1997; 172

4.1.1 Methodology, methods, synchrony and diachrony

OED distinguishes between ‘methodology’ and ‘methods’, with methodology defined as ‘the study of the direction and implications of empirical research, or of the suitability of the techniques employed in it’, but in ‘some contexts weakened to mean little more than “method”’ (*OED* entries). In this chapter, I explain my research design ‘methodology’ - the methodological rationale developed in response to my research questions - and also my ‘methods’, the means by which the data-set was selected, collected and organised. I illustrate this account with more specific information set out in Appendix IV. After critiquing the corpus-dependent methodology that I applied in the earlier phase of the study, I explain the mixed-methods research design which was innovated subsequently. This focused on collecting a data-set following the principles of the conceptual framework explained in Chapter 3: SMS orthographic choice as constituted by textual instantiation, as evidence of literacy as a social practice, as subject to inevitable metadiscursive evaluation, and as subject to changes in technology and to changes in respondents’ roles and perceived identities, as their biographical ‘trajectories’ unfolded into adult life.

The principal research instruments were a data-base comprising facsimile texts selected over time, a corpus of text messages in machine-readable form, quantitative and qualitative self-reports in questionnaire surveys and interviews. Three of these data streams were collected by the survey (below and in the appendices), which also offered a means of relating textual production to respondents’ demographic and attitudinal profiles. I explain some of the less familiar research instruments used, including the ‘Seen/Use’ method of measuring levels of attestation (Chapter 6). I explain the approach taken to classification of orthographic choice given the problematic, overlapping terms and concepts in the field. I draw on (and adapt typologies from) linguistics, sociolinguistic study of CMCs, and sociocultural approaches, to develop the situated social semiotic approach of dimensions and affordances explained here. At the chapter’s conclusion, I hypothesise the connection between literate and orthographic identity, and socio-economic access to prestige orthographic registers. I offer an explanation of the analytical framework derived from Chapter 3, in conjunction with the methods outlined below. This is applied to all data-sets in Chapters 5-8.

4.1.2 Research questions

The research reported in this thesis is focused on four interdependent questions:

- 1) What are the features and patterns of orthographic choice used over time as sourced from a corpus of actual SMS text messaging interaction and in the ways such practices have been enregistered in public sphere metadiscourse, for example in news reporting, popular accounts and related mass-mediated coverage?
- 2) What do the associated choices of spellings in SMS and related media afford interlocutors and their idiolectal and sociolectal repertoires such that these choices came to attract mass recognition, co-option, and circulation in enregistered literate practices?
- 3) What patterns in social judgments about such choices can be observed over time and what is their impact on interlocutors' orthographic practices?
- 4) What does the case of orthographic practice in SMS text messaging signify about sociohistorical, diachronic changes in the linguistic and semiotic resources deployed in the contemporary communicative landscape, and what are the implications of those changes for schooled instruction of spelling and literacy?

The first research question is amenable to analysis of salience and frequency patterns in the variations of spelling to be found in a representative sample of young people's text messaging (here from England), and in the comparison between this data-set and a representative sample of text message spelling choice as featured in popular accounts and news media. This contributes to the empirical record of young people's SMS orthographic choices, which remains comparatively unstudied, given the level of diffusion of the medium, and the more extensive empirical studies of other comparable CMC varieties. It adds to the evidence garnered by other scholars contrasting mass mediated coverage with the evidence of actual situated practice (e.g. Carrington 2005, Thurlow 2003, 2006, Thurlow & Poff 2010, Squires 2010, 2012, Wood, Kemp & Plester 2014).

Research question 2 can be addressed in part by linguistic and semiotic analysis of those features and patterns of orthographic choice using a classificatory framework explained later in this chapter. Research questions 2 and 3 require the reports of respondents, structured by an analytical framework. Here I am interested in the contextual pressures reported by interlocutors as informing choices, and the folk-linguistic rationales given for the selection of choice, and evaluation of other peoples' choices. This approach is informed by methods drawn from the research tradition of literacy as a social practice, as refined by its application in observational ethnographic methods to CMC domains (Androutsopoulos 2008, 2012, Jones 2009, Barton & Lee 2012, 2013).

Finally, there is the issue of research methods which can encompass the broader generalisable social significance of SMS spelling choices for understanding sociohistorical change in linguistic and semiotic resources. What social processes act on changes in valued orthographic choice? By what methodological design is it possible to differentiate significant social semiotic change from ‘the perception of seemingly endless technological innovation,’ as observed in Herring’s invocation for researchers ‘to step back from the parade of passing technologies and consider more deeply what determines people’s use of mediated communication’ (2004;270)?

4.1.3 Contextualising the methodology: ethnography

Although not constituted as an ethnography, this study draws on some ethnographic methods (see Chapter 8), and on approaches informed by the reporting of ethnographic studies, including Hodgson’s longitudinal study of rural adolescents’ literacy and media practices in the 1990s and early 2000s (Hodgson 2007). I draw too on methods reported by Ito and colleagues in their work on adolescent mobile phone practices in Japan, which used a technologically-inflected form of ethnographic observation drawn from social anthropology (Ito *et al.* 2005). Several of my respondents were re-interviewed, often in conjunction with a re-examination of data collected from them. Although not an ‘emic’ ethnographic study as such, informants were consulted to refine the research instruments and test the extent to which provisional ongoing interpretation offered some degree of recognition and verification of respondents’ narratives, rationales and folk-linguistic theorisation. The methodology applied represents the theoretical prioritisation of an ‘extended case’ study, as formulated by Burawoy in the epigraph quotation above.

Following Burawoy’s proposed design, this study seeks to exemplify a reflexive model of social science, observing the object of enquiry over duration and from a situated position in the field, and starting out with a stronger degree of theoretical focus than would be associated with grounded theory methods.

4.1.4 Contextualising the methodology: corpus approaches

This study was originally conceived as analysis based on the linguistic patterns of spelling shown in the norms and variations identified by a corpus of SMS data gathered from adolescents. It seemed that corpus methods could be adapted for the case of vernacular spelling in SMS. There were attendant methodological decisions around the lemmatisation of spelling variations in vernacular writing, as noted by Tagg and others developing corpora of non-standard varieties (2009, 2012). The evidence afforded by a big data-set allows a ‘data-driven’ methodology identifying profiles of actual situated linguistic use in relation to demographic groupings, genre, medium or other classification. This would enable a scale of verification

possible only by machine-readable electronic corpora (Johns 1986, Sinclair 1991, 2003, 2004, Stubbs 1996, Scott 1996, Tagg, 2009, 2012).

Text messaging has proved to be a less tractable source of data than that sourced from other CMC media until recently, due to the dyadic nature of its characteristic interaction, and the difficulty of gathering private data by manual transcription (Tagg 2009, 2012). In contrast to the large-scale data-downloads associated with studies of other CMC media, SMS researchers have relied upon copying relatively small tranches of text from informants, or gathering submissions from specialised websites. One consequence has been a smaller scale of textual evidence in the earlier scholarship (Dürscheid 2011, Chen & Ken 2013). Synthesising four bibliographies constructed between 2006 and 2008 shows citations of ten studies of text messaging in English based on samples of SMS messages or small corpora: Taylor and Harper 2001 (samples), Grinter & Eldridge 2001 (samples), Shortis 2001 (200 messages), Grinter & Eldridge 2003 (477 messages); Thurlow with Brown 2003 (544 messages), Keseler & Bergs 2003 (samples), Crystal 2004 (samples and unspecified private corpus), Faulkner & Culwin 2005 (337 messages), Shortis 2007a (samples), Tagg 2009 (over 11,067 messages).⁶² With the exception of Tagg's CorTxt, these are small corpora; it is only since 2012 that much larger live SMS corpora in English have been developed (Chen & Kan 2013), following methods pioneered with French SMS (Fairon & Paumier 2006, Fairon *et al.* 2006 cited in Crystal 2008, Anis 2007).

As implied by Herring (2004), norms generated by the configurations of contextual pressures generated in a particular setting, studied over a short period, may be too localised to be representative of national or globalised heterogeneous practice. A single study of 337 text messages sourced from a cohort of young adults (Faulkner & Culwin 2005) may be cited to suggest that respelling is becoming less frequent. Lexical lists generated from a single scholar's private corpus may have wide circulation in published reference, while being hard to verify in data from comparable settings.⁶³ Similarly, Instant Messaging data gathered in a North-American college setting may be cited as a benchmark for levels of non-standard usage in that medium (Tagliamonte & Denis 2008, Baron 2008, Squires 2010, 2011). Other studies of such media suggest a notably diverse cohort of users and literate performances (Palfreyman & al Khalil 2003, Lewis & Fabos 2005, Lee 2006, Fung & Carter 2007, Lam 2009). Following the principles elicited by the review of literature, this study regards orthographic choice as motivated by a matrix of competing contextual pressures. The method of collecting data from a wider constituency over longer duration addresses some of the limitations of reliability and verification in norms and variations extrapolated from localised contexts.

UK-based studies of SMS spelling bear comparison with those focused on texting in other European languages. Studies considered in this thesis include: Androutsopoulos & Schmidt 2001, Doring 2002 (German), Bieswanger 2007, Frehner 2008 (German & English), Fortunati 2001 (Italian), Kasesniemi & Rautiainen 2002, Oksman & Rautiainen 2004 (Finnish), Hård af

Segerstad 2003, 2005 a and b (Swedish), Ling & Baron 2004, Ling & Pedersen 2005 (Norwegian), Sylvestrie 2005 (Spanish), Spilioti 2006, 2009, Androutsopoulos 2011 (Greek) & Baron & Ling 2008 (American English). These show similar patterns to those focused on SMS in English: small corpora localised to participants' domestic life-worlds. Earlier treatments tended to present SMS as a youth literacy practice, noting the manifestation of 'non-standard' forms of language, usually oriented to environmental, ergonomic and economic considerations, and to the construction of oppositional identity stances associated with youth sociolect. Linguistic forms identified include types of abbreviation such as elisions, ellipses, initialisms, apocope and elaborations, coinages, stylised simulations of spoken language, and the use of dialectal and basilectal forms (Bieswanger 2007). Some studies favoured a strong focus on environmental factors, such as explanations of text entry reduction (Hård Segerstad 2003, Sylvestrie 2005). Others emphasised the sociolectal variation of early adopters, and their construction of a distinctive subcultural identity. Alternatively, approaches tended towards disciplinary perspectives from social anthropology or sociological fieldwork, with less scrutiny of linguistic examples.⁶⁴ Studies of the US context were rare in the earlier period, with SMS only diffusing at large scale after 2007 following changes in state phone tariffs and the introduction of smartphones (Baron 2008). SMS literate and orthographic practices represent the singular case of CMC innovation established globally in Europe and Asia before diffusion in the US. See Figure 4.2.⁶⁵

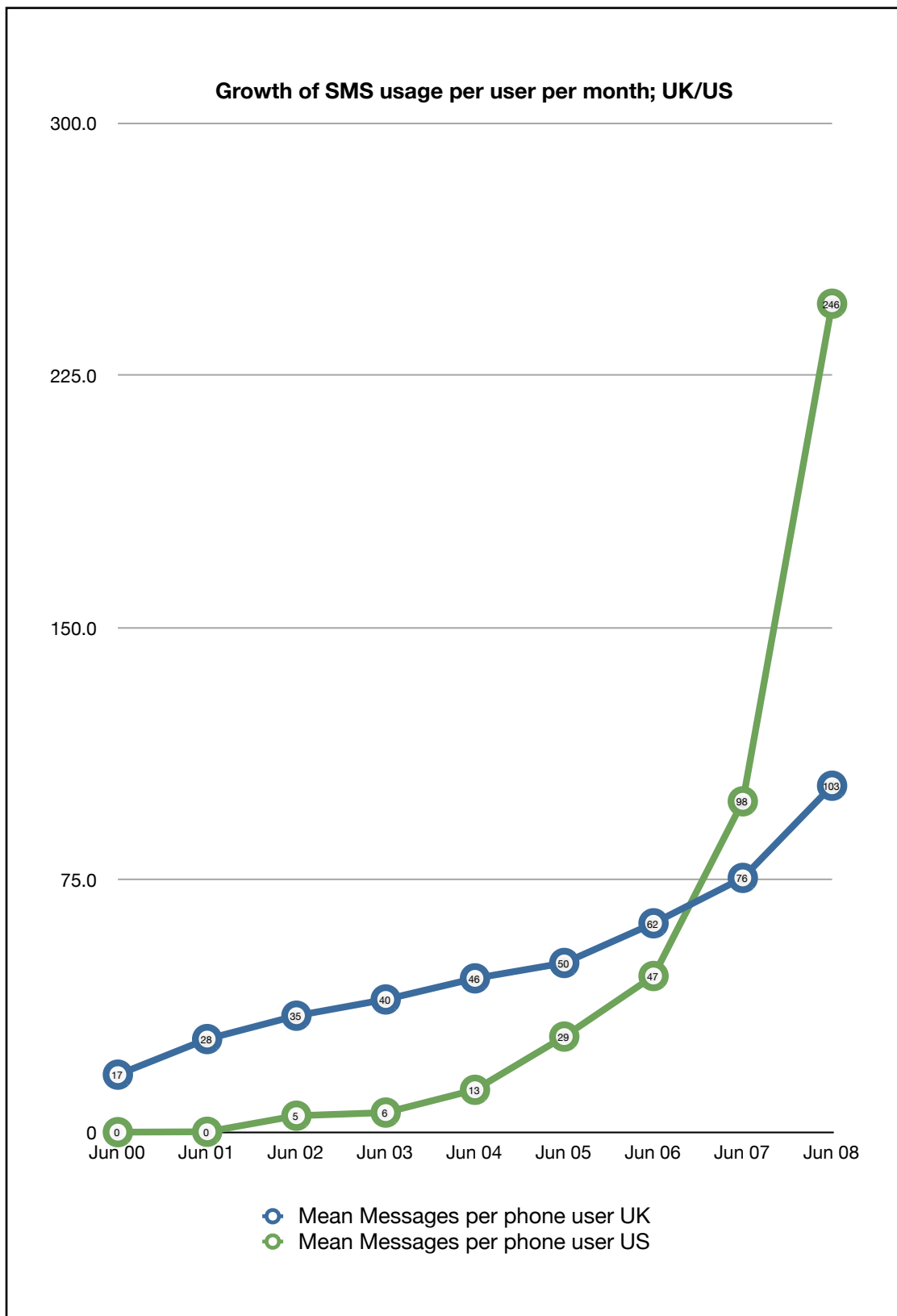


Figure 4.2 Growth of SMS messages per month, showing later diffusion of practice in US

4.2.1 Problems with corpus-based approaches in the pilot phase of study

In my earlier fieldwork focused on three college sites, I recorded many orthographic patterns common to all three (SBC, SCS, SLC, from 2000 to 2006: see Appendix VI). I also noted a more cohesive, intense pattern of respelling practices at SLC, with more marked forms of respelling evident there. In contrast, aggregated SCS practice seemed to be more oriented to normative choice. Provisional analysis of the corpora turned out to be problematic because the methods used could not explain such variations between and within the three corpora. It appeared that patterns observed in particular sites and messages, and in field-note records of the attitudes and explanations of particular contributors, were flattened out in a representational mean. Following from this, the corpus collections unwittingly concealed evidence of contested, divergent attitudes and practices. They offered limited means of representing idiolectal preferences and their accompanying folk-linguistic rationales. For example, one of the subcorpora in the original SBC 2000 corpus, since excluded for ethical reasons, showed a comparatively strong preference for cryptic messages in vernacular demotic forms contributed by a small group of younger respondents, with strongly held and idiosyncratic points of view made in comments justifying such choices. By contrast, other respondents reported changing preferences towards more normative spelling.⁶⁶

As SMS diffused (see Figure 1.2), respondents reported changes in phone technology influencing orthographic choice, including enhanced automated correction by ‘T9’ predictive text. Field-notes showed divergent appropriations of the affordances of this potential enhancement in orthographic automation.⁶⁷ Some noted that it made it easier to spell in standardised English; others filled their predictive text dictionaries with the SMS vernaculars of idiolectal and sociolectal preference. Customising phone dictionaries against the grain of the manufacturer’s designed intentions allowed those users to access faster text entry, while preserving preferred construals of identity and interactional alignment.

There was an additional methodological problem in the mass diffusion of a sequence of related technologies. This can be seen in Figure 1.1, showing such uptake. In particular, instant messaging by *MSN* was facilitated by broadband internet connection from 2001, which effectively rendered the internet free to adolescents with bills paid by parents. The web, and *MSN* in particular, rapidly diffused to a mass accessory of adolescent interaction as shown in the Figure 1.1 chart, and documented by others (Livingstone & Bober 2003, Kent & Facer 2004). Respondents, especially younger adolescents, began to talk of daily extended participation in *MSN* using an orthographic register similar to SMS, although mediated by computer keyboarding.⁶⁸ There was a methodological challenge in devising approaches to assess the intertextual relationship between choices used in SMS and *MSN*. Without such consideration, orthographic choice in two forms of related digitally-mediated vernacular interaction, which originated in the same domain of social practice, might be reified into discrete subfields. Finally, in spite of the subsequent successful development of larger corpora of SMS (Frehner 2008, Tagg

ibid.), there were practical problems in developing a convincing scale of evidence, including an appropriate number of participants, as well as of texts. Even a corpus of the scope collected by Tagg may be sourced from a relatively small number of participants of particular age range, educational attainment and socio-economic profile (Tagg 2012;04, Chapter 6 here).

4.2.2 The revised design and how it addresses the research questions

In the revised research design, I responded to these earlier problems by building a multiple-strand evidence base allowing verification between different types of data-sets. The conceptual framework (Chapter 3), which treats the object of study as manifest in texts, practices and metadiscursive commentary in time, and over duration, is mirrored by contextualising the textual evidence of orthographic choice with what respondents report about their attitudes and practices around spelling. So corpus evidence could be set out in relation to demographic and biographical information about its provenance, and cross-referenced with a data-set recording accounts of respondents' reported attitudes and practices around SMS and spelling choice in general. Additional textual evidence includes photographic and facsimile evidence, and reconstructed visual representations, of digitally-mediated vernaculars in actual situated contexts selected over duration. This approach moves away from linguistic 'data-driven enquiry', in its corpus linguistics sense, to a model which can encompass an agentive, sociolinguistic and social semiotic approach to diachronic change in meaning-making resources. It reframes orthographic choices in SMS as a social, ideological and materially-situated construct, in which preference draws on and enacts 'interest' (Kress 2003), in embodied meaning-making artefacts, including the attitudes and ideologies they embed. To summarise, methodology offered a means of applying Agha's theoretical account of the 'speech chain' process of enregisterment, as the mechanism for the diffusion of socially valued change, to a model of orthographic choice as social semiotic (Agha 2003, 2005, 2007, Halliday 1979, Hodge and Kress 1988, Kress 1997, 2010) in the context of a sociocultural approach to orthography as social action (Sebba 2007, Blommaert 2008, Jaffe *et al.* 2012).

4.2.3 Orthographic choice in SMS in five strands of evidence

The revised research design relies upon the collection of the following five strands of empirical evidence which contribute to the manifestation of agentive choice in text spelling.

Textual evidence situated in its original provenance of context, collected over time, setting and textual embodiment, including the social conditions giving rise to the interaction, and the conditions and affordances of its manner of semiotic, material and geosocial realisation. This strand of data is examined by linguistic and semiotic analysis of orthographic choice over time (Chapter 5).

SMS orthographic choice as attested in salient features and patterns, extrapolated from textual evidence discernible in larger bodies of machine-readable electronic record, and cross-referenced to the settings and participants from which the data was drawn (see Chapter 6).

Self-reports of attitudes and practices towards orthographic choice in SMS, and to particular spellings, as these feature in the responses to a questionnaire schedule designed to elicit evaluative commentary on texts and practices over time (see Chapters 6 and 7).

More specific and probing self-reports by respondents in response to interview questions, including self-reported narratives of their literacy practices and repertoires in time and over duration (Chapter 8).

Evidence of exemplifying SMS orthographic choices and accompanying commentaries found in ‘public sphere metadiscourse’, including journalism, SMS glossaries and lexical lists (see Chapters 5 to 8 and Appendix IV, V and VI).⁶⁹

4.2.4 Data description

The revised methodology includes the corpus and textual data-sets gathered in 2000-2006 from students in comparable educational sites in a major city, a regional centre and a small town in a rural area. These students were resurveyed more systematically by online questionnaire and field visits from 2007. A larger-scale, ‘open-access’, web-based survey (2008) provided a benchmark of practice outside these sites, with subsequent resurveying of invited respondents.

By comparison with the norms of sociolinguistic studies of CMC, this data collection has been conducted over a longer duration, with some material collected in 2000, following a literature review and analyses of digitally-mediated interaction in texts from the 1990s, undertaken in 1999 for an introductory overview of the field (Shortis 2001). This timescale enabled a longitudinal perspective which has a methodological import in relation to Herring’s critique of temporal scale in CMC study. For example, general trends and many linguistic particularities of

vernacular innovation, now seen in SMS and social media, can be situated in the perspective of comparable reports about earlier digitally-mediated forms, such as those found in accounts of informal email, bulletin boards, electronic forums and internet chatrooms (Reid 1991, Turkle 1995, Jones 1995, Herring 1996, Werry 1996, Snyder 1998). Similarly, the public debate focused on SMS literacy following its introduction (Thurlow 2003, Crystal 2008) was foreshadowed by claims of defective literate choices in informal email in the later 1990s. This followed the equally sudden diffusion of online practices in the wake of the innovation of the worldwide-web, mediated by graphical-user-interface web browsers, web-enabled multimedia PCs, and cheap email accounts in the mid-1990s (Petrie 1999, Shortis 2001, Crystal 2002). This temporal perspective on the patterns of public-sphere metadiscourse shapes understanding of it as systemic semiotic production: a likely social reflex to the rapid and chaotic changes in digitally-mediated communication shown in the chart in Chapter 1. In the words of Carrington's 2005 paper, 'Txting: The end of civilization (again)'.

The revised research design reflects the provenance of this study in a variety of the researcher's education-related roles in the fields of teaching, examining and researching of English language and linguistics, communications studies, and 'new media', and researching the application of ICTs to formal learning (see Appendix IV).⁷⁰ This has included: educational designs for teaching and learning about contemporary and diachronic language variation and change; emerging practices and conventions in digitally-mediated interaction; English spelling and its history; infants' early speech and literacy; and poetry written in English over time. These were realised in web-based, pedagogical designs for learning, usually taking a historical frame of reference. This sustained engagement in an educational domain shapes the methodological design of this 'extended case study' and its iteration of situated practice, systematic review, and re-theorisation.⁷¹

4.2.5 Rationale for the data-set: texts, practices and attitudes

The revised research design in Table 4.1 presents a matrix of data analysis with an accompanying outline of research processes, treatment of data, and opportunities for cross-verification. Respondents' perspectives on the representative status of exemplar textual data (Chapter 5) could be checked by the comments on such matters in interviews (Chapter 8), by the way such material shows up in salience and frequency in corpus linguistics methods (Chapter 6), and by the way it features in statistical accounts of attestation in the quantitative strand of the questionnaire surveys (Chapters 6 and 7).

Data Type		Research Process		Verification	Data description
I	SMS orthographic choice in context: situated examples of SMS and related practices.	Examples of SMS communicative acts set out in facsimile form with contextual information about participants' demographic profiles along with situated geosocial, temporal and co-textual conditions, following methodologies adapted from Kress 2000, 2003, Scollon and Scollon 2003, Jewitt 2009.		Texts verified by pedagogical, research and assessment roles. Many generated by interviewee respondents or their peers; others from known school and sites in RealTxt corpus.	Chapter 5 Texts: Selected from 18 samples representing orthographic choices in SMS and related digitally-mediated vernaculars. Facsimile layout enables analysis of 'contextualization cues' in graphical and paralinguistic forms.
II	SMS orthographic choice in textual traces: SMS text messages in machine-readable form.	Corpus evidence correlated with sites of collection, and the writer-respondent demographics. Data-set collected by four main surveys: pilot in City Comprehensive school and Rural Comprehensive (00) college sample in SBC, SCS, SLC (24) main online opportunity-sampling (30); follow-up 2008-2009 survey. Interviewees also completed questionnaires. Collected samples of 3-5 messages following Thurlow (2003).		Processing of corpus for systematic comparison with Tagg's CorTxt Word-Group tables and frequency lists (2009: 356, 2012). See Appendix VI. Intra-corpus comparison.	Chapter 6 Texts: 26,000 word selection from 36,000 word corpus of data-set drawn from over 1,000 respondents in situated interaction; over 2,500 words data-set elicited from over 200 respondents in texts elicited in response to a defined hypothetical situation (Hypo corpus).
III	SMS orthographic choice in practices: self-reported attitudes and practices en masse.	Respondent demographic profiles and reported dispositional preferences relating to standard English spelling and orthographic practice in SMS. i. Elicited evaluations of exemplar SMS text message language as a base point for locating choice. ii. Elicited reports of experience using the 40 word variables in the SEEN/USE method. iii. Elicited self-reported open text commentaries on attitudes and practices around emoticons. iv. Elicited self-reported open text commentaries about attitudes to SMS orthographic practice over time and influences from use of other digital media.		Verification of other data outputs as reported en masse in the questionnaire, especially SEEN/USE indices.	Chapter 7: Attitudes and Practices Quantifiable data linked to demographics based on answers to 18 multiple choice questions by >800 respondents; qualitative data consisting of >50,000 words of open text observation in response to questions and prompts. Coded by qualitative research methods.
IV	SMS orthographic choice over duration: self-reported narratives of motivations for choice and change in time.	Elicited responses commenting on examples of practice as seen in strands above; the questionnaire schedule and respondents' self-reported narratives of structure and 'mobile semiotic resources'. Idiolectal change in autobiography constituted of family and school experiences of standard spelling, emergent history of social and orthographic practices around digital media including dispositional preferences. Probing for reports of influence and change in relation to biographical trajectory of role shift and changes in ideology/aspirations. Ethnographic research method adapted from Androutsopoulos 2007, Blommaert 2008, Barton & Hamilton 1998, Barton & Lee 2011 and related ethnographic approaches, and previous research on spelling autobiographies (Shortis & Sutch 2001).		Verification of the reliability of other data outputs including their representative and emic status as perceived and reported by interviewee.	Chapter 8: Attitudes and Practices Qualitative data consisting of interviews with 12 principal respondents recorded and transcribed with 8 of these observed closely over time; passing reference to wider circle of interviews. Qualitative data consisting of over 100,000 words of transcription along with field-notes based on interviews and conversations in response to questions and prompts. Coded by qualitative research methods (Chapter 7b).

Table 4.1: Data-set type, description, research process and verification featuring in the revised design

4.3.1 Research instruments outlined

The revised methodology was shaped and administered by the online questionnaire built using the *SurveyBuilder* application (Hall & Shortis 2007).⁷² This enabled scrutiny of the data to shift between larger patterns of results and individual records, not then afforded by equivalent software applications such as SPSS⁷³ but since made available by applications like *Survey Monkey*.⁷⁴ The questionnaire design was based on extensive paper-based survey piloting prior to 2007 (N=>450), and was developed with advice taken from those earlier respondents. This included attending to audience preference for a simplified three-point measurement of the ‘directionality and intensity of individuals’ reported attitudes’ in place of the established Likert five-point scale for the sake of manageability.⁷⁵ The commentary below explains this instrument of data collection and its opportunities for verification. Appendix IV presents a detailed rationale for the questionnaire schedule in the form of a table illustrated by an example of a completed questionnaire.

4.3.2 Data instrument: determining attestation by the ‘Seen/Use’ method

The questionnaire schedule includes a method for gauging questionnaire respondents’ reported recognition and use of linguistic variables, here variant spellings and emoji. This method was adapted from an earlier study of Bristolian dialect by teachers working with 16-19 college students. This contrasted the recognition and use of features of Bristolian accent, dialect lexis and dialect grammar (see Shortis 2006, Shortis 2011b, Blake & Shortis with Powell 2011). In the Bristolian questionnaire surveys (N = 978), respondents reported which variants they had heard in local spoken interaction and which they reported using themselves. A comparatively high level of reported encounters and reported use suggested a variant in common unmarked circulation in the Bristol area: for example, the rhotic ‘r’. Low indices for both reported encounters and reported use suggested a variant falling into obsolescence, or becoming restricted to sublocalised and/or age-graded circulation: for example, the dialect formulation ‘casn’t’ for the common standard English contraction ‘can’t’ tended to be reported mainly by older speakers in dense social networks such as the locality around the old tobacco factories.⁷⁶ A comparatively high level of reported encounters along with low indices for reported use was interpreted as indicating that a variant was undergoing some level of visible stigmatisation: for example, respondents appeared to avoid the social liability incurred by use of the salient localised accent feature known as the Bristol ‘l’ (see Wells 1982).

This attestation method was adapted for this study’s questionnaire surveys following observation in field-notes of localised idiolectal and microlectal profiles of spelling choice. This was found to operate in conjunction with systemic differences in the citations of SMS abbreviated forms in data-sets drawn from actual situated interaction and the contrastive exemplification of SMS orthographic choice which featured in the public sphere, in news reporting and in popular reference such as that represented by Aitchison (2007) or Crystal

(2004, 2008). Respondents were asked to identify their reported experience and reported use of forty variant spellings, sourced mainly from corpus evidence. The randomly sequenced list also included sixteen other variants, copied from exemplification in public mediated-representations, but not observed as frequent or salient by any other data-collection method.⁷⁷ This design enabled some comparison of the possible contrast identified in in research question 1.

Following the method applied in my earlier study of Bristolian dialect, the questions elicited the level of self-reported encounters with particular variants - ticked as ‘Seen’ - and the self-reported use of these same variants in the respondents’ own messaging - ticked as ‘Use’. The survey is predicated on the linked propositions that high indices for both indicate a relative frequency of attestation, and by implication, possible indication of emergent comparatively unmarked choice. The scheme also elicited forms which field-notes suggested were undergoing possible stigmatisation. These attracted indices for a high level of self-reported recognition, and significantly lower figures for self-reported use in active repertoires. Typically such variants took the form of initialisms, acronyms and alphanumeric and/or symbol rebuses such as elaborated emoji. These more esoteric forms were commonly exemplified in popular commentaries (see Appendix V, Chapter 6) - or ‘public sphere metadiscourses’ - while appearing to be infrequent in corpus evidence.

High indices for ‘ Seen ’ and High indices for both ‘ Use ’	Variant spelling is in frequent and comparatively unmarked circulation	Common letter and number homophone spellings, as found in corpus
Low indices for ‘ Seen ’ and low indices for ‘ Use ’	Variant spelling is in comparatively infrequent and /or localised circulation	Elaborated emoticons, initialisms and acronyms sourced in ‘public sphere’ news media coverage
High indices for ‘ Seen ’ and low indices for ‘ Use ’	Variant spelling is experienced frequently but its lower indices for use suggest a perceived stigma in using it.	Iconic SMS respellings such as ‘Cya18r’ and more generally the use of <8> as a ‘rhymogram’.

Figure 4.3 Seen/Use attestation method for evaluating indices for the ‘forty variables’ data-set

So the the ‘forty variables’ data-set table reported in Chapter 6 is constituted by a mixture of variant spellings sourced from, and frequent in the SMS corpus or by related fieldwork along with 14 variant spellings extrapolated from ‘public sphere’ popular commentary, as outlined below (see section 6.3.2 and tables 6.9a and 6.9b).

Source of variant pair	Example of 40 pairings as originally randomly sequenced in questionnaire: see Appendix	Comment and coding
Respellings attested in 2000-2006 corpus or fieldnotes	<p><U> for <you> ; <2> for <to>; <r> for <are>; <LOL> for (laugh out loud); <4> for <for>; <wat>for <wat>; <goin> for <going>; <wot> for <wot>; <txt> for <text> ; <.)> for smiley [rebus] ; <wanna> for wanna>; <ill> for <I'll>; <2nite> for <tonight> ; <soz> for <sorry>; <tomoz> for <tomorrow>; <2moz> for <tomorrow>; <tonight> for <tonight>; <gr8> for <great>; <2> for <too>; <skool> for <school>; <bro> for <brother>; <tomo> for <tomorrow>; <m8s> for <mates>; <msg> for msg> <@> for screaming[rebus]; <2c> for <to see></p>	<p>Spellings recast in descending order of frequency of attestation showing limited overlap with public sphere media representations and popular accounts.</p> <p>Code: CORPUS</p>
Cited in media accounts: (Hurley 2003, Cramb 2003).	<p><skool> for <school>; <bro> for <brother>; <@> for screaming[rebus]; <2c> for <to see>; <AAR8> for <at any rate>; <CWOT> for <complete waste of time>; <hols> for <holidays>; <ICBW> for <It could be worse>; <o> for <nothing>; <ps> for parents>; <cyal8er> for <for see you later>; <TPTB> for the powers that be>; <VVV> for <very very very>.</p>	<p>Note the more frequent use of initialisms and acronymy in the SMS exemplifications which feature in public sphere media representations and popular accounts.</p> <p>Cramb 2003: SSSMS</p>
Metro (Stevenson 2000)	<p><BTDT> for <been there done that>; <BAU> for <business as usual>; <2day> for <today>; <TIC> for <tongue in cheek>;</p>	Stevenson 2000: METRO
Mander SMS glossary 2001	9/40 citations	Mander 2001: M
<i>Letts Teacher Diary</i> glossary 2006	11/40 citations	Diary 2006: D
Listed in Crystal's two glossaries (2004, 2008)	<p>14/40 citations in C4 13/40 citations in C8</p>	<p>Crystal 2004: C4; Crystal 2008: C8</p>

Figure 4.4 Mixed provenance of data-set drawn from in selection of 40 variant forms

4.4.1 Methodological issues with typologies of spelling and respelling

I adapted and synthesised typologies for classifying SMS respellings from those developed in more recent studies in sociolinguistic study of CMCs, and related sociocultural approaches to spelling (Werry 1996, Androutsopoulos 2000, Kress 2000, Thurlow 2003, Sebba 2007, Anis 2007, Tagg 2009, 2012). The associated range of overlapping terms and concepts for classifying spellings is also the consequence of the study of spelling being comparatively underdeveloped in linguistics and related fields (Crystal & Davey 1969, Davies 1987, Sebba 2007, Jaffe & Walton 2000, Jaffe 2012). There was a common difficulty in applying older classificatory descriptions of respelling, which tended to foreground formal linguistic features by comparison with the benchmark afforded by standardised forms. Terms such as ‘apocope’, ‘vowel elision’, ‘appellation’, and related descriptions without terminology, focused on the deviation or elaboration from the standard form of spelling. Such a focus did not afford analytical purchase on the localised motivation of choice in interest and design, as it might have been perceived by interlocutors. Formal correspondences tended to be foregrounded over the construal of meaning as understood in situated interaction. There are epistemological limitations in a mode of comparison which represents ‘non-standard forms’ by comparison with standardised forms when these are presented as ahistorical artefacts, rather than as the well-resourced, prestige orthographic register arrived at by social contestation over time (Milroy 2001:530,535).

Early fieldwork showed that respelling in SMS appeared to be patterned, with trended correlations. Although preference appeared to be variegated across participants, the most frequent and salient surface features of textual patterns appeared to be comparatively stable and conventionalised across forms of digitally-mediated interaction and across time (see Chapter 5). Additionally, SMS respelling appeared to be similar in its typifying spelling designs to orthographic choices identified in earlier forms of digitally-mediated interaction, although less marked in the degree of vernacular and subcultural orientation. In his analysis of stylistic variation in 1990s *Internet Relay Chat*, Werry identified a similar manifestation of abbreviated and elaborated respelling, which he organised under four superordinate contextual pressures: ‘addressivity’; text entry reduction; simulation of the spoken mode in graphical form; and ‘stage directions’ by which the visual and auditory setting of the imaginary conversation was figured in verbal description and sound effects. Participants were described interacting in an imaginary social domain of conversational proxemics, mediated by the meagre semiotic representation afforded by the plain text, scrolling, monotone, courier font possible at the time. There were further technologically-determined constraints of the packet size of messages, the clumsy, semi-synchronous manner by which these turns were sequenced, and the additional distraction of visible computer code protocols realised in ASCII form, showing participants joining and leaving the chatroom, or making contributions (Chapter 5). Furthermore, interlocutors’ identities were manifest only as ‘nicks’ or monikers localised to the chatroom domain and with no extrinsic verification (see Behar-Israeli 1995). There was an additional pressure to type at speed in order to make a contribution before the thread being contributed to was subsumed by others.

A typology of SMS text messaging and related respelling

Three main motivations:

1. features for economy and text entry reduction;
2. features for giving the respelling a simulation of spoken language;
3. features which involve a shift to multimodal visual and graphical effects and iconicity in which the linguistic sign is pushed into the periphery of meaning making.

In detail each of these groupings consists of a number of orthographic devices.

Features for economy and text entry reduction comprise such devices as:

- Omission of vowels (<gd> for <good>);
- Letter and number homophones (<r> for <are>, <2> for <to>);
- Initialisms and acronyms for key bindings and phrases (<G2G> for <got to go>);
- Clippings in which words are shortened by losing word ending (<congrats> for <congratulations>);
- Consonant reduction for medial double consonants (<imedtly> for <immediately>);
- Respellings by analogy with other words with shallow orthography (<thru> for <through>, <fone> for <phone>).

Features for giving the respelling a simulation of spoken language include:

- Eye Dialect (<tuff> for <tough>);
- Accent simulation (<goin> for <going>, <wiv> for <with>);
- Semiotic features such as capitals to indicate pitch, volume, other prosodic detail (<AUFAUFAUF> for dog barking loudly);
- Stage directions in parentheses to indicate nuance. (e.g. 'Monsieur (said in a French accent)')
- 'Reduplication', or repeated letters, for prosodic emphasis (<Soooooooo>)

Features which incorporate graphical and kinaesthetic devices such as:

- Emoticons, sometimes from emoticon banks;
- Use of colour, movement, pictorial imagery;
- Alphabetical rebuses such as (<@}-'---> for a rose);
- Other special effects, such as the use of text written in symbols/webdings

Figure 4.5 Earlier typology for orthographic choice in SMS adapted from Werry (1996)

Werry's typology of linguistic and interactional features is centred on orthographic tactics for reducing text entry demands in response to the requirement to type at speed, in conjunction with various kinds of verbal, semiotic and informational elaboration, which enhance the sense of the interlocutor's vividness of screen presence.⁷⁸ Discoursal and orthographic elaboration offers a resource for a process of 'semiotic resupply' by which interlocutors co-construct the simulation of the spoken mode of their imagined geosocial location, align with and co-construe group identity, and offer gifts to the group, consisting of humorously framed paralinguistic information. The social conditions in which SMS is conducted are notably different in dyadic intimate address but if ergonomic awkwardness of phone-pad entry is substituted for typing at speed, there are grounds for adapting this model; it connects orthographic choice with the social, material and technological conditions which motivate it. Versions of the scheme on the previous page structured the earlier reporting of this study; it was also adapted by Thurlow in his prescient and influential analysis of a sample of UK undergraduates' SMS texting samples (2003).

4.4.2 Reworking the typology as laminations of multiple affordances

Interlocutors make SMS orthographic choice under conditions of relatively fluid external expectation – Sebba's more 'permissive regime' – while being constrained by a range of social and environmental motivations. The typology below reflects this patterned heterogeneity by offering a classificatory framework for spelling choice by dimensions of affordance and polysemic meaning.

So <U> for <you> may be motivated in part by the deep orthographic etymological challenge of a standardised spelling based on past patterns of pronunciation (see *OED* entry, figure 2.12), which may appear elaborate and illogical in its lack of shallow orthographic correspondence; YOU in any realisation is also the most frequently occurring word in SMS, reflecting its dyadic address (Tagg 2007, 2009:360, 2012:53), so additionally motivating the value of a more economic text-entry method; in addition, the spelling <u> significantly reduces text entry demands on a 12-button phone-pad, reducing <999_666_88> to <88> (Chapter 2b above); in addition, <u> is an easily understood 'morphogram', which can be 'sounded out', following the principles of 'constructed homophony' and combined with other morphemes or orthographic particles (Ryan 2011); and the spelling shows some level of semi-conventionalised recognition, by its being culturally attested in records of vernacular and popular culture back to the nineteenth century, and is still in frequent current use in both those domains (e.g. Pound 1923, Alexander 1930, Herriman 1991, Inge 1990). <U> or <u> conveys semantic nuance and metapragmatic imaginings of conceptual orality, and represents the more vivid mode of reading elicited by respelling (Jaffe 2000, Koch & Oesterreicher 1984); in addition, <u> may function as part of an extended orthographic repertoire by which interlocutors with access to standardised variant forms may align themselves in construals of localised social belonging in the social

networks mediated by CMCs (Georgakopoulou 1997, Paolillo 2001); furthermore, <u> has achieved a measure of enregistered iconicity as an SMS spelling, and may function to index a particular social group or stance of digital identity (Chapter 2, McIntosh 2010 in Deumert & Lexander 2013;535). For some, it may have additional functions. Some respondents suggested it restored vocative localised address which had disappeared following the loss of THOU/THEE in standardised English as the second personal singular forms of familiarised address: the ‘tu/vous’ (t/v) distinction.⁷⁹

The <u> for <you> example shows the multiple affordances of respelling, which may not be not fully amenable to the kind of flat classifications used in earlier phases of this study. The use of a letter name (<U>/<u>) sound learnt with the rest of the alphabet by children as a morphogram which may also operate as a homophonous word is a ‘script shift’ within written English but it is likely to be intelligible. <U> for <You> is not simply or necessarily a ‘lexical homophone spelling’, a ‘morphogram’ or a simple transcription into a variational equivalent. It has multiple motivations, and may construe multiple meanings and connotative nuances.⁸⁰

Figure 4.6 identifies factors which motivate respelling by superordinate functions of text entry reduction, grapheme substitution, cultural allusion and ‘paralinguistic restitution’. It includes contextual factors of text entry difficulty for the particular keyed sequence of numbers (ergonomic pressures); opportunities for shallower orthographic correspondences, principles of constructed homophony (etymological challenges), and likely frequency of the word based on Tagg’s word frequency for SMS (frequency expectation). This revised typology shapes each respelling as offering a particular configuration of affordances and constraints localised to its dimensions on this profile. It attempts to count the application of the categories to over 900 respellings in the corpus constituted by the variant spellings of the 150 Word-Group list explained in Chapter 6.⁸¹ This was less useful than hoped, because it did not reflect the unique configurations of potential likely affordance offered by any respelling. The affordances and constraints are as perceived by interlocutors, without any reference to any extrinsic criteria, beyond the fact of the choice not being the standardised, codified form. By this analysis, feature spotting of semiotic forms of respelling offers a way into analysis but not a substitute for it.

This leads to a problematic issue in the methodology. A number of the instruments treat respellings as variant forms, following methods applied to variant spoken realisations in variationist sociolinguistic approaches to features of accent. Tagg used a similar conceptualisation to arrive at her ‘Word-Groups’, which enabled classifications and counts of spellings and respellings (see Chapter 6). Similarly, in Chapter 5 this approach of variant synonyms is applied to achieve a provisional approximation of the level of deviation from standardised forms in a particular text, as indexed by approximate counts of variational features. Other qualitative data collection instruments afford strong evidence that these variant forms were not perceived by interlocutors as synonyms because each variant construed distinctive

meanings. I report and analyse such discussion (Chapters 7 and 8), focusing on the epitomising examples of what was inferred by <soz> and <wot> /<wat>, treated notionally as synonyms for <sorry> and <what> respectively (Chapter 5 and 6). The unsatisfactory nature of typologies, which nonetheless afford provisional insight, illustrates Burawoy's claim for the extended case study being focused on the 'imaginative and parsimonious reconstruction of theory to accommodate anomalies' (1998;5).

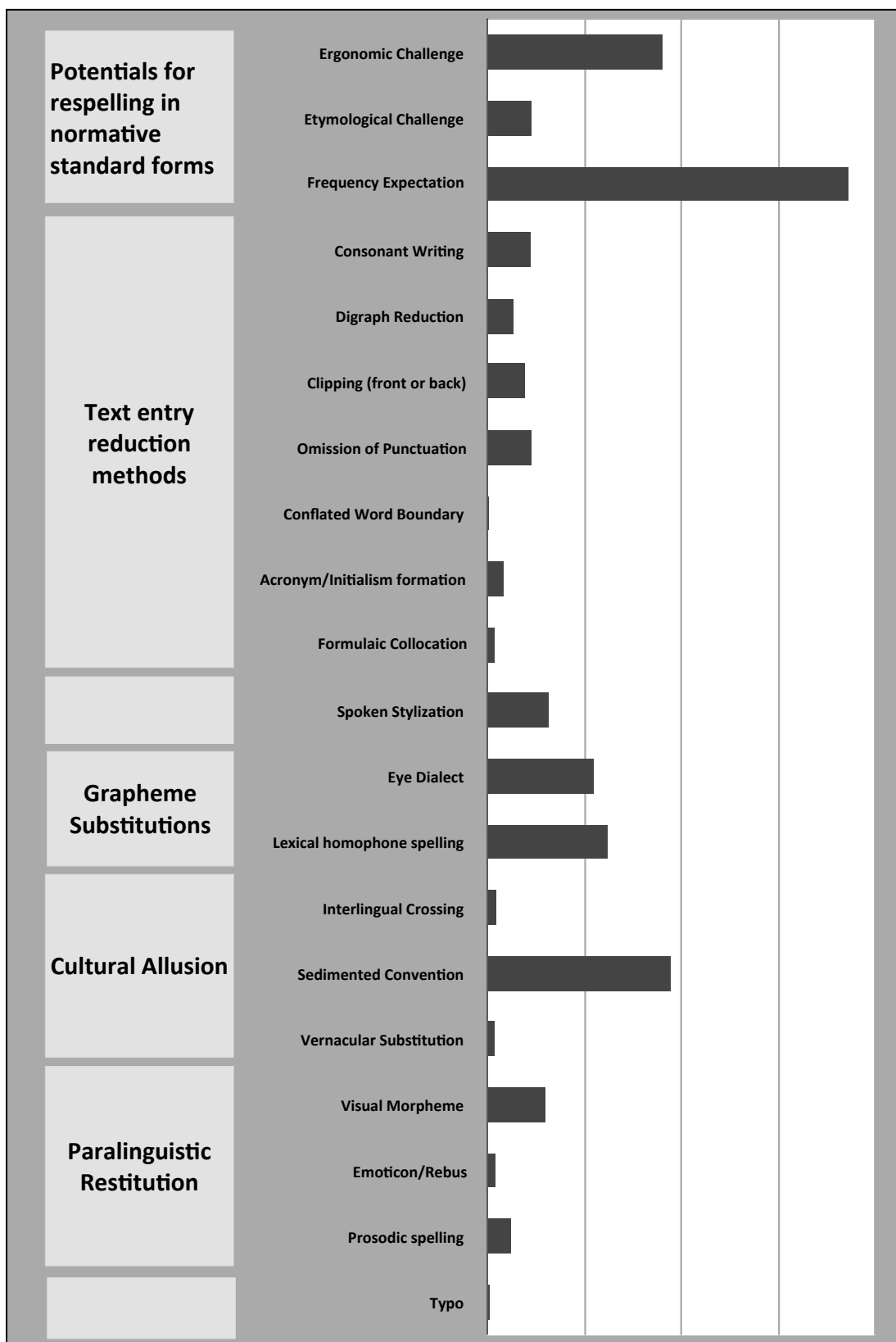


Figure 4.6 Multi-motivated, multi-accentual dimensions of SMS respelling, with approximation of weighting⁸²

4.5.1 Influence by socio-economic access to prestige registers and repertoires

Some choices to respell are influenced by environmental measures of costs, focal attention and accomplished capacity in deploying the potential technological affordances of apparatus. Such material factors were frequently reported by respondents and feature as explanations in everyday anecdotal awareness (Chapters 7 and 8). Environmental and material factors can also provide proxy rationales for behaviours with underlying motivations in folk-linguistic perceptions of normative choices indexing greater social accomplishment (Tagg 2007b, 2012). These may in part be shaped by differential and inequitable social opportunity, as discussed later in this chapter and in Chapter 9. Such pressures may materialise in different configurations of interiorised self-surveillance: subjective intrapersonal evaluation, shaped by the ideology of mass schooling but also open to other pressures of enculturation, by access and experience, leading to differential understandings of ideology in common sense assumptions. Drawing on Robertson's adaptation of Bernstein's recontextualising fields, I am suggesting these embodied, contested social processes shape literate identity and its orthographic subset. The diagrams below connect Robertson's 2004 model of 'force fields' to possible correlations of orientation to autonomous or ideological models of literacy, socio-economic resourcing and cultural access, which will be explored in the design and application of the empirical analysis which follows.

The argument presented in the previous chapter and its associated visual representation of theoretical concepts contribute to a research method which seeks to account for issues of structure and agency in SMS orthographic choice. Figure 4.7 posits this study's adaptation of Robertson's model of recontextualisation as correlated with aspiration and exposure to literate accomplishment, as filtered by socio-economic resourcing. The disposition to orthographic choice is related to respondents' identification with the domains of discourse that underpin more localised choice in the course of their ongoing biographical trajectories. This is presented as being shaped by social and economic access to the domains in which the recontextualising fields operate. The model associates fields of discretionary orthographic licence with fields of subjective social experience and orientation of stance to standard forms. This scheme has something to say about the transitional literacy orientations of the younger adolescents whose self-reported accounts feature in this study: adolescent respondents showed a greater orientation to fields C and D. As respondents matured, there was an increased orientation and exposure to field B, as I shall explain further in Chapters 7 and 8.

A: Official Recontextualising Field (ORF) Orientation and exposure to policy agendas of international economic competitiveness. For example, PISA testing and standard language national testing: an elite discourse.	B: Pedagogical Recontextualising Field (PRF) Orientation and exposure to schooled literacy practices based on an autonomous hyperstandardised literacy model: middle class aspirational discourse.
Literacy Practices in Policy and Management Imperatives	Schooled Literacy Practices
C: Popular and Pre-emptive Recontextualising Field (PPRF) Orientation and exposure to representations of orthographic choice in popular culture and commercially oriented practices such as marketing and advertising: discourse of mass consumption and global capital interests.	D: Vernacular Recontextualising Field (VRF) Orientation and exposure to vernacular literacies in home and streetlife: a non-elite, non-aspirational discourse of localised address.
Literacy Practices of Consumer Culture	Home and Community Literacy Practices

Figure 4.7 Recontextualisation correlated with socio-economic access to literate accomplishment

4.6.1 The conceptual framework for data classification and analysis

Chapter 3 presented a conceptualisation of the object of study as manifest in texts, practices and metadiscursive commentary, by an argument predicated on orthographic choice motivated by a configuration of social and material pressures acting on agentive decision. That understanding of choice as a resource and fractal component in semiotic design informs Figure 4.8, which separates:

- *social pressures* accruing to the performance of literate identity enacted in relation to audience and related self-construct influences;

- *environmental pressures* of economic cost and technoliterate materiality (including awkward, unfamiliar text entry and the degree to which the respondent can access the potential affordances of the technology).

This distinction between identity and environment informs the coding schema in much of the empirical analysis. It foregrounds orthographic choice as a matter of social action, although shaped by environmentally-sourced pressures. This prioritisation contrasts with anecdotal and folk-linguistic commentaries which tended to report environmental pressures of text entry awkwardness, efficiency and cost of messages over considerations of ideology and identity, as echoed by some questionnaire answers and interview responses.

Adapting these theoretical considerations to the framework of analysis, the questionnaire surveys and interviews are gauged to elicit self-description of orientation to autonomous and ideological positions in the orthographic repertoires they recognise as valid, and in the selection of resources. The choice of general ‘focusing’ or orientation to autonomous normative choice or contingent ideological diversity is criterial: an orientation to the autonomous repertoire will typically generate strong social evaluations of differences from that repertoire on a deficit model. Initial fieldwork showed some respondents attached to that autonomous model. Such dispositions have their equivalent public sphere metadiscourses in the ‘zero-tolerance’ pronouncements about text messaging spelling in news journalism and pundit commentary, as illustrated in Appendix V.⁸³ It can also be found in questionnaire answers, interviews and observations recorded in field-notes.⁸⁴

4.6.2 Overarching motivational pressures on orthographic choice

Contextual pressures acting on orthographic choice			
Pressures motivated by identity	A: Literacy identity & ‘orthographic identity’ Extent to which the orthographic attitudes and practices invest in spelling ‘stakes’ of the person texting (the orientation to hyperstandardisation). Data collection instruments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•<i>Elicited evaluation of other people’s orthographic choices in SMS (e.g. SSSMS and 40 variables)</i>•<i>Evaluation of their reported practices.</i>•<i>Interview schedule: responses to open questions</i>•<i>Narratives of biographical trajectory</i>•<i>Samples of respondent’s textual practice</i>•<i>Aggregated corpus evidence</i>	B: Audience & performativity Perceived orthographic identity of the audience: expectations accruing to genre, purpose and context (and their penalty). Data collection instruments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•<i>Questionnaire survey: responses to open and closed questions</i>•<i>Interview schedule: responses to open questions</i>•<i>Narratives of biographical trajectory</i>•<i>Samples of respondent’s textual practice</i>•<i>Aggregated corpus evidence</i>	
	C: Techno-social environment Effects of nature of the apparatus including the contract & the user familiarity with SMS functions: ‘multi-tap’ or T9 predictive text, QWERTY, phone pad /conventional pad interface, metering and tariffs, packet size and message space. Data collection instruments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•<i>Questionnaire survey: responses to open and closed questions</i>•<i>Interview schedule: responses to open questions</i>•<i>Narratives of biographical trajectory</i>•<i>Cross-referenced coding of textual variables</i>	D: Geo-social environment Time, location, cost, focus - monofocal, dedicated attention or poly-focal ‘nagara’ - as these impact on the control of orthographic choice in production, Issues of time available, movement, surveillance and physical situation. Data collection instruments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•<i>Questionnaire survey: responses to open and closed questions</i>•<i>Interview schedule: responses to open questions</i>•<i>Narratives of biographical trajectory</i>•<i>Cross-referenced coding of textual variables</i>	

Figure 4.8 Contextual pressures acting on orthographic choice, cross-referred to data-collection instruments

4.6.3 Visual dimensions: graphical representation as method

This thesis makes heavy use of a variety of visual representations, and this forms a subsidiary aspect of the methodological approach. By using so much illustrative material, I am following a common practice in sociocultural and social semiotic approaches to orthographic variation. Key papers and monographs in the field have often included facsimiles of examples of vernacular practices, or their commercial recontextualisation in graffiti, home-produced notices, or marketing material.⁸⁵ Such visual material has the value of exemplifying the materiality of texts and practices difficult to cite in academic sources given the newness of the field and the patchy documentation of some domains. It also records aspects of a transient technology so these can be better understood once SMS becomes obsolete: the images representing screens and people text messaging will have an additional value of clarification at that still future point. So, visual approaches are means of affording stronger illustrative empirical evidence, including of past under-documented vernacular practice.

There is the more pressing theoretical implication that orthographic choices form part of the graphical resources by which writing is manifest. By the multi-modal theorisation attended to in this study, the linguistic sign is manifest in the graphical and geosocial dimensions of its situated embodiment (Scollon & Scollon, Jewitt 2009, Kress 1997, 2010). There is the additional dimension of the culture of production and reception as this acts on orthographic choice and the meanings construed. Text entry ergonomics, screen size, and bodily proxemics are attended to in so far these serve the theorisation of SMS orthographic choice as conceptual spokenness by graphical means. Any one of these subsidiary focuses might have formed an object of enquiry in its own right

Visual representation has also proved to be a core methodological research practice in the teasing out and development of abstraction and theorisation of thinking derived from secondary sources. Such approaches feature in theoretical works consulted, including Halliday (1979) and Bernstein (1996). The personal application of this research practice grew from earlier involvement in Robertson's 2004 paper and her graphical representations of 'force fields' of pedagogical recontextualisation. These were subsequently developed and adapted throughout the period of study. Visual designs helped develop the re-appropriation and application of Bernstein's theoretical models and those of others. They offered a means of articulating abstract socio-economic and sociocultural influences underneath the immanent evidence of screens and surfaces.

Finally, there is the collaborative work with a graphical designer and with an artist in approaches devising how the ideas in this study might be projected graphically and aesthetically to gain recognition beyond a scholarly audience, given the extent of the researcher's professional work in web-based pedagogical designs. In 2011, I recontextualised aspects of this study's emergent findings in two multimedia treatments co-written for the *All Talk* website and

its downloadable educational designs.⁸⁶ Here the writing team worked with John Smith, a graphical designer, along with design and film production teams developing images and other media now cited in this thesis's appendices.⁸⁷ In 2012, for a period of four months, I collaborated with an artist and musician, Yoshino Shigihara, exploring aesthetic treatments of the educational and theoretical arguments developed in this study. As a bi-lingual artist, who grew up in Japan, Yoshino was enculturated in a distinctly different visual culture, with an occupational formation in graphics and popular culture, rather than social semiotics. Yoshino brought her own productive interpretation to the illustration of argument. That contribution helps this work achieve a potentially different kind of recognition in educational contexts, and possibly beyond. In particular her graphical style indexes the 'Shi Jinrui' aesthetic which Carrington argues is found across globalised youth culture practices (2004).

4.6.4 Summarising methodology and method in an 'extended case'

With reference to Burawoy's concept of the 'extended case', I have outlined the methodological problems encountered in the corpus-based methodology used in the pilot phase of the study, explaining the mixed-methods subsequently developed, and showing how these combined to address the research questions. I have explained how the different data outputs afford opportunities for cross-checking patterns across the data collection strands and the use of visual representation which characterises the thesis. More detailed treatment of the data-set, including the methods used to observe ethical guidelines and to determine reliability and verification, are set out in Appendix IV.

The methodology of this study is complex and shows a level of ambition and innovation, which has not come without problems. The approach may offer greater potential application to teams better resourced to cope with its complexity than single researchers engaged in doctoral studies. Those wishing to adapt the methods used in this study for their own fieldwork, or to test the findings presented in this thesis, are referred to the appendices, including links to the online survey in its current iteration.

62 See Spilioti 2006, Shortis 2007, Tagg 2009 and Crystal 2008.

63 See Crystal 2002, 2004, 2008, Chapters 5-8 here, including Appendix IV,V, and VI.

64 For example, see Katz & Aakhus 2002, Castells et al 2004, 2007, Ito, Makabe, Matsuda, 2005.

65 Figure 4.2:UK data from THEMUDA;US data sourced from CTIA.org: total messages sent, divided by the populations of UK/US, divided by percentages for penetration of mobile phones, as taken from ITU World Telecom.

66 Field-notes: Katie A; Joseph, Sarah 2002, See Neville 2002 and Grinter & Eldridge 2001 for other reports of the level of extemporised early practice. See Petrie 1999 for a related discussion of different sociolectal appropriation of email affordances.

67 Field-notes; emails: Cornwall 2002; interviews Jo 2009; Gemma 2009.

68 For example, interviews: Pete and Vic (2003). See Chapter 5,8, Appendix VIII.

69 The opportunities of this data-set for evidence relevant to the research questions and for cross-verification are explained further in the detailed tables presented in Appendix IV.

70 See ESRC TLRP Interactive Education Project 2001-2003 at interactiveeducation.ac.uk.

71 See Burawoy 1998 for discussion.

72 See professional bibliography in appendices.

73 SPSS was used in the analysis of questionnaire evidence in Interactive Education.

74 See SurveyMonkey.com. SurveyBuilder and SurveyMonkey enable direct entry of questionnaire responses by respondents rather than the re-keying of data separately collected. In addition, qualitative data gathered in this way could be outputted and coded, using technology-enhanced methods adapted from Hahn (2008) which explains how standard MS Office applications can offer the affordances associated with more specialised qualitative data analysis tools, such as NVivo.

75 In fieldwork visits undertaken for this study, and in other questionnaires administered on the Interactive Education project, I observed adolescent respondents complaining about the excessive demands they believed were being placed on them by the specificity of five point and seven point scales in questions. I made a judgment call to simplify the Likert scale, partly to secure a better response rate, especially in the web survey, although in retrospect this may have been a flawed decision.

76 See Shortis 2006, Shortis, Blake, Lipponen, Langer 2011 in professional bibliography.

77 These details are reported in table in Appendix IV.

78 See alternative typology in Androutsopoulos 2000:521 and more detailed formally-focused discussion of SMS respelling in Tagg 2012:55-62. Earlier version of Werry-adaptation cited in Shortis 2001 book website (Data Disk appendix).

79 THOU/THEE/ THY were lost from standardised forms of English in the late sixteenth century, as analysed by Nevalainen (2006). They continue to be used in some regional dialects.

80 See related argument of interlocutors' flexible 'neography' in Anis 2007.

81 See Appendix IV and VI for detail.

82 See table IV,v,i on page 424 for extract from indices.

83 For example, Humphrys 2006, 2007, Truss 2003, Heffer 2011.

84 Field-notes: Sadie's dictum that only predictive text in conjunction with standard forms is a credible accomplished choice (field-notes: 2002).

85 See such examples in studies featuring orthographic choice, see Kress 1997, 2000, Jaffe 2000, Scollon & Scollon 2003, Dray 2004, Sebba, various, 2007, Blommaert, various 2008. For the argument about multimodality and the visual see Jewitt, 2009. For an overview of the visual in educational contexts see Jewitt 2008.

86 See bt.com/alltalk and material copied from that source in appendices and data disks.

87 See Howoco.com and Dialogics.com.

5. SMS as orthographic intertext over time, space and setting

Orthographic choice in text messages and related media over duration

**Well I trust god he's guna do wts best
for me cuz he doesn't wna c me being
takin advantage of stressed out and nt
respected nt appreciated nd held
against my own will god luvv me too to
hv pp lyk dt in my life [NAME] u hv just
lost a frend hu has been dere 4 u
ALWAYS nd lyk ova wt!!?? Jus becuz u
dnt lyk wt u hear welcome to life
[NAME]!! U hv jus fucked up a gd
friendship for no reason.**

Figure. 5.1 The choice of respelling: SMS orthographic choice by an eighteen-year-old (2011)

Mundane texts are overlooked; yet they are the texts which are most telling, in many ways, in our everyday and working lives. They form the bedrock of social and economic life. Without an understanding of the mundane text, and without the confident ability to use it for one's purposes in whatever domain, we cannot be fully effective participants in the economic, social and political life of our group

.... A text, any text, is a microcosm of the social world in which it is made. It encapsulates in an irrefutable form a cultural truth about the individuals who produced it

....[W]ithout an understanding of the mundane text, we are cut off from a full appreciation of the aesthetically valued text. Perhaps most significantly from the point of view of curriculum, without that understanding it cannot be brought to bear on the everyday. This last point provides the decisive justification for the inclusion of the serious study of the mundane text in the English curriculum,- together with the equally serious study of the culturally salient and the aesthetically valued text...

Kress 1995;36

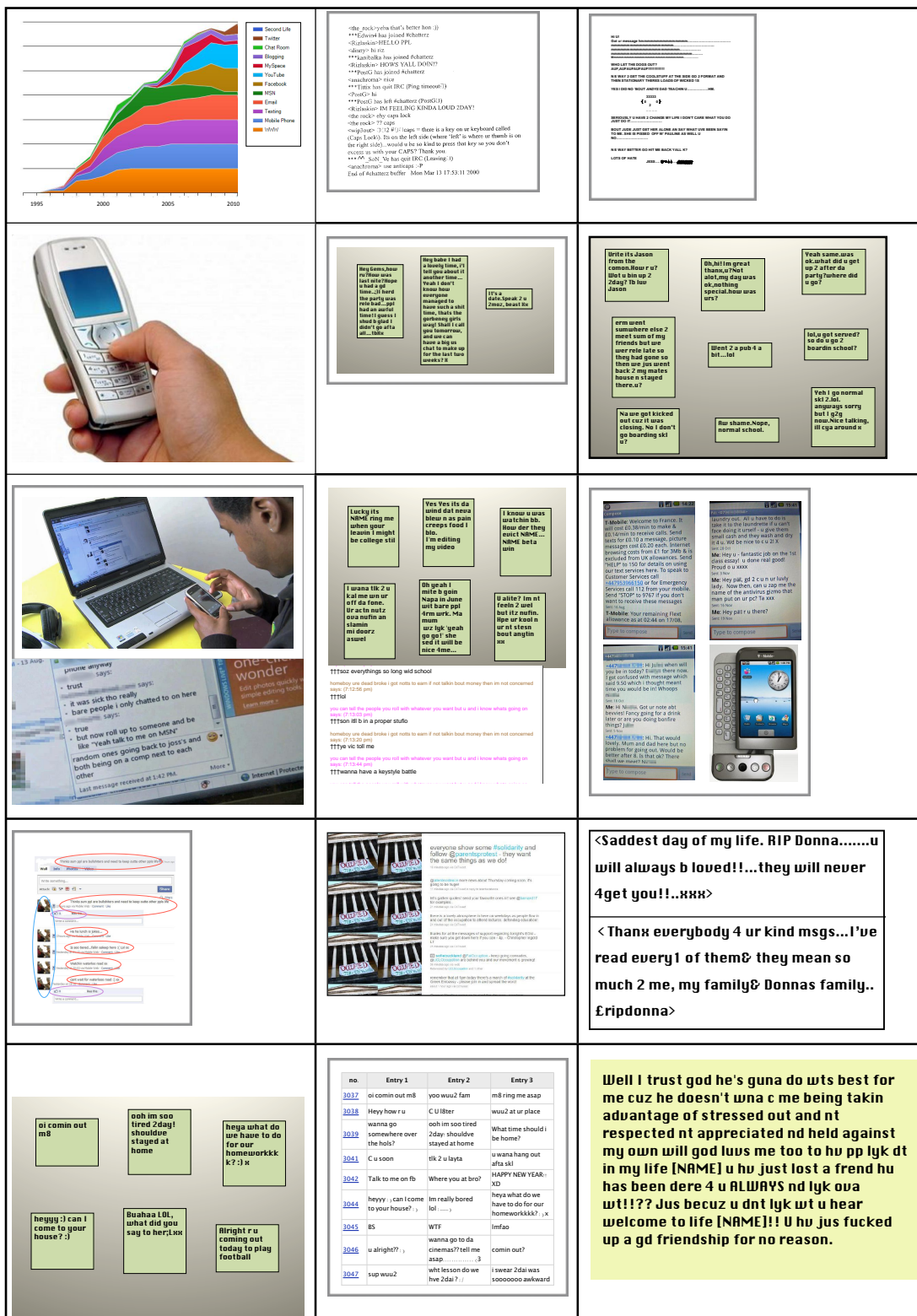


Figure 5.2 Thumbnail images of respondents' encounters with digitally-mediated vernaculars from 2000 to 2012

5.1.1 SMS and orthographic intertextual influences from 2000 to 2012

In this chapter I present analysis of situated orthographic choices, as made in a sequence of excerpts from interactions in SMS, and from related digitally-mediated communication, spanning 2000-2012. This diachronic perspective shows the influence of technological affordances and constraints, as these shaped the options of orthographic choice as perceived by those respondents, and the meaning-potentials of these to mediate and embody their screen presence. I have used an analytical presentational method, which foregrounds orthographic choice, by transcribing the respellings and related graphical choices for each example analysed in data-set ‘tables’, with approximations of degrees of normative choices in ratios and totals, accompanied by relevant contextual information.⁸⁸

Many of the texts are accompanied by visual reconstructions of how they appeared in their original **contexts of production** and **contexts of reception** (Jones 1992). This allows the analysis to switch between the patterns in respelling, and as these featured in their social, material and textual manifestation. The method also makes it possible to see respelling and associated innovative graphical choices alongside the concurrent choice of conventional spelling, punctuation and capitalisation. This foregrounds the representation of the individuated, differential choices, including the shifting choices made by the same interactants within the same texts. It also supports the argument that linguistic and semiotic choice in SMS is patterned in its **centripetal** convergence with the enregisterment of emergent literate conventions, while being unsettled, divergent, and more deeply patterned, in its **centrifugal** instantiation.

I examine the texts in a sequence which begins in 2012, moves back to 2000, and then proceeds chronologically to 2012. This arrangement is calculated to support the claim that there are commonalities in respelling conventions which transcend time and technology, while being shaped by past practice; it allows the reader to situate the influence of spelling choices in previous related literacy practices. I suggest, following Harris (as quoted above in the epigraph to Chapter 2), that these symbolic resources included units of notation, such as alphabetic letters and punctuation symbols, which offered the ‘capacity to fulfil a variety of functions’, and were often appropriated and transformed to serve a modality of conceptual spokenness by graphical means. The aggregation of those appropriated choices, in the spot-sampling of interaction over time, builds a small corpus of orthographic attestation. In the final section, I present synoptic analysis of these aggregated respellings and related semiotic choices in a typology of the salient dimensions of orthographic structure in digitally-mediated textual interaction, relating this to a synthesis of the scholarship in the field. This leads to discussion of the social, linguistic and economic factors which contribute to the shaping of SMS orthographic choice.

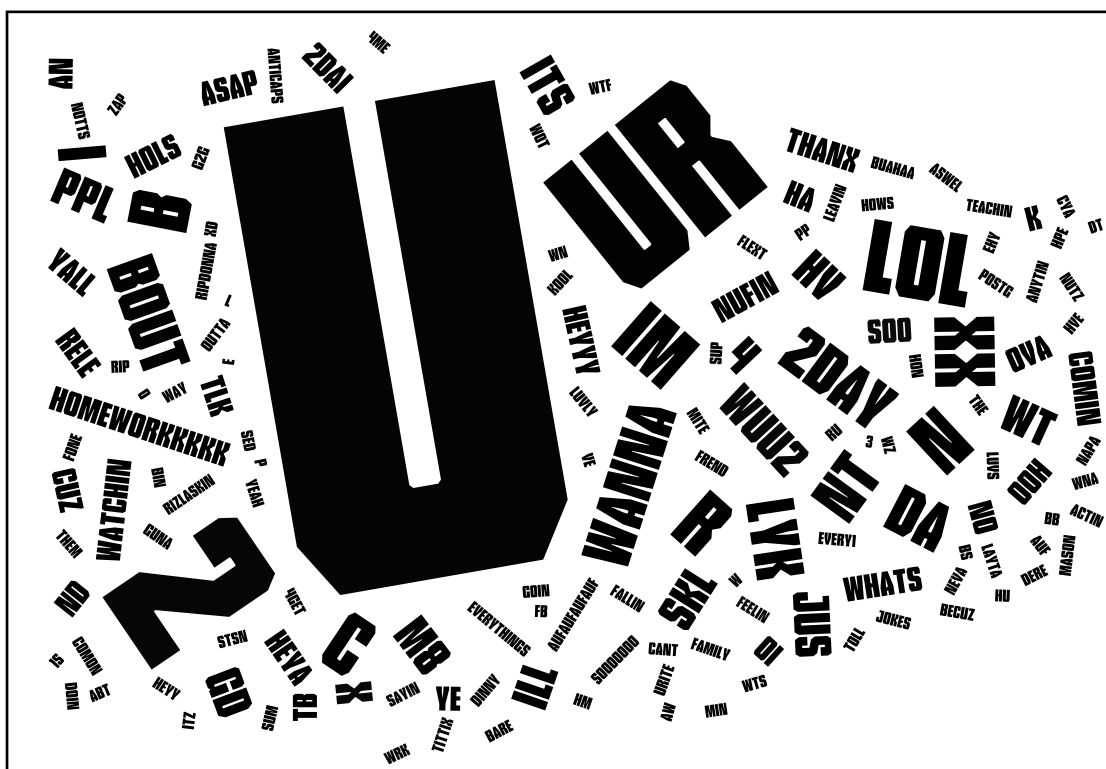


Figure 5.3 Simple, scaled representation of orthographic commonalities found across the Chapter 5 textual data-set

The patterns identified give evidence for the intertextual basis of spelling choice, synchronically across types of digital media, and diachronically in the record of previous technoliterate practice. I argue that this principle of inter-relatedness shows interactants drawing on a pool of semiotic resources associated with vernacular literacy practices in their digital instantiation. The reader is reminded of the additional contextualisation and verification afforded by Figures 1.1 and 1.2, which show the sudden diffusion of SMS in monthly totals of text messages sent in the UK between 1998 and 2009. In addition, there is the localised interview testimony of a mobile phone shop manager in central Bristol, from 1998 to 2011.⁸⁹

To develop the argument from Kress's comments (see epigraph), the texts examined are notably 'mundane': they show participants making quotidian, fractal, micro-choices of selection from potential orthographic optionality, in order to intimate identity and disposition in the course of managing their social designs and interactional purposes. These texts offer a 'microcosm of the social world' in which they were made. In the case of this selection, those contextual conditions can be known because they are verifiable by the data collected and analysed from other research instruments: fieldwork observational records, questionnaires, interviews. The texts examined 'encapsulate in an irrefutable form a cultural truth about the individuals who produced [them]' (Kress 1995 in epigraph above). Additionally, these cases index the relationship between agentic choice, the pressures of social convention, and the affordances, constraints and economics of the communications technologies which mediated the interaction.

4:6	<p>Well I trust god he's guna do wts best for me cuz he doesn't wna c me being takin advantage of stressed out and nt respected n't appreciated nd held against my own will god luvs me too to hu pp lyk dt in my life [NAME] u hu just lost a frend hu has been dere 4 u ALLUAYS nd lyk oua wtl!?? Jus becuz u dnt lyk wt u hear welcome to life [NAME]!! U hu Jus fucked up a gd friendship for no reason.</p>	<p><guna>; <wts>; <cuz>; <wna>; <c>; <takin>; <nt>; <nd>; <nt>; <luvs>; <hv>; <pp>; <lyk>; <dt>; <u>; <hv>; <frend>; <hu>; <dere>; <4>; <u>; <nd>; <lyk>; <ova>; <wt>; <jus>; <becuz>; <u>; <dn't>; <lyk>; <wt>; <u>; <hv>; <jus>; <gd></p>
	2011 SMS	<p>Bristol: single text message sent by eighteen-year-old female to a female friend; approximately 35 non-standard choices in 80 words.</p>

Table 5.1 Orthographic choices in eighteen-year-old Kaylie's text message (2011)

5.2.1 Construing identity by controlled variation of orthographic choice (2011)

Such a process is demonstrated by Figure 5.1 (transcribed below). This was composed using a sophisticated mobile phone with the option of QWERTY text entry and predictive text. It is a comparatively high status text, punctuating a moment of crisis in a close friendship. It seems to me to be a powerful exercise of localised domestic address, intimating forceful spoken delivery. This is made more vivid by an aesthetic shaping, more evident in its screen-simulated form: in its original context of reception it was read from a handheld screen. The rhetorical shaping includes patterned, parallel syntactic structures, hyperbolic reference, and artful contrasts between the articulation of a sense of measured control, in the accumulated claims of generosity on the part of the absent third party, breaking down into shouted exasperation. That last contextualisation is cued by the mimetic use of capitalisation and multiple punctuation symbols, appropriated for prosodic emphasis. These are only two of the devices by which the writer achieves a vividness of semiotic force, insufficiently conveyed by the following translation into the conventions of standard English:

Well, I trust God he's going to do what's best for me because he doesn't want to see me being taken advantage of, stressed out, and not respected, not appreciated and held against my will. God loves me too, to have people like that in my life. [Name], you have just lost a friend who has been there for you always and, like, over what? Just because you don't like what you hear. Welcome to life [Name]. You have just fucked up a good friendship for no reason.

The standard English representation meets the formal demands of normative orthographic choice at a loss of nuanced meaning and rhetorical force; it is 'correct' rather than 'accurate' to appropriate Kress's distinction (2000:41). Standardised choices are not neutral in their intimation of affect, and may become marked choices in conceptually spoken writing, giving off unintended connotative meanings, including their implied characterological voices. That judgment was frequently made by respondents, especially adolescents, in comments about their struggle to realise a texting style which reflected their voice and aspiration of identity.⁹⁰ Standard English was found to be too freighted by institutional symbolism and appeals to social prestige, so potentially alienating some localised audiences.

The table above shows a comparatively high level of respelling, at just under half of the word total and including the usual, comparatively unmarked orthodoxies of <u> and <4>, and the rarer <4u>, which compounds the number and letter name homophone rather than leaving the two word collocation of the normative referent <for you>. There are other respellings made on a principle of eye dialect, which convey more transgressive, idiosyncratic choice, including <hu> for <who>; <lyk> for <like>. There is the related regiolectal Caribbean-associated realisation of <that> as <dt> and <there> as <dere>. In all three cases the respelling reduces text entry

demands, and removes digraphs found in standardised forms. There are thirteen examples of consonant writing and colloquial contractions for allegro forms undergo further shortening in losses of redundant medial consonants or vowels: <guna>, <wna>.

Standard forms are retained by Kaylie in a trope of contrastive variation often found in this study's data-set, and also in Tagg's *CorText* corpus . This approach appears to achieve at least some of its rhetorical force from the way it marks out the rhetor's optionality of orthographic registers. Certain comparatively elaborate lexical items are spelt in standardised forms, indexing the rhetor's skill and fluency, by showing her orchestrating the meaning-potentials of both standardised and vernacular forms. This more elaborate register ('well I trust god'; 'advantage of'; 'held against my own will'; 'just lost a'; "welcome to life"; 'friendship for no reason') is juxtaposed with abbreviated function words and lexical respellings; similarly, 'stressed out', 'respected' and 'appreciated' are intercut by <nd> and <nt>. Orthographic choice construes voice and indexes the articulacy of an interlocutor who can integrate the affordances of transgressive, variational choice and normative choice in a vernacular rhetoric more vivid than its normative re-casting. This individuated performance makes use of conventions found throughout this chapter's data. There is nothing unique in the sense of idiolectal coinage; the writer has drawn on a series of emergent orthographic practices, and re-appropriated them for her own singular design (see Anis 2007).

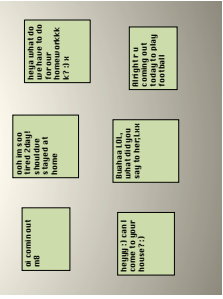
1:1		<p><oi>; <comin>; <m8>; <ooh>; <soo>; <2day>; <shouldve>; <heya>; <homeworkkkkk>; <k>; <,>; <heyyy>; <:>; <:>; <Buahaa>; <LOL>; <L>; <r>; <u>.</p>
	2012 SMS	<p>Bristol: single text messages collected from a group of thirteen-year-old male and female school pupils; approximately 25 non-standard orthographic choices in 53 words.</p>

Table 5.2 Orthographic choices in routine SMS texting by adolescents (2012)

5.2.2 Mundane, adolescent SMS text messaging interaction (2012)

Kaylie's text calls to mind some of the sophisticated discourse rendered in text messaging with variant spelling and grammar, as found in the examples cited by Tagg and others (2009, 2012, Page 2012). These show the eloquent power of localised address, which can be deployed by artful, accomplished variation in register. Table 5.2 shows routine respelling choices in text messages focused on social arrangements and micro-narratives by younger adolescents. This is one of two excerpts collected from adolescents attending an inner city school, where over half the pupils speak languages other than English at home, although there is little evidence of that in this monoglot sample. The pupils provided these examples for their teacher, Gemma, for a classroom discussion in which they reportedly commented at length about their fascination with their 'texting language'. Several suggested their spelling choices functioned in the manner of an argot; a localised youth sociolect of coded, insider reference. Just under half of the choices in both samples are non-standard, and mainly from a stock of the semi-conventionalised choices and meaning-potentials accessed by Kaylie. Gemma is among the the generational group of early adopters thought to have innovated SMS orthographic choice from about 1999.⁹¹ The kinds of routine spelling variation her pupils have collected here are not unlike those manifest in the SBC corpus generated by her own peer-group circle of address in late adolescence. Such a data-set illustrates the enregisterment of SMS spelling conventions in adolescents' choices of orthographic self-presentation,. Twelve years after SMS became available to UK school students, including Gemma, and following many sociotechnological developments, including sophisticated predictive text entry, some interactants still chose semi-conventionalised, variationa options, at least for a while, and attributed their preference to seeking a form of covert prestige which would be valued by their peers.

Table 5.2 also shows an orientation to frequent vernacular choice with about half the forms being non-standard, including the use three times of repeated letters to signal a kind of prosodic emphasis. The use of repeated letters in sequence to signal spoken effects was observed in IRC data where it would be easily keyboarded (e.g. Werry 1996), but is not easy to achieve with earlier mobile phones. So, a feature associated with keyboarded vernaculars is now entered on mobile phone keypads, possibly showing cross-media influences to be more important for these interactants than ergonomic convenience. As with Kaylie's equivalent choices of punctuation and capitalisation, the semiotic principle is a form of **graphical re-etymologisation** by which the strictures of single and double letters in the authorised normative orthographic repertoire are subordinated by their repetition as clues for prosodic effects and emphasis. There are four semi-conventionalised emoticons formed by the re-appropriation of punctuation symbols, including the rebus heart (<3), which have recently diffused into more popular recognition; it is not found in the earlier SMS data, although the heart icon rebus has been modelled in a widely-distributed commercial design since 1987.⁹² The spoken vocalisation <Buahaa> is possibly a stylized quasi-phonetic rendering of an evil laugh rather than an idiolectal adaptation of the crying convention <boohoo>. It is one of many graphic vocalisations collected in this study. Here writing becomes

sound effect (Werry 1996) in a script switch from notational language to phonetic, iconic representation. This is not new: *OED* cites the related <ha ha> for laughter in Anglo-Saxon writing. Nevertheless its extemporised status here confounds the expectations inculcated by naturalised familiarity with authorised normative writing.

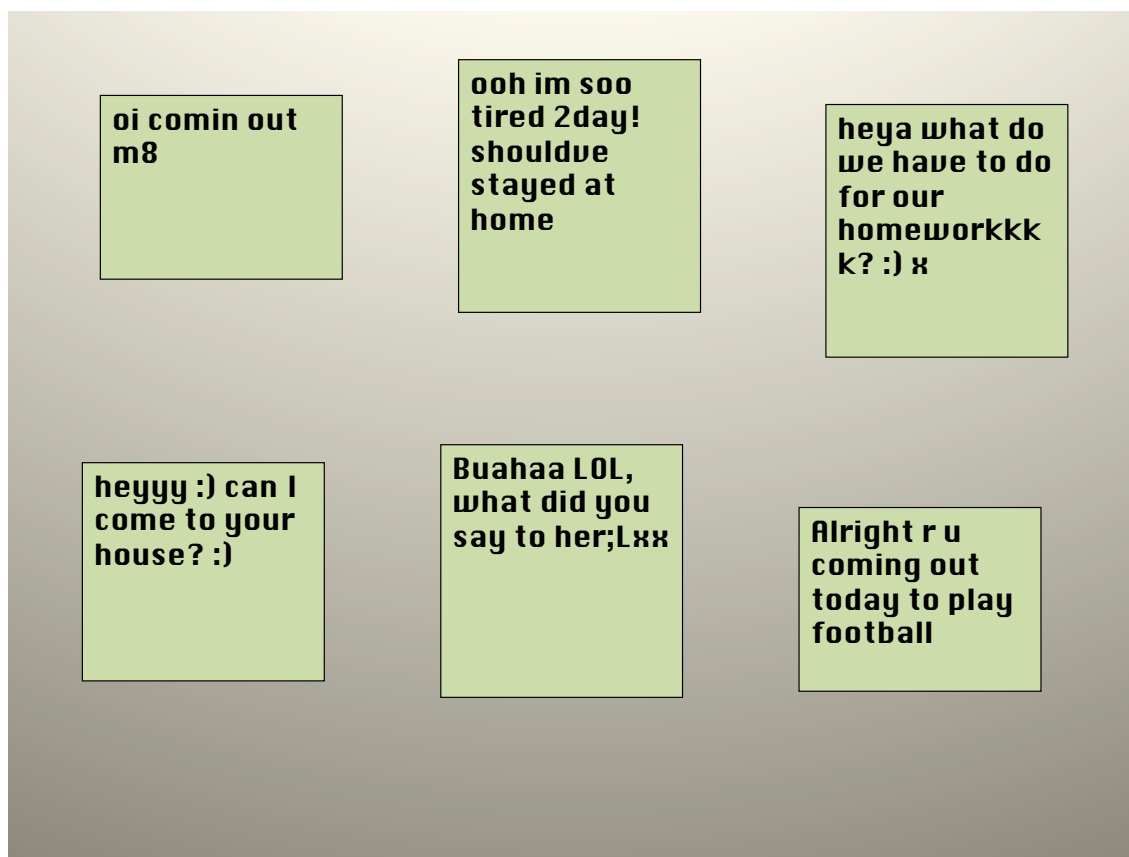


Figure 5.4 Orthographic choice in small stories and social arrangements by thirteen-year-olds

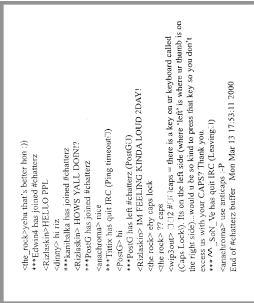
1:5		<p><yeha>; <hon>; <:))>; <PPL>; <HOWS>; <YALL>; <DOIN>; <IM>; <KINDA>; <2DAY>; <ehy>; [Extended character set ASCII graphabet symbols in rebus emoticon performing anger]; <ur>; <ur>; <anticaps>; <:-P>.</p> <p>Idiosyncratic spelling of participants' monikers using graphabet of extended ASCII character set: <the_rock>; <dinny>; <kanibalka>; <anachroma>; <Rizlaskin>; <PostG>; <Tittix>; <wip3out>; <chatterz>; <^^_SON_Ve> [this last example, likely to be an extended character set 'leet' spelling of <Mason_Ve>].</p> <p>'Noise' (Shannon and Weaver 1947) of computer-automated protocols: <***>; <has joined # chatterz>; <Ping timeout>.</p>
	2000 IRC	<p>Bristol/Virtual: excerpt of virtual interaction in an internet chatroom; approximately 15 non-standard orthographic choices in 67 words, although hard to assess because of automated protocols. Participant Rizlaskin is eighteen-years-old male but age, gender and location of other interlocutors is unknowable.</p>

Table 5.3 Orthographic choices in interaction between interlocutors in an internet chatroom (2000)

5.3.1 The ‘pre-Text’ before SMS: in internet chatrooms (2000)

Field-notes show school and college students aged between sixteen and nineteen at SBC mainly using computers for desktop-publishing and related media artefact production prior to 1995, with increasing use of the worldwide-web and email from about 1997, following the introduction of graphical-user-interface web-browsing and free email accounts.^{93,94} A handful of students at the site began exploring the more esoteric options represented by previously established, more specialised media, such as email forums and internet chat. These enjoyed a measure of subcultural status (Herring 1996, Smith and Kollock 1999). SBC student experimentation was not often sustained beyond novice encounters in the financial conditions of metered internet connection.^{95,96} In the excerpt of interaction shown in Figure 5.5, a key respondent in this study seeks to provoke a reaction from his unknown interlocutors by feigning ignorance of the ‘netiquette’ shibboleth by which capitals are understood to have been re-conventionalised as indicating shouting.^{97,98} His interlocutors police the infringement, advise on a solution and mitigate some of their directive force with graphical realisations of simulated non-fluency features, interjections, and gestures in emoticon form, along with politeness markers, accent stylisation, ‘pseudo-prosodic’ graphical forms, and the already-routine ‘constructed homophony’ of <u> and <ur>. <wip3out> orchestrates variationa choice in conjunction with elaborated forms in a parodic simulation of normative fussiness, presumably calculated to evoke a ‘vernacular spectacle’⁹⁹ for the enjoyment of interlocutors by the mockery of Rizlaskin. Like Kaylie, ‘wip3out’ juxtaposes formal standard features and politeness markers with vernacular convention: parentheses, and initial points.¹⁰⁰

Internet chatrooms were sites for the prior development of conventions re-appropriated in SMS choice but they operate on different social and economic principles to the later commoditised literacy practices, which ‘slouch[ed] towards the ordinary’, to appropriate Herring’s words. Geographically-dispersed participants, usually not familiar to each other outside their CMC context, are shown engaged in online interactive written discourse, in near real time in ‘virtual communities’, giving a strong motivation for typing at speed in short turns, with associated challenges of disambiguating scrolling threads and message addressees. Technosocial conditions shape the orthographic repertoire in the restrictions in bandwidth, which at that time reduced embodied digital participation to scrolling Courier font on a monotone background. This was understood as a motivation for various conventions of ‘semiotic resupply’ which sought to give the graphical realisation of conceptual talk more vivid representation. Those devices were afforded by the graphabet of the ASCII extended character set, which allowed options of symbols beyond those considered available for normative standardised English. These include semi-conventionalised innovations which constructed a more vivid representation of the screen presence of the social group. Choices cued intrapersonal experience of conceptual spokenness by graphical intimations of accent, voice quality, intonation, pitch and volume, many of these adumbrated by pre-existing vernacular literacy practices. Some orthographic innovations of phonetic spelling, homophone shortenings and spellings here show an obvious intertextual

connection with those used later in SMS. Initialisms and emoticons once localised to *Internet Relay Chat*, such as <LOL>, have diffused to a broader base since. Others, such as <IMHO> and <ROFL> have remained localised to use in email forums, gaming and other more specialised domains. The social and material conditions of chatrooms required an interactant to type interactive turns at speed, in an immersive subculture, mediated solely by writing and, participated in on a regular basis, with interlocutors not known in any other context. This motivated the utility and recognition of initialisms and acronymy for discourse markers and other frequently occurring collocations differently to the conditions under which SMS was conducted by adolescents. These conventions remain in peripheral awareness and feature occasionally, as shown in the sequence of initialisms cited by one of Gemma's pupils.

```
<the_rock>yeha that's better hon :))
***Edwin4 has joined #chatterz
<Rizlaskin>HELLO PPL
<dinny> hi riz
***kanibalka has joined #chatterz
<Rizlaskin> HOWS YALL DOIN!?
***PostG has joined #chatterz
<anachroma> nice
***Tittix has quit IRC (Ping timeout:1)
<PostG> hi
***PostG has left #chatterz (PostG1)
<Rizlaskin> IM FEELING KINDA LOUD 2DAY!
<the rock> ehy caps lock
<the rock> ?? caps
<wip3out> 12 #12caps = there is a key on ur keyboard called
(Caps Lock\). Its on the left side (where 'left' is where ur thumb is on
the right side)...would u be so kind to press that key so you don't
excess us with your CAPS? Thank you.
***^_SoN_Ve has quit IRC (Leaving1)
<anachroma> use anticaps :-P
End of #chatterz buffer Mon Mar 13 17:53:11 2000
```

Figure 5.5 'Viral policing' of 'netiquette' infringement 'trolling' on IRC

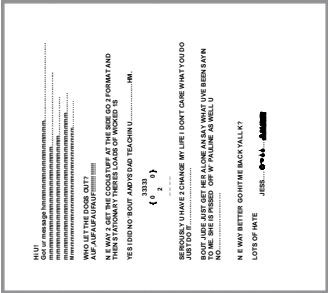
3:5		<p><U>; <UR>; (hmmmm> [about 20 keyboarded repetitions of <m>, followed by between 20 and 30 initial points, in a sequence repeated four times, with last iteration in smaller font]; <AUF, AUFAUFAUFAUF> ; <!!!!!!!!!!!!!!>; <N E WAY>; <2>; <KOOLSTUFF>; <STATIONARY>; <THERES>; <1S>; <NO>; <'BOUT>; <TEACHIN>; <U>; <.....>; <HM> [alphanumeric rebus of face]; <U>; <2>; <BOUT>; <AN>; <UVE>; <SAYIN>; <W'>; <U>; <NO>; <YALL>; <K>;</p> <p>[name in sign-off rendered unintelligible in SYMBOLS font, but recoverable in others].</p>
	2001 Email	<p>Bristol: email sent to Pete, aged twelve by a female member of his peer group, also aged twelve; approximately 30 non-standard orthographic choices in about 50 words, although not possible to assess precisely because of the nature of some of the written utterances.</p>

Table 5.4 Orthographic choices in a twelve-year-old's email to a friend (2001)

5.3.2 The ‘pre-Txt’ before SMS: adolescent appropriation of email (2001)

While internet chat was a practice figuring relatively infrequently among school-age students, email was diffusing into mass practice by the later 1990s (Petrie 1999, Crystal 2002). This is exemplified in Figure 5.6 and Table 5.4. The message appears to have been written using an email interface with word-processing features, as shown in Jess’s breathy imperatives about how to use the advanced features of its formatting menu (<GO 2 FORMAT>).¹⁰¹ This detail is interesting for showing an instantiation of the peer-to-peer guidance by which adolescents learnt how to use communications technologies. Jess’s email represents a snapshot of the sort of practice repeatedly witnessed by the researcher in adolescents’ appropriations of ICT resources for social purposes. It was written at the critical point when SMS text messaging was just becoming available to that age group, and before the combination of broadband computing and *MSN Messenger* provided other means of being in perpetual contact with peers.¹⁰²

The email is striking for its level of extemporised orthographic and graphical creativity. This is of a variety which would not have been possible on a mobile phone, or on the constrained modularised text inputs of a later social networking site such as *Facebook*, although examples of Jess’s heterogeneous methods can be found on earlier, more idiosyncratic home pages (Chandler & Roberts-Young 1998). Jess’s choices offer a juxtaposition of modes in a representation of conceptual spokenness by which she performs live, synchronous, intimate, dyadic interaction, which is realised by static, graphical, composed means. The identity performed is manifest only in orthographic choices afforded by keyboarded text: there are no sound effects, animations or colour graphic images. The choices made are intelligible but meaning-potentials are compressed by the assumption of the localised address of the interlocutors’ shared context. We may not know who <Pauline> is but we may infer the email is written in response to a previous over-reaction by the addressee. <Who let the dogs out?> implies ‘calm down’ by its allusion to a popular song of the time.¹⁰³ The beginning of this song is simulated in the repeated letter <m> and initial points, followed by the barks of the imaginary dog (<auf>).¹⁰⁴ Later, there is the choice of the alphanumeric rebus face used to punctuate the vague completion of her discourse with an intimation of puzzlement. This is a device found in older, more specialised digital forms, such as email forums, and perhaps shows Jess experimenting with digital registers, as she establishes her digitally-mediated voice. These orthographic choices are accompanied by more routine shortenings, intimations of spoken vivacity, and abrupt topic shifts signalled by paragraphing. Together these convey a sense of haste and intrapersonal absorption in the here and now of an emotionally-framed exchange. They also offer points of response which function like threads of discourse such as graphical indicators of auditory paralinguistic features of pitch and volume; initial points for the kind of vague completion of utterance associated with the spoken mode; letter and number homophone respellings; eye dialect, phonetic spellings and elisions intimating spoken realisation (<BOUT>; <W’ PAULINE>).¹⁰⁵ In one idiolectal, or microlectal experiment, the logos and symbols used in the writer’s signature are set out in fonts taken from the non-alphanumeric ‘dingbat’ graphabets.

When changed to a regular alphabetic font, the sequence reveals the name of the writer repeated. Here font choice is re-appropriated to function as a kind of graphical argot in a code spelling and symbol of provenance, which certifies her message something in the manner of sealing wax on a handwritten letter.

(<JESS.... ☺☹♦♦.... > for <jess jess>)

Such intense, patterned, heteroglossic choices of representation enact a stance of carefree oppositional exuberance: a stylisation of playful revolt in relation to adult norms. Some of these impressions are located in the intensity and variety of orthographic and graphical innovations straining beyond the regulative conventions of schooled literacy to construct a sense of peer-group ‘affinity space’. While having the unique integrity of her singular situated act of meaning-making, on unfamiliar equipment, in the context of this study, these semiotic devices can be seen to contribute to the patterned catalogue of re-conventionalised vernacular resources documented about informal email, IRC internet chat and related interactive written discourse going back to the 1980s.¹⁰⁶ In spite of its construal of apparent haste, and indifference to convention, there is countervailing evidence of choices oriented to standardised literacy conventions from which the orientations of choice appear to be distanced. There are no typos; at points the writer is at pains to indicate elided letters with apostrophes, suggesting Jess has the option of accessing normative choice. The key impression is of a preparedness to experiment and create meaning-potentials on Jess’s own terms. Even the prevalent body text capitalisation signals not the transgressive ‘shouting’ of adult subcultural conventions of internet chatroom netiquette but a possible graphological styling of text messaging, which in UK contexts in 2001 was sometimes carried out using capital letters only.¹⁰⁷

In sum, Jess’s email demonstrates the tactical manner in which the students featuring in this study’s data appropriated the potential affordances of digital technologies, anticipating the social media practices which followed.¹⁰⁸ At the time Jess wrote her email, computers were often presented in marketing discourse as ‘productivity tools’[sic] and essential aids for school-based learning.¹⁰⁹ For Jess the tactical appropriation of design interest is rather in the new ‘means of production’ for self-publication in narrowcast distribution offered for semi-synchronous, peer-to-peer interaction.¹¹⁰ She takes the resources of the normative repertoire and transforms them in an idiolectal enactment of individual and peer-group identity, managed by animated written representations, and construing modal affordances previously and conventionally associated with co-present speech.

Got ur message hmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.....
 mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.....
 mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.....
 mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.....
 Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.....

N E WAY 2 GET THE COOLSTUFF AT THE SIDE GO 2 FORMAT AND THEN STATIONARY THERES LOADS OF WICKED 1S

$$\begin{array}{c} 33333 \\ \{ \quad 0 \quad \quad 0 \quad \} \\ 2 \end{array}$$

**BOUT JUDE JUST GET HER ALONE AN SAY WHAT UVE BEEN SAYIN
TO ME. SHE IS PISSED OFF W' PAULINE AS WELL U
NO.....**

LOTS OF HATE

Figure 5.6 Email from Jess to Pete, both aged twelve, from Bristol

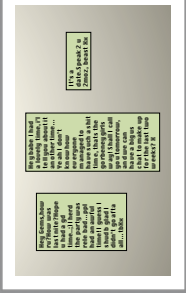
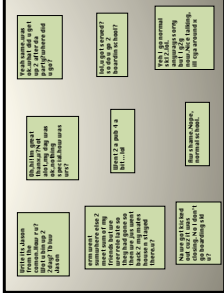
1:5		<ru>; <nite>; <u>; <gd>; <;>; <herd>; <rele>; <ppl>; <shud>; ; <afta>; <tb>; <2>; <u>; <2moz>; <xx>.
	2003 SMS	London: text messaging interaction between two fourteen-year-old female schoolfriends; approximately 16 non-standard orthographic choices in about 85 words.
1:3		<urite>; <its>; <comon>; <r>; <u>; <Wot>; <u>; <bin>; <2>; <2day>; <tb>; <luv>; <thanx>; <u>; <urs>; <u>; <2>; <da>; <u>; <erm>; <sumwhere>; <sum>; <wer>; <rele>; <jus>; <2>; <u>; <u>; <2>; <4>; <...>; <lol>; <u>; <boardin>; <Na>; <cuz>; <skl>; <u>; <aw>; <Nope>; <skl>; <2>; <lol>; <anyways>; <g2g>; <ill>; <cya>; <x>.
	2003 SMS	London: text messaging interaction between two school pupils, one female aged fourteen and one male aged about a year older; approximately 51 non-standard orthographic choices in about 170 words.

Table 5.5 Respellings and related orthographic choices in peers' text messaging (2003)

5.4.1 SMS orthographic choices in adolescent interaction (2003)

Figures 5.7 and 5.8 offer transcribed SMS interactions which were composed within a year or two of the interlocutors starting secondary school, and texting on mobile phones. In Figure 5.7, Marna and Gems catch up on a party one of them went to the night before. The next sequence manifests a more tentative probing for ‘interactional alignment’, as Marna engages in a first follow-up written conversation with a 15-year-old boy she met in a local park (Figure 5.8).¹¹¹ That nine-turn interaction is arranged left to right and from top-left to bottom-right. The tables show a general orientation to standard forms, with a higher level of vernacular innovation in the conversation between Marna and Jason.

5.4.2 Interactional alignment by new acquaintances in South London (2003)

By comparison with Jess’s email, both SMS sequences appear relatively prosaic in orthographic representation: choices construe an interpersonally-oriented focus and peer-group loyalty but without the compositional ingenuity and relish of the email, or the semi-conventionalised, emergent practices observed in the internet chatroom. As before, the participants use conventional tactics for text entry reduction and orthographic innovation, and the context-bound deictic choices enact a simulated conceptual orality along with a localised peer-group address, indexical of their close friendship.¹¹² The various strategies for shortening appear to construe brevity contributing to the sense of pacy self-absorption with an informal tenor and stereotypical adolescent identity image seen elsewhere.¹¹³

Here, different social and technical constraints underlie the conditions of production: these texts have been extemporised using twelve-button phone-pads on hand-held mobile phones,¹¹⁴ rather than keyboarded on personal computers, and in the context of movement, ‘polyfocal’ attention and multi-tasked activity.¹¹⁵ The digitally-enabled contexts and practices of technologies which are, by Ito’s formulation (1995), ‘personal, portable and pedestrian’ by comparison with personal computers, further alter time and space conditions. These facilitate a running commentary on live action, delivered through the permeable walls and the practicalities of remote location.¹¹⁶ This was evident in the previous asynchronous but electronically connected email interaction; here there is a shrinking of geosocial space in practices which inscribe remote mobile intimacy. These small stories are also being narrated by a web of other face-to-face and digitally-mediated contacts, including face-to-face conversations, mobile phone calls and, in 2003, instant messaging using *MSN*.¹¹⁷ The social performance in these particular messages is hard to recover fully from the transcription; as with much new media interaction, some of their original import would have come from the sharpness of rapport signalled by the timing of the interaction, and its semiotic and symbolic space in the ongoing textual production and reception of perpetually connected peer-group interlocutors. The transcriptions offered in this study cannot recover that information, although Spilioti’s time-based SMS study offers relevant insight (2006).

By comparison with Jess's email, there is a stronger compliance with schooled literacy expectations with only a grace note of affect. The single winking emoticon allows a nuancing of meaning which moves outside the strictly linguistic circumscription of alphabetical signs, but this is the only instance. Subsequent interviews confirmed this was not Marna's preference. There may be contextually motivating factors relating to greater maturity and academic accomplishment than was seen in Jess's email and Pete's note. These participants are monolingual, from comparable social settings, and appear to be engaged in comparable social performances of projecting imagined, peer-group, youth sociolect identity, combined with an aspiration for the academic achievement indexed by standard literacy conventions.

This can be seen in patterns of similarity and difference between close friends. The young women are nuancing their commitment to simulations of informal peer-group rapport with an undertone of anxieties about their access to the credibility of standardised forms which operates at an idiolectal level, although that may also be related to contextual factors of social class and gender. This extends to the technoliterate choices they make in how they use their phones. One is using more standard English and predictive text but changing some details to accommodate to variational conventions (she has added <I'l> for <I'll> to her dictionary) while avoiding full standard English punctuation markers, which are, from an ergonomic perspective, awkward to enter, because they require accessing the symbols menu of her alphanumeric keypad. Jason is using more non-standard spelling but all three punctuate their messages with attention to normative conventions, occasionally using initial points and <lol> as a discourse marker as substitutions for more formal choices. Marna is using manual multi-tap text entry but still scrutinises her apparently informal choices of spelling. Six years later she explained that she changed to entering her SMS texts by predictive text shortly after this message. She went on to explain a folk-linguistic rationale by which she avoided numbers for their homophone value in her texting or other social media because this innovation represented a 'category error' – in other words a **script shift** – of using a number figure to stand in for a letter.¹¹⁸ Similarly she reported strong dislike at an idiolectal level for other conventionalised abbreviations such as <soz>. So while this is unremarkable adolescent text messaging spelling of its time, frequently variational and inconsistent, yet intelligible and conventionalised, there are incipient clues and cues about the manufacture of social distinction. In microcosm we can see an aesthetics of taste enacted in a struggle to negotiate the literate choices which broker between peer-group values of fourteen-year-olds and the cultural capital of accomplishment in the normative forms these interlocutors imagine are prized by schooled literacy, and beyond.¹¹⁹

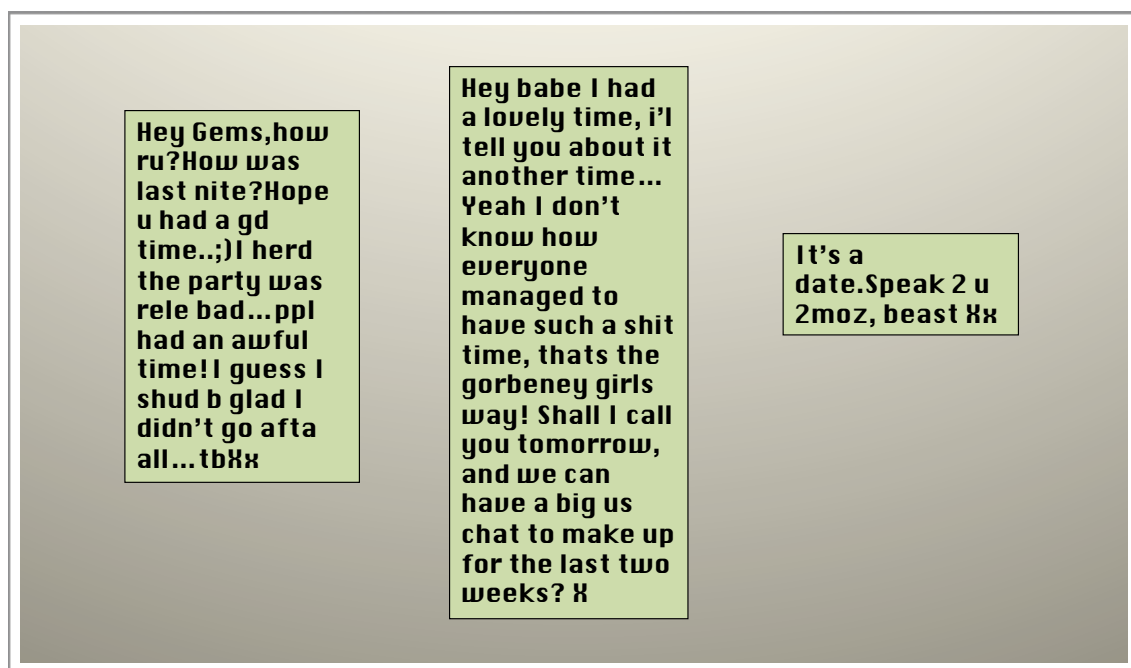


Figure 5.7 SMS interaction between Marna and a close friend, aged fourteen



Figure 5.8 SMS interaction between Marna and Jason, a new acquaintance


1:1		<p><u>; <i>; <whats>; <soz>; <everything>; <wid>; <ill>; ; <n>; <stufio>; <ye>; <toll>; <wanna>; <ill>; <u>; <ye>.</p> <p>Respelling calculated from dialogue only: monikers are 9:20 non-standard, repeated in three adjacency pairs and one turn:</p> <p><u>; <i>; <whats>; <ure>; <i>; <notts>; <talkin>; <bout>; <im></p>
	2004 MSN IM	<p>Bristol: excerpt from peer MSN Instant Messaging interaction between three male friends aged fifteen; approximately 13 non-standard orthographic choices in about 26 words.</p>

Table 5.6 Orthographic choices in a data-log of fifteen-year-olds' *MSN* Instant Messaging (2004)

5.4.3 Instant messaging on *MSN* as cross-medium intertextuality (2004)

As broadband computing was sold into UK homes from 2001, unmetered, '24/7', semi-synchronous, peer-to-peer written interaction became possible for young people in the form of Instant Messaging (IM). Instant messaging, in its various forms offered a textually-mediated interface for keyboarded written conversations between peers at semi-synchronous pace, with implications for the reinforcement of peer-group orthographic norms in other forms of leisured digitally-mediated interaction, such as SMS. For this study's respondents, messaging usually took the form offered by *MSN Messenger (MSN)*, which had been made available by its being presented as an extension of the free *Hotmail* email accounts popular with them. The suddenness and the extent of young people's engagement with *MSN* can be seen in Figure 1.1 and is attested in empirical studies (see Livingstone and Bober 2003, Kent & Facer 2004, Fabos & Lewis 2005, Spatafora 2008 for Canadian contact).¹²⁰ The data collected in this study suggests that UK teenager appropriation of *MSN* seems to have had a particular saliency for those respondents born 1988-1992, who often reported being in peer-to-peer interactions for over an hour day over the two to three years *MSN* was focal, and before social networking sites offered enhanced opportunities for related activity. The pervasive ubiquity of this medium had implications for SMS orthographic choice.

Instant messaging provided a new way of being in perpetual contact by writing, with many orthographic features in common with SMS.^{121,122} It required unmetered fast connection connection such as *Broadband* internet connection for sustained presence but with this in place, there were no technical; or economic constraints on the frequency and length of peer-to-peer interactive sessions. This made it an appropriate medium for the kind of interpersonally-focused relational work observed by Spilioti about SMS (2006, 2011). For example, in Figure 5.9, respondents Pete, Vic, and their friend Gervase, orientate themselves for a textually mediated interactive bout of competitive insults, in the manner of the practice of 'sounding', as observed by Labov regarding African-American youth (Labov 1972; Chapter 8). In the Bristol context, the equivalent spoken practice was called 'rinsing', here translated into its digital analogue of a 'keystyle battle'. The practice may gain recognition from hip-hop, rap and related cultural influences on the peer-group. It exemplifies the interpersonally-oriented CMC rituals of that time in which the young people observed in this study regularly spent extensive periods of time chatting with their friends online, sometimes simultaneously engaged with SMS on mobile phones and *MSN* on computers, as illustrated by Figure 5.10.

MSN is significant for exemplifying a new social and economic dynamic which shaped communications technology, and by indirect means, orthographic choice. It typifies the emergent digital commoditised literacy practices, which emerged from around 2003 in *MSN* to be followed subsequently by related social networking sites. These characteristically offered one set of affordances for the participants who used them, and another for the owners and suppliers

of the technology which mediated those participants' interactions. While the same difference would be apparent in a crayon for a child colouring in a picture vs. a manufacturer of crayons, the nature and scale of marketised digitally-mediated communication media are of a different order. They mark a shift in communicative paradigm, with implications for young people's communicative choices. Along with free branded communication technologies, *MSN* represents a monetised 'attention economy' (Goldhaber 1997), oriented to the mass recruitment and engagement of audiences in the interests of the acquisition of marketable private data, and the accumulation of private capital (Gelles 2010). That financial context caused these global service providers to compete for market share, and the indirect consequence was to create digitally-mediated environments for interactive writing sufficiently attractive to recruit those markets. Those so recruited were engaged in the conceptually spoken graphically mediated exchanges documented above. In this way, globalised markets competed with the individual state in the formation of sites for literacy practices, and also in the accumulation of personal data.



you can tell the people you roll with whatever you want but u and i know whats going on
says: (7:12:45 pm)
†††soz everythings so long wid school

homeboy ure dead broke i got notts to earn if not talkin bout money then im not concerned
says: (7:12:56 pm)
†††lol

you can tell the people you roll with whatever you want but u and i know whats going on
says: (7:13:03 pm)
†††son itll b in a proper stufio

homeboy ure dead broke i got notts to earn if not talkin bout money then im not concerned
says: (7:13:20 pm)
†††ye vic toll me

you can tell the people you roll with whatever you want but u and i know whats going on
says: (7:13:44 pm)
†††wanna have a keystyle battle

you can tell the people you roll with whatever you want but u and i know whats going on
says: (7:13:49 pm)
†††ill take u

homeboy ure dead broke i got notts to earn if not talkin bout money then im not concerned
says: (7:13:53 pm)
†††ye

Figure 5.9 Data log excerpt of MSN interaction between acquaintances of Jess, Peter and Victor

In Figure 5.11, Pete and Vic recall a practice of their adolescence: of going around to a mutual friend's house in 2003 where there were several computers and interacting on *MSN* while sitting next to their interactants. In the excerpt below, representative of the longer sample collected, the respellings are from the common stock seen in the SMS data with some possible styling of an African-American projection in <toll> for <told>; <wid> for <with> and <notts> for <nothing>, their 'nicks', or monikers, alluding to hip-hop songs.



Figure 5.10: 'Polyfocal', multimedia attention: moving from IM embedded in SNS to SMS

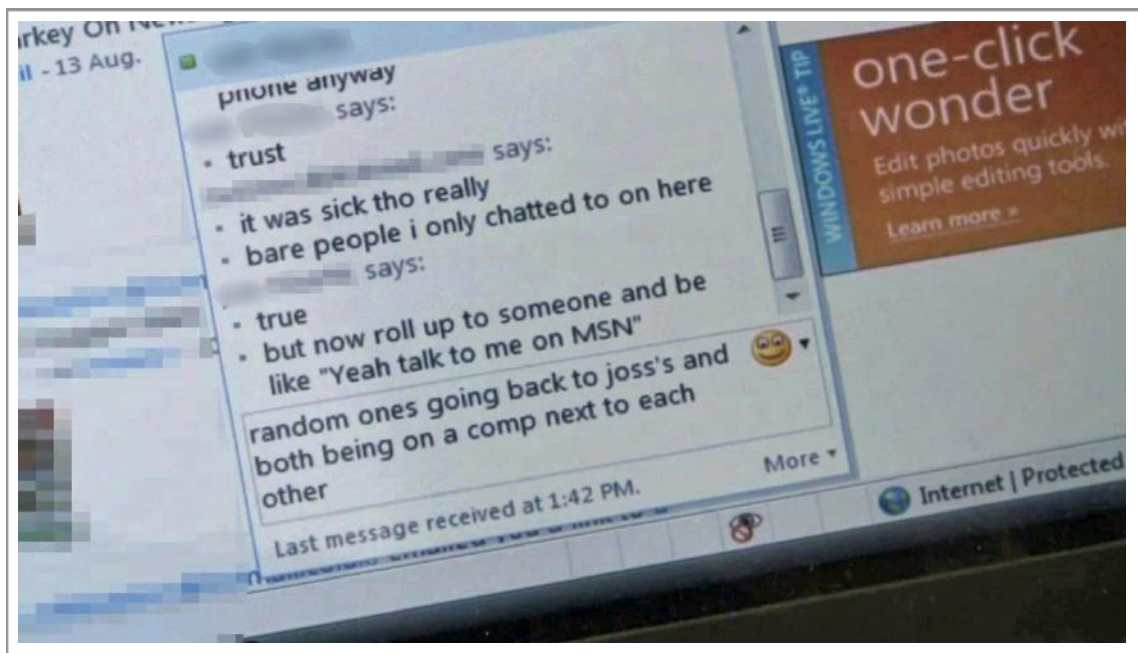


Figure 5.11 Close-up on instant messaging interaction with participants remembering 2003 MSN (2011)

These economic circumstances have implications in motivating a design which will attract participants, here adolescents. Mass adolescent use of *MSN* was in part a consequence afforded by a wider technologically-enabled development. Broadband connection made it possible for interlocutors to be in constant web-mediated communication thereby enabling persistent 'breaking news' narratives or live commentary. This was anticipated by the social practices afforded by low-cost SMS, for example, in Marna's phatic reporting to friends in her texts, later

exemplified by status updates on social networking and micro-blogging sites. The *MSN* interface design reflected a well-resourced purpose in recruiting identifiable profiles of participation, which could be tracked and the data ‘mined’ and sold. Its textually-mediated world offered many affordances by comparison with internet chatrooms, as was well understood by the young people in this study. It became possible to use a form of online forum to determine visibility and participation by friends. It offered augmented communication of in-real-life identity, rather than virtual identity, enabling users to create online peer-to-peer social networks determined by the peer-group’s own preferences, rather than the somewhat disinhibited, esoteric social dynamics shown previously by the chatroom excerpt. Identity was no longer virtual but was hooked onto known individuals by their branded free *Hotmail* email accounts and their need to be invited into visible participation by their peers, something made explicit by respondents.

Instant messaging marks a shift from the economic options of mediating peer-group digital contact by metered pay-as-you-go and monthly contract arrangements, as experienced by earlier SMS users, to the exchange of augmented communicative access for exposure to advertising and economically-oriented surveillance, as later more explicitly finessed in Social Networking Sites (SNS).¹²³ As with those later platforms, the economic functions of the design were calculated to increase users’ participation in interaction in order to to elicit electronically-networked observable social relationships with others. From an interlocutor’s perspective this was manifest in a well-resourced modularised interface design, which excised or aestheticised the automated computer protocol noise featured in the IRC sample above. This design was calculated to frame and encourage participation by offering users perpetual, stylishly-displayed opportunities for online interactive written discourse with their peers as an ongoing conversation. The modular template offered convenience and ease by comparison with the more static composed artefacts represented by Jess’s email or personal homepages. Respondents reported the site as a secure zone for the exploration of personal relationships in the peer-group, several commenting on the safe opportunities for flirtation with others half-known, but vouched for by peers (Appendix VIII). The graphical environment was enhanced by animated emoticon banks and sound effects, many of which could be customised. There were options for font, colour, moniker, use of symbols from an emerging ‘iconic grammar’ of visual lexis and syntax: notably icons such as smileys or the thumbs-up.¹²⁴ This interface contributed to an informal, interpersonally-prioritised habitus in which choices of vernacular respelling might sit more comfortably than normative choice. In effect, its economic context of production prompted a design which created an orthographic incubator in which peers could participate in the innovation, distribution and monitoring of social group norms, with orthographic choice functioning as an important discriminating resource for mediating voice and presence.

5.4.4 College students' distinctive orthographic stylisation (2006)

Figure 5.11 shows text messages collected from a college where the majority of students were of African or African-Caribbean heritage, with a sizeable minority of Portuguese speakers. This site of post-compulsory education was the source of innovative and transgressive orthographic display, as sampled here, in which under half the orthographic choices are standardised. Two of the interactants choose mainly vernacular forms with vivid construal of spokenness and affect. The interactant at the bottom-right shows an idiolectal style which omits <r>, perhaps intensifying an orthographic orientation towards a particular spoken vernacularity by offering a more accurate transcription of connected speech; perhaps seeking to pare down redundancy of orthographic information; perhaps construing vividness of address. As before, transgressive choices of spelling are accompanied by a performance of normative details in some messages, foregrounding the optionality of vernacular choices. For example, the respondent going on holiday chooses a compressed demotic style, before setting her mother's words in normative and labour-intensive inverted commas.

As decontextualised messages in corpus data form, subjectivity reveals itself in textual performance without co-text and context. That textual evidence suggests a consistently more demotic sense of social performance: for example, the lower register, multi-ethnic London vernacularity indexed by the g-clippings with a styling of multicultural urban English in the <d> for <th> substitution and other grammatical details of elision and ellipsis seen in that college corpus. The eye dialect choices are always clear referentially, but also more transgressive.¹²⁵ Such choices were found much less frequently in the SBC and SCS corpora collected from similar-aged and role-profiled respondents in the South-West. For example, the eye dialect /aɪ/ of <lyk> [laɪk] is the /aɪ/ of <my> [maɪ] in RP, and saves the split-digraph fussiness of <ike> and, according to some respondents, may also attempt to index a particular Afro-Caribbean vowel sound. Simple corpus checks and consultation with Carney's record show medial <y> is unusual in contemporary standard forms of English, although common enough in historical spellings (1994, *OED*). Similarly, the initial <k> of <kal> would be rare in non-loan standardised forms although ubiquitous in trade name spelling and related practices.¹²⁶ There are more esoteric innovations, such as the homophone use of <4rm> devised by a form of extemporised representational metathesis for <from>. Such choices call to mind the affordances of vernacularity and its potentials for affect which feature in Jaffe's analysis of the 'stinkin utinsels' canteen notice (2000, Chapter 2 here).¹²⁷

According to interviewees and questionnaire respondents, students at this college felt a stronger degree of peer pressure to write in a more marked group microlect, with social penalties for choosing standardised forms. The least normative corpus in this study was also drawn from a non-selective college with some of the highest indices for performance in public examinations nationally, with these particular sampled students coming from classes which achieved high levels of attainment.¹²⁸ By implication, these results would suggest a capacity to access

prestigious accomplishment in standard English, including its spelling, foregrounding the contrast to be observed in this example of peer-to-peer interaction and suggesting a highly functioning repertoire constituted by vernacular and normative registers. When interviewed in 2009, Marna, who attended a school within a mile of this college, easily differentiated such messages from the other sites of data collection as typical of the South London texting she encountered in her locality.¹²⁹



Figure 5.12 SMS choices by seventeen-year-olds attending a college in South London

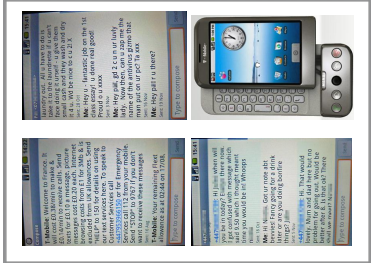
1:4		<p>Thread 1 (service provider): <min>; <mb>; <flex></p> <p>Thread 2 (addressee aged 21): <u>; <u>; <urself.>; <u>; <4>; <u>; <c>; <u>; <2>; <o>; <u>; <gd>; <2>; <c>; <u>; <n>; <ur>; <luvly>; <U>; <zap>; <r>; <u>;</p> <p>Thread 3 (addressee aged 40s): <ur>; <abt> in 60 words</p> <p>Analysis and proportions of respelling focus on thread 2</p>
	2009 SMS	<p>Bristol: screenshots of three ‘smartphone’ text message ‘threads’ on a phone of a female respondent aged 43; approximately 20 non-standard orthographic choices in about 80 words in the excerpts considered.</p>

Table 5.8 SMS orthographic choices in varied audience-directed registers (2009)

5.5.1 Affordances of spelling choice in ‘smartphones’ (from 2007)

Respondents reported that changes in phone technology had some bearing on choices of selection of normative forms; in particular, predictive text on smart phones used by older respondents. Figure 5.13 presents SMS texting as it appeared on an earlier smartphone handset belonging to Vanessa, a key informant. By comparison with the phone interfaces of the early 2000s, these phone screen images show a semiotically rich, sophisticated visual environment, which appears to allude graphically to word-processing activity in a business context. The screen interface has a comparatively large display, designed in the visual syntax, fonts and colour scheme of the office aesthetic observable in an application such as *Microsoft Word*. The screen invites its owner to ‘Type to compose’, rather than enter text, reinforcing the connection with word-processing documents that will be ‘composed’ and ‘saved’, rather than the transient contact occasioned by pressing in letters-by-numbers on an earlier phone model. Underneath these surfaces, there is a more sophisticated and invasive spellchecking ‘autocorrect device’, which is maintained and altered by its automated record of the owner’s history of interaction with it. The three screens show an accompanying documentary record of the threads of sent and received interaction with three interlocutors: the service provider (top-left), a family member (top-right) and a friend (bottom-left).

Given these pressures, it is noteworthy that Vanessa, an adult in her mid-40s educated to postgraduate level, opts for a relatively high incidence of the conventional shortenings associated with early text messaging, especially in her interaction with the family member. Table 5.8 shows the familiar repertoire of lexical homophone spellings, consonant writing and related emergent conventions. The common formulaic phrase, ‘good to see you’ is realised by a familiar sequence of consonant writing and number and letter ‘morphograms’ in the key binding <gd 2 cu>. <xxxx> signifies a visual morpheme ‘kisses’ sign-off with repetition again used to signal phatic emphasis. There is also evidence of variation by interlocutor preference. The text on the bottom-left shows a thread of interaction between adult friends, each with distinctive orthographic orientations: one using standardised spelling consistently, while Vanessa appears to use more of the emergent heterodox spelling conventions enregistered by SMS.

The text on the top-left is a reminder of the accumulating logs of user information built by phone service providers on the basis of automated customer surveillance.¹³⁰ Interaction is recorded insistently as the phone and its service provider plot the owner in time and space. Here the phone provider uses its customer data-base, in conjunction with locational information, to give notice to the phone’s owner that more expensive tariffs will be incurred in another market/jurisdiction. This is linked with a contextualised opportunity to pitch an advertisement for the customer to buy ‘a bundle’ which will reduce the cost of their mobile phone activity abroad in their FLEXT arrangement (a trade neologism which blends flexibility and text). The notification may also have the function of an illocutionary act, which warns the customer of imminent revised pricing and so meets legal/contractual expectations of phone providers. Also provided

are options to interact with the customer service system via text message directive using lexical items which trigger automated computer procedures: <Send "HELP" to 150>. The lexical, grammatical and stylistic choices of the message direct and constrain the user's behaviour with explicitness about agency backgrounded, and so naturalised.



Figure 5.13 Images of SMS texting interaction on a 'smartphone'

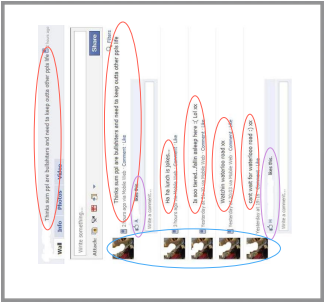
2:3	 <p>Symbols font + ‘likes this’ [rebus icon in ‘visual syntax’: van Leeuwen 2004:17] ; <ha ha>; <jokes>; <soo>; <tiered>; <....>; <fallin>; <:[>; <lol>; <xx>; <Watchin>; <Waterlooo>; <xx>>; <Cant>;<:>; <x>; symbols font + ‘likes this’ [see above].</p> <p>Respelling in SNS identifier is: <sum>; <ppl>; <bullshitters>; <outta>; <ppls>; <life> [sic] (6/13), repeated twice in this excerpt.</p>
	<p>London: SNS : ‘status update’ posting on social networking ‘wall’ of fourteen-year-old female adolescent; approximately 17 non-standard orthographic choices in about 29 words.</p>

Table 5.9 Orthographic choices by a fourteen-year-old on her social networking site ‘wall’ (2009)

5.5.2 Social networking postings by mobile phone text input (2009)

Figure 5.14 presents a facsimile of a social media site ‘wall’ with the text in the ‘status update’ thread entered by Cara on her web-enabled mobile phone, using the orthographic habits she acquired by SMS and instant messaging. By contrast with the earlier images of text, email and chat, this textually-mediated environment shows a corporately-branded sense of modular visual design, as observed in the smartphone interface. Opportunities to contribute text and to make related graphical choices are constrained by templates, which shape the available choices of contribution. As with *MSN*, the commercial purposes of the interface design are motivated by the commercial imperative to ‘drive traffic’ to the *Facebook* site in order to generate the resellable data and marketing opportunities, which will be afforded by the disclosures made by Cara and her social network, and 500 million others (Gelles 2010). The design is also calculated to keep Cara on the *Facebook* site by integrating communicative options previously mediated by discrete application packages of email, online chat and personal homepage, as above. Such commercial factors potentially shape agentive choice by homogenising textual outputs to the design orientation afforded by this particular communication platform. A similar commercially-focused design can be observed in the three-column arrangement which seeks to elicit personal information in the biographical profile on the left, encourage a record of the user and her social network’s ongoing interactive activity in the central column, and present data-base-generated, targeted advertising on the right.

The central column affords the main semiotic opportunity for the user to customise with the kinds of peer-group oriented idiolectal and sociolectal vernacularity seen in the texts and interaction analysed previously. In the zones ringed in red (Figure 5.15), Cara and her interlocutors territorialise their sociality in the short interactive turns and accompanying ‘icon’ symbols offered by the interface.¹³¹ Each turn elicits further participation, and so further access for the *Facebook* business to the personal data given away by interlocutors in the course of interacting on the social network. Cara’s orthographic choices are from the common stock of semi-conventionalised tools for the intimation of conceptual spokenness by graphical means: vernacular respelling as a device for colloquial stylisation, slang, taboo, spoken vocalisations. These choices will now be manifest in the more public context of a ‘collapsed audience’ in a display on a website which may reach a potentially infinite public audience, depending on Cara’s choice and control of her privacy settings. She responds to this context in her status update moniker, which appears to index an oppositional stance she intends to be attractive to her friends and followers, while marking social distance from those she implies are ‘bullshitass’; whether these are peers, or the on-looking relatives she has chosen not to ‘unfriend’.¹³² The import of the stance is part of the rhetoric of her spectacle but also draws up the older internet chatroom problem of locating addressivity in the context of a multiple and unknowable audience. Her vernacular choices create a stronger contrastive affect by their being encased in *Facebook*’s modular frames, which are labelled consistently in standard English, often in a

lexical reduction in which a word functions as a hypernym referent, or as a link for navigating choice (Androutsopoulos 2010).

The SNS ‘wall’ image exemplifies the complexity of participative media environments. The semiotic landscape is shaped by its market functions, which in turn restrict Cara’s choices relative to the *tabular rasa* of Jess’s email page, the home pages observed by Chandler and Roberts-Young (1998), or the relatively private, dyadic and ‘gated’ interaction of texting or messaging among friends and peer-group. Voice becomes shaped by the modularised constraints of *Facebook*’s design, which presents Cara with a convenient and aesthetically-styled branded platform to facilitate her interaction with chosen others. Its dual function requires a design sufficiently calculated to offer Cara affordances of pleasurable simultaneous running interaction with absent friends, while structuring that interaction towards the building of the data-base of marketable knowledge about networked contacts in searchable, malleable digital form. Market imperatives seek to drive interactivity, participation and self-disclosure, and these in turn carry some shaping of the likely orthographic choices.



Figure 5.14 Social networking site 'status update'



Figure 5.15 The defined space for vernacular interaction in a social networking site

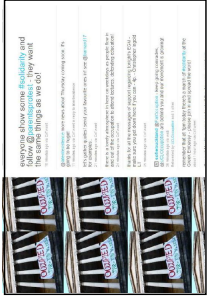
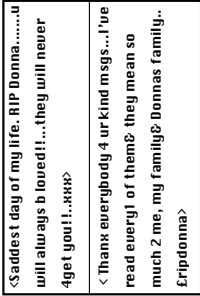
0:1		Notice the use of actual names, or monikers, now in the public domain, and searchable on the web as ‘searchable speech’ in graphic form (Zappavigna 2012).
	2011 Microblog	London: microblog feed of posts mainly by undergraduate students, ages unknown; all in normative standardised spellings.
2:5		Post 1: <RIP>; <.....>; <u>; ; <4get>; <!>; <..>; <xx>. Post 2: <Thanx>; <4>; <ur>; <msgs>; <....>; <every 1>; <them&>; <2me>; <family&>; <fripdonna>.
	2012 Microblog	Personal microblogging post by male, 29-years-old, to football fans, as quoted in newspaper; approximately 16 non-standard orthographic choices in about 40 words.

Table 5.10 Different orthographic choices in microblogging posts (2010, 2012)

5.6.1 Microblogging by mobile phone (2010 and 2012)

As text messaging diffused into wider participation, news media commentary developed a more realistic representation of its orthographic choice. Newspapers included readers' text messages without commentary. Stories were sourced in the searchable interactive data afforded by microblogging sites and, especially, *Twitter*. In Table 5.16, featuring undergraduates coordinating protest activity, there are no non-standard spellings in spite of the 140 character limitation of messages possible at the time.

In contrast, the source of Table 5.17 combines a human interest story with an implicit observation about the elaboration of digitally-mediated vernaculars into new domains. The grieving professional footballer's words appear to have been copied directly from microblogs, or 'tweets', using the particular affordance of *Twitter* by which a message can be accessed on a mobile phone connected to the web; this would not have been possible with an SMS message in 2002. Like early texting on phones, microblogging bandwidth restricts packet size and message length, with implications for conventionalised choices of shortened forms. It is also likely the original messages were composed on a mobile phone. As before, SMS-style orthographic choices offer the affordances of construal of intimacy and its proxy of shared context by deictic and localised reference. Such choices may have affordances of situated affect and localised address less easily realised in standard English: the informalised, abbreviated, context-bound vernacularity observed throughout this chapter. Meaning as it is manifest in these forms is taken to be transparent; the relatively idiosyncratic. <£> symbol in <£ripdonna> presumably denotes value. Such examples index the diffusion of the spelling practices associated with SMS across media and registers at a level of conventionalised expectation less likely a decade before.

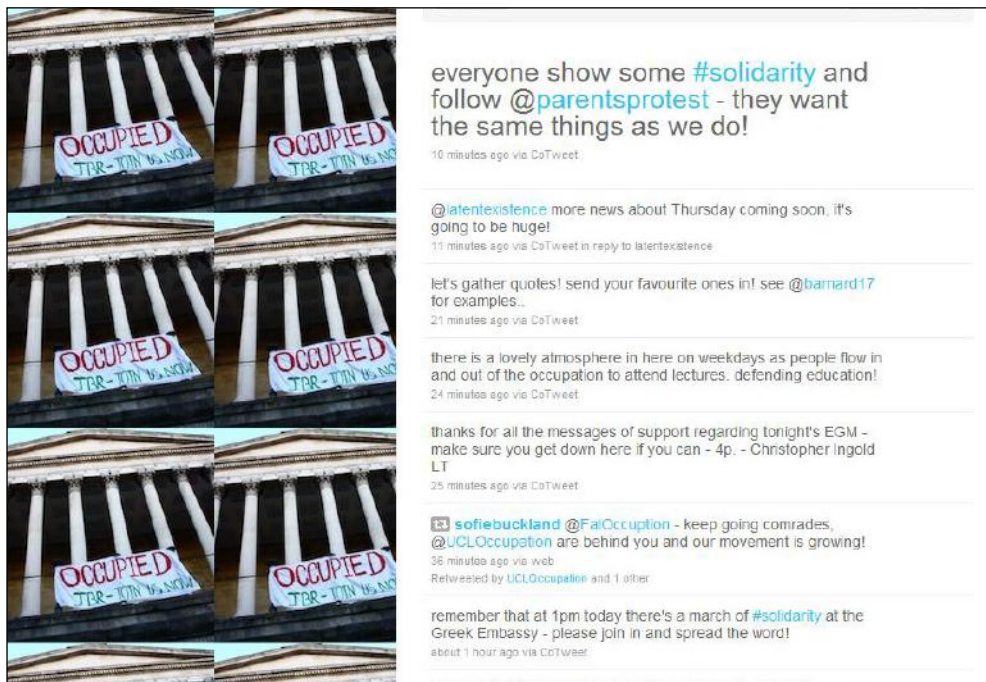


Figure 5.16 Microblogging from the context of a student demonstration against tuition fees

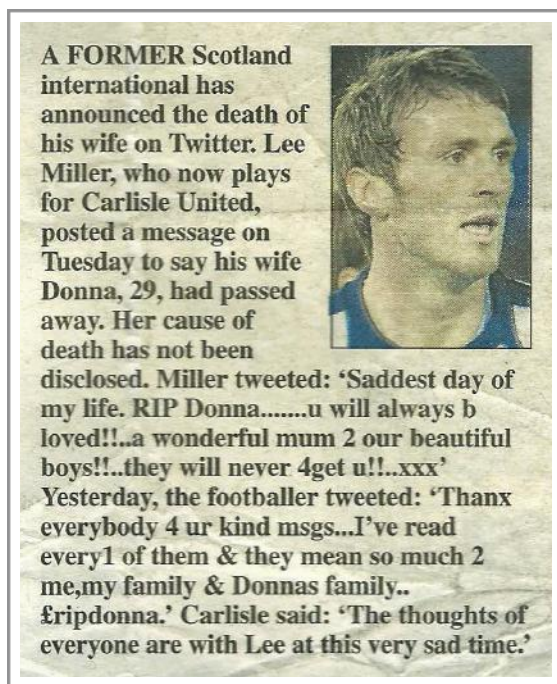


Figure 5.17 Construing solidarity by vernacular orthographic choice

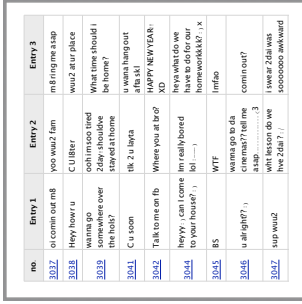
2:5		<p><oi>; <m8>; <yoou>; <wuu2>; <m8>; <asap>; <R>; <u>; <C U l8ter>; <wuu2>; <ur>; <wanna>; <hols>; <Heyy>; <r>; <u>; <wanna>; <hols>; <ooh>; <im>; <2day>; <C>; <u>; <tlk>; <2>; <u>; <layta>; <skl>; <fb>; <bro>; <!!>; <XD>; <heyyy>; <.>; <.>; <Im>; <lol>; <:----->; <heya>; <Homeworkkkkk>; <.>; <x>; <BS>; <WTF>; <lmfao>; <u>; < ??>; <.>; <wanna>; <da>; <??>; <asap>; <<3>; <comin>; <sup>; <wuu2>; <wht>; <hve>; <2dai>; < / >; <i>; <2dai>; <sooooooo>.</p>
	2012 SMS	<p>Bristol: single text messages collected from a group of thirteen-year-old male and female school pupils; approximately 44 non-standard orthographic choices in about 105 words. Set out in table with numbers on left corresponding to identifiers and links to questionnaire respondents' full survey answers.</p>

Table 5.11 Orthographic choices in text messages by thirteen-year-old peers (2012)

5.6.2 Semi-conventionalised choices in adolescents' SMS (2012)

Tables 5.11 and 5.12 return to the inner city school in Bristol in 2012, and show the respellings from the rest of the small corpus collected by the online questionnaire at the prompt of their teacher, Gemma. What is there to be said about this additional sample, except that it confirms the general pattern of orthographic choices observed throughout this chapter? There are ten rebus emoticons, possibly reflecting the increasing recognition of this semiotic device, as reported by other research instruments. It is likely some of these will have been displayed as coloured graphical icons on some phone screens, by an automated protocol which converted sequences of punctuation symbols in this way. If this is the case, then it shows some of the ways in which text messaging had moved from the bare monotone textual representation of 2000 to a more intensively visual manner of representation. Some respondents are likely to be using miniaturised QWERTY keyboards, which may motivate the reduplication of letters for prosodic emphasis. One respondent offers three examples of text messages made up entirely of initialisms, suggesting the possibility that some respondents send cryptic messages of this kind: there are similar examples in other corpora, usually a tiny sub-sample. Several of these respondents will also be accessing other digital media, as suggested by Figure 1.1. These may include *Flickr* and *Tumblr*, trade names which exemplify the orthographic practices observed, reflecting and contributing to the enregisterment of such choice. Text messaging is now found operational in a repertoire of related CMC practices (Figure 1.1), mediated by the apparatus of convergent media, rather than being the only method of staying in touch digitally with peers. Young adolescents use semi-conventionalised orthographic choices which are now well established, adding a few innovations of their own such as <2dai> for <today> below.

no.	Entry 1	Entry 2	Entry 3
3037	oi comin out m8	yoo wuu2 fam	m8 ring me asap
3038	Heyy how r u	C U l8ter	wuu2 at ur place
3039	wanna go somewhere over the hols?	ooh im soo tired 2day! shouldve stayed at home	What time should i be home?
3041	C u soon	tlk 2 u layta	u wana hang out afta skl
3042	Talk to me on fb	Where you at bro?	HAPPY NEW YEAR!! XD
3044	heyyy :) can I come to your house? :)	Im really bored lol : —)	heya what do we have to do for our homeworkkkk? :) x
3045	BS	WTF	Imfao
3046	u alright?? :)	wanna go to da cinemas?? tell me asap..... <3	comin out?
3047	sup wuu2	wht lesson do we hve 2dai? : /	i swear 2dai was soooooo awkward

Table 5.12 Adolescents' SMS choices as reported in survey results

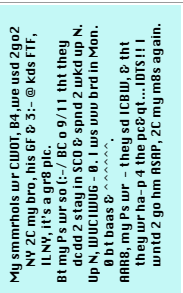
4:1	 <p>My smmrhols wr CUOT. B4, ue usd 2go2 Nv 2C my bro, his gf @ 3:- @ kds FTF, ILNv, it's a gr8 plc. Bt my Ps wr so (-:/ BC o 9/11 tht they dcdd 2 stay in SCO & spnd 2 wkcd up N. Up N, WUCIUUG - @. I ws uvu brd in Mon. @ bt baas & ^^^^^. RAR8, my Ps wr - they sd ICBW, & tht they wr ha-p 4 the pc&qt...IDTS!! I wntd 2 go hm ASAP, 2C my m8s again.</p>	<p><smmrhols>; <wr>; <CWOT>; <B4>; <usd>; <2go2>; <NY>; <2C>; <bro>; <GF>; <&>; <:- @>; <kds>; <FTF>; <ILNY>; <gr8> <plc>; <Bt>; <Ps>; <wr>; <(-:/>; <BC>; <o>; <9/11>; <tht>; <dcdd>; <2>; <SCO>; <&>; <spnd>; <2>; <wkd>; <N>; <N>; <WUCIUUG>; <0>; <ws>; <vvv>; <brd>; <Mon>; <0>; <bt>; <baas>; <&>; <^^^^^^>; <AAR8>; <Ps>; <wr>; <sd>; <ICBW>; <&>; <tht>; <wr>; <ha-p>; <4>; <pc&qt>; <...>; <IDTS>; <!>; <wntd>; <2>; <hm>; <ASAP>; <2C>; <m8s>; <2day>; <cam>; <bk>; <2>; <skool>; <v>; <O>; <BC>; <hv>; <dn>; <hm>; <wrk>; <BAU></p>
	SMS 2003	<p>Example cited in media reporting of school homework written in SMS style, reportedly by thirteen-year-old female, as syndicated over 1500 times globally from 2003; approximately 81 non-standard orthographic choices in about 110 words. Note higher proportion of opaque spellings such as initialisms and other symbols which depend on glossing.</p>

Table 5.13 Orthographic choices in SMS as represented in news reporting (2003)

5.6.3 Media misrepresentation of SMS orthographic choices (2003)

Agha differentiated between the primary evidence around a social and cultural practice – the choices made and evaluated in the **speech chains** embedded in situated communicative acts – and the way such practice may become subject to evaluation in **public sphere metadiscourses** (2003;37), particularly in mass-mediatised artefacts in public media and popular accounts. His distinction offers a way of understanding the slippage between the evidence presented above and the way SMS orthographic choice was represented publicly in news media coverage. This is a focus for the first research question which calls for a scrutiny of the basis of comparison between SMS orthographic choice as found in situated interaction and as reported in public sphere metadiscourse. Readers are referred to the chronologically sequenced collection of examples in Appendix V.

The original of the next text was reportedly transcribed from an account of the pupil's summer holidays and was presented as noteworthy because it is written in text message-style. Figure 5.18 shows the text as it might have appeared on an early mobile phone screen. It dates from 2003, the same year as Marna's text messages. By comparison, it has less verifiable provenance and incomparably wider public distribution in citation and commentary following its surfacing to public recognition in UK tabloid and broadsheet newspaper reports in 2003.¹³³ The tone of the message constructs something of the vivacity of the written situated interaction examined above but the orthographic choices appear to be of a differently patterned order. There are more esoteric and obscure choices, including a higher proportion of initialisms and alphanumeric characters and symbols from the ASCII extended keyboard graphabet used as graphical rebuses. Such methods are opaque without regular situated immersion in specialised practice or a secondary gloss.¹³⁴ This is a representation of youth SMS orthographic choice as an intricate verbal performance and typifies the exemplification of SMS in its early public representation. Its elaborations show, by contrast, the intelligibility and degree of emergent mundane convention in the orthographic choices used in most actual situated practice.

This text was syndicated globally, featuring in over 1,500 newspaper accounts (Thurlow 2006). It came to function as the encapsulating example of what constitutes adolescents' orthographic variation in SMS, at least in the popular imagination. It has also been presented as authentic texting data in scholarly analysis, in higher education pedagogy and professional conferences.¹³⁵ Its provenance has never been sourced and it is sometimes viewed as a fabrication (Crystal 2008). Although unrepresentative of the data-set in this study, and possibly apocryphal, the example is significant for its level of circulation. It offers a typifying exemplification of the public reporting of digitally-mediated vernaculars. For this reason the text was built into the empirical methodology used in this study, including the questionnaire schedule (see Chapters 4,6 and 7).

**My smmrhols wr CWOt, B4,we usd 2go2
 NY 2C my bro, his GF & 3:- @ kds FTF,
 ILNY, it's a gr8 plc.
 Bt my Ps wr so (:-/ BC o 9/11 tht they
 dcdd 2 stay in SCO & spnd 2 wkd up N.
 Up N, WUCIWUG - 0. I ws vvv brd in Mon.
 0 bt baas & ^^^^.
 AAR8, my Ps wr - they sd ICBW, & tht
 they wr ha-p 4 the pc&qt... IDTS!! I
 wntd 2 go hm ASAP, 2C my m8s again.**

Figure 5.18 The Scottish school pupil homework set out to look like an early SMS message

5.7.1 Summarising orthographic choices across digitally-mediated interaction

In this chapter, SMS text messaging spelling choices have been situated in the pre-existing, concurrent and succeeding, digitally-mediated written vernaculars accessed by adolescents between 2000 and 2012. Increasingly, these took virtual place in graphically-mediated environments designed and made available by commercial providers in order to engage the regular and sustained attention of interactants. Such settings were calculated to elicit a running commentary of socially-networked, self-disclosure. As shown by figure 5.19, the orthographic methods used by interlocutors for expressing their screen presence show a surprising level of commonality. Participants appear to draw on a relatively conventionalised set of options for spelling and related graphical choices, which appear to have recognition as public meanings in part by their being circulated in previous orthographic practices (Chapters 2 and 3). Some of these are historically attested conventions of vernacular uneducated choice, as exemplified by Dickens' fictional Pip. Others have been acquired and legitimated by the aestheticised recontextualisation of vernacularity in popular culture from the early 20th century (e.g. the US comic strip *Krazy Kat*, or African-American roots music, both circulating nearly a century ago). Globalised hip-hop popular music and related fashion genres are now more likely to offer significant modelling (Pennycook 2007, Alim *et al.* 2009, Hinrichs 2012)

For this study's interlocutors, most spelling choices are likely to draw a degree of recognition from their being creatively re-appropriated from patterns to be found in standardised English. That source appears to be constituted by various ways of spelling encoded in the various

discrete ‘subsystems’ that have sourced standardised registers of English since its Anglo-Saxon origins (Chapter 2b here). The polysystem nature of standardised English spellings creates opportunities for constructed homophony and respelling by analogy (Ryan 2011). Other common semi-conventionalised innovations include consonant writing; eye dialect; colloquial contractions; clippings and truncation; acronyms and initialisms (e.g. Cook 2004 a and b). There are related extralinguistic conventions such as visual morphemes, emoticons, rebuses, ‘stage directions’, and other contextualising cues. These devices feature in many forms of semi-conventionalised unlicensed variation located in the unsystematised and uncoded orthographic practices operating in popular culture and vernacular traditions. They function tacitly in the situated practices framed, distributed and evaluated in ‘horizontal’ discourses of localised address. In contrast to the fixity of standard forms, such vernacular choice appears to be extemporised in the manner Anis termed ‘neography’ (2007).

The general trend in the data-set illustrates a performance by graphical means of **imagined conceptual orality** in **social scripts** focused on managing impressions of the interlocutors’ personae (see Deumert 2014). Such practices, made more visible by the diffusion of digitally-mediated writing, disrupt the historised association of writing with geographical and social distance, as associated with prestigious printed modes of production in the modern period. Combining writing with other graphical meaning-making resources has offered a way of prioritising the social proxemics of localised address, including its metapragmatic recruitment of affect, and the intimation of social solidarity over authoritative status. Similarly, punctuation conventions previously functioning to mark out grammatical structure in normative standard English, may be re-purposed as devices to enhance prosodic meaning-making potentials. This is not without precedent. Historical studies of punctuation demonstrate that, in the long run such markers have always been contingent upon social value and the literacy practices to which they are applied; they have always varied over time in relation to changes in ideology and social function (Parkes 1992). Studies of the English language on historical lines, notably *OED*, afford a similar argument about spelling, lavishly illustrated by the variant forms documented. However such historical awareness is representationally absent from the ideologies representing standardised language, in which the normative use of punctuation symbols is represented as permanent and unchanging, with deviation functioning as a shibboleth supposedly indexical of literate in/competence and mental im/precision (e.g. Truss 2003, Humphrys 2006, 2007, Heffer 2010).

Formal patterns in orthographic choices observed in 225 ‘types’ and 357 ‘tokens’

More frequent semi-conventionalised patterns, are mainly homophone ‘morphograms’, substitutions by analogy in ‘constructed homophony’, and common colloquial contractions, notably final shwa in <er> as <a>, and g-clipping. Note consonant writing and reduction of doubled consonants as redundancy, including in respellings: <wanna>; <wana>; <wna>; <gonna>; <guna>; <gna>.

<U>; <u>; 40 (7 capitalised)
 <UR>; <ur>; 12
 ; ; 5
 <C>; <c>; 5
 <R>; <r>; 5
 <IM>; <im>; 5
 <ILL>; <ill> 3
 <wuu2> 3

<*a> [shwa] 8
 <*na> 8
 <*in> 22 [g-clipping]

<gd>; <wd>; <wht>; <wt>; <wts>; <n>; <jus>.

Morphograms and other orthographic particles are found in compounds, some formed from multi-word collocations in standardised English.

<ur>; <4get>; <4rm>; <aswel>; <£ripdonna>;

Avoidance of redundancy in apostrophes. Re-appropriation of capitalisation, reduplicated letters and other punctuation markers for prosodic emphasis, or in the case of initial points, prosodic punctuation of speech timing.

<ALWAYS>; <HOWS.>; <YALL>; <DOIN>;
 <IM>; <KINDA>; <2DAY>; <CAPS>.

<??!!>; <??>; <!!>; <!!>; <!!>; <!!>.

<heyyy>; <sooooooooo>; <homeworkkkkk>;
 <erm>; <soo>

<...>; <...>; <...>; <...>; <...>; <...>; <...>;
 <...>; <.....>;

Infrequent use of initialism forms except for a small number of frequently occurring formulaic phrases and discourse markers.

<wuu2>; <wuu2>; <wuu2>; <LOL>; <lol>;
 <BS>; <wtf>; <lmfao>

Emoticons become more frequent in later SMS samples. Mainly a small set of semi-conventionalised examples.

<:]>; <:]>; <:]>; <:]>; <:-P>; <[:>; <[:>; <[:>;
 <[:>; <[:>; <[:>; <[:>; <[:>; <[:>; <[:>; <[:>;

<X>, sometimes in multiple forms for phatic emphasis, used as a visual morpheme in sign offs, and sometimes as a discourse marker:

<Xx>; <Xx>; <XD>; <xx>; <xx>; <xx>;
 <xx>; <x>; <xx>; <x>.

Some sound effects and spoken vocalisations:

<ha ha>; <ehy>; <hmmmm...>; <Buahaa>;
 <AUF, AUFAUFAUFAUF>

More esoteric graphical devices seen in earlier text media such as chatrooms give way to modularised lexical and visual syntax:

Rebus icon ‘like this’ /thumbs up, in lexical and visual syntax; lexical triggers of activity.

[With reference to observations and typologies by Werry 1996, Thurlow 2003, Androutsopoulos 2000, 2010, Tagg 2009, 2012; Ryan 2011, Jaffe 2000, 2012].

Figure 5.19 Outline typology of orthographic choices observed in the Chapter 5 data-set

5.7.2 Social, linguistic and economic factors shaping orthographic choice

Some of the respelling conventions which have been identified in this chapter form the basis for further ongoing, creative elaboration, as exemplified by their adaptation in successive forms of CMC. For example, <lol> and its evolution from ‘paralinguistic restitution’ (Thurlow 2003) to formulaic discourse marker. Many of these conventions diffused from their original US provenance by their distribution in the course of digitally-mediated contact in specialised and subcultural registers, or in forms which have been diffused by the branded commoditised literacy practices emerging since 2000. This process has recently become more commoditised in the neologism production factory of ‘friending’, ‘unfriending’, ‘tweeting’ and ‘selfies’, by which media referents come to be known by their commercial eponyms, and the hypernym relays of operating jargon from those provenances. Social networking sites become synonymous with *Facebook*, content sharing sites become *YouTube*, microblogging means *Twitter*. These commercially-oriented developments contrast with the early forms of CMC which operated with less forceful branding in making available digital means for remote mediated interaction, sometimes for free and produced by an esoteric hobbyist subculture serving an ideology of social activism.^{136 137} What was originally the subcultural niche practice of CMC has diffused to a different scale and prominence over the twelve-year frame of the texts examined here in the course of the emergence of pervasive, convergent media and the global marketing of brands such as *Facebook* (Baron 2008, Jenkins 2006).

With the possible exceptions of email and *Internet Relay Chat*, all of the communication media which feature in this chapter are the socio-economic and material production of globalised private capital¹³⁸. This sometimes took the form of metered charging for interaction, as in the case of earlier internet connection or SMS. Later forms of digitally-mediated communication generated revenue by advertising. More recently, the revenue generation has been acquired by the mining and sale of personal data which had been given by CMC interlocutors, wittingly and unwittingly, in exchange for access to digitally-mediated communication tools, such as social networking sites or content sharing applications (e.g. boyd & Marwick 2011). This economic basis shapes the kinds of communication afforded differently to the material artefacts of writing and print produced by schooled literacy, historically in the interests of the formation of the citizen and the modern nation-state. Social, economic and historical processes shape orthographic choice in their construction of designed interfaces, which invite extended participation in textually mediated vernacular life-worlds, encouraged by the modularised environments of marketised instant messaging, social networking and microblogging. The structure and sequence of analysis has shown how designs of commoditised literacy production, as represented by these artefacts, shape spelling choice by invoking the spoken vernacular life-worlds of their participants.

5.7.3 The prioritisation of an ‘interpersonal metafunction’ in SMS

I have interpreted the spelling choices featuring in the chronology analysed in this chapter as being illustrative of an emergent, deliberated **hetero-graphy**. Observed in relation to the contextual pressures which gave rise to it, variational choice afforded particular meaning-potentials of affect, addressivity, in-group belonging and semiotic vividness, which appeared to be less focal in standardised forms. Such choices were deployed to construe **affinity spaces** of like-minded social valuing and audience-convergent literate performance. In offering such dimensions, the digital artefacts examined here present a form of user-customised literacy design, which enabled participants to deploy written and graphical choices inflected for localised social conditions. Such choices backgrounded the interests of a circumscription of an autonomously defined set of uniform literate and orthographic standards, operating at the nation-language frame of reference, as motivated by the material and symbolic resources associated with schooled literacy. So self-published interactive writing, as it features in this chapter, offered a context for heterox but semi-conventionised user-customised choice rather than another context for the default application of the autonomous model of literacy, although that continued to be a common choice.

My analysis demonstrates how my respondents ‘navigat[ed] different affordances and applications’, as Carrington and Robinson put it, in a differently configured ‘moral and technological economy’. By acquiring ‘key skill[s] for effective participation in the political and economic infrastructure of [their society]’, interlocutors extended their repertoire from one in which vernacularity fell away inevitably with adult socialisation (Carrington & Robinson 2009;166). Variational options were chosen for their affordances in construing localised address in a modality oriented towards the construction of social solidarity between interlocutors in their particular, localised contexts.

The prioritisation of an ‘interpersonal metafunction’ (Halliday 1979) in contemporary discourse, is also inculcated and fostered by marketised service industries (see Cameron 2000). So it could be argued that the informalised ‘digital tenor’ observed as routine in CMC by Posteguillo (2003) was coming to have enhanced economic value in communicative repertoires demanded by ‘customer service’ discourses. By this interpretation, the respondents in this study had access to standardised English while their performance of written vernacularity, and its invocation of localised address offered an additional lamination: a ‘code of participation’ which responded ‘the microcosm of their social world’ (Carrington and Robinson 2009), with possible value beyond that. All this evidence points to possible paradigm changes in what was constituted as socially valued in literate performance. Meanwhile, the commercial provenance of the communicative resources used by this chapter’s interlocutors - SMS, IM, SNS and related social media - also shaped interlocutors’ choice tacitly in ways not usually remarked by them in the course of situated interaction; a phenomenon which has yet to be researched systematically in the disciplinary fields of sociolinguistics and social semiotics at the time of writing.

88 The proportions and totals seek accuracy but have to include a level of approximation given the kinds of Word-Groups, graphical choices and symbols used in extemporised vernacular practices, which do not always translate neatly into countable standardised English words and spellings.

89 See Appendix X and XII: Txt Talk: Mobile Phones, Blake & Shortis with Powell 2011.

90 Interviews: See Victor and Pete, 2003 in Chapter 8 and appendix VIII.

91 See Figure 1.2

92 The heart icon is derived from Milton Glazer's familiar 1987 commercial design, where it is inserted between two initialisms: *LOGOWORKS BLOG:AARON S. ON OCTOBER 24, 2013*.

93 Field-notes prepared for Shortis 2001a.

94 See accounts of young people's use of computers at this time in Facer *et al.* 2003, Livingstone & Bober 2001.

95 Based on interviews with main informant Joe and his peers at SBC in 2000, and two cohorts of over forty university undergraduates and their assignments 2010 and 2011.

96 This is attested by the very low figures for use of internet chatrooms in the chart above in spite of the extensive coverage of this phenomenon in the Journal of CMC and related publications.

97 The interaction can also be seen as a sequence of steps in the vernacular ICT practice known as 'trolling'. See Donath 1999.

98 This particular convention around capitalisation achieved recognition as an iconic example of 'netiquette': a codified list of pragmatic expectations of social behaviour in web-written interaction. .

99 See Androutsopoulos 2010 and his adaptation of Goffman's framework.

100 See Bechar-Israeli 1995 on nicks and their functions.

101 The text is the original keyed in by 'Jess' with a nineteen-word excerpt at line 17 omitted for reasons of ethics, confidentiality and permissions.

102 Research role on the ESRC TLRP Interactive Education project, which studied the school attended by Pete, Vic and Jess and others in this age group.

103 "Baha Men - Who Let The Dogs Out". Ejams.com. Retrieved 2010-10-07.

104 Note the importance and frequency of allusions to song and popular music in interaction among the adolescents' texts in this chapter, as noted by Rampton (2006) and in related writing by Rampton, Harris (e.g. 2011), Dover 2007.

105 See Petrie in her large-scale email survey from 1999. 'Trailing dots', as she termed them, for vague completion, were the most frequent variational feature in 40,000 emails.

106 For representative examples of earlier coverage, see Nelson 1987, Reid 1991, Rheingold 1993, Turkle 1995, summarised in Jones 1995, Crystal 2002, Thurlow *et al.* 2003.

107 See SBC data in Appendix VI.

108 For heteroglossic performances in interpersonally-focused realtime 'vernacular spectacles', see Androutsopoulos 2010.

109 For example, Dale *et al.* 2004.

110 For discussion of the application of Marx's term 'means of production' to personal media contexts see Chandler 2000.

111 Marna is a key informant in this research: see Chapter 8, interviews.

112 See Tagg 2009.

- 113 Tagg 2009, 2012.
- 114 See Figure 2.12 in Chapter 2.
- 115 <Nagara> Ito *et al.* 2005; for ‘polyfocal attention’ see Lee 2007.
- 116 Robertson *et al.* 2004; Shortis & Blake 2011.
- 117 See Georgakopoulou 1997, 2003, Spilioti 2006, 2011, Page 2012 and the notion of ‘small stories’ in Maybin 2006 and Georgakopoulou 2008.
- 118 Interviews: Marna 2009, in Chapter 8.
- 119 Bourdieu 1984.
- 120 See Kent & Facer 2004 for mention of the sudden diffusion of MSN observed in the ESRC TLRP Interactive Education project.
- 121 The data sampled above and represented in Figure 5.8 below is taken from data logs of MSN interactions collected in Bristol in 2003-4.
- 122 This is the case documented with the participants observed, surveyed and interviewed in this study with over 85% of the rural site sampled (SCS) using MSN at least weekly in 2007, 60% of those daily.
- 123 See Gelles 2010 for an account of *Facebook*’s data-focused commercial method, written from a business journalism perspective.
- 124 See Van Leeuwen 2003, in Androutsopoulos 2010.
- 125 Bolinger 1946, Bowdre, 1964, 1982, Sebba 2007.
- 126 See Pound 1925.
- 127 Jaffe 2000,
- 128 Information cited from The Sutton Trust and published in student newsletter autumn 2007.
- 129 As outlined in Chapter 2, recent research has shown some degree of correlation between creativity in texting style and accomplishment in academic literacy in studies focused on children with a more mixed pattern observed in a study of older adolescents See: Neville 2002, Plester, Wood & Bell 2006, Plester & Wood 2009, De Jonge & Kemp 2012, Wood, Kemp & Plester 2014.
- 130 The pervasive issue of mobile phone charging, which so preoccupied the respondents in this study, according to their own reports, is left relatively undiscussed in the sociolinguistic literature. Such financially-focused representations as feature in this screen image surely have to be seen as indexical of the pecuniary pressures shaping context in digitally-mediated interaction.
- 131 Interlocutors here are limited to two (anonymised) names and two thumbs-up icons.
- 132 ‘Unfriend’ in the sense of the verb in use referring to the action of implementing the *Facebook* protocol for removing a contact from the networked friends list of the user. *Urban Dictionary*.
- 133 See Hurley 2003, Cramb 2003 and Thurlow’s data-list in 2006.
- 134 This is demonstrated in the later survey analysis in this study.
- 135 Used as an example of authentic adolescent SMS in Carrington 2003; in Higher Education pedagogy in Dudeney *et al.* 2006; in localised recontextualisations in a professional conference in AAATE Tasmania (Blake 2009, personal communication).
- 136 See Nelson 1974, 1987; Rheingold 1993, Turkle 1995, Jones 1995.

137 Ryan distinguishes between graphabet, character and alphabet as follows: 'A graphabet is the set of symbols available for use at any given moment by a writer, either by typing into a machine or using the printing tools available. A character set is a large collection of available symbols to be used on a machine. These includes ASCII and UTF-8. An alphabet is a collection of symbols used for writing a script such as English or Irish or Danish. All alphabets derive from the Greek alphabet (Daniels, 2007), which in turn has been developed into versions as diverse as Latin, Coptic, Armenian, Gaelic, Futhark, English, Danish, etc' . (Ryan 2012, Newcastle University: Cut & Paste-Modern Spell!nk

138 Email is generic but the particular example may have been *Hotmail*. Similarly IRC.

6. Innovation and deviation in larger scales of evidence

SMS choice in corpus evidence and questionnaire attestation

ood!wheyhey only few days till ur at mine.u havin lazy day2d
ain 2nite? we.ll make it worth ur while! x x x x x x x x x x
on? x 207 im k howz u? how was ur day? tb xx 208 Arg did you
to? xx 211 omg gossip! pick up ur fne rngin in wivheld! X x
d! And its stopped rainin now. ur jus a wimp! Lol! Xxx 297 W
2c how u r. its bin ages. hpe ur ok love u x 302 The gorill
later or tomo x 294 Hiya. Hope ur having a good wkend.hava w
u, we thought u were goin wiv ur house mates. We wil go2 th
resent yesterday. Am I comin 2 ur dance show on fri? Tb love
. wher is ur (place) n wt tysms ur (place)? Tb x 103 i no u d
uld do 4 u 2 4giv me 104 u and ur constant air tym viia text
m bt i myt start stil. wher is ur (place) n wt tysms ur (plac
r yh, jus hurry up! am wit dat ur friend n 2nd year shes wai
se 4. Aint seen u in agez, hpe ur gdgd doh tb xAx 332 So wat
sh man in here at the mo. Hope ur okay honey cant wait til u
vin a nice time its officially ur birthday! Happy birthday p
t in the sky?'. 177 aha u fink ur so bludy funy! u in 2mo @9
o wts new wid u?X 112 kl b saw ur misd call, bare supried u
p 2? Hws colege? Hope ur ok nd ur wel.x 105 Sory my battery
t neway merry christmas to u n ur mum an squatta hav a nice
z i dnt realy wanna so make up ur mind b X 753 ily im sooo b
bored :*(<3 x 785 hve u done ur geog hw 787 "hey darlin' u
xxx 256 Gimmie a txt wen ur on ur way ova hun! X x x 258 can
x 212 Hi (NAME), how's u hope ur fine today...R u feeling b
a tho xxx 256 Gimmie a txt wen ur on ur way ova hun! X x x 2
305 Hey hun hows ur planning 4 ur party goon? Wat u bin up2?
ty goon? Wat u bin up2?how was ur cousins wedding- or havnt
a catch up? X 305 Hey hun hows ur planning 4 ur party goon?
pe ur okay honey cant wait til ur home! Xxx 303 Safe and sou
ht mate, ope evryfins goin gd! Ur bk 4 xmas aint u? Rekon u
ITZ A SPESHAL SIM LOL. I HOPE UR GR8. X. OH YH DIS IZNT MA
u been up 2? Hws colege? Hope ur ok nd ur wel.x 105 Sory my
s jus cal me wen u get dis hpe ur kl.mwah" 328 my nan went t

Figure 6.1 Manual coding of sense 'you're' and 'your' in a KWIClist of <UR> 139

It is my belief that a new understanding of the nature and structure of language will shortly be available as a result of the examination by computers of large collections of texts.
Sinclair 1991b;489, in Stubbs 1996;22

Quantification provides the strongest basis for generalisation across large data samples...
Herring & Paolillo 2006;444, in Hinrichs 2010;2

It is important to bear in mind that this is just one, highly localised group of users. That is, their communicative practices are likely to have emerged from a particular set of circumstances – particular individuals and relationships – and may not be typical of other ‘texting communities’ or networks.
Tagg, writing about her CorTxt corpus: 2012;04

6.1.1 Larger scale attestation of changes in linguistic and semiotic resources

Figure 5.19 in the previous chapter presented the spelling typology distilled from a case study chronology of a small sequence of texts. Corpus methods now offer a means of testing its generalisability. The title of Chapter 6 asks whether there is a principled correlation between which words are respelt and how this is constituted by the features, patterns and guiding orthographic principles underlying innovation. It frames a hypothesis that SMS spelling choices may manifest some systemic change in the resources of written English. By this interpretation, certain orthographic variant spellings and their principles of formation may have diffused from the periphery of minority subgenres, or subcultural use, into wider social and linguistic recognition. Here I focus my analysis on the two largest data-sets gathered for this study. The first is a ‘Word-Group’ table (see Table 6.3 and Appendix VI) extracted from a corpus of text messages collected mainly by questionnaire and referred to as ‘RealTxt’. I compare this with an equivalent table derived from CorTxt, a much larger corpus prepared by Tagg (2009, 2012). The second data-set was drawn from questionnaire surveys administered to 823 respondents, who reported their experience of forty variant spellings in their active and passive repertoires. Those indices of attestation are now cross-referenced to corpus evidence, phone-pad transcription, and the provenance of the variants’ citations. This juxtaposition is presented in a table featuring the designed sample of the ‘forty variables’ set (Chapter 4 and Table 6.9a and 6.9 b below).

I begin by discussing the affordances of corpus-based approaches and corpus comparison as methods for determining orthographic choice at larger scales of evidence than are possible by the textual analysis presented in Chapter 5. I scrutinise the patterns of attestation in the comparison of two ‘Word-Group’ tables, as illustrated by Tables 6.2 and 6.3. Then I draw on the matrix of attestation, provenance and contextual pressures afforded by the ‘forty variables’ table in Table 6.9 as the basis for examining frequencies of orthographic choice and their possible motivations. Here I focus on a selection of variants and develop the argument advanced in Chapter 4: SMS orthographic choice may be sourced by multiple motivational factors, including ‘environmental’ pressures of text entry, and the ‘multi-accentuality’ of meaning-potentials constituted by any spelling. Vernacular choices are not subject to the defined, legitimated codification which features in dictionaries; they appear to achieve recognition by different principles of selection, distribution, and attribution of valued social meaning. I consider the significance of patterns revealed in two charts generated by a spreadsheet constituted by the corpus data. Figures 6.7 and 6.8 offer visual representations of the larger patterns in the SMS trend towards respelling which offer some explanation of the disturbance of SMS to settled ideas about the stability of standardised spellings. Finally, I develop a synoptic interpretation of the evidence which suggests that these data-sets show many of the types of orthographic choice identified in Chapters 2 and 5. These variants appear to be in wide circulation, with patterned and differential uptake, including an age-graded trend towards normative choice.

6.1.2 Systematic innovation and deviation?

The chapter title is adapted from a 2001 conference paper and its sequel in 2003, which focused on the patterned, incremental innovations in SMS respelling, still then at that periphery of adolescent subcultural practice. I suggested that innovations in SMS choice deemed as novel were in fact rooted in pre-existing vernacular and popular practices.¹⁴⁰ There was a contrast noted between the routine devices of actual SMS respelling and the esoteric exemplification featuring in SMS glossaries and news coverage (e.g. Mander 2001; Appendix V). On the evidence of the corpus collected in 2000, and similar material from instant messaging transcripts, orthographic choice was

relatively explicit in reference and rule-governed in its deviation from standard forms. The manner of these deviations reflects the situational constraints of the text entry contexts but also shows patterns of youth covert prestige as found in UK accent research in recent years. It reflects older patterns of abbreviated writing, including those found in graffiti, classroom notes and other contexts of unregimented writing. There is also evidence of leakage of some of these forms into the spoken repertoires of users. (Shortis 2003: abstract)

Orthographic conventions used in those earlier years, and sometimes developed well before then, continue to feature in many CMC media (Chapter 5). Some show a level of frequent iteration which could be taken to show possible emergent re-conventionalisation. A larger database of machine-readable corpus evidence could offer a different scale of attestation, as in the comments quoted from Sinclair (1991b; 489, Stubbs 1996). By an extension of methods applied by Aitchison to lexical change in newspapers, it would be possible to identify the norms and variations of SMS respelling and their indication of diachronic change (1994, see Shortis 2001). As the juxtaposition of the epigraphs above suggests, such approaches offered the potential means for establishing what many people actually do with language variety in a particular demographic, genre, medium or other classification. Such evidence may not be representative beyond the constituency sampled, as Tagg notes in the epigraph quotation (2012:04).

6.2.1 Comparability in the demographics of RealTxt and CorTxt informants

Tagg collected her CorTxt SMS data-set at a similar time to the RealTxt material collected for this study allowing grounds for comparison. The RealTxt corpus sample is both comparatively small (26,000 words vs. over 170,000), while elicited from a larger and more diverse group of contributors who were a little younger than Tagg's informants. This presents a methodological opportunity to treat data-set outputs from CorText as a benchmark for comparison; hence the effort expended in replicating Tagg's analytical and presentational methods in the '150' and '250' 'Word-Group' lists, modelled on that original design (illustrated by Table 6.2), and making systematic comparisons with it. That design features lexical lists of words in both standardised and variant forms grouped under standard English headwords with systematic reporting of frequency of attestation. The resulting 150 and 250 tables are a principal source of evidence

drawn on in this chapter. They are presented in full in Appendix VI, which can be cross-checked with Tagg's equivalent data-sets (2009;360-367).

RealTxt and CorTxt bear comparison for being collected from cohorts with congruent demographic profiles of gender, home language use, educational role, and the orientation to the social futures of those educated beyond compulsory school age.¹⁴¹ There is comparable difference in respondents' age profiles. Over 80% of the RealTxt data were drawn from respondents between the ages of eleven and nineteen, with 31% aged between eleven and sixteen, and 48% in the sixteen to nineteen range. 97% of Tagg's respondents reported being aged twenty-two or over with nearly 80% of the total reporting aged between twenty-two and thirty-five (Tagg 212;27).¹⁴² Both RealTxt and CorTxt report a 6:4 female/male ratio. So, both corpora focus on samples predominantly drawn from young people educated beyond compulsory age between the ages of sixteen and thirty-five. The age ranges equate to experience before and after higher education for the majority who follow that option. Tagg gives no precise description of her respondents but reports them to be 'well-educated and highly literate people' and it seems likely many will be graduates (2009;340). The quotations from SMS messages cited in Tagg's various research reports also suggest a cohort which is generally more accomplished and developed in educational attainment and normative literate choice.

The corpus linguistics methodology used by Tagg represents all textual evidence in the plain text representations of corpus downloads and can offer limited purchase on extralinguistic semiotic signs. There is one further significant difference to note, which relates to the contributor profiles in a study of spelling: 83% of the CorTxt contributors reported using predictive text with an equivalent profile of just under 50% in RealTxt, with further evidence of a stronger trend of non-preference in younger respondents. Given the arguments rehearsed in previous chapters about technological contextual pressures and their possible impact on spelling choice, this is relevant to the technosocial dimension of the analytical framework.

The thousand or so RealTxt contributors are more numerous than Tagg's 256, while the linguistic data collection is much less extensive, leading to over four times as many respondents providing a sample of textual data under one-sixth the size. It should also be noted that Tagg's thesis is a corpus study of SMS and not limited to SMS spelling choice: her research methods reflect their specialised origination at a centre of expertise in corpus linguistics.¹⁴³ In contrast, the interest of this thesis is not in a corpus study of text messaging but the application of corpus methods as one means of showing a scale of attestation of diachronic orthographic change in linguistic and semiotic resources.

6.2.2 Methodological cautions about representativeness and repertoire

The text messages collected for RealTxt document interpersonally-focused, everyday commentary on the lived interaction of student roles and friendships (Page 2012), often focused on the co-ordination of social arrangements (Ling & Yttri 2002). As with Tagg's data, the messages are frequently playful with a prioritisation of an interpersonal metafunction. Interlocutors convey stance, construe vernacular spectacle and create a narrative from the front and back stories of their social relationships. The general context is as reported in previous studies of the everyday creativity in spoken interaction and online interactive written discourse (Ferrara, Bruner & Whittemore 1991, Posteguillo 2003, Carter 2004, Swann 2006; Spilioti 2006, Goddard 2006a, 2006b, Androutsopoulos 2010). The nature of this discourse is typified by the KWIClist at the head of this chapter, the WORDLE representation below, and the longer samples in Appendix VI. Although it is not possible to relate a text to the co-texts and localised conditions of its production in either RealTxt or CorTxt, the single texts construct an impression of a vernacular peer-group and family-focused life-world with an absence of formal institutional discourse, for example.¹⁴⁴

The lexical and orthographic data in Figure 6.2 reflect a comparable, graphically formed semantic prosody of 'micro-coordination' of social arrangements and live commentary by deixis including frequent pronoun forms, and references to time and location. Tagg has reported how SMS word frequency lists differ from those for speech and writing and it seems reasonable to infer that some of the contextual motivation for such difference will relate to the social purposes for which SMS is used in the context where, during the period of this study, this medium has not attracted the level of elaboration in register found in other CMC forms: email, for example. In principle, spelling choice is less constrained by the expectations associated with more formal registers.

The degree of commonality across the subcorpus sites of RealTxt makes it possible to observe a variegated level of orientation to respelling **types**, in the sense used in corpus studies. The SLC data-set represents the extreme of inventiveness, and avoidance of normative choice. Survey 65, sampled a year later from older respondents, is the contribution of a group comparatively more oriented to standardised forms.¹⁴⁵ In Figure 6.2, the most frequently occurring, spelling types – in larger letters – typify those found across all the sub-corpus data-sets. The lower incidence spellings – shown by smaller words – may indicate the vernacular styling of that particular setting: <dat> for <that> intimates Afro-Caribbean realisations of RP [ðæt] commonly found in the SLC data-set, and rare in the material collected in SBC and SCS.

and to facilitate comparison between the two corpora. For example, possible text entry errors, which Tagg terms ‘letter transpositions’, are included, as in CorTxt, and feature in the low levels of instantiation (ibid;57). Table 6.1 explains the eight columns of reporting.

A	the numerical place of the Headword or Word-Group in the rank order of descending frequency of instantiation in the RealTxt corpus;
B	the reference Headword or Word-Group (the alphanumeric string which realises the Headword or Word-Group in standard English);
C	the frequency of that Headword or Word-Group in RealTxt;
D	the percentage of RealTxt formed by that Headword or Word-Group;
E	the number of respelt <i>types</i> ;
F	the listing, in descending order of their frequency of occurrence, of standardised forms and ‘competing variant’ spellings, in descending order of frequency, including their numerical instantiation in <i>tokens</i> (set out in parentheses);
G	the numerical placing of the equivalent Headword of Word-Group in the rank order of descending frequency in Tagg’s CorTxt corpus;
H	the number of respelt <i>types</i> for the equivalent Headword or Word-Group in Tagg’s CorTxt corpus.
	Chapter 6 legend for WORD GROUPS,pages Friday, 3 October 2014 134 words

Table 6.1 The columns of reporting in the 150 and 250 RealTxt Word-Group list

	Headword	Freq	%	Variant forms
1	YOU	7,884	4.14	u(3043),ya(256),yer(14),ye(9),uu(2)
2	TO	4,976	2.61	2(690),ot(3)
3	I	4,257	2.23	
4	X	3,689	1.94	xx(833),xxx(635),xxxx(11),xxxxxx(3),xxxxxxx(2),xoxox(1),xxxxx(42)
5	A	3,580	1.88	
6	THE	3,553	1.86	d(21),da(6),th(8),hte(3),te(2),ze(2)
7	AND	3,171	1.66	n(182),an(19),adn(10),amd(2),annd(2)
8	IN	2,387	1.25	iin(2)
9	FOR	2,057	1.08	4(357),fer(2)
10	IT	2,020	1.06	
11	HAVE	1,993	1.05	av(8),hve(6),ave(5),hav(106)
12	IS	1,577	0.83	

Table 6.2 The first twelve frequencies of the CorTxt 250 in descending order (Tagg 2009;360)

	WORD	Frq	%	RealT xt RS		Tagg # RS	Cortxt RS
TOTAL		26206		1114			491
1	YOU	1972	5.5	19	u(1365),you(507),ya(64),yu(9),youu (8),ti(2),yew(2),yeww(2),yooo(2),yooou (2),choo(1),toi(1),ua(1)yoo(1),yoooooo (1),yooou(1),youuu(1),ypu(1),y(1)	1	6
2	X	1493	4.1	28	x(1021),xxx(175),xx(163),xxxx(35),xxxxx (34),xxxxxx(17),xxxxxxx(10),ux(6),xo (4)),xd(3),xxxxxxxx(3),xxxxxxxxx(3),xox (2),xxxxxxxxxx(2),xxxxxxxxxxxx (2),xxxxxxxxxxxxxx(2),xax(1),xoxox (1),xoxoxoxox(1),xoxoxoxoxo(1),xxxw (1),xxxxxxxxxx(1),xxxxxxxxxxxx (1),xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (1),xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (1),xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (1),xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx+(1)	4	8
3	I	868	2.4	1		3	1
4	TO	864	2.4	5	2(468),to(380),t(14),ta(1),tae(1)	2	3
5	THE	529	1.5	8	the(409),da(89),th(14),d(8),de(5),le (2),la(1),thee(1)	6	7
6	A	498	1.4	1		5	1
7	AND	449	1.2	3	and(270),n(157),nd(22)	7	6
8	ME	368	1	4	me(360),mi(6),mee(1),mwa(1)	14	1
9	I'M	367	1	3	im(297),i'm(69),iam(1)	24	2
10	ARE	354	1	3	r(208),are(134),ar(12)	16	3
11	IN	311	0.9	1		8	2
12	WHAT	306	0.8	9	what(103),wat(100),wot(76),wt (18),wht(4),wa(2),watt(1),wha(1),whaa (1)	41	3

Table 6.3 The first twelve frequencies of the RealTxt 250 in descending order

See Appendix VI for full tables of RealTxt 250 and 150

6.2.4 Indicative frequencies in the RealTxt and CorTxt 150/250 tables

The RealTxt lists show a strong trend of verification with the tables provided by Tagg, and a consistent pattern of difference manifest in more heterogeneous variation, oriented away from normative choice. The similarities in proportions and distributions of the most frequent words support Tagg's contention that SMS attracts different configurations of frequency to those established from analysis of larger reference corpora of speech and writing (Tagg 210;130).¹⁴⁷ 208 of the 250 most frequent Word-Groups in the CorTxt list are found in RealTxt's equivalent, and 99 of the 150 Word-Group list of words subject to respelling. YOU is the most frequent headword in both data-sets, in both attracting high levels of respelling as <u>. The visual morpheme X, used in sign-offs, is similarly prominent, along with lower frequencies for similar greetings and sign-offs (e.g. <TB> for text back>) as might be expected in short messages of dyadic address, although these are not reported in the CorTxt tables.

	WORD	Frq	%	RealT xt RS		Tagg #	CorTxt RS
53	TEXT BACK	114	0.315	6	<i>tb(105),text back(3),tbx(2),ptb(1),ptbx(1),tback(1),tbxx(1)</i>	n/a	n/a

Table 6.4 <Text Back> and variant forms, not found comparatively frequently in CorTxt

Scanning through the two lists, the reader will see common types of respelling with many variants in a similar rank order sequence. The most frequent spellings and types of spelling (Chapter 5) can be found, including ‘**constructed homophony**’ spellings for frequently-occurring function words (Ryan 2011): <u>(1st¹⁴⁸);<2>(5th);<r> (10th), <4> (14th); well-established vernacular spellings (<wot>) and ‘colloquial contractions’ (Tagg 2009:Appendix, Weber 1986).

6.2.5 Frequencies of competing variant ‘types’ in RealTxt and CorTxt

Tagg noted the majority of the most frequent headwords and Word-Groups feature some level of respelling (69%). This pattern of optionality features more intensively in the RealTxt 250 list at 81%, showing both data-sets routinely manifest respelt data. However, the patterns of distribution in the types of respelling and in the tokens of frequency differ consistently. RealTxt exhibits more respelt variant types, with a greater proportion of frequency tokens of instantiation, along with more evidence of accidental misspelling. Specific comparison of types of frequency is illustrated by Figure 6.3, which shows over twice the level of variation in types in the much smaller RealTxt corpus, showing its greater level of instantiation, and by implication its greater permissive scope for extemporised innovations.

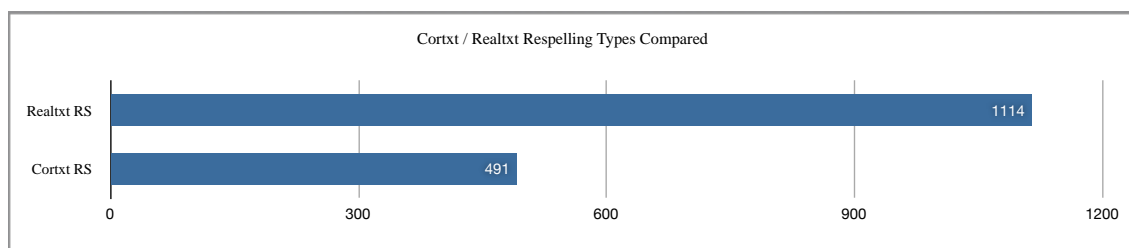


Figure 6.3 Comparison of respelt Types in Real Txt and CorTxt

CorTxt shows lower levels of variation (or no variation) in some headword/Word-Group types, a lower number of competing variants, a lower percentage of non-standard variation in frequency of respelt tokens and a lower proportion of extralinguistic semiotic devices such as rebus emoticons and visual morphemes, or spoken vocalisations and other sound effects. These trends are consistent across the data-set with no exceptions suggesting significant grounds of comparability with patterned differences in degree.

6.2.6 Tabular comparison of frequent respelling in RealTxt and CorTxt

Table 6.4 juxtaposes CorTxt and RealTxt values in descending frequency of corpus attestation, with comparative indices for orientation to respelling in the two columns on the right. The figures show the comparatively small scale of the processed RealTxt corpus, in spite of its higher proportional scores for respelling, and the greater orientation to vernacular spelling indices which track the rank order of the CorTxt figures. YOU, YES, TOMORROW, BE, YOU'RE, ARE and BECAUSE feature as variations in which respelling in CorTxt is relatively frequent and conventionalised at between 20% and 45% of variation. These are long-established realisations drawn from routine vernacular orthographic resources instantiated in grassroots literacy, trade spelling and related popular culture.

Word	Realtxt NS	Realtxt S	Realtxt Total	Cortxt NS	Cortxt S	Cortxt Total	Realtxt % NS	Cortxt % NS
YOU	1465	507	1972	3324	4560	7884	74	42
TO	484	380	864	693	4083	4776	56	15
THE	120	409	529	40	3513	3553	23	1
AND	179	270	449	215	2956	3171	40	7
I'M	298	69	367	280	936	1216	81	23
ARE	220	134	354	424	1054	1478	62	29
WHAT	203	103	306	185	654	839	66	22
FOR	149	128	277	359	1698	2057	54	17
MY	20	236	256	0	1285	1285	8	0
LOVE	76	175	251	54	314	368	30	15
HAVE	79	163	242	125	1868	1993	33	6
SEE	134	95	229	248	1007	1255	59	20
BE	93	136	229	375	1192	1567	41	24
YES	197	26	223	501	451	952	88	53
GOOD	68	118	186	68	1197	1265	37	5
THAT	64	107	171	7	1111	1118	37	1
TOMORROW	128	42	170	519	369	888	75	58
WAS	27	142	169	7	945	952	16	1
GOING	101	47	148	60	650	710	68	8
DON'T	102	40	142	202	469	671	72	30
I'LL	101	40	141	97	531	628	72	15
WITH	52	83	135	89	913	1002	39	9
BACK	71	55	126	61	672	733	56	8
YOU'RE	111	11	122	313	798	1111	91	28
NIGHT	64	55	119	105	481	586	54	18
TONIGHT	74	33	107	70	361	431	69	16
THANKS	71	33	104	46	366	412	68	11
PLEASE	51	37	88	51	199	250	58	20
BECAUSE	78	5	83	253	53	306	94	83
RIGHT	20	11	31	3	115	118	65	3

Table 6.5 The most frequent Word-Groups attracting respelling in the 'RealTxt' corpus compared with CorTxt.

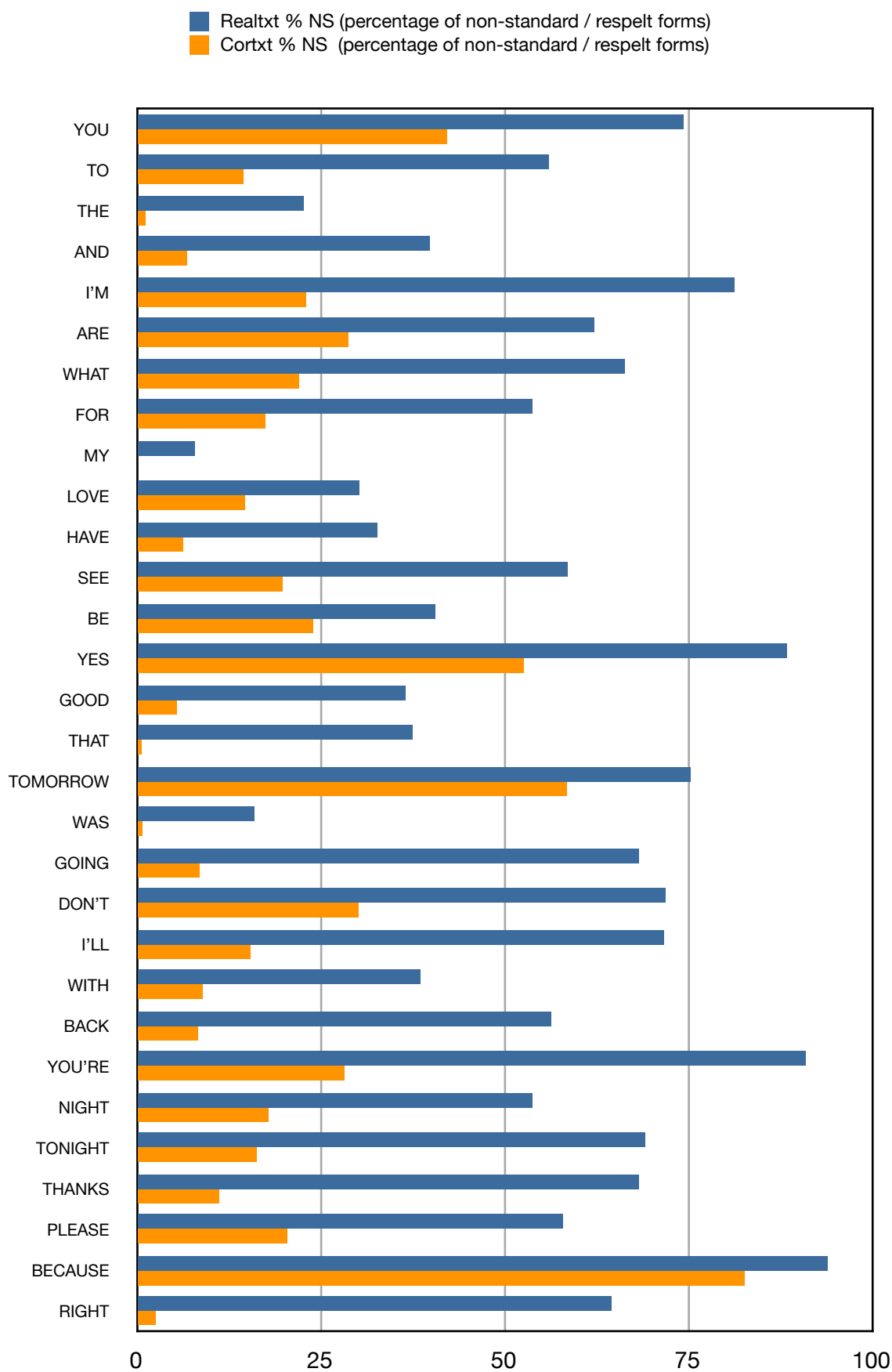


Figure 6.4 Percentages of frequent respelling in the 'RealTxt' corpus and CorTxt

Five are based on routine homophone-based respellings, with two of the examples derived from pre-existing conventionalised shortenings, forming the basis for potential further innovations. For example, BECAUSE is routinely realised in clipped forms in both speech and vernacular writing (e.g. <because>, <coz >, <cos>). Examining the RealTxt list shows a plethora of spelling variation and underlying varied orthographic tactics to reduce text entry, intimate conceptual spokenness or recruit metapragmatic connotations conventionalised in colloquial contexts or popular culture. This variation is not always found for equivalent words in CorTxt.

	WORD	Frq	%	RealT xt RS		Tagg # RS	Cortxt RS
77	REALLY	86	0.238	14	really(58),reali(5),rele(5),real(4),rly(3),reli(2),rli(2),ra(1),realli(1),reely(1),relly(1),rely(1),relyyy(1),rlly(1)	72	2

Table 6.6 More variant forms for <really> in RealTxt than CorTxt

Some respellings which occur in RealTxt show negligible manifestation in CorTxt. THE, MY and THAT show minimal variation with much lower indices for AND, GOOD and WITH. RealTxt shows the popularity of respellings for high frequency contracted forms such as <I'll>, <I'm> and <you're>. The omission of a punctuation symbol in <Ill> for <I'll> avoids manipulating the intricate symbols menu of a phone interface. The CorTxt data-set shows much lower indices for variants reducing punctuation demands, suggesting differences in text entry method, possibly predictive text, or alternatively or in addition, the greater stigma associated with incomplete standard English punctuation, including by those with more developed accomplishment in standardised literacy. Punctuation symbols were semi-automated by predictive text while being awkward by manual entry, and this may be a factor given the higher reporting of predictive text use by older contributors. Conversely, <UR> for YOU'RE remains at a level of frequency suggesting a possible status as a comparatively unmarked convention. The pattern is one of multiple motivation and meaning-making in emergent and unsettled conventions with the certainty of rationale opaque from textual evidence. Environmental contextual pressures may be in play in the affordance of not having to negotiate the symbols menu of the phone-pad; this may operate in conjunction with a naïve, less inhibited concern for the shibboleths of standardised forms of apostrophe use (see figure 4.6 for the notion of multiple affordances and the opaque nature of multiple motivations and effects).¹⁴⁹

Some words and colloquial contractions with established vernacular spellings show low indices in CorTxt by comparison with RealTxt. For example, <n> for <and> in collocations; <woz> for <was>, <goin> for <going>. This may suggest that availability of an established vernacular convention does not necessarily lead to general acceptance of that form. As the interviews and questionnaires demonstrate, such options may be avoided for perceived stigmatised connotations, or because of text entry demands by comparison with alternatives, or for a

combination of these and other reasons. Some may avoid such variations, which may be frequent in other settings, such as the medial <y> eye dialect forms found at SLC. This is illustrated by the discrepancy in the citation of the colloquialism ALRIGHT (strictly ALL RIGHT) which is comparatively frequent in RealTxt, functioning as a discourse marker with over twenty spellings, some in deictic and mimetic stylisations of talk. ALRIGHT is apparently less frequent in CorTxt, lying outside both Word-List parameters.

	WORD	Frq	%	RealT xt RS		Tagg #	Cortxt RS
87	ALRIGHT	84	0.2	22	alrite(26),alright(20),ite(8),alryt (6),allright(4),ight(2),orite(2),oryt (2),aight(1),aiite(1),alite(1),alritee (1),alritey(1),alriyte(1),alrt(1),alryyt (1),altee(1),arite(1),awrytt(1),oright (1),uite(1),yalright(1)	n/a	n/a

Table 6.7 Frequent respelling in ‘RealTxt’ corpus without featuring in the CorTxt 150

6.3.1 Analysing reporting of the ‘forty variables’ attestation results

The ‘forty variables’ instrument juxtaposes corpus attestation with self-reported experience; with ‘keystroke transcription’; with the provenance of examples drawn from corpus evidence and mass-mediatised exemplification in a variety of popular accounts. Table 6.7 is arranged in descending order of corpus attestation. The columns present the selected normative and respelt forms by their frequency in corpus evidence in the RealTxt sample, aggregated perceived frequencies of 823 respondents in active and passive repertoires, text entry demands by phone-pad transcription and citation of the variants in the RealTxt and PopTxt data-sets used in this study, including the texts which constitute the PopTxt.

A	Respelling or spelling variant , or a related orthographic variation such as a rebus or emoticon, formed from an alphanumeric and/or symbol sequence (type)
B	Frequency of spelling variant in corpus (tokens) in descending order of frequency
C	Ratio of spelling variant by comparison with use of normative standardised form
D	Percentage of the RealTxt corpus constituted by the spelling variant
E	‘Keystrokes’, or the phonepad transcription of the text entry for the spelling variant as entered by pressing numbers on an earlier twelve button phone pad
F	Reported percentage of attestation of variant form in experience of other people’s SMS choices (‘seen’: spelling variant reported by respondents as seen in their reading of text messages from interlocutors)
G	Reported percentage of attestation of variant form in respondents’ SMS choices (‘used’: spelling variant reported by respondents as being used in their own composition of text messages)
H	Normative standardised spelling , or the sense inferred from a rebus or emoticon (type: the alphanumeric and/or symbol sequence by which the ‘type’ is spelt)
I	Frequency of normative standardised form in the RealTxt corpus (tokens: frequency of occurrence of that ‘type’ in the corpus)
J	Percentage of the RealTxt corpus constituted by the normative standardised form
K	‘Keystrokes’, or phonepad transcription of the text entry for the normative spelling as entered by pressing numbers on an earlier twelve button phone pad
L	Citation of spelling variant in RealTxt corpus (Cor and/or in lexical lists and glossaries in public sphere accounts (e.g. Mander 2001 (M); Hurley/The <i>Sun</i> 2003 (SSSMS); <i>Letts Teacher Diary</i> 2006 (D); Crystal 2004 (C4); Crystal 2008 (C8).
M	Provenance of spelling variant in the RealTxt corpus (= CORPUS) and/or in popular accounts such as Stevenson 2000 (METRO = <i>Metro</i> article); Hurley 2003, Cramb 2003 (SSSMS = Scottish pupils’ SMS-style homework text message cited in The <i>Sun</i>)

Table 6.8 Key to fourteen column ‘forty variables’ data-set table (Tables 6.9a and 6.9b)

6.3.2 The ‘forty variables’ data-set table

Re Spelling	RS FRQ	RS Ratio	RS %	Keystrokes	Seen %	Used %	Standard Spelling	SS FRQ	SS %	Keystrokes	Reported SMS example	Provenance
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
U	1364	2.7	3.771	88	84.11	74.79	you	507	1.402	999_666_88	(C4,C8,D,M)	CORPUS
2	468	1.2	1.294	NUM_2	83.47	72.67	to	380	1.051	8_666	(C4,C8,D,M)	CORPUS
r	208	1.6	0.575	777	81.78	70.13	are	134	0.370	2_777_33	(C4,C8,D,M)	CORPUS
LOL	207	n/a	0.572	555_666_555	86.23	72.67	laughing out loud			555_2_88_4_44_0_666_88_8_0_555_66_6_88_3	C4, C8, D, M	CORPUS
4	143	1.1	0.395	NUM_4	80.72	68.86	for	128	0.354	333_666_777	(C4, C8, D, M)	CORPUS
wat	100	1.0	0.276	9_2_8	73.73	52.75	what	103	0.285	9_44_2_8	None	CORPUS
goin	99	2.1	0.274	4_666_444_66_6	76.91	66.31	going	47	0.130	4_666_444_66_4	None	CORPUS
wot	76	0.7	0.21	9_666_8	75.64	46.82	what	103	0.285	9_44_2_8	C4, C8	CORPUS
txt	64	2.6	0.177	8_99_8	86.44	71.82	text	25	0.069	8_33_99_8	C4, C8	CORPUS
:)	62	n/a	0.171	SYMBOL_)	72.03	54.66	smiley			[not directly translatable]	M	CORPUS
wanna	49	4.5	0.135	9_2_66_66_2	80.30	70.76	want to	11	0.030	9_2_66_8_0_8_666	None	CORPUS
ill	44	1.1	0.122	4_555_555	72.25	57.84	I'll	40	0.111	4_555_SYMBOL_!_555	None	CORPUS
2nite	43	1.3	0.119	NUM_2_66_444_8_33	79.87	62.92	tonight	33	0.091	8_666_66_444_4_44_8	C4, C8, D	CORPUS
soz	30	0.4	0.083	7777_666_9999	75.64	60.17	sorry	74	0.205	7777_666_777_777_999	None	CORPUS
2moz	27	0.6	0.075	NUM_2_6_666_9999	72.46	56.14	tomorrow	42	0.116	8_666_6_666_777_777_666_9	None	CORPUS
tomoz	14	0.3	0.039	8_666_6_666_9999	61.86	37.92	tomorrow	42	0.116	8_666_6_666_777_777_666_9	None	CORPUS
tonite	14	0.4	0.039	8_666_66_444_8_33	73.73	44.49	tonight	33	0.091	8_666_66_444_4_44_8	None	CORPUS
gr8	12	0.6	0.033	4_777_NUM_8	79.03	55.08	great	21	0.058	4_777_33_2_8	C4, C8, D, M	CORPUS
2	11	0.3	0.03	NUM_2	75.00	62.71	too	38	0.105	8_666_666	C4,C8,D,M	CORPUS
skool	8	0.5	0.022	7777_55_666_666_555	72.67	42.16	school	17	0.047	7777_222_44_666_666_555	(SSSMS)	CORPUS
bro	7	3.5	0.019	22_777_666	79.87	54.24	brother	2	0.006	22_777_666_8_44_33_777	(SSSMS)	CORPUS

Table 6.9 a The ‘forty variables’ data-set (1/2)

Re Spelling	RS FRQ	RS Ratio	RS %	Keystrokes	Seen %	Used %	Standard Spelling	SS FRQ	SS %	Keystrokes	Reported SMS example	Provenance
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
tomo	5	0.1	0.014	8_666_6_666	49.15	26.91	tomorrow	42	0.116	8_666_6_666_777_777_666_9	D	CORPUS
m8s	4	0.4	0.011	6_NUM_8_7777	66.31	48.52	mates	10	0.028	6_2_8_33_7777	?	CORPUS
msg	2	0.1	0.006	6_7777_4	78.39	63.77	message	20	0.055	6_33_7777_7777_2_4_33	C4, C8, D	CORPUS
:@	1	n/a	0.003	SYMBOL_Colon_@	36.65	18.01	screaming			[not directly translatable]	M + SSSMS	CORPUS?
2C	1	0.1	0.003	NUM_2_222	62.29	39.62	to see	15	0.041	8_666_0_7777_33_33	SSSMS	CORPUS?
AAR8	0	n/a	0	2_2_777_NUM_8	17.37	7.20	at any rate			2_8_0_2_66_999_0_777_2_8_33	None	SSSMS
BTDT	0	n/a	0	22_8_3_8	15.47	8.69	been there done that			22_33_33_66_0_8_44_33_777_33_0_3_666_66_33_0_8_44_2_8	C4, C8, D	METRO
BAU	0	n/a	0	22_2_888	15.47	6.36	business as usual			22_88_7777_444_66_33_7777_7777_0_2_7777_0_88_7777_88_2_555	None	SSSMS
CWOT	0	n/a	0	222_9_666_8	16.95	7.42	complete waste of time			222_666_6_7_555_33_8_33_0_9_2_777_7_8_33_0_666_333_0_8_444_6_33	None	SSSMS
dcdd	0	0.0	0	3_222_3_3	20.55	10.17	decided	3	0.008	3_33_222_444_3_33_3	C4, C8	METRO
hols	0	0.0	0	44_666_555_7777	76.69	62.71	holidays	1	0.003	44_666_555_444_3_2_999_7777	None	SSSMS
ICBW	0	n/a	0	444_222_22_9	15.68	9.75	it could be worse			444_8_0_222_666_88_555_3_0_22_33_0_9_666_777_7777_33	None	SSSMS
0	0	0.0	0	0	27.33	11.65	nothing	10	0.028	66_666_8_44_444_66_4	None	SSSMS
ps	0	0.0	0	7_7777	17.58	8.47	parents	4	0.011	7_2_777_33_66_8_7777	None	SSSMS
cyaßer	0	n/a	0	222_999_2_555_NUM_8_33_77	42.58	25.42	see you later			7777_33_33_0_999_666_88_0_555_2_8_33_777	None	SSSMS
TPTB	0	n/a	0	8_7_8_22	13.98	6.99	the powers that be			8_44_33_0_7_666_9_33_777_7777_0_8_44_2_8_0_22_33	M	SSSMS
2 day	0	0.0	0	NUM_2_3_2_999	82.20	68.86	today	37	0.102	8_666_3_2_999	C4, M	METRO
TIC	0	n/a	0	8_444_222	13.51	7.20	tongue in cheek			8_666_66_4_88_33_0_444_66_0_222_4_4_33_33_55	M	METRO
VW	0	n/a	0	888_888_888	24.36	13.14	very very very			888_33_777_999_0_888_33_777_999_0_888_33_777_999	(SSSMS)	SSSMS
				Rank order by corpus attestation								

Table 6.9 b The ‘forty variables’ data-set (2/2)

The ‘forty variables’ table reports a rank order of indices of respelt frequencies, which generally correlates with the rank order of recognition (SEEN) and reported use (USE) in the most frequent variants (columns F and G) . There is a consistent pattern of higher indices of attestation for variants sourced in RealTxt and lower figures for the examples with a provenance in citations found in mediated representations of text messaging language, such as the examples from the *Metro* and *Sun* tabloid newspapers (Stevenson 2000, Hurley 2003, Appendix IV and V). In the higher frequency variants, and in novel variants like <wat> for <what>, the transcription data of text entry sequences foreground the ergonomic challenges of entering some normative standardised spellings, and by contrast the motivational advantages of the affordances of text reduction in certain respelt variants. Conversely, initialism and acronym variant spellings sourced in public sphere media accounts show high levels of text reduction affordances and notably low levels of attestation in corpus data, and in both indices for SEEN and USE. <LOL> in its various forms is a well-established and salient exception. Following the typology introduced earlier (Chapter 4), it seems that certain variant spellings offer competing configurations of affordance and constraint to be evaluated by interlocutors in situated interaction, and contributing to the popularity of some variants over others (see Chapters 7 and 8).

6.3.3 Environmental pressures: tactics for reducing text entry demands

It has been suggested that SMS respelling functions as a tactic for reducing keystrokes (chapter 2b above). This has been linked to arguments of adaptive behaviour to new technoliterate conditions and contextual motivations of environment (Hård af Segerstad, 2003, 2005, Bieswanger 2007) with similar behaviours observed in keyboarded synchronous CMCs media (Reid 1991, Werry 1996). By this interpretation, users extemporise text entry shortcuts to save time, effort, and money, especially in the earlier context of metered 160 character text messages. This motivation may be intensified when under pressure of time or distraction of ‘polyfocal’ attention. The columns in the ‘forty variables’ table listing transcribed sequences of ‘keystrokes’ enable the reader to see the potential affordances of text entry reduction in the context of the phone-pad text entry methods in common use by respondents while data were being collected.

These affordances may operate in a configuration of motivational pressures for co-option or dis-preference. This can be illustrated by the case of <u> for <you>, with its general prior recognition in the vernacular and trade spelling conventions identified in previous chapters (see Chapters 2,4 and 5), in conjunction with its frequent iteration in a range of examples of digital media. In its standardised form, <you > would be realised by two complicated triple entry numbers and one double entry: <999_666_88>). As explained in Chapter 2b, certain sequences of multiple numbers were easily mis-keyed, generating errors and a possible motivational dis-preference for using those spellings. In the case of <you> an awkward normative spelling is

substituted by one double entry sequence, with a consequent reduction of two letters, and eight complicated phone-pad actions for the most frequently occurring word in SMS corpora (CorTxt 7.9%; RealTxt 5.45%,). As explained in Chapter 4, <U>/<u> for the sense YOU appears to offer multiple affordances in relation to the analytical framework (see Figures 4.6 and 4.8) alongside its associated ergonomic advantages but the relative weighting or prioritisation of these is difficult to ascertain (see 131 above).

Re Spelling	RS FRQ	RS %	Keystrokes	Seen %	Used %	Standard Spelling	SS FRQ	SS	Keystrokes
U	1364	3.77	88	84.11	74.79	you	507	1.40	999_666_88

Table 6.10 Data for the variant <u> for <you> allowing comparison of phone-pad text entry demands

The Wordlist and ‘forty variables’ table provide related frequencies and contextualising data for <what> in its normative and respelt variant forms, which can be interpreted as evidence of a process of contested enregisterment. Returning to the typology of competing variational pressures (Chapter 4), the spelling of WHAT foregrounds issues of etymology, the multiple motivation and multi-accentual meaning of a conventionalised respelling (<wot>) and the perceived affordances of enhanced text entry reduction for certain letter sequences.

	WORD	Frq	%	RealT xt RS		Tagg #	Cortxt RS
12	WHAT	306	0.8	9	what(103),wat(100),wot(76),wt(18),wht(4),wa(2),watt(1),wha(1),whaa(1)	41	3

Table 6.11 Frequencies of <what> and its respelling; see <wat> and <wot> in the ‘forty variables’ table.

The unusual normative <wh> spelling in <what> and related question words is explained in *OED* as the consequence of the historical metathesis of <hw> to <wh>: hence a spelling with a ‘silent letter’ found misleading and a prompt for the frequent shallower orthographic spelling found in children’s transitional spellings, as exemplified by Dickens’s Pip. The respelling <wot> is first attested in *OED* in 1829, used by Pip in 1861, and diffused to mass recognition by the ‘Chad’ comic strip after the Second World War (*OED*, cited by Crystal 2008). As shown above, in SMS, WHAT appears to be spelt frequently in the novel form <wat>, which is not frequently attested prior to SMS but is found at relative scales of frequency in RealTxt, and in CortTxt. The text entry demands for <wat> are <9_2_8> over <9_44_2_8> for <what> and <9_666_8> for <wot>, with possible implications of ergonomic affordances for its frequent selection. Interview respondents claimed the choice of <wat> over <wot> avoided perceived stigmatised connotations of the older and more conventionalised vernacular form (Chapter 8). Eye dialect forms, such as <wot>, may raise issues of social signification and meaning beyond the

substitution of a shallow regularised orthographic correspondence for a word spelt with etymological complexity (Sebba 2007). A variant form may be well established but its status as an available semi-conventionalised option appears not to give it certain preference of uptake in situated use. Similarly, in the case of the established eye dialect spelling <skool>, (see Sebba 2007, Chapter 2), the reduction of the etymological spelling <sch> by eye dialect <sk> from <222_44> to <55> still leaves four other letters with complex text entry procedures. These might encourage other abbreviated options such as <skl> which combines ergonomic affordances, eye dialect principles and vowel elision and can be ‘sounded out’ in speech. Ergonomic contextual factors of text reduction compete with the affordances of the enregistered respelt variation and with the localised affordances of whichever variant predominates in the interlocutors’ circle of address. Choices and effects derive and mutate inextricably from fluid localised contextual pressures including the changing patterns of in-group preference.

6.3.4 TOMORROW as a case of ergonomic text entry challenge

In both CorTxt and RealTxt, TOMORROW features as the headword with the highest number of variants: 21 and 29 respectively. This frequency is intensified by the situational likelihood of TOMORROW as a marker of time in textual practices often focused on making social arrangements. The keystroke sequences for the standard form may have motivated dis-preference for the standardised form: <o> spelt as <666> leading to three sequences of awkward triple entry in conjunction with a single <6> and the double letter sequence of <r> giving a six entry double seven: <777_777>.

	WORD	Frq	%	Realt xtRS	Variant Spellings	Tagg # t RS	Cortx t RS
38	TOMORROW	170	0.47	29	tomorrow(42),2moro (28),2moz(27),tomoz (14),2mrw(9),tomoro(6), 2 moz(5),tomo(5),2mo (4),2mz(4),tomorow(3), 2m(2),tmo(2),tmoro (2),tmrw(2),tomz (2),moro(1),mz(1),tmos (1),tmr(1),tmra(1),tmro (1),tmz(1),tommoz (1),tomorro (1),tomorroww (1),tomozzles(1),tomrw (1),tomuro(1)	40	21

Table 6.12 <Tomorrow> as the most elaborately respelt word in both CorTxt and RealTxt

This is a demanding way of entering a frequently-occurring eight-letter word likely to occur in the ‘micro-co-ordination’ of social arrangements associated with texting. The variants exemplify ways of lowering demands of text entry, in some cases imbuing the choice with nuances of conceptually spoken vividness. Attestation figures favour the combination of homophone spelling and vernacular substitution represented by <2moz> which, although transgressive, offers affordances of efficiency and intelligibility.¹⁵⁰

6.3.5 SORRY and SOZ: vernacular appellation, substitution and hypocoristics

There is evidence that the respelling <soz> for <sorry> attracted evaluation by interlocutors which varied in its orientation and intensity (see Chapters 7 and 8, *All Talk Vox Pops*).¹⁵¹ The respelling is unusual and shows the difficulties in establishing etymological derivation in vernacular forms. It may originate in the routine UK vernacular appellation of names such as <Barry> to <Baz>, <Sharon> to <Shaz>, or more famously the 1990s footballer Paul Gascoigne to <Gazza>. The respelling <soz> and its associated uncodified viral spelling substitution (e.g. <tomoz>) appear to have some level of circulation in spoken and tabloid print contexts prior to texting, although earlier citation is limited to quoted personal correspondence. This researcher’s field-notes show some respondents reporting using <soz> as spoken slang in the Birmingham area in the 1980s. *OED* cites derivation in an Australian orthographic practice formed on the principle of hypocoristics: diminutive forms and appellations with a strong interpersonal orientation, originally identified in place names (Simpson 2001, Liberman 2013, e.g. Dietz 2008). 20% or more of the large geographically dispersed sample here (n=823) claim never to have encountered it, and others judge it harshly in the qualitative data.¹⁵² Such emerging patterns in this table point to the patterned but varied tendencies in these uncodified forms, and to the manner in which respellings may combine multiple affordances rather than the manner of single criterial groupings, as used in earlier attempts to classify types of SMS respelling.

	WORD	Frq	%	Realtxt RS	Variant Spellings	Tagg #	Cortx t RS
57	SORRY	123	0.340		9 sorry(74),soz(30),sori (10),sory(3),sary(2),sorri (1),sos(1),sowi(1),sozzzz (1)	78	3

Table 6.13 Variations on <Sorry> as synonyms or different words

6.3.6 Related examples of multiple motivation in conventionalised respellings

To take two other frequent examples, comparable to <u> for <you> in relative salience, frequency and longstanding attestation, text entry reduction affordances of <2> for <to> or <nite> for <night> may combine with affordances of eye dialect which construe indexical value of

rebellious affect in vernacularised loyalty (Jaffe 2000, Sebba 2003), while being anticipated in well-established, widely-distributed trade respellings such as those recorded back to the 1920s (Pound 1923, Alexander 1930). Both words offer what Ryan terms ‘morphogram’ and ‘rhymogram’ potentials as orthographical particles (2011;5). They can be yoked together in other compounds: <2> and <nite> conflated in <2nite>. In such cases orthographic variation seems to perch serendipitously on accreted cultural convention with uptake determined on the basis of an interlocutor’s evaluation of the balance in the configuration of contextual pressures and affordances. This liquid flux of optionality represents an opposite on the cline of fixity associated with standardised spelling in printed contexts.

6.3.7 Motivational pressures in spellings formed by initialisms and acronymy

Spellings formed as initialisms and acronyms offer a method of reducing text entry demands, especially in the context of formulaic phrases and frequent collocations. In the case of <LOL> for the formulaic collocation and discourse marker <laugh[ing] out loud>, three words are reduced to three letters, and a sequence of 26 numbers is reduced to nine. Like <u>, <LOL> was already a recognised convention in early CMC media, where it was observed as having function of a ‘stage direction’ (Werry 1996), or paralinguistic restitution (Thurlow 2003). Its familiarity was reinforced by the mass diffusion of *MSN Messenger*, where it was frequently used as a graphically inscribed minimal response and discourse marker. The conditions of its enregistered recognition of meaning, its frequent use in instant messaging as an iconic discourse marker, its affordances of ergonomic efficiency in conjunction, with its badging as a fashionable marker of a technological lect all offer potential motivational grounds for use. As before, this can only be inferred because derivations of uncoded vernacular provenance are tacit and unrecorded. <LOL> is perhaps confusingly reported in this table because of the decision to list variation case sensitively: (<LOL>:212); (<lol>:207). In combined capitalised and uncapitalised forms it has an attestation of 419 in RealTxt, making it the seventh-most frequent item in the 250 Word-Group list. It does not feature in the CorTxt tables. Tagg gives a similar more prosaic example of <BTW>, used colloquially for many years as a formulaic abbreviation for <by the way> but given additional motivation in SMS by reducing text entry demands for an informally styled discourse marker (2012).

	WORD	Frq	%	Realtxt RS	Variant Spellings	Tagg #	Cortx t RS
28	LOL	212	0.584	4	lol(207),lolz(3), ilol(1),lool (1),	n/a	n/a

Table 6.14 Attestation of initialism form claimed in popular mass-mediatised accounts

6.3.8 Initialisms and acronymy in popular accounts: text reduction and meaning

The ‘forty variables’ table shows sixteen initialisms and related esoteric forms taken from popular news media accounts. Inspection of the keystrokes for the forms shows the major reduction in text entry demands made possible. These examples tend to feature infrequently or not at all in corpus attestation. Such results call to mind the identification of similar patterned infrequency of elaborated emoticons and initialisms in earlier email study (Petrie 1999, Dürscheid & Frehner 2010). Meanwhile, the asymmetrical high SEEN/low USE profile, occurs in eight of the variants as a 20% discrepancy.¹⁵³ Ten score below 25% recognition and eight of these are reportedly used by under 10% of respondents. This data profile contributes to the finding that respellings formed by initialism constructions are frequent in the exemplification featuring in public sphere metadiscourse (e.g. Appendix V), and rare in situated practice, except for a handful of familiar conventionalised exceptions such as <LOL>, <OMG>, or <LMAO>. Such exceptions can be found too in earlier forms of digitally-mediated interaction, as documented in the earlier pioneering studies of CMC (e.g. Reid 1991, Werry 1996, see Squires in press). Some conventionalised shortened forms can be found occasionally in still older texts, although their actual lived connection as a provenance to which interlocutors allude, seems unlikely. Nonetheless, there appears to be a degree of enregisterment in collective memory (see discussion in Chapter 2a)¹⁵⁴ Such low indices of attestation for initialisms and elaborated emoticon forms could suggest affordances of economy in text entry may be outweighed by dispreference for opaque meanings. Initialisms pre-suppose high levels of familiarisation through routinely situated occurrence or specialised occupational practices where text is entered as a code, with a secondary gloss to hand, as in Morse, telegraphy, stenography, semaphore, masonic languages and similar specialisms inculcated by programmatic instruction in vertical discourses (see Chapter 2a).¹⁵⁵

6.4.1 Discussion: empirical trends and their implications

According to the analysis of larger scale data-sets presented in this chapter, orthographic choice in SMS appears to show a level of patterned semi-conventionalised innovation, and principled deviation from normative forms, especially those based on deep orthographic correspondence or requiring awkward text entry sequences. The RealTxt data features more frequent respelling, more varied respelt types, greater frequency of respelt tokens and higher indices for accidental misspelling than are manifest in CorTxt. These patterns are consistent, providing evidence for a comparatively higher regard for normative choice in CorTxt’s contributors. This features systematically in lower indices of respelling in general, and the avoidance of specific respellings and orthographic tactics in particular, especially omission of punctuation symbols. There are a group of frequent respellings which feature in both collections which may suggest a level of enregisterment in emergent wider recognition of socially valued choice. This includes the iconic form of <u> for <you>, which is much the most frequent respelling of all data-sets, but is also seen in patterns in words which elicit high numbers of variants in both data-sets, such as those

for TOMORROW. CorTxt and Real Txt are similar in type and different by degree. This contrasts with the more esoteric spellings sourced in data excerpted from popular accounts in public sphere commentary, or listed in lexical lists such as those collected by Crystal (2004, 2008, see Tagg 2009,2012 for similar finding), which seem to be the production of a different principled configuration of semiotic affordances.

6.4.2 Age-grading and educational attainment as possible correlations

There is evidence in both the SEEN USE survey table and in the comparisons between RealTxt and CorTxt, that a substantial proportion of those texting avoid respelling. This reluctance correlates with age and educational attainment although there is no necessary causal relationship. The stronger orientation to standard form types and tokens are found in the more educated older demographic of CorTxt's contributors, and in the smaller subsample of older contributors to RealTxt in Survey 65, raising the possibility that respelling in SMS is in part age-graded and/or education-graded with some young adults choosing to shed variants in their ongoing social trajectories towards higher education study and employment in professional roles (see Chapter 8).¹⁵⁶

6.4.3 Issues of heterogeneity in the participant sample

There are grounds for believing that situated attitudes and practices were more polarised than the indices for the total corpus samples shows. According to the survey of SMS attitudes and practices (Chapter 7) about a quarter of respondents report avoiding text abbreviation. If such respondents are broadly accurate in their reported practice, then others must respell more than the mean of aggregated representation constituted in the total corpus. The more intense level of innovation in the SLC data illustrates this. However, the WORDLE representations and SMS samples show this as a matter of degree. All representations of data collection sites include at least some conventionalised respellings.

6.4.4 Microlectal peer-group norms in the condition of orthographic uncertainty

SMS interlocutors operating in the condition this study terms 'literate indeterminacy' share their orientation to standardised forms insofar as they share an orientation to common knowledge, understanding and expectations of accurate performance in the replication of defined, codified forms of schooled literacy. In situated practice, respondents will have differential levels of access to such knowledge and understanding. If users of SMS are operating in a condition of uncertain expectation of general preferred orthographic expectations in a medium which is self-published and dyadic, they may orientate themselves to the peer-group norms of their microlectal circle of address, rather than to standard conventions of nation-state standardised choice, with its undertones of meticulous formality. In their less defined sense of appropriate conventional norms in digitally-mediated contexts, practices may be extemporised with an

orientation to localised co-constructed expectations rather than to any normative imaginary of a common reference point. Focus on competent replication of standardised spelling expectations gives way to orthographic norms in accommodation to the social valuing of interlocutors, in overlapping microlectal circles of communicative practice; including the option of continuing with standardised choices for those with a literacy identity defined autonomously of situated context.

6.4.5 Conventionalised non-standardness as a disruption to familiar expectations

There is an additional implication for users' sense of stable habitus in the face of rapidly-changing communicative conditions innovated outside the programmatic instruction of schooled literacy. The pervasive pattern of the corpus analysis shows that respelling is frequent, at least for some frequent words, and some respondents. This impression is evident in Figures 6.7 and 6.8, which show the trend of respelling with graphic immediacy (see Appendix Vi;iv for more detailed enlargements). This depiction of a conventional level of 'non-standardness', or variational forms in vernacular conventions, is in line with a pattern consistently demonstrated throughout the data-sets collected for this study. The respelling of frequently occurring words is an inevitable encounter for many recipients of RealTxt SMS messages, with many frequent words sometimes respelt, and others mainly respelt, with the general orthographic environment in this study showing a mean aggregated level of respelling of 30% or more. A general orthographic environment in which some degree of respelling appears routine has consequences for the sense of fixity in the spelling dimensions of habitus. The notion that 'twentieth-century English spelling is almost absolutely invariant' may continue to hold in many prestige registers of public discourse while being experienced very differently, and on a daily basis in vernacular life-worlds.¹⁵⁷

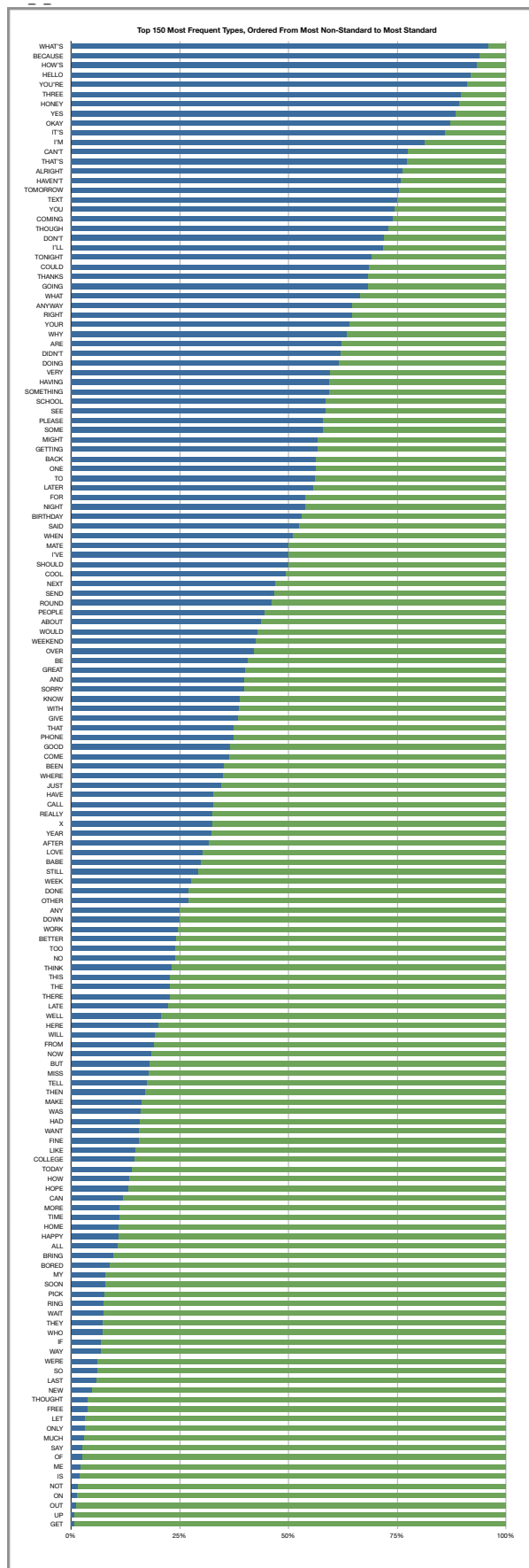


Figure 6.5 Descending order of the tendency to respelling in the RealTxt 150

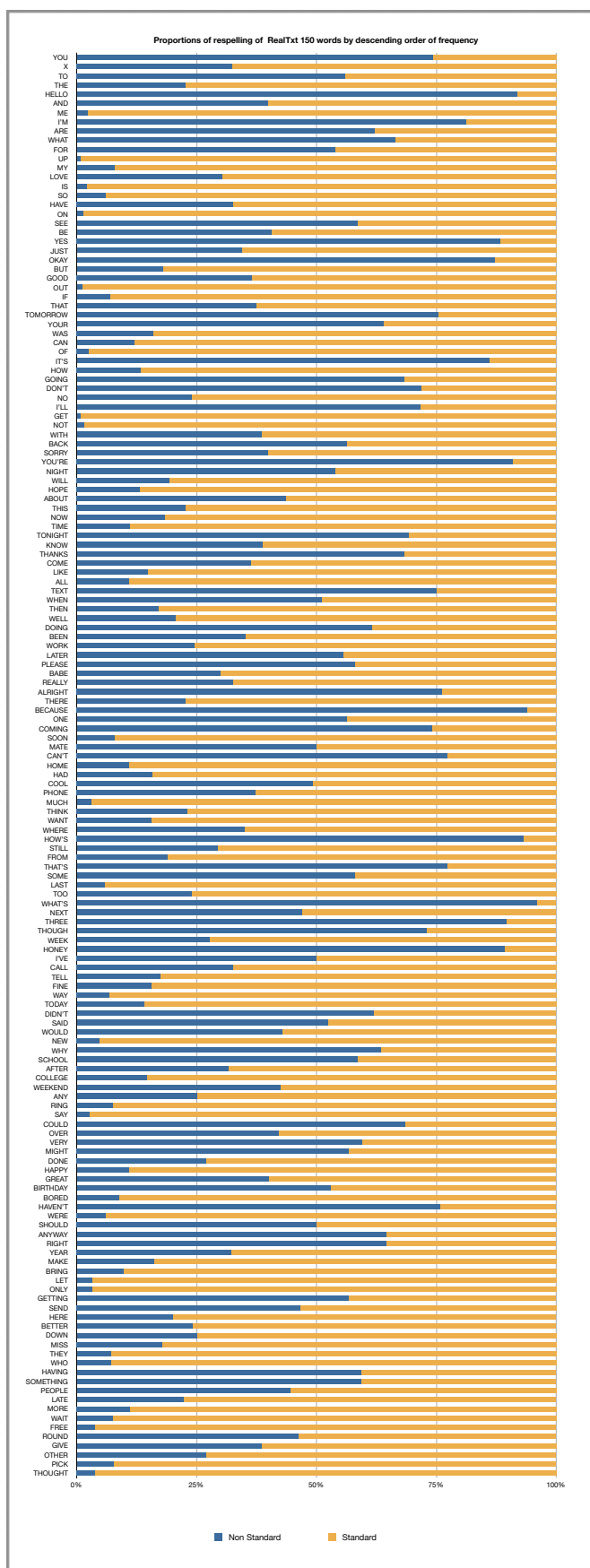


Figure 6.6 Respell RealTxt 150 words by descending order of frequency

6.4.6 Summarising the profile of more intensive respelling by adolescents

The chapter has corroborated the identification of the orthographic features and patterns identified by the linguistic and semiotic analysis reported in Chapter 5, in which I demonstrated some of the affordances offered by respelling in digitally-mediated practices. The evidence presented in Chapter 6 is at a larger scale of attestation: the numerical indices suggest users' recognition of the advantages of respelling and their concurrent differential attachment to the institutional legitimation and cultural capital offered by normative forms. There is verification of Tagg's CorTxt Word-Group tables with patterned differences in degrees of iteration which may be age-graded or relate to educational attainment. I have shown how the scale of respelling by this study's adolescent respondents is differently profiled from those cited in popular accounts (e.g. Mander 2001, Crystal 2004). I have presented data-sets demonstrating that orthographic choice in this sample is more intense and varied than the results reported in studies focused on Higher Education college students' instant messaging in Canadian and US contexts (e.g. Ling & Baron 2008, Baron 2008, Tagliamonte & Denis 2008, Squires 2010, 2012). I have argued that it is necessary to scrutinise the ideological attitudes and the contextual pressures manifest in the situated literacy choices underlying evidence of choice as manifest in textual evidence. This is the function of the two chapters which follow.

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- 139 Image adapted from edited version of report generated by Wordsmith Tools (see Scott 1995).
- 140 Shortis 2001b and Shortis 2003 in professional bibliography.
- 141 This was not asked for or measured in RealTxt instruments but is estimated as higher than Tagg's 96% figure for 'Native English' use in her sample, and especially in the SLC material from London.
- 142 Tagg reports 25%: 22-25, 23%: 26-29 and 30%: 30-35. N=248+16=264 (2012:27).
- 143 University of Birmingham
- 144 By contrast, see the data collection method deployed by Spilioti in her ethnographic study (2006, 2011).
- 145 Following common reporting of corpus data, the distinction is drawn between TYPES as unique configurations of graphabet sequencing, typically spellings, and TOKENS, as the frequency of instantiations of the TYPE in any given corpus.
- 146 Each corpus processed with WORDLE: Feinberg 2012 at <http://www.wordle.net/>.
- 147 See Tagg 2012:130, citing Leech *et al.* 2001, and comparison of lexical frequencies in Tagg 2007.
- 148 1st, 5th, 10th etc are references to rank order of Head-Word/Word-Group in 250 table in Appendix VI.
- 149 See shibboleths exemplified in Truss 2003, Humphrys 2006, Heffer 2010.
- 150 The transgression of written system norms represented by <2moz> may be a motivation or an obstacle to its uptake depending on the microlectal context of address. The option <tomo> appears to have been an innovation based on a sequence in predictive text, which triggered the full realisation.
- 151 See treatment of <soz > by respondents in Txt Talk Vox pops in Blake & Shortis with Powell 2011 and in *Urban Dictionary* and related WIKI sources.
- 152 See Liberman 2013 for references on hypocoristics. See Kidd, Kemp and Quinn 2010 for a more recent treatment.
- 153 In the original Bristol dialect study High seen/Low Use was associated with variants undergoing possible stigmatisation (Shortis et al 2011).
- 154 OMG features in *OED3* with a citation dating back to 1917. <http://www.lettersofnote.com/>.
- 155 The re-conventionalised <lol> and its indices here, or certain 'code' items in L337.
- 156 See Tagg's identification of occupational roles in 2012: 27.
- 157 See Milroy & Milroy 1991:67, and cited in Sebba 2007.

7a). The ‘deregulation’ and ‘viral re-regulation’ of SMS choice

Quantitative indices of self-reports of SMS spelling choice

Next...what you actually do...

Practices: the way you text and your experiences as a user	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
I rarely use text message abbreviations in my own texts.	X	X	✓
I never use text messaging spellings in my formal work.	✓	X	X
I vary my text message spelling depending on who I am texting.	✓	X	X
I vary my text message spelling depending on whether I am in hurry.	✓	X	X
I don't usually punctuate my text messages.	X	X	✓

Next....text spellings you have seen and use...

This next section is for recording your experience of particular text spellings - whether you see certain spellings in text messages and whether you use them when you text.

Each text spelling in the left hand column is accompanied by the word or phrase in its standard English form in the right hand column.

<http://www.teachit.co.uk/index.asp?CurrMenu=324&resultid=1052>

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Figure 7.1 Excerpt from one of the 823 respondents' answers to quantitative survey questions

[i]t is important to stress that vernacular literacies are still subject to the social pressures of the family and other social groups and they are regulated by them. While these pressures may be less formal than the strictures of school, law or workplace, and people often willingly accept them, institutions such as the family are powerful social institutions, and their influence can be strongly restraining to people. Pressure is exerted through the intimacies of day-to-day interactions, attitudes, humour, traditions and routines, rather than through formal procedures and legal sanctions.

Barton & Hamilton 1998;253

7.1.1 Orientation: the questionnaire as a proxy for a ‘speech chain’ process

In Chapters 7 and 8, I shift the focus away from the textual and corpus evidence which featured in Chapters 5 and 6, to considering evidence I collected about the respondents’ reported attitudes and practices around their SMS orthographic choices. In Chapter 7, I report analysis of the patterns of response generated by the questionnaires administered in this study. In Section A, I report analysis of quantitative indices and in Section B, I present analysis of over 50,000 words of discursive commentary, which make up the qualitative questionnaire data-set.

Questionnaires formed a research instrument used from the earliest phase of study in 2001, with the schedules applied in those early pilot questionnaires being devised in response to emerging lines of enquiry. In 2007 the schedule was formalised in the larger-scale online questionnaires administered using the *SurveyBuilder* application to over 800 respondents at the mid-point of the study. The questionnaires were subsequently re-administered to smaller samples and also repurposed as the basis of the later interview schedules. The value of the questionnaires was in part their empirical attestation, especially when used in triangulation with other research instruments, and in part their value in testing out emerging theorisation of the intrapersonal ideologies which appeared to be shaping idiolectal and microlectal preference.

In Chapter 3, I suggested that any act of orthographic choice gives rise to textual evidence, along with evidence of the pressures of the contingent social expectations and practices in which the text is situated; there is also the evidential trace made by the persistent evaluation to which all socially visible choice is subject. So a choice of spelling is triangulated around the inscription of a semiotic preference in a particular configuration of contextual pressures, and these pressures include the inevitable evaluation of that choice by interlocutors. In the previous chapter, I presented the aggregated evidence of respondents’ ‘micro-evaluations’ of the textual data comprised of forty variant orthographic forms (Table 6.9). These were treated as indices revealing the relative degree of socially valued recognition of those particular examples. In this chapter, I present the trends to be observed in those same respondents’ self-reports of their SMS orthographic attitudes, practices, and habits including their evaluations of more specific textual evidence.

I begin by reporting the indices for the quantitative survey questions. These probed respondents’ generalised estimations of their SMS spelling practices in relation to possible motivations and effects, using a schedule of prompts developed from the analytical framework (Figure 4.8). In the next chapter section, I develop analysis of the more elaborated evaluative commentary to be found in the qualitative responses to a schedule of structured open questions. Taken together the quantitative and qualitative sections of the chapter depict an aggregation of the respondents’ accounts of the attitudes and practices which comprise the conditions under which their SMS spelling choice was made, at least as it was reported by them. Together they show the operation of the informal ‘relay’ of iteration and evaluation by which moments of

idiolectal choice drew from, and fed back into emergent socioliterate conventions. Quantitative survey results are presented in tables inserted in the body of the chapter; qualitative data are illustrated by an indicative selection. More detailed information can be found in Appendix IV, which presents an example of a completed questionnaire, along with a detailed rationale for its schedule, and Appendix VII, which presents tables which offer more detailed explanation of the analytical codes applied to respondents' comments.

7.1.2 Deregulation and viral re-regulation: defining terms

The question in the chapter section title refers to the **deregulation** of orthographic choice, by which I mean the way in which the spelling choices used so pervasively in SMS and related digitally-mediated interaction can be viewed as a challenge to the default expectation that normative orthographic choice will always be the preferred form, irrespective of context and social purpose: the settlement of 'the high age of print' and the **autonomous model of literacy**. Orthographic behaviour in young people's SMS choices is **deregulated**, in the sense that choices other than normative selection can be considered as deliberated social semiotic design rather than deficit performances of ignorance or the want of educational opportunity (Chapter 2a). The phrase **viral re-regulation** alludes to the re-regulation of spelling choice by the 'intimacies of day to day interactions: attitudes, humour, traditions and routines,' to use Barton & Hamilton's wording (1998:253, above). These constitute the changes to choice consequent on monitoring as these are enacted by serial, small acts of evaluation by which interlocutors make situated judgments about the spelling choices they make, and those made by others, within their localised circles of interaction. So by this hypothesis, spelling choice is **re-regulated** by tacit, localised social pressures manifest spontaneously in the immersive conditions of a **horizontal discourse**, rather than extrinsically by institutional prescription, as associated with the **vertical discourse** of **schooled literacies**. The nature of that informal **viral regulation** will be a consequence of the self-perceived literate and orthographic identity of interactants. This will include their orientation to ideological or autonomous models of literacy and their corresponding sense of what constitutes valued orthographic choice. The questionnaire schedule is designed to elicit these social and literate values as reported by respondents, and their claimed orthographic dispositions and practices, in order to understand the contextual pressures brought to bear on spelling choice in a more permissive orthographic regime.

Selection of spelling is seen as related to constructions of literate identity; considerations of audience expectation; the degree of 'technoliterate' accomplishment and its resourcing; and 'environmental factors', such as the 'geosocial' setting in which the SMS was composed, following the matrix of motivational pressures on orthographic choice outlined in the analytical framework (Figure 4.8). Choice will also relate to the socio-economic and cultural resources the person choosing has at their disposal: their accomplishment in standardised forms, attentiveness to register, and the level of informed metapragmatic awareness about the choices likely to be

deemed appropriate in a given situation. Some of these factors are suggested by the quantitative indices featuring in the twenty closed questions in the questionnaire. Others are further explored in the second section of the chapter in analysis of the evidence afforded by the coded evidence of answers made in response to the qualitative questionnaire schedule. I draw provisional conclusions to be developed in analysis of the more specific extended narratives and rationales featuring in the interviews examined in the next chapter, and in the theoretical elaboration given synoptic treatment in Chapter 9.

7.1.3 Quantitative data-set indices for answers to closed questions

I now examine the quantitative data-set using the numerical indices of answers to closed questions, divided into the five main sections of the quantitative section of the questionnaire, as set out in Chapter 4 and its appendix. As explained there, these questions were designed to elicit answers focused on the social and environmental contextual pressures identified in the analytical framework (Figure 4.8). Questions also probed possible correlations identified by earlier fieldwork and earlier studies, such as the means by which SMS respellings came to be learnt, and the relevance of extrinsic reference and instruction to those processes. Other questions focused on attitudes towards predictive text, which was commonly thought to encourage preference for standardised forms, but was also reported as being appropriated against the grain of its manufacturer's design in the production of phone lexicons of respelling (e.g. interviews: Pete and Victor 2003).

I have argued that SMS orthographic choice is both patterned and heterogeneous and that it is difficult to generalise the larger patterns practised by millions with any certitude from the evidence garnered from a few individuals or from a handful of groups. This view is reflected in the status I give the numerical indices which I report. They are indicative of possible empirical trends and theoretical perspectives without having the status of a statistical survey.

The reporting here follows the sequence set out in the questionnaire. Data-sets precede commentary and analysis.

		24 College 2007(N=145)	30 Open Access 2008 (N=556)	65 Follow up 2009 (N=122)	Total (N=823)
Age	5 - 11	0.68%	2.69%	0.82%	2.06%
	11 - 16	2.05%	42.11%	19.67%	31.73%
	16 - 19	82.88%	39.61%	45.90%	48.17%
	19 - 25	11.64%	3.23%	24.59%	7.88%
	26 - 35	1.37%	5.56%	4.10%	4.61%
	36 - 50	0.68%	5.02%	0.82%	3.63%
Gender	51 - 65	0.68%	1.79%	2.46%	1.69%
	Male / Female	32.88% / 67.12%	42.47% / 57.53%	34.06% / 65.94%	39.48% / 60.52%
	Don't text	0%	2.87%	0%	1.94%
Freq. of Text use	Receive but don't send	4.79%	2.33%	2.46%	2.78%
	1 - 20 a week	31.51%	36.92%	22.13%	33.77%
	20 - 50 a week	30.14%	22.58%	21.31%	23.72%
	Over 50 a week	31.51%	14.16%	22.13%	18.40%
	Over 20 a day	N/A	13.80%	31.97%	17.07%

Table 7.1 Profiles of age, gender and SMS texting profiles of respondent cohorts

7.2.1 The profile of the survey cohort: age, gender, use of SMS

Aggregating the three surveys, 80% of respondents describe themselves as students in secondary education with nearly 50% representing the post-compulsory sixteen to nineteen age range. The reported gender profile is 6:4 female:male, with a more asymmetric 7:3 ratio in Survey 24, drawn mainly from sixteen-nineteen-year-olds. The smaller Survey 65 has 25% representation by young adults in the nineteen to twenty-five range, mostly undergraduates, giving it a slightly older, more educated profile. Just over 12% of the sample come from the nineteen to thirty-five range (as reported in Chapter 6, this is in contrast to Tagg's CorTxt). Most of the RealTxt survey answers in the older age ranges are from those in graduate professional roles, as in CorTxt, including teachers, who represent the main occupational group surveyed, with over 60 respondents describing themselves this way.

7.2.2 SMS texting profiles of use

These data confirm the wide diffusion of SMS texting as a literate practice by 2008, confirming the data profile seen in Figure 1.2. 97% report some involvement in receiving SMS messages, with under 2% reporting not texting at all. Between a quarter and a third report sending twenty text messages or fewer a week, with about 60% sending over twenty a week and nearly 20% sending over twenty a day. The mean aggregate is boosted by over 30% of the highest profile of use by the older respondents in survey 24. In the qualitative data statements and in interviews, respondents commonly explain they are sending more text messages as a result of newer phone contracts, which make texting free or low cost, with implications for the motivational value of some of the shortened text entry tactics associated with earlier SMS practices. In a related survey applied to one of the three college sites (SCS), over 60% of respondents reported frequent use of *MSN* for over an hour a night.¹⁵⁸ Larger-scale contemporaneous questionnaire surveys also report high levels of access to fast unmetered internet, especially following the diffusion of broadband internet access from 2001.¹⁵⁹ So these figures for phone use can be cross-referred with ongoing co-occurring engagement with related digital media practices, such as instant messaging, social networking and content sharing and commenting, as shown in Figure 1.1.

		24 College 2007(N=145)			30 Open Access 2008 (N=556)			65 Follow up 2009 (N=122)			Total (N=823)		
		Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
Your attitudes to standard spelling, abbreviated spellings and punctuation	I am good at spelling.	82.19%	10.27%	7.53%	80.65%	14.52%	4.84%	90.98%	5.74%	3.28%	82.45%	12.47%	5.08%
	I find English spelling easy to learn.	78.77%	17.12%	4.11%	77.06%	16.49%	6.45%	86.07%	9.02%	4.92%	78.70%	15.49%	5.81%
	I don't like abbreviated spellings like those found in text messaging.	23.29%	23.97%	52.74%	27.78%	24.55%	47.67%	45.90%	22.13%	31.97%	29.68%	24.09%	46.24%
	I like being able to spell in the way I want in my texts.	80.82%	13.70%	5.48%	80.29%	13.80%	5.91%	76.23%	10.66%	13.11%	79.78%	13.32%	6.90%
	I think punctuation is important in all written communication	49.32%	27.40%	23.29%	37.81%	26.16%	36.02%	56.56%	19.67%	23.77%	42.62%	25.42%	31.96%

Table 7.2 Respondents' attitudes to standardised spelling, abbreviated spellings and punctuation

7.3.1 Self-image, attitudes and orientation to standard English spelling

The results show relatively high levels of self-reported confidence in perceived access to standard spelling. This general impression may suggest that the respelling found in the RealTxt corpus is generally considered by its users as a deliberated choice. The statements about perceptions of being ‘good at spelling’ and finding English spelling ‘easy to learn’ were prompted in part by the researcher observing younger primary-aged children, and adolescents with dyslexia. Intermediate difficulties with achieving standardised spelling seemed to provide an additional impetus to welcome SMS freedoms. Respondents reportedly developed innovative styles which were deemed by peers as having high status with their localised peer-group audiences.¹⁶⁰ By contrast, De Jonge and Kemp observed SMS respelling offering ‘camouflage’ to older students with transitional accomplishment in measures of schooled literacy competence (2012). While these profiles of possible difficulties with spelling are reported in the indices for ‘Undecided’ and ‘Disagree’ categories, and are highest in Survey 30 with its greater number and proportion of younger respondents, this line of enquiry is hard to develop further by this kind of quantitative report.

7.3.2 Liking abbreviated spellings

The majority report welcomed higher levels of orthographic freedom, with a residual 25% of the sample reporting a more conservative orientation, which reports not welcoming such choice. There are similar proportions of about a quarter of congruent answers to questions asking for evaluation of standardised choices, supporting an estimation of a significant minority reporting an attitude to spelling shaped by an autonomous model of literacy. Survey 65 with its slightly older users expressed such preferences at a higher figure of 45%; that same group reports higher indices for familiarity with and use of predictive text, with evidence of related attitudes in the corresponding qualitative data.

7.3.3 Discretionary orthographic choice

Most respondents reported welcoming spelling as they wanted, with a ratio 8:1 showing a general preference for such choice. Its relevance here is better established by the indices for answers focusing on discretionary choice being motivated by contextual pressures of audience or geosocial setting in the tables below. These contextual pressures feature in the analytical framework. 65% of respondents reported welcoming varied orthographic choice in response to audience, with a similar figure for environmental pressures. Scrutiny of individual questionnaires suggests that respondents with a relatively autonomous orthographic identity may still welcome the freedom to exercise that choice exceptionally in particular environments. This was echoed by interviewees: the codes of *ENVIRONMENT* and *AUDIENCE* were applied to equivalent qualitative statements, in recognition of this frequent pattern (see Chapter 7,

section B). The overwhelming appreciation of user choice and flexibility suggests that inflexibility is a matter of relative degree in practice, whatever stated stances may imply.

7.3.4 Practices around use of punctuation

Early mobile phone interfaces presented particular ergonomic challenges which required use of the ‘symbols menu’ to access punctuation. This may have motivated the frequent, semi-conventionalised omission of some punctuation markers, especially apostrophes, as observed in earlier SMS data and commentary. For example, <Im> for <I’m> or <ill> or <il> for <I’ll> were frequently attested (Chapters 5 and 6). The question here about punctuation is framed with an extremity of position which probes the contested discourse around punctuation as a criterial shibboleth of prescriptivist deficit models of usage: the commonly reported folk-linguistic perception of accurate elaborated standard English punctuation as an index of higher order standard literacy or mental precision, with a countervailing evaluation by others of its comparative redundancy and obsolescence in situated use.¹⁶¹ The wording of the question is designed to encourage an identification with either the prescriptivist position of an autonomous model of literacy, or otherwise a contingent/ideological position. The general distribution shows a broad balance between those in favour and those less determinate: about half in favour of punctuation ‘always being important in writing’, a quarter undecided, and therefore not fully persuaded, and a quarter recording opposition to the prompt statement. The figures for the older cohort show the ‘Undecided’ figures transposed and added to the group allied to the autonomous position. These figures are consistent with the reporting of punctuation practices in SMS in the tables below.

		24 College 2007 (N=145)			30 Open Access 2008 (N=556)			65 Follow up 2009 (N=122)			Total (N=823)		
		Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
	I use mainly predictive text	41.10%	N/A	58.90%	49.28%	N/A	50.72%	49.18%	N/A	50.82%	47.82%	N/A	52.18%
You and predictive text (for example, T9)	I find predictive text annoying to use.	52.05%	5.48%	42.47%	41.40%	13.08%	45.52%	37.70%	14.75%	47.54%	42.73%	11.99%	45.28%
	I find predictive text easy to use.	47.26%	11.64%	41.10%	51.79%	17.38%	30.82%	60.66%	9.84%	29.51%	52.31%	15.25%	32.44%
	I add text message spellings to my phone dictionary.	36.30%	9.59%	54.11%	42.83%	13.62%	43.55%	47.54%	13.93%	38.52%	42.38%	12.96%	44.66%

Table 7.3 Self-reported attitudes and practices to predictive text

7.4.1 Attitudes to predictive text (T9 and semi-automated spelling)

From around 2002, my respondents began reporting that mobile phones were being marketed with more sophisticated spellchecking, including automated predictive correction, leading to some respondents claiming ‘T9’ would turn text respelling into an obsolete phenomenon, once users were familiar with it.¹⁶² The predictive text innovation and its associated discourses have intensified following the introduction of more sophisticated smartphone predictive procedures as a default option from 2007.¹⁶³ In this study respondents have consistently shown varied attitudes and practices to all aspects of predictive text, from their facility with its procedures and functioning, to preferences which appear to balance their estimation of gains and losses. For example, the gain of speed of production of standardised forms, including punctuation, against the loss of choice in its pressure to respell according to the defined preferences of its stylesheet, or inflexibilities around challenging the spelling of names. Automated correction may constrain both lexical and orthographic options and respell words and names with bizarre substitutes. Predictive text enforces standardised preferences as a default, against the expectations of the interlocutor.¹⁶⁴ In earlier interviews, adolescent users reported adding their routine SMS abbreviations to their phone dictionaries in preference to using standard realisations, which appeared too formal for their intended audiences.¹⁶⁵ In such cases the use of predictive text preserved respelt choices for their situated rhetorical affordances. Habitual T9 users also reported needing do this for accurate realisation of interlocutors’ names and other proper nouns and for expletives.¹⁶⁶

7.4.2 Predictive text and age

The results presented here show a greater proportion of respondents over the age of sixteen reportedly preferred predictive text, and this appears to have been a common default preference among older adolescents and younger adults, and in the qualitative comments analysed below in the next section under the coding *PREDICTIVE*. The results show respondents reporting divergent choices mainly in the 40% to 60% range, with comparatively low figures for the undecided option, indicating some degree of polarised viewpoint. Interestingly, this applies to the college sample, 60% of whom prefer non-predictive, manual entry. Examining individual questionnaires grouped by these totals, or by age, shows a degree of age-grading with older, more educated users more likely to prefer predictive text. Individual surveys show that those who did not add spellings to their predictive text dictionaries frequently opted to spell in standard forms irrespective of context.

		24 College 2007(N=145)			30 Open Access 2008 (N=556)			65 Follow up 2009 (N=122)			Total (N=823)		
		Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
Learning: the way you learn text message spellings	I learn about text spelling abbreviations from books and dictionaries.	1.37%	2.05%	96.58%	6.81%	8.42%	84.77%	4.92%	4.10%	90.98%	5.57%	6.66%	87.77%
	I learn my text spellings from people texting me.	73.97%	10.96%	15.07%	70.07%	14.87%	15.05%	75.41%	8.20%	16.39%	71.55%	13.19%	15.25%
	I learn my text spelling from articles in newspapers and magazines.	6.16%	12.33%	81.51%	9.32%	13.26%	77.42%	12.30%	12.30%	75.41%	9.21%	12.95%	77.84%
	I can usually figure out the meaning of a text message spelling.	94.52%	4.79%	0.68%	86.92%	8.96%	4.12%	90.16%	5.74%	4.10%	88.74%	7.75%	3.51%

Table 7.4 Self-reported sources for learning shortened forms: the way you learn SMS spellings

7.5.1 Learning SMS respellings

These questions about how SMS spelling is learnt were designed to check fieldwork observation that SMS is learnt informally in the course of situated interaction: '[t]he respellings... are 'natural', functional and uncoded and 'are interpreted and replicated by immersion rather than by formal instruction'.¹⁶⁷ The general trend in these indices suggests that SMS is learned tacitly in context, in a horizontal discourse, and not from explicit codified reference or formal instruction. A consistent 70% of respondents report learning their variations in this way. This figure is more conclusive than it may appear, in the general context that about a quarter of respondents appear to report avoiding respelling in SMS, and may therefore not relate to the question focus. Inspection of the surveys grouped under the totals shows a 15% minority who report avoiding respelling in their SMS practices. This fraction can be associated with the minority 'conservative' orthographic identity position revealed elsewhere in the analysis of the qualitative data below (see comment in 7.3.2 above).

Similarly, the consistent 9:1 ratio reporting of the low impact of 'dictionaries and books' shows these are overwhelmingly perceived as having little impact on learning SMS respellings, in spite of the novelty SMS and textspeak glossary structures, which proliferated in earlier public sphere commentary, as illustrated in Appendix V. The similar ratio with which users report 'usually' being able to 'figure out' the meaning of a text message spelling supports several related arguments presented in this thesis.¹⁶⁸ If a text can be puzzled out then the forms of respelling used must have some transparency such that they do not require glossing. In Sebba's terms they must operate within a 'zone of social meaning' (2007, 2012). Most frequently iterated respellings appeared to be based on informal and intuitible orthographic principles such as forms of constructed homophony (Ryan 2011); colloquial contractions (Weber 1987, Tagg 2009); consonant writing (Crystal 2002); eye dialect (Bowdrie 1964, 1982); simulations of variational voice (Skousen 1982, Balhorn 1998); regiolectal spelling (Androutsopoulos 2002, Shaw 2008); and/or sourced in semi-conventionalised usage in crossings from globalised popular culture (Rampton 1999, Pennycook 2007, 2008, Alim, Ibrahim and Pennycook 2009), television and the web (Sebba 2007b, Hinrichs 2009). Such spellings are more likely to be intuited in situated context than those based on more opaque principles, such as acronymy. This insight may be a factor influencing patterns of harsh evaluation of such lack of transparency, or operation outside the 'zone of social meaning' in the qualitative reports focused on the SMS homework example, and the related orthographic methods it represents (section B).

		24 College 2007(N=145)			30 Open Access 2008 (N=556)			65 Follow up 2009 (N=122)			Total (N=823)		
		Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
Practices: the way you text and your experiences as a user	I rarely use text message abbreviations in my own texts.	30.14%	13.01%	56.85%	35.30%	18.28%	46.42%	55.74%	9.02%	35.25%	37.42%	15.98%	46.60%
	I never use text messaging spellings in my formal work.	89.04%	4.11%	6.85%	77.60%	12.37%	10.04%	86.89%	8.20%	4.92%	80.99%	10.30%	8.72%
	I vary my text message spelling depending on who I am texting.	75.34%	8.90%	15.75%	63.62%	13.26%	23.12%	65.57%	4.92%	29.51%	65.97%	11.26%	22.77%
	I vary my text message spelling depending on whether I am in hurry.	73.29%	6.16%	20.55%	63.26%	13.26%	23.48%	58.20%	9.84%	31.97%	64.28%	11.50%	24.22%
	I don't usually punctuate my text messages.	27.40%	16.44%	56.16%	35.48%	19.89%	44.62%	12.30%	14.75%	72.95%	30.62%	18.52%	50.85%

Table 7.5 Self-reported practices: the way you text and your experiences as a user

7.6.0 Reporting practices of situated preference and adaptation

These answers report users' perceptions about deploying text messaging spelling choices in different contexts. They show the majority of respondents perceived themselves to be adapting their preferences to suit contingent, situated factors arising from the institutional framing of the literacy event, including its public status and audience expectations. Choices may be influenced by environmental factors and contextual conditions such as 'hurry'.

7.6.1 General disposition

The first general question was designed to elicit an indication of the disposition to use SMS abbreviations in the respondents' own practice, which bears comparison with the question above about affective disposition to respelling; both report the same trend of higher indices of preference for standard English choices by the older, more educated cohort: approximately over half against a third, as reported by the other two groups. Some respondents claim using higher percentages of standard forms than they tolerate. This suggests that personal production preferences for standard usage, possibly facilitated by predictive text, may co-exist with tolerant attitudes towards less standardised preferences used by others. This is verified by comments in qualitative data, especially from the cohort of teachers, who sometimes reported personal orientation to standardisation, while claiming to welcome creativity and variety in others, especially adolescents.¹⁶⁹

7.6.2 Accidental 'leakage' of SMS spelling into formal, institutional contexts

The second question asks about use of SMS respellings in 'formal work', eliciting data relevant to the alarmist media claims of contagion of formal literacy registers, as critiqued by Thurlow, Carrington, Crystal and others.¹⁷⁰ 85%-90% of older-profiled users in the two smaller surveys report never using SMS respelling in formal work, with the same trend but 10% lower for Survey 30, with its higher proportion of younger students in compulsory schooling. The figures for 'Disagree' and 'Undecided' do not give grounds to fully refute the news media claim: it seems that such leakage may happen, but occasionally, as reported in the qualitative data. The level of reporting suggests it is an occasional, transitional problem, a perception supported by the LEAKAGE coding in the analysis of qualitative results, and by the interviews.¹⁷¹

7.6.3 Adaptation to audience

The third question directly asks about orthographic adaptation to perceived audience expectations, with two thirds or more claiming making such alterations, and just under a quarter implying an invariant autonomously determined practice. Individual questionnaires show the usual correlation between not adapting and taking a position of autonomous, normative preference. Some younger respondents claimed not to alter their practice, with qualitative data

suggesting an adherence to vernacular preferences. The figures for the question about adapting in relation to being in a hurry show a similar profile. These indices, in conjunction with connected comments in the qualitative data-set, support the depiction of such audience-related pressures shown in the analytical framework, and figured again in Model 3 of Chapter 10.

7.7.0 Summarising the profile of quantitative evidence

Returning to the research problem identified in Chapter 3, if the variations in spelling practices seen in SMS are not externally defined and codified, or learnt by programmatic instruction, then what are the motivational processes by which interlocutors have developed the patterned but differential appropriation of available orthographic resources shown by the analysis presented in Chapter 6? How, why, and by what processes of ideological valuing, and situated activity do interlocutors judge their own choices and those of others?

The quantitative data-set indices suggest that the majority of respondents reported general proficiency in standard English spelling but welcomed the freedom to respell in more varied, abbreviated ways, especially in relation to differing audiences and contexts of production, and most claimed relatively few problems with SMS orthographic practices affecting their control of standard forms. This majority reported learning their texting abbreviations from situated interaction with peers, rather than by instruction or from sources of reference. They claimed being generally able to understand a text message in its context. Attitudes to, and use of predictive text varied; there was some evidence of a higher degree of predictive text use by the older subgroup. There is consistent evidence of about a quarter of the sample reporting a more conservative linguistic orientation across this data-set. Those respondents reported a disposition in line with the autonomous literacy model. They claimed to use standard spellings and punctuation irrespective of context, often in association with predictive text entry. This more conservatively-oriented subgroup consistently reported avoiding semi-conventionalised respelling, except when under the duress of environmental pressures such as ‘being in a hurry’. Taken together these results show patterned variation, suggesting that the more relaxed orthographic regime associated with SMS, as referred to by Sebba, is a complex and multi-faceted entity at the level of individual engagement.

7b). Self-reported evaluations viewed as a ‘speech chain’

Qualitative self-reports of the evaluation of SMS spelling practices

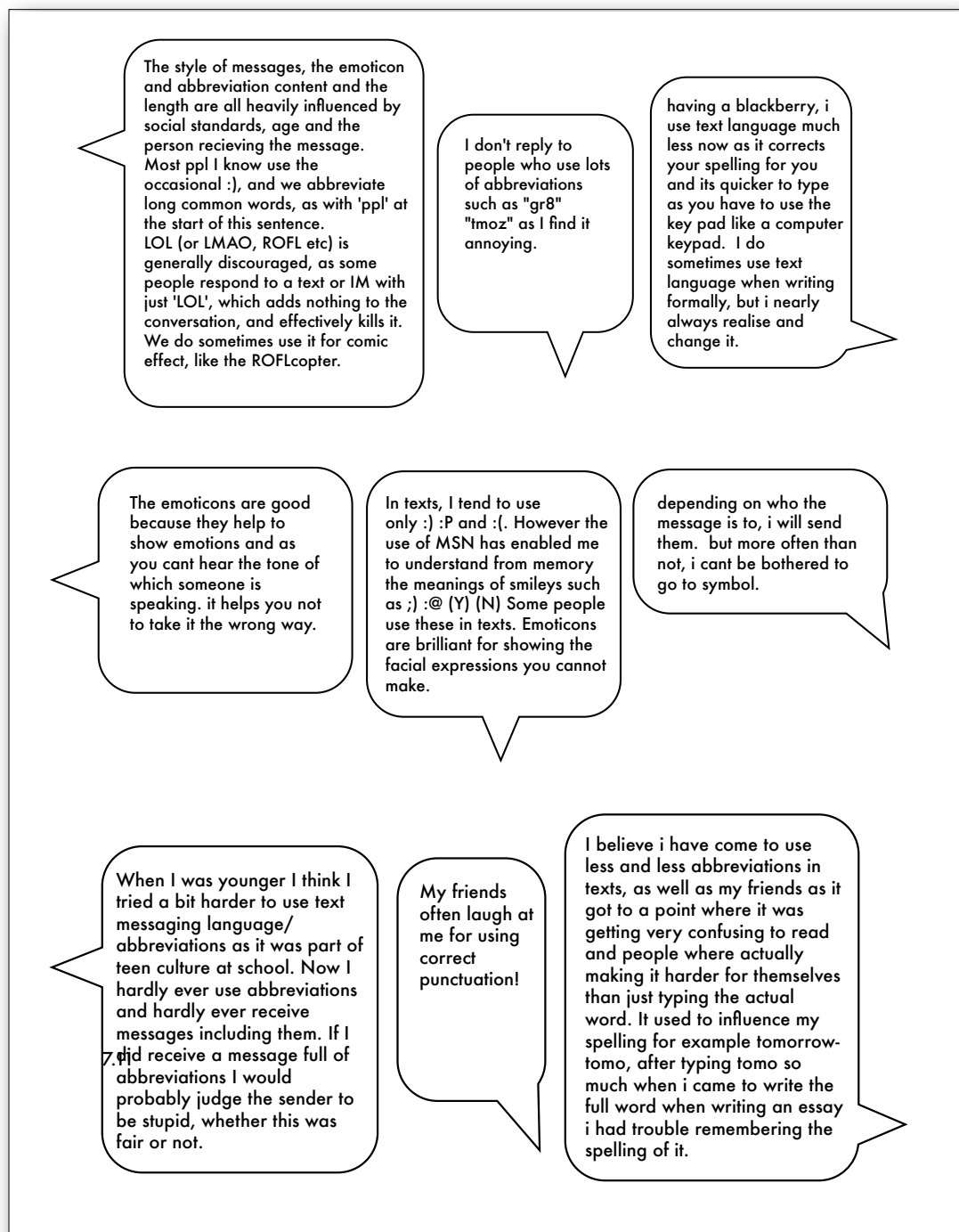


Figure 7.2 A sample of respondents' monitoring of their experience of SMS orthographic choice

Although different socially positioned individuals differ in the degrees of freedom they recognise themselves as having, their responses to messages received in the indexical here and now of each encounter are unavoidably agentive acts that require a semiotic reading of the current message and result in a 'next' message. As the characterological voices of the past speak to the one engaged in this reading, the next turn (or larger chain segment) is always up for grabs, always potentially a branch point in the social life of the register.

Agha 2003;270

Iconisation involves the transformation of the sign relationship between linguistic features (or varieties) and the social images with which they are linked. Linguistic features which index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them as if a linguistic feature depicted or displayed a social group's inherent nature or essence. This process entails the attribution of cause and immediate necessity to a connection between linguistic features and social groups which may be only historical contingent or conventional. The iconicity of the ideological representation reinforces the implications of the necessity.

Irvine & Gal 2000;37

7.8.1 Qualitative data-set coding of answers to open questions

The qualitative survey data-set has the general methodological function of offering verification of trends that have also been observed by other methods, and the more specific purpose of illustrating Agha's argument about the 'speech chain' process by which linguistic and semiotic choices are 'enregistered' as having social value. The striking innovation of Agha's argument is that '[the] culture of reflexive activity ... lives through the evaluative activities of ordinary persons' and is exercised in the course of everyday domestic interaction (Agha 2003:239). In other words, the sequences of evaluative behaviour which determine, and enact synchronic and diachronic 'cultural transmission' do not exist 'merely at the level of public sphere institutions,' although they are found there. Rather, these and other possible choices are filtered and mediated in the sequences of evaluative activity described in the epigraph quotation above. If we focus this argument on the case of SMS orthographic choice, changes in orthographic practices will be determined at the microcosm level of 'speech chain' evaluation, rather than by the articulations of powerful public pronouncement, although these are also likely to reflect and influence interlocutors' private and situated evaluation. Well-resourced published opinion sourced in linguistic authority, schooling or mass-media reporting will achieve such influence as it is mediated, filtered, internalised, and acted upon, in the aggregation of 'agentive acts that require a semiotic reading of the current message and result in a 'next' message'. Barton and Hamilton make the related observation that vernacular literacies are subject to regulation by sources of influential power that are instantiated through the 'intimacies of day-to-day interactions', rather than through the kind of programmatic methods associated with institutions (1998, epigraph). The questionnaire responses can be viewed as illustrative of the 'agentive acts' by which interlocutors arrive at their individual and collective understanding of the social value of SMS orthographic choices. Observing these contested ongoing evaluations as these featured in the aggregation of over eight hundred respondents' metadiscursive commentaries offered a way of observing the ongoing manufacture of the naturalised ideology of what is constituted as 'common sense' in literate choice, here as it pertains to SMS.

The qualitative survey consists of three open questions, designed to elicit responses shaped by a number of embedded prompts (see Appendix IV, VII). From a methodological perspective, the questions were designed to test propositions developed in the course of earlier fieldwork.

The first question about the SMS homework text had the base function of testing whether, and to what extent, this example of SMS orthographic register was representative of likely situated SMS orthographic choice, as perceived by respondents (research question 1). It also elicited a multiplicity of aesthetic evaluations of social distinction, which could be viewed as the manifestation of a kind of 'speech chain' *en masse*, as respondents evaluated the example and explained the degree to which the focus text compared with their own experiences and estimations (research question 3). In addition, it elicited imaginings of the **characterological** voice in the cited message, and the imagined personhood of its writer, which appeared to show

the influences of such estimations on possible future choices. Many of these qualitative responses were surprisingly vehement, especially from younger respondents. Their answers support Agha's argument that status indexicals arrived by the evaluative acts of 'ordinary persons' construct imaginary 'personhoods' by a process of iconisation (*ibid.*, Irvine & Gal 2000:37).

The second question focused on 'smileys' and other emoticons. These were chosen as the epitomising example of the popular representation of SMS and related digitally-mediated writing (e.g Mander 2001, Crystal 2004, Appendix V).¹⁷² These graphical re-etymologisations of punctuation symbols had featured in studies of earlier forms of CMC (Nelson 1987, Reid 1991, Rheingold 1993, Turkle 1995, Werry 1996, see Squires forthcoming). Their level of iteration, and degree of elaboration was contested in empirical study of more recent popularised use of digital media, such as informal email (Petrie 1999). There was some evidence that emoticons were becoming more frequent and conventionalised in SMS, with regular use of a small subset (Tagg 2004), although some other accounts suggested a degree of elaboration which seemed implausible given the opaque signification of an esoteric rebus, without a glossing of its translated meaning (see Appendix V for illustration). The question probed reporting of active and passive repertoires. Respondents frequently gave details of particular emoticons which had achieved recognition for them and identified the affordances of disambiguation, affect and 'semantic nuance' made possible by these paralinguistic signs.

The third question focused on eliciting commentary relevant to the matrix in the analytical framework (Figure 4.8), and the emphasis in this study on attitudinal, linguistic and semiotic change over duration. It encouraged focus on 'leakage' of variants associated with SMS orthographic choice to and from writing in institutional contexts and other CMCs, as also tested by the quantitative survey. This encouraged respondents to elaborate on such intertextuality and elicited data supporting the argument about changes in choice over 'biographical trajectory', as developed in Chapter 8. These questions elicited many discerning reports showing how respondents evaluated their current profiles of practice in relation to previous choices, sometimes in the course of relating potted biographies of their evolving SMS and CMC preferences.

7.8.2 Methodological processes in analysing the qualitative commentary

I coded over 50,000 words of qualitative data using a method adapted from Hahn's application of grounded theory and related qualitative data analysis (Hahn 2008, Strauss & Corbin 1998, Miles & Huberman 1994, or as summarised in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison 2000). Following a process explained in more detail in Appendix VII, I developed higher level analytical codes as set out below, and in the section endnotes. Categories which emerged as focal included: 'OPACITY' of meaning; 'DEGREE' of innovation; the 'TYPES' of respelling featured; the

elicitation by spelling choice of strong *‘SOCIAL EVALUATION’*. In addition the *‘CONSERVATIVE’* code indicated a stance oriented towards prescriptive normative choice, which was thought to carry value irrespective of context, as reported by between a quarter and a third of the sample. These classifications are explained further in the table presented in Appendix VII.

7.9.1 The representativeness of the Scottish school pupil SMS-style homework

Respondents were asked to examine a plain text representation of the homework assignment reportedly written in SMS style that I illustrated in Figure 5.18 (with its spellings listed in Table 5.13). They were asked to answer two questions: how typical was this text of the SMS text messages they read and wrote, and what was similar or different about it? The overwhelming majority indicated that they found the text mainly unlike their own SMS experience, with wide but patterned variation in the explanations. Responses varied on a continuum from strident unsupported social evaluations to more qualified comments, more specifically focused on analysis of semiotic detail, sometimes in relation to linguistic categories and their effects. Respondents noted the opacity of unfamiliar initialisms and esoteric rebuses. Over 30% indicated recognition of a degree of overlap between the homework texting style and their reported everyday practice. An equivalent proportion emphasised the degree of difference, sometimes extending this judgment with commentary on the utility and logic of extreme shortenings. The comments below are indicative.

the text has a lot more abbreviations, i would definately not use as much as this as in some cases it was impossible to read. I would however use some of the abbreviations such as 'br'o' 2' 'v'and 2day'.	This is very different to text messages I read and write. It has too many abbreviations and symbols. I think it is harder and more time consuming to write like that than to do standard spellings.	I use simular abreviations such as '2day' and 'm8s' but i don't know what half of this text message says such as BAU and AAR8, WUCIWUG etc. I usually use standard spelling so i don't text like this.	Parts are similar to text messages I know, but as a whole, it is a lot harder to read than most text messages I receive.
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Table 7.6 Recognition of overlap between the homework SMS example and respondents’ practices

7.9.2 Impugned motives about the imagined writer

A significant minority used hyperbole, exaggeration, adverbial intensifiers and other rhetorical tropes to emphasise that the text message homework example was most unlike those they had encountered. Some generalised hostile social evaluations of the imagined author, commenting on the writer’s eccentricity, arrogance, social ineptitude, and general lack of worthiness to be their interlocutor, sometimes linking this with attributions of ostentation, emotional neediness and other superlative comparisons, to emphasise the level of unrepresentative approximation, and maximise their sense of social distance.

7.9.3 The tacit expectation of clarity and transparency in SMS respelling

Respondents reported difficulty in understanding the respellings in their situated context, suggesting they found this act of communication opaque without recourse to a gloss. The frequency of remarks attracted the coding *Seen/Use*, and the attendant social evaluation of the writer's competence, suggested to me that the text might offend a tacit code of emergent convention: a 'common sense' maxim that respellings should be transparent and intelligible so they can be intuited in context. It seemed that spellings which confounded that expectation were seen as indicative of a lack of due social regard for audience expectations, so revealing some possible failure in the social performance and adequacy of the writer.

Some older and more educated respondents in the sixteen to nineteen age range commented more specifically on the kinds of respelling which caused problems of intelligibility, singling out unfamiliar initialisms, esoteric emoticons and rebus symbols.¹⁷³ These observations apply to other examples drawn from accounts in public sphere metadiscourse (see Chapter 5, Figure 5.18, Appendix V). Others reported that the kinds of respelling in the homework text had been encountered but the degree of respelling and the use of more opaque constructions such as initialisms was more intense than the respondents' reported general experience.^{174,175} In sum, these responses suggested a consensus that the homework text was recognisably distinct from their experience. It manifested different principles of orthographic articulation by comparison with situated practice, and by implication, suggested that practice was constrained by a configuration of pragmatic motivational pressures for the types of orthographic choice most appropriate for those particular conditions. In particular, respelling should be decodable in its situated context, rather than depending on secondary glossing, or insider knowledge in the manner of an argot. This consensus offers insight into the low figures of attestation for such examples in the 150/250 'Word-Group' and 'forty variables' tables reported in Chapter 6.

Not at all typical- the abbreviations are not economical and I certainly don't share most of them in my repertoire. I don't use such opaque smileys and considering the length of the text the use of so many abbreviations (which I normally use under time or space constraints) seems highly unusual.	Not typical at all. Similarities are threadbare. I guess the content is similar, but the way it is articulated (if that is the correct word) is completely different to how I would message someone. I use predictive text so all the words are complete and correct to standard English forms.	This text message is completely different from the ones that I would write. I wouldn't use as many abbreviations and I can't understand some of them! I would use some such as bro and b4 but I tend to write a lot of my words in standard English.	I have never seen such a range of numbers and letters scrabbled together, i don't know what most of it means. This has no similarities to my methods of texting, i only use abbreviations on occasion when in a hurry or am lacking in characters on a message.
I use words and punctuation, and my texts are at least somewhat legible.	Not at all similar to my text messages, im more likely to spell words correctly than abbreviate them like that.	my texts can be read by normal people.	Nothing like my texts: I used correct English and punctuation, as do most of my friends. I can't even understand this!
Very untypical, to the point of it being unrecognisable or understandable.	Not at all how I or anyone I know text.	i do not write like this, it looks ridiculous.	what the hell? I do not understand it. I only understood some of this because of the words on the transcript.
I would never write in such a disgusting manner, and if any of my friends sent me a message like this, unless they were being ironic, they would likely be struck from my phonebook and our friendship would be terminated.	This is ridiculous. In reality, no one would go to the length of leaning all these abbreviations and then presuming that the reader knows them too. the message is way too long, goes into unnecessary detail.	I personally have never sent a message like this, i feel that the abbreviations are way over the top. This makes it difficult to read. I do get really annoyed if i recieve a message like this.	This is about as far away from the type of text message I send/ receive as possible! Nobody I know texts like this at all. It's barely legible and it took me much longer to decode this than it would had it been written in plain English

Table 7.7 Sample of evaluative comments on the unrepresentative SMS homework text

7.10.1 Respondents' experience of smileys and other emoticons

Respondents were reminded of the term 'emoticon' and the representation of this phenomenon in news reporting, given two examples, and asked to report on their experiences of emoticons as readers and writers of SMS. Answers were coded and counted to give approximate indices for reported experience and use of emoticons, adapting the method for estimating Seen/Use word variables reported in Chapters 4 and 6. Just under half of respondents reported encountering emoticons in SMS messages received, with about a fifth claiming to use them, suggesting a comparatively high level of reported user experience, given the low frequency of corpus evidence.¹⁷⁶ The majority of comments welcomed this innovation, often claiming that emoticons offered a quick, convenient way of maintaining a friendly interpersonal tenor; such features offered a way to re-animate writing with emotional dimensions of tone and affect.¹⁷⁷ Some respondents pointed to the contexts in which SMS was composed and received and the likely additional pressures influencing choices of shortened forms in conjunction with the likely general lack of stylistic and informational elaboration possible when texting. Others made precise observations about which meanings were being substituted, often commenting on missing paralinguistic contextualisation cues such as facial expression and gesture or the absence of physical in-real-life location. There was a pattern of discrepancy between reception and production, with some reporting experiencing such choices while not replicating these in their own textual production, suggesting a measure of controversy and contestation about this relatively novel convention. This view is supported by a small proportion of derogatory comments, sometimes connected with claimed perceptions of emoticon use as stereotypical of the stylised performances of young female adolescents. A minority claimed strong dislike of all emoticons, and as with the homework text, castigated the personhood of the imagined writer on the basis of this choice.

I dont like emoticons. I think they are annoying and very very immature. so i dont like to use them whats the point in emoticons when you have words?	no one i know uses them in texts unless they are feeling extremely emotional. i dont use them.	i have only i ever received 'smileys', i have never sent one.	My friends may send the odd :), but Seen I think they're terrible.
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Table 7.8 Comments offering negative evaluations of emoticons and sometimes of their users

7.10.2 Semantic disambiguation

Many respondents made specific comments about the affordance of emoticons in marking stance and nuance, especially when humorous or non-literal reference might need to be disambiguated.¹⁷⁸ In some cases, this was accompanied by precise observations about the difficulty of conveying the appropriate tone by writing composed in awkward ergonomic conditions and at speed. Such observations recall longstanding observation in CMC scholarship that interactive written interaction may attract innovation to compensate for its sparse interface remotely mediating a manner of interaction associated with the vividness of actual speech.¹⁷⁹ This is reflected in the codes used to indicate respondents' comments on conveying precise emotional nuance.¹⁸⁰ Others commented on the opportunity to maintain a light-hearted tenor by construing a sense of openness to 'phatic communion' and intimations of social solidarity.¹⁸¹ There were similar comments about the affordances of emoticons and related conceptually-spoken cues for indicating tenor, in the sense of implied social relationship; and the popular re-appropriation of the 'visual morpheme' <x>, functioning a kind of 'minimal response' in written form.¹⁸²

Conversely, anxiety about SMS inculcating an interpersonally-focused tenor featured in comments from other respondents. Some complained of coming under pressure to adopt simulated conversational styles to avoid their interlocutors judging their habitual preferred written style as displaying an inappropriate degree of formality. Their preference for what to them had seemed like the unmarked choice of standard English had exposed them to a degree of evaluation of such choice being perceived as marked by others. The first comment below shows another common pattern in which the respondent reports understanding the convention and accepting its legitimacy, while claiming it is not in active use in her particular repertoire.

Personally I dont use emoticons when texting however i understand why they are used. I recieve texts with emoticons as it helps the reading of the text to understand what emotions the sender os feeling. It also allows the reader the understand how the text was supposed to be perceived e.g. If they used :P that symbol is would show the text was meant in jest.	I often use smileys to indicate laughter and appear more friendly. They are also commonly used in a joking manner. I also have used frowning faces to convey that I am sad or disappointed about the situation.	I use emoticons quite a bit when writing texts. I use them to help back up a point and let the other person know how I feel. My friends also use emoticons quite a lot. They are mainly used when there is a text being sent that could be interpreted in different ways to make the meaning clear.	I think they are used mainly to indicate the tone of text, as irony, sarcasm etc. can be hard to discern from written text. Futhermore, it is my experience that they are used to 'soften the blow' of a text message that could be taken as being more harsh than was intended, or, annoyingly, at the end of a text which is meant to be taken harshly.
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Table 7.9: Comments that emoticons can be used to enhance precision and construe nuance

i personally use them a lot, it's a simply way of showing someone your emotion. It's hard to show your joking in a text so by using an emoticon it shows them that you are. As for recieving them i only recieve them from certain people.	They are used fairly frequently in text messaging. As a lot of the time texts can be ambiguous in terms of the meaning intended behind them, smileys help to clarify the tone of a message. For example, if sarcasm was used you might see :-P. There are only a few varieties that I would use myself, :-), :- (and ;-).	I think they help to clarify what the writer is saying which can be essential with such instant communication that email/facebook/MSN etc affords. Emotions can be so easily misconstrued, words said in the heat of the moment, and worse still, sent to the wrong people.They add that extra touch of humour, sympathy, empathy, consideration - the essence of that instantaneous moment..... if you like! =:-]	I absolutely LOVE using emoticons, and there is barely a text that I write where I don't use them! Three of the most common ones I use are the winky face ;) the smiley face :) and the disgruntled or woops face :L . I think they are really fun and can really portray the way someone is saying things, such as if they are saying something jokily or sarcastically!
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Table 7.10: Evaluations of emoticons and explanations of their perceived affordances

For me emoticons never represent words only emotions and its main use is when texting a girl. Girls seem to use them a lot more and it allows really for a simulation of body or faecal language eg "u were lookin horrible 2day ;)"	I used to make use of a lot more features of text language such as these when I was younger, but it was only in fashion for about a year when I was 15 or so, and then everyone started to think it was a bit lame so all my peers grew out of it together. Now it's very characteristic of pre-pubescent girls	use them only when texting females	I certainly receive texts with them included, on a frequent basis. I do find that they normally crop up in texts from females: friends, sisters, mother. However i rarely use them.
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Table 7.11 Gendered attribution in evaluations of emoticons and their users

7.10.3 General disposition: likes

Many respondents indicated their general disposition towards the meaning-making affordances associated with SMS texting, especially emoticons, expressing pleasure in the innovation of new communicative possibilities.¹⁸³ Several focused on the augmented capacity to perform intimations of affect and emotion in writing. Some commented on the ease of figuring emoticons with symbols rather than explaining nuances by words. There was some evidence of use of emoticons alongside standard English spelling preference, suggesting a possible emergent configuration of affordances: a re-conventionalisation by some dedicated users of standard English spelling who sought a means of maintaining a tenor of friendly ‘screen presence’ without risking being deemed ignorant, which they associated with respelling (below and Chapter 8). This development is explored in interviews, in which respondents extend the case to the use of emoticons in work-related emails.

7.10.4 General disposition: dislikes

Other respondents expressed their dislike of innovative orthographic styling in SMS using a repertoire of social and personal evaluations focused upon attributions of lower social class, sexist claims based on gender stereotypes, age-graded assumptions, attributions of alleged stupidity, or of social and emotional neediness as proxies for a generally inadequate sense of accomplished social identity. This position is similar to the excoriating judgments about the worth of the writer of the homework text. It was usually associated with more conservative attitudes to standardised choices but also came from people with differently inflected innovative styles in expressions of distaste: for example, younger respondents with differently idiosyncratic texting styles.

7.10.5 Which emoticons?

Many respondents reported which emoticons they used, sometimes without any other comment. The coding frame gave attention to this profile in the code ‘*RESTRICTED*’ with results suggesting widespread use of a small repertoire of six to ten well-established options, confirming the findings of Tagg and others (2004, 2009).¹⁸⁴ As before, both survey answers and interviews showed a pattern of influence reported from parallel use of these conventions and emoji in instant messaging, especially *MSN Messenger*, with some mention of advanced phone features of semi-automated emoticon and emoji banks and animations increasing user variation.

I use alot more punctuation than i used to when i was younger.	I never used to use predictive text but recently i find it quicker and as i have more texts on my contract i tend to use them up.	alot of the slang i use comes from other people texting me, but i dont use slang as much as i used to and its the same with my friends.	I used to abbreviate almost all my words about two years ago, but now I look back and am embarrassed. I do not like some of the use of text language as it can look cheap.
When I was younger I think I tried a bit harder to use text messaging language/abbreviations as it was part of teen culture at school. Now I hardly ever use abbreviations and hardly ever receive messages including them. If I did receive a message full of abbreviations I would probably judge the sender to be stupid, whether this was fair or not.	My text language has definitely developed over time, I used to write most things out in full but as more and more text speak is used, I have included it far more frequently. I sometimes speak in a way that would be written in a text but it's fairly rare.	When I was younger and I got my first mobile phone I used to text just for becuae it was a trendy thing to do, and I used to just send short messages such as How r u? But now my texts are much more purposeful, I text to find specific information from people.	Non-standard orthography was definitely used more when we were younger - I remember using abbreviations such as "lmao, cba, kk, g2g, 2, u" etc etc far more when I was younger, say 13-14. Over time, I have grown out of using such forms, as have the majority of my friends.
I use standard English in text messages because of predictive text. If I were to upgrade to a phone with a qwerty keyboard, I'd probably change up and become a bit more lazy. I used to use 'txtspk' when I was younger, but when I discovered predictive texting, I never looked back.	When I first started text messaging at the age of 15 (2004) I tended to use more abbreviations and emoticons, as did my friends. When I started getting older I noticed a decrease in the trend of using specific texting lingo. I now barely abbreviate, unless I'm running out of characters in a text, and use smileys less often.	I used to use text message language, but as i used the internet mrioe and more i grew out of it and returned to using standard english lexis which i find easier to read and write, and i have started disliking the use of text language intensely.	The type of phone has altered my use of abbreviations and the 'free message' bundles available on phone contracts has reduced the need to shorten messages to the 160 character limit per message. However, in saying that I was never a big user of shortenings and rarely omitted punctuation etc. when texting.

Table 7.12 Respondents' comments on changes in SMS orthographic practices over time

7.11.1 Summarising comments about experience of SMS orthographic register

Respondents were invited to write about anything else, with three sub-questions to focus their responses:

- a) What factors do you think influence your text messaging style?
- b) Has text messaging altered the way you spell in other situations?
- c) Has your attitude to your own and other peoples' text messaging changed over time and if so how?

7.11.2 Intertextual influences of other digital media

Respondents commented on the intertextual cross-currents between various new media platforms which led to practices developed and iterated in one digital medium diffusing to others.¹⁸⁵ In particular, several developed detailed commentary on *MSN Messaging* as the prime source of their more innovative orthographic styling. Others referred to similar choices being exercised in social networking sites and content-sharing sites; these were relatively new at the time of the questionnaire as evident in Figure 1.1. Other studies featuring content-sharing sites show similar orthographic practices, although these are not usually the focus of those analyses.¹⁸⁶

7.11.3 Influences of phone technology factors: 'PHONETECH'

Codes were applied to attribute the influence of changes in phone technology, including facilities for display, spellchecking and text entry, or smartphone augmentations.¹⁸⁷ Focuses include changes in keyboard configuration and especially switching from twelve-button 'multi-tap' phone-pad entry to QWERTY displays, or equivalent shifts to brand-specific text-entry methods such as those used for *Blackberry* phones.¹⁸⁸ There was some comment on advantages of automated generation of graphical images such as emoji from emoticon punctuation sequences and related animated effects, which also featured in *MSN*. Others reported sourcing their dispreference for emergent semiotic conventions in difficulties caused by the technical capacity of their phone, or their familiarity with its use. These comments support the 'technosocial' 'environment' profile in the analytical framework (Figure 4.8).¹⁸⁹

7.11.4 Influence of the dimension of the coding: 'MICROLECTAL' address

SMS features mainly in one-to-one 'dyadic' communication. The term 'microlectal address' signals respondents' reference to their own localised audience for SMS communication in such dyads, and especially peer-group contacts and family relationships. There were frequent references to the respondents' own circle of interlocutors as marking some sense of the parameters for what the respondent regarded as a norm, or what they felt able to comment on. Some respondents were explicit in relating their norms to the expectations of those in their

circle, and their estimation of the localised norm conventions by reference to that group. Others referred to the variations of preference which featured within their group. Others still generalised their own localised choices and practices into matters framed as general common sense expectation. Others, mainly older respondents working as teachers, showed more nuanced understanding by referring to the more diverse range of audience roles and expectations in their SMS communicative circle.¹⁹⁰

7.11.5 Informal peer-to-peer norm enforcement

There were frequent reports of strong social pressures to conform to the social scripts of localised norms. These were sourced in evaluative judgments made by interlocutors about orthographic choices. Sometimes these judgments appeared to take the form of pressures to adopt the informal respelling practices used by the peer-group in a form of covert prestige, especially among younger adolescents. Conversely, among older students, there appeared to be negative stereotyping of SMS innovations as indexicals of immaturity, lack of educated literate accomplishment, or lower social class. Such opinions may suggest the operation of tacit shared ideological stances, which are not coded explicitly or learnt by programmatic instruction. The data-set was coded to gauge the strength of these contextual pressures.¹⁹¹

7.11.6 Environmental pressures of economy and instrumental benefit

Codings were applied to respondents' answers which reported making orthographic choices in order to fit the text to the limit of 160 characters. Such answers foregrounded the logic and efficiency of shortenings in reducing ergonomic, physiological and motor-sensory demands in instrumentally-focused rationales. This choice was also reportedly motivated by economic factors, or more commonly, out of concern to keep the message coherent and whole. An additional code identified responses foregrounding the logic and efficiency of shortenings in reducing text entry demands, sometimes with the corollary that these practical affordances legitimated such practice; conversely, use of respelling for other reasons was deemed foolish. A minority reported a more conservative preference for the legitimated exception to use shortened spellings 'when in a hurry' or for similar environmental justifications.¹⁹²

7.11.7 The influence of SMS spelling choices on practices in other domains

Common responses took the form of commentary on the influence derived from previous and concurrent practices with other social media, including instant messaging, and occasional references to online gaming and social networking, the latter just starting to diffuse into wider circulation at this time.¹⁹³ A few respondents reported occasional leakage of SMS respellings into formal writing. Others reported they felt able to keep their texting style discrete from domains associated with formal literate accomplishment. It seems that such perceptions varied depending on the self-estimation and identity projection of the respondent. More specifically,

respondents reported mainly accidental use of particular widely attested, frequent respellings, such as <u> and <2>, in formal contexts, which, it was claimed, did not impede understanding but might reduce credibility. There was little report of frequent experience of unintelligible communication by SMS respelling.

7.11.8 Idiolectal change over time in relation to biographical trajectory

There were many answers by respondents in the sixteen to nineteen and nineteen to twenty-five age groups, which commented on the way their own SMS orthographic choices had developed over time in response to changes in: maturation; educational accomplishment; employed roles; technoliterate expertise; tastes of changing interlocutors; and technological development of phone models, including new forms of text entry, display and predictive text. These micro-narratives repeated earlier comments about the motivation of respellings in the context of peer-group pressure, metered message length costs, twelve-button text entry. They suggested such pressures gave way to increased incentives to use standardised forms. Sometimes these choices were elaborated in folk-linguistic rationales. The common factor was the recognition that SMS attitudes and practices change over duration.¹⁹⁴ There was a common focus on past adolescent preferences now interpreted as being naive or gauche (see Chapter 8).

7.12.1 Summarising self-reports of attitudes and practices in SMS spelling

The general picture is one of ‘viral re-regulation’ and ‘self-surveillance’ in relation to social pressures, and to pressures arising out of the sociotechnological, material environment. Respondents appeared to manage their orthographic practices in SMS with differential awareness of the affordances offered by new options, and the threat of adverse social evaluation attendant in choice. Judgments appear to have been extemporised in comparatively localised, domesticated circles of interaction, in the context of dyadic communication, usually within a circle of habitual interlocutors. The patterns of response show discernible correlations between what was commonly respelt and how, and which choices attract harsher censure, and why, with more opaque forms such as acronyms attracting censure. Taken together, the trend of responses suggests the perceived impact of maturation and enculturation, with greater age and educational accomplishment correlated with more conservative orientations. Normative practice might also co-exist with welcome of more varied choices by others. It appears that most respondents remained vigilant and attentive to their spelling choices and they showed awareness of potential penalties for orthographic behaviour evaluated by others.

7.12.2 Clear, considered and contrastive rationales for deliberative choice

Many expressed considered rationales for what they did, and their claims appeared to be broadly congruent with the evidence of textual practices in their corpus samples, and across their quantitative and qualitative responses. They reported choices being made in response to the

perceived gains and losses of altered communicative affordances, while attitudes to the perceived superior status of standardised spelling remained broadly constant. Such answers suggested a tacit reflective self-monitoring. Others expressed strong opinions without justifying them. Those reporting an orientation to a normative literacy identity were more prone to judge by deficit criteria. Their position appears to have valued a generalised awareness of the social penalty of failing to spell in standard English over the potential of the situated advantages offered by respelling.¹⁹⁵ Respondents show both varied levels of awareness that choices carried social risks and varied perception of the focus of those principal risks: at each end of the continuum, adolescent peer pressure censure for ‘acting posh’ or the reverse-side deficit evaluations of variational forms as a proxy for ‘acting common’, and without achieved social distinction. Most respondents appeared to comment in ways which suggested that they did have choices to exercise.

7.12.3 Recognition of the contextual pressures in the analytical framework

Responses give empirical support to the matrix of **literacy identity**, **audience** demands, **sociotechnological** and literate access and **environmental pressures**, as presented in the analytical framework hypothesised in Chapter 4, Figure 4.8, and developed further in Chapter 9. Answers showed the predicted common awareness of the pressures to accommodate to audience and purpose; the pressures accruing to technoliterate conditions of familiarity with text entry facilities, charging tariffs and the gains and losses of predictive T9; the environmental factors of polyfocal attention and pressures of time and motion. They also show a general outline sense of respondents varying dispositions and varying elaborated orthographic identities in relation to their social and professional roles.

7.12.4 Age-grading and dedicated role

There appears to be an element of age-grading in conjunction with experience of the intensified demands and orthographic expectations attaching to employment and university-level study, with general patterns of more conservative orientations and dispositions reported by the relatively small sample of older users, mainly in professional occupations, who were also more likely to offer specific explanations for their choices. However, it is too simple to suggest that older users with more literate accomplishment always reported conservative orientation to text spelling practice; two of the principal informants in this study working as teachers chose otherwise.¹⁹⁶ There is a pattern suggesting metadiscursive comments by younger users, especially males, tended to be less developed in orientations more preoccupied with the social capital of using texting styles which accommodated the localised norms of their peer-group. Such respondents also engaged in acts of strong evaluation couched in dramatic language marking evaluative stances. Older respondents reported losing such preferences in the course of maturation, or in the face of changing technologies and changing social evaluations of orthographic norms by peers.

7.12.5 Disinhibited ‘viral policing’ in the ‘hue-and-cry’ of norm enforcement

I was struck by the level of peremptory social distancing, even aggression, featuring in some comments, and especially those by younger respondents. Some appeared ready to make strident estimations of the notional reliability, credibility and likeability of an interlocutor on the basis of minor linguistic and semiotic details in a manner of **iconisation** (Irvine and Gal 2000;37). The process appeared analogous to the kinds of tacit norm-enforcement and policing of difference associated with stereotyping on the basis of accent. Such contextual pressures were reported in interviews too (see Chapter 8) and testify to the social penalties for those perceived as making the wrong choice in the general condition of a lack of codified expectations. Whatever the impetus, the phenomena observed foregrounds the manner in which perceived socially inept judgment is policed, even in an apparently permissive orthographic regime. By implication, it seems that respondents knew they were making a contribution to a discourse which is ‘unregimented’ and ‘uncodified’ but still exacting in its demands, with all the ‘speech chain’ entailments of adapting subsequent contributions to avoid being ostracised.

7.12.6 The new accommodation

There was a subgroup of answers which showed a correlation between expressions of a conservative stance towards orthographic innovation by others, a claimed preference for using standard forms of spelling and punctuation, and a welcoming of emoticons as a means of animating writing with intimations of conceptual spokenness and affect. This was not expected. Such devices were not common in the corpus gathered in the earlier years of this study, and do not feature extensively in the material gathered by the questionnaires. Some earlier respondents reported emoticon-use as a possible media myth belonging to false reports in exaggerated popular accounts, justifying this with a common sense explanation that emoticons were much harder to enter on a phone-pad because they required engagement with the intricate ‘symbols’ menu. It was also said they were a feature of younger adolescents’ communication and several comments suggest possible stereotypical gendered associations.

The reported configuration of predictive text, standardised orthographic choice, and active/passive use of emoticons may indicate an emergent accommodation to new sociotechnological conditions of literacy by interlocutors who had outgrown their teenage excursion into peer-group demotics but who wanted to maintain the cues of intimacy, affect and social solidarity construed by an imaginary of conceptual spokenness. By this hypothesis, emoticons, originally formed from punctuation symbols, now functioned as diacritics to intimate an informal tenor by subtler means than respelling, and without calling into question the respondents’ capacity to access normative spelling with competence. The high frequency for the formulaic <X> visual morpheme may be a linked development. As noted at the conclusion of Chapter 5, such innovations may prioritise the ‘interpersonal metafunction’ of Halliday’s classification (1979) in the wider context of a preference for informalised, conversationalised styles of writing in public

discourse.¹⁹⁷ This possible trend shows the complexity of the competing motivational pressures claimed by interlocutors but would need further investigation to determine its generalisable status

7.12.7 Summarising patterned heterogeneity in linguistic and semiotic resources

In this chapter section, I have presented analysis of the trends in the aggregated comments made in answer to the qualitative questionnaire prompts. Taken together, these testify to a pervasive self-surveillance of interlocutor's choices in conjunction with persistent situated evaluation of choices made by others. These behaviours appear to be patterned but heterogeneous in focus and intensity. These evaluations were multifarious and jostling, and notably varied in disposition and level of explicit development. Some took the form of general claims, or tacit personal theories; other respondents answered obliquely with cryptic insults directed at the imaginary chooser of the particular variants in focus. There was a subgroup pattern of assertions about the inevitable superiority of standardised English in all orthographic choices and the futility of such questions as those posed in the questionnaire.

The data-sets examined depict a patterned heterogeneity suggesting a moment of contested sociohistorical change in linguistic and semiotic resources which had not yet sedimented into the conventions of common expectation. They point to an emergent, incomplete phase of enregisterment, with the possibility that the associated conventions of SMS and related mediated communication may never stabilise in the manner of the codified prestige register of print literacy, although that sociohistorical process, naturalised now, was initiated in the fifteenth century and not settled until well into the seventeenth century. There are underlying trends discernible including an emergent fusion of graphical and linguistic means of communication in an **integrative** manner of meaning-making (see Kress 2010, Harris 2014). The process is encapsulated by semiotic devices such as emoticons and emoji which reportedly helped some respondents to sustain the intimation of affect and presence over remote distance by a manner of semi-synchronous, conceptually spoken graphical sign-making. Others evaluated these differently. The degree of variation reported by respondents, in conjunction with the energetic variety of commentary, indexes instability in attitudes and practices at idiolectal, microlectal and sociolectal scales. The often fractious nature of opinion observed is indicative of the underlying anxiety elicited by SMS orthographic choice at the time, and its apparent disturbance of the consensus enregistering accomplished literate performance. The questionnaire responses testify that SMS orthographic choice was disrupting but not supplanting the power of an entrenched, well resourced standard language ideology.

158 College student's survey of SCS site (Shortis 2008)

159 See Kent & Facer 2004 and related reporting of ESRC TLRP Interactive Education project; Livingstone & Bovill 2001, Livingstone & Bober 2003.

160 Reported by Victor in interviews and by Clyde and Sam in personal correspondence, the latter in observations about texting by hairdresser colleagues, several of who were reportedly dyslexic.

161 See Heffer 2010 for recent example of a strong prescriptivist emphasis.

162 Personal communication in lengthy email from Cornish student in the sixteen to nineteen age group (2002); personal communication from Head of English in secondary school about the inappropriateness and pointlessness of all non-predictive and non-standard spelling in text messaging.

163 Interviews: Vanessa 2009

164 For example, a phone was reported as supplied with a locked dictionary that prevented the teacher user from using expletives. Field-notes: personal communication (Northumbria 2002).

165 Interviews: Pete and Victor 2003.

166 See Nishimura 2011 for the issue of automated over-correction in Japanese contexts.

167 See Shortis 2007a.

168 Note the granular level of a spelling, not a message.

169 For example, interviews with Vanessa 2009, Gemma 2010

170 Thurlow 2006, Crystal 2008, Carrington 2004, 2005.

171 Interviews: Marna 2009; Peter and Victor, 2003 and 2012.

172 See Chapter 9. Emoticons feature repeatedly in Mander's glossary as the most frequent type of respelling (Mander 2001).

173 Coding: TYPE.

174 Coding: DEGREE.

175 Coding: TYPE.

176 Coding: SEEN and USE.

177 Coding: SEMIOTIC RESUPPLY or PARALINGUISTIC RESTITUTION (Thurlow 2003).

178 See Tagg 2012.

179 See Werry 1996, Thurlow 2003.

180 Coding: NUANCE; EMOTION/MOOD/AFFECT.

181 See Malinowski 1935.

182 Interviews: German male interviewee in Text Talk Vox Pops: Blake, Shortis *et al.* 2011

183 This also occurred in interviews recorded in the Vox Pops recorded for Blake, Shortis *et al.* 2011.

184 2004, 2009, 20012.

185 Coding: NEW MEDIA/ INTERTEXTUALITY/ MSN/ INTERTEXTUALITY.

186 For example, see Adami 2009.

187 Coding: PHONE TECH/PHONE TECHNOLOGY/ TECHNOLOGY AFFORDANCES.

188 Particular smartphone brand previously associated with business users' email and becoming popular among young adults from 2010. Interviews: 2011 Victor and Pete.

189 See Posteguillo 2003 for discussion of the relationship between patterns of technological development in emoticon banks and user uptake: (iconic graphical metaphors 61, emoticons 64) Also the more general treatment of same theme in Fortunati 2008 and Ito *et al.* 2005.

190 Codings: FRIENDS/ CIRCLE/MICROLECT/ ADDRESS/ MICROLECTAL CIRCLE OF ADDRESS.

191 Codings: VIRAL POLICING and SELF-SURVEILLANCE.

192 Codings: SPACE/SPACE IN THE MESSAGE/ ECONOMIC/EFFICIENCY OF TEXT ENTRY/ FINANCIAL ECONOMY OF TEXT ENTRY.

193 Codings: LEAKAGE OF RESPELLING PRACTICES INTO OTHER DOMAINS.
BOUNDARIED: PRACTICES REMAINING BOUNDARIED TO SMS/TXT CONTEXTS.

194 Codings: BIOGRAPHICAL TRAJECTORY/BT/ IDIOLECTAL CHANGE/ROLE/ CHANGING MATURATION AND SOCIAL ROLES; IMPACT OF PREDICTIVE TEXT.

195 The motivation for that may be socially progressive in aspiration, given the penalties for failure to be able to manage normative forms.

196 See Vanessa's smart phone data in Chapter 5.

197 See Fairclough 1992.

8. SMS orthographic choice over biographical trajectory

Analysing interview evidence in time and over duration



Figure. 8.1 Pete and Victor re-interviewed in 2011, eight years after their first interview, inset, when aged fifteen.

So what then is a self-conscious personal identity? We might say that it is a semiotic articulation of a person's evaluative stance toward interactions. It is what we are inclined to believe or doubt, desire or dislike, expect or find surprising, and so on cast in the romantic folk-language of "who we are," what social types or categories we identify with on the basis of shared values. It is a very complex construct, not usually explicitly articulated; in fact, it would be reasonable to say that people do not have stable, unitary identities, but rather that we all learn to interpret certain persistent evaluative stances toward action in these terms and articulate the relevant pieces ad hoc from situation to situation and not necessarily consistently... Thus "personal identity" may not be as long term a phenomenon as we imagine. Like most everything else, it too requires integration across timescales: across who we are in this event and that, at this moment or the other, with this person or another, in one role and situation or another.

Lemke 2000;283

An important stage was passed when I realised that it was the very ordinariness, the everyday nature, of what I was hearing that formed the significance of the material. Identity and personal opinion are formed not only in epiphanic moments of textual encounter: they develop over time out of the practices of everyday life. I became increasingly interested in the meanings of my respondents' textual encounters not only as a private transaction, the individual viewer in front (say) of the television screen, but also as a factor in their wider lives. A key moment came in one of the interviews, in March 1998. Tessa, one of the more prominent students in her group, suggested that I needed to understand more about the students' lives in the round:

Tessa: I have always wondered if you are doing about what we watch and what teenagers think, shouldn't you be doing about their social lives?

JH: Yes, I should do.

Tessa: Because that would have a lot to do with what we watch in our spare time.

Hodgson 2007

8.1.1 Interviews and ethnography in empirical studies of CMC and SMS

The photograph on the chapter title page shows two respondents, Pete and Victor, as they were interviewed when they were in their early twenties, with another photograph embedded in the image, showing an earlier interview when they were fifteen. In this chapter I report analysis of such interviews which I used in order to augment and verify the evidence collected by other means. Interviewing offered a way to probe respondents' claimed orthographic rationales, estimations and experiences of spelling variation in ways, and in a depth which would have not been possible from the testament of textual evidence, linguistic corpora or questionnaire responses. Respondents could be asked to expand on general preferences claimed in their questionnaire answers, or to justify and evaluate particular orthographic choices in contributed textual data, such as those copied into their survey responses. When the same respondent was re-interviewed months or years later, it was also possible to make comparisons with earlier attitudinal responses and textual contributions. So, Pete and Victor's unabashed preferences for the choices preferred by their peer-group at age fifteen (e.g. Appendix VIII) gave way to more complex nuanced choices and elaborate claimed rationales they reported in the face of the more demanding literacy pressures experienced in Higher Education study and in employed roles.

The resulting data-set built a record of shifting practices and points of view over duration, showing the complexity of the notion of literate identity – and its constituent orthographic preferences – when tracked over time (Lemke 2000). Respondents were observed altering their choices of SMS spelling, and changing their folk-linguistic rationales for those choices. They showed differential responsiveness to different kinds of contextual pressure. In the case of Pete, Victor, Joe and Gemma, the frequency and duration of observation, and the texture of related field-notes built an ethnography focused on SMS spelling choice in the wider context of their social trajectories and their use of other digitally-mediated literacy practices. Others, such as Sadie or Chakra, were interviewed only at the time they completed their online questionnaire. Such isolated transcripts did not amount to an ethnographic perspective although their answers often illuminated trends seen in analysis of reports by other respondents, including the general claims of changing literate preference over time in relation to changes over duration in roles, aspirations, peer-groups, literacy resources and technological affordances. The analytical framework in Figure 4.8 offered a way of classifying such responses, which tended to verify patterns observed in analysis of the qualitative data-set in the questionnaire survey.

This study's transcribed interviews provide a subsidiary evidence base for making sense of other data-set strands. So, the interview data-set offered the kinds of insight which might be drawn from ethnographic methods without amounting to a consistent ethnography in the formal sense of that. Although I attended to the rationales and histories which respondents brought to bear in their reports of individual and group understanding of their choices, and sought an emic perspective which emerged from the viewpoint and language of respondents, I drew on a degree of etic, *a priori* theorisation with reference to terms and concepts from sociolinguistic CMC

studies. I looked for correlations between interview comments and the trends observed in the questionnaire data-set reported in Chapter 7. Several respondents had been interviewed at intervals over duration in the manner of Hodgson's ethnographic study of a broadly equivalent cohort of young people ten years before (2007) but in this case with a semi-structured schedule linked to the questionnaire survey schedules. The ethnographic basis is of a different order to that reported by Blommaert (2005, 2008, 2010), Rampton (1994, 2006) or the related interactional sociolinguistics focus undertaken by Spilioti in her study of Greek teenagers' text messaging (2006). In part these differences reflect my research focus on the more general issue of orthographic practices exemplifying diachronic change in linguistic and semiotic resources.

Recent studies in the CMC field have made greater use of ethnographic methods. Following his critique of earlier researchers' over-reliance on downloaded data-sets of decontextualised textual evidence, Androutsopoulos argued for ethnographic perspectives in studies of digitally-mediated interaction (2006, 2008).¹⁹⁸ He suggested that choices seen in screen-recording of web-mediated interaction would be better understood when explained by the contributor. This has been fleshed out by Androutsopoulos in later work (2010, 2011), and in the observational preparation for other studies of screen-based interaction less reliant on downloaded linguistic outputs. For example, Jones examined sites of display in a Hong Kong social networking site and considered the multimodal environment and how it was used in practices marking interest and social distinction (2009).¹⁹⁹ A number of the earlier studies of text messaging also made extensive use of interviewing as a means of verifying and exploring comments made in fieldwork notes or in textual samples (e.g. Grinter & Eldridge 2001, 2003). There are examples of such treatments in the earlier sociological studies focused on the alteration of time, space and connectedness through the perpetual contact afforded by mobile phones (see Katz & Akhus 2003). Ling refers to interviews in his copious observations of earlier communicative practice in SMS (e.g. 1999, 2002). Similarly, Ito and colleagues use photographs, questionnaires, interviews and principled observation to foreground the symbiotic relationship between technological innovation and user-customisation (2005). More recently Lee has refined her earlier ethnographic methods in an extended project which examines respondents' sociotechnological biographies of digital practice (2011, Barton & Lee 2014). These examples, and the model of ethnographic literacy study developed by Barton and colleagues, helped to frame the interview methods used in this study. One point of departure is the emphasis here on respondents discussing microlinguistic details when presented with particular spellings, texts or data-sets and invited to comment on specific orthographic choices. This innovation stems from earlier research I conducted with primary school children, sixteen to eighteen-year old students in further education, and their teachers. All were interviewed about their autobiographical histories of their learning of English spelling, including their learning of choices made in their out-of-school digitally-mediated interactions (Shortis & Sutch 2001, Robertson *et al.* 2004, interactiveeducation.ac.uk).

8.1.2 SMS choice, ‘identity’ and the temporal perspective of longer duration

The principal function of the interviews was to refine the research focus and its instruments: to check and verify the emergent findings of the study; to check that the emergent theorisation was supported by a degree of cross-verification with other data-sets in the manner of an ‘extended case’ (Burawoy 1998). I interviewed and re-interviewed key respondents over the course of the study, allowing the collection of evidence showing changes of SMS orthographic choice over duration. As Lemke observes in the epigraph quotation, identity has a shifting temporal dimension which can best be observed for what it is by observation over duration. I worked with semi-structured interview schedules which elicited recognition and verification of SMS orthographic choices as featured in corpus data, mass-mediatised reports and in other popular accounts (see SBC 2000 and Appendix V). I tested popular recontextualisations of academic study such as the lexical lists based on private corpora (e.g. Mander 2001, Crystal 2004, 2008). These were contrasted with the testing of recognition, evaluation and other verification of SMS textual data from situated interaction, as collected for the SBC and SCS corpora, or collected from those sites by pen and paper copying of messages. In some cases respondents were asked to comment on spelling used in related digital media or in popular culture. Respondents were invited to contrast their out-of-school literacy practices and the orthographic fractal instantiation of those, with attitudes and practices fostered by schooling. I focused on recognition and evaluation of particular orthographic choices. For example, <u>; <2>; <CUl8r>; <night>; <school>. To illustrate this process I have appended a transcribed semi-structured interview with Pete and Victor from 2003, which proved significant for the evidence it gave of the social and linguistic perspectives reported of this peer-group (Appendix VIII). This interview contributed to the decision to move beyond a methodology dependent on corpus and text evidence. Garnering some sense of the social identity, aspiration and its attendant literacy identity was a focus for all interviews, with that notion of what might be meant by ‘identity’, its contingency and instability, as described by Lemke in the essay quoted in the epigraph.

Interviews conducted after 2007 usually started with the respondents’ answers to the online questionnaire just completed, sometimes in conjunction with a shortened version of the mediascape questionnaire which generated Figure 1.1. These later interviews offered respondents the chance to verify recognition of what was being asked in the questionnaires; to explain their choices and rationales in more detail; and to compare stated attitudes with the text message data-set. There were opportunities for respondents to examine and comment on their earlier contribution of messages (Gemma 2009, Joe 2010, 2012), or transcribed commentary (Marna 2003, 2009; Victor 2003, 20011). All interviews probed more general claims of activity, literacy practices and folk-linguistic theorisation. The later interviews were able to attend to shifts in occupational role, social maturation by wider experience and greater degrees of standardised English accomplishment.

8.1.3 Exemplifying the contribution of interview data

Interviews offered a means of capturing the rationales by which respondents justified their practices and evaluations in the absence of codified conventions. This can be illustrated by the two excerpts below. In the first example, Johannes, a German respondent, offers an insightful folk-linguistic appreciation of emoticons, which he reports as an innovation made by young people in the course of exploring the affordances of new ways of writing.²⁰⁰ He identifies the nature of the meaning-potentials opened up by unlicensed innovation, and spread without the endorsement of linguistic authorities or schooling, by spontaneous viral co-option (Chapters 2 and 3). In this case, his stance is one of welcome.

...they found an easier way to er bring emotions (.) you know just a smiley just a new dimension of saying something (1.0) you can say (.) you can write something but you can't feel the emotion of the people (1.0) and err (.) young people found a way to bring in their emotion and so I like it (.) to be honest (.) I like it...

Johannes, a German professional in his 40s, responding to Vox Pop interview prompt about writing using digital media in Portobello Market, London, September 2011 (Blake & Shortis with Powell 2011 *Txt Talk* in Appendix XII).²⁰¹

In the second example, Gemma, whose texting practices had been observed and collected intermittently since her first-wave adoption of SMS in 1999, described how she navigated the strongly-held opinions of her colleagues teaching English in an inner city secondary school.²⁰² Here SMS respelling, or 'text language' appears to have offended the professional, social and aesthetic aspirations of the majority of her colleagues. Gemma anticipated these criticisms, justified her own different sense of entitlement to a personal configuration of preferred options which was not indexical of her literacy accomplishment or intellect, and defiantly insisted on her right to use a functionally-focused, abbreviated style at variance with her peers' shibboleths.

<<well, there is an open dialogue now departmental debate (.) if you like, about the use of standard and non-standard forms and text messaging (1.0) and there's a total snobbery amongst my colleagues (.) and they really do feel that some people just (.) oh my god (.) I hate text messaging (.) just write it in full (.) Oh god (.) you've got to punctuate (.) And I'm sitting there thinking, I'm educated the same as you but I don't feel the need (2.00) I don't feel that my text the extent of my punctuation in my text messages should form any part of my identity intellectually or otherwise [interview prompt] and I really think that they would judge me but out of protest (.) and I'm like it with emails as well (.) and sometimes I just send them all lower case and no punctuation (1.0) because time is short (.) you know?>>

Gemma (1982), early adopter of SMS in 1999 and here in her late 20s working as a secondary school teacher of English in Bristol in September 2009.

Both Johannes and Gemma offered evaluations of contested literate choice arising from unsettled expectations about orthographic form as they navigated competing social pressures, including the judgments of others on similar journeys under conditions of social valuing which had yet to settle. Analysis of texts and corpus material in conjunction with interviews showed orthographic choices for which respondents offered detailed metadiscursive commentary,

making connections with their personal circumstances and histories as they located their preferences in a framework often surprisingly consistent with their self-estimation.²⁰³ They situated their adolescent texting choices in longer stories of their literate development, exemplified by vignettes from memories of schooling and contiguous life-worlds of home and street. Such accounts showed a common tension between the choice of expressive respelling calculated to engage peer-group address and the countermanding pressures accruing from the enduring hegemonic value of standardised choices. The eleven-to-fifteen age group tended to relate more to immediate social concerns of the peer-group, with less overview of other social possibilities; they were preoccupied by their friends, family and school life-worlds. Older respondents tended to gravitate to more normative choice, echoing the trend seen in the analysis of questionnaire surveys (Chapter 7).

8.1.4 The shift from the peer-group preoccupations of adolescence to adult roles

By inviting respondents to describe practices over time, or by re-interviewing them and presenting examples of past messages, it became possible to discern longer term trends. In particular, longer time-scales juxtaposed orthographic choice with the demands and resources afforded by new roles. Informants' commentary on orthographic choice functioned as one detail in a more general account of changes to literate preferences in ongoing identity and public role fulfilment, with all the heterogeneous dimensions of ideology, resource and aspiration. This longer temporal framework also provided an unusual perspective in a field of study, CMC, which has often generalised about communicative practice from data collected in relatively short timeframes (Herring 2004, 2007, Ito et al. 2005).²⁰⁴ When examined over duration it became possible to see changes in spelling choice as an expression of a shift from the peer-group preoccupations of adolescence to adult roles. This raises the problem of the extent to which these stories about changing choices are best understood as being about the affordances of digital media or the direction of young adult socialisation in late modern settings as expressed by claimed literate preferences.²⁰⁵

Respondents reported similar patterns in co-option of technologies and orthographic resources and especially among students of similar age. Profiles of recognition, preference and use mapped consistently onto the patterns shown previously in text, corpus and survey data-sets (see Figure 1.1, Chapter 5). Respondents also showed individuated configurations of spelling choices in their writing and interpretation, sometimes with a particular inflection based on idiosyncratic beliefs sustained in the general absence of formal instruction about SMS literate choices equivalent to those relayed by schooling about standard English.²⁰⁶ As before, changing technological developments impacted on users' choices of orthographic variation.

8.1.5 Profile of informants and rationale for their selection

Twelve respondents were observed and interviewed over time, including four born 1982-1984 and eight others born 1988-1990. A further twelve respondents born 1987-1990 were interviewed once at the time the main questionnaire surveys were administered in their colleges in 2007 and 2008. Joe, Gemma, Marna, Pete and Victor and others were interviewed on multiple occasions over periods which ranged from two to three years to over ten years. That iterative method allowed the researcher to record choices set against longer term changes in these informants' roles, tastes, educational accomplishment and aspirations. Typically such interviews allowed exploration of current stances towards past practices, often, but not always eliciting judgments of difference and claims of embarrassment. Interviews took a semi-structured form using a schedule which afforded some focus on excerpts from the texts and corpus data analysed in this study; later sessions asked the respondents to expand on their answers to the questionnaire. All schedules sought respondents' histories of themselves as users of SMS and related digitally-mediated interaction and as emergent competent standard language spellers, as self-evaluated, in school and home contexts. The principal informants and their changing roles are listed in Tables 8.1a and b. In addition interviews undertaken for the *All Talk* pedagogical intervention (Blake & Shortis with Powell 2011) provided a sample of Vox Pops from a wider social and generational cross-section, including interviews with additional students and a mobile phone service-provider. Analysis was developed from coded notes and transcripts of recordings drawn from a selection of the interviews and field-notes. That cumulative process built an evidence base verifying the degree of users' perceived representativeness of the textual data analysed in this study (see Chapters 5 and 6, Appendix V and VI) and the potential for recognition of that analysis to those respondents.

8.2.1 Profiles of main interview respondents

Born	Identifier	Gender	Upper-secondary education	HE?	Post-secondary education roles	Years of contact
1981	Chakra*	F	South Coast 16-19 College	HE	HE Degree, Various media-related roles and now commercial blogger	2008-2012
1982	Joe	M	SBC 16-19 college, Bristol	HE	Interrupted HE Degree, TeFL teacher, research and administration, unemployed, completed degree	1999-2012
1982	Gemma*	F	SBC 16-19 college, Bristol	HE	Charity street seller, completed HE degree, then secondary school teacher with school-based training.	1999-2012
1982	Galena*	F	Selective state school, Ulster	HE	HE Degree, retail roles, roles as administrator in social care	2011-2012
1984	Francis**	M	City state school, Bristol	HE	HE Degree, retail roles and then TeFL, teaching overseas	1999-2012
1988	Pete	M	City state school, Bristol	HE	Left school at 16, unemployed, Telesales roles and barwork before returning to further education, completed HE degree, charity sales	1999-2012
1988	Victor*	M	City state school, Bristol	NO	Left school at 18, self-employed media worker, film-maker, broadcaster, writer, engaged in community action	2001-2012
1988	Sadie*	F	City state school, London	HE	Mobile phone sales, clerical work before and after degree, PGCE, then secondary school teacher	2010-2012
1989	Marna**	F	Selective state school, London	HE	Various professional administration roles including account manager in professional legal field	1999-2012
1989	Angelo	M	City state school, Bristol	HE	Interrupted HE, various, catering-related, agricultural work, unemployed, casual work	1999-2012

Table 8.1a Table profiling main interview respondents and settings

Born	Identifier	Gender	Upper-secondary education	HE?	Post-secondary education roles	Years of contact
1988	Mitch	M	SCS, Westshire		16-19 College Student	2007-2008
1988	Stacey	F	SCS, Westshire		16-19 College Student	2007-2008
1988	Kirstie	F	SCS, Westshire		16-19 College Student	2007-2008
1989	Joanna	F	SCS, Westshire		16-19 College Student	2007-2008
1988	Roberto	M	SBC, Bristol		16-19 College Student	2007-2008
1988	Nick	M	SBC, Bristol		16-19 College Student	2007-2008
1987	Nicola	M	SBC, Bristol		16-19 College Student	2007-2008
1988	Carl	M	SBC, Bristol		16-19 College Student	2007-2008
1987	Felicia*	F	SLC, London		16-19 College Student	2007-2008
1988	Dominique	F	SLC, London		16-19 College Student	2007-2008
1988	Claud	M	SLC, London		16-19 College Student	2007-2008
1988	Luca*	M	SLC, London		16-19 College Student	2007-2008
					* Bilingual background, ** Fluency in other languages	

Table 8.1b Table profiling main interview respondents and settings

For example, Marna commented on how SLC data compared with her peer-group experiences in South London:²⁰⁷

Yeah, this is how my best friend talks, she writes just like this....Yeah, I think it's a London thing. It's the sort of... well it's not really cockney but a London accent it's like you don't put the 't' on the end of a word it's [naɪ?] and not [naɪt], and that is [gəʊlɪn] not [gəʊlɪŋ] like it is... it does reflect the accent and Manchester... like people do use text language but I have seen it like I said before reflecting the accent and it's not quite the same. Then 'ting' is a very South London... but of course that originates from African-Caribbean like as well. I've never seen any Northerners use it unless they were Caribbean.

Marna, 1998, 2009 [00:46:01]

8.2.2 Patterns and variations in perceived optionality

Marna's comments above are typical in showing how respondents' claimed changing orthographic behaviour functioned as a resource for enacting their image of preferred literacy identity; these choices accreted over time into a familiar orthographic habitus of idiolectal signature.

For others, especially from the SCS site, orthographic identity was a more stable cultural production of standardised literate disposition, shaped in earlier childhood. Joanna explained her experiences of a strict socialisation with parents ambitious for her future as attending a 'second school at home'. She reported intensive routines of reading and being read to, and being obliged to answer home-based school spelling tests. It is possible to infer a relationship between the normative, aspirational literacy identity likely to have been inculcated by her reported life-experience and her summary comments that, 'it's like everyone has an education, so why not make the most of it, maybe', connected with her explanation that, 'if people are more posh then they are oh-oh er perfect English'.²⁰⁸ By such tacit ideology, SMS respelling was judged as 'mainly lazy and annoying', or not 'making the best of it' in the sense of failing to maximise social aspiration. To be specific, she claimed the routine 'accent stylisation' device of 'g-clipping' (Thurlow 2003) left her 'feel[ing] dirty'. This surprising cast of evaluation introduces a sense of a pervasive near-physical taste about an orthographic choice, which seems to have functioned in the manner of Bourdieu's observations about 'bodily hexis' in the immediacy, vividness, and physicality of French working-class speech (1990;69-70, Crowley 1996;82). There is also the sense of vigilant self-monitoring of standardised forms allied to folk-linguistic rationalisation in instrumental appeals to logic and efficiency.

Oh, I just think...because like when you're typing on a computer, you type on a computer and do homework and stuff, I just find it easier to use the same sort of register, as it were, on like everything than just have to keep changing in between. Because it's like having to remember two different things and it's just easier to stick with one.

Joanna 1982, SCS, Westshire 2007, 16.21

Interviews offered a means of checking and probing the kinds of evidence furnished by exemplar texts (Chapter 5), corpus results (Chapter 6) and questionnaire survey responses (Chapter 7). These materials were often shared with interviewees with questions about their representative status. When conducted in conjunction with opportunities for situated observation over time, it was easier to relate reported choices to the motivations for those choices. For example, Marna, who at thirteen contributed textual data analysed in Chapter 5, described her informal respelt choices from the perspective of being six years older, making the common observation of the prime importance of peer pressure for younger adolescents. Here she comments obliquely on her text chat with Jason (Figure 5.8).

I think when you're younger as well, when I was my brother's age, you think... you're quite self-conscious about appearing uptight, so if you're talking to a load of other fourteen year olds or fifteen year olds, if you're writing in perfect English it does seem quite... I dunno quite anal. Like when I was texting a boy I'd met if I'd written in full proper English... I was probably conscious of the fact that I would seem really uptight.

Marna 1989 South London 2009 41.35

Similarly seventeen-year-old Mitch, who didn't use SMS, compared his relatively standardised preferences on *MSN* Instant Messaging with his younger brother's style, which he and Joanna evaluated as a form of indecipherable, strained ingenuity (cf Chapter 7).

Mitch ...I've seen my brother talking to his friend, I can barely understand what he's saying. It's like every other word is an emoticon. Every other word is also abbreviated or shortened....some of the stuff is quite...just ridiculous. But I don't see what the point of doing it is.
 Joanna Yeah, sometimes you...
 Mitch Because you can't be in that much of a hurry to type something.
 Joanna Yeah. Sometimes it takes you so long to think of the abbreviation that, by the time you've thought, you might as well have typed the whole word.

Mitch and Joanna interview, SCS 2007, 5:46:

As above, Joanna and Mitch mixed aesthetic evaluation with a common sense instrumental framework of logic and efficiency. At another point in the interview excerpted above Joanna took strong exception to her mother's use of text messaging abbreviations (substituting <d> for <th>) adopted apparently for practical reasons of text-entry reduction, but evaluated as inappropriate choice for an older adult by her daughter.

In contrast, Pete and Victor, aged fifteen in 2003, argued that using standard English in their peer-group's informal written communication was inconsistent with the kind of identity projected by the idiolectal style of their spoken choices. Here Victor seems to be reaching for the articulation of a personal, signature style of conceptual spokenness in line with the way he is known to speak by his peers: he is seeking to write with an accent of credible voice.

Yeah, it kind of gets it like if I had my personal ... by saying ... texting what you're actually going to say - like say if I was trying to say someone was posh and I was putting on a posh accent like it would only sound posh because I don't usually talk like that. So by texting it kind of ... by texting how it kind of ... by texting personal to you kind of makes everything else relevant as well. So I would know Pete's taking the Mick because he doesn't usually...

Pete and Victor 1989, 2003 Bristol p.16 (full interview in Appendix VIII)

'[B]y texting personal to you kind of makes everything else relevant as well' is one way of asserting the power of authenticity, and by implication, personal credibility, which can be inculcated by vernaculars, as observed by Bernstein in his comments on the power of horizontal discourses (Bernstein 1996:159).

8.2.3 Folk-linguistic rationales for choice

Respondents often related their own spelling preferences to folk-linguistic theories they had developed which provided a rationale for their intuitive sense of taste, recalling Bourdieu's interpretation of intuitive feelings of taste as embodied social production of social distinction (1984,1991). Post-hoc rationales were developed from contrasting points of view. For example, rationalizing his preferences, Pete joked about his perception of the officious redundancy of certain standard spellings such as <night> in part to justify the variant <nite>, then in predominant use by his circle of friends. Here he role-plays its imagined etymological derivation in an orthographic 'conspiracy theory' of cultural imposition on the young.

Q: Why do you think the 'gh' is in night then?
 Pete: Um because some English people said 'oh well let's do this correctly and, er, let's put in silent 'g's because we like them and, um [laughs] yes that looks good, don't you think so? Yes, yes it looks great' so yeah that's probably why I think it was done but I mean that could be just do you need a teacher, it's like no.

Pete, 1988, Bristol 2003

In a more serious, generalised vein, Victor's longstanding difficulties with standardised spelling (related to developmental dyslexia) were deployed to justify his degree of respelling. He commented on the opaque and inconsistent nature of standardised forms of English spelling, interpreting these as an arbitrary regulative imposition by comparison with the greater applicability of mathematical principles, which he claimed to learn without difficulty.²⁰⁹ On the other hand, Marna, accomplished in Modern Foreign Languages, claimed strong dislike of number logographic homophone spellings such as <4> (<for>), or <8> in its various particle substitutions because of their offence to her sense of linguistic propriety. In contrast, letter homophone spellings were deemed acceptable. Similarly she and four other respondents felt that <soz> was an inappropriate respelling of <sorry> because the abbreviation implied a lack of the due level of commitment expected in making a gesture of contrition. For Marna this had become a microlectal joke shared with a parent in a casual semantic reanalysis.²¹⁰

I have a joke about 'soz' with my friends and Mum actually because I say 'soz' is like... to shorten sorry is so insincere so I say soz like I just have a joke with friends and family that 'soz' is just you know it's an insincere apology so you know if someone says something and you wanna apologise but you're not really sorry you just say 'soz'.

Marna, South London, 2009, 23.30

As in the survey, practical considerations were accompanied by folk-linguistic rationales. For some informants it was important to justify respelling as licensed by practical considerations with respondents explaining that there is no point in a respelling which does not save time or money, echoing a frequent line of reasoning coded in the questionnaire data-sets. Yet other commentary points to the motivation of affordances for construing 'identity' over those influences which this study terms 'environmental' (Figure 4.8). Peer-group norms in educational settings featured as a pressure, whether orientated to normativity or respelling. Sadie (1982, 2010) reported 'fitting in' as a major contextual pressure on her when she started secondary school in West London and heeded friends' advice to use informal variational (non-standard) forms in texting to avoid being evaluated as an upper class outsider. Sadie had apparently moved to the area with her teacher mother and had achieved a high level of standard literacy which carried the social risk of ostracisation by her peers. Peer-group pressure impacted on a previously more conservative literate style with further reinforcement from her immersion in *MSN* instant messaging for at least an hour a night until she was sixteen.

Like Victor, Joe and others, Sadie reportedly used her facility with predictive text against the grain of the manufacturers' intentions to maintain her informal style with technoliterate ease of input by adding her respellings to the phone dictionary. This was then subject to the aggravation of having to re-enter these options when changing phones. Sadie interpreted her adolescent orthographic style as being influenced by the kind of urban multi-ethnic vernacular choices seen in the SLC data. Her characteristic preferences changed as she went to university, worked as a sales assistant in a mobile phone shop, learnt other languages and moved away, geographically and socially, from her school peers. Interestingly she claimed to switch back to her previous norms when in intermittent contact with these old London friends, seeking to retain solidarity with this group now five years later. She explained that she did not want to be rejected for having moved to Bristol and 'become posh', that being the default inference she would expect her old friends to draw from more normative spelling. Such commentary more commonly arises in sociolinguistic focus on accent and indicates the ways in which orthographic choice in digitally-mediated writing attracts the kinds of tacit evaluation and grading more frequently associated with spoken performance.

8.2.4 Competing variants as markers of social distinction: <wat> and <wot>

Sadie, Angelo, and six other students interviewed from the three colleges all corroborated the trend reported in the analysis of the questionnaires by which people claimed coming under pressure as adolescents to use demotic, semi-conventionalised respellings to mark out peer-group identity and distance themselves from adult and teacher mainstream norms. Others, such as Mitch from SCS, reported experiencing pressure but distanced themselves from attending to it, attributing these fearful choices to younger peers, such as his brother. Mitch's classmates made more explicit and pejorative social-class-based judgments, echoing a similar thread in questionnaire answers. They referred to choices such as <wot> for <what>, as opposed to their preference <wat>. These were thought to be more likely from students at a college 'down the road' with perceived lower social status. Social evaluations based on social aspiration and perceived maturity are intermingled, often with harsh social stereotypes, following the pattern established by the evaluation of the Scottish schoolgirl text in the questionnaire responses.

- A1 I bet at [NAME OF LOCAL FE COLLEGE] they have more text language.
Q Yeah. Can you say about why's that?
A1 I don't know.
A2 Well, just looking at it, it's a bit...
A1 Well, they're more chavvy.
A2 Yeah, yeah, basically.
A1 They are a lot more chavs at [LOCAL FE COLLEGE] and a lot of chavs do use text language. I don't know why, but they do. It's a fact.

Stacey and Kirstie 1989, SCS, 2007 42:31

Similarly, at SBC in Bristol, Nick, by no means styling himself as 'posh' and a user of Bristolian dialect features, explained with some embarrassment that the variant <wot> was associated in his mind with friends at a small ex-mining town ten miles away.

.... I don't use that but I have friends who do. I have friends who live in (STARTS TO SAY NAME OF PLACE)... this sounds really sad, like I've analysed it but I've friends in (NAME OF PLACE near Bristol) who use W-O-T but everyone I know in Bristol don't.

Nick, 1998, SBC, 2007 56:34

The respelling of WHAT offers a particular demonstration of the nuances of interpretation and choice which attach to a single orthographic variable surfacing in explicit metapragmatic evaluation. It might be assumed that the well-established respelling <wot> would have functioned as the main SMS alternative to the standard form, as explained in Chapter 6. It might be thought of as the longstanding enregistered variant. Yet it crops up in four interviews as a dispreferred choice. Interviews show informants reaching for folk-linguistic rationales to dress up an aesthetic non-preference for <wot> which appears to be based on estimations and evaluations of social class, as in the excerpts above, in conjunction with tactics for reducing the ergonomic and etymological challenges of the standardised form. This might be expected in the

more aspirant, middle class social disposition expressed by the tranche of SCS students interviewed but it also extends to respondents in SBC without that profile. In ethnically and linguistically more diverse SLC, respondents used <wat> more frequently than <wot> while being less explicit about their reasons beyond a general assertion of preference and the pressure to fit in with peer-group norms. The inclusion of <a> in both <what> and <wat> offered several informants a rationale for <wat> as a preferred respelling but discussion showed awareness that this reasoning was dubious.

- A1 I prefer w-a-t.
 Q You prefer w-a-t to w-o-t?
 A1 Because there's an 'a' in the actual word.
 A2 Yeah.
 A1 So it means more...
 A2 But then it makes it...
 Q But phonetically...
 A2 Yeah, phonetically it's pronounced what with an 'o' and that's like saying 'wat', which is like saying rats with a speech defect.

Stacey and Kirstie 1988, SCS 2007, 43:21

Others noted a relatively free zone of extemporised inconsistent choice in actual practice.

- Mitch I've seen people use the same...I've seen people use different ones. I've seen someone say to me wot, like w-o-t, and then later in the thing use w-a-t.
 Joanna Yeah.
 Mitch I don't know if they were trying to say something different, but I thought that was a bit...
 Joanna I think I have actually seen w-h-t as well because that does kind of say what. I think I've seen that.
 Mitch Or they just put w-t.
 Q I've seen w-t.
 Mitch Yeah.
 Q I've seen w-t. So how is it that you can get something spelt so many different ways? Why do people have so many different ways and why do they change?
 Joanna It's just because it's not grammatically correct language that it's not standardised anywhere.
 Mitch It's kind of like freeform; you can do what you want.

SCS 1988 Mitch and Joanna, SCS 2007, 23:20

8.2.5 Changes over time in relation to shifting biographical roles

Although Mitch claimed a zone of free variation where you can 'do what you want' and choices may be inconsistent, it seems evident that there was an insistent evaluation of some choices. Other respondents took a contrasting stance, seeing such aesthetic evaluations as facile acts of social one-upmanship (Sadie again) or used their digital media activities as an opportunity to develop a new repertoire of graphical communication distinct from the previous habitus inculcated by home, school and peer-group. Chakra, born 1982, living on the South coast and with family originally from Bangladesh, was thirty when interviewed and writing commercial

blogs for a social network gaming company. She presented an intricate narrative of her personal exploration of digital literacy practices as a dimension of her wider exploration of social identity beyond constraints she had found in her own enculturation. She reported participation in a wide array of digitally-mediated text forms over fifteen years including *Internet Relay Chat*, bulletin boards, blogging and online gaming. She remembered her early texting and wanting to use ‘the new lingo’ but explained how her earlier preferences were later re-shaped under the pressure of a particular interlocutor’s feedback on Instant Messaging and from caricatures of texting language in broadcast media, including satirical comedy, attesting to the power of these public sphere metadiscourses to influence the localised speech chains of evaluation. She exemplifies a trend seen across older interviewees whereby earlier preferences for routine respelling are adapted into more conservative practice under the pressure of negative social evaluation from more literate discourse at university, in employment and through ‘a lot of negative connotations...and negative portrayals met with in media representation’ (Chakra, London, 1982, Interview SMS section, 2010). Meanwhile in her work and in her leisured social networking interaction she cultivated a ‘screen presence’ characterised by an informalised digital tenor enacted in a manner of easygoing conceptual spokenness (field-notes).

Older respondents such as Chakra, Jo, Gemma and Galena described their tactics of responding to the complexity of having acquired a semiotically vivid written style as early adopters of digital media while having to adapt to the mores and expectations of standardised spelling in professional roles, in part to avoid the charge of ignorance and in anticipation of metapragmatic evaluation of conveying an unduly informal tenor. Gemma’s defiant outlook is indexed by her comments quoted at the start of the chapter; she seemed to maintain a complex stance of confident adaptivity. In contrast, Joe commented ruefully on his embarrassment with his past habits, echoed in his questionnaire comments (Appendix IV and VII). Meanwhile, Galena who worked in a professional administration role, noted a conflictual adaptation by her peers: work correspondence took the form of standardly spelt emails with conceptually spoken styling inflected by numerous emoticons. She interpreted these extralinguistic graphical devices as a means of marking a light-hearted, friendly interpersonally-focused screen presence, while not calling one’s literate competence into question by failing to observe role-specific expectations of normative spelling and punctuation.²¹¹ Others differentiated between texting styles used by different social groups and in different locations. For example, Marna compared the London texting style featuring in SLC with similar choices characterising her partner’s African-Caribbean peers in Birmingham (but not by him). She offered further comparisons with what she described as the ‘Northern’ texting styles she had encountered at university in the North-West, and also with the contrasts in style and evaluations she had noted in an aggressively aspirational, privately-educated peer-group she knew from her London schooldays:²¹²

Marna: [The people I know] who study at (NAME OF SCHOOL) who are from a really middle class background...there is quite a snobbery in that way towards it that... that it is common that it is... and I think to a certain extent I share it but I don't think that these people are thick I just think it's naff... I just think it's a bit tacky... but there's definitely, I know people who hold the opinion that it's [SMS respelling is] common and that they're morons and that...

Q, And would people doing that text in the standard?

Marna. More standardly, yeah. But I mean they have their own version of it, you know, and they might not be using text message language or abbreviations or, I dunno, slang, in the same way that the people from... the other people... but they have their own slang of that group that, that... [asked for examples] 'Yah' and they write it, you can see it in their texts. I'm trying to think of another... 'defo'.

Marna 1989 2010 61.35

As observed above, written choices in informal social interaction seemed to recruit similar patterns of metapragmatic evaluations of social class and social worth to those noted in sociolinguistic studies of accent.²¹³

8.3.1 Discussion: empirical trends and their implications

Interview data supported other evidence suggesting the power of markets to attract near-ubiquitous common participation by this age cohort in new, digitally-mediated forms of written and graphical interaction, such as texting. Interviewees reported similar sequences of adopting digitally-mediated peer-to-peer literacy practices, keeping in step with each other usually within the same year to eighteen months. This is especially true of the cohort born 1988-1990 whose digital platform activity maps onto the reported activity of the third-year undergraduate students of the same age (Figure 1.1). Nearly all of this group reported obtaining mobile phones towards the end of primary school and being dependent on parents for scarce phone credit. They told stories of uptake and influence by immersive learning from interaction with peers, rather than from books or media sources (in line with the questionnaire evidence). Nearly all noted their SMS choices being affected by their substantially greater time commitment in *MSN Messenger* where they learnt variations subsequently deployed across their participation in all digital media platforms. All found the examples of SMS in news journalism and popular accounts (e.g. Mander 2001, Crystal 2004) unconvincing and unlike their actual situated practice.²¹⁴ Most reported strong pressure to accommodate to peer group pressure in the adoption of a casual respelt style in mid-adolescence. Nearly all respondents reported a re-orientation towards standardised norms in later years, especially in more educated social contexts. As in previous chapters, orthographic choice in text messaging appears to show a level of repeated patterned innovation which can be seen as systemic in both the words which focus innovation and the kinds of orthographic devices generated by the conventionalised respelling. Respondents verified as recognisable and familiar the kinds of texting choices found frequently in the RealTxt corpus sample while being clear about the unrepresentative nature of the mass-mediated representations gathered in the corpus in this study termed PopTxt, and illustrated by

the facsimiles in Appendix V. Several were able to identify the SLC sample as coming from South London.

Informants sought reasons which legitimated their respelling preferences. There seemed to be a pattern by which unrationalised deviation from the conventionalised options within a 'zone of social meaning' (Sebba 2007;34) might be dismissed as pointless ostentation. When probed about their rationales there was a common focus on environmental factors as the principal motivation, sometimes accompanied by folk-theories of rational behaviours motivated by parsimonious use of money, time or effort (see Figure 4.7). When pressed, respondents noted their observations of emergent stereotyping in the correlation between spelling variation and perceived distinctive social groups, or even perceived social class. Few respondents insisted it was only a matter of practicality.

Some texting styles and even specific spelling variants were evaluated as stigmatised social performances, giving additional testimony to the patterns which emerged from the questionnaire analysis presented in Chapter 7. The issue of social class evaluation, often expressed through such formulations as 'chav' (sic), was strikingly common, except in SLC, which was the least socio-economically advantaged of the three main sites and the most ethnically diverse. It seems possible that conceptually-spoken writing practices such as SMS are becoming a new field for old displays of social distance and distinction based on estimations of stratified social class, as found in earlier sociolinguistic studies of distributions of accent and dialect.

Although these media are all voluntary activities, and respondents came from a range of ages, places and social settings, nearly all respondents exhibited closely similar media selections such that non-preference or non-use of some technologies amounted to marked social behaviour; for example, Max not having a phone, Ben not texting, Gemma and Angelo refusing to use *Facebook*. Here it seems that communication practices generated by private capital in effect functioned in a localised and transnational relay of diffusion. In such a context, it is perhaps not surprising that orthographic features found in SMS were also observed in related digital media and across national and linguistic boundaries. For example, two German respondents showed knowledge of routine CMC expressions from UK and US contexts.

Man: [*reading list of SMS abbreviations*] '

Txt', 'gr8', yeah today...never seen this '2' just (?) smiley...to show somebody the tongue, and laughing out loud yeah

Woman: The smiley of course, OMG, mm no, yeah 2night also...think that's it...yeah

Question: And are these ones that you've seen in German text messages or somewhere else? Even though they're English abbreviations?

Man: Yeah a lot of them, for example LOL, OMG uhh yeah

Woman: I think this is very international

8.3.2 Orthographic choice over duration

Interviews provided a form of evidence indexing the level of detailed consideration given by interlocutors to their orthographic choices in SMS. Respondents reported complex motivations for their orthographic preferences in spite of the association of that medium with ephemeral and mundane communicative acts. These choices operated at a level of general description and stance, and also – perhaps more surprisingly – in the granular choice of particular variants. Preferences were reported as being made contiguously in other self-published digitally-mediated interaction, giving support to the argument developed in this thesis that SMS orthographic choice is nested in a group of unregimented self-published literacy practices: Txt.²¹⁵ Such semiotic resources were also usually presented by informants as fluid configurations of preference arrived at over time, offering potential contrasts with previous choices, roles and orientations, and those which might become more attractive in their social futures.

The analysis presented here is consistent with the interpretation established by the questionnaire surveys, with additional information about patterns of situated use over longer duration. Interviewees are shown following a similar trajectory of access and appropriation of SMS as one salient medium in the sequence of platforms for digitally-mediated interaction which have become available over the years of their childhood and adolescence (Figure 1.1, Chapter 5). They reported the sociolectal influences arising out of interaction with peers, colleagues and family members. They offered additional vignettes and folk-theories which they regarded as relevant to the choices they had made and re-made. Such explanations show orthographic choice functioning as a semiotic resource which construed the characterological image of personhood they wished to project (Agha 2003, 2007, Chapter 3 here). Choices were reported as woven into the fabric of memory and personal interpretation of earlier episodes, as in Joanna's memories of early literacy practices at home, which may have shaped a particular ideological perspective on linguistic standardisation.

8.3.3 Evolving ‘literate indeterminacy’ in shifting biographical trajectories

This chapter offers verification of the construct of ‘literate indeterminacy’ in the context of the apparently unregulated orthographic regime associated with SMS. Respondents appeared to have made their ongoing choices, and attendant legitimations of choices, under the influence of complex and conflicting attitudes and values which altered in the course of their evolving social trajectories and associated repertoires. Respondents reported a common aspiration to be seen as credible by their interlocutors. Their choices and rationalisations for choice included meeting the pragmatic expectations of an instantiation of written and graphical inscription interpreted as having the interpersonal functions of speech. They were also subject to ideological awareness to which they appeared to become sensitised by adult experience. These more sophisticated, social complexities mark out the social domain being studied here from research focused on children’s early spelling and their use of CMCs (Merchant 2003, 2007, Kress 2000, Pahl 2004, 2006). There appears to be a pattern of shift from the relatively innocent, peer-group preoccupations of Marna, Pete and Victor at fourteen, those same respondents in their early twenties beginning roles in higher education and paid employment, and the more complex and inflected personae presented by Joe and Gemma, in their early thirties, and all with their different accommodations to past and current practices.

198 Androutsopoulos 2008; see also accounts of new literacy studies by Pahl & Rowsell 2005, 2006, or the focus and methods described in Lankshear & Knoebel 2003.

199 See also Androutsopoulos 2011 and his account of Greek Hamburg teenagers in a keynote presentation given in Page 2012b.

200 His linguistic and national identity functions to emphasise such new media writing practices are a global and recent phenomenon.

201 All Talk Txt Talk VoxPop 1:53 in Blake & Shortis with Powell 2011. See Appendix XII.

202 Sixteen- to nineteen-year-olds in England, Wales and Northern Ireland study three to four A-level courses as the main post-compulsory education route into university.

203 See Androutsopoulos & Schmidt 2001, Hard af Segerstad 2003, Thurlow 2003.

204 Studies such as Ito et al.'s 2005 edited collection used a longer timeframe with a focus on technological and social change without particular attention to particular instances of textual production and interpretation, leaving little to be said about particular texts or recognisable individuated acts of social agency.

205 For example, respondents frequently compared their past practices to current practices by younger siblings, suggesting SMS orthographic choice may be an age-graded phenomenon, confirming a trend observed before in the survey data and by other commentary including in undergraduate studies by Walshe and Abbott in 2011.

206 Bernstein 1996. See Chapters 2, 3 and 10 in this study.

207 The interviews also enabled the researcher to test the reliability of the questionnaire (Chapter 7) by ensuring the questions were meaningful to the respondents.

208 2007 interview: 32.

209 Sam, who is also dyslexic (1987) takes a similar view. She has been observed intermittently since leaving school at sixteen and is now working as a salon manager. She sees SMS orthographic variation as an opportunity for signature styles and creativity.

210 See a similar opinion in the Txt Talk Vox Pop 2:51 (Blake & Shortis with Powell 2011) and in many WIKI sites of reference such as *Urban Dictionary*.

211 This pattern became explicitly noticeable to her as she assembled workplace emails for an annual performance review meeting. Such use of emails was predominant in her workplace made up mainly of graduate women in their twenties and thirties.

212 She describes him as being especially censorious of non-standard variation.

Labov 1966, Trudgill 1974 etc and as summarised in Trousdale 2010, for example.

214 Here characterised by the tabloid texts in Chapter 5 and the PopTxt corpus in Chapter 6.

215 See Shortis 2007 for a definition of 'Txt'; also used in Tagg 2009 and 2012.

9. SMS spelling in a moment of contested enregisterment

Post-print re-regulated distributions of orthographic resources



Figure. 9.1 The tower of standardised linguistic normativity in the ocean of globalised semiotic vernacularity 216

Meaning is thus negotiated interactively within the process of communication, whereby any participant draws on her/his semiotic knowledge, i.e., her/his knowledge of usage rules of certain signs. Within this negotiation process, not only might the “correct” interpretation become subject to discussion, but also the interpretability itself...and even the perceptibility might be a matter of dispute. In short, signs are not just “there,” [they] emerge in the process of our attempts to reach communicative goals... In other words, the semiotics of graphic elements is floating.

Spitzmüller 2012;259

All forms of communication... demand continuously monitored creative activity. Even the most trivial act of communication is subject to this requirement. Communication, in other words, is not a closed process of automatic 'transmission' of given signs or messages from one person's mind to another's, but of setting up conditions which allow all parties involved the free construction of possible interpretations, depending on the context. These contextual possibilities are intrinsically ongoing and open-ended. (This applies to my – or anyone else's – statement of them.) This open-endedness outstrips and defies any 'rules' or 'codes' that participants may think can be imposed, either in advance or retrospectively.

Harris 2010²¹⁷

9.1.1 Schematising diachronic change in linguistic and semiotic resources

In this chapter I offer a synoptic account of the diachronic changes in sociolinguistic and semiotic resources represented by text spelling in an extension of the theoretical argument introduced in Chapter 3. Drawing on the empirical analysis of the previous four chapters, and the different insights and perspectives afforded by the mixed-methods research applied, I present SMS spelling as a ‘complex system’ (e.g. Larsen-Freeman & Cameron 2008) constituted by competing motivational pressures of social, material and environmental agency. I summarise the argument that these act together so that SMS spelling choice came to be seen, at least for a while, in the earlier years of texting on mobile phones, as functioning as a social symbol of a fundamental change in the resources available for literacy. The viral spontaneity of sign-making choice appears to invoke the kind of ‘integrationist’ model of communication argued for by Harris in which ‘meaning is ... negotiated interactively within the process of communication’ (Spitzmüller 2012;259) in ‘conditions which allow all parties involved the free construction of possible interpretations, depending on the context’ (Harris above, see 2014). SMS respelling can be seen operating like Fiske’s construct of ‘oralised script’ in a manner of situated **framing, distribution and evaluation** (Bernstein 1996) which appears to sideline the legitimisation of nation-state linguistic codification as associated with ‘print capitalism’ (see Anderson 1991). By this interpretation, the popular controversy elicited by SMS spelling reflects the perceived impact of semiotic changes being instantiated in an abruptly diffused, mass-literacy practice which appears to subvert commonly-held beliefs enregistered in the spelling practices expected in institutional contexts. The resulting ongoing, contested discourse can be viewed as exemplifying an earlier, ‘fractious’ phase of the enregisterment of this example of **post-standardised variation**. Its choices exemplify a ‘re-regulated’ expansion of the pools of semi-conventionalised orthographic choice, and their deployment, caused by changes in social and material conditions, which have in turn been altered by the changed condition of the post-print, post-standardisation context, and ultimately by the socio-economic alteration termed globalisation (for example, Blommaert 2010, Coupland 2011). To put it another way, and drawing on Langer’s concept of ‘invisibilization’, digitally-mediated forms of vernacular written interaction, such as SMS, have ‘re-visibilized’ the routines of hetero-graphic variation, which had been effaced by an imagining of literate normativity resourced by the impress of schooled formal writing (Shortis forthcoming, Langer and Havinga 2015:30).

The symbolism of this diachronic shift is represented graphically in the cartoon shown in figure 9.1, which presents a caricature of standardised normative forms of spelling encased in a walled tower: static, secure, formidable, monoglot, institutionally framed, and impervious to scrutiny. Beyond the tower is an ocean of flux representing the dynamic variety and innovation beyond licensed linguistic manifestation or register-expectations. This exhibits different principles of semiotic vitality in colour, movement and regulative transgression. The artist has chosen some of the typical forms of respelling which might be sourced in SMS: popular music, mass-marketised trade spelling, and vernacular and subcultural life-worlds. Some of the examples

have achieved wide recognition in commercial global branding or other forms of enregisterment but they would not generally be considered by many to have parity of status with normative choice.

That notional loss of legitimation may be offset by other gains in precision of localised address, affect or reference (see Chapters 5 and 6). Two of the examples have inverted letters alluding to children's transitional letter formation, perhaps suggesting a stance of resistance in the way they elude normal script system expectations: they cannot be word-processed. Others show etymological elaborations which are not from the usual stock of linguistic rationales found in dictionaries. <Deejay> may be connected to <DJ> as the common initialism with a provenance in the compound <disc jockey> but its stylised eye dialect form also denotes specific reference and a stance of transgressive resistance, unavailable in the older conventional initialism <DJ>.

The graphic also calls to mind visual traditions in street art, including graffiti and music fliers, in artefacts produced and published by independent means of production in acts of localised subcultural address. Such discourse is designed and deliberated but it is unlikely to have gone through the exacting normative 'galley proof' correction process still associated with print production (e.g. Grafton 2011). The respellings construe a kind of verbal performance not easily translated into standard forms. Vernaculars 'can give rise to new practices ... which can embody different sets of values from dominant literacies' (Barton & Hamilton 1998). Conversely, in societies with mass schooling, practices sourced in vernaculars are also likely to invoke, allude to and play-off those dominant literacies (Jaffe 2000). The situated literacies originally documented by Barton, Hamilton and colleagues, occurred in localised communities, then less influenced by globalised, digital flows of interaction. In contrast, SMS, in common with all digitally-mediated vernaculars, operates across prior time, space and regulative settings. This shift calls for an analytical perspective which sets vernacular practices in their wider contexts, including their relationship with nation-standard forms. Although spelling remains stringently regulated in such institutional contexts, and by the intrapersonal monitoring consequent on people's extensive schooled formation in spelling standardly, it seems that normative forms are increasingly problematic as an inevitable representational hegemony, fit for all, and for all purposes and registers. The hetero-graphy exemplified and mass-diffused in SMS may be problematising the 'erasure' of the awkward actuality of orthographic heterogeneity.

9.1.2 Sequence of argument

I return now to Figures 3.9 and 3.10, which extend Sebba's discussion of the relationship between spelling choice and Street's distinction (1984) between autonomous and ideological models of literacy. Sebba argued that a sociocultural approach to spelling depends on an understanding of literacy as a social practice, which in turn depends on a social model of literacy (2007: Chapter 2). Figure 3.10, building on Cook's two 2004 compendia of situated

spelling variation, identifies the potential pool of orthographic choice as situated and sourced in registers, domains, social practices and repertoires beyond those which feature in mass schooling. The obviousness of this claim is disguised by the prevailing influence of the autonomous model in schooled literacies, by which the pedagogic discourse associated with spelling instruction insists on the replication of correct standard forms, or conversely, ‘diagnoses’ the partial realisation of that aspiration as incompetent. In Chapter 3, following Agha (2003), I suggested that this schooled approach was both influential and a misrecognition made possible by the ‘erasure’ and ‘invisibilization’ of vernacular and specialised practices beyond standardness. Bernstein made the related argument about the social process of the ‘symbolic ruler, ruling consciousness, in the sense of having power over it, and ruling, in the sense of measuring the legitimacy of consciousness’ (1996;114). Here that ‘symbolic ruler’ attends selectively to the potential pools of orthographic resource: the ‘reservoirs’ as Bernstein termed these. It thereby legitimates some choices and makes others invisible as valued cultural production. The degree of permissive spelling choice can be considered as operating somewhere on a continuum between a social expectation of standardised competence, which functions autonomously of context, or at the other end of the cline, as an ideological, contingent literate practice, where choices always relate to an interlocutor’s perceived sense of social value and purpose in a given situated context (Kress 2000, 2003; Sebba 2003, 2007). Interlocutors may also be engaging in a mode of graphical interaction, rather than interactive writing: meaning is inferred contingently rather than defined by extrinsic definition, as outlined in the observation by Harris in the epigraph quotation. Spelling choice may also become subject to evaluation from co-existent and powerful lenses, typically in retrospective or extrinsic perspectives by which choice is evaluated by the criteria of autonomous literacy. By that model, normative choice functions as a proxy for literate choice ‘of social value’, as Agha terms it. As commented previously, Blommaert has offered a number of analyses of this process as it surfaces through the relative mobility of signs in flows of people, money and texts, and the immobility of sites of institutional evaluation, especially in the institutions of the European nation-state. In the case of African grassroots literacy and its evaluation, vernacular modes of articulation may achieve high status at a local scale while failing to achieve similar recognition when these resources are used and evaluated in other geosocial contexts, such as the metropolitan setting of European immigration control (Blommaert 2007, 2008, 2010, Shortis review 2009). Such an interpretation could also be applied to young people’s choices in digitally-mediated vernaculars, and was salient in the exaggerated claims made in coverage of youth SMS in public sphere discourse (Carrington 2005, Thurlow 2006).

In Chapter 2, I introduced two contrasting visual representations depicting aggregated resources of orthographic choice and their circulation in economies of *framing, distribution and evaluation* (Bernstein 1996). Figures 2.10 and 2.11 took the variety of orthographic and social practice domains, as shown in the image of the extended orthographic ‘palette’, or repertoire, and in the references which support that visualisation. Figure 2.10 was elaborated from the

visual schema used by Robertson in her re-working of Bernstein's construct of the recontextualising fields of pedagogic discourse (Robertson *et al.* 2004). In both schema, institutionally sanctioned, powerful orthographic registers are set at the top of the visual model, with choices which have their provenance and field of operation in popular culture and vernacular life-worlds being set out at the bottom. Here, I refine this analogy in two models which represent the **reservoir**²¹⁸ of potential orthographic resources available, their provenance in 'pools' and 'streams' of semiotic resources, and their 'relay', distribution and evaluation in both '**horizontal**' and '**vertical**' discourses.²¹⁹ In Chapters 3 and 4, I introduced two theoretical models which shaped the analytical framework brought to bear in the empirical analysis. Synthesising sociolinguistic studies of CMC and orthographic choice, these presented a matrix of contextual pressures acting on SMS interlocutors which, it was hypothesised, influence the recognition, evaluation and selection of potential orthographic resources. In this chapter, models 3 and 4 offer more detailed representations of those social and material pressures as these appear to operate in the '**contexts of production and reception**' (see Jones 1991). I differentiate between the immediate short term choices of a particular moment²²⁰ (Model 3, see Figure 4.8), which echoes the analytical framework presented earlier, and the more elusive, longer-term social pressures which accumulate in the ongoing production of literate identity by interlocutors, as manifest over biographical trajectories. This dual temporal perspective attends to the emergent practices and dispositions inflecting and reproducing representations of identity over longer duration (Model 4, see Figure 4.7). Underlying these representations is the issue of inequitable and differential socio-economic resourcing of literacy, as represented by both Bernstein and Blommaert. Hence, I extend Bernstein's construct of a socio-economic differential in access to cultural codes of interaction to refer to **restricted and elaborated orthographic codes**.

I have presented evidence showing SMS to be widely perceived as epitomising a moment of comparatively rapid diachronic (sociohistorical) shift in orthographic choice, and related linguistic and semiotic resources more widely defined (Figures 1.1 and 1.2). The abruptness of this diffusion, and the apparent novelty of its linguistic form, as reported in news media and popular accounts, have been shown to source the metadiscursive reflex seen in **public sphere commentary**. Models 5 and 6 offer contrastive schema which represent the temporal shift from a paradigm of more regulated orthographic choice in the pre-digital, modern age of nation-state defined language, print and mass schooling (Model 5). In this idealisation, knowledge is treated by **regulative segmentation** (Bernstein 1996). The shift is to a model of re-regulated, opportunistic orthographic choice, or '**viral diffusion**', following the arguments made by Blommaert, Alim, Pennycook and others (*passim*). This phenomenon appears to operate in the conditions associated with digitally-mediated, self-published interaction in the shifting social landscape of globalised 'late modernity' (Model 6), including its extreme fragmented settings of 'superdiversity'²²¹, and the associated tendency for social semiotic crossings over previously demarcated domains of social practice (Rampton 1999, 2006, Blommaert & Rampton 2011).

In effect Orthographic choice modelled by commercial provenance offers an influential orthographic register which is not sourced in the nation-state, previously the monopolistic regulator of nation-literate accomplishment, including its orthographic fractal. Finally, I remind readers that this extension of orthographic resources co-exists with the continuing structures of domination in the ideological representation of standard languages. Normative spelling choice from the pool of approved standard forms – what I have termed ‘hyperstandardised’ orthographic practice – continues to function to limit access to authoritative discourse and transactions of power, and in the individual instantiation, the degree of competent performance limits access to a person’s educational development and progression.

By such an argument, the apparent banality of people’s idiolectal choices in a mundane, low status register as found in SMS, became a contested discourse of greater social semiotic import. I have shown how orthographic expectations have been deregulated in conjunction with the digital turn. In contiguous domains of social practice, national and international testing regimes focused on improving standardised literacy, including spelling, have been introduced and then intensified, using benchmarking standards and evaluation procedures derived from an autonomous literacy perspective (See Kress *et al.* 2005, Rampton 2006, Introduction/Chapter1). These appear to service a discourse in which aggregated test scores in international comparisons such as OECD PISA function as indices of nationhood economic virility.²²² This has implications for the pedagogic discourse around spelling experienced by the respondents in this study, who faced pressures simultaneously towards and away from normative choice. Model 1 draws on the reconfigured Bernstein and Robertson heuristics to represent the reservoir of orthographic resources potentially available in the written form of a national language and to a user, and as distributed, recontextualised, and evaluated, in this case for the users of SMS. This representation allows placing normative, standardised forms of spelling, dominant in schooling, print publication and public written discourse, in the same semiotic framework as other fields of importance to this study’s respondents but often presented less prominently, or excluded altogether: the rituals and literacy practices of their home and street life-worlds in the past and now. Model 1 includes, at each extreme, the orthographic resources available in scholarly, ‘philological’ accounts of standard English spelling over time, as exemplified by *OED*, and the resources used in relatively undocumented vernacular practices, or ‘Grassroots literacy’ (Blommaert 2008). Some of these, but far from all, are recorded in user-generated viral reference, such as *Urban Dictionary*.²²³

9.2.1 Scholarly accounts of standard English orthographic choice

Lexicographical and historical approaches to orthographic choice represent the scholarship of spelling over time (e.g. *OED*, Scragg 1974, Upward & Davidson 2011). This discourse offers an expanded representation of the set of orthographic resources in play in written English, along historical principles, by comparison with the commonsensical definitions of English spelling defined in dictionaries of usage, computer spellcheckers and the orthographic 'set' featuring in the style sheets used to generate prestigious forms of published print. The scholarly record indexes diversity of influence over space, including regiolect, and time, usually excluding the immediate past/present. It includes academic coverage of subvarieties in specialised forms, and the routine representation of figures/characters drawn from other script systems in derivational etymologies. In so doing, it acknowledges tacitly the 'polysystem' origins of standard English as identified by Albrow, Carney, Rollings and Ryan (Chapter 2b). Lexicographical, philological commentary on historical principles, as developed by Murray in the nineteenth century demonstrates that all preferred linguistic choice is inevitably subject to change over time and to sociohistorical contestation (*OED*, Murray 1995, Brewer 2007, Durkin 2009, 2014).²²⁴

9.2.2 Reservoirs of orthographic resource

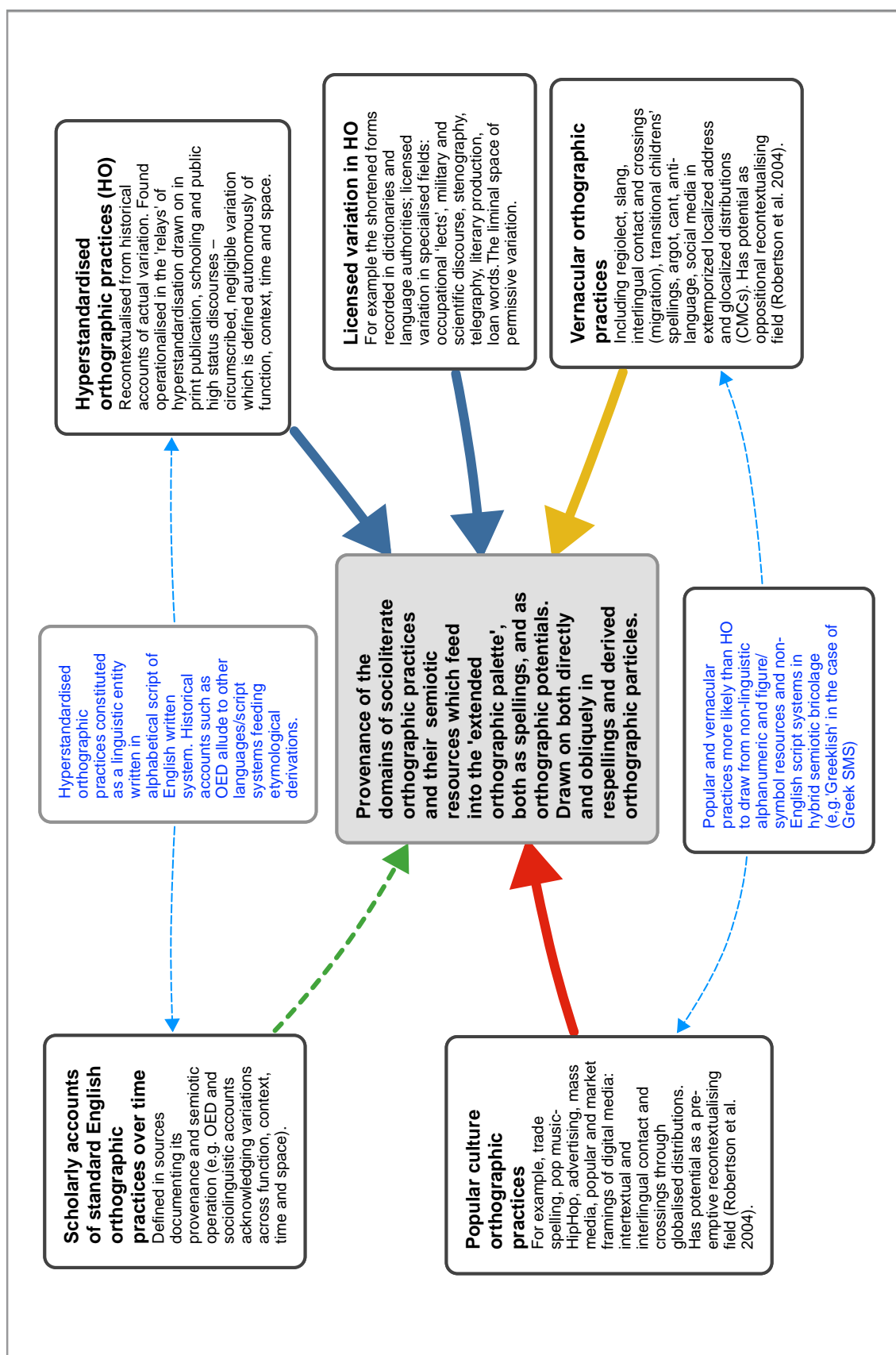


Figure 9.2 Model 1: Provenance of semiotic resources feeding into the 'extended orthographic palette'

9.2.3 Normative spelling in standardised English

Normative spelling choice is presented in this diagram as a selective pedagogical recontextualisation of scholarly accounts of standard English, as required to operationalise it in the relays of print publication, schooling and high status writing. To paraphrase Bernstein's distinction (1996), echoed by Robertson (2004), it is characterised by a strong 'regulative discourse' of obligation and a weak 'instructional discourse' of explanation. Typically, it makes a selective filtering of the kinds of information shown in scholarship, such as *OED*. That dictionary routinely provides descriptions of the origin of a word, multiple spellings with dates, and, for older words, citations expressed in the writing conventions and spelling conventions of the time. As a consequence, the representation of spelling is given a richer instructional discourse which can accommodate temporal and ideological explanation, along with the primary evidence of exemplification of the inevitability of spelling variation across geosocial space and in time. By contrast, normative representation of English spelling filters scholarly accounts of standard English knowledge in the interests of presenting regimented unitary patterns, accepts minimum variation, and defines preferred forms in isolation from function, time and space. This, in turn, leads to such practices as the 'tidying up' of the spelling found in some older historical and literary texts when these are presented to modern audiences, even where these audiences have specialised historical and linguistic knowledge.²²⁵ This is the closed set of spelling forms which function as a **pedagogic device**, operationalised in the pedagogic relays of '**print capitalism**' (Anderson 1991), school and usage dictionaries (i.e. not *OED*), 'schooled literacy' (Street & Street 1991) curriculum and assessment, and in public high status commentary. It is a variety framed regulatively as correct, regardless of the rationales of etymology, frequency of use in corpus attestation, or lexicographical method. It just is.

9.2.4 Occupational, popular and vernacular fields of provenance

The other four fields depicted – licensed variation, occupational specialisms, popular culture and vernacular practices – all provide indications of their constituent domains of social activity. These offer other kinds of orthographic representation; these are not necessarily encoded in language authorities, such as dictionaries, but remain familiar to many interlocutors, depending on their access to repertoire (Bernstein: 1996;159) : their inevitably '**truncated repertoire**' of registers (Blommaert 2010;102). To refer back to the empirical analysis in Chapters 5 to 8, interlocutors may have varied orthographic repertoires and varied socioliterate knowledge of their import. Their '**cultural capital**' including their 'truncated repertoires' will impinge on choices made. Respellings, such as those identified as frequent and unmarked in Chapters 5 and 6, may have everyday familiarity, while being ignored in schooled literacy and its pedagogical relays. They may be under-represented in the record of the contemporary vernacular in *OED* and related sources, which have tended to draw examples from more prestigious written texts and registers. ²²⁶

9.3.1 The distribution of orthographic resources in flows of contact

Model 2 overlays Model 1 with a representation of Bernstein's accounts of **codes** and **framing** in **recontextualising fields**. This foregrounds the different **distributive rules** and **relays** in the contrasting **vertical discourses**²²⁷ of standard English and the 'horizontal discourses' of popular culture orthographic practices and the vernacular orthographic practices of home and street life-worlds (e.g. Barton & Hamilton 1998, Camitta 1993). These follow the pattern of Model 1. The spheres of activity and their underlying social relations are understood as codes framed with differential strength, disciplinary definition and socio-economic resourcing, reflected in the spatial principle by which the upper half represents 'vertical discourses': publicly recorded, explicit practices, usually dependent on formal instruction, relayed by funded institutions in prescribed and tested programmes of defined disciplinary specialism such as schooled approaches to literacy. The lower half represents horizontal discourses where knowledge is tacit and acquired informally and cheaply, by immersive participation in situated, localised social activity, usually outside the transactions and relays of institutional power and status. These horizontal and vertical discourses carry loadings of access to economic and cultural resources, with the vertical discourses corresponding to more privileged social formations, and more valuable, and transferable, cultural capital.

Scholarly accounts of standardised English, and their recontextualisation in the normative orthographic repertoire of English spelling (HO), are presented as 'vertical discourses' with 'strong framing,' with the latter mainly functioning as a 'regulative discourse'. This is to say, schooled literacy is more commonly a regulative discourse focused on compliance in the replication of standard forms as measured by assessment performativity. It is not primarily a discourse which attends to the histories and rationales of standardised English spelling or to the nature of its being learnt in early literacy, as described by Treiman (1993) or Kress (2000). Learning to spell consistently in standard English requires persistent conscious instruction, and even the most expert writers will have incompletely uniform knowledge and practices. Access to accurate standardised performance is therefore likely to be expensive and so gated by inequality (Blommaert 2010, Agha 2007). In addition, for some learners, the act of learning standardised forms may involve conscious unlearning and subordination of viral, spontaneous, vernacular approaches which might have served in horizontal discourses of situated informal interaction. The tensions around home vernaculars are well understood by linguists commenting on accent, dialect and schooling (e.g. Trudgill 1978, Milroy & Milroy 1991). Commentary on the dimension of vernacular spelling has been less extensive until recently.

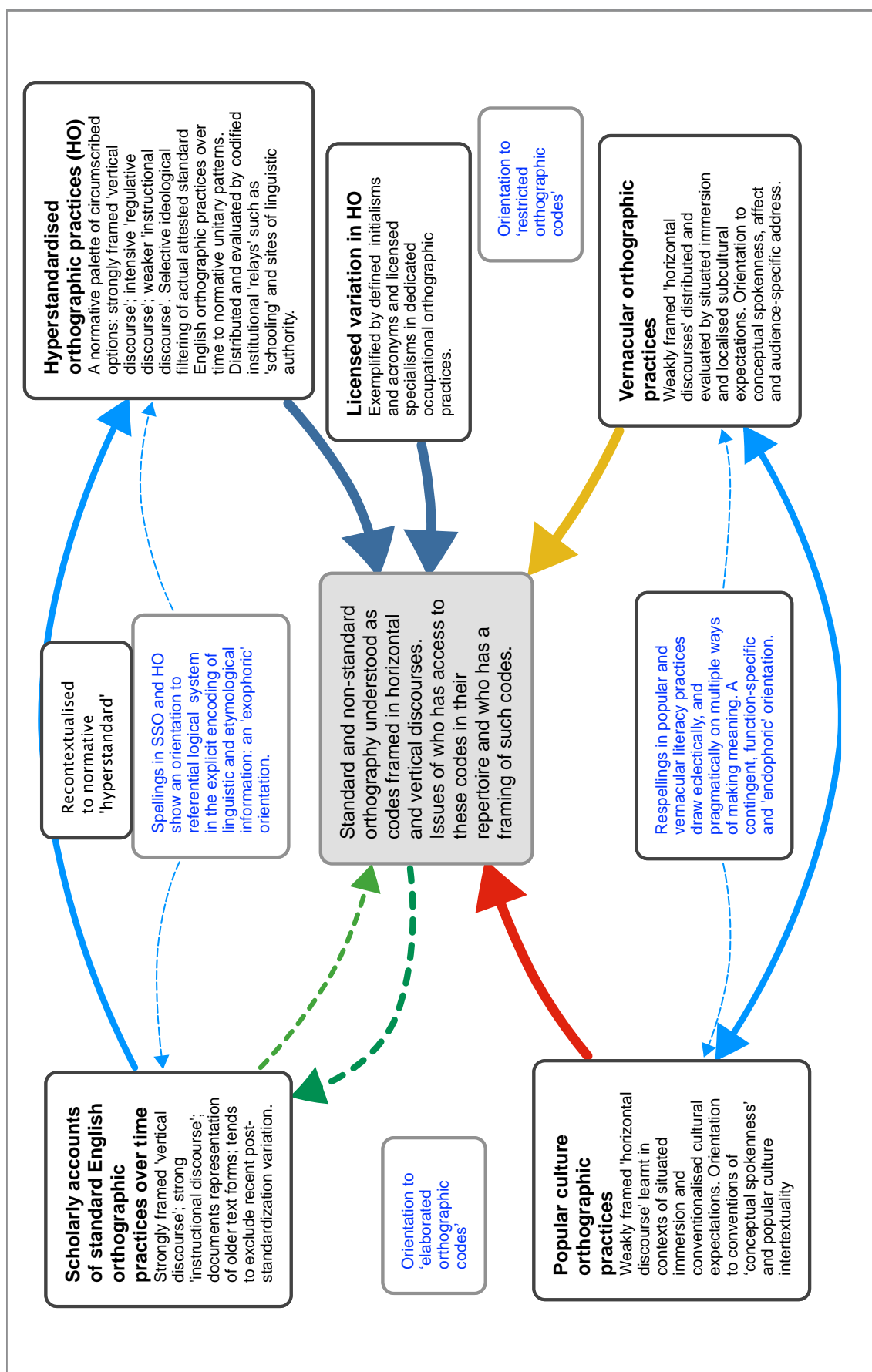


Figure 9.3 Model 2: Orthographic resources understood as 'codes' framed in 'horizontal' and 'vertical' 'discourses'

9.3.2 Bernstein's relevance to the 'recontextualisation' of normative practice

Scholarly and normative accounts of English spelling show an elaboration of complex orthographic codes. For example, both attend to etymological principles of spelling whereby a word is sometimes spelt in a way indicating its origin, especially when it is Graeco-Latin, with the social class implications of that specialised knowledge tending to favour social and economic privilege (Kress 2000, Hughes 1988, Scragg 1974, Durkin 2009, 2014). Such elaboration, and the resulting deviation from the shallow orthography of intuitive sound-spelling regularities, makes the task more dependent on formal knowledge of principles of etymology, morphology or the formal structures of ancient languages. Meanwhile the innovators of the spelling formation associated with horizontal discourses, such as those advocating simplified spelling, tend to ignore etymological information in favour of shallow orthography, which assumes situated learning without instruction, and which operates in the context of tacit evaluation.

9.3.3 How normativity represents difference by regulative segmentation

Where normative spelling does admit orthographic variation, this tends to be allocated to a subfield and treated as a discrete domain of licensed variation: permitted within the sub-domain and codified as such. For example, school dictionaries record abbreviated forms, which are defined as standard and permissible, often doing so in a demarcated listing. In dictionary accounts of standard English, spellings show an orientation to referential logical linguistic system in their explicit encoding of linguistic and etymological information in additive semiotic systems with internal coherence: the etymological spellings of /f/ as <ph> or /t/ as <ght>, for example. These have an exophoric orientation to sources of secondary reference (here, the origin of the word in the transliteration of that other register or language's writing system), which define and legitimate preferred choices of spelling regardless of their level of instantiation, and provide rationales from subfields in lexicographical practices, including philology and linguistics. Details of etymology, attested usage, phonology and grammar are drawn on to justify a standard spelling which may achieve its effective status by its compliance with the regulative discourse associated with schooled literacy.

9.3.4 User appropriation for design as an operationalising principle

By contrast, respellings in popular and vernacular practices are drawn eclectically, and pragmatically from multiple domains of social practice, and multiple ways of making meaning by orthographic representation, and may cross jurisdictional codification and linguistic regulation, especially in the context of digital interaction (Goddard 2006a, Lee 2007, Fung & Carter 2007, Lam 2009). Their mode of operation is context-specific and endophoric in orientation; rationales for choices are tacit, and oriented to the user's sense of the dynamics of the social situation in focus. Typically there are internal 'mimetic' motivations built on

orientations to spokenness including: regularities of common sound-spelling correspondence; sound-alike principles of homophones; look-alike principles of homographs and logographs; the intimation of metapragmatic and auditory effects by graphical cues. The latter can be exemplified by the patterns scrutinised in Chapters 5 and 6: capitalisation for volume, font size and emphatic stress; repetition of graphemes to indicate duration; rebus-like emoticons to mark stance, punctuation conventions such as initial points indicating pauses and silences to construe tentativeness or mark discourse boundaries.

9.4.1 Contextual pressures acting on a moment of orthographic choice

Model 3 represents the matrix found in the analytical framework (Chapter 4, Figure 4.8). The focus shifts from the observation of the larger abstractions of ‘the reservoir’, and the circulation and evaluation of its orthographic resources, to their selection and deployment in a moment of situated SMS activity: a **literacy event** inevitably carrying with it moments of orthographic selection shaped by past and proleptic choice. This is a shift to the user/rhetor in a moment of time. It foregrounds the diverse contextual pressures acting on social actors in the invisible but palpable, ‘competing discourses’ of economic and psychosocial pressure (Lee 1992). These competing motivational factors act on dimensions of orthographic choice in fluid enactments of ‘liquid modernity’ (Bauman 2000; Rampton 2006;13). Figure 9.4 shows these operating at the interstices of the contextual pressures arising out of ‘sociocultural, socio-cognitive and affective’ dimensions of identity performance and the instrumental, mundane ‘environmental factors’ of situated production.²²⁸ This depiction suggests the complexity of the social semiotic systems in play. Choice is multi-motivated, multi-accentual and fluid, in the sense of being an ongoing and unpredictable social semiotic, relatively unconstrained by codified linguistic convention.

The focus upon choices experienced at the moment of composition has greater significance in the case of SMS than in more routinised types of writing and keyboarding. As discussed earlier, there is greater potential for indeterminacy in the conventions and expectations of literate production in a medium which does not yet have the stronger conventionalised framing sedimented by practices over time. This more open sense of determining pressures of enregistered convention can be contrasted with opportunities for compliance and non-compliance (deliberate or accidental) framed by prestigious genres of more regimented written production. These aspire to the normative orthographic repertoire: here expectations are delimited by the prescription of the unitary acceptable form, and the penalties for not meeting this are ‘spelt out’ in habituated binary evaluations of orthographic choice as literate competence, and the mirror image of deficit evaluations of the writer. In short, normative spelling choice maintains, and is maintained by, an evaluative feedback loop of linguistic prescriptivism.

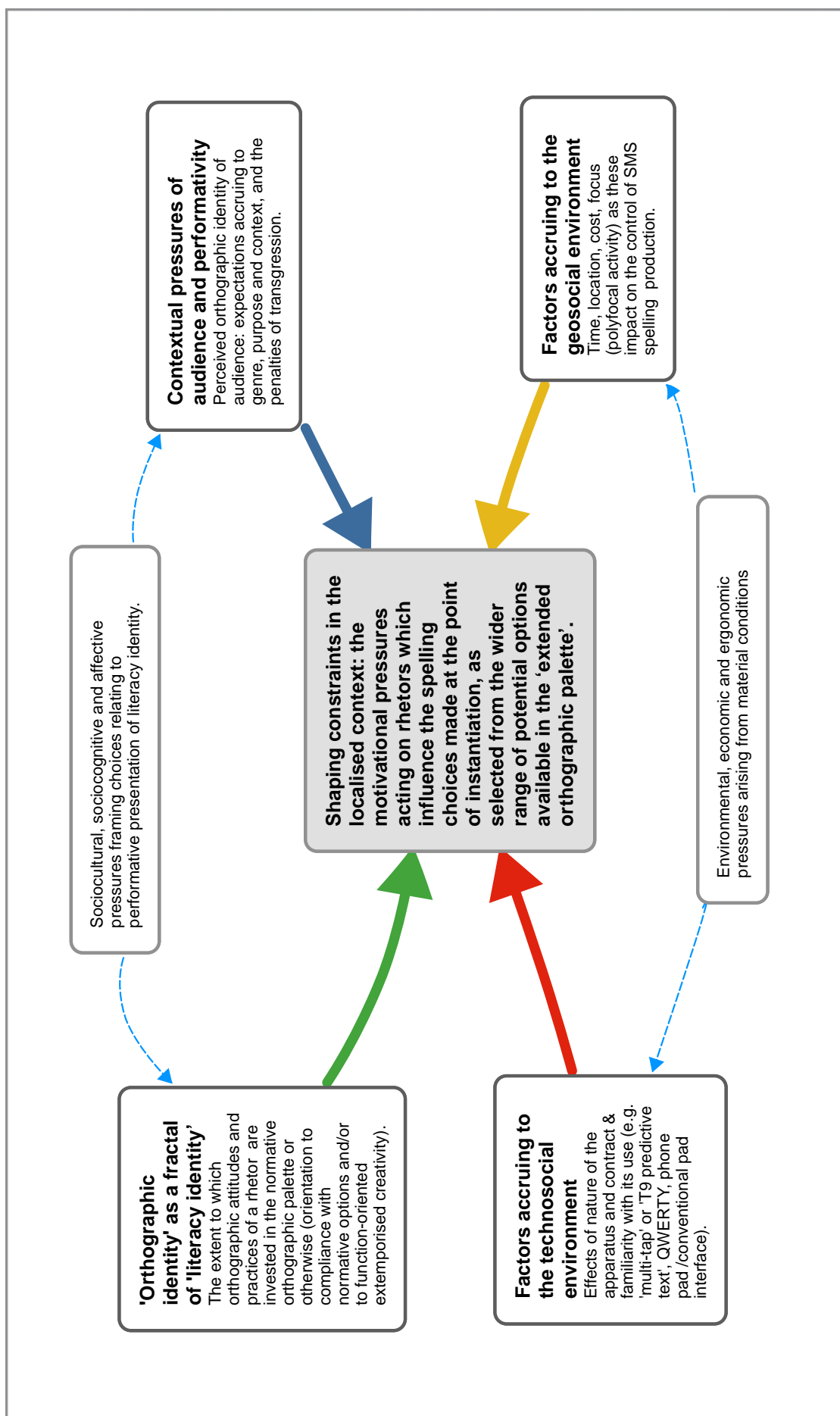


Figure 9.4 Model 3 The localised pressures acting on a moment of orthographic choice

Model 4 builds on Figure 4.7 and focuses on the rhetor's construction of subjectivity over duration. I return to Bernstein's argument about codes in seeking to explain the pressures on an SMS interlocutor's sense of literate identity, and the dynamics of formal educational settings and their framing as shaped by competing pressures from schooled literacy, markets, home and street-life. The vernacular may accrue a different status in a society currently driven by the motor of mass consumption as much as by nineteenth and twentieth-century prioritisation of nationhood, citizenship and military imperialism.²²⁹ The disruption to spelling occasioned by SMS may be sourced in the orthographic practices modelled by popular culture and drawn from vernacular culture by 'horizontal discourses' and 'symbiotic intertextuality' (see Models 1 and 2). The shift to a freer way of spelling, as exemplified in the orthographic practices diffusing in conjunction with digital media, indicates the power of markets and their invitation to 'just-for-me consumerism' in social relations, including their literate mediation (see Kenway & Bullen 2001, Robertson *et al.* 2004). Earlier scholarly commentary on trade spelling noted a comparable shift in the available representations of literacy, attributing this to 'commercial' interests (Chapter 2). Pound observed the likely 'psychological ground for the employment of curious spellings' and noted a reorientation from the formal to the demotic in the patterns of orthography innovated by agencies of those commercial interests: 'time has passed when new trade-names were coined, as a rule, in orthodox ways from Greek and Latin roots' (1923).

In late modernity, markets function as Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' (1776) in the 'force fields' acting on the construction of literate identity, influencing relationships between commercially motivated interests and more permissive literate practices. In globally networked markets, with strong orientations to mass consumption, theoretical models cannot only attend to interests defined by the reifications of the nation-state and its institutional relays (Gee et al., 1987, Kress 1995, Castells 1996). This critique informs Robertson's reconfiguration of Bernstein's recontextualising fields. Models 5 and 6 use depictions of a similar visual representation to interpret a temporally-located '**orthographic shift**' occasioned by the innovation and diffusion of unregimented, self-published writing in what I term digitally-mediated vernacular written interaction in its mobile form. An interlocutor's attention to licensed fields of subvariation changes from licensed variation in Model 5 to opportunistic re-appropriation in Model 6. In Model 5, specialised, register-specific 'non-standard' variation is licensed by a defined circumscribed exception to normative practice. Specific forms of respelling are legitimated by being recognised and licensed as acceptable in 'orthographic regimes' for different kinds of register-expectation (Sebba 2003, 2007; 47, 97 above). Such exceptions function to mark a general perpetuation of the standardised form as the hegemonic default expectation. In Model 6, following the kinds of argument presented by Pennycook (2003, 2007, 2009, 2010), varied linguistic and semiotic traditions are drawn on without regard for their provenance and implied authority, and then re-combined, leading to a form of orthographic 'sampling' or 'mash-up': 'rip, slyme and performativity', as Pennycook put it (2003).

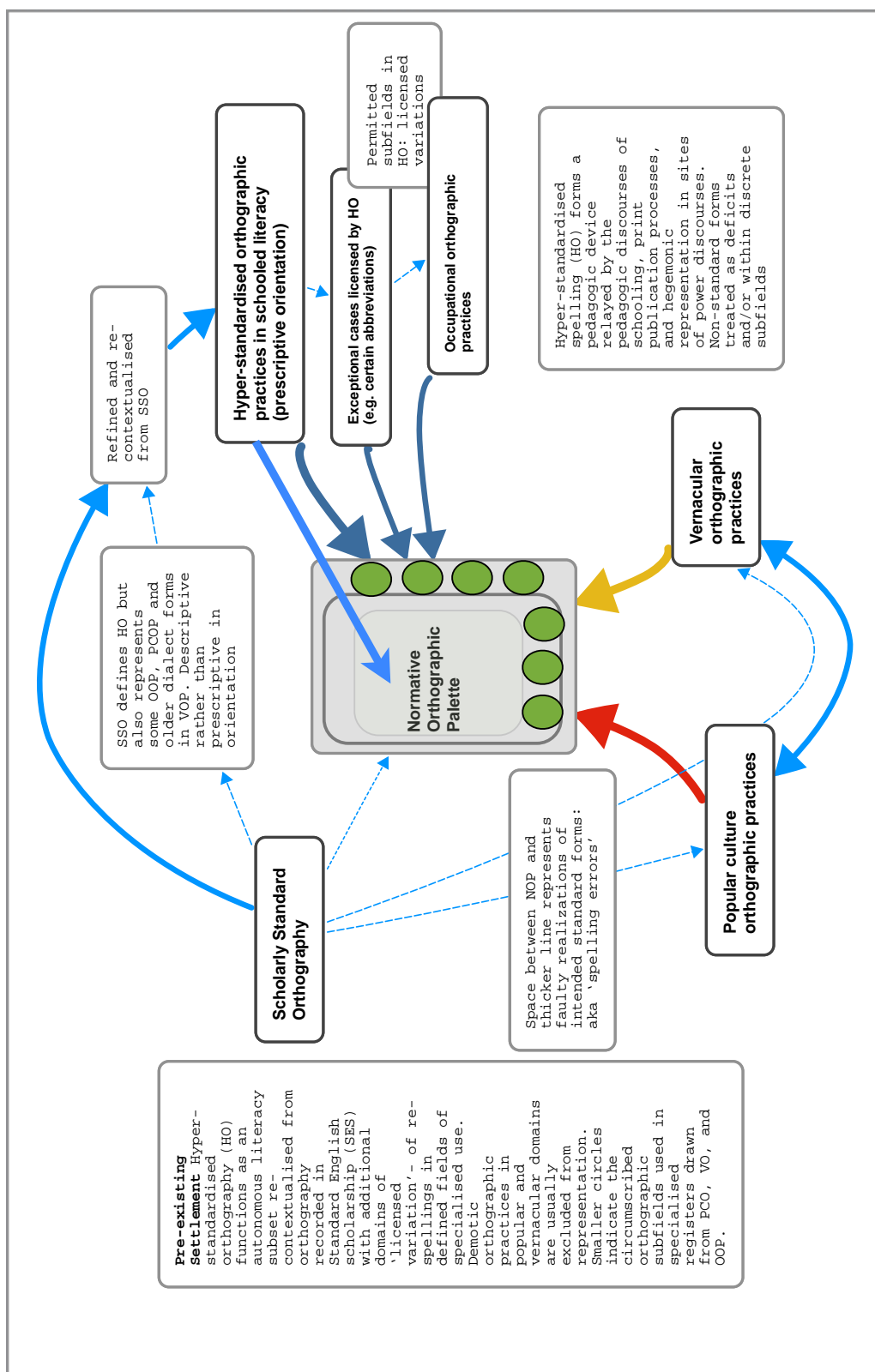


Figure 9.5 Model 5 Regulated distribution of resources in the prior 'orthographic settlement' of print

9.4.2 The regulated distribution of orthographic variation in print.

Respellings are drawn on in ongoing extemporised semiotic practice, which draws eclectically from many tributaries of provenance. The effect of this alteration is to make normative-hyperstandardised choices appear more porous. As shown in Chapters 7 and 8, some of the pressures on those texting are exaggerated in popular accounts. Such explanations are characterised by instrumental appeals to legitimation, as grouped in the fields described here as ‘technoliterate’, and ‘geosocial’.²³⁰ Examination of the environmental, economic and ergonomic pressures arising from altered environmental conditions supports Hård af Segerstad’s definition of a ‘maxim’ of ‘linguistic adaptivity’ encompassing consideration of material conditions of text entry.²³¹ Technological conditions do not determine variation, and adaptation will be influenced by the degree of cognitive familiarisation and motor-sensory immersion in a particular interface. For example, analysis of the transcription of phonepad text entry in Chapters 2 and 6 has shown that the configurations of keypad interfaces have motivational potential. The earlier phone-pad text entry transcription showed an additional lamination of possible motivation for respellings of etymological letter string sequences such as <ght>. Conversely, QWERTY interfaces, and a new generation of invasive spellcheckers on smartphones appear to pressurise users to adopt their mainstream standard English orthographic practices (Mitton, forthcoming).²³² Respondents also reported frustration in texting standard and non-standard variation on *Blackberry*-style phones, for example, where the key-pressing sequences internalised from practice with the standard alphanumeric phone-pad did not transfer to that specific interface.²³³ At the time of writing there is evidence that technological and material change, in conjunction with changing social pressures in a new technology now domesticated, are pressuring users towards normative choice, sometimes against the grain of their claimed preferences.²³⁴

Similarly, the items grouped under the geosocial environment are attested by many respondents, who rationalised their evaluation of spelling choices via issues of cost and convenience (see Chapters 2, 7 and 8). The qualitative data here has echoed with the extended commentaries on the editing of messages to achieve better cost and clarity.²³⁵ The different billing schemes which prevailed at the time of writing, and those that applied ten years before, have been related to shifts in practice. Respondents frequently reported adapting their practice to the constraints of the physical setting, including texting more informally and with less editing when walking, ‘in a hurry’, or engaged in other activity (Chapter 7).

Such claims of logical motivation sit uneasily with the evidence for variety within and across social groups, and even within and across one person’s idiolectal practice. The elusiveness and complexity of Model 3 lies in inclusion of the more abstract, internalised ‘**force fields**’ shown in the upper half of the figure, further explored in Model 4, and adumbrated by the socio-economic framework of aspiration and register-experience presented in Figure 4.7. The data analysed in this study suggests that technological and environmental factors, as frequently foregrounded by

respondents in this study, may be over-determined by sociocultural and affective pressures which condition choices before the point of micro-pressures of text entry reduction.

Choice includes variation in relation to audience and the associated genre expectations. Here, examples may include practical reasons of not wishing to confuse an audience unused to the conventions of respelling.²³⁶ This view is congruent with the general pragmatic concern for intelligibility evinced by questionnaires and interviews, and conceptualised by Hård af Segerstad.(2003). It may be more subtle, as in one respondent's claim of using standard forms as a kind of 'social armour' in the context of possible negative evaluation following the breakdown of a relationship.²³⁷ Similar comments are made by older and more accomplished professionals, including lecturers and employers. Such matters can be presented using the familiar notions of 'audience design' (Bell 1997), or 'situational variation' (Littlewood 1981): orthographic variation adapted to perceptions of audience, purpose, context and penalty (see Agha 2007 for discussion). Tagg and Spilioti have both presented the subtler explanation of performativity: brevity may be a proxy for performing intimacy and informality in the recruitment of affective dimensions of address by deictic devices which imply shared knowledge and context (Chapter 2). Choice appears influenced by peer loyalty, social solidarity, and orientation to an interpersonal metafunction (Halliday 1979).

This study has focused on text messaging data-sets collected in the period when it was still a comparatively novel practice. Those texting, especially in peer-to-peer contexts, had a wider set of orthographic choices, of orthographic 'types' and 'particles', and a more permissive level of discretionary choice in making their semiotic design. Choices were not inevitably amenable to externally located evaluations based on *a priori* definitions of normative expectation. This depended in turn on the users' degree of orientation to the normative repertoire of standard English, including access to its prestigious affordances, and the corresponding level of self-surveillance. It may also depend on the orientation and flexibility of 'habitus' and the extent to which this is defined by habituation to prestigious, formal written registers to the exclusion of other varieties (Bourdieu 2002). Blommaert's construct of 'truncated repertoire' is pertinent: one of the striking patterns in the interview data is the use of respellings sourced from vernacularity by people with high levels of literate accomplishment (postgraduate level and beyond). Such subjects may function with orthographically diglossic repertoires, choosing the extended orthographic resources and their implied permissive variation in their SMS practices, and maintaining high levels of compliance with standardised forms in public contexts, such as academic writing where other choices carry strong penalties.²³⁸

9.4.3 Contextual pressures arising from social and cultural capital

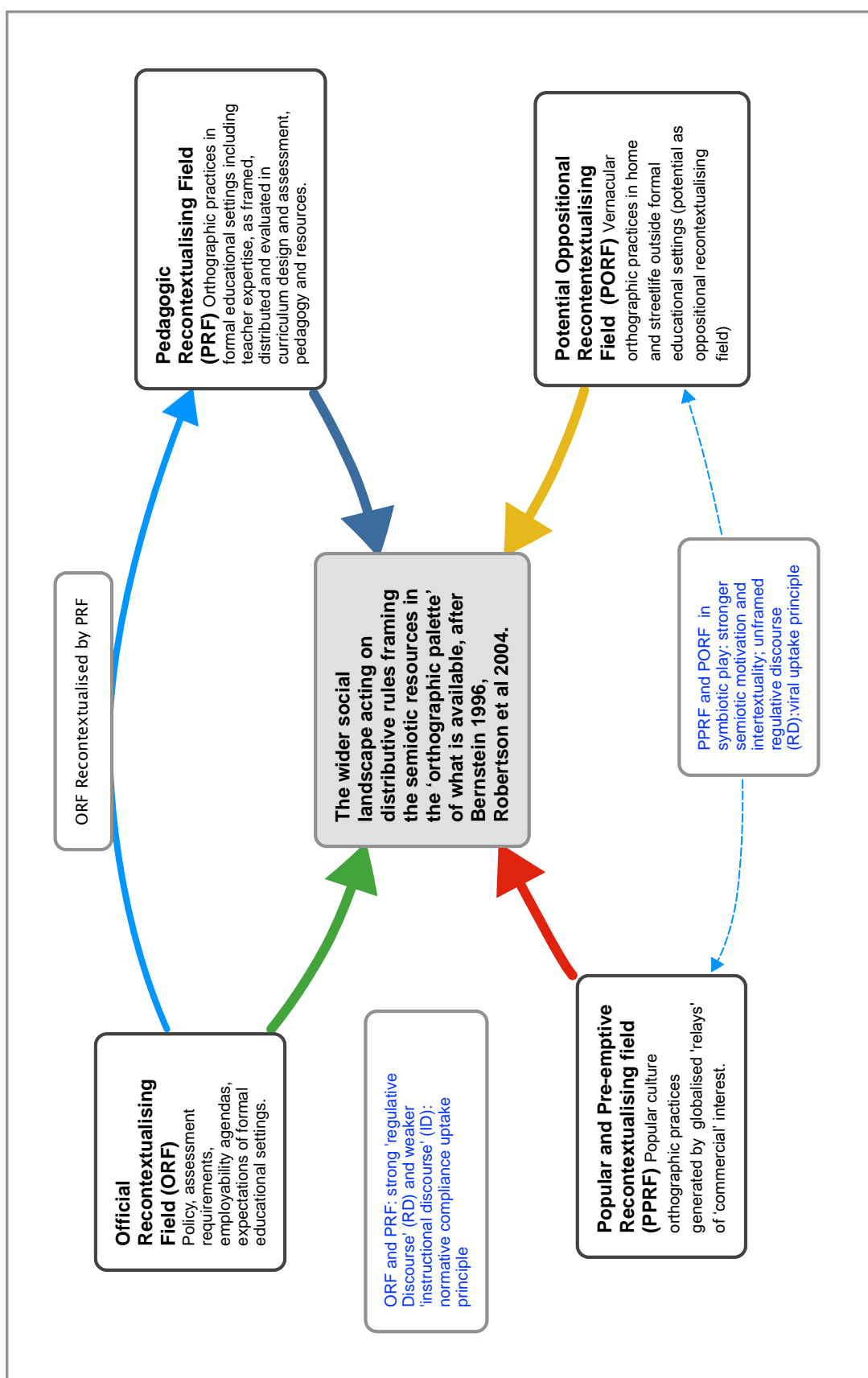


Figure 9.6 Model 4: Modelling the wider social pressures acting on choices of orthographic identity

to alteration by variables of contextual motivation, so weakening the hegemonic status of standardised English spelling as an autonomously legitimated construct enduring imperviously of time, space, function and context. Model 5 depicts variational spelling as a practice contained by being conventionalised in subfields pertaining to particular domains: stenography, telegram operators using specialised argot initialism-spellings for economy and security, skilled office workers using shorthand. Outside specialised licensed exemptions, specialist rhetors are expected to spell ‘like the rest of us’. This is the regulated distribution of representational resources in what Kress has termed the ‘high age of print’ (1998): the period from the late sixteenth century, by which time printing was well established in its craft practices, insofar as these relate to the selection and representation of spelling^{239, 240} to the advent of offset litho, high-street photocopying and digital technologies, in text-inputs which required no typesetting. This shows the dominant influence of a set of spelling resources refined and recontextualised from scholarly accounts of standard English and iterated in the regimented practices of formal instruction, testing, proofreading, and deficit evaluations of difference as incompetence. Throughout this period, variational orthographic practice has been documented as co-existing²⁴¹, in vernaculars including informal letters, occupational registers and multilingual practices in more recent historical sociolinguistics studies.²⁴² These variations have had limited public representation. Their lack of representation is evidence of their ‘**erasure**’ and ‘**invisibilization**’ as legitimated choice.

9.4.4 Re-regulated orthographic resources in digitally-mediated vernaculars

Model 6 contrasts the pre-existing ‘orthographic settlement’ – prior to the advent of digitally-mediated vernaculars – as noted in comments about the stability and pervasiveness of standardised English spelling – with the new distribution of spelling types occasioned by practices of networked, unregimented writing, in contexts which are not regulated or intended to be made public, or permanent.²⁴³ Those engaged in digitally-mediated vernaculars operate in conditions of self-published, digital distribution and have a high level of optionality in how to innovate spelling choice. This innovation occurs in altered temporal, spatial and regulative frames (Katz, & Akhus 2002, Green 2003). Spelling choice is potentially disembedded from schooled literacy, without regard for its institutionally-legitimated provenance. As I have shown, the representational resources found in the extended orthographic repertoire are drawn from a number of domains previously kept demarcated into discrete subfields. These may now recombine²⁴⁴ with only limited regard for original provenance and its implied authorisation of licensed variation. In addition, as Ryan has observed, respellings typically compromise the morphological and etymological information presented in dictionaries and related accounts as legitimating the preferred forms of standard English spelling (2011:3). The consequence of such optionality is to erode the pre-existing framework by which ‘orthography’ was primarily oriented to standardised forms and licensed variation following the legitimation afforded by

appeals to the aspiration for logical consistent linguistic system. In the post print-context, hetrography becomes focal.

By this interpretation, those engaged in digitally-mediated interaction appropriate resources and subsume them to the social and semiotic purposes of their own 'designs'. This process, and its use of an extended orthographic repertoire, may not attend to the ideological framings and evaluative stances of the pre-existing print settlement, including more explicit privileging of normative forms as contrastive with ignorance and poverty, and its typologies of semiotic codification in linguistic authority and usage guidance. Punctuation devices with prescribed functions in standard language may be appropriated beyond their previously prescribed definition and its related circumscribed, conventionalised use:²⁴⁵ So, the use of fullstops/periods to indicate vague completion of an utterance, as in informal spoken English;(Petrie 1999); the use of a semi-colon in a 'winking' emoticon (<);>;(Crystal 2002, 2004). In some cases, use may become re-conventionalised, as in the <@> symbol or aroba, included on typewriter keys, and now an essential part of the syntax of email. These patterns are common to all new media language but SMS remains salient for perceptions of the level of such viral appropriations. Hence, its iconic status as the epitome of the disruption occasioned by digitally-mediated writing.

Such differences extend beyond the pre-existing boundaries of national languages too, given the way digital technologies flow across pre-existing linguistic and jurisdictional boundaries. This has been observed in scholarship focused on hip-hop (Alim *et al.* 2009, Pennycook 2007), and to a lesser extent in transnational and translinguistic hybrid forms found in instant messaging, 1337 (Leet), and gaming. The music subculture analogy of '**sampling**' in the now-globalised domain of hip-hop alludes to the domestic locus of personal computer piracy practices of 'ripping' and 'burning' content. There are clear analogies in the emerging representation of new piratical orthographic conventions of techno-literate subcultures exhibiting 'ripped' and 'burned' hybrid styling. By this argument, Model 4 should indicate greater porosity in its influence by the national, cultural, and linguistic flows to and from domains in other languages: the otherness of language subculture as a market of geographical and cultural difference, now yoked together by networks of electronic binary processing, to produce transnational literacy practices.

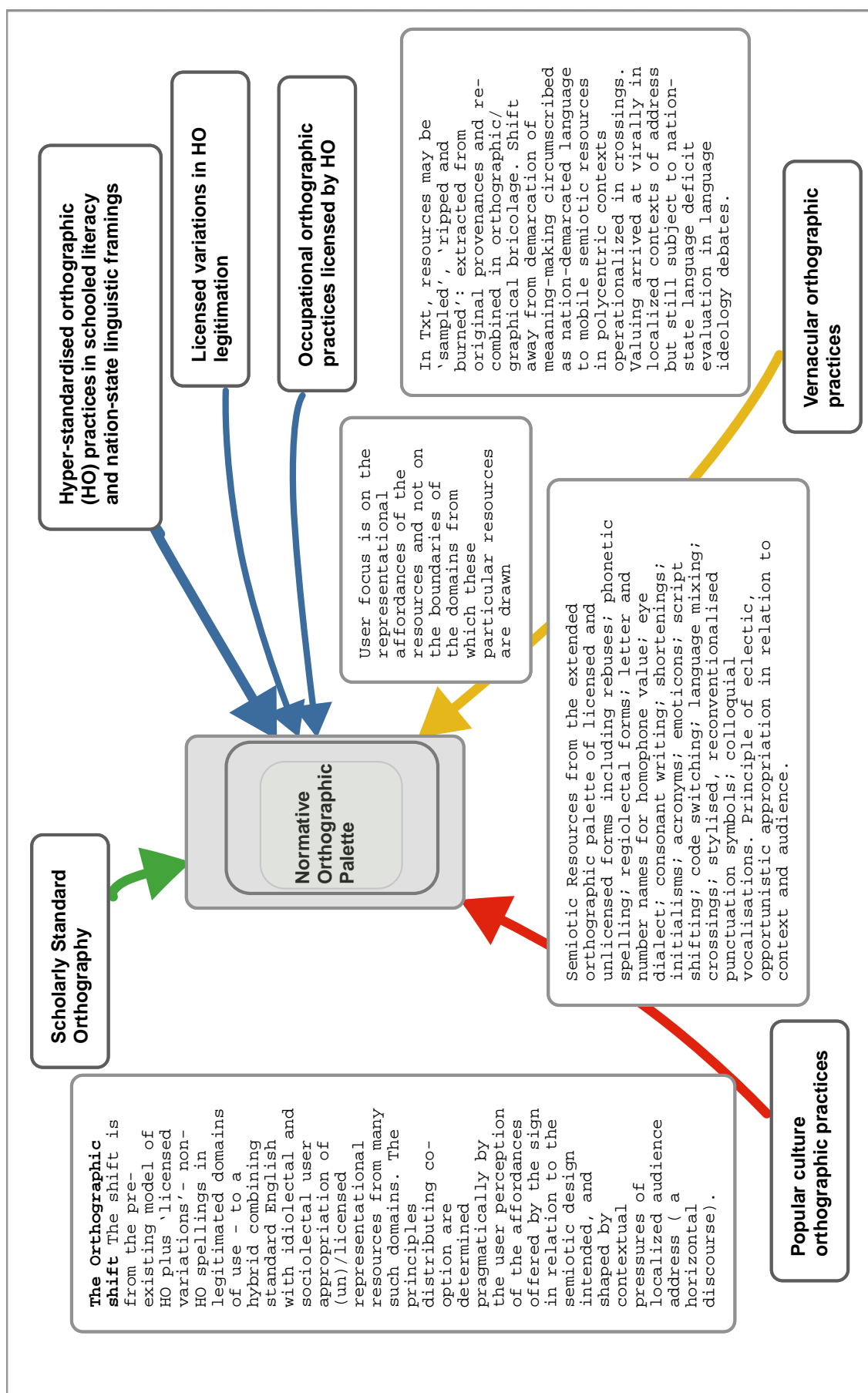


Figure 9.7 Model 6: reregulated representational resources in the extended orthographic repertoire

9.5.1 Technological contexts and technological determinism

The modes of ‘print capitalism’ production in the early European nation-state provided a socio-economic context of audience, a technology, and a division of labour which depended on standardised orthographic choice and on an imagining of a standardised national language more generally (Anderson 1991).²⁴⁶ Printers sought uniformity as a marker of achieved craft practice and as a means of separating the class-based division of labour between mechanical compositor and author.²⁴⁷ Publishers sought a market of readers of vernacular nation-languages beyond the scale of regiolectal variation. Later, scholars sought intellectually coherent consistent linguistic system in a pre- enlightenment project of rationalisation (Bregelman 1980). That project is not easy to disambiguate from its function to manufacture shibboleths in a legitimisation of social class divisions by the construction of a framework of distinction based on the grammars of Latin (Smith 1991, Crowley 1996).²⁴⁸ As a consequence, there are historicised procedures by which a manuscript is translated into printed output (e.g. Moxon 1683) and these remain relatively unchanged by the social and material conditions which now render them less necessary at a strictly utilitarian level (e.g. Grafton 2011). For example, copy may now be inputted directly in electronically-stored form without compositor labour.

Spelling has a particular status and treatment in the sequence of these print procedures which operate with the general aspiration of achieving absolute levels of uniformity, consistency and ‘correctness’ in the conventions of standardised written published forms. Such regulative practices are echoed and recontextualised in the fractal social practices encoded in guidance on written style, even at the time of writing. For example, the handbooks and related guidance focused on credible normative ortho-graphical output, as published by the Modern Languages Association (MLA). At the greatest level of scale of diffusion, if not of prestige, there are also the demands and resources associated with standardised writing and spelling as iterated by mass schooling.

9.5.2 Summarising the theoretical argument

I have explained how the spelling used in SMS is recycled from popular and vernacular contexts in a cultural economy which draws from and competes with the institutional norm-enforcement of nation-state literacy as enacted in its standardised spelt forms. This argument, and the empirical evidence which supports it, points to a possible temporally-located shift from the social conditions of nation-state prescription of spelling, and the material conditions of the associated ‘relay’ of uniform standard English spelling by ‘schooled literacy’ and print, towards a more variegated, opportunistic sense of permissive choice. This appears to operate with greater fluidity and user appropriation under the conditions of self-published interaction in digitally-mediated forms such as SMS. Changes in socially-shaped meaning potential are further enabled by habits formed from the accumulating choices of users in related digitally-mediated vernaculars, which in turn may sediment and leak into enregisterment of emergent

normative re/conventions (e.g. <u> for <you>, <2> for <to>). These may be expected to feed into a set of reconventionalised resources and the discursive options available in their selection, leading to accelerated change in linguistic and semiotic resources within and across nation-state boundaries and speech communities in a trend towards ‘centrifugally distributed’ **post-standardised** variation (Androutsopoulos 2011). To illustrate, we have seen in Chapters 2 and 5 how the respellings chosen in *IRC*, informal handwritten writing and informal email all adumbrated choices subsequently used in SMS. It seems that in the mobile, **polycentric** social conditions of digitally-mediated vernaculars – here defined as leisured, peer-to-peer, self-published, vernacular written interaction – the conditions for writing associated with print technology no longer hold or constrain choice. In particular, the interlocutor/rhetor has direct access to the means of production,²⁴⁹ distribution and address. The consequence may be a shift in emphasis from spelling as a **pedagogic device**, prescribed and policed by institutional and production relays of the state, in conjunction with print publication technologies, to emerging conditions of **semiotic mobility**: in viral digitally-distributed circulations of self-published, **conceptually-spoken**, synchronous graphical interaction. These new informal relays occur at local and supranational levels below and beyond the scales of nation-state legitimation and its instantiation in schooled literate production and linguistic authority, so reversing the orientation of print-capitalism and nation-languages observed by Anderson (1991). There is a shift from orthographic choice in the service of a model of collective national citizenship to a model of individualised, electronically-networked consumer preference: the ‘pastiche personality’ invoked by Gergen (1991:150). All this appears to operate at local and global scales less amenable to the intervention of the nation-state. If this general depiction is accurate, then standard spelling is likely to become a less settled construct than as identified by the Milroys (1991).

Spelling choice may become a fractal of globalised processes of unfettered, opportunistic user appropriation of the sign associated with late modernity, as argued for by Pennycook, Blommaert, Kress, and others and given their extreme formulation by Spitzmüller, or in the ‘integrationist’ argument of Harris (2014). Signs are both semiotic material – stuff – and the cohesive ‘sociohistorical’ accretions of codified convention, functioning as a proxy for circumscribed collective identity. Such licensed usage may be ignored by interlocutors in favour of other preferred options. Choices remain subject to ‘polycentric’ evaluation by peer-to-peer viral estimation, convergence and divergence (Chapter 7), and also, in time, by their enregisterment in the evaluations made by those speaking for institutions in the processes which determine access to more valued symbolic resources, including higher status discourses of power. As I showed in Chapters 7 and 8, as this study’s respondents matured, their awareness of institutionally-sanctioned literacy practices, including expectations of normative spelling, became more influential than their previous spirited, naïve preoccupation with localised modes of address found in their peer-group life-worlds, sourced by and sourcing commercial popular culture. Their choices also found means of representing altered communicative conditions.

216 Imaginary representation by Yoshino Shigihara 2012.

217 <http://www.royharrisonline.com/integrationism.html>.

218 Bernstein (1996:158) differentiates between an individual's repertoires of 'set[s] of strategies' and 'analogical logic' and the term 'reservoir' to refer to the total of sets and its potential of the community as a whole'...'Thus the repertoire of each member of the community will have a common nucleus but there will be differences between repertoires.' This can be applied to the fractal case of domains of orthographic practice, as here.

219 Terms in inverted commas from Bernstein (1996).

220 See Blommaert 2010:147 on 'temps', 'durée' as temporal perspectives drawn from Braudel 1949 or Blommaert 2010:196.

221 For discussion of the construct of 'superdiversity' see Rampton & Blommaert 2011. See the related construct of 'supervernaculars' in Blommaert, J. & Velghe, F., 2012 with further exemplification in Deumert & Lexander 2013. The data scrutinised in this study was generally from metropolitan contexts with little manifestation of superdiversity, with the possible exception of some students from the SLC setting, the most diverse of the social contexts sampled.

222 See oecd.org/pisa webpages.

223 See www.urbandictionary.com.

224 Perhaps no other languages have an equivalently resourced live historical, empirical descriptive source of exhaustive reference comparable to *OED*. For example, the lexicographical governance of Spanish and French takes the autonomous literacy form of prescriptivist academies

225 See the standardised spelling method used in David Burnley (1992, 1st edition) *The History of the English Language: A Sourcebook*.

226 ; This is now changing as the web makes other material more available (*OED* Symposium 2013 via oed.com).

227 All words in inverted commas used in the sense implied by Bernstein (1996).

228 Such a representation has some relation to Herring's overarching hypernym classification of CMC 'language' in a typology accruing to 'social' and 'technical' factors (2007).

229 Blommaert cites Hobsbawm 1975, 1987, 2007.

230 For example, Grinter & Eldridge 2001, 2003, Biesswenger 2006, Hård af Segerstad 2003, Tagg 2009.

231 See 2003:271 for summary.

232 Interviews: Henry 2008; Jon 2009, Peter 2011.

233 Interviews: Peter, Mark, 2009.

234 Interviews: Gabby 2009; Vince and Patrick 2011.

235 Questionnaires; Interviews: Peter 2003; Joshua PIN 2009; Sasha 2009.

236 Grinter & Eldridge 2002, 2003; interviews: Victor 2003, 2011.

237 Interviews: Trisha 2009.

238 Field-notes: Francis 2006; interviews Rachel 2009; Vanessa 2009.

239 Brengelman 1980, Cameron 1996, Moxon 1683, Scragg 1974.

240 For example, Mulcaster 1604, Blount 1653: Jackson 2002, Scragg 1974, Shortis *et al.* 2005.

241 For discussion see Osselton 1974, Strang 1970:107 cited in Sebba 2007,2012a:5, Ticken-Boone Van Ostade in Muggleston 2006.

242 For example, see Fairman 2007, Wright 2010.

243 Milroy & Milroy 1991, Cameron 1996, Crystal 2008, though see Stubbs, as reported by Sebba 2007; see the notion of 'half-life' in Gee 2003 or Turkle 1995, or *passim* in Shortis 2001.

244 Werry 1996, Chamdler & Roberts-Young 1998. See discussion of Gergen 1991 in Kataoka 1997.

245 Werry 1996, Crystal 2001, Posteguillo 2003, Spitzmüller 2007, Knas 2009.

246 Scragg 1974, Strang 1980, Leith 1997, Blake & Shortis 2010 *OED* pedagogic materials.

247 See Moxon 1683 for a primary source text or also Brengelman 1980 for a description of the specialised expertise deployed in the codification of English spelling; Grafton 2011.

248 See Smith 1984, Leith 1997, Crowley 1996.

249 Here used for what Marx might term 'the forces of production': the facilities and resources for producing goods.

10. SMS orthographic choice as social symbol

Signifying sociohistorical change in linguistic and semiotic resources

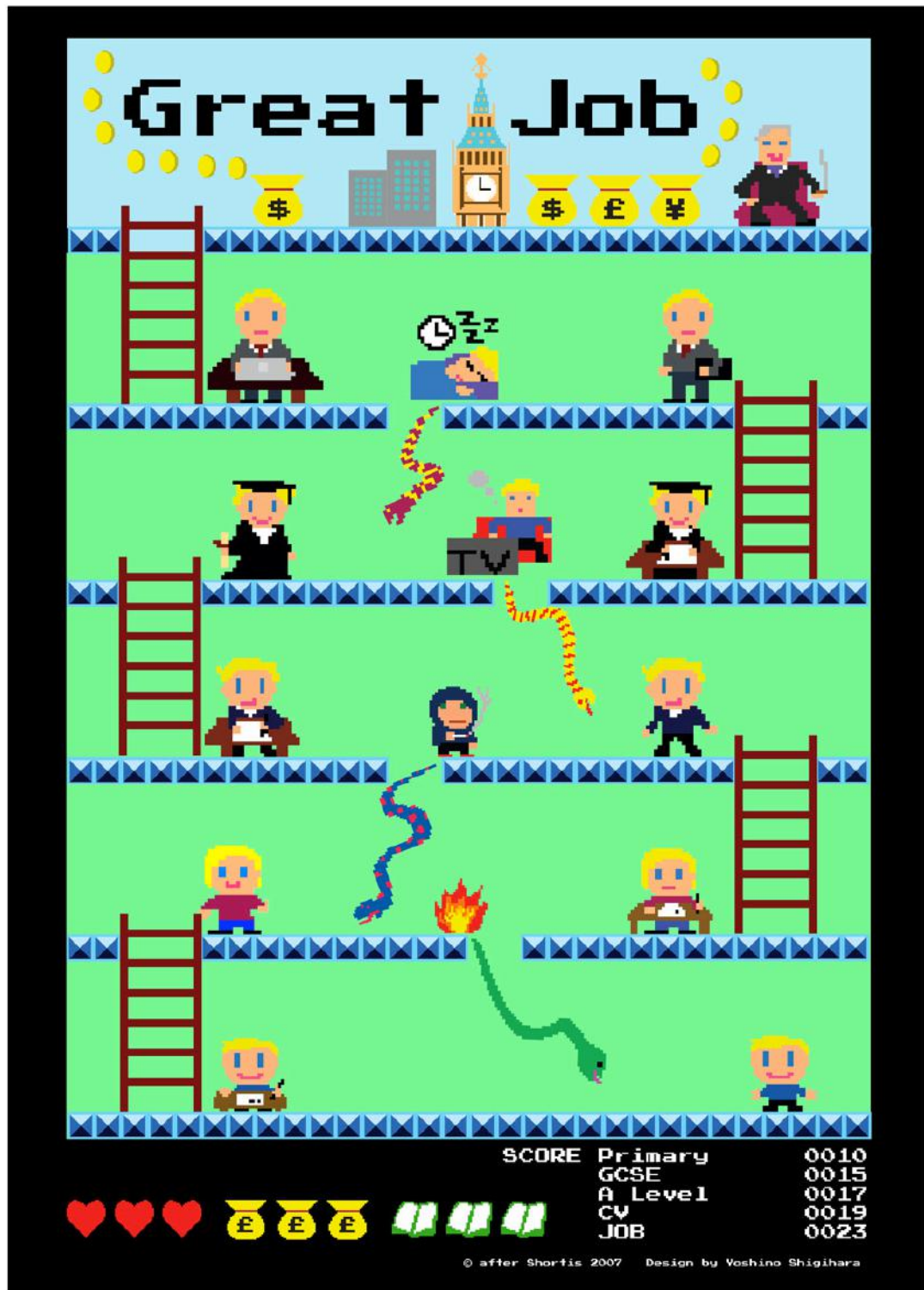


Figure 10.1 Great Job!: Txt, spelling, vertical discourse and life chances

[F]rom the perspective of ordinary speakers, linguistic differences are understood through folk theories (ideologies) that often posit their inherent hierarchical, moral, aesthetic or other properties within broader cultural systems that are themselves often contested and rarely univocal...In constituting itself as an academic discipline, linguistics has rejected precisely this culturally embedded speakers' perspective. It insisted instead on deculturing linguistic phenomena and establishing the theoretical and therefore disciplinary autonomy of language. Linguistics has its own sense of relevances driven by changing theoretical considerations that differ from those of native speakers. Thus from the position of post-Saussurian theoretical linguistics, signs are indeed arbitrary because the cultural systems that make them iconic are stringently and systematically excluded from consideration, for the sake of science.

Irvine & Gal, 2000;78

(V)ariational use of English, far from being “incorrect” or “illiterate”, is increasingly being drawn upon creatively to mark a place identity. It also points to a shift in our conceptual thinking about language(s) and varieties from being perceived as static, “fixed”, totalised and immobile to being thought of as dynamic, fragmented and mobile, with the focus upon mobile resources rather than immobile languages. At the same time, the teaching of literacy centres upon the teaching of linguistic norms of spelling and grammar as “fixed.” There is a tension then, between creative expression of linguistic use often linked to place and those linked to standard English.

Clark 2013;58

10.1 Introducing the synoptic evaluation

Following a discussion of issues illustrated by the chapter title graphic and epigraphs, I review the contribution to scholarship made by this thesis, organising my synopsis as follows:

the theoretical contribution made by a perspective which has attended to the intertextual relationship between SMS orthographic choice and that found in related ‘oralised scripts’, as these are manifest in digitally-mediated vernaculars, and in contiguous and historical traditions of vernacular writing;

the empirical contribution made to what is known about the nature of diachronic change in linguistic and semiotic resources associated with text messaging spelling choice, as represented by the data-set, its classification and analysis;

the methodological contribution made by the multi-faceted explanation of SMS orthographic choice afforded by the mixed-methods research design, including the innovation of its conceptual and analytical frameworks (Figures 3.1 and 4.8);

the limitations of this thesis, and ways its focus of enquiry might be extended in future;

the implications represented by SMS spelling choice for the future of written conventions in standardised English, and for teaching and learning about spelling and literacy in formal educational settings.

10.2 Snakes, ladders and recontextualising fields in educational progression

In Figure 10.1 above, Shigihara reworks Bernstein’s construct of the recontextualising fields of pedagogic discourse by figuring these as a *Snakes and Ladders* game of social and educational advancement. She presents this in a pixillated design which alludes to early computer ‘platform games’ of the 1980s and 1990s. This computer game offers a trajectory of social progression forwards and upwards, with its associated accumulation of symbolic resources; progress can only be attained by passing a sequence of literacy tests which bring rewards for compliant performance, allowing the character to move up to the next level. These filtering mechanisms occur in an iterative cycle from early years onwards to adulthood, the recursive pattern of such progression being foregrounded by the cartoon character answering pencil-and-paper tests in images which are differentiated only by graphical indicators of age. This computer game graphic shows the meritocratic route through schooled attainment (including in *Rechtschreibung* or correct writing) to the apex of the social hierarchy. The carnivalesque temptations of delinquent recreation take struggling participants slithering down to the lower levels of social possibility. Meanwhile, the ‘man at the top’, who has made it through all the levels appears to lead a life of indulgent consumption. Deferred pleasure leads not to a model of achieved

citizenship but to a fantasy of perpetual self-gratification in a parody of consumer self-absorption.

The cartoon image in Figure 10.1 offers a caricature of a tension that I have observed throughout this study. This is the conflict between the **centripetal** orientation to schooled literacy and its **orthography**, and the **centrifugal** influences derived from unschooled **hetero-graphic** choice, such as those associated with SMS respelling, itself located in the mediascape of related digitally-mediated vernacular writing (Chapter 1). In the earlier years of their mass-diffusion (figures 1.2, 4.2) – the period under consideration – texting and related messaging appear to have disturbed the hegemony enregistered by standardised English spelling (Chapters 3 and 9). SMS choice even came to be seen as a social symbol of this disruption in mass-mediated commentaries, although much of what was evaluated in popular discourse as being specific to SMS practice was adumbrated long ago, and is seen concurrently in other domains of social practice (Chapter 2a, 2b, Chapter 6, Appendix V).

As Stubbs and others have observed, the degree to which spelling in English is standardised has been exaggerated by the popular disregard for the actual variety of ways in which words get spelt (Stubbs 1992;221 in Sebba 2007;32). With reference to examples from many domains of social practice, I have shown the multiple provenances and operation of this patterned variety of hetero-graphic resources (Chapter 2b) along with the enduring attachment elicited by prestigious normative selection. I have argued the diffusion of variational choices has been influenced and resourced agentively by the situated affordances they were seen to offer interlocutors, and especially those which construed a manner of ‘conceptually spoken’ localised address expressed in graphical form. Hetero-graphy offered **graphical re-etymologisation** of the meaning-potentials of the written word (Chapters 4 and 5). This was evident on a mass scale of iteration, if also unlicensed by established linguistic authorities, and was often subject to social stigma by the criteria of dominant ideological perspectives (Chapter 6). Hetero-graphic choices have also been shown to be motivated by a variety of other situated affordances, not all of them strictly linguistic in their frame of reference, including perceived bio-mechanical/ergonomic, situational, technological and economic advantages; and meanings construed by allusions to prior literacy conventions, including to patterns in normative spelling (Chapter 2a and 2b, Figure 2.16, Chapter 3, figures 3.9 and 3.10, Chapter 4, Figure 4.8). I have supported this argument with analysis of many actual situated examples drawn from texts, corpora and commentary of different kinds (Chapters 2, 5, 6, 7, 8).

I have argued that the tension between schooled literacy and localised preferences is epitomised by the issue of orthographic choice in SMS in the early years of its diffusion and that this may be connected to wider social change. The young people observed in this study have been observed to be subject to the social pressures which have featured in their home, street, family and peer group. These occurred in a time of intensifying relationship between their domestic

life-worlds and commercial commoditisation and marketisation, from local to global scales, including the commercially-oriented agencies which marketised digitally-mediated literacy resources such as texting, messaging and social networking sites. Meanwhile, I have shown how this study's young respondents have also been subject to intensifying countermanding pressures to accommodate their repertoires and competencies to the schooled normative forms of English which continue to gate educational progression, and by that economic progression (Chapter 2a, Chapter 3, Chapter 5, Chapter 7, Chapter 8).

10.3 'Variational use', hegemony and the 'deculturing' of linguistic phenomena

These issues can be seen too in the chapter epigraph quotations, which highlight two specific ways in which this thesis contributes to theoretical dimensions of scholarship. As Clark argues, 'variational' use of English – sometimes referred to in this study as 'non-standard' – is increasingly used for specific affordances in representing localised identity in ways which would not be available from drawing on 'fixed, totalised and immobile' resources such as the archive represented by standardised English (Chapters 2 and 3). Yet standard forms and norms predominate in the dominant genres of literacy teaching, which allow little discursive space for such innovation. In the article from which this excerpt is taken, Clark develops extended analysis of hegemony as it applied to the case of standard English, observing the slippage between what it is permissible to represent and what gets represented in actual contemporary communicative conditions. Irvine and Gal develop the related proposition of a slippage between language and the wider social and material contexts in which it is generated. They suggest that post-Saussurian linguistics has effaced the 'culturally-embedded speaker perspective' in the interests of presenting itself as a disciplinary field of enquiry modelled on the natural sciences: it has 'insisted on deculturing linguistic phenomena'. In the extended argument and empirical analysis represented by this study, I have sought to probe the hegemony of standard English in relation to variational uses of language beyond its orthographic palettes and repertoires of recognition (Chapter 3, Figures 3.9 and 3.10). I have also sought to give extended attention to the issue of '**reculturing**' the linguistic phenomenon of texting spelling choice by situating it in a broader, contested sociocultural and material context. This includes exploring the relationship between the written word with the site and manner of its material inscription, following the arguments raised by the re-theorisation of writing in sociolinguistics (Lillis and McKinney 2013, Blommaert 2013, Lillis 2014).

This thesis contributes to scholarship by its theoretical critique and synthesis, linked to supporting empirical analysis of a comparatively large mixed methods data-set. Drawing on this data in conjunction with the explanation of **enregisterment**, I have argued that all forms of spelling are indexicals of social and literate accomplishment, as viewed from multiple perspectives and ideologies. I have shown this is manifest in a '**polycentricity**' of evaluation in my analysis of the fractious folk-theorisations of SMS spelling choice made by respondents

(Chapters 7a and b), these always subject to further change over those respondents' unfolding social trajectories (and developing repertoires) over duration (Chapter 8). Respondents reported choices, in a moment, and in their changing habits over time contributed to my argument that there is a dynamic impetus for a type of ongoing, contested linguistic and semiotic change; one which may never arrive at the fixed solidity associated with the written conventions which feature in print. Spelling choice appeared to function in SMS rather as a resource for managing impressions of self in a form of mutating social script: self-monitored **intrapersonally** and also projecting outwards **interpersonally** in eliciting live feedback from interlocutors. That project could take the form of performing an educated identity by insisting on consistent standardised choice. My study has provided a warrant that SMS and its associated literacy practices have reflected and contributed to the accelerating sociotechnological conditions driving such change.

Following Robertson's re-working of Bernstein's model of pedagogic discourse (2004, 1996), I have suggested that this dialectic is at a historical moment in which the linguistic foundations of nation-state 'print capitalism' (Anderson 1991), which had achieved comparative stability by the twentieth century, have been destabilised by intensifying socio-economic, ideological, material and technological alterations. SMS hetero-graphy appears to represent an epitomising example of this disruption (Chapter 9), although the manner of its actual patterns of respelling have been shown to be exaggerated and misrepresented in popular commentary, in part as a consequence of the **erasure** of the discursive representation of comparable orthographic practices in other domains. I have been able to make this argument with empirical support.

10.4 Empirical evidence of SMS as linguistic and semiotic diachronic change?

In this study, I have assembled one of the largest, most detailed sets of evidence concerning the linguistic and semiotic change wrought by SMS orthographic choice as it was manifest in the UK in the decade following its introduction (Chapter 5-8, Appendix VI). I have collected data from close to the point when texting first came into popular use (SBC 2000, Appendix VI); I have methodically sampled data-sets from three comparable sites and demographics in southern England (SMC, SCS, SLC); I have observed the SMS practices of several key respondents periodically over ten years or more (Table 1.1, Chapter 8, Table 8.1). My research design has allowed the object of study to be examined from a number of different theoretical perspectives by the evidence afforded by different types of data-set: texts, corpora, records of practice and metadiscursive commentary. These have been examined by the analytical frameworks set out in the various typologies, tables and figures which were developed so that the affordances and meaning-potentials of SMS spelling practices could be understood in relation to the multifarious pressures which appear to give rise to spelt preference (Chapter 4, Figure 4.6). I have identified a wide range of competing motivations for SMS respelling including: the affordances of 'polysystemic' English spelling patterns for 'constructed homophony'; social pressures arising from the institutionalised, historicised hegemony of standard English; and a diverse set of

social, economic and environmental factors, including the motivations for text entry reduction (Chapters 2 and 5). By arranging the collection and processing of my corpus evidence so it is comparable with Tagg's more extensive collection (2009), and with material cited in earlier studies by others, I have been able to offer a high degree of verification by the comparisons afforded (Chapter 6, Appendix VI).

10.5 Contribution made by the research design and methods

I developed an innovative research design which conceptualises the object of study in a multi-faceted arrangement offering cross-verification over duration. This revised design enabled a level of disambiguation of those factors which relate to the contextual pressures occasioned by the literacy choices of adolescents, from those factors which accrued to the shaping of choice influenced by the transitional designs and technologies used in communications technologies such as mobile phones, from those factors which may derive from conventions found in pre-existing vernacular practices. This analysis can be seen as exemplifying what I have termed above as the 'reculturing of linguistic phenomena', in an innovation of analytical methods developed by scholars of multimodality and social semiotics, especially in the analysis presented in Chapter 5.

The questionnaire schedule administered by the *SurveyBuilder* application also enabled an innovative way of examining contested enregisterment of linguistic and semiotic change. The generation of over eight hundred contrastive but patterned commentaries functioned as a means of gathering a proxy for the 'speech chain' process identified by Agha. Chapters 7 and 8 show the immediate, contemporary focus on semiotic change being made, evaluated and justified by folk-linguistic rationales in 'speech chains', as that process unfolded. This is a principal contribution of this study and offers a way of exploring diachronic linguistic and semiotic change which may be adapted by other scholars of *Web 2.0*.

10.6 Theoretical contribution: re-situating SMS in longer and wider perspectives

Attending to the critique made by Herring of the narrowness of observational focus, disciplinary specialism and timescales which she observed as characterising earlier CMC research (2004), I have re-sited spelling in texting in the emerging field examining the phenomenon of post-standardisation linguistic and semiotic change (Androutsopoulos 2011, Blommaert 2010, 2013, Deumert & Lexander 2013, Kress 2010). I have drawn on scholarship working in the tradition of literacy as a social practice, as documented in the actual variety of forms, functions and meanings occurring in situated practice (Lancaster Literacy Research group). My adaptation of Robertson's treatment of Bernstein's recontextualising fields has offered a way of conceptualising texting in relation to the impact of globalisation and markets (Chapter 3). This agentic focus contrasts with conventional representation of spelling in linguistics which has tended to foreground the workings of the internal linguistic system while backgrounding the

socio-economic, ideological, agentive and environmental pressures which act on it. The argument presented in Chapters 3 and 9 has sought to build on and synthesise theorisation by Blommaert, Bernstein, Robertson, Kress and Sebba to render a sociocultural account of orthographic change using an adaptation of Agha's explanation of enregisterment. The methods I have innovated offer an approach for recording, observing and analysing post-standardisation variation in linguistic and semiotic resources. Building on the notion of the **deregulation** of valued symbolic choice, I have also been able to show in some detail the means by which choice is **re-regulated** virally in 'speech chains' of metadiscursive evaluation (Chapter 7b).

This thesis offers material which may be of interest to lexicographers and other makers of dictionaries built on historical outlines. It makes more use of their contribution than is common in CMC sociolinguistics and offers theoretical insights and data-sets which exemplify the spelling and principles of word formation which feature in SMS and related media. To date, and with some exceptions (see Durkin 2012, Crystal 2013), *OED* has been comparatively little referred to by sociolinguists or CMC sociolinguists. Used in conjunction with other linguistic corpora, *OED* offered research potential for investigating changes in lexical and orthographic choice in and over time. There is also the concomitant challenge of providing stable lexicographical documentation of the contemporary flux of mobile semiotic resources, which move fluidly across mode, register and jurisdictional boundaries. It has been argued that *OED*'s current word entry structure reflects its original method of tracing English words from their earliest citable examples to the moment of stabilisation in a national lexicon (Crowley 1996). This thesis suggests the dictionary's conceptualisation and associated lexicographical methods may have to alter in order to accommodate the phenomenon of twenty-first century post-standardisation as treated here. For example, the the pace, porosity and representational bandwidth of the vocabulary, spelling and related graphical signs distributed by digitally-mediated vernaculars, such as SMS.

10.7 Limitations of this study

This thesis is based on fieldwork which has been carried out over a longer period than is normal for a doctoral study, and with the benefits of a longer temporal perspective for identifying what is significant in the flux of ongoing linguistic and semiotic change. In other ways, it is the doctoral study of one individual with the limitations that come with that, and as mentioned in Chapter 4, the methodological approach taken is perhaps better suited to a research team than an individual.

Additional resource would have allowed a more thorough treatment of some of the many research processes undertaken. For example, there is scope to develop a full statistical treatment of the indicative numbers reported in Chapters 6 and 7; to arrange a more explicit and programmatic sampling of the data-set; and to adopt the full five-point 'Likert scale' in the

quantitative schedules of the questionnaire. Although I have mentioned the potential impact of gender and attitudes to social class in the estimation of SMS orthographic choice, those aspects deserve more thorough exploration and explanation than I managed here. In addition, there is surprisingly little evidence of multilingual language-mixing and switching, which is likely to have occurred in many contemporary UK settings but which is not salient in the material collected, except from the SLC site (see Sebba, Mahootian & Jonnson 2012).

There is the limitation that this study is mainly exemplified with data collected from earlier, simpler mobile phone rather than on smartphones of varying degrees of sophistication. That limitation also contributes to the value of the historical record afforded by a study of data drawn from a form of interaction still in the infancy of its niche use, which went on to be mirrored in subsequent sociotechnological literacies (Figure 1.1, Chapter 5). For example, the nature of orthographic variation identified in SMS later featured in microblogging. The ‘packet size’ of 140 characters in *Twitter* reinvigorated the contextual motivation for the manner of variational spelling which characterised early SMS. Unlike SMS, its semi-public status as **‘searchable speech’**, with accompanying demographic information, also encouraged collection of language corpora, such as those used in the written citations in some *OED* word entries: private and public areas of socioliterate practice became more melded. Many respondents reported increasingly strong semi-automated pressure to spell standardly in texting, with invasive forms of autocorrection becoming prevalent across many forms of digitally-mediated writing. Word processing applications started to feature similar semi-automated predictive text so pressuring normative use, along with **emoji**, enabling a form of variational expression: both features formerly restricted to texting and messaging. To summarise, this study of linguistic and semiotic change is focused mainly on the case of earlier SMS; the analysis offers grounds for comparison with subsequent developments.

Finally, my respondents mainly lived in certain sites in London and South West England; there was little evidence of patterns of regiolectal variation which have been observed in research based on microblogging data; the terminology, analytical frameworks and typologies deployed in this study - for example, ‘conceptual spokenness’ and ‘microlectal address’ - remain of wider application to other contexts and settings.

10.8 Ways the focus of enquiry might be extended in future research

There are opportunities to extend this enquiry by adapting and relaunching the current research instruments to conduct further studies offering comparisons with the baseline data presented in this thesis, possibly with more intensive scrutiny of the impact of gender, social class and multilingualism. There is also scope to make more systematic comparison between the spelling choices in empirical data-sets analysed by historical sociolinguists and those featuring in digitally-mediated forms of written interaction, as I exemplify by the selected texts which

feature in in Appendix II.

A more significant multi-disciplinary focus for future research identified in this study is touched on in various references I have made to colloquial address, mass-marketing and the emergence of globally distributed ‘**commoditised literacy practices**’ controlled by global private capital, such as those represented by *Google* or *Facebook*. I am suggesting the emergence of a newly salient rhetoric, which is orientated to the intimation of social solidarity rather than prestige, with implications for orthographic choice. Future investigation of digitally-mediated vernaculars and their economic basis of operation would require the innovation of a multi-disciplinary approach which gave more explicit attention to their underlying financial dynamics as these impinge on rhetorical choice, including orthographic choice. With some isolated exceptions (e.g. Gee *et al.* 1996, Kelly-Holmes & Mautner 2010, Blommaert 2010), those working in sociolinguistics and social semiotics have been focused the means of signification as it appears on the surfaces of communication in the intended social actions of interlocutors, and rather less attentive to the socio-economic and sociotechnological processes which have orchestrated and mediated such human-to-human communication. Issues of privacy and informed self-disclosure have been backgrounded too (boyd & Marwick 2011). There is a dual text occasioned by the data-set generated, apparently ephemerally, in the course of situated social interaction, and as stored, sold and mined in the records of digitally-mediated interaction made by ‘service providers’. cursory reading of articles in the field of applied economics, such as financial journalism, shows the interest of *Facebook* and mobile phone producers to be focused on the accumulation and resale of private personal data in the monetisation of an attention economy (Goldhaber 1992, Gelles 2010, Alloway 2015). I have suggested that the orthographic choices found in SMS may be part of a newly inflected rhetoric of interpersonally-prioritised ‘synthetic personalisation’ of the type, previously identified by Fairclough about a trend to informalised public rhetorics, and now operating at the level of ‘mundane’, unremarked, enregistered ‘cultural transmission’(1990, 1992, 2004). This hypothesis would need more systematic investigation.

10.9 Application of this study to schooled literacy in formal educational settings

This study has the potential to contribute to a distinctive innovation in the teaching of spelling because it situates normative forms within the wider representational ecology of orthographic variation experienced by learners in school and beyond, and it attends to sociohistorical change over duration. In the UK, the inculcation of normative spelling has been a major focus of literacy teaching in formal education since the beginning of mass schooling in the nineteenth century. Its strong regulative framing, distribution and evaluation continues to the time of writing, with comparatively little regard for the forms from which normative preferences were selected, for those used and lost in the course of children’s transition from infancy, or those experienced in life-worlds outside schooling, labelled vernacular and popular orthographic

practices in this study (e.g. Sullivan 1847, Peters 1985, Ott 2007). The spelling used in digitally-mediated vernaculars such as SMS has joined this set of options excluded from pedagogical consideration as shown. It has been noted that the teaching of normative spelling is under-conceptualised because undertaken in isolation from learning how and why standardised English spelling is as it is (Ramsden 1993, Brown and Brown 2009, Blake & Shortis 2008, Crystal 2013). In 1847, Sullivan noted this in his editorial introduction and referenced others writing in a similar vein back to the eighteenth century. Related commentary can be found in adumbrations by sixteenth century schoolmaster lexicographers such as Mulcaster and Coote (Sullivan 1847, Scragg 1974). One pedagogical approach has been to develop approaches to spelling built on accounts of the linguistic system of English with treatments focused on morphology, phonology and conditioned variation (e.g. Bryant and Nunes 2006, Stone 2014). Other rare approaches have included Kress's social semiotic case studies (1997, 2000) and Mitton's data-base of actual 'misspellings' (1996).

One implication of this study is that young people might engage differently with the *school English* topic of spelling if it were reframed so that standard forms were re-situated within a wider representational ecology. Such an approach would require an investigative approach to actual potential orthographic optionality, as schematised in the domains which feature in Figures 2.10 and 2.11. Such a re-modelled approach would have the additional benefit of encouraging recognition and investigation of the scripts, orthographies and writing systems of school students in Britain who arrive at school with increasingly varied multilingual registers in use at home, many with their own distinctive traditions of convention and regulation in the spelling ideologies and conventions pertaining to other languages. Such an approach is modelled in the *All Talk* learning materials sampled in the Appendix and on disk.

10.10 Concluding comments

I have presented an **extended case** study of the microcosm of sociolinguistic and social semiotic variation and change to be observed in data elicited from a comparatively small number of young people texting and messaging over the first decade which followed the introduction of SMS. This thesis also presents evidence for a possible wider social and linguistic shift in the orientation of orthographic choice. This appears to be away from a literacy model focused exclusively on nation-state subjectivity to more conflicted hetero-graphic practices; these give greater attention to a global and local construction of subjectivity in their representation of heterogeneous, individualised consumer preference. By this interpretation, structural changes at the base levels of economic and political relations may be playing out in the seemingly-banal superstructure details of spelling choice and related graphical inscription. This potential co-exists with the intensified pressures on instruction and testing of normative spelling, as practised in metropolitan sites such as Europe and North America. The mundane matter of SMS spelling choice and its current phase of contested enregisterment may encapsulate wider anxieties about

the difficulty of arriving at socially-valued communicative choice in the rapidly changing conditions of late modernity.

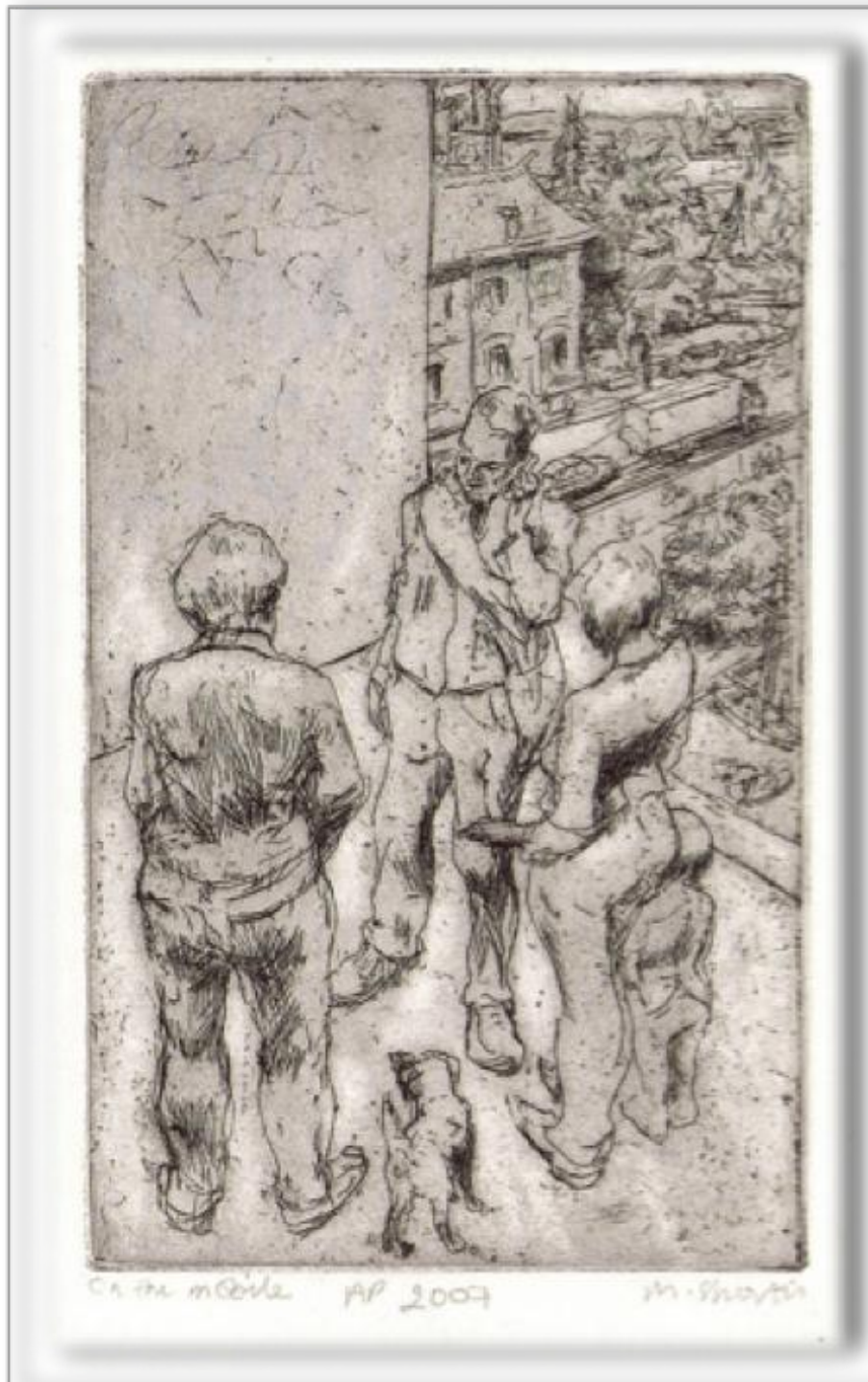
As both Blommaert and my respondents have observed in their different ways, credible performance of prestigious registers continues to function as one criterion determining access to socio-economic opportunity at national and supranational levels (Blommaert 2008, 2010, Clark 2013, SCS interviewees). There are social limits to ‘truncated repertoires’ voiced in variational forms, as evaluated away from their conditions of localised address. The orthographic efflorescence seen in SMS and related digitally-mediated interaction in recent years is not an uncomplicated benefit of augmented social expression for all, even if the reverse-side depiction of a metadiscursive construction of panic about language and social change constitutes a nostalgic misrecognition.

ENDS

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'On the mobile': cell phones as a mundane communications technology by 2007

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Caricature of prescriptivist approaches to orthographic choice in schooled literacy (Shigihara 2012)

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Orthographic practices in SMS text messaging as a case signifying diachronic change in linguistic and semiotic resources



Figure 0.1 Stock image of texting on a mobile phone using a twelve button keypad from around 2004

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Structure and content of Appendices



Life-sized, three-dimensional pixillated image of a school pupil texting ²⁵⁰

Introduction

The *UCL Institute of Education* examination regulations state that ‘Appendices should only include material which examiners are not required to read in order to examine the thesis, but to which they may refer if they wish.’ These appendices are constituted by supplementary information relating to this study. They are made available for possible reader interest but did not form part of the thesis offered for examination. They comprise a body of discursive material along with data-sets which were too extensive to be included in the body of the thesis. In particular, **Appendix VI** gives the full **Word-Group** tables sampled in Chapter 6 along with samples of the corpus data, so offering comparison with Tagg’s **CorTxt** equivalent tables.

Appendix I comprises supplementary material relevant to the *mediascape* questionnaire survey reported in Chapter 1 and figure 1.1.

Appendix II comprises examples of texts from the past which exemplify hetero-graphic spelling choices, as surveyed in Chapter 2.

Appendix III lists some of the bibliographical sources which support the model of a reservoir of diverse orthographic practices, as featured in figures 2.10, 2.11, 3.9 and 3.10.

Appendix IV shows some of the thinking underpinning the methodology and methods used. It is of possible interest to those seeking to adapt the research methods used here.

Appendix V comprises exemplification of the mass-mediatised public commentary about SMS spelling of the sort exemplified in Chapter 5, figure 5.18. Such representations offer many points of contrast with the body of texts analysed in Chapter 5.

Appendix VI offers over fifty pages of the corpus data analysed mainly in Chapter 6 and includes tables of the full 250/150 **Word-Group** data-sets arranged so these can be compared with the equivalent reporting in Tagg's appendices (Tagg 2009:360).

Appendix VII treats the methods used in the questionnaire coding and analysis.

Appendix VIII exemplifies the semi-structured interviews method used in Chapter 8 with a sample transcript.

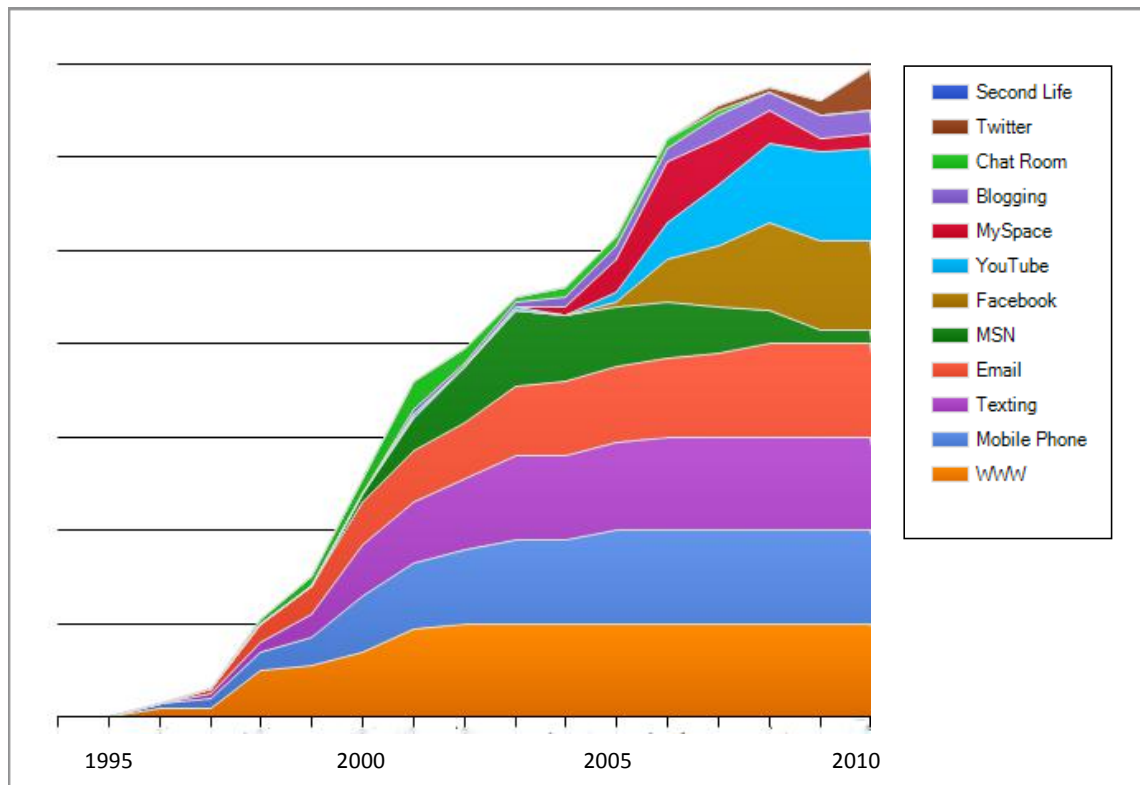
Appendix IX comprises a book chapter, and an article written for students and teachers of English. Both reported on the earlier phase of the study.

Appendix X samples some of the learning materials and examination papers sourced in the data collected for this study, including the multimedia *All Talk* resource.

In addition, I have appended:

- a professional bibliography of research, book reviews, educational writing, and pedagogical designs not central to the thesis but of supplementary relevance.
- a digital appendix comprised by the files on two disks.

Appendix I



Appendix I comprises supplementary material relevant to the *mediascape* questionnaire survey reported in Chapter 1, figure 1.1.

Appendix I: context for Figure 1.1

The chart depicted in Figure 1.1 is based upon results for a questionnaire survey undertaken using the *SurveyMonkey* application which was administered to two cohorts of over 40 third year language and communication undergraduates, one in 2010 and the other in 2011 and has been used in other teaching contexts since. The first of these cohorts helped generate the selection of media used in the questionnaire. The questions for each medium were as set out below.

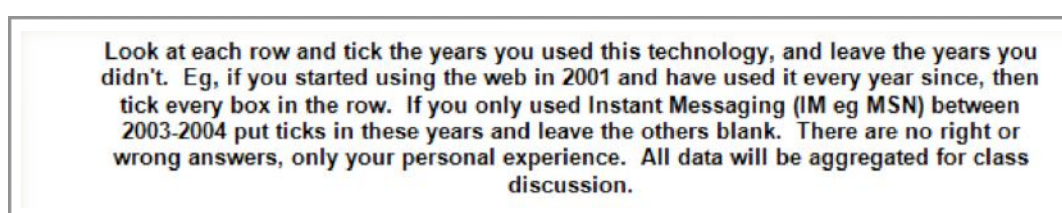


Figure I.ii Instructions for mediascape questionnaire

It was later adapted in pedagogic materials for GCE A level study of English language. The original function of the questionnaire survey was to bring to students' attention that there was a difference between the profiles of the communications technologies they had experienced personally and the digital communications media which had attracted the greatest attention in academic coverage in journals such as *The Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*. In particular, niche genres such as bulletin boards and internet chat were more frequently analysed than SMS or *Web 2.0* mass branded commoditised media such as *Facebook* and *YouTube*. In addition, the survey showed the ways in which the students' personal mediascapes had grown more complex and they grew up in to adult life so that they would be making regular use of six or seven types of such media. The results presented here are from 2010; the survey has generated profiles similar to this in other testing and its outline was generally corroborated in interviews with respondents, and especially those born between 1988 and 1992. It is a blunt instrument for self-reporting CMC participation and it does not give any indication of what use in a year meant. In discussion with respondents SMS, Instant Messaging and latterly social media were the media reportedly used most, often on a daily basis for over an hour. The survey formed the basis for the following commentary written for an audience of secondary teachers of English.

New txts, new technologies, new political economy

Ways of communicating and ‘doing literacy’ have altered out of recognition in the recent past, partly because of ongoing changes in the availability of networked digital media. The chart above represents a group of undergraduates reporting their participation in types of digitally-mediated communication, year-by-year, from starting school in 1995 until now. The barrage of striped colour shows that choices are increasingly complicated: as *MySpace* came on stream, *MSN* lost popularity; as *Facebook* diffused, *MySpace* declined; as *YouTube* opened up multimedia content-sharing, the advantages of text-based real-time interaction seemed less compelling. We see the appropriation of an increasing variety of new communication media, most under five years old and now sometimes in convergent media on mobile phones.

Such young people consistently act as early adopters in complex, individualised profiles of choice. Amongst the undergraduates surveyed are two or three teenage pioneers who spent their evenings not on *MSN* instant messaging with friends but in *Internet Relay Chat* or forum banter with globally situated virtual ‘friends and acquaintances’; another who built a vast, complex homepage before abandoning it for *Facebook* because her friends stopped visiting; students educated in two countries or even three continents with working familiarity with the contrasts across each; another running a blog with clothing and restaurant review freebies supplementing her student income. In contrast to the regimented step of the official curriculum and its promise of future economic rewards for deferred pleasure, here is the consumer-directed impulse of pleasure and absorption in an attention economy of constant diversity, transience and uncertainty.

Minority youth-associated practices in each new medium have moved from niche specialism to unremarkable ubiquity in a matter of two to three years. Such abrupt change lies outside the space of a nation-state’s curriculum review, occurring instead on a supranational scale in the wider context of accelerating flows of people, money and information mediated by digital technologies. It is indicative too of the loss of a more settled sense of what counts as time, space and authoritative knowledge in school. New technologies have offered these students new ways of communicating, allowing them to engage in silent dialogue with their peers through the newly porous walls of classrooms, in acts of polyfocal attention which go beyond daydreaming to live interaction. The attractions of social space compete with what is available in a particular physical and geographical place. All this reframes the appeal of schooling and of school English within that.

So, what might all this amount to for notions of literacy, in the sense of access to participation in valued symbolic resources? Doing more peer-to-peer, self-published, written interaction in unregimented forms of writing, or flicking *YouTube* videos to pals, is no royal road to better life chances, given the conservatism of the kinds of literacy encountered in formal examinations and valued in higher status communication. While young people may be doing more informal

writing than ever before in their out-of school practices, this runs in a path parallel to another one showing intensifying concerns about control of standard English and access to the high status cultural knowledge associated with book literacy and intensified competition for educational accreditation.

Such concerns are evident in the controversy about spelling in the earlier years of SMS text messaging. Such moral panics are not supported by the empirical studies showing correlation between creative spelling in new media and performance in standard literacy measures. Neither do they correspond with the undergraduate students' reporting of their informalised digital style and tenor peaking at 14 or 15, then gravitating towards the valued norms of formal standard English as they moved into further and higher education. Standardised literate accomplishment still acts as a filter to educational accreditation and better life chances. On the other hand, representing young people as 'technosavvy' delinquents may offer powerful opportunities to more settled and vested interests in a time of intergenerational competition for scarce resources, including jobs.

New media are also generating a new economics where the virtual goods of digitally-augmented communication, such as *Facebook*, are bartered, wittingly and unwittingly, in exchange for personal information. Being able to use new media effectively is becoming one route to economic and social opportunity, previously gated by accomplishments in schooled literacy. One of the students surveyed completed an application process for graduate employment in an elite organization based entirely on composing presentations mediated through *Twitter*, *YouTube* and *Facebook*, with their sense of popular appeal assessed by the numerical indices of viral uptake. Her aptitude was evaluated as she represented her proficiency in new media, with less credit given for formal educational attainment or CV. Any thinking about English over the next fifteen years will attend to this digital elephant in the room or may find itself pushed to the floor by the invisible hands of markets and data-bases.

Draft discussion piece in teacher's professional journal on the future of English published as Shortis, T. and Blake J. (2011). *New txts, new technologies, new political economy*. EDM. Sheffield, NATE. **June 2011**.

Appendix II

**MI DEER JO i OPE U R KR
WITE WELL i OPE i SHALL
SON B HABELL 4 2 TEEDGE U
JO AN THEN WE SHORL BE SO
GLODD AN WEN i M PRENGTD
2 U JO WOT LARX AN BLEVE
ME INF XN PIP**

Appendix II comprises examples of texts from the past which exemplify hetero-graphic spelling choices, as surveyed in Chapter 2.

Examples of orthographic practices in vernacular literacies over time.

One argument presented in this thesis is that normative spelling is situated in a wider ecology of choice and that variational spelling draws on its own traditions as well as on the patterns underlying normative forms. This appendix offers a range of texts from different times featuring illustrating a variety of texts spelt with variational spelling.

I begin with discussion of an excerpt from the text of Caxton's *Preface of Enydos* which raises the issue of how print focused the need for unitary, standardised lexical and orthographic choice. Fairman's corpus of 'lower order' Poor Law letters in the 19th century is excerpted. This bears comparison and contrast with the mediated representation of the spelt speech of the slave and sailor taken from Devonish's web collection of 18th century newspaper eclogues; this seems to show different semiotic principles, being an artefact produced by those with access to standard literacy representing others (see Dickens's Pip's note in Chapter 2). 18th century and early 19th century newspapers, now digitised, commonly feature such representations of regiolectal writing. Evidence of actual 'grassroots literacies' by poor and semi-literate people such as those documented by Fairman is not extensive as a consequence of their lack of resources and the past social value associated with such artefacts. See also Blommaert's account of contemporary equivalents (2008). Older advertisements, such as the nineteenth century New York shop novelty rebus puzzle illustrated here, reflect a popular interest in spellings of the sort underlying 'homophone lexical substitutions'. I have excerpted Pound's related early observation of the emergent conventions of US trade spelling. I illustrate an extreme case of mass-domesticated but specialised code spelling from the context of the Second World War along with a recent email 'meme' about the claimed intelligibility of a variety of transposed spelling.

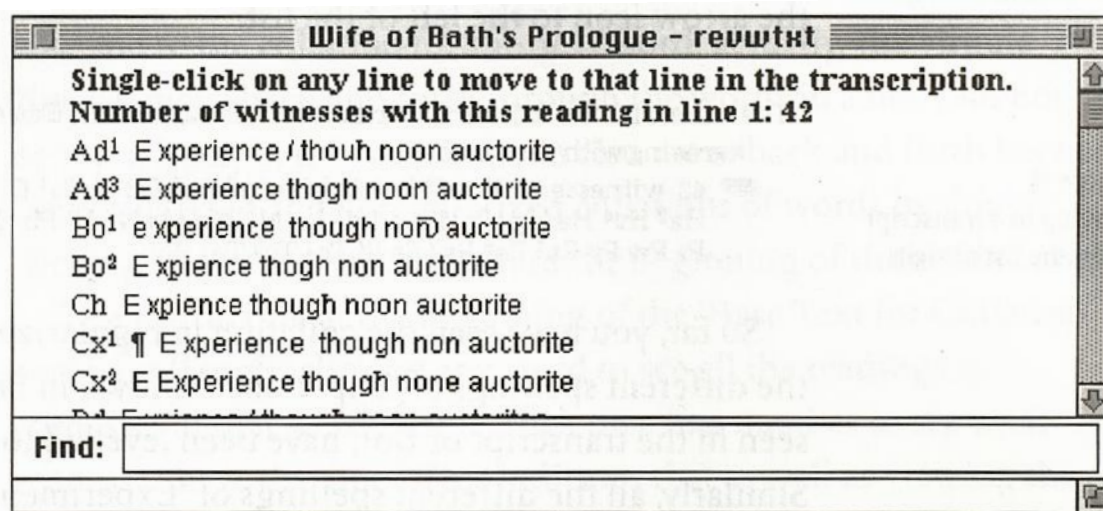
And whan I had aduysed me in this sayd boke. I delybered and concluded to translate it in to englysshe And forthwyth toke a penne & ynke and wrote a leef or tweyne / whyche I ouersawe agayn to corecte it / And whã I sawe the fayr & straunge termes therin / I doubted that it sholde not please some gentylmen whiche late blamed me sayeng yt in my translacyons I had ouer curyous termes whiche coude not be vnderstande of comyn peple / and desired me to vse olde and homely termes in my translacyons. and fayn wolde I satysfye euery man / and so to doo toke an olde boke and redde therin / and certaynly the englysshe was so rude and brood that I coude not wele vnderstande it. And also my lorde abbot of westmynster ded do shewe to me late certayn euydences wryton in olde englysshe for to reduce it in to our englysshe now vsid / And certaynly it was wreton in suche wyse that it was more lyke to dutche than englysshe I coude not reduce ne brynge it to be vnderstonden / And certaynly our langage now vsed varyeth ferre from that. whiche was vsed and spoken whan I was borne / For we englysshe men / ben borne vnder the domynacyon of the mone. whiche is neuer stedfaste / but euer wauerynge / wexyng one season / and waneth & dyscreaseth another season / And that comyn englysshe that is spoken in one shyre varyeth from a nother.

From Caxton's preface to the boke of Eneydos, 1496

Print and its craft implication of regimented orthographic standardisation

The possibility of a major diachronic change in literate resources can be considered through the historical lens of the conditions by which writing and spelling could be conducted following the introduction of printing technology. Caxton's comments in the epigraph quotation, written some ten years after his introduction of printing to England, offer comparison with the emerging public enregisterment of digitally-mediated vernacular interaction, some fifteen years after the practicable introduction of SMS text messaging. For Caxton, printing raises the question of precisely which signs - words rendered as alphabetical letters and symbols - will be printed at the lexical and orthographic level, and by what criterial influences. Caxton rehearses a fifteenth century jocular performance of what I have termed 'literate indeterminacy' as he explains the difficulties of knowing which words and spellings he should choose, and how his earlier choices have been evaluated harshly. In an earlier example of self-monitoring, he reports correcting his initial draft text before starting to consider the issues. It is no comfort that still earlier choices shown to him by the 'lorde abbot' look coarse, obscure, and Dutch. The social, economic and technological basis of the compositors' craft will create social and technologically motivated

conditions which are challenged by competing dialectal terms for the same referent ('egges' and 'eyren' in Caxton's preface). Typesetters will come to seek unitary spellings in arrangements of moveable metal type for accomplished performance of their craft of constructing the most socially valued form of written text, as interpreted by their market and the wider culture of reception (Grafton 2011). Texts not up to that unitary craft standard will be deemed 'foul copies'. In time, these compositors will learn to lose Caxton's superscript shortening of <n> by which scribes reduced the labour of inscribing text, with these affordances made redundant by the technology of typesetting (<whã> for <whan> for <when>). Orthographic choice will be subject to an exacting centripetal process of normative selection by craft practices, division of labour and the meticulous licensing of an exacting variety of prestigiously evaluated standard English (Moxon 1683, Grafton 2011) which became the prestige orthographic register of printed written English. Meanwhile, as Strang, Osselton and others have observed, other lexical and orthographic variations persisted in the literate life-worlds outside printed representation, and to the present time.



Varied versions of the same line by Chaucer, 1380s to 1480s, in Robinson, 1996

Caxton's problem and the relationship of print to unitary standardisation of spelling choice can be illustrated further by the image above which shows a small sample of the scribal variation in a line of Chaucer's *Wife of Bath Prologue* from *The Canterbury Tales*, with different orthographic representations on each line reflecting the degree of spelling variation in copying manuscripts before print. Typesetting has always functioned as a social and material pressure for orthographic uniformity in ways which mark it out differently to digitally-mediated vernaculars, although both are realised in the fonts associated with the printed word.

For THE BATH CHRONICLE.

A WEST-INDIAN PROSAIC ECLOGUE.

JACK AND QUACO.

Q. HOW you do Massa Jack-Tar?—Me no bin see you dis long time.

J. Ha, Quaco! you black negro! you are as fat as a hog.

Q. Hi! massa sala! and you mangar like one John Crow.* You hab one wooden foot and one tump hand. Where you bin get dat, massa?—Da French-man bin ge you dem? No?

J. Aye, you dog!—I have been beating the French.

Q. You fum de French-man, massa?—Him fum you by Gor Mitee for true. But massa, why you go leave dem marchan-men, and go fight?

J. Why, you black slave! they prefs'd me, and made me fight.

Q. What, massa! you no free man?—Who da make you go, when you no love fight?

J. Why, you fool, dont you know the man-of-war men came with guns and cutlasses, and made us go.

Q. True, massa, me bin hear so. Sala-man, and foga-man, no free man in him coutrny.

J. You lie, you dog!

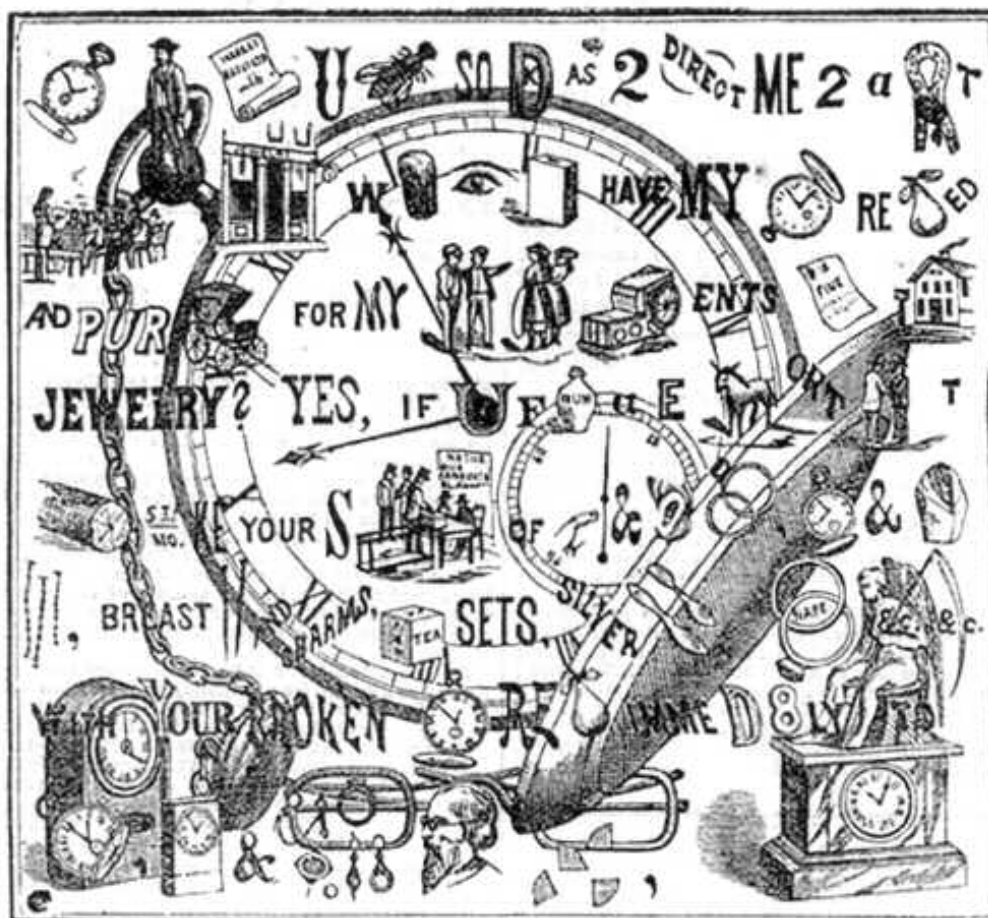
Q. Why, massa! you no bin tell me they make you go whether you wood or no? Ovachea no make poor negro fight. Him only make poor negro work, when him no love for work.

Eighteenth century vernacular orthographic choice figured in an eclogue between a sailor and a slave

Transliteration	Comments	
from John Ansell North Cave Yorkshea _r frends this coms from me with a gret deel of un eas for to think how werry i am <i>of</i> bad of and i should	<i>dll</i>	<i>h</i> written above.
5 be glad if you yould send me acup ple of pounds for i am yerry bad of and if you yount i suld fall seek on this parrish and thay well breng me home		orig?: <i>glas--</i> orig?: <i>basi</i> <i>i</i> inserted later. <i>pa</i> or <i>po</i> orig: <i>brend.</i> <i>h</i> started before <i>me</i> .
10 Sick send it sune to for i am bad of i wish that i was back agane at my home a gane for hear is bread as black as my at and i have	<i>i an.</i>	<i>i</i> doubtful mark before <i>wish</i> .
15 mot ad no work sence harvest	<i>blas.</i>	<i>i ha</i> rising loop started. Orig: <i>h</i> and another letter. orig. <i>at.</i> <i>n har.</i>

Transcript of actual vernacular orthographic choice in John Ansell's letter from 1821 (Fairman 2007:32)

I will present to the first of my LADY CUSTOMERS who will bring me at No. 29 MARKET STREET, LYNN, a correct solution of this Rebus, a HANDSOME GOLD RING. To the first Gentleman, a SET OF GOLD STUDS. To the first Miss, a PAIR OF BRACELETS.



Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1871, by CRANE & CO.,
in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

The solution to the above must be enclosed in sealed envelopes, with the name, which will be numbered as they are received, and on the 4th of July next, when all the contestants are invited to be present, the envelopes will be opened and the prizes awarded to the successful competitors.

Notice will be given in the Lynn Transcript to the persons entitled to the prizes.

LADIES' GOLD WATCHES, \$25, \$30, \$35, \$40, and upwards.
SILVER WATCHES, \$12, \$15, \$20, \$30, and upwards.

A Large Assortment of PLATED WARE, KNIVES, SCISSORS, RAZORS, POCKET BOOKS, &c., &c.

55 By mutual agreement all Jewelry Stores in the city are closed on Wednesday and Friday Evenings at 6 o'clock.

J. C. OLIN, 29 Market Street, Lynn.

52 Notice the Turning Table in the Window.

april 19

POUND, L. (1923) Spelling-manipulation and present-day advertising. *Dialect Notes*, 5, 226-32.

Spelling manipulation and advertising

Manipulated spelling has played a role for some time as a device to catch the eye in advertising; but it has never loomed so prominently nor been so thrust upon the public attention as at present. The tendency toward novelty of spelling has gained momentum in the last few years. It is now a stock recourse in the coinage of trade names and in popular advertising. It takes its place alongside blends or amalgamations, hyphenations, shortenings and extensions, words built from initials, and other ingenuities having current popularity in commercial linguistics. Perhaps the tendency has derived part of its momentum from the simplified spelling movement and from the new interest in phonetic transcription of words. The legacy to the standard language of the agitation for spelling reform is not yet very marked; but its influence upon the language of advertising and the coinage of trade-names is unmistakable. Or it may be that our audacities of spelling are merely a phase of the general "jazzing" (as critics call it) of language, as well as of music, manners, and morals, consequent upon the war. With the fading of awe for formalities and conventions in general, awe for the established forms of words have faded also.

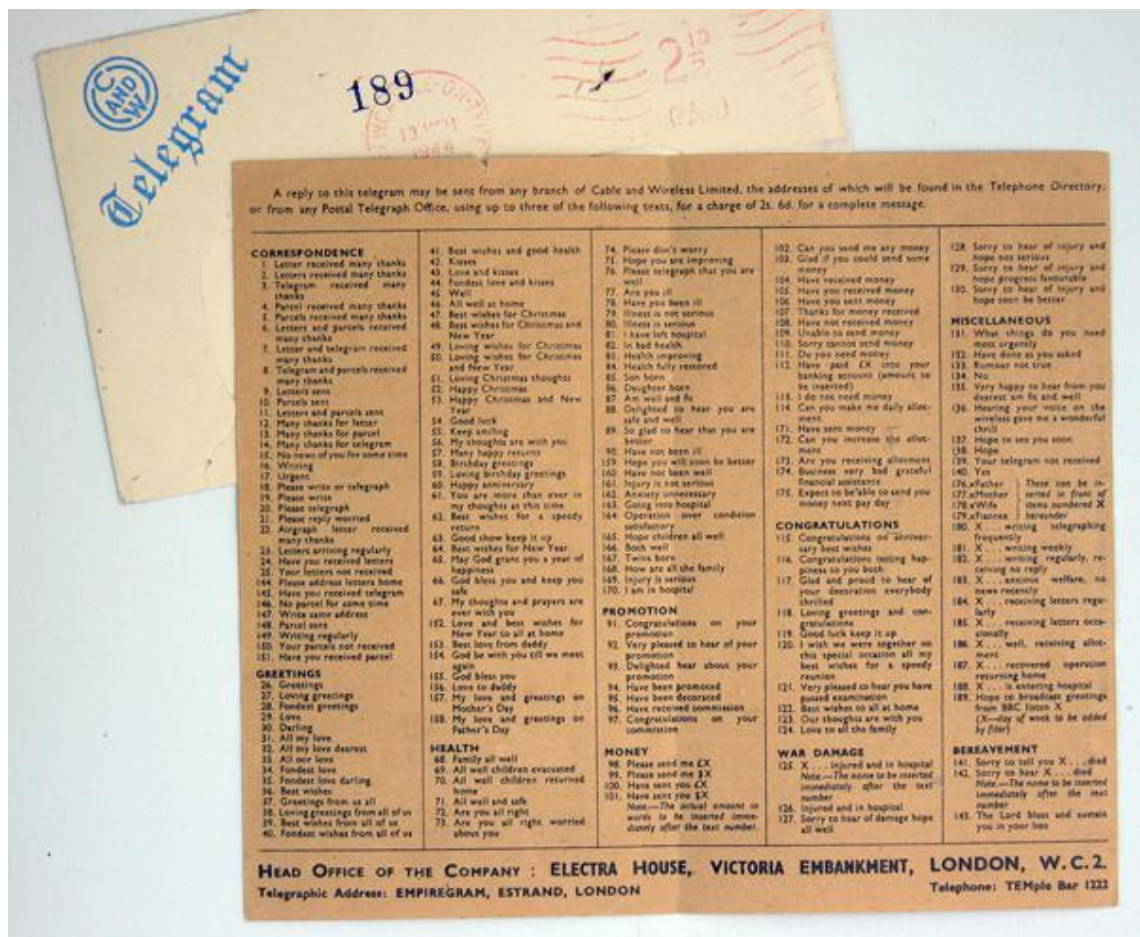
There is probably valid psychological ground for the employment of curious spellings by an advertiser. A normal passer-by or reader of advertisements might let his eyes linger over the unfamiliar appearance of familiar words when, if the words looked as usual, he might not give them a second glance. Re-spellings or spelling-perversions that in an earlier or more dignified period might have repelled observers and hindered sales now bring returns. Some few enterprising innovators began to juggle words to win attention for their articles of trade; then, once the trail was blazed, others followed. The launchers, for example of "Uneeda" or "Takhoma" biscuit, or of "Phiteezi" or "E.Z. Walker" shoes, have had many successors. In these days, when new words are needed for popular commercial purposers, the manipulation of familiar words in striking ways is a device not to be overlooked by those wishing names that will "take." The time has passed when new trade-names were coined, as a rule, in orthodox ways from Greek and Latin roots.

When I made a short study, some ten years ago, of word-coinage and trade-names, intentional misspellings formed a group of somewhat minor importance in advertising device. At the present time, too many such spellings meet the eye to be recorded. Makers of paints, household utensils, automobile parts or equipment, articles of apparel, and the like, rely upon spelling manipulation as a primary device when advertising their wares.

In the following pages an endeavour is made to exhibit the leading tendencies and to distinguish classes, in spelling manipulation for advertising purposes. There is no attempt to make the citation of material exhaustive; yet the examples included will give an idea of the relative popularity of the classes they illustrate. It is not wholly improbable that some of the re-spellings with which the public is now being familiarized by advertising – for example the increased use of *K* and the substitution of *-ite* for *-ight* – may eventually affect the accepted usage of the standard language. The influencing of the language of advertising by the simplified or phonetic spelling movements seems pretty clear; and it is a possibility to be borne in mind that the language of advertising may, in its turn, have influence upon the standard language. Many decades from now, it may be of interest to determine whether this reflex influence of the spelling reform movement (if there be such) did not prove to be greater than was its direct influence when the movement was at its height.

Text copied from Pound 1923

Pound lists and exemplifies 'misspelling for alliteration'; 'consonant substitution' (e.g. <sox. for <socks>); 'consonant omission' (e.g. <slipova> for <slipover>); simplification of <igh> to <i> (e.g. <nite>); 'vowel changes' (e.g. <Shyn> for <Shine>); simplification through the use of capital letters (e.g. <Fits-U> for <Fits you>); 'use of small letters for capitals'; medial capitalisations (e.g. <cheer-O-gram>); 'intentional spellings in newspaper writing'.



Key to Figure 2.5, modules of constrained utterance for a wartime civilian telegram²⁵¹

Email meme about the intelligibility of principled resequenced spelling

People | Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit

23/11/2014 16:32

Navigation

MRC

Cognition and
Brain Sciences Unit

[Home](#) > [People](#)

Aoccdnrig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoetnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a toatl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.

Or rather...

According to a researcher (sic) at Cambridge University, it doesn't matter in what order the letters in a word are, the only important thing is that the first and last letter be at the right place. The rest can be a total mess and you can still read it without problem. This is because the human mind does not read every letter by itself but the word as a whole.

This text circulated on the internet in September 2003. I first became aware of it when a journalist contacted a my colleague Sian Miller on 16th September, trying to track down the original source. It's been passed on many times, and in the way of most internet memes has mutated along the way. It struck me as interesting - especially when I received a version that mentioned Cambridge University! I work at [Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit](#), in Cambridge, UK, a [Medical Research Council](#) unit that includes a large group investigating how the brain processes language. If there's a new piece of research on reading that's been conducted in Cambridge, I thought I should have heard of it before...

I've written this page, to try to explain the science behind this meme. There are elements of truth in this, but also some things which scientists studying the psychology of language (psycholinguists) know to be incorrect. I'm going to break down the meme, one line at a time to illustrate these points, pointing out what I think is the relevant research on the role of letter order on reading. Again, this is only my view of the current state of reading research, as it relates to this meme. If you think I've missed something important, let me [know](#).

Other languages:

My colleagues and I are also aware of versions in Spanish and French which I've appended below. There are, no doubt, versions in many other languages as well. If you know of any others let me [know](#) and I'll add them to the list. I would be especially interested by versions of this text in languages that (to my knowledge, at least) work very differently in their written form from English. For example:

- 1) semitic languages (such as Hebrew or Arabic) where vowels tend not to be written in text
- 2) agglutinative languages (like Finnish or Turkish) where words are dramatically longer than in English
- 3) languages such as Thai which do not (conventionally) put spaces between words
- 4) logographic languages such as Chinese in which complex symbols represent a whole word or concept.

Update (7/10/03):

Looks like at least one of my predictions seems to be correct. Thanks to [Peter Eskolin](#) and [Ari Ruottu](#) I've had a couple of suggestions for Finnish versions of the text. Both Peter and Ari suggest that the resulting scrambled text is very difficult to read. Their names are linked to their suggested scrambled versions of the text.

One interesting possibility (thanks to Rémy Viredaz, and others that mentioned this) is that one thing that makes these scramblings difficult to read is that the jumbled-letters often move across morpheme-boundaries. One way of making polymorphemic words easier to read when scrambled would be to keep letters in a position close to their original location. This is apparent in some of the German versions of the text.

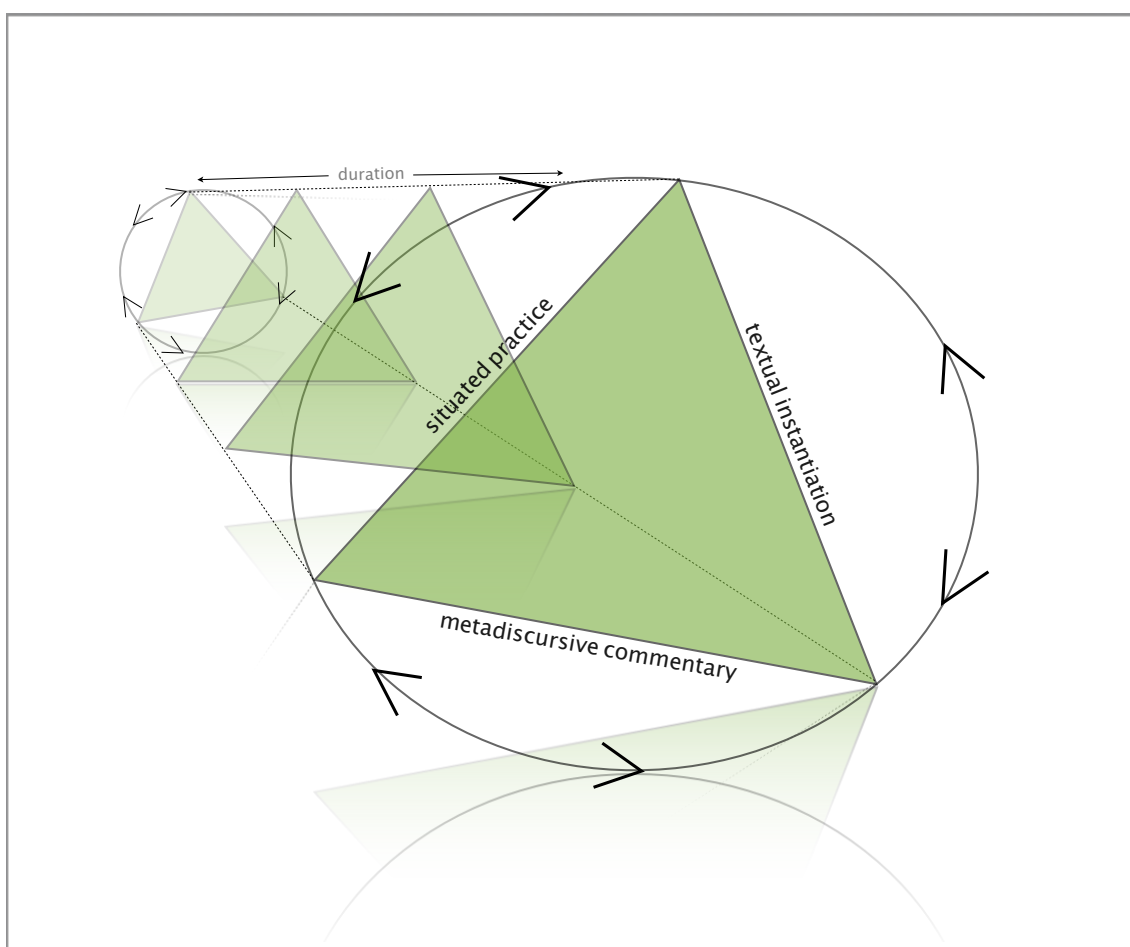
I've also received a Hebrew version of the text, which apparently could not be read when scrambled. However, I couldn't read the characters, sorry! If any of you can help with converting Hebrew text into graphics files, let me know.

<http://www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/people/matt.davis/Cmabrigde/>

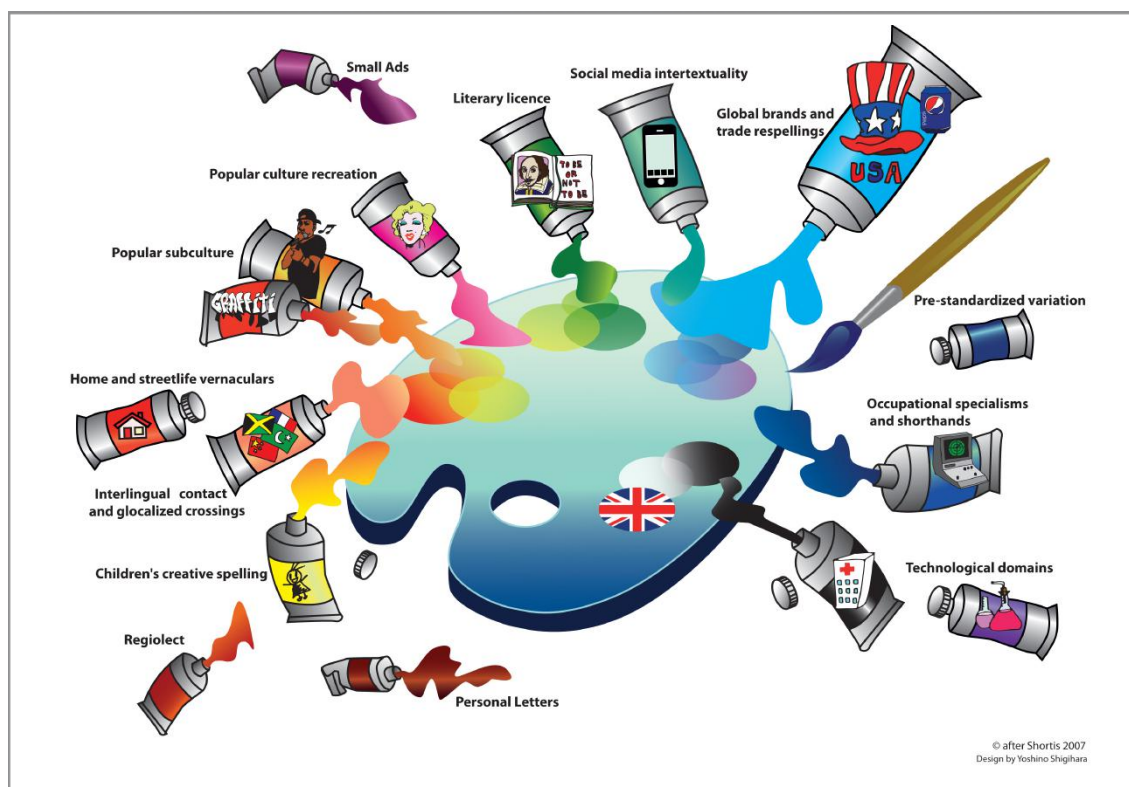
Page 1 of 8

From email meme 'Aoccdnrig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy' (Davis 2003)

Appendix III



Scholarship giving coverage of domains featuring heterogeneous spelling choice



The 'extended orthographic palette' used in the context of 'unregimented writing'

Literary licence: Barnes 1841; Jelsbak 2010; modernist writers such as Cummings; Joyce;

Social media intertextuality: Reid 1991; Werry 1996; Herring 1996; Carrington 2004; Adami 2009(data); Goddard 2006; North 2006, 2007; Sebba 2007b. Frehner 2008; Hinrichs 2012

Global brands and trade respelling: Pound 1923; Praninskas 1968; Davies 1987;

Pre-standardised variation: OED; Robinson 1996; Fairman 2007; Wright 2010

Occupational specialisms and shorthands: (field specific lexicons and dictionaries)

Technological domains: OED,

Personal letters: Osselton 1984, Barret-DuCrocq 1993/Keseler & Bergs 2003; Philips 2000, Gillen & Hall 2012, Gillen 2013

Regiolect: OED; Beal 2006; Shaw 2008;

Children's creative spelling: Read 1986; Bissex 1988; Treiman 1993; Kress 2000; Willans & Searle 1953-1958 (represented).

Interlingual contact and glocalised crossings: Blommaert 2003, 2008, 2010, Fung & Carter 2007; Lam 2009; Pennycook (various)

Home and streetlife vernaculars: Blume 1985; Camitta 1993; Adams & Winter 1997; Barton and Hamilton 1998, Barton Hamilton, Ivanic 2000, Cook 2004a;

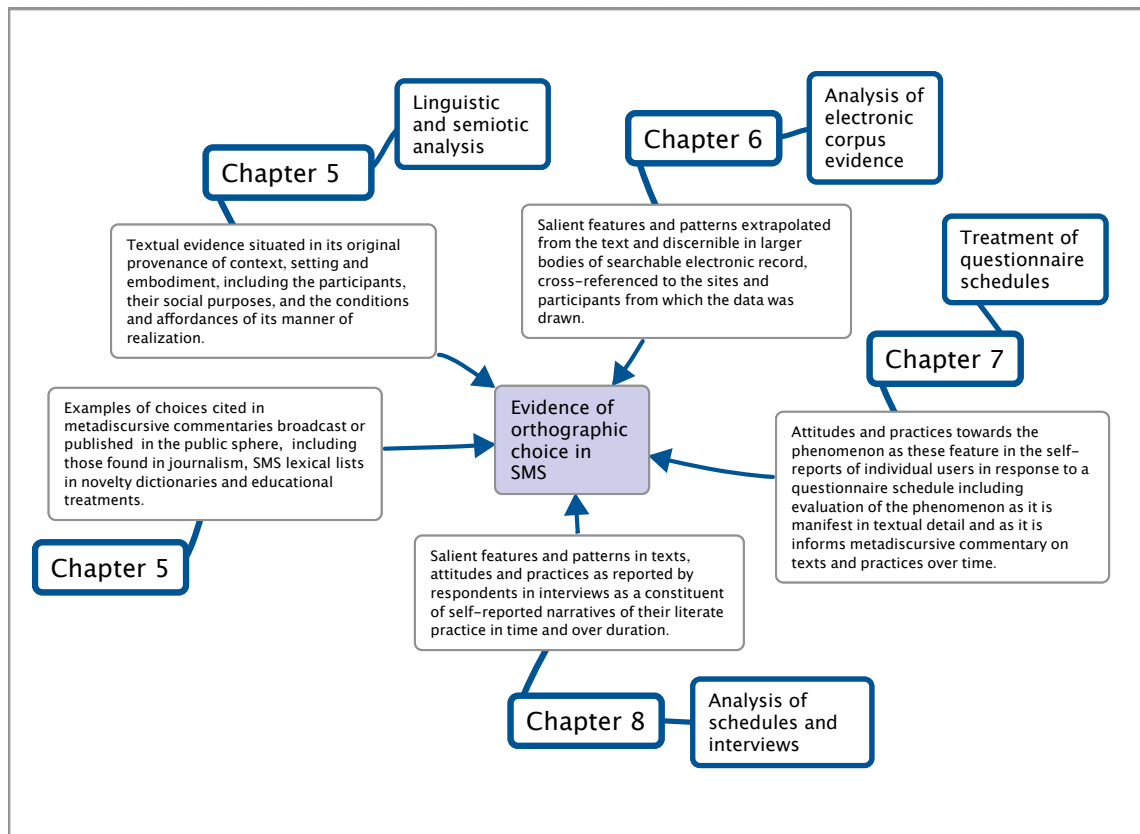
Popular subculture: Herriman 1991 (data); Androutsopoulos 2000

Popular culture recreation: Lomax 1959; Pennycook 2003, 2007; Ryan 2010;

Small ads: Marler 2002, 2007 (data)

Punctuation conventions: Parkes 1992; Vaisman 2011; Squires 2012.

Appendix IV



Appendix IV shows some of the thinking underpinning the methodology and methods used here. It is of possible interest to those seeking to adapt the research methods.

Structure of Appendix IV

This chapter offers supplementary notes on the research methods applied in Chapter 4. More detailed information of the methodology and research methods is set out in the appendices in Appendix V with further information about data collection and processing in Appendix VI and VII.

IV;i) Differentiating orthographic choice in mediated representations

	Method	Detail	Observation
1	Stylistic analysis of a spelling choice in a small sample of salient texts from tabloid coverage including Stevenson 2000, Hurey 2003, Cramb 2003,	Texts chosen from earlier and later periods and where used for examination texts: Metro 2000; Sun 2003; Metro 2012.	Identifies profile of orthographic choice in textual examples for comparison with examples from situated interaction.
2	Corpus attestation based on a corpus made up of 4 salient examples of popular sources of reference about SMS lexical and orthographic conventions. Mander's SMS dictionary (2003; Letts Teacher Diary (2006); Crystal (2004); Crystal(2008) constitute what this study terms POPTXT corpus. POP ular reporting of TXT	Electronic entry of data into subcorpus word lists; Classification of data by principle of orthographic formation	General finding that principles of orthographic formation are inconsistent with REALTXT. Word formation principles different in Crystal 2004, 2008 and in Mander.
3	Selection of 16 examples drawn from POPTXT corpus in 40 word variable	See 40 variable chart for examples: Cross checking of respellings across the constituent POPTXT sources and REALTXT corpus	Chapter 6 reports a generally low level of attestation for salient, frequent types of variation in POPTXT. More representation of patterns in Crystal 2004 and 2008
4	Transcription of 16 variables by early phone pad text entry method	Allows analysis of possible ergonomic benefits of respelling	Shows major text entry reduction affordances for initialisms and acronyms in these examples
5	Eliciting respondent's verification and attitudes towards POPTXT source text and respellings in qualitative questionnaire schedule	Questions about SSSMS, emoticons	Pattern of suspicion and hostility towards SSMS; more engagement with emoticons.
6	Eliciting respondent's verification and attitudes towards POPTXT source text and respellings in qualitative interview schedule	Use of POPTXT as example to focus questionnaire discussion of recognition and attitudes	Pattern of low recognition and censorious evaluations of those who make such choices.
7	Testing of SEEN/USE attestation of 16 variables by 823 respondents;		Reveals low indices for initialism spellings
8	Attestation of level of presence in REALTXT corpus		Negligible presence in RealTXT corpus

Data collection and methodological treatment of SMS choice in public sphere metadiscourse.

IV.ii) Summary of methods applied to the research questions

R Q	Research Question	Exemplar Texts (Chapter 5)	Corpus Data (Chapter 6)	Quantitative Self-reports (Chapters 6 and 7)	Qualitative Self-reports (Chapters 7 and 8)
1	What are the features and patterns of orthographic choice used in actual UK SMS text messaging by a sample of young people and in the ways that practice has been reported in popular accounts in the public sphere ?	Analysis of examples of SMS and related vernacular orthographic practices plotted over time; analysis of mediated representations of the same.	Corpus attestation; analysis of corpus patterns correlated with Tagg's CorTxt benchmark word group lists.	Attestation by claims of experience and use of the 40 word variants using SEEN/USE method.	Patterns in coding showing claims of attitudes and practices in questionnaire open text boxes and interview transcripts.
2	What do the associated respellings in SMS and related media practices afford users such that these choices came to attract mass co-option, circulation and recognition?	Analysis of salient patterns in texts and the perceived possible affordances which can be inferred.	Analysis of frequency patterns and perceived possible affordances which can be inferred.	Analysis of patterns in self reported claims of preferences and practices.	Patterns in coding showing claims of attitudes and practices in questionnaire open text boxes and interview transcripts.
3	What patterns in social judgments about such practices can be observed and what is their impact?	Implication of attitudes in analysis of texts and intertextual patterns over time.	Implication of social judgments is tacit in patterns of attestation.	Analysis of quantitative results for what they show about patterns of attitudes, disposition and reported claims of use about SMS orthographic choice.	Coding and Analysis of codings of responses to schedule prompts.
4	What does all this signify about contemporary changes in the communicative landscape, including the implications for schooled instruction of spelling and literacy?	Analysis of spelling and orthography as these feature in schooling. Explanation of pedagogical applications.	Corpus evidence verifies patterns of systemic variation in Tagg's CorTxt with dimension of age grading.	Respondents show idiolectal profiles coalescing in trends relating to site of collection, age, gender, role, and literacy identity.	Trends identified by more specific nuanced commentary on choices in time and reports of change in biographical trajectory over duration.
		Stylistic and semiotic analysis	Corpus attestation	Quantitative schedule indices	Qualitative schedule indices

Outline of methods applied to the research questions.

IV.iii) The questionnaire design and its exemplification

Rationale for questionnaire design (1/2)

Ethical prequel	Informed consent	Guidance on purpose of research and conditions of confidentiality and explicit request for permission required	
Biographical profile details	Demographic information	Age, gender, location, role (usually school or college student)	
Your use of text messaging (1-3)	Reporting of frequency of SMS practices and tendency to use predictive text	Indices for degree of involvement in SMS interaction. Use of predictive text is often associated with orientation to standardised forms.	
Your attitudes to standard spelling, abbreviated spellings and punctuation (4-8)	Self-estimation of orthographic identity as suggested by reported attitudes to standard English, SMS respelling, punctuation.	Indices for perceived accomplishment in standardised spelling, Self-estimation of disposition to literate identity in autonomous or ideological form indicated by attitudes to respelling and punctuation. Data set for identity factors in analytical framework.	
You and predictive text (9-11)	Reported attitudes and practices around automated predictive text.	Indices for attitudes to predictive text, level of technoliterate accomplishment and control, and preparedness to use predictive text creatively for for respelling. Oblique evidence of literacy identity, and relevant to analytical framework.	
The way you learn text message spellings (12-15)	Reports the sources and practices by which respelling is learnt	Indices for different ways SMS spelling is learned and understood and the level to which respelling can be intuited in context. Answers indicate the extent to which SMS orthographic choice is acquired by immersion in interaction in a 'horizontal discourse' and also by implication the extent to which glossaries in popular sphere discourse are apposite.	
Practices: the way you text and your experiences as a user (16-20)	Self-reporting of variation in respelling choices made by contextual pressures of audience, institutional setting, polyfocal attention and technoliterate accomplishment.	Indices of pressures motivated by respondents' sense of literate identity/audience and those stemming from situated environmental factors. Evidence of the degree of deliberated practice in relation to social context, in contrast to the reporting of SMS as sloppy or delinquent in popular representations. Answers about changes in relation to audience may indicate orientation to normative orthographic choice. Relevant to identity and environment	
Spellings you have seen and use (40 variable SEEN/USE instrument: chapter 6) 21-60	Reporting of the respondents' experience in active and passive repertoires of a selection of 40 orthographic variables sourced either in corpus evidence or from public sphere representations	Indices for levels of attestation of variables showing those in frequent conventionalised distribution and those more rare, with information about which show possible signs of being stigmatised. Feeds into the 40 variable data set presented in chapter 6 which also juxtaposes correlation with shows provenance of focal variable, its affordances of text entry reduction, Indicates possible semi-conventionalised variables especially	

Rationale for questionnaire design (2/2)

Text messages you are willing to share with the survey (QUAL 1-3)	Prompt to contribute 3 text message samples from self and interlocutors	Contributes to RealTxt corpus and also traceable back to original questionnaire answer and to demographic profiles, sources of provenance.
Texting a friend arranging to see them the following night (QUAL 4)	Hypothetical text message elicited in response to a defined imaginary situation	Task designed to generate indices for frequent semi-conventionalised respellings such as those rendered in standardised English as <you>, <tomorrow>, and <night>. Data not closely analysed in this study but sampled in appendices.
(QUAL 5)	Evaluation of orthographic choices reportedly deployed by Scottish pupil in a homework written in a texting style and comparison with respondent's own experience	Elicits proxy of a 'speech chain' evaluation of an example of SMS respelling. Example is from widely circulated but extreme example cited in many popular and academic sources(Carrington 2005, Dudeney and Hockney 2003, Thurlow 2006). Example typifies SMS as discreet esoteric code representation found in popular accounts such as Mander 2001, Hardyman 2001 but also echoed by Crystal 2002, 2004,2008)
Your use of smileys and emoticons: For example... (QUAL 6)	Invitation to report on use of emoticons in own texts and experience of same in texts received (Used in interviews)	Qualitative evidence of idiolectal and sociolectal contestation around these semiotic devices, and evidence of which are actually used. Elaborated emoticons were dominant in public sphere discourse (Mander 2001, Hurley 2003, Cramb 2003, Humphrys 2007). Qualitative coding reported in chapter 7.
What factors influence your text messaging style ?(QUAL 7)	Invitation to report on what factors influence the respondent's text message style? (interview schedule too)	Qualitative evidence of motivational factors and intertextual provenance as set out in analytical framework. Evidence of deliberated reflectiveness over choice, for SMS orthographic choice as design (Kress 1998, 2003, 2010)
Has text messaging altered the way you spell in other situations?(QUAL 8)	Invitation to report on perception of how SMS altered the respondent's spelling in other situations? (interview schedule too)	Reported evidence of intertextual influence in crossings and leakage across domains. Tends to pick up respondents' evaluation of deliberated influences rather than public sphere model of SMS as contagion across registers.
Has your attitude to your own and other people's text messaging styles changed over time, and if so, how?(QUAL 9)	How has the respondent's text message style changed over time?	Reported evidence of idiolectal diachronic change in relation to changing evaluations in relation to changes in social experience, normative literate accomplishment, technological change and other factors apparent from biographical trajectory or wider social change

280914 Table Landscape questionnaire, pages 879 words

Example of a completed questionnaire (Joe 2010)

Teachit.co.uk – National txt survey4/1/09 12:40 PM

"Pssst" ...


ENGLISH TEACHING ONLINE


Members [Login help](#) [Home](#) | [About us](#) | [Help](#) | [First time here](#)

 **Membership**

 **Latest additions**

 **Resource libraries**

 **Whizzy things**

 **Special resource collections**

 **Books**

 **Newsletters**

 **Training**

 **Staffroom**

 **Mini sites**

 **Sister sites**

Biographical Profile Details

This section consists of Biographical Profile Details including basic questions about age, gender, location and occupation. These questions will be used to generate searches of the questionnaire results.

Please indicate your age range by clicking on the appropriate circle. 26 to 35

Please indicate whether you are male or female. Male

Which country do you live in? Click on the appropriate letter.

A) UK (including England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland)
B) Ireland
C) Australia
D) Canada
E) New Zealand
F) United States
G) Other

A

If you answered 'G) Other' in the previous question, then please indicate the country where you live in the following textbox. Otherwise go on to the next question

If you live in the UK, please indicate the area by clicking on the closest choice from the list of options below.

Bristol

Are you a full-time student? No

LGfL Login
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If you are NOT a full-time student then please indicate
your occupation in the text box below.

part-time student, EFL teacher

**This next section is for you to tell us about
your use of text messaging...**

This next section consists mainly of 'Tickbox' statements
which form the basis of the statistical outputs of the
survey. Please click on the circle which best describes
your experience.

How often do you text? Please click on the appropriate
letter in the drop down box to indicate your use of
mobile phones (cell phones) and texting.

- A) I don't use a mobile phone.
- B) I don't use a mobile phone for texting.
- C) I receive texts but don't send them.
- D) I send between 1 and up to 20 texts most weeks.
- E) I send between 21 and 50 texts most weeks.
- F) I send over 50 texts most weeks.
- G) I send over 20 texts most days.

D

Do you use mainly predictive text (e.g. T9) in your text
messages? Yes

Do you have a mobile phone (cell phone) with you now?
Yes

Next...your attitudes to standard spelling...

**Your attitudes to
standard spelling,
abbreviated
spellings and**

Agree Undecided Disagree

punctuation

I am good at standard English spelling.	✓	✗	✗
I find English spelling easy to learn.	✓	✗	✗
I don't like abbreviated spellings like those found in text messaging.	✗	✗	✓
I like being able to spell in the way I want in my texts.	✓	✗	✗
I think punctuation is important in all written communication.	✓	✗	✗

Next....you and predictive text...**You and predictive text (for example, T9)**

Agree Undecided Disagree

I find predictive text annoying to use.	✗	✗	✓
I find predictive text easy to use.	✓	✗	✗
I add text message spellings to my phone dictionary.	✓	✗	✗

Next...learning text...**Learning: the way you learn text message spellings**

Agree Undecided Disagree

I learn about text spelling abbreviations from books and dictionaries.	✓	✗	✗
I learn my text spellings from people texting me.	✗	✓	✗
I learn my text spelling			

from articles in newspapers and magazines.

X ✓ X

I can usually figure out the meaning of a text message spelling.

✓ X X

Next...what you actually do...

Practices: the way you text and your experiences as a user

Agree Undecided Disagree

I rarely use text message abbreviations in my own texts.

X X ✓

I never use text messaging spellings in my formal work.

✓ X X

I vary my text message spelling depending on who I am texting.

✓ X X

I vary my text message spelling depending on whether I am in hurry.

✓ X X

I don't usually punctuate my text messages.

X X ✓

Next....text spellings you have seen and use...

This next section is for recording your experience of particular text spellings - whether you see certain spellings in text messages and whether you use them when you text.

Each text spelling in the left hand column is accompanied by the word or phrase in its standard English form in the right hand column.

Please follow these instructions

- 1) Click on the SEEN square box for examples you see at least once a year.
- 2) Leave the SEEN box blank if you never, or nearly never, see the example - under once a year.
- 3) Click on the USED square box for the example if you use the example at least once a year.
- 4) Leave the USED box blank if you never, or nearly never, use the example - under once a year.
- 5) Click on BOTH the SEEN and the USED boxes if you have both seen and used the example at least once a year.
- 6) If you USE it, you will have SEEN it - USUALLY. If so, click on BOTH squares

The same principle applies if you leave a USED box blank.

Text Spelling	Standard English spelling	Seen	Used
txt	text	✓	✓
bro	brother	✓	✓
AAR8	at any rate	✗	✗
skool	school	✗	✗
wot	what	✓	✓
wat	what	✗	✗
0	nothing	✗	✗
2day	today	✓	✓
hols	holidays	✓	✓
:@	screaming	✗	✗
BAU	business as usual	✗	✗
ps	parents	✗	✗
2C	to see	✗	✗
dcdd	decided	✓	✓
LOL	laugh out loud	✓	✓
msg	message	✓	✓
ICBW	it could be worse	✗	✗
VVV	very very very	✓	✓
soz	sorry	✓	✓

2moz	tomorrow	✓	✓
tomoz	tomorrow	✓	✓
tomo	tomorrow	✗	✗
tonite	tonight	✓	✗
2nite	tonight	✓	✗
U	you	✓	✓
cya8er	see you later	✗	✗
gr8	great	✓	✗
:)	smiley	✓	✓
CWOT	complete waste of time	✗	✗
m8s	mates	✗	✗
TIC	tongue in cheek	✗	✗
TPTB	the powers that be	✗	✗
2	to	✓	✓
2	too	✓	✗
4	for	✗	✗
r	are	✓	✗
ill	I'll	✓	✓
BTDT	been there done that	✗	✗
goin	going	✓	✗
wanna	want to	✓	✗

Text boxes for more detail...

This section contains text boxes where you can type in your opinions and experiences at greater length. Three of the boxes provide a space to record text messages you are willing to share with the survey.

Please follow these instructions

- 1) Put each text message in a separate box
- 2) Write them out letter for letter using the exact spelling, punctuation and capital letters as they appear in the original message.
- 3) Remove the details which would make the text message identifiable. Put '(NAME)' for any particular personal name and '(PLACE)' for any particular place name.

Please use the three boxes below to type in any three

text messages you have sent or received and which you have permission to use in this survey.

Message 1

Just heading back to the flat. If you come over can you bring your cable please

Message 2

Mate so bored on an observation. Feel like i might die. Tell me something funny before i throw a printer at the wall.

Message 3

Am workin all day 2 moro then off to cardiff for the weekend wit the boy. prob around next week, coffee? x

Please enter the text you would use on a mobile phone, word for word and letter for letter, if you were texting a friend because you were going to arrange to see him or her the following night.

hey, hows it going? what you up to tomorrow night? fancy doing smt?

Next...the Scottish schoolgirl text message homework...

In 2003 several newspapers included the following text which they reported as being written by a Scottish schoolgirl in response to a homework task asking her to write an account of what she had done over her summer holidays. Read the text and go on to the next question.

SCOTSSCHOOLGIRL SMS

My smmrhols wr CWOT, B4,we usd 2go2 NY 2C my bro, his GF & 3:- @ kds FTF, ILNY, its a gr8 plc.

Bt my Ps wr so (-:/ BC o 9/11 tht they dcdd 2 stay in SCO & spnd 2 wk up N.

Up N, WUCIWUG - 0. I ws vvv brd in Mon. 0 bt baas & ^^^^^.

AAR8, my Ps wr :) - they sd ICBW, & tht they wr ha-p 4 the pc&qt...!DTS!! I wntd 2 go hm ASAP, 2C my m8s again.

2day, I cam bk 2 skool. I feel v O:) BC I hv dn all my hm

wrk. Now its BAU

How typical is this 'text' of the text messages you read and write? What is similar or different about it?

this is very different from the texts that I write. I only use a few of the acronyms and tend to try and make the message as clear as possible for a standard reader. If I think there's a chance they might not understand what I am saying I will use the standard form. I quite often write things like 'dcdd' or 'spnd' as it is often clear what they mean in context - I will very often write 'smt' to mean 'something'. Most, or all of the time though, I use T9, so often it is quicker and easier to write the full word. It is a lot more chatty than my texts. I tend to use texts for functional reasons - making arrangements etc. If I want to chat about something, I would normally call. These kind of 'text-sesh' chats, I don't have very often anymore. I've heard people say that normally they let it get to 2/3 exchanges before they call. I'd say I was like that.

Next...your use of smileys and emoticons. For example... :)

Newspapers and dictionaries of text messaging language sometimes report texters using lots of smileys and other symbols such as such as ;) and :(.

Such symbols are sometimes called emoticons.

.....What is your experience of these symbols, as a reader of texts, and as a writer of texts?

I do use emoticons with quite a high degree of frequency. I feel they add something essential to good text communication. Often the feeling behind a statement would be unclear without their use. Using a smily, winky or "lol" at the end of an utterance can be very important to show that you are joking or being sarcastic.

Nearly finished.....anything else you want to say...

You can use this space to write about anything else you would like to say about your use of text messaging language which you think would be helpful for research in this area. For example, what factors do you think influence your own text messaging style? Has text messaging altered the way you spell in other situations? If so how? Has your attitude to your own or other people's text messaging spelling changed over time and, if so, how?

I'd say my attitude towards texting has changed over time. When it first came about, I was about 17 and it was the main form of quick textual communication - it was brand new and, for a brief spell, quite exclusively used by my age group - mobile phones weren't being used so extensively in schools - it was still a new thing to have a phone - and older generations hadn't really cottoned on. It felt like it was ours, a playground for chat. I guess its appeal as play didn't really last long as I quite quickly moved onto using T9. Quite quickly, overuse shortenings and acronyms just felt a bit pointless. Also, with the advent of MSN messenger and the like, and more recently web 2.0 apps like facebook, myspace and twitter, not to mention email being used with much more brevity and the fact that people are more and more connected to these services so you can expect a rapid response, I have been using texts less and less, and normally just for specific functional uses where I want to get a msg through instantly. This is changing with new phones being able to receive email. In terms of language play, I'd say that I am much more playful when IMing/emailing/chatting on fb. This is almost entirely due to the fact that I have a full keyboard and that I am not using T9. I don't particularly enjoy writing texts - they are fiddley and awkward. I'd rather get it out the way and don't think about how I writing them so much. Occasionally there are situations where I feel I really need to get a bit of gossip out and the only way is through a text... but I am pleased to see the new range of phones brought about by the iphone that have things like push email and full touch-screen keyboards. I think once I have an iphone / iphone-like device, my habits and attitudes will change. I think I will be more playful. Txting is really an interim technology, I think. Once email and 3G functionality are the norm, there will be little need for them. Of interesting note are services like Twitter - where the limit is set to 140 chars - a "tweet" - people like brief updates....

Giving permission and submitting the form

If you want to be emailed about the survey results when the survey has finished then click on the YES box, if not then click on the NO box. Yes

Please read through all your answers and click on the button to confirm you are willing for your information to be stored and analysed in this online survey. ✓

If you have any concerns about the use of your information then record these here. Otherwise leave blank.

EXTRA BOX - Use this box for any extra information relating to the survey

Make sure you have answered all the questions or it will be impossible to submit your survey. Any missing information will be highlighted with a small red asterisk in the margin.

Finally...

When you are happy to submit your survey then click on the 'Submit' button below.

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Example of a completed questionnaire (Joe) as hosted on Teachitsurvey (2010)

Research instruments outlined

The main research instruments are the exemplar texts which feature in Chapter 5, the corpus material analysed in Chapter 6, the quantitative questionnaire data in Chapters 6 and 7 and the self-reported qualitative responses featuring in Chapters 7 and 8. More specific methods are explained in those chapters. Most of these data streams were integrated in the online questionnaire survey built using the *SurveyBuilder* online questionnaire application (Hall & Shortis 2007).

Questionnaire surveys

The four questionnaire surveys generated samples of SMS, quantifiable responses to multiple choice closed questions about orthographic attitudes and practices, free text input answers to open questions and indices of attestation for the Seen/Use instrument described below. They were based on extensive paper-based piloting prior to 2007 (n=450+) and were developed with advice taken from participants including a simplified three point 'measurement of the directionality and intensity of individuals' attitudes' in place of a Likert five point scale, and in the interest of reducing the demands of a survey which was already reported by respondents as being arduous in its reading demands and response complexity. The surveys comprise the following self-reported data from respondents:

- 1) Participant details of age, gender, location and use of technology set out using search filters, so allowing the researcher to search by specified biographical profiles to see banks of individual survey answers;
- 2) Reporting of participants' practices and experiences of SMS, orthographic choice and standard English spelling allowing some evidence of connections between attitudes, experiences, perceptions and practices;
- 3) Specimen examples of participants' actual and imagined text messages in response to a hypothetical situation, the former adding to the corpus of examples of orthographic choice from actual contexts of use, and the latter functioning as a prompt to elicit data likely to include words which attract respelling.

The questionnaire surveys take the same wording with some minor revisions. The Pilot survey 00, was administered in two schools in Bristol in July 2007; the focus 16-19 college survey, 24, was run in November and December 2007 and featured answers from students in the colleges in London, Bristol and Somerset which had provided data between 2000 and 2006. The third survey, the Open Access survey, 30, was hosted on the Teachit website from January of 2008 and advertised on the website, in various electronic newsletters, on associated email lists, and through informal email invitations to participate. Survey 65 provided an open-access follow-up

mainly by invited participation and with a higher proportion of undergraduate respondents. The survey has been run from time to time since with broadly similar patterns of results.

Quantitative data analysis

Quantitative data analysis is applied to the attestations extracted from the corpus and in SEEN-USE instruments. It features in the enumeration of orthographic variation in the comparison made between Tagg's CorTxt 250 and 150 wordlists displayed in Appendix II below. The focus is to elucidate indicative patterns of choice and attitude for co-investigation by other means. This is not a formal; statistically-based study but one making use of number as one set of indices in a mixed method of investigation and analysis.

Seen/Use surveys: the 'forty variables' sample

The questionnaire includes a method for testing recognition and preference of variants forms developed in my coordination of an earlier study of Bristolian dialect undertaken by college students. Here respondents are asked to comment on their perceived experience and use of 40 particular variant forms, as set out in the questionnaire.

The 40 sample Seen/Use survey combines examples of respelling in frequent use in the corpus collected for this study here with features which are particular to mediated representations of SMS in popular accounts such as SMS lexical lists, dictionaries of text message usage, examples featuring in newspaper articles, and related popular accounts in public sphere broadcast. Six of these are drawn from the Scottish Schoolgirl SMS homework story which was used in all empirical methods as the encapsulating example of popular account exemplification of youth texting language (see Chapter 5 and Appendix V for examples).

The 40 variants constitute a randomly sequenced sample of SMS orthographic choice taken from these actual, situated and represented/composed kinds of source, so addressing the focus in the first research question foregrounding the potential anomaly between popular accounts of orthographic variation in new media, here SMS, and those which emerged from analysis of empirical data from contexts of situated interaction.

Classificatory framework: types of respelling

Textual data were originally classified using a provisional typology of functions and features adapted from Werry's 1996 study. Similar typologies feature in many studies of SMS and related new media and usually without the superordinate functions of reduced text entry demands, intimation of spokenness and paralinguistic restitution. Later classification drew on a variety of other models including Androutsopoulos (2000:520), in conjunction with emergent classification typologies developed in this study.

Interview schedules

Interview schedules took a semi-structured format usually starting with some scrutiny of contrasting SMS data such as the material featuring in Chapter 5, Appendix V or in the pedagogic materials exemplified in Appendix X and asking about current and past practices with SMS and spelling in general with reference to an adapted version of the schedule which features in the questionnaire. Later interviews either filmed the questionnaire being completed with the respondent talking aloud about choices or interviewed the respondent talking through her own completed response. Schedules of questions and probes were influenced by prior experience on the Interactive Education Project as a researcher of child interviewees' capacity to generate autobiographical narratives about their spelling practices including those claimed in digital media and their facility for commenting in detail on particular orthographic features with folk-linguistic rationales for choice and dispreference.

Coding of qualitative data in surveys and interviews

Qualitative data featuring in open text answers in the questionnaire and in interviews were coded using emergent classifications and concepts which were tested and developed in the course of the study. Initially the qualitative data-set in the questionnaires was coded systematically following the methods explained in Hahn 2008, who uses what he terms a pseudo-quantitative method to develop countable indices from qualitative material. A similar method was used to classify over 950 spelling variants by 24 criteria grouped under seven categories. This developed the model of SMS orthographic choice as being motivated by multiple contextual pressures and offering multi-accentual meaning-potentials.

Planning for validity and reliability

The mixed-methods offered multiple opportunities for testing the reliability and representativeness of data and emergent findings especially from respondents' comments about the recognisable quality of this material in terms of their own perspectives, experiences and perceptions. So examples of actual and represented text messaging were tested for verification in questionnaire and interview schedules.

Sampling sites and questionnaires

The focus college and out-of-school data were sourced from educational sites in Bristol, a Somerset rural town, and from South London, giving some sense of diverse but comparable social settings in post-compulsory pre-HE education. The focus college data represents three sites from a similar domain: 16-19 year old students mainly studying A Level English. Online data participants reported themselves as coming from all over the UK with a significant representation of Bristol and South-West perspectives and low sampling from London. Gender

ratios were within a 6:4 ratio of women to men. About 80% of the respondents came from school and college settings mostly from the South and South-West of England.

This study does not seek to be exhaustive in its categorisation of the features and patterns of respelling in SMS. Observation of the examples collected over the years, including those examples in the data-sets discarded in terms of explicit analysis in this study, suggested the bulk of respelling encountered in SMS is patterned, conventionalised and comparatively routine. The additions to the corpus since 2002 have not significantly altered perceptions about prototypical SMS respelling: what gets done, by most people, most of the time. The London focus college stands out for its type and degree of innovation, with interesting potential connections to be developed about the relationship of such choices with multi-ethnic urban vernaculars; the detailed investigation of that variation is beyond the scope of this study. Otherwise much of the orthographic patterning underpinning the respellings features in the original 2000 collection.

This study is unusual in the field for the number of respondents sampled and in a range of comparable settings. The nature of the collection method prevents disambiguating material from a respondent's own SMS messages from material quoted from others but assuming a text collection of at least double the total number of direct participants, data was sampled from around 1,500 contributors, the overwhelming majority in the 16-19 age range.

Sampling and the interviews

The selection of interviewees represents an opportunity sampling with sufficient design to ensure some representation of demographic and attitudinal diversity. In the course of the study, over thirty-five people have participated in recorded interviews with twenty of those taking place in educational settings. About two thirds of those interviews fell into the 16-19 age range and two thirds of those came from Bristol. school and college interviewees were selected with their teachers' advice given to the researcher or with the help of people who knew them. Some interviewees were chosen because they had generated focus texts referred to in the study.

Sampling error

In planning the research, calculations were made using guidance from research methods reference (e.g. Cohen, Manion, Morrison 2000, Hahn 2008) to arrive at figures for sampling error and generalisability of results. Although the methods and guidance were applied in fieldwork, the results from this research are best thought of as offering indicative generalisable results which draw some of their robustness from the comparisons with Tagg's and from internal cross-data-set verification here rather than from more substantial statistical method. This reflects the way in which the research design changed from corpus and questionnaire methods to becoming an extended case study (Burawoy 1998) In terms of sample size, confidence levels and sampling error, the sample of well over 500 16-19 year olds studying English Language is

large enough to be representative of the 35,000 students studying English Language in the 16-19 age range, assuming there is limited regional variability in the use of SMS. These figures give a sampling error of approximately 5%. The samples are too small to be representative of the constituent colleges which made up the focus surveys. Within the online questionnaire, the samples are also too small to be representative of age ranges outside the 11-19 ranges. The 60 responses from teachers provide a significant occupational group sub-sample, at least for the purposes of qualitative analysis of the free text box responses, although this opportunity sample would not constitute the basis for quantitative enquiry.

Potential replicability of design

The research design presented here is replicable subject to the temporal window available for the access to a data from a particular age range at comparable sites. The particular situated record of a communications technology caught in a site/sites at a moment close to its early diffusion and tracked over a number of years required extensive time. There were particular challenges in processing, distilling and presenting data from the corpus collection so it could match Tagg's data-base. Qualitative coding of corpus material was laborious with multiple processing between six software applications: *WORDSMITH TOOLS WORDLIST*, *WORDSMITH TOOLS CONCORD*, *IWORKS*, *IWORKS PAGES*, *IWORKS NUMBERS* and *MICROSOFT EXCEL*.

Ethical challenges and the way these were addressed

Fieldwork has been conducted on the principle of informed consent with an effort to reduce intrusion on respondents' lives and protect anonymity in the manner of reporting. Permissions were sought in the context of guidance being given about the purposes of the research, and the use to which the data-set would be put. Fieldwork sought to reduce the burden of participants' personal disclosure. Two respondents wished to feature more publicly in photographs and references but with names altered. All data was checked and cleaned of identifying information such as personal names and place names.²⁵² The fieldwork data strands presented the routine challenges and procedures associated with the use of transcribed recordings and questionnaires in social science research. There were additional challenges presented by the collection of copies of actual SMS data, as discussed in Tagg 2009 and 2012 and her advice was attended to.

In the 2000, 2002 and 2006 corpus collection SMS data was requested voluntarily, in the context of site visits to give public classroom teaching and learning activities focused on identifying the language of SMS and other ICT-enabled Txt media. Students were advised in advance to submit only small samples of their own text messages, or text messages for which they had permission. These materials were collected and administered by their teachers. Students were asked to change names and identifying personal references and the aggregated

data-set data was subsequently checked and amended by the researcher to ensure removal of any remaining identifying personal details.

In the 2007-2008 corpus collection by questionnaire, the Pilot Questionnaire Survey and the Focus College surveys were administered in person with a spoken introduction and advice about the submission and use of confidential material. In the Open Access survey the questionnaire was prefixed by a webpage giving the information deemed necessary for respondents to give informed consent for their views to be used. The text explained the context of the research, the participants, the purposes for which the data was being gathered and an explanation of how it would be used. It was a requirement for prospective respondents to click on a button to show they had read the page before they could be connected to the survey.

There were two other processes undertaken to address the ethics and confidentiality issues in the questionnaires. Firstly, the questionnaires included verification procedures to check respondents were at ease with the methods. There were specific questions and free text boxes asking respondents if they were happy about the ethics and confidentiality of the surveys and inviting email contact. The responses suggest a negligible level of recorded anxiety and no emails were received about this matter. Some of these checks were removed following the pilot survey as respondents complained there were too many of them.

Secondly, and in relation to data protection, the researcher/questionnaire designer worked closely with the questionnaire survey systems analyst to ensure the records generated complied with UK guidelines and the legal requirements relating to data protection. In particular, identifying personal data in section A, including the optional email addresses were collected by volunteer submission, but remained secure, confidential and accessible only to the analyst, and not to the researcher or any other source, and will remain confidential after the study is complete. The email addresses were collected principally so those informants who requested it could be informed of the outline survey results.

Ethical guidelines in CMC study

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) presents additional challenges of ethics, confidentiality and data protection in part because of the machine-readable and intimate nature of the material. There is the additional matter of operating in a domain where academic practices have yet to settle on established principles and conventions. Text message data also present particular challenges because of their social locale. They are typically generated in dyadic exchanges between people who know each other well, and sometimes include references to personal experience, including comments on third parties.

Influence of the KCL College Teaching Fund project on research ethics

A project conducted by the researcher under the auspices of the King's College London College Teaching Fund (KCL CTF) on ethics in new media data collection was informed by this study and fed back into it.²⁵³ That project focused on methods of obtaining ethically-clean data-sets for study of digital media and followed a CMC literature review of papers concerned with ethics in this field (Shortis et al 2011). This project informed the data collection methods used here and was a source of some data. It is beyond the scope of this study to report this in detail here but the core references and influences are cited in the footnotes and bibliography.

Removal of identifiable personal information

All data was cleaned to remove identifying details of name and usually of place following the methods set out by Tagg. Unique identifying numbers for each survey were linked to the quantitative outputs but with confidential information about the contributor's name, institution and email address rendered opaque to the researcher following data protection guidelines.

Principle of 'informed consent' and texts in the public domain

The principle of informed consent was applied to all data collection with participants being introduced in detail to the purposes of the study and the use of their contribution. This was done verbally and in writing when the person was met and in a lengthy written introduction in the online survey which had to be read and approved before the survey could be entered. The study uses a number of texts in the public domain with permission sought for use in the context of public examination papers.

Principle of reducing burden of intrusion

There has been a policy of 'data burden economy' - of taking as little as necessary in the scale of SMS data collection in relation to individual participants' lives in a decision taken to source the textual data in small packets of three or four messages from a relatively large number of people, rather than relying upon larger collections from a small number of respondents. It was believed that the data collection would be found less intrusive in this approach.

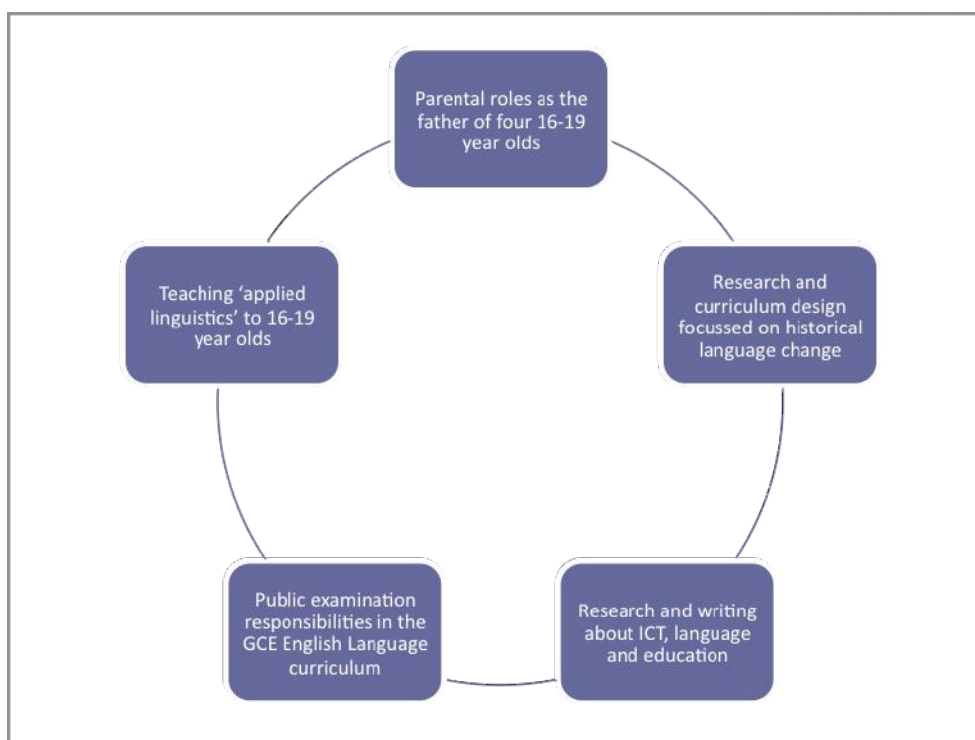
Similarly there is a limited representation of excerpts from SMS text messages and interviewee transcripts beyond short exemplifying samples in the appendices and the speech bubble quotations. The more limited representations of SMS in the 150 and 250 wordlists are thought adequate in the context of these particular research questions, which are about general patterns of orthographic choice. There is a loss of some of the contextual information as a result of the adoption of the <NAME> or <NAME WITHHELD> substitution used in place of substituting names individually with other proxy or false names. The personal names inevitably suggest

features of the linguistic, social and ethnic diversity of the participants and sometimes ‘give off’ information about other socially relevant dimensions. The ethical benefits of such a measure were deemed more important.

Verification, replication and development of comparisons in future research

This study captures a particular data-set of early adopted SMS text messaging which will not become available again. In common with other studies, the ethical procedures used are such that this data has the status of private data. With some exceptions such as the SBC 200 material, messages cannot be accessed by people other than the original researcher. That data-set and questionnaire used to elicit that material have both been re-used in language investigations, mainly at school level (e.g. Shortis 2008). The online questionnaire continues to be available on a number of websites including teachersurvey.co.uk. This allows students re-use the questionnaire or versions of it.

The researcher's occupational context



Researcher roles and contingent access to sites of data collection

This study initially emerged out of the occupational context of working as a college teacher and manager, before moving into roles in educational research, curriculum design and assessment, and making web-based learning designs. A sabbatical scholarship in 1998 paid for a term's study leave to prepare the literature review for an introductory textbook focused on the relationship between language and ICT. The teaching role, 1991-2001, and the role as a Head of English in a 'sixth form college', provided the original research problem, along with the context, and the site, for the first round of data collection at that college in 2000. In the context of teaching about 100 students at any one point over ten years, mobile phones in general and text messaging in particular, seemed salient for the rapidity of their diffusion and their valuing by young people. The sociolinguistic approaches to language study fostered by teaching the Advanced level English Language curriculum did not immediately seem to offer students the conceptual apparatus to make sense of these experiences of rapid social linguistic and semiotic change, and corresponding changes in literacy practices, including the orthographic dimensions of these. In 2000 three students wrote 3,000-4,000 word dissertations on the spellings they had collected in small corpora of text messages (Akers, Norris) while another wrote an article on *Internet Relay Chat* (Stevenson 2001). Their insights, experiences, successes and difficulties constituted initial impetuses for this research.

Public examining and assessment roles as a senior examiner and later Chief Examiner of the AQA GCE English Language course for 16-19 year olds²⁵⁴, provided the professional context for many one-off visits to other schools and colleges, including those selected for the college-

based questionnaires and interviews. Most sites were known to the researcher and had been visited in other capacities as a teacher or examiner going back to before the start of empirical collection. Such experience also provided the context for the selection of a representative collection of SMS samples for setting in data-sets used in public examination papers focused on register variation, early language and literacy, and language variation and change over time from 1500, with the follow-on perspectives drawn from the assessment of answers in the examination process (Shortis and Jewitt 2005). Several of the texts and data-sets drawn from such sites have acted as focussing examples in this study²⁵⁵, as indicated in the footnotes and Appendix X.

The writing and research involved consultancy roles as an external language consultant for the British Library learning team in the *Texts in Context* project, and its website, provided extended supported access to library and archive collections of early printed and manuscript materials. (2003-2005) in a range of popular genres over time, especially the agentive focus on the designs of earlier lexicographers in early codification in dictionaries for the site *How Do You Mean?* and the British Library *Texts in Context* sub-site *Dictionaries and Meanings*, which samples dictionaries of English from their early seventeenth century origins to 2005. These experiences built on earlier teaching and assessment of historical language variation and change and in conjunction with work using the *Oxford English Dictionary* with school students, sensitised the researcher to working with a longer historical perspective. Other research roles gave access the application of conceptual frameworks used in the methodology and analysis here but applied elsewhere. There was also an extended period of related work as lead consultant on the British Library learning team's *English Language and Literature Timeline* and on the earlier stages of preparation for the *Evolving English* exhibition (2008-2010; Blake and Shortis 2009). These experiences provided many opportunities for situating contemporary varieties in their provenance and relationship with older texts and their genres. The typology of SMS orthographic choice used in the earlier part of this thesis was adapted from a literature review undertaken in preparation for Shortis 2001 which presented an overview of the language and digital technologies field and which also reported on the discrepancy between the news media-reported claims about new media language and the documentary actuality, schematised in this study in the data descriptions termed RealTxt and PopTxt.

The three year role as a researcher working on the ESRC TLRP InterActive project required data collection and other fieldwork in ten different schools and colleges covering age ranges from seven to nineteen (January 2001- December 2003). Two of the classroom interventions examined issues relating to teaching and learning about language variation and change over time, including the standardisation and codification of English spelling. That experience enabled the researcher to situate the previous localised and specialised experience gained from teaching in one 16-19 Bristol college over ten years into broader patterns of perspective relating to the subject discipline curriculum, educational sites in Bristol and the informal literacy practices

featuring students' home environments, including the attendant vernacular digital dimensions of those. Much of the theorisation, methods and approaches used in this were adapted and developed from that experience and its attendant formation in ESRC TLRP programme of training and development.

Parenting four teenagers over the earlier period of this study afforded many opportunities for field-related observation: these young people and their peer-group could be observed making patterned but differential appropriation of new media and frequently also offering ongoing commentaries on choices and rationales for choice. As for Kress in his studies of children's early meaning-making, this observational perspective functioned as a persistent prompt to check understanding of the patterns observed in the data being collected and analysed, in the shuttling between emergent theorisation and data observation described in research accounts of situated literacy; it also sensitised the research focus to the contextual and idiolectal factors underpinning orthographic choice as these young people also operated in the effortful accomplishment associated with the acquisition of schooled literacy, including the accomplishment of perceived competence in standard English spelling as evaluated in the vertical discourse of schooling and testing. Some of the related-role experiences as a researcher on the ESRC TLRP InterActive Education project consolidated this domestic perspective; in particular interviews with teachers and with children as young as eight showed people's capacity for narratising their autobiographical experiences of emergent orthographic identity as a subset of a broader sense of their literacy identity, and even narratising their new media experiences, or technobiography as a further subset; this enabling surprisingly detailed discussion of details of their own spelling choices justified by extemporised folk-linguistic theorisation (Shortis & Sutch 2001, Robertson *et al.* 2004).

Generally, the context of the varied professional roles followed in the part-time conditions under which this thesis has been produced has influenced the study's duration, its attention to verification by considering findings in the light of the perspectives offered by respondents about the object of study, with a stronger focus of the application of educational implications of the enquiry in pedagogical designs than might otherwise been the case.

A layered typology of forms of respelling, their motivations and effects

As might be expected of spellings extemporised by their innovators without great regard for the niceties of linguistic propriety, respellings in SMS and related digitally-mediated vernaculars may take more than one form of motivation, with derivation originating in innovations which combine orthographic particles based upon different kinds of linguistic and orthographic principle (e.g. Crystal 2008, Tagg 2009), or from different script systems in the case of multilingual mixing (Lee 2007; Lam 2009; Sebba et al 2012). They may also mean with multi-accentual polysemy including recruiting affiliation from some imaginary audiences and alienating others.

For example, in the case of <2moz> for the standardised English spelling <tomorrow>, the letter homophone substitution <2> for <to> appears to be used in combination with a form of vernacular letter string substitution found in hypocoristic and diminutive forms of English forenames:

<Barry> becomes <Baz> or <Bas>;

<Sharon> could become <Shazza>, although this may be pejorative ;

Famously, Paul Gascoine the footballer was known by the tabloid press as <Gazza>.

By analogy,

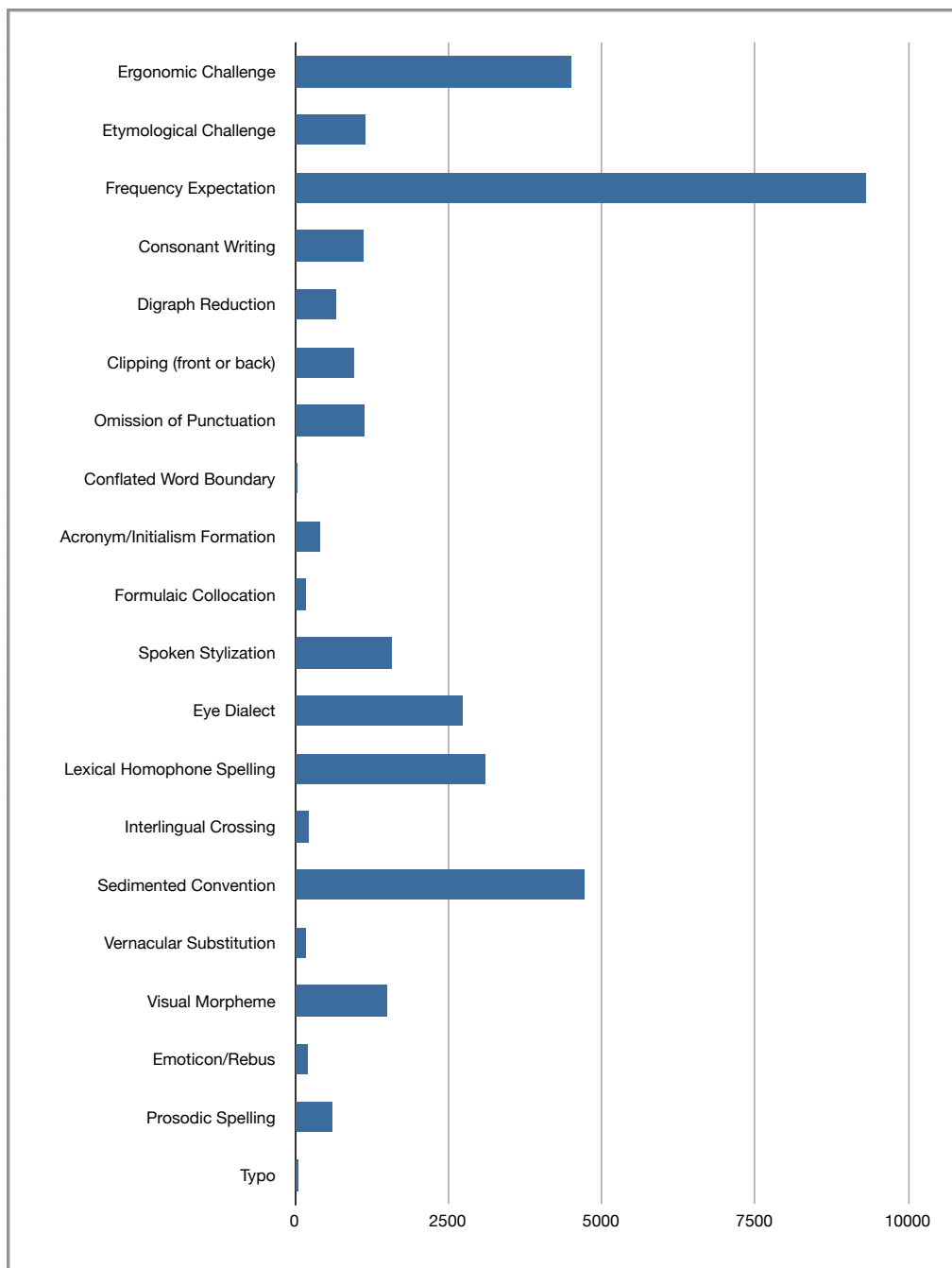
<tomorrow> becomes <tomoz> or <2moz>;

<sorry> becomes <soz>, although the latter with some claimed shift of nuance in what Sebba terms the ‘zone of social meaning’.

The respelling <2moz> may also be motivated by the length of the standard spelling based on its formation in the compounded etymology of <to> and <morrow>, with <morrow> now infrequent or even obscure as a free morpheme and independent lexical item. Then there is the lamination of the difficulty of entering <tomorrow> on a phone-pad and the likely situation of having to do so with frequency in an interactional medium form often used to focus on temporal aspects of social arrangements. Some respondents will also show a marked dispreference for such innovative forms, as shown by attestation data and comments in the questionnaires and interviews. The table on the next pages is an excerpt of a spreadsheet used to codify over 900 forms of the 150 Word-Group list of words attracting some level of respelling in the RealTxt corpus. This exercise was attempted in order to show a weighted distribution of the types of respelling in circulation in actual situated SMS. The table is not easy to read so that the various configurations of motivation and effect can be seen for each variant. The numerical totals of distribution in the typology figure allows a demonstration of the contrast between actual patterns of respelling and the types of respelling found in the PopTxt corpus of meditated representations illustrated in Appendix V for Chapter 5.

Word 2 / 2	Potentials for respelling in normative standard forms				Text entry reduction methods					Grapheme Substitutions			Cultural Allusion			Paralinguistic Restitution				Type
	Erpographic Challenge	Eymological Challenge	Situational Likelihood	Consonant Writing	Digraph Reduction	Clipping front or back	Elision of Punctuation	Conflated Word Boundary	Initialism formation	Key Blinding	Fonetik Spoken Stylization	Eye Dialect	Lexical homophone spelling	Interlingual Crossing	Sedimented Convention	Vernacular Substitution	Visual Morpheme	Emolicon /rebus	Prosodic spelling	
TOTAL COUNT	4504	1137	9311	1110	662	958	1127	42	407	181	1569	2731	3102	226	4720	177	1497	204	598	49
You	1972	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
U	1365	1365	0	1365	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1365	1365	0	1365	0	0	0	0	0
YOU	507	507	0	507	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	507	0	0	0	0	0
YA	64	64	0	64	0	0	0	0	0	0	64	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
YU	9	9	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
YOUU	8	8	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ti	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	8
YEW	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
YEWV	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
YOOO	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
YOOOU	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
CHOO	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
TOI	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
UA	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
YOO	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
YOOOOOO	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
YOOU	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
YOUUU	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
YPU	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Y	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
X	1497	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Coding of variant forms of <you> to show relative weighting of motivation.



Multi-motivated, multi-accentual dimensions of SMS respelling

252 See Tagg 2009 and especially 2012 for discussion of issues around anonymizing SMS corpus data

253 See Shortis, Blake, Andon 2011 and Shortis, Blake, Smith, Smith 2011 for CMC ethics.

254 JMB, NEAB, AQA B, (1995-2006) the originator and largest of the GCE English Language syllabuses and specifications.

255 AQA ENB 6 January 2003 and January 2005 as shown in Appendix X

Appendix V

Well I trust god he's guna do wts best for me cuz he doesn't wna c me being takin advantage of stressed out and nt respected nt appreciated nd held against my own will god luvs me too to hv pp lyk dt in my life [NAME] u hv just lost a frend hu has been dere 4 u ALWAYS nd lyk ova wt!!?? Jus becuz u dnt lyk wt u hear welcome to life [NAME]!! U hv jus fucked up a gd friendship for no reason.

Appendix V comprises exemplification of the mass-mediatised public commentary about SMS spelling of the sort exemplified in Chapter 5, figure 5.18. Such representations offer many points of contrast with the body of texts analysed in Chapter 5. . The data-set is patterned with the same kinds of example featuring frequently across the data-set, and generally not featuring much in the data-set collected from actual situated interaction. Squires has commented on the peculiar enregisterment of what she terms ‘internet language’ contrasting such mass-mediatised accounts with patterns observed in situated interaction (2010).

Selection, arrangement and structure of Appendix V

The following pages present a selection of images of earlier mass-mediatised popular coverage of SMS. This discourse was in frequent circulation when SMS was still a practice mainly localised to young people. Its antecedents can be found in comparable treatments of internet language and email in the 1990s in the UK and in other global settings. Such exemplifying representations of SMS orthographic choices and accompanying commentaries were to be found in journalism, SMS dictionaries and glossaries, and the more authoritative lexical lists and ‘lexipedia’ sources exemplified by the two glossaries presented by Crystal (2004, 2008). These are all illustrated below in facsimile form: a selection of text was scanned and digitised in a corpus termed *PopTxt* to distinguish it from the *RealTxt* corpus of data drawn from situated interaction and analysed in Chapter 6.

There are a number of research papers scrutinising the phenomenon of mass-mediatised coverage of SMS spelling, notably Carrington 2005 which works with a form of critical discourse analysis, and Thurlow 2006, which used *LexisNexis* to build a data-set showing the global syndication of the SMS homework text. Data drawn from materials exemplifying public sphere representations are examined in the course of Chapters 5 to 8, often to note the principle of patterned contrast in these artefacts by comparison data drawn from situated interaction. It appears that the data featuring in the public sphere is distinctively different in linguistic and semiotic choice reflecting a distinctively different semiotic economy in the requirement of a mass media market.

Crystal has observed that text messaging has attracted a singularly fractious reception in both public and private debate (2008:viii). It is difficult to consider text messaging spelling choice in isolation from its popular treatment and data from news reporting and related documentary features has featured in other studies (e.g. Spilioti 2006, Crystal 2008). Respondents in this study explicitly referred to the pressure of this discourse on their own and others’ evaluation of spelling choices. The images presented in this section illustrate those parts of the thesis which address research question 1 and the patterned contrast posited between actual SMS orthographic choice and as it was reported. This contrast can be summarised by the claim made in the thesis

that while situated SMS orthographic choice appears to be interpretable from context and is sourced in pre-existing common patterns to be found adapted from both standardised and vernacular spelling, mass mediated representation of SMS orthographic choice tends towards presenting SMS spelling as an opaque argot of insiders in the manner of a cant or antilanguage.

Dictionaries and glossaries of SMS

A search of the British Library catalogue showed eleven text messaging glossaries and dictionaries published between 2000 and 2003 including Mander 2001, the best selling book for under £5 in the year following its publication. Most take the form of lists of emoticon-rebuses and initialisms with translations. Mander's dictionary is claimed to be based on 'a file of text messages' and asks readers to send more examples. It was copied into the PopTxt corpus and was used as a source for items in the 'forty variables' table.

Some include simple guides to usage. For Example, Hardyman suggests new conventions for capital letters.

'If there is a long vowel sound in the word, you can indicate this by putting one of the vowel sounds in a capital letter

Double or repeated letters are also indicated by capital letters. For example, 'Better' becomes 'BeTa' ' (2003:5)

HARDYMAN, R. 2003. Valentine Txt Fun, Oxford, Oxford University Press (with Marks and Spencer PLC).

MANDER, G. 2001. wan2tlk?l tl bk of txt msgs, London, Michael O'Mara Books Limited.

ANONYMOUS 2000. Text Me: all the text messages you need for your mobile phone, Harmondsworth, Penguin.

ANONYMOUS 2001. The Joy of Txt, London, Corgi.

ANONYMOUS 2001. ltl bk of luv txt, London, Michael O'Mara Books.

ANONYMOUS 2001. litle bk of txt abuse, London, Michael O'Mara.



Figure V.i Novelty text messaging dictionaries from 2000, 2001, and 2003

14 METRO Wednesday, November 22, 2000

You too can talk text – NALOPKT (Not A Lot Of People Know That)

BY SUZANNE STEVENSON

ALMANACS may date back to ancient Greece – but one has finally succumbed to the modern cult of the mobile phone.

The latest edition of the Hutchinson Almanac has a glossary of text message abbreviations for the first time to try to end confusion over the symbols.

It details 46 phrases used by avid text fans such as NALOPKT, which stands for Not A Lot Of People Know That, and FOCL – Falls Off Chair Laughing.

Emoticons – symbols made from key-stroke combinations to convey emotion – also appear in the almanac, alongside the usual facts such as the tides and phases of the Moon.

The guide follows the publication last month of a mobile phone text message dictionary, WAN2TLK.

A spokesman for Hutchinson Almanac publisher Helicon said: 'This is an area of much confusion for people.'

About 500million text messages are sent each month, mainly by the under-30s.

KEY MESSAGES

Some of the abbreviations featured in the Hutchinson Almanac:

- BTDT** – Been There, Done That
- PMFJI** – Pardon Me For Jumping In
- CUL** – See You Later
- LCW** – Loud, Confident and Wrong
- WYSIWYG** – What You See Is What You Get
- DQM** – Don't Quote Me
- YHM** – You Have Mail
- FOCL** – Falls Off Chair Laughing
- TIC** – Tongue In Cheek
- TTFN** – Ta Ta For Now
- TTYL** – Talk To You Later
- LOL** – Laughing Out Loud
- GIGO** – Garbage In Garbage Out
- NALOPKT** – Not A Lot Of People Know That
- FUD** – Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt
- TPTB** – The Powers That Be




Figure V.ii Early print media coverage of SMS in an excerpt from Metro, a free daily newspaper, 2000

The original of the facsimile above was peeled from the wall display of a Bristol classroom in 2000 and is typical of the news media commentary collected and accessed by SBC students at that time as they sought to ground their perceptions about new media language and especially SMS in what they hoped would be more authoritative comment. The *Metro* article offers a guide to what it characterises as an ingenious digitally-mediated 'language' devised by young people. It exemplifies a similar pattern of mediated representations, seen before about the internet and

email and afterwards, for example, in the case of <L33t> , as typified by the CNN journalist quoted below (Shortis 2001;37,42). In common with many public accounts of this type, the SMS medium is represented as a ‘new language’ rather than a new form of spelling or word formation, and this claim is illustrated by a wordlist of initialisms and emoticons with an accompanying gloss for those not experienced in texting or versed in its lore. The piece straddles light-hearted humour with claims of offer authoritative comment. Reflecting the difficulty of accessing reference about any such new medium, the provenance of the ideas is presented as being sourced in a set of nested informational representations, each sourced from one another, and all tenuously connected with actual situated practice. These consist of

- 1) a wordlist and gloss, extracted from and illustrating
- 2) the newspaper account reporting some new coverage in
- 3) the popular knowledge compendium, the Hutchinson Almanac, which was in turn sourced from
- 4) Mander’s best-selling novelty dictionary (2000).



Figure V.iv Story in tabloid newspaper featuring the pupil's homework text, 'translation' and commentary, 2003

The image above presents Figure 5.18 as it usually appeared in news media, embedded within a graphical and discursive framework which offered a translation in higher register elaborated standard English for rhetorical contrastive effect, along with a commentary which construes moral panic (Cohen 1992). Such treatments are critiqued by Carrington 2005 and Thurlow 2006, 2007 and Squires 2010. The interest in this study is in identifying the patterned nature of linguistic and semiotic illustration found in such treatments, which arise out a differently

inflected socio-economic and semiotic economy from one fostered by localised dyadic interaction.

The school pupil homework was arguably the most widely circulated example of a text message in English in the earlier years of the decade following the introduction of text messaging in the UK. Although unrepresentative of the kind of material presented in this thesis and possibly apocryphal, the anecdote remains significant for its exemplification of digitally-mediated vernaculars being presented in public discourse as operating like a code of semiotic devices based on insider knowledge and secondary reference in glosses and guidebooks. For this reason this text is built into the empirical method used in this study and especially the schedules in the questionnaire and interviews used. It provided a focus for eliciting general aesthetic responses to its intricate innovations (page 7 of questionnaire); ten of the 40 lexical examples tested for attestation of experience and use were taken from it (see page 5 and 6 of questionnaire). It was routinely used as a focus for discussion in the interview schedule. It was also used as the stimulus material text for the role play based on an SMS dictionary filmed in the *Poke Message Tweet unit* in the *All Talk* materials featuring Appendix X and the data disk. The young people ignored its SMS context and caricatured it as an example of an ignorant and officious commentary on youth sociolect.

Lexical list of SMS terms taken from a private corpus in 2004

As with emoticons, many of the coinages used in Textspeak are never found in routine messaging, being artful creations devised just for fun to see how far this kind of approach can be developed. The system has not yet reached its limit, and is still accreting new abbreviations, so the following list, though representative, should not be seen as complete.

Receiving: Abbreviations to Meanings

?	what?
@	at
@coll, @Coll	at college
@hm, @HM	at home
@schl, @SCHL	at school
@wrk, @WRK	at work
1daful, 1DAFUL	wonderful
2	to, too, two
24/7	twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week
2b, 2B	to be
2bctnd, 2BCTND	to be continued
2d4, 2D4	to die for
2day, 2DAY	today
2g4u, 2G4U	too good for you
2ht2hndl, 2HT2HNDL	too hot to handle
2l8, 2L8	too late

Figure V.v From an 'A-Z of Textspeak' in Crystal 2004:171

Crystal's lexicons of SMS are of a different status to Mander or Stevenson's lists but overlap with those popular treatments. Few of their examples feature in Tagg's CorTxt or in this study's RealTxt. They are based on a private corpus. The examples offered by both dictionaries were word-processed and included as subcorpora in the PopTxt corpus and were scrutinised in the selection of the 'forty variables' Seen/Use instrument.

SMS abbreviations as glossed in a school diary for teachers in 2006

Useful Text Abbreviations			
@	At	KIT	Keep in touch
1	One	L8	Late
2	To, Too, Two	L8R	Later
2B	To be	LOL	Lots of luck
2DAY	Today	MAYB	Maybe
2L8	Too late	ME2	Me too
2MORO	Tomorrow	MMD	Make my day
2NITE	Tonight	MOB	Mobile
2U	To you	MSG	Message
4	For, Four	MYOB	Mind your own business
AAM	As a matter of fact	NE	Any
AFAIC	As far as I am concerned	NETHING	Anything
AFAIK	As far as I know	NE1	Anyone
AKA	Also known as	N01	No one
ASAP	As soon as possible	NRN	No reply necessary
ATB	All the best	OTOH	On the other hand
ATM	At the moment	PCM	Please call me
B	Be	PLS	Please
BCNU	Be seeing you	PPL	People
BHL8	Be home late	PS	Post script
BWD	Backward	PUKS	Pick up kids
B4	Before	R	Are
---	---	RR	Rate

Figure V.vi SMS abbreviations as glossed in a diary for schoolteachers in 2006

This text messaging glossary is in the part of the *Letts* schoolteacher diary offering its audience aide memoires for specialised information they may need for their professional role. As with the other novelty lexicons, many of its items are hard to find in corpus data. It is not easy to see how this translated list might have been found helpful in practical terms and it is probably better viewed as an entertaining topical diversion. It was copied into the PopTxt corpus.

TES coverage of SMS spelling in examinations in 2007

Txts r gr8 but not in exams

Article | Published in TES Newspaper on 9 February, 2007 | By: Irena Barker

- **Last Updated:**

11 May, 2008

- **Section:**

Article

Texting Is Nothing New: We Have A Tradition Of Shorthand Language.

Throughout history we have communicated in codes, using everything from smoke signals to Morse and the telegram.

And until the arrival of the text message in the public domain in 1992, there was little concern about the destructive effect these systems might have on "proper" written English.

Now the huge popularity of text and email slang among young people is being widely blamed for slipping standards of literacy.

The Scottish Qualification Authority's announcement last year that children would not be marked down for using "textisms" in their exam answers has further fuelled the debate. But does it really damage a pupil's ability to write a grammatically correct history essay if they are addicted to txtng their m8s all day?

Tim Shortis is carrying out a PhD in text messaging as a vernacular language at London university's Institute of Education, studying 600 texts written by Bristol teenagers. He said that abbreviations, emoticons such as :) (smile) and other well-publicised features of text slang are used far less than popularly believed.

He said: "There's a moral panic about young people and language, a populist alarm. But the examples you see in the media are rarely used. You get initialisms such as LOL for laugh out loud and letter and number homophones such as r and 2, but they are not as widespread as you think. There are also remarkably few casual misspellings."

The abbreviations common to texting are nothing new, he said. The use of the letter u to stand for the word you was first recorded in 1897 on the "U need a biscuit" cookie brand.

Mr Shortis, a former chief examiner for English language A-level at the exam board AQAB, said he had rarely seen textisms used in A-level papers.

But examiners had seen them crop up at GCSE.

He said: "Between 11 and 16, children often change their language to express their social difference or identity. Using text message abbreviations in exam answers is the verbal equivalent of wearing a hoodie."

"If I saw one on a paper, I wouldn't be particularly impressed, but it wouldn't make a critical difference."

Dr Crispin Thurlow, a researcher in language and communication at the University of Washington in Seattle, highlighted a study of 135 19-year-old students at Cardiff university. Researchers gathered 544 of their recent text messages: only 20 per cent used abbreviations. And, to the delight of English teachers everywhere, 35 per cent contained the correct use of apostrophes.

Dr Beverly Plester and Dr Clare Ward, psychologists from Coventry university, showed in a recent study that it was children with high literacy abilities who were more likely to use abbreviations and other textisms in messages. English teachers and literacy campaigners are in two minds about the texting phenomenon: some see it as an irritation, and others as an opportunity.

Ian McNeilly, a secondary English teacher for 12 years and director of the National Association for the Teaching of English, said: "I don't think text message and MSN messenger styles are a sign of declining standards, but changing literacies. Children are usually capable of differentiating between the two."

But Mr McNeilly said he sees textisms in school written work all the time.

"I have to explain that it just isn't appropriate. Some genuinely don't know the difference."

"You are getting some children whose major use of language is through texting and computer messaging more than writing."

Even the Queen's English Society, preservers of traditional grammar and spelling, seems resigned to the onward march of textese. Michael Plumble, its outgoing chairman, said textisms were acceptable in the same way as the telegram, which also changed the English language, to convey messages quickly, or in secret.

"Textisms are an eroding force but you can't stop it happening, he said."

"But children should never be allowed to use textisms in their school writing."

Join the debate on this topic on our website www.tes.co.uk/section/staffroom/have_your_say

Figure V.vi Times Educational Supplement coverage of SMS spelling in 2007

This article probes the claim that SMS respellings were leaking into pupils' work in public examinations and typifies a common trope whereby SMS spelling is causing youth illiteracy. These claims are examined in the questionnaire schedule. For a commentary on this story see Crystal 2008;155.

CNN news feature broadcast warning about <Leetspeak> in 2008

<<Boy, I mean, text messaging, instant messaging, e-mail chat rooms, kids today are practically born wired and they've also developed their own online language dubbed "leetspeak." It looks like this. Obviously it's not meant to be understood by everyone. Look at this. This is what it says. What may appear to be random symbols and numbers is really online lingo used by teens to hide messages from their parents. There it is. For most kids, "leetspeak" is just for fun. Typically it's nothing more elaborate than acronyms for common expressions. For example, nearly everyone knows that LOL means laugh out loud, but Internet safety experts say parents should understand that certain "leetspeak" acronyms are red flags that an online chat is moving into dangerous territory. Del Harvey is with PervertedJustice.com, a Web site that polices chat rooms for sexual predators. She joins us from Los Angeles to explain some of the top "leetspeak" terms that savvy parents should be aware of and we should mention that Del is not her real name. Del, good to see you.>>

Figure V.vii Transcript excerpt from alarmist CNN news feature broadcast from 2008 taken from the CNN site

There is a history of transgressive orthographic innovations in orthographic choice and script systems which can be traced back to the rebuses and related arcane conventions of those accessing digitally-mediated interaction in the 1970s and 1980s with a common stereotyping of new media as a world of opaque subcultural communicative practices as practised by hackers (e.g. Nelson 1987, Raymond 1996). Such language is sampled below in two examples from L337, or Leetspeak, a hacker subgenre then diffusing into gaming communities. These data were drawn from from a small scale study undertaken by a college student in 2008. It seems that mass-mediated public discourse sometimes characterised routine interaction in routine digitally-mediated vernaculars such as SMS as being sourced in esoteric and subcultural interaction such as L337. The manner and degree of such representation is problematic, and especially when it leaches into accounts written by scholars and educational material based on that scholarship.

Teh/	The (Intentional misspelling).	Mockery of a person's poor typing skills.
T3h	"BigPimpin94 is teh haxor!!!11"	
Woot/ w00t	Acronym for 'We Own the Other Team'. Also used as an exclamation of happiness/excitement. "I just bought a new kite." "w00t w00t!!!11"	Originates from online gaming.

Figure V.viii Examples of more obscure subcultural choices from a small scale study of l337 (<leet>) (2008)

Jocular tabloid representation of SMS research in 2009

You have 1 new PhD in text messaging...



[metrowebukmetro](#) Thursday 6 Aug 2009 6:25 pm

Dr Caroline Tagg: omg u hav a phd :-)

Some of us worry that degrees are getting dumbed down – but now we have a PhD that has been thumbed down.

A postgraduate has been awarded what is thought to be the country's first doctorate in text messaging.

Dr Caroline Tagg spent three-and-a-half years tapping out an 80,000-word thesis about SMS texts and their language.

She asked friends and family to send her their messages and ended up poring over 11,000 texts, containing 190,000 words, sent by 235 people. And she came to a surprising conclusion. 'Actually, not many people use abbreviations,' said the Birmingham University academic, 33.

In fact, many texts are 'pointless and waffly', such as the enlightening: 'Hi. I know you are at work but I just wanted you to know I found my pen lid.'

And fears that 'text speak' is harming our ability to use language are unfounded, she insisted.

'People use playful manipulation and metaphors. It is a playful language. Not only are they quite creative, it is also quite expressive,' she added.

Tutor Prof Sue Hunston – who admits she cannot text – said: 'Every stage of the English language has been studied. Now Caroline has studied its use in texts.'

Dr Tagg is now going through teacher training at Birmingham University and will be starting an academic post with the Open University in September.

But it seems she is hooked on her subject and hopes to continue by studying texts sent by children.

More



[Want to see what happens when you squeeze a 20-year-old spot?](#)

Figure V.ix Tabloid representation of SMS spelling research in 2009

Popular evaluative metadiscourse in news features sometimes took the form of mockery of SMS and related media forms as an object of enquiry in research. Some respondents noted this in interviews. The article above, from the free tabloid *Metro* offers a comparatively playful take on the trope of education and popular culture 'dumbing down' educational standards. For stronger treatments see Truss (various), Humphrys 2006, 2007.

Tabloid reporting of microblogged personal message



Figure V.x Example of SMS orthographic choice (Twitter) embedded in public sphere tabloid journalism in 2012.

'Searchable speech' in the melding of public and private domains

The facsimile excerpted above is from the same free newspaper, *Metro*, which sourced the stories from 2000 and 2009 cited earlier in the chapter. The spelling choices in this facsimile image above from a newspaper in 2012 are analysed in Chapter 5. The news article combines a human interest story with an implicit observation about the elaboration of digitally-mediated vernaculars into new domains. The grieving footballer's words appear to have been copied directly from 'tweets', using the particular affordance by which a message can be accessed on a mobile phone connected to the web; this would not have been possible with an SMS message in 2002. Like early texting on phones, microblogging bandwidth restricts packet size and message length, with implications for conventionalised choices of shortened forms. It is also likely the original messages were composed on a mobile phone.

As the study reported in this thesis progressed and text messaging and related forms diffused into wider participation, news media commentary developed a more realistic representation of orthographic choice in digitally-mediated vernaculars. Public discourse such as newspapers

routinely included readers' comments text messaged directly and cited without commentary in the forms they were sent in. Newsmedia stories were sourced in the searchable interactive data afforded by microblogging sites and especially *Twitter*.

Surveying mass-mediatised coverage over time

The image on the next page was devised by an undergraduate student. It juxtaposes a chronology of mass-mediatised articles about SMS texting and its spelling in the public sphere with the statistical levels of SMS activity gleaned from the THEMADA data, as reported separately in Figure 1.2. The digital PDF version can be enlarged and read in detail on screen.

[illegible]

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Appendix VI

ver u. 1Jon4:8, luv bro (name) ur brova in CHRIST JESUS 107
c u bbe x x cal me afte u dne ur work yea x x 109 I LOVE U!
(name) Xxx 288 hey babes, hows ur day goin? Im bored n tired
ood!wheyhey only few days till ur at mine.u havin lazy day2d
ain 2nite? we.ll make it worth ur while! x x x x x x x x x
on? x 207 im k howz u? how was ur day? tb xx 208 Arg did you
to? xx 211 omg gossip! pick up ur fne rgin in wivheld! X x
d! And its stopped rainin now. ur jus a wimp! Lol! Xxx 297 W
2c how u r. its bin ages. hpe ur ok love u x 302 The gorill
later or tomo x 294 Hiya. Hope ur having a good wkend.hava w
u, we thought u were goin wiv ur house mates. We wil go2 th
resent yesterday. Am I comin 2 ur dance show on fri? Tb love
. wher is ur (place) n wt tysms ur (place)? Tb x 103 i no u d
uld do 4 u 2 4giv me 104 u and ur constant air tym viia text
m bt i myt start stil. wher is ur (place) n wt tysms ur (plac
r yh, jus hurry up! am wit dat ur friend n 2nd year shes wai
se 4. Aint seen u in agez, hpe ur gdgd doh tb xAx 332 So wat
sh man in here at the mo. Hope ur okay honey cant wait til u
vin a nice time its officially ur birthday! Happy birthday p
t in the sky?'. 177 aha u fink ur so bludy funy! u in 2mo @9
o wts new wid u?X 112 kl b saw ur misd call, bare suprised u
p 2? Hws colege? Hope ur ok nd ur wel.x 105 Sorry my battery
t neway merry christmas to u n ur mum an squatta hav a nice
z i dnt really wanna so make up ur mind b X 753 ily im sooo b
bored :*(<3 x 785 hve u done ur geog hw 787 "hey darlin' u
xxx 256 Gimmie a txt wen ur on ur way ova hun! X x x 258 can
x 212 Hi (NAME), how's u hope ur fine today...R u feeling b
a tho xxx 256 Gimmie a txt wen ur on ur way ova hun! X x x 2
305 Hey hun hows ur planning 4 ur party goon? Wat u bin up2?
ty goon? Wat u bin up2?how was ur cousins wedding- or havnt
a catch up? X 305 Hey hun hows ur planning 4 ur party goon?
pe ur okay honey cant wait til ur home! Xxx 303 Safe and sou
ht mate, ope evryfins goin gd! Ur bk 4 xmas aint u? Rekon u
ITZ A SPESHAL SIM LOL. I HOPE UR GR8. X. OH YH DIS IZNT MA
u been up 2? Hws colege? Hope ur ok nd ur wel.x 105 Sorry my
s jus cal me wen u get dis hpe ur kl.mwah" 328 my nan went t
gud bbz? cald u da ova day but ur fne sed sumthin bout no in
o incomin cals, ges u dint pay ur bill den! neways jus cal m
t kno how 2 say it so wen ever ur free like holla at me so w
person. Anywayz im listenin 2 ur tune at da moment, it is g
sweetheart. 147 Heya ;-) hope ur havin fun. Jst thought i'd
ws u ?! Im all gdta!! hws ur wkend goin on ? wat u up t
its dat time of year agen wen ur fave persons bday is appro
ow. In reception 100 Hey. hope ur alrite. jus checking on u.
nd u sumtyme, i dont know wot ur finkin or feeling. I think

Appendix VI offers nearly forty pages of the corpus data analysed mainly in Chapter 6 and includes tables of the full 250/150 **Word-Group** data-sets arranged so these can be compared with the equivalent reporting in Tagg's appendices (Tagg 2009:360).

Structure of Appendix VI

Appendix VI provides additional illustration for Chapter 6, which presents analysis of SMS orthographic choice on the basis of corpus attestation based principally on a 26,000 word selection of the 37,000 word RealTxt corpus in conjunction with the 'forty variables' Seen/Use instrument. The appendix is designed to give the reader a closer idea of the kind of textual data that was collected and how and why it was processed and presented in the way it was.

This appendix consists of:

Appendix VI.i) samples of SMS textual data from each of the sites which make up the corpus accompanied by a *WORDLE* automated graphical collage representation indicating some approximation of frequent patterns of respelling in the subcorpus.

Appendix VI.ii) The RealTxt 250 Table: the 250 most frequent headwords/Word-Groups in the RealTxt corpus (including those without respellings);

Appendix VI.iii) The RealTxt table: the 150 most frequent spelling headwords and Word-Groups (excluding words which are not respelt)

Appendix VI.iv) Three 'bird's eye view' enlarged graphical representations of the tendency to respelling in frequently occurring words including descending order of frequency, tendency to variation in descending order of frequency of that variation, and linear scale of level of word and variation, as generated automatically from spreadsheet data;

Appendix VI.v) Various representations of the 'forty variables' attestation instrument results based on 823 responses;

Appendix VI.vi) various results for orthographic types identified in the **PopTxt** corpus.

Processing and presenting the *Real Txt* corpus

The *RealTxt* corpus was compiled by two main procedures. Between 2000 and 2006 16-19 year old college students at SBC, SCS and SLS copied small selections of SMS messages from their phones in response to paper-based questionnaires and data-collection invitations in discussion seminars. There were transcribed in word-processed files in character-by-character transliterations. All other text message data came from the data-bases storing questionnaire results or from text message data which the respondents were invited to copy on to paper character-by-character from their phones. In both cases students were asked for just three of their messages and to avoid material which was sensitive or personal in nature or which they did not wish to share in this research. The cleaning and processing of the data broadly followed the

procedure set out by Tagg (2009, 2012). All text message data were treated to remove identifying information of place or name.

The text files produced were processed by the WORDLIST application in Wordsmith Tools (Scott 1995) to generate text string frequency lists. These were then exported into spreadsheet applications²⁵⁶ and categorised by manual coding using the Word-Group classification typology developed by Tagg. The manual coding focused on headwords by comparison with normative spellings of those headwords, and with the addition of non-alphabetical characters such as numbers and symbols as used in emoticons and number spelling lexical substitutions, for example. Spellings and respellings on the text string frequency list were classified by normative spellings and others and all were checked and counted by keyword in context list (KWIClist) using the Wordsmith Tools application of CONCORD in searches, which have been saved. The Wordsmith Tools application KEYWORD was used to verify the overlap between the PopTxt corpus word frequency list processed from mediated representations of SMS orthographic choice and the RealTxt data drawn from situated interaction. There was little evidence of cross-corpus attestation between these different types of data-set provenance. The RealTxt data were then processed and arranged in a modification of the tables Tagg presents in her appendices and samples in her monograph. This enabled comparison of frequency order, levels of respelling and types and tokens of respelling between these two data-sets.

The data was processed and arranged in a spreadsheet enabling semi-automated generation of the charts featuring in **Appendix VI;iv)** and **Appendix VI;vi).**

Appendix VI.i) Samples of SMS textual data and accompanying WORDLE representations from each of the data collection sites featuring in the text message corpus

Samples of SMS textual data from each of the sites which make up the corpus accompanied by a *WORDLE* automated graphical collage representation indicating some approximation of frequent patterns of respelling in the subcorpus.

SBC Sample

Hey sorry I didn't give ya a a bell earlier hunny, just been in bed but mite go 2 the pub l8tr if u wana mt up? loads a luv (Name)xxx.	GRAN ONLY FOUND OUT A FEW DAYS AGO.CU SOON HONI	Hey (Name)! r u feeling any better, hope	HEY HEY WERE THE MONKEES PEOPLE SAY WE MONKEY AROUND! HOWDY GORGEOUS, HOW U DOIN? FOUND URSELF A JOB YET SAUSAGE? LOVE (Name) XXX	HEY DAS COOL... I KNOW ALL 2 WELL DA PERIL OF STUDENT FINANCIAL CRISIS! SPK 2 U L8R.
ALRITE HUNNY! WOT U UP 2 2NITE? DIDNT END UP GOIN DOWN TOWN JUS DA PUB INSTEAD! JUS CHILLIN AT DA MO IN ME BEDROOM! LOVE (Name) XXX.	HI BABE U AWAKE?FEEL LIKW SHIT.JUST FOUND OUT VIA A LETTER THAT (Name) GOT MARRIED 14th DEC.BEHIND OUR BACKS – FUCKIN NICE! SELFISH,DEVIO US BITCH.ANYWAY, I'L CALL U	HEY BABE! FAR 2 SPUN-OUT 2 SPK AT DA MO... DEAD 2 DA WRLD. BEEN SLEEPING ON DA SOFA ALL DAY, HAD A COOL NY THO, TX 4 FONIN HON, CALL 2M WEN IM BK FRM CLOUD 9! (Name) X	YEH, SHE SHUDVE TOLD U. DID UR GRAN KNOW? NEWAY, ILLSPEAK 2 U 2MORO WEN IM NOT ASLEEP...	Hi darlin i cantdo anything tomorrow as my parents are taking me out for a meal. when are u free? (Name)xxx
What are you doing later? (Name)xxx	ny boy where are you me and all your friends are in the whitehart come down if you can love (Name)	(Name) can you please ring me ive hardly got any credit	CAN I PLEASE COME UP NOW IM IN TOWN.DONT MATTER IF UR GOIN OUT L8R,JUST REALLY NEED 2DO CD.PLEASE DON'T PLEASE DON'T IGNORE MYCALLS,U NO THE CD IS V.IMPORTANT TO ME 4 2MORO	Ill be at yours in about 3 mins but look out for me
Me too! Have a lovely night xxx	Now u sound like manky scouse boy (Name),like! I is travelling on da bus home.wot has u inmind 4 recreation dis eve?	R U &(Name) C IN EACHOTHER. IF WE MEET WE CAN GO 2 MY HOUSE	Sary just need (Name) in the bollox &it hurt him a lot so he tol me!	IM FINE BABES AINT BEEN UP 2 MUCH THO! SAW SCARY MOVIE YEST ITS QUITE FUNNY! WANT 2MRW AFTERNOON? AT TOWN OR

SCS Sample

Hi stinky! how u feelin? hope ur beta! do u wana go out this sat, a girly nite at the pub with me & (Name)? itll b fun! we need a nite out just us & mayb mel! tmb (Name) x	Hi m8! Wot time shall I come round? Wot time is (Name)? We can arrange buses when i get there they r quite regular! tmb love (Name) x x x x	IM STILL HERE AND STILL BORED!!!!!!!!!!!!!! IM GONNA DIE IN A MINUTE!!!!!! HELP ME	Still at (place). Will be busy but will not be out like last weekend! (place) is good. Cold though. How about (place)?	HELLO YOUNG (Name)! IM SORRY I NEVATXT U BCK, I USUALLY HAVE NO CRED OR IM 2 LAZY! HOW R U? (place) IS BORING BUT COLLEGE IS GOING WELL @ THE MO! WHEN R U HOME? (Name) xx
GOIN OUT WITH MY MUM TYPE GOIN OUT. BUT TXT ME ON SUNDAY, & WE'LL ARRANGE SUMTHING! CANT TXT 2MRW, GOT A HUGE FAMILY XMAS DO, BUT I CAN TXT U ALL DAY SUN IF U LIKE! x	HELLO (Name)! IM HOME & U HAVE MY UNDIVIDED ATTENTION! NOW WOT WERE THOSE V INTERESTIN THINGS U HAD 2 TELL ME?!	NO, I GOT 1 TXT BUT I DON'T KNOW WOT @08 MEANS! SEND ME THE SECOND TXT AGAIN, I DIDN'T GET THE END OF UR STORY! *F*	HIYA! R U HAVIN A NICE DAY? I WUZ JUST THINKIN ABOUT U, THOUGHT ID SEND U A QUICK 1! IM SO BORED! SHALL I CUM OVA 2NITE? GIRLS NITE IN? GOOD PLAN? TMB	ID LOVE 2 READ IT! DON'T WANT 2 B IN IT THO! U MIGHT HAVE TROUBLE PERSUADING (Name) & (Name) 2!! ID LIKE 2 C (Name) IN A THONG THO! ER, MAYBE NOT ON 2ND THOUGHTS! *F*xxx
I don't know what time we'll be there. Its all three of us, but i don't know who'll be at the pub though.	GO ON! GIVE ME THE WORST! I CAN HANDLE IT! IM GONNA READ IT NEWAY ARENT I? YEAH, GO AHEAD! TELL ME THE GORY DETAILS!	Ok, its stupid o'clock, i am awake. And i have to be at work for nine. Oh my god. Have fun. See you soon.	Well done! Im totally snowed under with work but getting through it slowly. When do u finish college?	I was only jokin! Honest! I find it funny! I havent completed the final draft yet so maybe u have sum ideas4sum scenes?!
There was something I forgot to say to you last night: Sweet dreams.	I'm really sorry honey but i was asleep. I will however definitely call you tomorrow. Again i'm sorry. Lots of love hugs and kisses. (Name) xx	HI M8! DO U WANNA CUM OUT 2NITE? MEET ME @ COOP @ 7:30? CANT WAIT 2 HEAR ALL THE GOSS! (Name)xxx	YEAH RING ME @ HOME! ILL HAVE NO CRED LEFT IF I KEEP TXTN U! IM ON (NUMBER)	Sounds good- I break up on 14th so nxt week will be fine! Wot do u think I shud do bout (Name)?



SLC Sample

Hey .. U alwd2sty rnd (Name)s nxt sat? I rly dnt fink ma mum wil let me go!x	Ok im at (Name)s neway xx	Hi babe im 2ill 2talk ... jus txtin2say I gt ur mist cal..	Try not say bye 1nce again :-(I c how u stay	Oh yeah I mite b goin (Place) in June wit bare ppl 4rm wrk. Ma mum wz lyk 'yeah go go!' she sed it will be nice 4me...
U alite? Im nt feeln 2 wel but itz nufin. Hpe ur kool n ur nt stesn bout anytin xx	Lucky its wobblez ring me when your leavin I might be college stil	Wot u should be sleepin	Good morning (Name) how r u hope u feelin better. I miss u ()	I am stil here this guys r wastin my time. Listen if want to start goin dnt let me waste ur time ok
Hi gal, wat up?	Ok leave it 4 now.we just av 2 make sure dat she doesn't buy it herself. We can get it another x Thanks again 3 d mp3. Where r u heading 2 now	(Name) I luv u but ur a cupla dayz urlly my bdays on da 8th but dnt worri xxx did da same (Name)	Happy Birthday from the king himself	Il phone u at 5
Tell her2smallen hertoe	Yeh that's fine, dnt need 2 b so rude tho, dnt 4get im helping u	I sooo have to re watch that bit, we'll c it when I return. I know, that's such a highlight of the story. Sayin (Name) would have gladly had a threesome with us!	Yeh kool yeh me n him chat. Nuttin really changed. Erm (Name) i rang her 2day n she sed she jus bin ill n dat but na she aint left she'll b bk soon I guess.	(Name) whats happenin down there. monkeys playing? big ques? anyone else special playing? (Name)
Here me now! I am well up for it its been a while since we've had some full on rusty luvn, though em's been ill this week she might not be in the same mood...x	Haha what a joker! Have a wicked time twin sistah (hallejujah amen) much fun being avec toi this weekend. Mwah! X	Jus2let u no babes...My tings dis sat starts @ 8pm	Waguan wat u bin on? Yeh do u kno da college jumbo goes tb	Merry Christmas nd a happy new year!!!! Hope u enjoy urself 2day eat nd drink a lot. Tk cre of urself. (name) xx



Survey 00 Sample

What's ur eta?	Yeah twas good.	hope your day is not too bad. The thought of work sometimes is worse than the reality. Chin Up. And eat good and plenty fluids. C u 6.15. Love. (name).x x x	Cooooool c u then x x	quality il cal u afta i find out train times inabiz'
Hey (Name)! Last night was so much fun! Have you got (Name)'s number? Also can you ask (Name) and text me with what time it starts tonight? Xx""	Great. u can get 2 the 2nd half of the rehearsal then? x x x	Hello again - we may need a babysitter this Fri-any chance u r free? (Name)	Coach buddies? x x x x	Nah, must have been a mirage. He doesn't come out in the day. XxxX""
so complementary dinners!chortle! how's it hanging brother?nice day for once.did u go swimming? i've had texts from an unknown source.who is it?	We ok. (Name) says can u get (Name)?	Dunno, might see if my m8s wanna come.	I have just handed in all my art!! No more!!! (well til A2 but shush) yay way yay YAY! Joyous! I wantd everyond to share in my happiness! Love X	Dude do u have ure tickets for (place) yet? if not u wanna come get later? x
Yoyoyo bizach, whats guanin? ys u not REplying mans message of space, mans is RA offended! X	Haha while i'm in my lovely warm bed.... Doing nothing.... For the next 6 weeks..... Arrgh when are you back again? There's noone to mole super attack :(*sob* i may have to start being mature...""	Lol i just left a message at your house! Ive bin babysitting all morning and then doing it this after noon 2 : (Hows th not leaving the house and revising goin? Please tell me ur goin 2(Name)s shed?! I dont want2go any more! Lol Tb (name) cx x x x	Aw! Cor your goin to be rolling in the money after tody! Um its not goin too gd :(but at work i havent rely got anythin to do so im revisin! i havent booked my ticket yet but am probs goin2 hav 2 come home early tho so i can work thurs :(xxxxx"	Wel, think it went ok but therte r 2nd interviews so dnt no if il get thru to that! thanku so much 4 asking tho-means alot....Tb xxx"

S00 Wordle

back seat have wna time love hey said fine m8 with of much see am for been no all phone make she ive hav mum AT house any lol dad ask ok yeah and to got this Love but new Message Hey No I dayr tues xxx night ur yeh tomorrow from b fun in the get I dayr tues xxx 2day its go if will hi U you goin later work x Lol thats bin my can dis can there wot out Sorry was 2moro good ya on okay on had Well 2 I just at so me 4 da 3 tb how 6

Survey 24 Sample

Here now. In reception	Hey. hope ur alrite. jus checking on u. So wat u bn up 2? Tb if u cn xXx	skn am already der	(place) is fine bt its getin kinda tuff nw. Erm i dnt n wen im goin, wt wen r u goin? N hws (place) Tb x	yh bbz i am home now jus doin sum tings here n dere relyyy tired tho gna try do sum wrk tho, so im free 2morrow wot u on tho? Txt bk x x x x
Hey sweetie sorry im at work, no i think im gunna give it a miss as i dont feel too good and i may have to babysit, have a wicked night though xxx	(Name) IMO HOLLA AT U 2MORROW YH IM KINDA TIRED STILL. BUH NEWAY U AVE OFFICIALY BCUM MY JOKIN BUDDY! (name).	Well you just found me! Tada! I was at home feeling sorry for myself as i've lost my voice. But i'll be in tomorrow don't worry. x	my bredrins havin wun 4 er birtday already on sat. . . bt i duno if im goin doe. . .bt dats nt wat i want 2 do. . .i jus wana sleep	Wag 1 bbz its "(Name)". wat u been on? do u want 2 cum 2 my yard afta skl wid "(Name)" 2 watch a film? P.S Ask (name) n hola @ me. xx
wts really sxc? cnt stop tinkin bout me n u yday... hope u havnt 4gt my pres!!!	o ye 4got 2 tel u (name) askd me out!! Lool x	Lol cal me 2moro cozima go sleep lol x	ting is i got summin 2 say but dont kno how 2 say it so wen ever ur free like holla at me so we can talk init. Bless	Hiya. Hope ur having a good wkend.hava wickd nite tnite.wish i was coming! x
O god, listening to 'ever fallen in love' in the common room crying lmao god im hormonal and lonely	OMG, ive been rushin to do it for like ages x	Woo .I'm seeing you tonite! X x x luvoo	hey hws u ?! Im all gdta!! hws ur wkend goin on ? wat u up to these dayzz anywz u tc...bye	Atm only askedyou my m8 said he aint got no money atm but night go Who would you go like you m8s?
r u goin 2 town?	Bus station... 178... 8.01... i am waiting..... ..† .	sounds like a gd idea lol i was ded yd fel asleep in da car 2 rugby trainin lol (name) askd me 2 go shopin wid him but i sed i dnt no wt 2 get u lol tb love ux	sounds like a gd idea lol i was ded yd fel asleep in da car 2 rugby trainin lol (name) askd me 2 go shopin wid him but i sed i dnt no wt 2 get u lol tb love ux	its so pretty. I love fireworks hehe. Nahh i miss you wayyy more, and all week i havnt been able to stop thinking bwt you :s...xxxxx

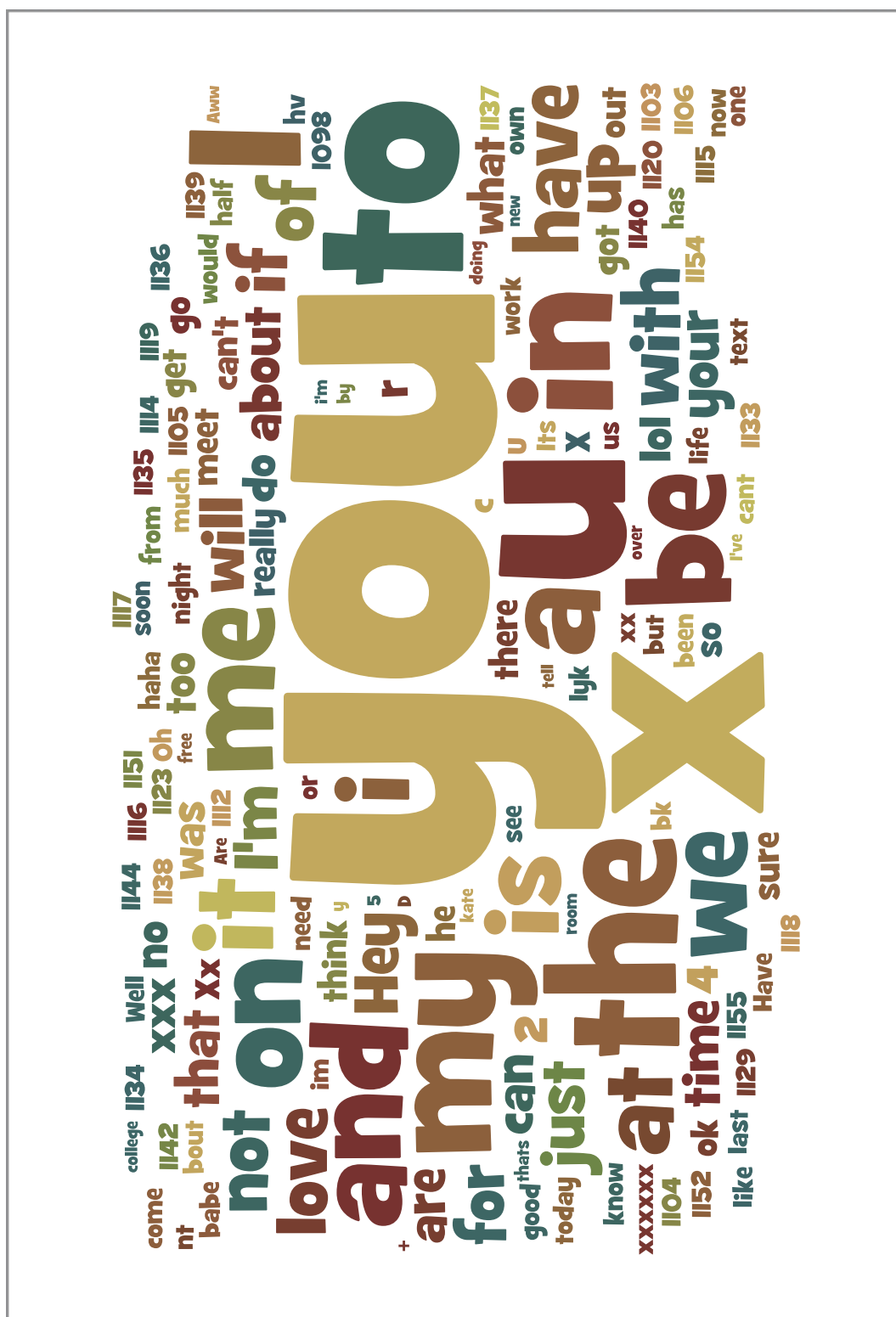
Survey 30 Sample

hey how is it going	:) How are you?	ye him in the library now top floor	No probs im ill anyway. ill see ya somewhen.	nah gt chemistry bt goin on thurs!
Dnt mind but we r getin drunk in (PLACE) but r getin the bus home bout 11.30. Xx ne thoughts	Home got da flu x	Hi babe jst so u kn wont needa lift hm goin 2tnw...thanx.x.	nuffin excitin. jus wrk n stuf lol. yer not bad thanku	(Name) is coming on Saturday isn't she.
Hiya.What are you up to?are you doing anything tonight?i've got college but i finish at 1. Text back xxx	Yeah it is good to see them. U should see how many pressies (name) sent! Hope the play is good! See you tomorrow xx	(Name) as jus txt me t say he as bin sacked!	LMAO!	How are you today?
hi (name) wat are you doing right know	hey wats up?	w r u	Dear (Name),It was a pleasure working with you. You are an amazing gentlemen, not at all conceited, and I admire your fine beard and your manly manner. You are quite the entertainer, and I would love to receive a textual message from you again.	Hey piss'ed, hav a gu nyt last nyt? Av u put them piks up am dieing to see then lol! tblyxXx
Hope youve stil got ur lil man tht apparently looks lyk one of the characters from monsters inc! =] i cant sleep, gay! xxxxx	hey wuu2?	i rushd outside n it was gone :-(c u l8ter	Coming Home
Hey! Just looking in waterstone and off 2 hmv. C u in hmv?	Can u get bread and milk?	You canbe too subtle for men! have a good new year	what are you doing	u 2 plz bring abi in
hey how are you?	ma m8s r cmin rnd so ill c ya l8er	hi wuu2?	Hey. gd thnx n you?	wer r u?



Survey 65 Sample

where u at?	Don't think u can use ur own at the lil one in (place). Love you xxxxxxxx	(Name)! why are u out on your own? Xxx	Lol okay. I know! Xx	is you at college today love (name) and (name) :)
You taking photos?Lawl	Hey, shall i meet you outside your class and are you in the science looking room? X x x	Alrite cheeky ;) howr u? r u goin tonight?? x x	"I'm doing work too! Please? X"	I lost the game. Now you have too. lol.
yh lol it is ok haha x	Hello! How lovely of you to think of me! Make up would be lovely! How about you lot? I'm on the train to london I start my new job tomorrow! Scared! X	I've boarded the trampoline. :) x	Wot time are you meeting us tomorro xxx love you x	2u2† to you too
Hahaha. U r welcome swthrt.	Oh ok, see you in a min :-) x	Hey! So nice 2 hear from u!hw r u?fanx so much 4 the txt.wel ave 2 meet soon wld be love! x x x	Love you night night	Okay cool how abt u?
Hey! Aww its okay I hope u get well soon. 2days lecture was one I think we all wouldn't have aced 4 if we missed it to be honest lol. Spk 2 u soon xxx	:(I slept over my alarm. Woke up at half past. Fuckkk :O	Not sure about the rectal, but he really sold it to Me dude. Apparently it goes REALLY well with (SUBSTANCE NAME DELETED). It's called (AS ABOVE, DELETED)and it's beautiful I'm told :)	Whatup blud what the plan for sevning?x	No im at work nevermind ill just put money on in a bit



Hypothetical sample: elicited in response to a hypothetical situation

Please enter the text you would use on a mobile phone, word for word and letter for letter, if you were texting a friend because you were going to arrange to see him or her the following night.

hey, hows it going? what you up to tomorrow night?
fancy doing smt?

U still ok for 2mrw? See you about 7ish.	Do you wanna meet up later? Could meet at (place).	hey, was wondering if ur free 2moz nite? xxxx	are we stil meetin up 2moro? if not let me kno (txt or phn me asap)	wt time we meetin lata?
Heeeey, what time u wanna meet 2moro night and where? xxxx	Yo bledrin you still on goin out on the raz 2mro nite? give me a ding when u get this, nuff love xxx	Hey! How you doing? Want to meet up tomorrow night? xxx	Where and when are we meeting tomorrow?	Hey, you wnna come out 2morow night?
safe mate how u doin? what r u thinking about 2moro night would you be on meetin up? tb or cal me. peace	Whats the plan for 2moz night? Love (Name)x	Hey, just checking that u r still on for 2mrw night? Let me know about times etc....hope ur good. xxxxxx	Hi, it's (name). Would you like to see me tomorrow? It would be nice to tear it up!	hey x did u wanna go out tomoro night about eightish? Hope you're ok! Tb x x x
Alright. What's happening in terms of tomorrow night? Give me a ring. (name)! X	Hey manz, how's it going? How do you fancy meeting up tomorrow night? xx	hi, u kl, wt u up 2 2moz, cuz im finkin bout meetin up n dat u kno, txt bk	Hey dude. You out tomorrow nyt cus apparently there's a party.. tb dudey..x x	hey...what are you up to tomorrow night? thinking about doing something. text back yo x'

Appendix VI.ii) The RealTxt 250 table and 150 table:legend for columns

A	the numerical place of the headword and word group in a rank order of descending frequency
B	the reference headword or word group
C	the frequency of that headword or word group in RealTxt
D	the percentage of RealTxt formed by that headword or word group
E	the number of respelt 'types' ¹⁰
F	the listing, in descending order of their frequency of occurrence, of standardised forms and 'competing variant' spellings, in descending order of frequency, including their numerical instantiation in 'tokens' (set out in parentheses);
G	the numerical place of the equivalent headword of word group in a rank order of descending frequency in Tagg's CorTxt;
H	the number of respelt types for the equivalent head word or word group in Tagg's CorTxt.
	Chapter 6 legend for WORD GROUPS.pages Friday, 3 October 2014 134 words

Table VI;ii and iii the columns of reporting in the 150 and 250 RealTxt Word-Group lists, adapted from Tagg

Appendix VI.iii) The RealTxt 250 Table

The 250 most frequent headwords/Word-Group (including those without respellings)

	WORD	Frq	%	Real Txt RS		Tagg #	Cortxt RS
TOTAL		2620		1114			491
1	YOU	1972	5.5	19	u(1365),you(507),ya(64),yu(9),youu(8),ti(2),yew(2),yeww(2),yooo(2),yooou(2),choo(1),toi(1),ua(1)yoo(1),yoooooooo(1),yooou(1),youuu(1),ypu(1),y(1)	1	6
2	X	1493	4.1	28	x(1021),xxx(175),xx(163),xxxx(35),xxxxx(34),xxxxxx(17),xxxxxxx(10),ux(6),xo(4)),xd(3),xxxxxxxx(3),xxxxxxxxxx(3),xox(2),xxxxxxxxxxxxx(2),xxxxxxxxxxxxxx(2),xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx(2),xax(1),xoxox(1),xoxoxoxox(1),xoxoxoxoxo(1),xxxw(1),xxxxxxxxxxx(1),xxxxxxxxxxxxxx(1),xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx(1),xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx(1),xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx(1),xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx(1),xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx(1),xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx(1)	4	8
3	I	868	2.4	1		3	1
4	TO	864	2.4	5	2(468),to(380),t(14),ta(1),tae(1)	2	3
5	THE	529	1.5	8	the(409),da(89),th(14),d(8),de(5),le(2),la(1),thee(1)	6	7
6	A	498	1.4	1		5	1
7	AND	449	1.2	3	and(270),n(157),nd(22)	7	6
8	ME	368	1	4	me(360),mi(6),meee(1),mwa(1)	14	1
9	I'M	367	1	3	im(297),i'm(69),iam(1)	24	2
10	ARE	354	1	3	r(208),are(134),ar(12)	16	3
11	IN	311	0.9	1		8	2
12	WHAT	306	0.8	9	what(103),wat(100),wot(76),wt(18),wht(4),wa(2),watt(1),wha(1),whaa(1)	41	3
13	IT	287	0.8	1		10	1
14	FOR	277	0.8	3	4(143),for(128),fo(6)	9	3

	WORD	Frq	%	Real Txt RS		Tagg #	Cortxt RS
15	UP	260	0.7	3	up(258),op(1),upp(1)	33	1
16	AT	260	0.7	2	at(224),@(36)	18	1
17	MY	256	0.7	2	my(236),ma(20)	19	1
18	LOVE	251	0.7	11	love(175),luv(56),lv(12),loadsaluv(1),lol ove(1),lolxx(1),loooooove(1),lov(1),love xx(1),luff(1),lve(1)	97	4
19	IS	251	0.7	2	is(246),iz(5)	12	1
20	SO	248	0.7	4	so(233),soo(8),sooo(6),soooo(1)	25	4
21	HEY	243	0.7	15	hey(195),heya(22),heyy(6),e'boro(5),ha y(3),haya(2),heyah(2),heey(1),heeyyaa(1),heyas(1),heyaz(1),heyhey(1),heyyy(1),ey(1),eyup(1)	75	1
22	HAVE	242	0.7	7	have(163),hav(44),av(15),ave(12),hv(5) ,hve(2),ve(1)	11	5
23	ON	236	0.7	3	on(233),oon(2),orn(1)	15	1
24	AN	230	0.6	1		124	1
25	SEE	229	0.6	3	c(132),see(95),se(2)	22	2
26	BE	229	0.6	2	be(136),b(93)	13	2
27	YES	223	0.6	12	yeah(69),yeh(39),yes(26),ye(25),yh(24), yea(17),yer(12),yep(6),yah(2),yeaah(1), yeahh(1),yup(1)	36	6
28	LOL	212	0.6	4	lol(207),lolz(3), ilol(1),lool(1),	n/a	n/a
29	JUST	209	0.6	4	just(137),jus(46),jst(25),js(1)	23	4
30	OKAY	203	0.6	11	ok(130),okay(26),k(20),kk(19),okies(2), akay(1),okai(1),okaii(1),okayy(1),okey(1),wocay(1)	n/a	n/a
31	EMOTICON	201	0.6	23	:(62),:-)(29),:((26),:P(16),:D(15),:)(9),:- ((8),:S(7),:-)(5),(: (4),:-D(3),:-))(2),:] (2),:- X(2),:O(2),:-O(2),:-*(1),:*(1),:[(1),:@(1):- P(1):-S(1)@-;-:(1)	n/a	n/a
32	BUT	195	0.5	3	but(160),bt(34),ut(1)	21	1

	WORD	Frq	%	Real Txt RS		Tagg #	Cortxt RS
33	GOOD	186	0.5	7	good(118),gd(53),gud(10),gdgd(2),gu(1),gurd(1),jigga(1)	20	4
34	OUT	176	0.5	2	out(174),owt(2)	46	1
35	IF	174	0.5	4	if(162),f(10),fi(1),iff(1)	26	1
36	THAT	171	0.5	5	that(107),dat(34),tht(17),th@(10),tha(3)	28	4
37	DO	171	0.5	1		31	3
38	TOMORROW	170	0.5	29	tomorrow(42),2moro(28), 2moz(27),tomoz(14), 2mrw(9),tomoro(6),2 moz(5),tomo(5), 2mo(4),2mz(4),tomorow(3), 2m(2),tmo(2),tmoro(2),tmrw(2),tomz(2) ,moro(1),mz(1),tmos(1),tmr(1),tmra(1),t mro(1),tmz(1),tommoz(1),tomorro(1),to morroww(1),tomozzles(1),tomrw(1),to muro(1)	40	21
39	WAS	169	0.5	6	was(142),wz(9),waz(6),woz(5),ws(5),w uz(2)	35	3
40	YOUR	169	0.5	5	ur(100),your(61),yr(4),ya(3),thy(1)	29	7
41	HI	163	0.5	5	hi(142), hiya(18), hii(1),hiii(1),hiiii(1)	64	1
42	CAN	159	0.4	4	can(140),cn(17),kan(1),kn(1)	39	2
43	OF	159	0.4	3	of(155),de(2),ov(2)	17	1
44	IT'S	157	0.4	4	its(128),it's(22),itz(6),tis(1)	52	3
45	HOW	157	0.4	3	how(136),hw(20),howd(1)	53	2
46	GO	149	0.4	1		69	1
47	GOING	148	0.4	4	goin(99),going(47),goen(1),goiin(1)	51	2
48	DON'T	142	0.4	6	dnt(65),don't(40),dont(32),donõt(2),dt(2),donyt(1)	54	3
49	NO	142	0.4	6	no(108),nah(16),na(15),nahh(1),nar(1), nooo(1)	49	3
50	I'LL	141	0.4	6	il(49),ill(44),i'll(40),i'l(5),ii(2),illl(1)	57	4
51	WE	141	0.4	1		38	1

	WORD	Frq	%	Real Txt RS		Tagg #	Cortxt RS
52	GET	140	0.4	2	get(139),ge(1)	37	1
53	GOT	139	0.4	1		48	1
54	NOT	136	0.4	3	not(134),nnot(1),nto(1)	30	2
55	WITH	135	0.4	8	with(83),wit(17),wiv(17),wid(13),wif(2), wd(1),wi(1),wuv(1)	34	4
56	BACK	126	0.4	6	back(55),bk(43),bak(17),bck(6),bac(4), bc(1)	47	6
57	SORRY	123	0.3	9	sorry(74),soz(30),sori(10),sory(3),sary(2),sorri(1),sos(1),sowi(1),sozzzz(1)	78	3
58	YOU'RE	122	0.3	10	ur(76),your(19),you're(11),ure(8),yor(2),y r(2),uare(1),ub(1),yers(1),youre(1)	94	7
59	NIGHT	119	0.3	8	night(55),nite(49),nyt(9),nighty(2),night night(1),nitw(1),nte(1),nty(1)	61	2
60	WILL	119	0.3	6	will(96),wil(19),ll(1),whill(1),wl(1),wll(1)	27	2
61	HOPE	114	0.3	5	hope(99),hpe(10),ope(3),hp(1),hpoe(1)	45	2
62	TEXT BACK	114	0.3	6	<i>tb(105),text</i> back(3),tbx(2),ptb(1),ptbx(1),tback(1),t bxx(1)	n/a	n/a
63	ABOUT	110	0.3	5	about(62),bout(41),abt(4),bwt(2),about as(1)	44	3
64	THIS	110	0.3	4	this(85),dis(22),ths(2),pthis(1)	58	2
65	TIME	109	0.3	4	time(97),tym(9),tme(2),tyme(1)	55	1
66	NOW	109	0.3	2	now(89),nw(20)	50	2
67	TONIGHT	107	0.3	10	2nite(43),tonight(33),tonite(14),2nyt(6), 2night(4),tnite(2),tonyt(2),tnight(1),tnt(1),tonit(1)	86	5
68	KNOW	106	0.3	5	know(65),no(20),kno(13),knw(7),noe(1)	43	4
69	THANKS	104	0.3	14	thanks(33),thanx(21),thnx(12),ta(10),th x(9),fanx(6),thanku(5),tnx(2),fanks(1),th annkyooou(1),thks(1),thnks(1),tks(1),tx (1)	88	8
70	COME	102	0.3	5	come(65),cum(29),cme(6),cm(1),coom ee(1)	71	3
71	LIKE	102	0.3	4	like(87),lyk(13),likw(1),lke(1)	90	1

	WORD	Frq	%	Real Txt RS		Tagg #	Cortxt RS
72	ALL	102	0.3	2	all(91),al(11)	42	1
73	TEXT	100	0.3	4	txt(64),text(25),tx(10),tex(1)	96	4
74	WHEN	100	0.3	4	when(49),wen(46),wn(3),whn(2)	59	2
75	THEN	100	0.3	3	then(83),den(11),thn(6)	66	1
76	LOVE YOU	100	0.2	18	love you(44)ly(30),loveyou(4),loveu(3),lovey oux(3),lovya(2), luvoo(2),loveyarr(1),lovyarr(1),lovyhoo (1),lu(1),luu(1),luvya(1),lvya(1),lyahhh(1) ,lysm(1),lyvm(1),lyxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xx(1),xxly(1)	n/a	n/a
77	WELL	97	0.3	3	well(77),wel(19),welll(1)	73	2
78	DOING	96	0.3	3	doin(58),doing(37),duin(1)	130	2
79	SPOKEN VOCALISATIO N	94	0.3	49	yay(8),ah(7),aw(7),aww(7),eh(6),ugh(3), uh(3),ahhh(2),argh(2),arr(2),buh(2),do h(2),grr(2),ohh(2),oo(2),wo(2),woo(2),w oohoo(2),aaaaaaah(1),aaaah(1),aahh(1 ,ahhhhhh(1),arg(1),arghhh(1),arr(1),arrg gghh(1),arrgh(1),cor(1),duh(1),eeeeek(1),eek(1),feth(1),gr(1),hoorah(1),huh(1), jheeze(1),lala(1),maa(1),meh(1),ooh(1), oooh(1),rrrr(1),urgh(1),wheyhey(1),woo o(1),woooo(1),wow(1),yaahhh(1),yey(1)	n/a	n/a
80	BEEN	94	0.3	3	been(61),bin(30),bn(3)	84	2
81	WORK	94	0.3	3	work(71),wrk(21),wk(2)	72	1
82	WANT TO	92	0.3	6	wanna(49),wana(18),wna(12),want to(11)1 2(1),wnna(1)	n/a	n/a
83	LATER	90	0.2	5	later(40),l8r(27),l8er(14),ltr(5),lata(4)	85	4
84	PLEASE	88	0.2	8	please(37),plz(34),pls(9),plzzzzz(2),pw ease(2),pwz(2),pleassssssseeeeeee(1), pweeze(1)	132	7
85	BABE	87	0.2	7	babe(61),bbe(16),bbz(6),babez(1),bab s(1),bb(1),bubs(1)	n/a	n/a

	WORD	Frq	%	Real Txt RS		Tagg #	Cortxt RS
86	REALLY	86	0.2	14	really(58),reali(5),rele(5),realy(4),rly(3),r eli(2),rli(2),ra(1),reali(1),reely(1),relly(1), rely(1),relyyy(1),rlly(1)	107	2
87	ALRIGHT	84	0.2	22	alrite(26),alright(20),ite(8),alryt(6),allrig ht(4),ight(2),orite(2),oryt(2),aight(1),aiit e(1),alite(1),alritee(1),alritey(1),alriyte(1) ,alrt(1),alryyt(1),altee(1),arite(1),awrytt(1),oright(1),uite(1),yalright(1)	n/a	n/a
88	THERE	84	0.2	7	there(65),ther(7),der(6),dere(2),thr(2),th ar(1),therte(1)	60	2
89	GOING TO	84	0.2	6	gonna(26),going to(23),gna(11),guna(10),gona(8),gunna (6)	n/a	n/a
90	BECAUSE	83	0.2	10	coz(29),cos(27),cuz(8),cz(7),because(5),caus(2),cus(2),bcos(1),becuz(1),cas (1)	109	8
91	HA	83	0.2	12	haha(33),ha(29),hehe(6),mwah(4),haha ha(3),hah(2),ahahaha(1),ahahahaha(1), ahawoo(1),baha(1),ho(1), muhahahaha(1)	n/a	n/a
92	ONE	80	0.2	3	1(44),one(35),wun(1)	74	2
93	COMING	77	0.2	7	comin(29),coming(20),cumin(19),cmin (4),cummin(3),c'ming(1),cuming(1)	111	3
94	SOON	77	0.2	2	soon(71),sn(6)	79	2
95	MATE	76	0.2	4	mate(38),m8(36),maty(1),mayte(1)	168	2
96	CAN'T	75	0.2	3	cant(37),cnt(21),can't(17)	100	3
97	HOME	74	0.2	4	home(66),hme(5),hom(2),hime(1)	80	1
98	DAY	73	0.2	1		76	1
99	SHE	73	0.2	1		119	1
100	AM	72	0.2	1		56	1
101	HAD	70	0.2	3	had(59),ad(8),hd(3)	67	3
102	COOL	67	0.2	7	cool(34),kl(16),kool(10),kwl(4),coo(1),c oooooooool(1),cul(1)	140	1
103	PHONE	67	0.2	4	phone(42),fone(20),phne(4),fn(1)	125	2

	WORD	Frq	%	Real Txt RS		Tagg #	Cortxt RS
104	MUCH	67	0.2	2	much(65),mch(2)	115	1
105	THINK	65	0.2	4	think(50),fink(9),thnk(4),tink(2)	77	1
106	WANT	64	0.2	4	want(54),wnt(8),wamt(1),wan(1)	70	1
107	OR	64	0.2	1		63	1
108	HE	63	0.2	1		81	1
109	AS	62	0.2	1		62	1
110	WHERE	60	0.2	5	where(39),wer(12),were(4),wher(4),war e(1)	126	2
111	HOW'S	59	0.2	7	hows(26),howz(16),hws(7),how's(4),o wz(3),hwz(2),ows(1)	155	3
112	DID	59	0.2	1		83	1
113	FROM	58	0.2	2	from(47),frm(11)	65	3
114	STILL	58	0.2	2	still(41),stil(17)	82	2
115	THAT'S	57	0.2	7	thats(30),that's(13),dats(5),thts(5),thas (2),das(1),dts(1)	114	2
116	SOME	57	0.2	3	sum(30),some(24),som(3)	95	2
117	MEET	55	0.2	1		157	1
118	HELLO	53	0.1	6	hello(39),holla(6),elo(5),ello(1),hallo(1), hola(1)	87	6
119	LAST	52	0.1	2	last(49),lst(3)	118	2
120	PLACE	51	0.1	1		n/a	n/a
121	TOO	50	0.1	3	too(38),2(11),tooooo(1)	68	2
122	WHAT'S	49	0.1	8	whats(18),wats(16),wots(7),wts(3),wha t's(2),watz(1),wht's(1),wos(1)	211	5
123	NEXT	49	0.1	4	next(26),nxt(20),nx(2),nex(1)	112	2
124	THOUGH	48	0.1	5	tho(31),though(13),doe(2),thos(1),tho w(1)	105	5
125	THREE	48	0.1	2	3(43),three(5)	n/a	n/a

	WORD	Frq	%	Real Txt RS		Tagg #	Cortxt RS
126	WEEK	47	0.1	2	week(34),wk(13)	93	3
127	MUM	47	0.1	1		196	1
128	OH	47	0.1	1		116	2
129	HONEY	46	0.1	7	hun(29),hunny(7),honey(5),huni(2),honey(1),honi(1),hunnie(1)	n/a	n/a
130	CALL	46	0.1	4	call(31),cal(12),kal(2),buz(1)	139	2
131	I'VE	46	0.1	3	i've(23),ive(18),iv(5)	104	4
132	TELL	46	0.1	3	tell(38),tel(7),tl(1)	191	1
133	FINE	45	0.1	4	fine(38),fne(5),fyn(1),fyne(1)	138	1
134	BIT	45	0.1	1		113	1
135	NEED	45	0.1	1		102	1
136	WAY	44	0.1	4	way(41),wai(1),wayyy(1),wy(1)	129	1
137	TODAY	43	0.1	4	today(37),tday(3),todaii(2),tody(1)	103	3
138	DIDN'T	42	0.1	11	didn't(16),didnt(14),dint(3),ddnt(2),didnt(1),didint(1),didn(1),didn'y(1),didnōt(1),dn't(1),dnot(1)	133	2
139	WOULD	42	0.1	5	would(24),wud(9),wuld(5),wld(3),wd(1)	99	3
140	NEW	42	0.1	2	new(40),nu(2)	120	1
141	SAID	42	0.1	2	sed(22),said(20)	186	1
142	SCHOOL	41	0.1	8	school(17),skl(9),skool(8),skol(2),skwl(2),schl(1),schoolio(1),shool(1)	n/a	n/a
143	AFTER	41	0.1	4	after(28),afta(11),aftaa(1),afte(1)	131	2
144	COLLEGE	41	0.1	4	college(35),col(3),coll(2),colege(1)	n/a	n/a
145	WHY	41	0.1	2	y(26),why(15)	241	2
146	WEEKEND	40	0.1	5	weekend(23),wkend(12),wknd(3),weeknd(1),wekend(1)	89	5
147	ANY	40	0.1	2	any(30),ne(10)	110	2

	WORD	Frq	%	Real Txt RS		Tagg #	Cortxt RS
148	RING	40	0.1	2	ring(37),rng(3)	123	1
149	SAY	39	0.1	2	say(38),sey(1)	148	1
150	COULD	38	0.1	6	cud(16),could(12),cd(5),cld(2),culd(2), uld(1)	91	3
151	OVER	38	0.1	2	over(22),ova(16)	167	2
152	VERY	37	0.1	6	v(17),very(15),vewy(2),tres(1),vry(1),vv vvvvv(1)	92	2
153	HAPPY	37	0.1	5	happy(33),api(1),hapy(1),hppy(1),hpy(1)	106	3
154	MIGHT	37	0.1	5	might(16),mite(11),myt(7),mt(2),migh(1)	160	3
155	DONE	37	0.1	4	done(27),dun(5),dne(3),dn(2)	144	2
156	AGAIN	37	0.1	1		127	1
157	HIM	37	0.1	1		137	1
158	SAT	37	0.1	1		147	3
159	GREAT	35	0.1	3	great(21),gr8(12),g8(2)	134	3
160	FUN	35	0.1	1		153	1
161	OFF	35	0.1	1		108	1
162	BIRTHDAY	34	0.1	6	birthday(16),bday(13),bdays(2),birtday (1),bithday(1),brthday(1)	141	3
163	BORED	34	0.1	3	bored(31),boared(2),boreedddd(1)	n/a	n/a
164	HAVEN'T	33	0.1	5	havent(16),haven't(8),avent(4),havnt(4) ,havn't(1)	176	5
165	WERE	33	0.1	2	were(31),wer(2)	182	1
166	SHOULD	32	0.1	5	should(16),shud(12),shld(2),shd(1),shl dxxxx(1)	122	4
167	SEE YOU	32	0.1	3	cya(23),cu(8),seeya(1)	n/a	n/a
168	BUS	32	0.1	1		n/a	n/a
169	ANYWAY	31	0.1	6	neway(15),anyway(11),neways(2),any wayz(1),anywz(1),newayz(1)	206	1

	WORD	Frq	%	Real Txt RS		Tagg #	Cortxt RS
170	RIGHT	31	0.1	4	rite(16),right(11),rt(2),ryt(2)	232	2
171	MAKE	31	0.1	3	make(26),mke(4),makf(1)	161	1
172	BRING	31	0.1	2	bring(28),brin(3)	n/a	n/a
173	LET	31	0.1	2	let(30),lt(1)	101	1
174	ONLY	31	0.1	2	only(30),onli(1)	162	1
175	YEAR	31	0.1	2	year(21),yr(10)	180	2
176	BY	31	0.1	1		117	1
177	HER	31	0.1	1		159	1
178	NICE	31	0.1	1		146	1
179	SURE	31	0.1	1		121	1
180	CHRISTMAS	30	0.1	5	xmas(20),christmas(7),chrissie(1),chri stmsget(1),crimbo(1)	158	4
181	GETTING	30	0.1	3	getting(13),getin(9),gettin(8)	190	4
182	HERE	30	0.1	3	here(24),ere(5),hre(1)	98	2
183	SEND	30	0.1	2	send(16),snd(14)	189	2
184	HAS	30	0.1	1		135	1
185	BETTER	29	0.1	4	better(22),beta(5),betr(1),betta(1)	170	4
186	TIRED	29	0.1	1		n/a	n/a
187	MISS	28	0.1	4	miss(23),mis(2),mish(2),mss(1)	n/a	n/a
188	WHO	28	0.1	3	who(26),hoo(1),who(1)	193	2
189	DOWN	28	0.1	2	down(21),dwn(7)	165	1
190	SOMETHING	27	0.1	10	something(11) sumthin(5) sumit(2) summin(2) sumthing(2) somethin(1) sommatt(1) sumfing(1) sumin(1) sumtin(1)	173	7

	WORD	Frq	%	Real Txt RS		Tagg #	Cortxt RS
191	HAVING	27	0.1	5	havin(13) having(11) avin(1) haveing(1) havn(1)	143	3
192	MORE	27	0.1	3	more(24) mre(2) mor(1)	166	1
193	PEOPLE	27	0.1	3	people(15) ppl(11) pp(1)	n/a	n/a
194	FREE	27	0.1	2	free(26) 3(1)	198	1
195	LATE	27	0.1	2	late(21) l8(6)	177	1
196	WAIT	27	0.1	2	wait(25) w8(2)	n/a	n/a
197	ROUND	26	0.1	7	round(14) rnd(6) rd(2) rond(1) roun(1) rownd(1) rwd(1)	202	1
198	OTHER	26	0.1	4	other(19) g(5) otha(1) othery(1)	227	1
199	AREN'T	26	0.1	3	aint(23) arn't(2) arent(1)	n/a	n/a
200	GIVE	26	0.1	2	give(16) giv(10)	142	3
201	PICK	26	0.1	2	pick(24) pik(2)	231	1
202	THOUGHT	26	0.1	2	thought(25) thout(1)	185	2
203	NOTHING	25	0.1	8	nothing(10) nuffin(5) nufin(5) nothin(1) nuthing(1) nutin(1) nuttin(1) nwt(1)	n/a	n/a
204	WORKING	25	0.1	5	working(9) workin(8) wrkin(5) wrking(2) wrkn(1)	179	2
205	FEELING	25	0.1	4	feeling(15) feelin(8) feeln(1) flin(1)	n/a	n/a
206	THING	25	0.1	3	thing(18) fing(5) ting(2)	220	2
207	WE'RE	25	0.1	3	were(13) we're(10) wer(2)	188	3
208	BABY	25	0.1	2	baby(23) babey(2)	n/a	n/a
209	MINE	25	0.1	2	mine(21) myn(4)	n/a	n/a
210	TALK	25	0.1	2	talk(23) tlk(2)	n/a	n/a
211	YET	25	0.1	1		128	1
212	THEM	24	0.1	5	them(16) dem(3) em(3) dm(1) thm(1)	149	2

	WORD	Frq	%	Real Txt RS		Tagg #	Cortxt RS
213	I'D	24	0.1	2	id(16) i'd(8)	n/a	n/a
214	LUNCH	24	0.1	2	lunch(23) luch(1)	n/a	n/a
215	LOOKING	23	0.1	4	looking(12) lookin(8) lokin(2) lookn(1)	199	2
216	NUMBER	23	0.1	4	number(15) numba(6) num(1) numbe(1)	171	4
217	HOUSE	23	0.1	3	house(20) hse(2) hous(1)	194	1
218	LONG	23	0.1	3	long(19) lng(2) lonng(2)	215	1
219	WON'T	23	0.1	3	wont(13) won't(6) wnt(4)	197	2
220	LOTS	23	0.1	2	lots(22) lotz(1)	230	1
221	BED	23	0.1	1		222	1
222	WENT	23	0.1	1		201	2
223	ANYTHING	22	0.1	9	anything(10) anythin(3) anytin(2) nething(2) antayin(1) nethin(1) neting(1) nthin(1) nything(1)	181	2
224	FEEL	22	0.1	2	feel(21) feeel(1)	203	2
225	MESSAGE	22	0.1	2	message(20) msg(2)	245	3
226	PARTY	22	0.1	2	party(21) prty(1)	n/a	n/a
227	TAKE	22	0.1	2	take(21) tk(1)	172	1
228	TIL	22	0.1	1		n/a	n/a
229	US	22	0.1	1		163	1
230	HALF	21	0.1	2	half(20) hlf(1)	218	1
231	TOWN	21	0.1	2	town(17) twn(4)	238	1
232	THANK	21	0.1	1		205	2
233	GIRL	20	0.1	7	girl(13) gal(2) girlie(1) girly(1) gurl(1) gurlies(1) gurls(1)	n/a	n/a
234	ER	20	0.1	5	er(5) erm(5) umm(5) err(4) errr(1)	n/a	n/a

	WORD	Frq	%	Real Txt RS		Tagg #	Cortxt RS
235	THINKING	20	0.1	5	thinking(9) finkin(4) thinkin(4) tinkin(2) tinking(1)	240	2
236	BOY	20	0.1	4	boy(13) boi(5) boiii(1) bwiii(1)	n/a	n/a
237	FUNNY	20	0.1	4	funny(16) funni(2) fnny(1) funy(1)	n/a	n/a
238	SPEAK	20	0.1	3	speak(10) spk(9) speaketh(1)	164	2
239	UNTIL	20	0.1	3	till(15) until(4) untill(1)	150	4
240	BEING	20	0.1	2	being(14) bein(6)	221	2
241	LOVELY	19	0.1	3	lovely(16) luvly(2) lubly(1)	183	1
242	FINISH	19	0.1	2	finish(18) fin(1)	n/a	n/a
243	OH MY GOD	19	0.1	2	omg(18) omfg(1)	n/a	n/a
244	MAN	19	0.1	1		n/a	n/a
245	PROBABLY	18	0.1	5	prob(9) probably(6) probabaly(1) proby(1) proz(1)	n/a	n/a
246	CREDIT	18	0.1	4	cred(10) credit(6) crdt(1) credeit(1)	n/a	n/a
247	DON'T KNOW	18	0.1	4	dunno(8) duno(7) dno(2) dunna(1)	n/a	n/a
248	YOURS	18	0.1	4	urs(7) yrs(5) yours(4) urz(2)	n/a	n/a
249	NEVER	18	0.1	3	neva(10) never(7) neve(1)	n/a	n/a
250	STAY	18	0.1	3	stay(14) stai(3) sty(1)	n/a	n/a

Appendix VI. iv) The RealTxt 150 Table

The 150 most frequent headwords and Word-Groups (excluding words which are not respelt)

	WORD	Fre q.	%	RS		Tagg #	Tagg RS
1	YOU	197 2	5.452	19	u(1365),you(507),ya(64),yu(9),youu(8),ti(2),yew(2),yeww(2),yooo(2),yooou(2),choo(1),toi(1),ua(1)yoo(1),yoooooooo(1),yoo u(1),youuu(1),ypu(1),y(1)	1	6
2	X	149 3	4.128	28	x(1021),xxx(175),xx(163),xxxx(35),xxxxx(34),xxxxxx(17),xxxxxxx(10),ux(6),xo(4)),x d(3),xxxxxxxx(3),xxxxxxxxxx(3),xox(2),xxx xxxxxxxx(2),xxxxxxxxxxxxxx(2),xxxxxxxx xxxxx(2),xax(1),xoxox(1),xoxoxoxox(1),x oxoxoxoxo(1),xxxw(1),xxxxxxxxxx(1),xxx xxxxxxxxxx(1),xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx(1),xxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx(1),xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx(1) ,xx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx+(1)	3	8
3	TO	864	2.389	5	2(468),to(380),t(14),ta(1),tae(1)	2	3
4	THE	529	1.462	8	the(409),da(89),th(14),d(8),de(5),le(2),la(1),thee(1)	4	7
5	AND	449	1.241	3	and(270),n(157),nd(22)	5	6
6	ME	368	1.017	4	me(360),mi(6),meee(1),mwa(1)	n/a	1
7	I'M	367	1.015	3	im(297),i'm(69),iam(1)	14	2
8	ARE	354	0.979	3	r(208),are(134),ar(12)	10	3
9	WHAT	306	0.846	9	what(103),wat(100),wot(76),wt(18),wht(4),wa(2),watt(1),wha(1),whaa(1)	27	3
10	FOR	277	0.766	3	4(143),for(128),fo(6)	7	3
11	UP	260	0.719	3	up(258),op(1),upp(1)	n/a	1
12	AT	260	0.719	2	at(224),@(36)	n/a	1
13	MY	256	0.708	2	my(236),ma(20)	n/a	1

14	LOVE	251	0.694	11	love(175),luv(56),lv(12),loadsaluv(1),lolo ve(1),lolxx(1),looooooove(1),lov(1),lovexx (1),luff(1),lve(1)	64	4
15	IS	251	0.694	2	is(246),iz(5)	n/a	1
16	SO	248	0.686	4	so(233),soo(8),sooo(6),soooo(1)	15	4
17	HEY	243	0.672	15	hey(195),heya(22),heyy(6),e'boro(5),hay (3),haya(2),heyah(2),heey(1),heeyyaa(1), heyas(1),heyaz(1),heyhey(1),heyyy(1),ey (1),eyup(1)	n/a	1
18	HAVE	242	0.669	7	have(163),hav(44),av(15),ave(12),hv(5), hve(2),ve(1)	8	5
19	ON	236	0.652	3	on(233),oon(2),orn(1)	n/a	1
20	SEE	229	0.633	3	c(132),see(95),se(2)	12	2
21	BE	229	0.633	2	be(136),b(93)	9	2
22	YES	223	0.617	12	yeah(69),yeh(39),yes(26),ye(25),yh(24),y ea(17),yer(12),yep(6),yah(2),yeaah(1),ye ahh(1),yup(1)	24	6
23	LOL	212	0.584	4	lol(207),lolz(3), ilol(1),lool(1),	n/a	n/a
24	JUST	209	0.578	4	just(137),jus(46),jst(25),js(1)	13	4
25	OKAY	203	0.561	11	ok(130),okay(26),k(20),kk(19),okies(2),a kay(1),okai(1),okaii(1),okayy(1),okey(1), wocay(1)	n/a	n/a
26	EMOTICON	201	0.556	24	:)(62),:-)(29),:((26),:P(16),:D(15),:)(9),:- ((8),:S(7),:-)(5),(: (4),:-D(3),:-))(2),:] (2),:- X(2),:O(2),:-O(2),:-*(1),:*(1),:[(1),:@(1):- P(1):-S(1)@-;-)(1)	n/a	n/a
27	BUT	195	0.539	3	but(160),bt(34),ut(1)	n/a	1
28	GOOD	186	0.514	7	good(118),gd(53),gud(10),gdgd(2),gu(1) ,gurd(1),jigga(1)	11	4
29	OUT	176	0.487	2	out(174),owt(2)	n/a	1
30	IF	174	0.481	4	if(162),f(10),fi(1),iff(1)	n/a	1

31	THAT	171	0.473	5	that(107),dat(34),tht(17),th@(10),tha(3)	17	4
32	TOMORROW	170	0.470	29	tomorrow(42),2moro(28), 2moz(27),tomoz(14), 2mrw(9),tomoro(6),2 moz(5),tomo(5), 2mo(4),2mz(4),tomorow(3), 2m(2),tmo(2),tmoro(2),tmrw(2),tomz(2), moro(1),mz(1),tmos(1),tmr(1),tmra(1),tm ro(1),tmz(1),tommoz(1),tomorro(1),tomo rroww(1),tomozzles(1),tomrw(1),tomuro (1)	26	21
33	WAS	169	0.467	6	was(142),wz(9),waz(6),woz(5),ws(5),wu z(2)	23	3
34	YOUR	169	0.4672	5	ur(100),your(61),yr(4),ya(3),thy(1)	18	7
35	HI	163	0.451	5	hi(142), hiya(18), hii(1),hiii(1),hiiii(1)	n/a	1
36	CAN	159	0.440	4	can(140),cn(17),kan(1),kn(1)	25	2
37	OF	159	0.440	3	of(155),de(2),ov(2)	n/a	1
38	IT'S	157	0.434	4	its(128),it's(22),itz(6),tis(1)	35	3
39	HOW	157	0.434	3	how(136),hw(20),howd(1)	36	2
40	GOING	148	0.409	4	goin(99),going(47),goen(1),goiin(1)	34	2
41	DON'T	142	0.393	6	dnt(65),don't(40),dont(32),donõt(2),dt(2) ,donyt(1)	37	3
42	NO	142	0.393	6	no(108),nah(16),na(15),nahh(1),nar(1),n ooo(1)	32	3
43	I'LL	141	0.390	6	il(49),ill(44),i'll(40),i'l(5),ii(2),illl(1)	38	4
44	GET	140	0.387	2	get(139),ge(1)	n/a	1
45	NOT	136	0.376	3	not(134),nnot(1),nto(1)	19	2
46	WITH	135	0.373	8	with(83),wit(17),wiv(17),wid(13),wif(2),w d(1),wi(1),wuv(1)	22	4
47	BACK	126	0.35	6	back(55),bk(43),bak(17),bck(6),bac(4),b c(1)	31	6

48	SORRY	123	0.340	9	sorry(74),soz(30),sori(10),sory(3),sary(2),sorri(1),sos(1),sowi(1),sozzzz(1)	49	3
49	YOU'RE	122	0.335	10	ur(76),your(19),you're(11),ure(8),yor(2),yr(2),uare(1),ub(1),yers(1),youre(1)	61	7
50	NIGHT	119	0.33	8	night(55),nite(49),nyt(9),nighty(2),nightn ight(1),nitw(1),nte(1),nty(1)	42	2
51	WILL	119	0.33	6	will(96),wil(19),ll(1),whill(1),wl(1),wll(1)	16	2
52	HOPE	114	0.315	5	hope(99),hpe(10),ope(3),hp(1),hpoe(1)	30	2
53	TEXT BACK	114	0.315	6	<i>tb(105),text back(3),tbx(2),ptb(1),ptbx(1),tback(1),tbxx(1)</i>	n/a	n/a
54	ABOUT	110	0.304	5	about(62),bout(41),abt(4),bwt(2),abouta s(1)	29	3
55	THIS	110	0.304	4	this(85),dis(22),ths(2),pthis(1)	39	2
56	TIME	109	0.301	4	time(97),tym(9),tme(2),tyme(1)	n/a	1
57	NOW	109	0.301	2	now(89),nw(20)	33	2
58	TONIGHT	107	0.296	10	2nite(43),tonight(33),tonite(14),2nyt(6), 2night(4),tnite(2),tonyt(2),tnight(1),tnt(1),tonit(1)	54	5
59	KNOW	106	0.293	5	know(65),no(20),kno(13),knw(7),noe(1)	28	4
60	THANKS	104	0.288	14	thanks(33),thanx(21),thnx(12),ta(10),thx (9),fanx(6),thanku(5),tnx(2),fanks(1),thannkyoooou(1),thks(1),thnks(1),tks(1),tx(1)	56	8
61	COME	102	0.282	5	come(65),cum(29),cme(6),cm(1),coomee(1)	46	3
62	LIKE	102	0.282	4	like(87),lyk(13),likw(1),lke(1)	n/a	1
63	ALL	102	0.282	2	all(91),al(11)	n/a	1
64	TEXT	100	0.276	4	txt(64),text(25),tx(10),tex(1)	63	4
65	WHEN	100	0.276	4	when(49),wen(46),wn(3),whn(2)	40	2
66	THEN	100	0.276	3	then(83),den(11),thn(6)	n/a	1

67	LOVE YOU	100	0.276	18	love you(44)ly(30),loveyou(4),loveu(3),loveyo ux(3),lovya(2), luvoo(2),loveyarr(1),lovyarr(1),lovyhoo(1),lu(1),luu(1),luvya(1),lvya(1),lyahhh(1),lysm(1),lyvm(1),lyxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (1),xxly(1)	n/a	n/a
68	WELL	97	0.268	3	well(77),wel(19),wellll(1)	47	2
69	DOING	96	0.265	3	doin(58),doing(37),duin(1)	83	2
70	SPOKEN VOCALISATION	94	0.268	49	yay(8),ah(7),aw(7),aww(7),eh(6),ugh(3),uh(3),ahhh(2),argh(2),arr(2),buh(2),doh(2),grr(2),ohh(2),oo(2),wo(2),woo(2),woohoo(2),aaaaaaah(1),aaaah(1),aahh(1),ahhhhh(1),arg(1),arghhh(1),arr(1),arrggghh(1),arrgh(1),cor(1),duh(1),eeeeek(1),eek(1),feth(1),gr(1),hoorah(1),huh(1),jheeze(1),lala(1),maa(1),meh(1),ooh(1),oooh(1),rrrr(1),urgh(1),wheyhey(1),wooo(1),wooo(1),wow(1),yaahhh(1),yey(1)	n/a	n/a
71	BEEN	94	0.260	3	been(61),bin(30),bn(3)	52	2
72	WORK	94	0.260	3	work(71),wrk(21),wk(2)	n/a	1
73	WANT TO	92	0.255	6	wanna(49),wana(18),wna(12),wantto(11)1 2(1),wnna(1)	n/a	n/a
74	LATER	90	0.249	5	later(40),l8r(27),l8er(14),ltr(5),lata(4)	53	4
75	PLEASE	88	0.243	8	please(37),plz(34),pls(9),plzzzzz(2),pwease(2),pwz(2),pleassssssseeeeeee(1),pweeze(1)	85	7
76	BABE	87	0.241	7	babe(61),bbe(16),bbz(6),babez(1),babs(1),bb(1),bubs(1)	n/a	n/a
77	REALLY	86	0.238	14	really(58),reali(5),rele(5),realy(4),rly(3),reli(2),rli(2),ra(1),realli(1),reely(1),relly(1),rely(1),relyyy(1),rlly(1)	72	2
78	ALRIGHT	84	0.23	22	alrite(26),alright(20),ite(8),alryt(6),allright(4),ight(2),orite(2),oryt(2),aight(1),aiite(1),alite(1),alritee(1),alritey(1),alriyte(1),alrt(1),alryyt(1),altee(1),arite(1),awrytt(1),oright(1),uite(1),yalright(1)	n/a	n/a

79	THERE	84	0.23	7	there(65),ther(7),der(6),dere(2),thr(2),thar(1),therte(1)	41	2
80	GOING TO	84	0.23	6	gonna(26),going to(23),gna(11),guna(10),gona(8),gunna(6)	n/a	n/a
81	BECAUSE	83	0.229	10	coz(29),cos(27),cuz(8),cz(7),because(5),caus(2),cus(2),bcos(1),becuz(1),cas(1)	73	8
82	HA	83	0.229	12	haha(33),ha(29),hehe(6),mwah(4),hahaha(3),hah(2),ahahaha(1),ahahahaha(1),ahawoo(1),baha(1),ho(1), muhahahaha(1)	n/a	n/a
83	ONE	80	0.221	3	1(44),one(35),wun(1)	48	2
84	COMING	77	0.21	7	comin(29),coming(20),cumin(19),cmin(4),cummin(3),c'ming(1),cuming(1)	75	3
85	SOON	77	0.21	2	soon(71),sn(6)	50	2
86	MATE	76	0.210	4	mate(38),m8(36),maty(1),mayte(1)	106	2
87	CAN'T	75	0.207	3	cant(37),cnt(21),can't(17)	67	3
88	HOME	74	0.205	4	home(66),hme(5),hom(2),hime(1)	n/a	1
89	HAD	70	0.2	3	had(59),ad(8),hd(3)	44	3
90	COOL	67	0.185	7	cool(34),kl(16),kool(10),kwl(4),coo(1),coooooool(1),cul(1)	n/a	1
91	PHONE	67	0.185	4	phone(42),fone(20),phne(4),fn(1)	81	2
92	MUCH	67	0.185	2	much(65),mch(2)	n/a	1
93	THINK	65	0.180	4	think(50),fink(9),thnk(4),tink(2)	n/a	1
94	WANT	64	0.177	4	want(54),wnt(8),wamt(1),wan(1)	n/a	1
95	WHERE	60	0.166	5	where(39),wer(12),were(4),wher(4),ware(1)	82	2
96	HOW'S	59	0.163	7	hows(26),howz(16),hws(7),how's(4),owz(3),hwz(2),ows(1)	100	3
97	FROM	58	0.160	2	from(47),frm(11)	43	3

98	STILL	58	0.160	2	still(41),stil(17)	51	2
99	THAT'S	57	0.158	7	thats(30),that's(13),dats(5),thts(5),thas(2),das(1),dts(1)	77	2
100	SOME	57	0.158	3	sum(30),some(24),som(3)	62	2
101	HELLO	53	0.147	6	hello(39),holla(6),elo(5),ello(1),hallo(1),hola(1)	55	6
102	LAST	52	0.144	2	last(49),lst(3)	79	2
103	TOO	50	0.138	3	too(38),2(11),tooooo(1)	45	2
104	WHAT'S	49	0.14	8	whats(18),wats(16),wots(7),wts(3),what's(2),watz(1),wht's(1),wos(1)	128	5
105	NEXT	49	0.14	4	next(26),nxt(20),nx(2),nex(1)	76	2
106	THOUGH	48	0.133	5	tho(31),though(13),doe(2),thos(1),thow(1)	70	5
107	THREE	48	0.133	2	3(43),three(5)	n/a	n/a
108	WEEK	47	0.130	2	week(34),wk(13)	60	3
109	HONEY	46	0.127	7	hun(29),hunny(7),honey(5),huni(2),honeys(1),honi(1),hunnie(1)	n/a	n/a
110	CALL	46	0.127	4	call(31),cal(12),kal(2),buz(1)	88	2
111	I'VE	46	0.127	3	i've(23),ive(18),iv(5)	69	4
112	TELL	46	0.127	3	tell(38),tel(7),tl(1)	n/a	1
113	FINE	45	0.124	4	fine(38),fne(5),fyn(1),fyne(1)	n/a	1
114	WAY	44	0.122	4	way(41),wai(1),wayyy(1),wy(1)	n/a	1
115	TODAY	43	0.119	4	today(37),tday(3),todaii(2),tody(1)	68	3
116	DIDN'T	42	0.12	11	didn't(16),didnt(14),dint(3),ddnt(2),diddnt(1),didint(1),didn(1),didn'y(1),didnõt(1),dn't(1),dnot(1)	86	2
117	WOULD	42	0.12	5	would(24),wud(9),wuld(5),wld(3),wd(1)	66	3

118	NEW	42	0.12	2	new(40),nu(2)	n/a	1
119	SAID	42	0.12	2	sed(22),said(20)	n/a	1
120	SCHOOL	41	0.113	8	school(17),skl(9),skool(8),skol(2),skwl(2),schl(1),schoolio(1),shool(1)	n/a	n/a
121	AFTER	41	0.113	4	after(28),afta(11),aftaa(1),afte(1)	84	2
122	COLLEGE	41	0.113	4	college(35),col(3),coll(2),colege(1)	n/a	n/a
123	WHY	41	0.113	2	y(26),why(15)	143	2
124	WEEKEND	40	0.111	5	weekend(23),wkend(12),wknd(3),weeknd(1),wekend(1)	57	5
125	ANY	40	0.111	2	any(30),ne(10)	74	2
126	RING	40	0.111	2	ring(37),rng(3)	n/a	1
127	SAY	39	0.108	2	say(38),sey(1)	n/a	1
128	COULD	38	0.105	6	cud(16),could(12),cd(5),cld(2),culd(2),uld(1)	58	3
129	OVER	38	0.105	2	over(22),ova(16)	105	2
130	VERY	37	0.102	6	v(17),very(15),vewy(2),tres(1),vry(1),vvv(1),vvvv(1)	59	2
131	HAPPY	37	0.102	5	happy(33),api(1),hapy(1),hppy(1),hpy(1)	71	3
132	MIGHT	37	0.102	5	might(16),mite(11),myt(7),mt(2),migh(1)	103	3
133	DONE	37	0.102	4	done(27),dun(5),dne(3),dn(2)	92	2
134	GREAT	35	0.1	3	great(21),gr8(12),g8(2)	87	3
135	BIRTHDAY	34	0.094	6	birthday(16),bday(13),bdays(2),birtday(1),bithday(1),brthday(1)	89	3
136	BORED	34	0.094	3	bored(31),boarded(2),boreedddd(1)	n/a	n/a
137	HAVEN'T	33	0.091	5	havent(16),haven't(8),avent(4),havnt(4),havn't(1)	111	5

138	WERE	33	0.091	2	were(31),wer(2)	n/a	1
139	SHOULD	32	0.088	5	should(16),shud(12),shld(2),shd(1),shld xxxx(1)	80	4
140	SEE YOU	32	0.088	3	cya(23),cu(8),seeya(1)	n/a	n/a
141	ANYWAY	31	0.086	6	neway(15),anyway(11),neways(2),anyw ayz(1),anywz(1),newayz(1)	n/a	1
142	RIGHT	31	0.086	4	rite(16),right(11),rt(2),ryt(2)	138	2
143	MAKE	31	0.086	3	make(26),mke(4),makf(1)	n/a	1
144	BRING	31	0.086	2	bring(28),brin(3)	n/a	n/a
145	LET	31	0.086	2	let(30),lt(1)	n/a	1
146	ONLY	31	0.086	2	only(30),onli(1)	n/a	1
147	YEAR	31	0.086	2	year(21),yr(10)	113	2
148	CHRISTMAS	30	0.083	5	xmas(20),christmas(7),chrissie(1),christ msget(1),crimbo(1)	102	4
149	GETTING	30	0.083	3	getting(13),getin(9),gettin(8)	118	4
150	HERE	30	0.083	3	here(24),ere(5),hre(1)	65	2

Appendix VI.iv ‘Bird’s eye view’ representations of degrees of respelling

Three enlarged graphical representations of the tendency to respelling focus on the most frequently occurring 70-75 words including descending order of frequency of the Word-Group, tendency to variation in descending order of frequency of variation and linear scale of level of variation.

a Respelt RealTxt 150 words by descending order of frequency;

b Tendencies to variation of RealTxt 150;

c Linear representation of scale of variation in RealTxt 150.

Tendencies to variation of RealTxt 150

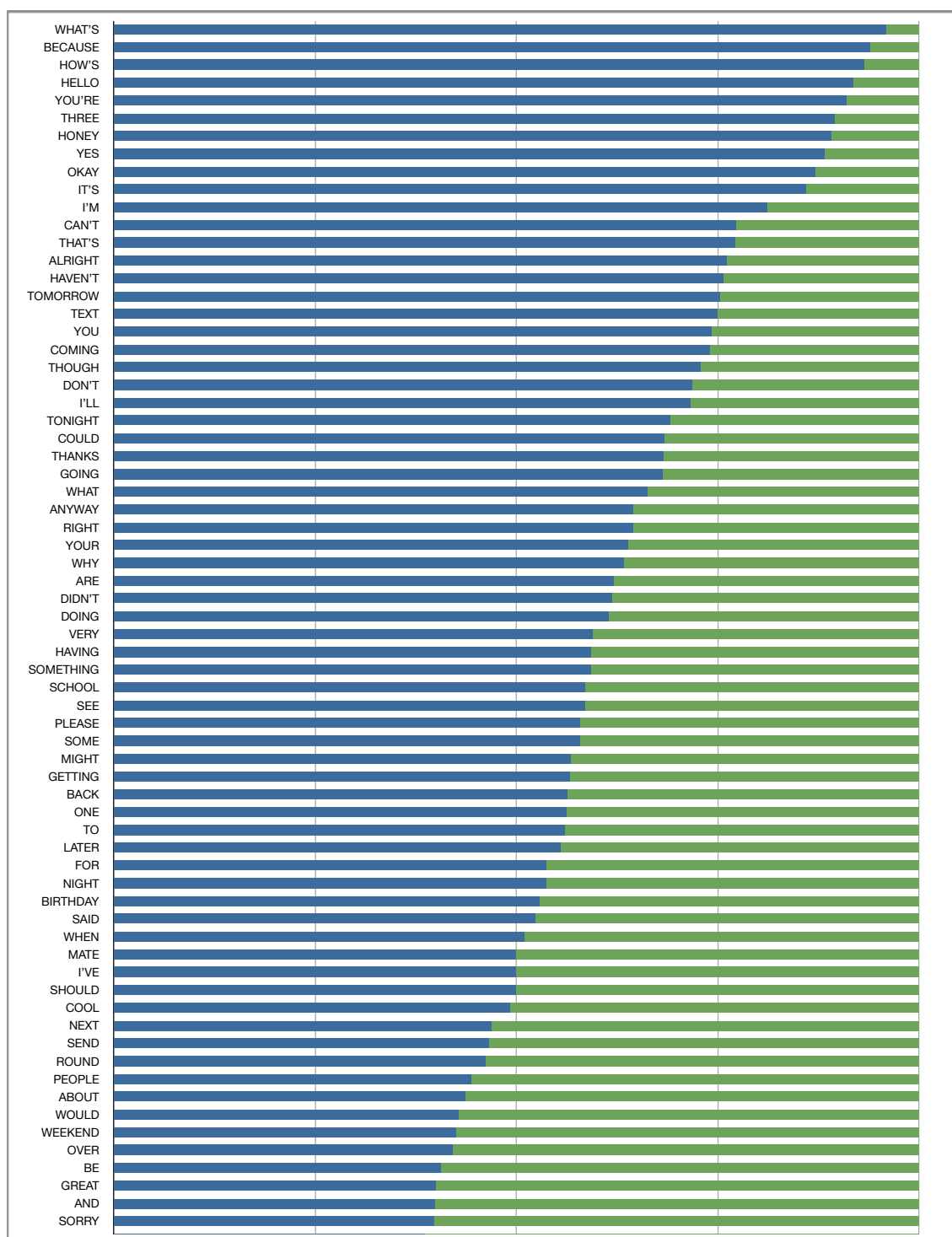


Chart showing tendencies to variation of RealTxt 150, top 75 words enlarged

Respelt RealTxt 75 words by descending order of frequency

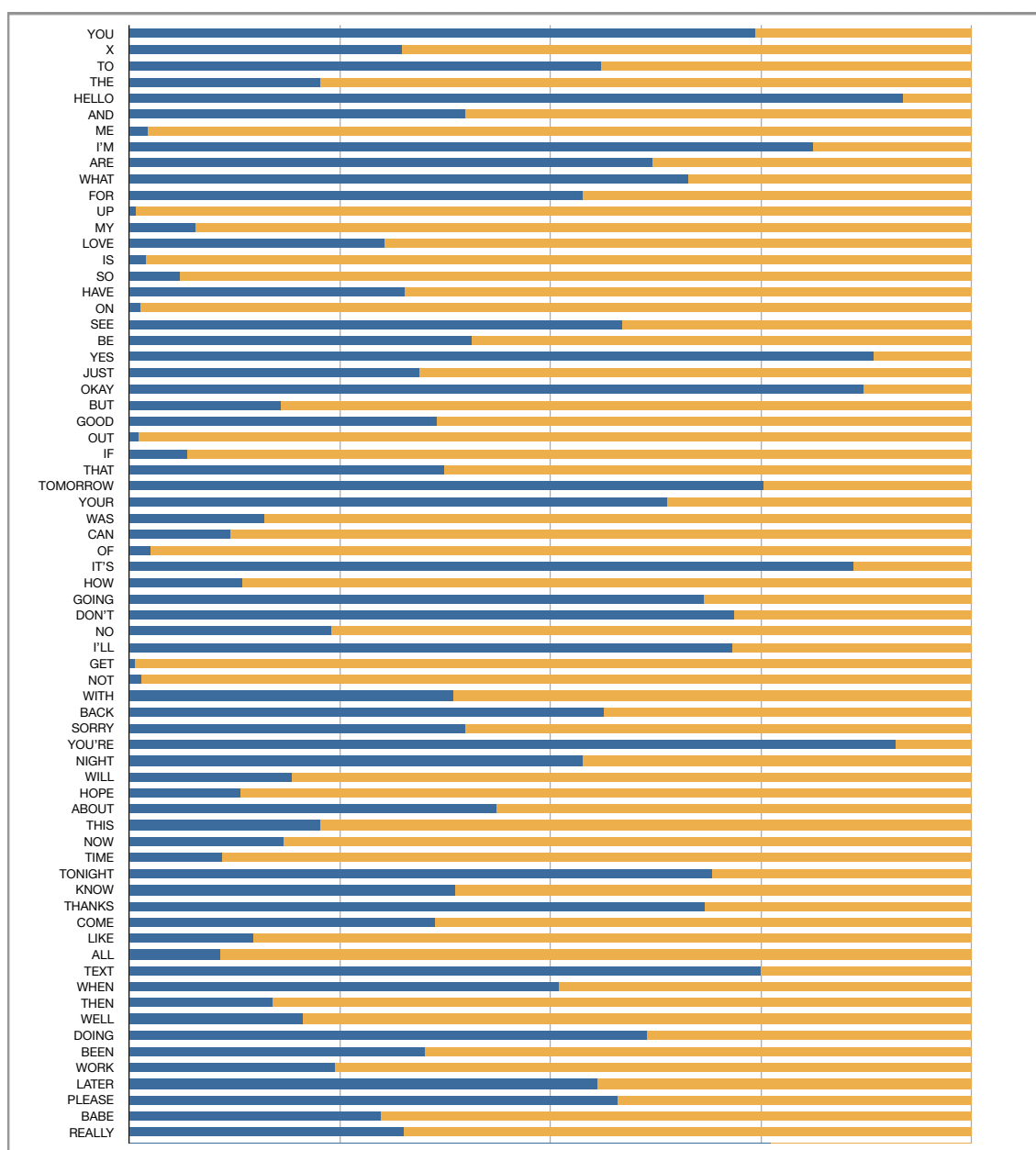
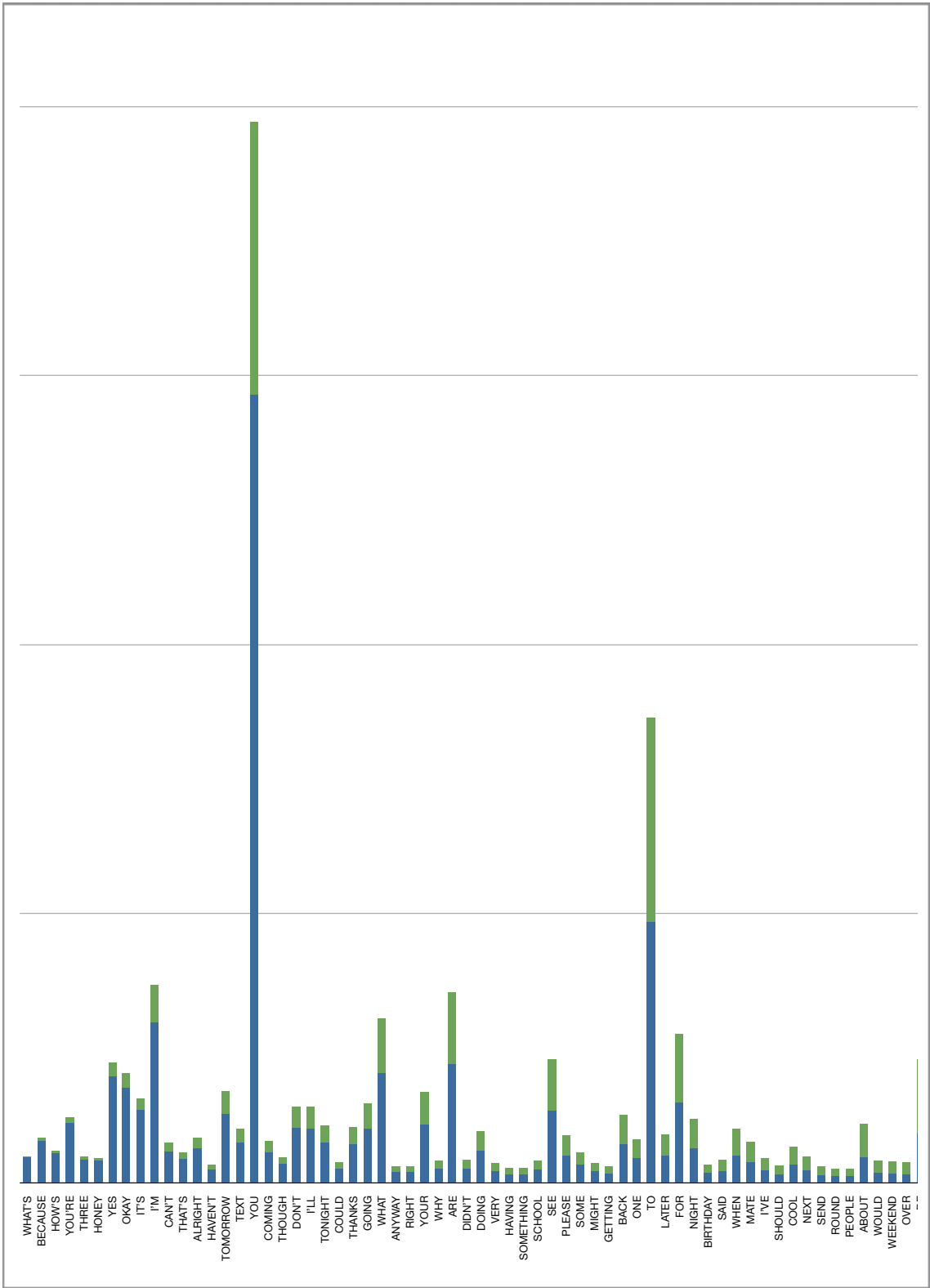


Chart showing respelt RealTxt 150 by descending order of frequency, top 75 words enlarged

Appendix VI.v) c: Linear representation of scale of variation in RealTxt 150



From linear representation of scale of variation in RealTxt 150, most frequent 65 words enlarged

Appendix VI.vi ‘forty variables’ results without provenance of items

Re Spelling	RS FRQ	RS %	Keystrokes	Seen %	Used %	Standard Spelling	SS FRQ	SS	Keystrokes
U	1364	3.77	88	84.11	74.79	you	507	1.40	999_666_88
2	468	1.29	NUM_2	83.47	72.67	to	380	1.05	8_666
r	208	0.58	777	81.78	70.13	are	134	0.37	2_777_33
LOL	207	0.57	555_666_555	86.23	72.67	laugh out loud			555_2_88_4_44_0_666_88_8_0_555_666_88_3
4	143	0.40	NUM_4	80.72	68.86	for	128	0.35	333_666_777
wat	100	0.28	9_2_8	73.73	52.75	what	103	0.28	9_44_2_8
goin	99	0.27	4_666_444_66_	76.91	66.31	going	47	0.13	4_666_444_66_4
wot	76	0.21	9_666_8	75.64	46.82	what	103	0.28	9_44_2_8
txt	64	0.18	8_99_8	86.44	71.82	text	25	0.07	8_33_99_8
:)	62	0.17	SYMBOL_)	72.03	54.66	smiley			
wanna	49	0.14	9_2_66_66_2	80.3	70.76	want to	11	0.03	9_2_66_8_0_8_666
ill	44	0.12	4_555_555	72.25	57.84	I'll	40	0.11	4_555_SYMBOL_'_555
2nite	43	0.12	NUM_2_66_444_8_33	79.87	62.92	tonight	33	0.09	8_666_66_444_4_44_8
soz	30	0.08	7777_666_9999	75.64	60.17	sorry	74	0.20	7777_666_777_777_999
2moz	27	0.08	NUM_2_6_666_9999	72.46	56.14	tomorrow	42	0.12	8_666_6_666_777_777_666_9
tomoz	14	0.04	8_666_6_666_9999	61.86	37.92	tomorrow	42	0.12	8_666_6_666_777_777_666_9
tonite	14	0.04	8_666_66_444_8_33	73.73	44.49	tonight	33	0.09	8_666_66_444_4_44_8
gr8	12	0.03	4_777_NUM_8	79.03	55.08	great	21	0.06	4_777_33_2_8
2	11	0.03	NUM_2	75.00	62.71	too	38	0.11	8_666_666
skool	8	0.02	7777_55_666_666_555	72.67	42.16	school	17	0.05	7777_222_44_666_666_555
bro	7	0.02	22_777_666	79.87	54.24	brother	2	0.01	22_777_666_8_44_33_777
tomo	5	0.01	8_666_6_666	49.15	26.91	tomorrow	42	0.12	8_666_6_666_777_777_666_9
m8s	4	0.01	6_NUM_8_7777	66.31	48.52	mates	10	0.03	6_2_8_33_7777
msg	2	0.01	6_7777_4	78.39	63.77	message	20	0.06	6_33_7777_7777_2_4_33
:@	1	0.00	SYMBOL_Colon_@	36.65	18.01	screaming			
2C	1	0.00	NUM_2_222	62.29	39.62	to see	15	0.04	8_666_0_7777_33_33
AAR8	0	0.00	2_2_777_NUM_8	17.37	7.2	at any rate			2_8_0_2_66_999_0_777_2_8_33
BTDT	0	0.00	22_8_3_8	15.47	8.69	been there done that			22_33_33_66_0_8_44_33_777_33_0_3_666_66_33_0_8_44_2_8
BAU	0	0.00	22_2_888	15.47	6.36	business as usual			22_88_7777_444_66_33_7777_7777_0_2_7777_0_88_7777_88_2_555
CWOT	0	0.00	222_9_666_8	16.95	7.42	complete waste of time			222_666_6_7_555_33_8_33_0_9_2_7777_8_33_0_666_333_0_8_444_6_33
dcdd	0	0.00	3_222_3_3	20.55	10.17	decided	3	0.01	3_33_222_444_3_33_3
hols	0	0.00	44_666_555_7777	76.69	62.71	holidays	1	0.00	44_666_555_444_3_2_999_7777
ICBW	0	0.00	444_222_22_9	15.68	9.75	it could be worse			444_8_0_222_666_88_555_3_0_22_33_0_9_666_777_7777_33
0	0	0.00	0	27.33	11.65	nothing	10	0.03	66_666_8_44_444_66_4
ps	0	0.00	7_7777	17.58	8.47	parents	4	0.01	7_2_777_33_66_8_7777
cya!8er	0	0.00	222_999_2_555_NUM_8_33_777	42.58	25.42	see you later			7777_33_33_0_999_666_88_0_555_2_8_33_77_7
TPTB	0	0.00	8_7_8_22	13.98	6.99	the powers that be			8_44_33_0_7_666_9_33_777_7777_0_8_44_2_8_0_22_33
2 day	0	0.00	NUM_2_3_2_999	82.2	68.86	today	37	0.10	8_666_3_2_999
TIC	0	0.00	8_444_222	13.51	7.2	tongue in cheek			8_666_66_4_88_33_0_444_66_0_222_44_33_33_55
VVV	0	0.00	888_888_888	24.36	13.14	very very very			888_33_777_999_0_888_33_777_999_0_888_3_3_777_999

Frequencies of attestation for the RealTxt respellings based on SEEN USE data (N=823)

Appendix VI.vii: Results for orthographic types identified in the PopTxt corpus

Attestation of SMS orthographic choices found in ‘public sphere metadiscourse’

As noted in Chapter 5 and Appendix V, scrutiny of exemplifying SMS orthographic choices and accompanying commentaries found in ‘public sphere metadiscourse,’ including journalism, SMS dictionaries and glossaries, and more authoritative lexical lists such as Crystal’s (2004, 2008) appears to show different principles of orthographic choice in frequent representation. These differences can be observed in corpus attestation and in the ‘forty variables’ instrument explained in Chapter 4 and its appendix.

Following the method and rationale explained in Chapter 4 and its appendix, a selection of mass-mediatised representations of SMS orthographic choice was scanned and then word-processed in a lexical list corpus termed *PopTxt* to distinguish it from the *RealTxt* corpus word frequency lists drawn from data collected from situated interaction. This PopTxt corpus list was coded to give a profile of types of respelling.

The general impression was that PopTxt data was closer in semiotic design to argots such as L337 or ‘hacker language (Raymond 1996) perhaps supporting the pattern of exaggerated claims in news media of SMS choices as representing a discourse of social and linguistic deviancy. SMS seems to have been exemplified as subculture. There is an esoteric and opaque method of orthographic formation which can also be found in the more transgressive and oppositional discourses associated with technologically-informed subcultures such as those used by hackers, dark net participants and web mobs such as the group termed ‘anonymous’. Here there is a history of transgressive orthographic innovations in orthographic choice and script systems which can be traced back to the rebuses and arcane conventions of those accessing digitally-mediated interaction in the 1970s and 1980s with all the cultural ramifications in the social image of new media as a world of opaque subcultural communicative practices by those commonly stereotyped in the lexical pillory of hackers, geeks or nerds.

It seems that mass-mediatised public discourse sometimes characterised routine interaction in commoditised, digitally-mediated vernaculars such as SMS as being sourced in such esoteric and subcultural interaction. The manner and degree of such representation is problematic, and especially when it leaches into accounts written by scholars and educational material based on that scholarship.

Number comparisons with representations in popular accounts

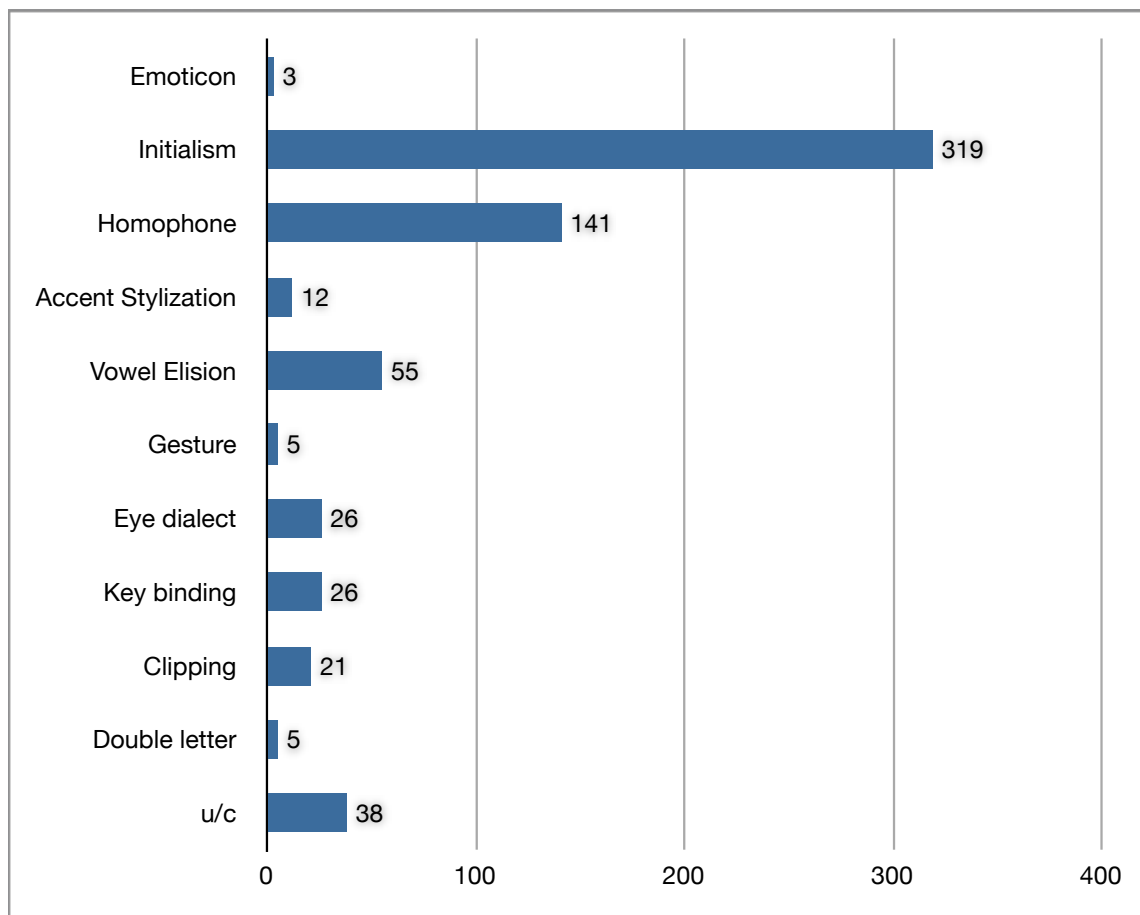
Coding and analysis of a data-set constituted by Manders’ bestselling SMS dictionary has shown it to consist principally of emoticons and rebuses with few of these in attested by corpus evidence in RealTxt or in Tagg’s CorTxt. A comparison between a 19,000 random word sample

of the RealTxt corpus and a corpus made up of the SMS lexical lists in Mander 2001, Crystal 2004 and 2008 and a 2006 school diary SMS glossary showed a similar level of mismatch with indices for esoteric initialisms and emoticon types notably out of proportion with the evidence provided by Tagg's CorTxt or by this study. Emoticons and initialisms make up 79% of **types** reported in the represented PopTxt wordlist but feature only as a minor statistical presence in the RealTxt corpus (3.2% types and 7.5% **tokens**). Scrutinising the alphabetical listing in database spreadsheet shows in graphical form the level of elaborated ingenuity in the represented forms.

Table B	Types	Types %	Tokens	Tokens %	Average
Emoticons	23	1.60	97	1.51	4.22
Initialisms	23	1.60	247	3.86	10.74
Total	46	3.19	344	5.37	7.48

Emoticons and initialisms in actual situated SMS interaction

By every comparison, popular accounts and mediatised representations appear to show different profile of types of respelling to those found in situated interaction. This difference appears to extend to more authoritative lexical lists such as the lexicpedial reference compiled by Crystal from private corpus. For example coding Crystal 2004 and 2008 shows a higher proportion of initialism and acronym constructions than found in RealTxt or CortTxt with few of these achieving recognition in either the RealTxt or Cor Txt wordlists.



Lists in Crystal 2004 and 2008 coded by orthographic formation

256 (Apple I-Works Numbers and MS Office Excel)

Appendix VII

The style of messages, the emoticon and abbreviation content and the length are all heavily influenced by social standards, age and the person receiving the message. Most ppl I know use the occasional :), and we abbreviate long common words, as with 'ppl' at the start of this sentence. LOL (or LMAO, ROFL etc) is generally discouraged, as some people respond to a text or IM with just 'LOL', which adds nothing to the conversation, and effectively kills it. We do sometimes use it for comic effect, like the ROFLcopter.

I don't reply to people who use lots of abbreviations such as "gr8" "tmoz" as I find it annoying.

having a blackberry, i use text language much less now as it corrects your spelling for you and its quicker to type as you have to use the key pad like a computer keypad. I do sometimes use text language when writing formally, but i nearly always realise and change it.

The emoticons are good because they help to show emotions and as you cant hear the tone of which someone is speaking, it helps you not to take it the wrong way.

In texts, I tend to use only :) :P and :(. However the use of MSN has enabled me to understand from memory the meanings of smileys such as ;) :@ (Y) (N) Some people use these in texts. Emoticons are brilliant for showing the facial expressions you cannot make.

depending on who the message is to, i will send them. but more often than not, i cant be bothered to go to symbol.

When I was younger I think I tried a bit harder to use text messaging language/ abbreviations as it was part of teen culture at school. Now I hardly ever use abbreviations and hardly ever receive messages including them. If I did receive a message full of abbreviations I would probably judge the sender to be stupid, whether this was fair or not.

My friends often laugh at me for using correct punctuation!

I believe i have come to use less and less abbreviations in texts, as well as my friends as it got to a point where it was getting very confusing to read and people were actually making it harder for themselves than just typing the actual word. It used to influence my spelling for example tomorrow-tomo, after typing tomo so much when i came to write the full word when writing an essay i had trouble remembering the spelling of it.

Structure of Appendix VII

Appendix VII supports Chapter 7 by presenting the full table of quantitative survey results along with more detailed commentary about the demographic profile of the cohort of respondents and the approach taken to the qualitative data analysis, including the coding of open text answers to the questionnaire schedule. The appendix needs to be read in conjunction with the sections about the questionnaire in Appendix IV including the rationale for the schedule design and the example of a completed questionnaire.

Appendix VII is sequenced as follows:

- Questionnaire survey results (quantitative indices);

- Profile of the survey cohort: age, gender, use of SMS;

- Analysing the qualitative commentary;

- Codes developed by tabular analysis of qualitative data.

Questionnaire survey results (quantitative indices)

		24 College 2007(N=145)	30 Open Access 2008 (N=556)	65 Follow up 2009 (N=122)	Total (N=823)
Age	5 - 11	0.68%	2.69%	0.82%	2.06%
	11 - 16	2.05%	42.11%	19.67%	31.73%
	16 - 19	82.88%	39.61%	45.90%	48.17%
	19 - 25	11.64%	3.23%	24.59%	7.88%
	26 - 35	1.37%	5.56%	4.10%	4.61%
	36 - 50	0.68%	5.02%	0.82%	3.63%
	51 - 65	0.68%	1.79%	2.46%	1.69%
Gender	Male / Female	32.88% / 67.12%	42.47% / 57.53%	34.06% / 65.94%	39.48% / 60.52%
Freq. of Text use	Don't text	0%	2.87%	0%	1.94%
	Receive but don't send	4.79%	2.33%	2.46%	2.78%
	1 - 20 a week	31.51%	36.92%	22.13%	33.77%
	20 - 50 a week	30.14%	22.58%	21.31%	23.72%
	Over 50 a week	31.51%	14.16%	22.13%	18.40%
	Over 20 a day	N/A	13.80%	31.97%	17.07%

		Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
Your attitudes to standard spelling, abbreviated spellings and punctuation	I am good at spelling.	82.19%	10.27%	7.53%	80.65%	14.52%	4.84%	90.98%	5.74%	3.28%	82.45%	12.47%	5.08%
	I find English spelling easy to learn.	78.77%	17.12%	4.11%	77.06%	16.49%	6.45%	86.07%	9.02%	4.92%	78.70%	15.49%	5.81%
	I don't like abbreviated spellings like those found in text messaging.	23.29%	23.97%	52.74%	27.78%	24.55%	47.67%	45.90%	22.13%	31.97%	29.68%	24.09%	46.24%
	I like being able to spell in the way I want in my texts.	80.82%	13.70%	5.48%	80.29%	13.80%	5.91%	76.23%	10.66%	13.11%	79.78%	13.32%	6.90%
	I think punctuation is important in all written communication.	49.32%	27.40%	23.29%	37.81%	26.16%	36.02%	56.56%	19.67%	23.77%	42.62%	25.42%	31.96%
You and predictive text (for example, T9)	I use mainly predictive text	41.10%	N/A	58.90%	49.28%	N/A	50.72%	49.18%	N/A	50.82%	47.82%	N/A	52.18%
	I find predictive text annoying to use.	52.05%	5.48%	42.47%	41.40%	13.08%	45.52%	37.70%	14.75%	47.54%	42.73%	11.99%	45.28%
	I find predictive text easy to use.	47.26%	11.64%	41.10%	51.79%	17.38%	30.82%	60.66%	9.84%	29.51%	52.31%	15.25%	32.44%
	I add text message spellings to my phone dictionary.	36.30%	9.59%	54.11%	42.83%	13.62%	43.55%	47.54%	13.93%	38.52%	42.38%	12.96%	44.66%
Learning: the way you learn text message spellings	I learn about text spelling abbreviations from books and dictionaries.	1.37%	2.05%	96.58%	6.81%	8.42%	84.77%	4.92%	4.10%	90.98%	5.57%	6.66%	87.77%
	I learn my text spellings from people texting me.	73.97%	10.96%	15.07%	70.07%	14.87%	15.05%	75.41%	8.20%	16.39%	71.55%	13.19%	15.25%
	I learn my text spelling from articles in newspapers and magazines.	6.16%	12.33%	81.51%	9.32%	13.26%	77.42%	12.30%	12.30%	75.41%	9.21%	12.95%	77.84%
	I can usually figure out the meaning of a text message spelling.	94.52%	4.79%	0.68%	86.92%	8.96%	4.12%	90.16%	5.74%	4.10%	88.74%	7.75%	3.51%
Practices: the way you text and your experiences as a user	I rarely use text message abbreviations in my own texts.	30.14%	13.01%	56.85%	35.30%	18.28%	46.42%	55.74%	9.02%	35.25%	37.42%	15.98%	46.60%
	I never use text messaging spellings in my formal work.	89.04%	4.11%	6.85%	77.60%	12.37%	10.04%	86.89%	8.20%	4.92%	80.99%	10.30%	8.72%
	I vary my text message spelling depending on who I am texting.	75.34%	8.90%	15.75%	63.62%	13.26%	23.12%	65.57%	4.92%	29.51%	65.97%	11.26%	22.77%
	I vary my text message spelling depending on whether I am in hurry.	73.29%	6.16%	20.55%	63.26%	13.26%	23.48%	58.20%	9.84%	31.97%	64.28%	11.50%	24.22%
	I don't usually punctuate my text messages.	27.40%	16.44%	56.16%	35.48%	19.89%	44.62%	12.30%	14.75%	72.95%	30.62%	18.52%	50.85%

Quantitative results for the questionnaire surveys

Functions of quantitative and qualitative questionnaire data

The questionnaire data examined in Chapter 7 give evidence of factors shaping SMS orthographic choice in both the quantitative indices and coded qualitative commentaries. These reveal respondents operating with persistent watchfulness about how to make social distinction in the conditions of more fluid expectation about what constitutes orthographic accomplishment. Variation is inevitably both patterned and heterogeneous. The questionnaire schedule probes the insights arrived at from fieldwork, which suggested SMS orthographic choice showed a level of variation in practice which was not amenable to analysis by a sole dependence on text and corpus data. The schedule was designed to elicit quantitative and qualitative outputs. The quantitative data offered ways of seeing norms and variations in user perspectives, including the patterned heterogeneity of those dimensions. The coding and analysis of the qualitative data in extended answers to open questions showed recurring pre-occupations and pressures affecting users' choices. These could be identified indirectly, using a coding process adapted from grounded theory methods. As shown in Chapter 6, a considerable degree of patterned orthographic variation by comparison to standard forms is attested in all corpus measures and their representation; this variance is localised to similar types to those found in Tagg's CorTxt corpus but with more orthographic '*types*' and in more intense distribution of '*tokens*'²⁵⁷. Other respondents showed little engagement with such options and censured them in metadiscursive commentary which appears to frame orthographic choices as a matter determined autonomously of context. This profile of an autonomous literacy stance appears to constitute between 25% and 30% of the cohort of respondents.

In dyadic self-published peer-to-peer interaction in unregimented writing such divergent attitudes reflect the instability of norms established under conditions of instantiation and scrutiny which are inevitably localised to audience and context-specificity. Analysis shows that such variety of disposition sits uneasily within the framing of indeterminate 'free variation' since it is subjected to forms of informally distributed regulation in 'relays' or 'speech chains' of metapragmatic estimation, toleration, and censure, and to the reverse face of approval and imitation. This has been discussed in some detail by Agha using the metaphor of such choices functioning as metapragmatic recruitment of particular dimensions of audience engagement by construal of affect, affinity space or by some other form of interactional alignment with the imaginary expectation of audience preference. So, for example, an informalised choice of spelling in conjunction with context-bound, implicit reference may recruit peer-group stances of social solidarity, defined in part by their opposition to adult, institutional norms. In these data, choices appear to be generally correlated with the users' level of educational maturation, and literate accomplishment, and their associated access to and control of standardised codes and practices. While older more educated users tended to exhibit more standardised orthographic practices, there were many exceptions to this trend, which can also co-exist with permissive interpretation of the significance of variation by others.

Profile of the survey cohort: age, gender, use of SMS

		24 College 2007 (N=145)	30 Open Access 2008 (N=556)	65 Follow up 2009 (N=122)	Total (N=823)
Age	5 - 11	0.68%	2.69%	0.82%	2.06%
	11 - 16	2.05%	42.11%	19.67%	31.73%
	16 - 19	82.88%	39.61%	45.90%	48.17%
	19 - 25	11.64%	3.23%	24.59%	7.88%
	26 - 35	1.37%	5.56%	4.10%	4.61%
	36 - 50	0.68%	5.02%	0.82%	3.63%
	51 - 65	0.68%	1.79%	2.46%	1.69%
Gender	Male / Female	32.88% / 67.12%	42.47% / 57.53%	34.06% / 65.94%	39.48% / 60.52%
	Don't text	0%	2.87%	0%	1.94%
Freq. of Text use	Receive but don't send	4.79%	2.33%	2.46%	2.78%
	1 - 20 a week	31.51%	36.92%	22.13%	33.77%
	20 - 50 a week	30.14%	22.58%	21.31%	23.72%
	Over 50 a week	31.51%	14.16%	22.13%	18.40%
	Over 20 a day	N/A	13.80%	31.97%	17.07%

Profiles of age, gender and SMS texting profiles of respondent cohorts

Aggregating the three surveys, 80% of respondents report themselves being students in secondary education with nearly 50% representing the post-compulsory 16-19 age range. The reported gender profile is 6:4 female:male, with a more asymmetric 7:3 ratio in Survey 24, drawn mainly from 16-19 year old students. The smaller Survey 65 has 25% representation by young adults in the 19-25 range, mostly undergraduates, giving it a slightly older, more educated profile. Just over 12% of the sample come from the 19-35 range; as reported in Chapter 6. This is in contrast to Tagg's CorTxt where 80% of respondents reported themselves being in the 21-35 age range, with only 3% younger. Most of the RealTxt survey answers in the older age ranges are from those in graduate professional roles, as in CorTxt, including teachers, who represent the main occupational group surveyed, with a sample of over 60 respondents reporting themselves to be teachers, distributed over the three surveys.

SMS Texting profiles of use

These data confirm the wide diffusion of SMS texting as a literate practice by 2008, confirming the data profile seen in Figure 1.2. 97% or more respondents report some involvement in receiving SMS messages with under 2% reporting not texting at all. Between a quarter and a third of the three samples report sending 20 text messages or less a week, with about 60% sending over 20 a week, and many more than that: nearly 20% send over 20 a day. The mean aggregate is boosted by over 30% of the highest profile of use by the older respondents in survey 24. In the qualitative data statements and in interviews, respondents commonly explain they are sending more text messages as a result of newer phone contracts, which make texting free or low cost, with implications entailed for the motivational value of some of the shortened text entry tactics associated with earlier SMS practices. In a related survey applied to one of the three college sites (SCS), over 60% of respondents reported frequent use of *MSN* for over an hour a night. Larger scale contemporaneous questionnaire surveys also report high levels of access to fast unmetered internet, especially following the diffusion of broadband internet access from 2001. So these figures for phone use can be cross-referred with ongoing co-

occurring engagement with related digital media practices, such as instant messaging, social networking and content sharing and commentating, as exemplified in Figure 1.1.

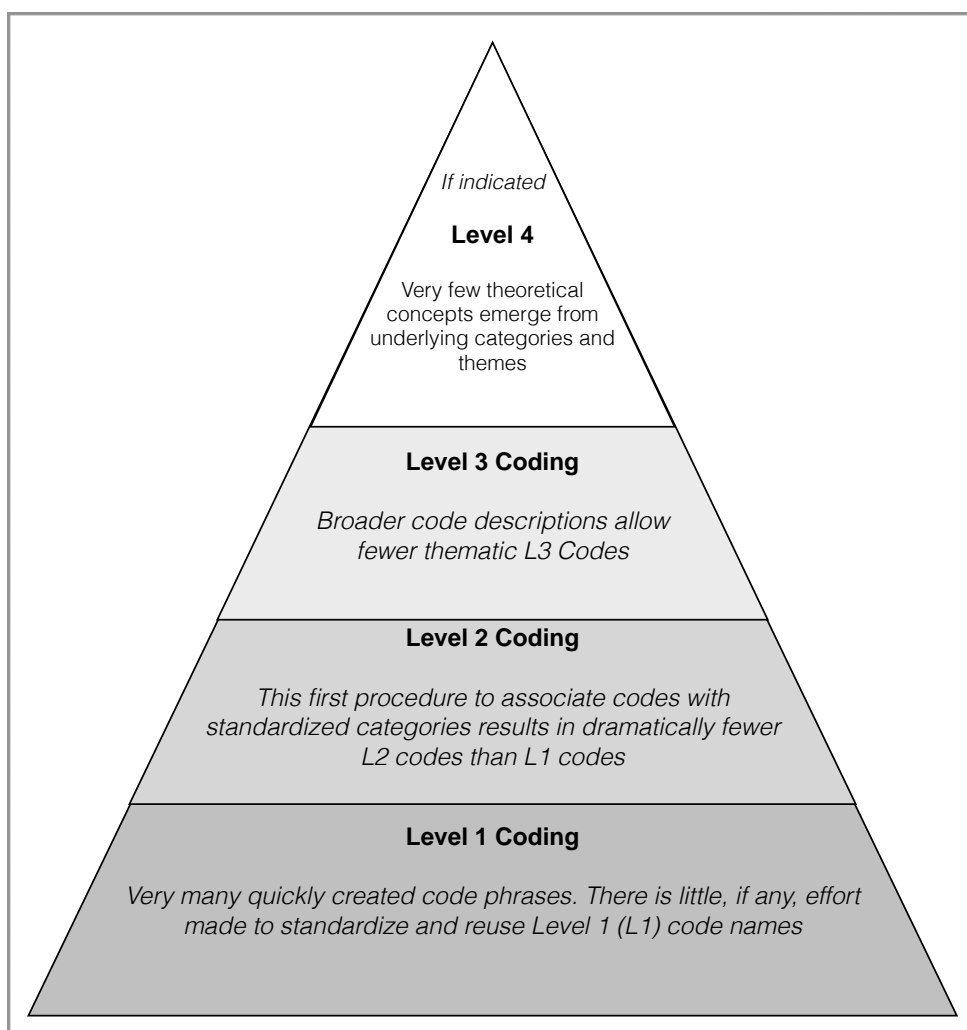
Analysing the qualitative commentary

The qualitative survey data-set takes the form of answers to three open questions, designed to elicit responses shaped further by a number of embedded prompts. These questions and prompts are set out in the tables explaining the structure of the questionnaire in Appendix IV (IV;ii). From a methodological perspective, the questions were designed to test propositions developed in the course of earlier fieldwork observation in process of formulating the analytical framework. The first question about the SMS homework text had the base function of testing whether, and to what extent, this example of SMS orthographic register was representative of likely situated SMS orthographic choice, as perceived by respondents. It also elicited a multiplicity of aesthetic evaluations of social distinction, which could be viewed as the manifestation of a kind of ‘speech chain’ en masse, as respondents evaluated the example and explained how it was, and was not, like their own experience of practice.

In addition it elicited imaginings of the characterological voice in the cited message, and the imagined personhood of its writer (Agha 2003; see ‘iconisation’ in Irvine & Gal 2000;37). Many of these responses were surprisingly vehement in tone, especially in the profile of younger respondents, as reported below. The elicited answers fulfilled the designed purpose of the question and gave support to Agha’s argument that status indexicals arrived by the evaluative acts of ‘ordinary persons’ construct imaginary ‘personhoods’. The second question focused on eliciting reporting about perceptions of smileys and other emoticons. These were chosen as the epitomising example of popular representation of SMS and related digitally-mediated writing²⁵⁸, which has achieved a measure of iconicity in everyday awareness. These creative graphical re-etymologisations of punctuation symbols had featured in the observations of earlier forms of CMC (Nelson, 1987, Reid 1991, Rheingold 1993, Turkle 1995). Their level of iteration, and degree of elaboration had been contested in empirical study of more recent popularised use of digital media such as informal email (Petrie 1999). There was some evidence that emoticons were becoming more frequent and conventionalised in SMS, with regular use by many of a small subset (Crystal 2002, 2004, Tagg 2004). The second question probed reporting of active and passive repertoires and was successful in such elicitation; respondents frequently gave detail of the particular emoticons which had achieved recognition for them. The third question with its three prompts is focused on eliciting commentary relevant to the matrix in the analytical framework, and the emphasis in this study on change over duration. It encourages focus on ‘leakage’ and intertextual influence between SMS orthographic registers, writing in institutional contexts, and emergent conventions in other CMCs. It allows an opportunity for respondents to elaborate on answers given to closed questions about these intertextual relationships in the quantitative questionnaire schedule. It also elicits data supporting the

argument about changes in choice over biographical trajectory, as explored in more depth in Chapter 8. These questions and prompts elicited many thoughtful and discerning reports of crossings between SMS and related forms. Many respondents placed their current profiles of practice in relation to previous choices in miniature potted biographies of their evolving SMS orthographic register.

It was necessary to complete all the quantitative question schedule in order to submit the survey but qualitative question answers were in effect optional. Not all respondents answered all questions, with proportionately fewer and shorter responses from the 11-16 age range, who were also more likely to strike a social stance of evaluation with less discussion of their rationale. Over 50,000 words of note form commentary answers give variegated, indicative coverage of all questions, and are often thoughtful and reflective, as the excerpts quoted show. Such a volume of response called for data distillation using the kinds of approach explained by Barton and Hamilton based on grounded theory (Barton and Hamilton 1998, Corbin and Strauss 1993). Grounded theory seemed the best method in the absence of identifying this kind of qualitative scrutiny of SMS choice in the literature. The coding and analysis of the 50,000 words of qualitative data in the open text comments followed the methods outlined by Hahn which demonstrates application of a four level coding procedure, as shown below.



Hahn's representation of iterative coding of qualitative data (2008:172)

The approach seeks to develop an emergent analytical framework arrived at by iterative observation leading to theoretical models grounded in the meaning-potentials implied by the configurations of data. Hahn draws on grounded theory qualitative method in a technologically-assisted technique based on using facilities embedded in generic wordprocessing and spreadsheet applications rather than the dedicated research applications, such as Atlas or NVivo.

Initial coding

In the initial cycle of coding and data-set familiarisation the individual answers to each question were extracted from the questionnaires and each set of the three answers in each survey was annotated using level 1 and 2 codes, as described by Hahn above, to establish descriptive patterns of user-orientation to standard and non-standard forms. These codes described practices in relation to standard forms but without identifying patterns in the data as structured by the analytical framework. In short, the focus was too crudely focused on comparisons with standardised forms.

Second pass coding

The aggregated commentary was extracted a second time and re-set in the tabular form shown below with each row featuring the answers of each respondent, as in Figure 7.4, enabling the researcher to see more easily the connections to be inferred across a respondent's three answers in the horizontal row and the patterns in answers to particular questions by scanning down the vertical column. This re-representation made the incipient patterns of respondent preoccupation easier to discern. A selection of the data were coded manually to discern emergent categories and exemplifying expressions using three to five near synonyms.²⁵⁹ The analysis proceeded by using additional column in the spreadsheet for the level 3 and 4 codes arrived at.

Scottish School Girl	Comments	Use of Emotions	Comments	Anything Else?	Comments (ID)
157 The text is abbreviated wherever possible, whereas the texts I read/write are near standard spellings. Most of these abbreviations I wouldn't use. I may occasionally use an abbreviation if a word is fairly long, such as 'girlfriend', so I don't go over the text-limit and pay another ten pence for a few extra characters! There is some standard punctuation, such as full-stops at the end of sentences, and capital letters at the start of letters and for 'I'. I use these in my own texts where possible, provided I'm not rushing to send them.	degree opacity difference economy orientation to standard	Because you can't see the facial expressions of people texting, sometimes emoticons help to convey how they're feeling. It can also sometimes add emphasis. I don't mind them, but excessive use can be become annoying. I may use emoticons now and again.	folk language paralytic contribution degree? evaluation U a little	My text-messaging style stays the same, although if I don't have much time to write the message or I am using someone else's phone, I may use abbreviations to save time (and money). If I am answering a specific question, I may give a very short reply.	Style stays the same Concise? elaborated
158 It's really difficult to understand. Between me and my friends this is not very typical, it's really hard to understand, but she does use words that me and my friends use such as 2, gf, grb, tht, wntd, 2day, c, mls, v.	opacity degree friendship overlap	I use emoticons all the time in my texts and so do my friends, emoticons are good way to show emotions in texts instead of describing it.	U ✓ emoticon mood eaching meaning	I don't really know, I use new language that I find in text language from my friends.	miscellaneous/friends it's a friends thing
159 me and my friends would not text like this. I think it is difficult to understand however I would use some of the language such as: bro, grb, mon, asap, 2day. I would also use punctuation as she has	opacity degree some overlap friendship not typical at all difference opacity	I use emotions such as these and so do my friends, it is quicker than describing how you are feeling etc.	U quicker mood feeling U * emotions, mood	show other friends text, also who you are texting to for example if I was texting my mother I would spell all word correctly in full and use punctuation but if I was texting my friends I would use abbreviated language to save time.	friends audience (e.g. parents)
160 It's not really typical at all, I've never read a text message quite like this one. It's very confusing, and most of it, I haven't got a clue what it means.		I love using them, they make the text look more interesting and it's also a way of expressing feelings and emotions.			

Draft coding of a sample of the qualitative data in Survey 24 showing emergent categories

The hyperlinks shown in the highlighted blue numbers in the far left-hand column enabled the researcher to cross-reference the comment with the original individual questionnaire answer, enabling a dual focus, micro/macro perspective in data familiarisation. For example, it was possible to establish the distinctive profiles of commentary and exemplification in the responses from 11-16 year olds in compulsory education by comparison with those in 16-19 education, suggesting a consistent trend towards more standardised, nuanced approaches in older years. It was also possible to make connections between conservatively-orientated quantitative answers and similar attitudes in the qualitative data, so verifying the consistency of the data-sets.

The draft codes were then reapplied using wordprocessing and spreadsheet software enabling the codes to call up all instances to which the same code had been attached.

Codes developed by tabular analysis of qualitative data

Questionnaire qualitative data: Question One				
Research Category	Feature	Incidence and Intensity	Exemplifying quotation	Interpretation
OPACITY	Respondent comment on the relative opacity of spelling choice as opposed to the kinds of transparent choices where meaning can be inferred in context without difficulty (e.g. homophone spellings)	Frequently reported in survey comments sometimes accompanied with strong expressions of exasperation or evaluation.	<<Not at all like anything I would ever write and I don't understand much of it without effort.>> 65/112	Respondents appear to share a tacit social maxim that SMS spelling choices should be made so meanings can be intuited without secondary glosses. Other behaviour is marked as needy and attracts 'viral policing'.
DEGREE	Respondent comments to the effect the degree of respelling is more intense than would be found in their own choices	Frequently reported though less common than opacity.	<<theres 2 much abbriviation i cnt undastand it !!! there cums a point when theres so much abriviations of wrds n phrases that the message cn't b undastood !>> 24/116	It appears the degree of non-standardness offends tacit pragmatic expectations of logical and purposeful innovation which are based on principles of attending to audience and acting in moderation.
OVERLAP	Respondent comments to the effect there is a degree of overlap between the respellings used in the example and those they have experienced	Reported by about 15 to 20% of respondents	<<Some of my friends do use text language like this but not to quite this extent. They just use emoticons and some abbreviations...>> 30/1033	This comment shows accurate recognition that the SSMS example includes some routine respellings as well as many esoteric forms.
SOCIAL EVALUATION	Respondent's explicit evaluation of the inferred personality of the writer often including estimation of their worthiness. Often but not always negative.	Comments made by between 10% and 15% of respondents with a higher level of insulting commentary from those in 11-16 range.	<<My texts make sense, you'd need some sort of chav written rosetta stone for this.>> 65/886	Respondents appear to make socially distancing speech chain judgments of SMS orthographic choices at an intuitive level even when these are not justified with rationale.

Questionnaire qualitative data: Question One				
Research Category	Feature	Incidence and Intensity	Exemplifying quotation	Interpretation
TYPE	Respondent comments on classificatory type of respelling used by comparison with those in their experience sometimes touching on linguistic classifications	Comments of this kind often made by respondents usually at an impressionistic level with a small number of precise observations usually by undergraduates and teachers	<<...The use of abbreviations and initialisms are so prevalent throughout, more so than a normal text.>> 65/1784	Even when not able to identify esoteric respellings using linguistic terminology respondents appear to make intuitive evaluations of the types of respelling in SSSMS .

Questionnaire qualitative data: Question Two				
Research Category	Feature	Incidence and Intensity	Exemplifying Quotation	Interpretation
EMOTICONS: SEEN and USE	Respondents' self reported estimation of their experience and use of emoticons using Seen/ Use methodological instrument described in Chapter 4. There is a subset of a reported profile of frequent emoticon use in conjunction with standard spelling preferences.	Most answers (62%) indicate experience of emoticons with between 30% and 40% claiming some use, including a smaller subset claiming use with standard spelling.	<<i use these all the time and actually find it hard now to write any message or letter to a friend without them! i usually use ;) :) and : (. my friends do to.>> 24/250	Emoticons appear to be becoming semi-conventionalised even among users who spell standardly. Most people recognise they do something useful even when they do not use them themselves while a small minority deride the practice or claim never to have experienced it.
SEMIOTIC RESUPPLY or PARALINGUISTIC RESTITUTION	Respondent comments to the effect emoticons re-supply contextualisation cues of facial expression, gesture and hand movements	Many respondents (20%) comment on the function of emoticons to resupply paralinguistic contextualisation cues which would have been expected in face to face speech.	<<Because you can't see the facial expressions of people texting, sometimes emoticons help to convey how they're feeling.>> 24/157	Again there seems to be a common understanding of emoticons offering situated affordances by re-supplying paralinguistic details associated with spoken situations. Suggests users are situating themselves in a mixed mode of composition.
EMOTION and MOOD	Respondent comments to the effect emoticons supply interpersonal metafunction with intimations of emotion and disposition including how the writer appears to others: cf 'screen presence'	Many respondents make a general claim about emoticons indicating their mood and general sense of wellbeing or disposition with emoticons functioning like a smile or general intimation of friendliness.	<< I like to add these to text messages to personalise what im writing and put my emotions across as an image.>> 24/164 <<the smileys is basically shows to maybe show what mood u are in...>>. 24/117	This frequent report was also often unspecific in explanation but it seemed that emoticons conveyed emotion but also functioned to convey the sense of wellbeing and mood on the part of their writer. Again this may point to a more vivid cross-modal perspective which melds writing with a more general sense of embodied social performance.

Questionnaire qualitative data: Question Two				
Research Category	Feature	Incidence and Intensity	Exemplifying Quotation	Interpretation
DISAMBIGUATION	Many respondents refer to the value of emoticons for disambiguating humour and other inexplicit but synchronous communication	This was frequently reported and explained in some detail suggesting well recognised affordances of emoticons for supplying contextualisation cues to frame less literal articulation.	<<I use quite a lot of emoticons because without reading tone of voice and body language it can be difficult to tell how serious the person is, when they are being ironic or whether something is a joke.>> 24/114	The configuration of conceptual spokenness, polyfocal attention, semi-synchronicity and awkward text entry intensifies the affordances of emoticons for many. It seems they are viewed as a necessary convention for preventing humorous intent from causing offence.
RESTRICTED SET	Respondent comment on the small number of emoticons types in use or giving exemplification of the small set of emoticons in their own microlectal experience.	A substantial minority of respondents reported their routine SMS emoticons with some claiming only <☺>	<<I use them a lot. Mostly: :) :D :P>> 24/251	The emoticons used generally come from a small set of well recognised types as established by Tagg 2004, 2009 with minority use of more ambitious innovations furnished by chatrooms or smart phones.
EMPHASIS	General claim of emoticons as a device for intensifying emphasis usually with little developed explanation of how this works	Many respondents imply emoticons give intensifying emphasis and especially those in the 11-16 age range.	<<i sometimes use these symbols to help emphasise the text >>24/124	There seems to be a frequent, general if unreflective awareness that emoticons carry a function of intensifying focus and enhancing semiotic vividness.

Questionnaire qualitative data: Question Two				
Research Category	Feature	Incidence and Intensity	Exemplifying Quotation	Interpretation
MICROLECTAL CIRCLE	Respondent reference to emoticon use by reference to the norms of their circle of SMS interlocutors	Some answers make direct or indirect reference to practices of their microlectal circle of address. Comments usually indicate an orientation to peer-group norms while others report mixed unsettled peer practices including their own dispreference in spite of peer norms.	<<I don't use them when i use text messages, however they are used in some of the texts that i recieve - the use of them depends on the relationship i have with that person, i am only sent smilies from friends, not employers or parents.>> 24/129	Users appear to understand their experience of emoticons is limited to what they have seen in their communicative circle; sometimes just a friendship group. Older users relate emoticon use to segmented audiences.
INTERTEXTUALITY	References to experience of emoticons in other digital media platforms and especially instant messaging on MSN Messenger	A significant minority of answers claim use of emoticons was learnt through other platforms, especially MSN	<<Use them alot - use them more on facebook and email than texting...>> 65/1098	Although not frequently reported , the detailed answers in the reports confirm the analysis in Chapter 5 and its identification of intertextual cross-media influences
EASE, EFFICIENCY, HASTE and HURRY	Claims of the ease of using emoticons when under environmental pressures of time, polyfocal attention or lack of message space. Includes comments from those with autonomous literacy orientation who welcome occasional flexibility.	Some answers make comments about the ease of using emoticons in terms of the reduction of text entry demands	<<Also, if I'm in a hurry or low on credit I will write in abbreviated form. The majority of the time I try to use full English and omit the punctuation when texting, as a rule.>> 24/1000	There seems to be a general recognition of emoticons offering significant affordances with minimal compositional effort. For some the graphical impact is found more vivid and appropriate than verbal elaboration.

Questionnaire qualitative data: Question Two				
Research Category	Feature	Incidence and Intensity	Exemplifying Quotation	Interpretation
PHONETECH	References to difficulty or ease of using emoticons in relation to the respondents' own particular phone technology or their capacity to access such phone features as their phone/ contract offers them.	Infrequent report but seems to be salient to those who experience these difficulties and affects many when they change phone interfaces .	<<It depends on what kind of phone you have because certain phone companys have emotions and others are not compatable with other phones and the emotions/ symbols do not work and you have to guess what they ar> 30/409	Another reminder that technological issues cannot be written off as technological determinism but are experienced by users in different levels and configurations

Questionnaire qualitative data: Question Three				
Research Category	Feature	Incidence and Intensity	Quotation	Interpretation
BIOGRAPHICAL TRAJECTORY	Respondent comment on the way their idiolectal SMS practices have altered over the course of time in relation to changing maturation, social roles, standard literate accomplishment and those of their circle of interlocutors.	Frequent comment from respondents in 16-19 age range and older at between 30% and 40% of those responses. Infrequent among 11-16 cohort	<<I think that texting has changed and that less people use non-standard english. I think that it also depends on whether you use T9 or not, as T9 may be more likely to use standard english.>> 30/1026	Sustained, repeated claims of changes in attitudes and practices over time in relation to broader roles. In line with evidence from interviews, corpus and textual analysis
SITUATIONAL and ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURES	Respondent comments on changes made to their own practices because of environmental pressures such as being in a hurry or needing to save space or save money	Frequent report at over 15% suggesting these contingent pressures are seen as influential ; sometimes allied to extension in argument to SMS spelling choice as being driven by imperatives to act logically and to behave economically.	<<...if i am in a hurry i will abbreviate alot.>> 154 <<There are many factors which influence my text style... If I am walking my text seems to be more short and abbreviated because I can't be bothered to keep txtng> 24/220	Respondents mindful of environmental contextual pressures which appear to be both real pressures and also providing an unreflective default explanation of all behaviour as driven by logic. This is sometimes linked to to such logics legitimising non-standard choices of spelling.
AUDIENCE	Respondent comments on the way they vary orthographic practice in relation to audience. Surprising frequency of examples contrasting behaviour with friends and parents.	Relatively frequent at around 25% of sample with autonomous / conservative profile claiming less audience – oriented adaptation	<<I think that factors that affect my text writing style is who i'm texting. if i am texting my mum i have to be sure to use all correct language otherwise she wont understand.>> 163	Common awareness that audience matters and must be attended to. Conversely that not to attend to reasonable expectations of audience is marked as deficit .

Questionnaire qualitative data: Question Three				
Research Category	Feature	Incidence and Intensity	Quotation	Interpretation
SOCIAL EVALUATION	Respondent's explicit evaluation of the inferred personality of the writer often including estimation of their worthiness. Often but not always negative. Sometimes linked to estimations of social class.	More frequent in reporting and pungent in formulation from 11-16 range and from those reporting autonomous literacy disposition.	<<My texts make sense, you'd need some sort of chav written rosetta stone for this.>> 65/886 on SSSMS <all texties are chavs> 65/116	Evidence suggests that SMS respelling choice is always subject to scrutiny and to social evaluation even when respondent is unable to rationalise an olfactory sense of social distinction
LEAKAGE	Respondent comments on the leakage of SNMS respelling into formal domains of writing or on the respondents capacity to spell standardly.	Infrequent but salient comments about possible or actual leakage often accompanied by anxiety about such 'contagion'	<<The whole debate over whether or not text language will creep into kids' formal writing is just pathetic..... Children know perfectly well when is the time to abbreviate and when they should write properly, the only time they may use it is perhaps when taking class notes if they're trying to write as quickly as possible in a kind of shorthand.>> 30/560	Leakage appears to be connected to a social anxiety about an incontinence of social performance based upon tacit belief in in/ appropriate spelling/domain configurations .
BOUNDARYING	Reporting of managing to restrict SMS orthographic choices to SMS contexts with little or no leakage into formal contexts or institutional domains	Infrequent explicit claim but more frequent than concerns about leakage	<<Most ppl I know use the occasional :), and we abbreviate long common words, as with 'ppl' at the start of this sentence. LOL (or LMAO, ROFL etc) is generally discouraged, as some people respond to a text or IM with just 'LOL', which adds nothing to the conversation, and effectively kills it.>> 65/1826	The importance of being able to boundary SMS repelling/Txt practices to digital media contexts appears to be a social given for many older respondents.

Questionnaire qualitative data: Question Three				
Research Category	Feature	Incidence and Intensity	Quotation	Interpretation
CONSERVATIVE’ or NORMATIVE or AUTONOMOUS ORTHOGRAPHIC MODEL	Respondent indication of orientation to standard English as autonomous literacy default	About 25% of the sample identify themselves with a more conservative orientation to autonomous literacy. This appears to be correlated with educational level and age and often in the context of a change in idiolectal practice as the social norms of interlocutors change	<<I am influenced by the way my friends text, and most of them use predictive text so i end up spelling everything properly unless I don't have much space in which case i will shorten something like 'when' to 'wn'. I always abbreviate 'though' to 'tho' and 'tomorrow' to 'tomoro'. I only write 'u' instead of 'you' if i am pushed for space.>> 30/359	The conservative autonomous profile is frequently associated with reports about changing personal histories of user/habitual interlocutors' changes in role and broader changes in social and technological developments leading to changing social expectations around SMS language.
MICROLECTAL CIRCLE	Respondent reference to the norms of their circle of SMS interlocutors.	Frequent implication the respondent can speak only for localised microlectal experience (over 30%)	<<alot of the slang i use comes from other people texting me, but i dont use slang as much as i used to and its the same with my friends.>> 65/116	Respondents explicitly see their practices in relation to the norms of their microlectal circle.

257 Here, ‘types’ and ‘tokens’ used in their corpus field-specific sense of text string item and frequency of occurrence.

258 For Example, see how emoticons feature repeatedly in Mander’s glossary (2000).

259 Hahn’s level 3 codes (2008)

Appendix VIII



Appendix VIII: transcript of interview with Victor and Pete

Appendix VIII exemplifies the semi-structured interviews used in Chapter 8 with a sample transcript. There is permission to quote this interview in full in the more public context of an appendix. This semi-structured interview was conducted with respondents Victor and Pete in June 2003 when they were fifteen years old. Both were interviewed together again in 2011 and periodically in between, and afterwards, especially Victor. The interview includes direct focus on orthographic choices in text messaging and sections of more general explanation and claim of the peer-group's digital practices including how *MSN* functions differently to internet chatrooms such as *IRC*. The interviewer had shown the respondents examples of data from *SBC* 2000 and from the *PopTxt* corpus. Names and identifying details have been changed.

Q Okay so talk to me about the predictive text and what percentage do you reckon of your friends use predictive text?

Pete Um again I would say 70%.

Victor Yeah I'd say about the same.

Pete Like I mean but the generation that's younger than us, like Milly, like 11 year old kind of people who have mobile phones, they won't use it as much because it's not.... they just probably don't understand it. I learned it through like ...because I used just to spend all my time like texting the long way round and that would take me about, I don't know, a good hour to do a text. Predictive text like cuts that in half.

Victor Yeah it does. It's ... um ... I think quite a lot of the people who first got mobile phones, I don't think use it. Well I reckon all the people who first got them I don't think most of them use it. Because the people who got them afterwards were like, when they figured out like texting and they were trying to put on loads of different features on it and then they put on predictive text. And then like I think it's mostly people who got the phones just after like the first wave of people who got them.

Pete So it's the second wave people that got phones ...

Victor Yeah.

Pete ... like the second ... the second sort of buyers.

Q So can you tell me a bit about what you do with a dictionary to customise it and why you do that?

Pete Yeah you just ... um ... if you type in a word and it's not ... you scroll through and it's not there it will say 'spell', and by spelling it saves it into the dictionary. Or you can just go on to 'insert word' and it inserts it and then saves it for you. And like there's no really limitation, I don't think there's a limitation on how many words you can save so ...

Victor I don't think so. I mean I haven't found one yet.

Pete ...because every time you type in a word and it's not there you save it, which means it will be there the next time.

Victor Yeah so then you can just skim through and put it down.

Pete Yeah.

Q And you reckon that other people do that too, your friends do that too?

Pete Yeah.

Victor Yeah. I've seen a hell of a lot of my friends do that too.

Pete Yeah it's just like a general thing really.

Q So can you get those dictionaries? So if I wanted to kind of see what the patterns are ...

Pete If you wanted to look into

Q ... I could look in four or five different dictionaries and it would be fairly ... there would be the same kind of things would it?

Victor I don't think there is a dict ... I don't think you can actually access the [inaudible 02.13] dictionary.

Pete Yeah.

Victor I don't think you can go into your phone and say 'look in dictionary' and go through the words you have saved.

Pete I don't think you can do that, unless you have some kind of computer which the companies have it, I haven't known that to happen. I can't find that on my phone.

Victor Yeah I don't think you could get a dictionary on it because they'd just ... it's just built it into the computer it doesn't expect you to go through looking for a word, you just skim through on your phone.

Pete Yeah I don't think like if you ... I don't know you could get a dictionary like the one that's on mine but I don't know if you can just get a general like teenage texting dictionary.

Q No I was just wondering if there were patterns, if you reckon the same kind of words get abbreviated by ...

Pete Oh there'll definitely be patterns.

Victor Yeah definitely.

Pete Definitely be patters, like the same kind of thing ...

Victor Tomorrow.

Pete ... there's probably the same kind of words get shortened. And it's also to do with, um, what words get used when you're texting. Like quite a lot of words relating to meeting up with people.

Q So night quite likely?

Pete Yeah.

Victor Night. Or like what you're going to do tomorrow with your mates.

Pete Yeah.

Q How do you spell night?

Victor N -I-T-E.

Pete Yeah, N -I-T-E.

Q That's a fairly common one isn't it?

Victor That's a very common one.

Q Why do you think night gets changed so often?

Pete Because you're just, um, just the more you use a word just the quicker you want to do it.

Victor You want to ... you want to ...

Pete Like stop thinking about it kind of.

Victor You want to get across what you're saying, you don't want to bother going through spelling N-I-G-H-T.

Pete N-I-G-H-T, yeah.

Victor Other than that it's also how it's said - 'nite', it's not said - 'n-g-t'.

Pete Yeah.

Victor And like the 'gh' I mean like ...

Q Why do you think the 'gh' is in night then?

Victor Um because some English people said 'oh well let's do this correctly and, er, let's put in silent 'g's because we like them and, um [laughs] yes that looks good, don't you think so? Yes, yes it looks great' so yeah that's probably why I think it was done but I mean that could be just do you need a teacher, it's like no.

Pete [laughs] Yeah I don't ... it doesn't make sense but I don't know.

Q What the spelling doesn't make sense to you?

Victor Yeah exactly.

Pete But I'm not ...

Q What about people?

Pete What do you mean?

Q Why do you think that's spelt like that?

Victor P-E ...

Pete Oh because it's just used so often it's just ...

Q So is people another word that gets changed to P-P-L?

Pete Yeah it's kind of like ...

Victor All slang.

Pete ... it's like verbal slang, the words that get changed are the words that are going to get used most frequently because they get used so often they get ... they're just starting to transform over a while.

Victor Yeah, the other one is like they said de-vowel ... like taking out the vowels. It's like good, G-D, which is good.

Pete Yeah. And like because if someone [inaudible 04.36] 'how are you?', 'I'm good', it gets used so often that it's just naturally going to just start getting shorter and shorter.

Victor I don't know what ...

Q You were saying earlier about discuss ... dictionary about '@', that it's not actually any quicker to...

Pete Yeah because the way that it's done is, um, to actually get the thing '@' you have to get the whole like, um ...

Victor Symbol dictionary.

Pete ... symbol, yeah, you have to get the symbol things up and then like sometimes you have to hold it down for like a second for it to come up. Then you have to scroll through to get whereas 'at' is a lot quicker.

Q So why do people do it then?

Pete I don't know about that one because I personally ...

Q Do you do it?

Pete No I never do that. It's not quicker.

Victor On the internet I use '@', I can use '@' ...

Pete Yeah because it's so much ... it is easier to do '@'. I mean if I'm writing a text and I find that it's too long and I'm trying to like get it all into one because I ain't got a lot of credit, I might go back and change 'at' for '@', just for the simple sake of like getting it into one text...

Q Do it [inaudible 05.30] in words?

Pete ... but I don't generally use that

Q Do you edit ... do you edit your messages to make sure they're short and?

Victor Yeah.

Pete Um, no, I don't ... I don't make sure they're short unless they're too long. Like if I get there and I've got no words left and I need to just finish it off then I go back and make it shorter in places just like sometimes just cut down spaces between words kind of, so they're like one word which is actually two words. Just so I can just finish it in but I don't usually do that, because I don't usually take up that much space.

Victor I usually do that all the time because I always have loads to say so.

Pete Yeah.

Q Yeah. What about punctuation? Do people use punctuation or not really?

Victor Um ...

Pete I don't see the point.

Q 'I'm', is that 'Im' or is that I?

Victor Im.

Pete No that's with Im. Um ... some ... quite a lot of people just use full stops.

Victor Yeah, full stops and commas.

Pete They do use full stops and commas just to set ... because it does get confusing sometimes, the start and the end of sentences but to do with like Im and that kind of stuff that never gets used because that being there or not being there doesn't really change anything when you're just reading it.

Victor You can understand.

Pete You know what they mean straightaway. So that doesn't really affect it.

Victor Like if you wanted ... because when you put in a full stop or comma you either change the sentence or you're adding some kind of like, um, what is it, um, exaggeration to the sentence so like 'guess what happened to me on Tuesday' like, and then do a question mark rather than just like 'guess what happened to me on Tuesday blah, blah, blah, blah, blah'.

Pete Yeah.

Victor Like you can actually just ... because you write it how you say it.

Pete Because it's all about ... it's all about trying to communicate what you're saying.

Victor Yeah.

Pete So if you were like speaking to them on the phone and you were saying it and you were going to say it with an exaggeration, you're trying to get ... or like sarcasm or something.

Victor Yeah.

Pete So sometimes I use inverted commas just because I'm trying to get across that I am being sarcastic with that comment.

Q Right, okay.

Pete So that's where that punctuation bit is used.

Q So you will use punctuation if you need it to actually frame something as sarcastic?

Victor Yeah or like ... or like ... or just literally just like keep on on a different subject so like I'll say 'oh yeah I saw Pete last night and then like oh yeah and then me and so and so went like on a bike', I'll put a dot ... a ... a dot in between because they're totally different subjects.

Pete Yeah and it might sound like I'm going on a bike ride with him.

Q Oh so it's a paragraph, like it marks paragraphs or it marks a topic change?

Victor Yeah it just makes ... if it's a topic change ...

Pete It's just to make it a lot more clearer when people are reading it.

Victor Because the topics are cut down to very small bits and bobs of information ...

Pete And I can't think of one now but sometimes it will get confusing. It will like start to merge them together. Like when they're reading it they'll think it's all one thing.

Q Yeah...

Pete And then it just starts to overlap. Yeah it starts to ...

Q And how common are those features ... so it is ... it can cause problems if you don't use any punctuation?

Pete Yeah, if you don't, yeah because a lot of people say I don't do that enough and it starts getting confusing because when like I send a text I try and say everything I've got to say in one.

Q Yeah.

Pete Because that's what makes it cost effective.

Q Right.

Pete And so just the full stops every now and again does help I'd say.

Q How ... how, er, general are the things you're talking about true do you reckon of your friends? Is it ... are the things you were discussing there fairly standard, that people only use punctuation for sentence boundaries?

Victor Yeah.

Pete Yeah.

Victor Yeah that's standard stuff.

Q And people's text messages tend to be more or less the same do they but with ...?

Pete Yeah, like, yeah.

Victor I mean like if you look at these, like a lot of them are just like along the same kind of thing like 'hello you, call when you finish work'.

Pete What's happened to people.

Victor Like if I said that in one it would be kind of like 'hello you call when you finish work'. If I said, 'Hello, you call when you finish work' it sounds like I'm saying, 'Hello, you're going to call me when you finish work'. If you say 'Hello you. Call when you finish work'.

Pete Yeah.

Victor So that's when stuff like punctuation comes in handy. And that, if you look through this then you'll find loads of ...

Pete And like I don't use them that often but question marks. Everyone else ... because it makes it a lot clearer because some ... when you're texting some things don't look like questions.

Victor Like there 'Hi babe, you awake?', it could be 'Hi babe, you're awake'.

Q Some things don't look like questions.

Pete Yeah, without question marks.

Q Yeah because they're statements...

Pete Yeah rather than ...

Q ... that sound like questions because in speech there'd be rising intonation, so they'd sound like a question.

Pete Yeah, so question marks are another one just ... it's just because that's all you're trying to do, communicate what you're saying.

Q What about 'd' for 'th' does that ever happen or is that too kind of Ali G?

Victor 'D' for 'th'?

Q Dem, them?

Victor Oh yeah that ... that does happen sometimes.

Pete Quite a lot of people do that. Quite a lot of people do that.

Victor Like 'dat's alright', you know.

Pete Yeah.

Victor Some people do it, some people don't.

Q How similar is the text messaging spelling to the spelling people do on internet chat?

Pete Very similar.

Victor Very similar, but sometimes on the internet chat it's a little bit easier because whereas text messaging you have to like press a button like da-da-da-da-da, skim through like, and like sometimes you can't be bothered to go through all that so you just might write it in properly. Whereas with computers like da-da-da-da-da all the buttons are in front of you.

Pete Some of it is different because, um, stuff ... circumstances on the internet are different ...

Victor Totally.

Pete ... to text messaging so you might be on the internet and your parents might be like shouting to you 'get off the internet', so you've just ... you've got to be able to say bye quickly whereas you don't generally have to say bye that quickly in text messages so.

Q So what's the quick [inaudible 10.35]?

Pete So like 'got to go' or 'be right back' but like ...

Q Or G2G and BRB are specifically about quickly signing off if you're being harassed to get off the computer?

Pete Yeah. Yeah.

Victor Or like the other thing is with text messaging there's not really a fear of your parents looking over your shoulder at what you're writing.

Pete Yeah.

Victor Because with text messaging you can just go somewhere else whereas if you've got a computer in front of you you can't really move the entire screen.

Pete And like with the whole internet like things with parents they do like to put it in places where you can see and like you understand why but you don't want them like ...

Victor Seeing what you're writing.

Pete ... you wouldn't expect them to be sitting next to you when you're on the phone.

Victor No.

Pete So quite a lot like internet talk I think gets a bit more kind of personalised like something that maybe only you and the person who you're talking to might understand. But generally ...

Q Because it's potentially observable, yeah?

Pete Yeah.

Victor And one thing I get about it ... is with like internet talk is like with human interaction generally, with human interaction with like life, um, [stuff 11.34] gets broken down easier if you have more ways of working with it. So like if someone tells me to feel something, yeah, and tells me to guess what it is, yeah, like say it's a rat ... say it's a dog, yeah, someone tells me to feel a dog and guess what it is, I can only kind of gather what it is. But if someone told me to feel and hear a dog then I could easily get it. With human interaction if you're calling someone it's a lot more scarier than if you're talking to them ...

Pete Yeah that's the thing about the internet.

Q Say that again? Hang on, let Pete explain this one again.

Pete Yeah, so it kind of ... it comes like ... the thing about the ... like text messaging, the thing is it's like really general. So like you can ... it's like ... it kind of breaks down some boundaries. So like say you saw someone in school and they looked kind of upset, but you're not really on any friendly basis to call them up and say are you upset? Because of what Victor was saying about like interaction.

Victor Yeah interaction.

Pete But you could text them and say it. And like on the internet it's even more because like maybe you're not even on a basis to text them but if they're on the internet and you're on the internet it's like it kind of ...

Victor It's generally a starting point to say hello.

Pete ... yeah exactly. It's just an easier way to talk. It's like an excuse to talk to people. Like you're there, they're there, you might as well ...

Q So it take some inhibition away?

Pete Yeah, yeah. And it kind of ... it makes it okay if you know what I mean. Like if I randomly phone someone they'd be like well Pete randomly phoned me but if I was on the internet no-one would be like oh he was talking to me because that's why you go on there. So it just ... it does.

Victor Okay with the internet yeah like with phone numbers, um, if someone has a phone and they have someone's mobile number than you can get it off them but it's a lot more personal than if you get their email address. Because to get their phone numbers you have two ways of interacting with them, you can text them, you can phone them. They don't know what you're going to do with that because you're going to have your phone with you at all times. But if they get your email address you can block them if you don't like them. So it's a lot more ... it's a lot more easier to go ... to speak on the internet because it's not as personal as it is when they have your phone number because it's your phone number. It's a way that they can contact you at any time they want. So that can be a little intimidating.

Pete Yeah.

Victor Whereas with the internet you can just block them if you don't like them. You can just like take them off your mailing list and that kind of thing.

Q Is that much of a ... is this thing on where people kept getting your phone like what they'll start sort of ...

Victor Harassing you.

Q ... harassing you or there's a lot of media hype about bullying people.

Pete That doesn't ... that doesn't really happen.

Victor That doesn't really happen, no.

Q In your circle?

Pete Because of the way that Pat was saying, like you don't give your mobile number out willy nilly.

Victor Yeah.

Pete But your email address is just your email address. It's like if you speak to someone once, what's your email address, you're most likely going to give it to them. There's no reason why, because as Vic said you can block them and that's that.

Victor Yeah like basically say ... say I wanted Pete's friend's email address, say I wanted Sean's email address, yeah, and I couldn't speak to Sean, I didn't have any way of contacting him, I'd just say Pete what's Sean's's email address, he'd give it to me and if Sean didn't like me Sean could just block me.

Pete But I couldn't really ... if someone just said what's Sean's mobile number I wouldn't give it to them.

Victor You'd be like ... he would ask San first.

Pete It's kind of like the difference between mobile number and home number.

Victor Exactly you don't give someone your home number because ...

Q Right you'd give someone your home number but you wouldn't necessarily give them the mobile number?

Victor No I do it the other way around because your mobile number you can be anywhere. Your home number they've got ... they can find out your address and that kind of thing.

Q Oh okay.

Pete So it's just like all in stages really. And like the internet is just the most free kind of general one.

Victor Actually I suppose it depends how you see it on home number and phone number really because your mobile number, you don't really want them harassing you everywhere, if it's your home number they can only harass you at home and you're hardly ever there anyway.

Pete I know. The thing about my home number is just my mum really.

Victor Yeah I guess.

Pete Because it just goes further and further. It's just more and more trust not to abuse the fact that you've got it kind of thing.

Q Right.

Victor That's true. And [inaudible 15.13] my parents [inaudible 15.15].

Pete Yeah and stuff like that, yeah.

Q The use of chat by people your age seems to be mainly using Microsoft Messenger, is that right?

Victor Yeah.

Q They don't use any other type of chat?

Victor Well no there's like ... there's different types of Microsoft Messenger. There's like, so you can get different programmes but they all work with Messenger.

Pete Yeah.

Q But what I mainly see is people ... like the research literature around internet chat, which is about five or ten years old, is mainly about people going into chat rooms with people they didn't know and sometimes coming across weirdness. And I remember my students starting to use chat rooms and writing projects where they'd gone into a chat room and pretended to be a woman or gone into a chat room and pretended to be a man. They found it quite - a strange kind of communication, and it was mainly with people they didn't really know and ...

Victor Or trust.

Q ...or trust.

Pete Yeah.

Q Whereas what I see going on is something very different which is ...

Pete Yeah [inaudible 16.20].

Qwhich is that people are actually going into what I call walled gardens.

Pete Yeah.

Q They're kind of ... they're a chat room open to a particular group of friends or people who know each other but there's a wall round it, no-one can barge in, you're not going to get some 55 year old ...

Victor Unless you invite them.

Q ... pervert.

Pete And the thing is you can ... you can ... it's like you can make friends [free 16.39] as in chat rooms because I mean I've got people on mine who were like friends of a friend of a friend of a friend.

Q Yeah.

Pete But because I know they're a friend of a friend of a friend of a friend, I know they're not a weirdo and I know they're actually a person and I know they're who they're saying they are, because someone, one of my friends ...

Victor Because someone who knows them.

Pete Yeah, someone does know them who I know.

Q Right.

Pete Which kind of made ... that's ... I was sort of like trying to explain it to my mum how that it's not a chat room in the fact that everyone there is known by someone and it's just like going to a party and someone's there.

Q Does she think it was a weird chat room like in the media that ...

Pete Yeah because she ... because she, um, she does all see the stuff about paedophiles and how they entice children and how like ... she sees all these programmes about Oprah and the children are always there saying oh I never did it before but this person, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

Victor But it's always on stuff like Talk 21 and like Chat C and those kind of places. Chat rooms are totally different because you get ...

Pete [inaudible 17.28] America really.

Victor ... you go into a chat room, it's everyone talking at once and someone will yell 'anyone want to have sex with a busty blonde who's 25, call this number' and like obviously there's going to be some kids on there who think it's going to be funny to call this number.

Pete Yeah, it's all like chat rooms I've been on chat rooms but they're just for a joke.

Q Right.

Pete You just go on there just to take the Mick really. You wouldn't go on there ... you wouldn't even give them your email address, the people on there, it's just all a bit of a joke.

Victor Exactly.

Q Right so but that's not what happens with, um ...

Victor Microsoft Messenger.

Q ... Microsoft Messenger is it?

Pete No, you add people and then they appear. Like there must be about, I don't know, a million people on Microsoft Messenger at any one time.

Victor No way.

Pete But only the people that you've added can see that you're there or you see that they're there.

Q Oh okay.

Victor So like basically it's like being in a room, yeah, and if you give someone your address you're visible but if you don't you're invisible. And they can't see you, they can't interact with you whatsoever.

Pete And if you block them you're invisible.

Victor Exactly.

Q So you choose who you see?

Pete Yeah.

Victor You choose who you see.

Q Everyone's on but it's just who you're choosing?

Victor Exactly.

Pete Yeah.

Q Right. What about the situation I've also seen which is that people seem to be able to have multiple conversations at the same time?

Pete Yeah that's another advantage is, um ...

Q That seems to be specific to Messenger ... well certainly it's easier to do in Messenger.

Victor Um, no, it's not exactly specific to Messenger because like in like chat rooms you have a thing called whisper ...

Pete Oh yeah.

Victor ... where you can interact with one person and that person only. and like but the difference is with MSN Messenger you're whispering to everyone but you can have several people in one conversation.

Pete Yeah you can it's just ... you can talk ... everyone's on there, you just double-click, you're talking to that person. You can go to 'invite' so you can get three people in one conversation and that's what most people will like ... that's what happens quite a lot you get quite a few people that want a conversation but everyone's speaking to those people individually as well. So it's like on a personal basis.

Q So you have a main conversation and you can run several other conversations on the side?

Pete Yeah. Or like you can just speak to everyone singly and like if you [inaudible 19.25]. Because it more or less runs on like even if you're talking to five different people if you like, um, three of them are like all close friends. You're all speaking to each other and it's just interactive all round really. And it's really simple as well, it's just double clicking.

Q And is that, um, how popular ... now I heard from a teacher ... I talked to some teachers recently and they didn't think that Microsoft Messenger was at all popular.

Pete Everyone I know is on it.

Q My perception is that everyone at this particular school you go to is on it...

Pete Yeah

Q ... generally ... is that particularly ... well a lot of people are, is that particular to that school, have you got friends from other schools ... how general is Messenger now?

Pete It's like everyone I know has got it.

Q Everybody you know who has got an internet connection uses it?

Victor Yeah.

Pete Not even if they've ... everyone just generally.

Victor Yeah I actually know Bridget hasn't got a computer but she's got an account which basically ...

Pete I [inaudible 20.26] on the internet.

Q Say that again?

Pete I've got MSN and I don't have the internet and I [inaudible 20.30] talking to people.

Q So you can do it round at a friend's?

Victor You can access it from anywhere.

Pete Yeah like Felix has got two computers so when we go round he's on one, I'm on one.

Victor Yeah you just put a [inaudible 20.37] a passport thing.

Pete It's just a general thing. It's because it is like no money. It doesn't cost anything so by going on you lose nothing and gain loads. Um, I don't know, it's kind of hard to say whether it's a general thing because like everyone I know has got it but then ...

Q You don't know everyone.

Pete ... I don't know everyone. I haven't actually been into the other schools and asked everyone there whether they all have it or if it's just the people that I know.

Victor The way MSN works is as long as you log in every 30 days your account stays open, or is it 40 days.

Q Is your impression that most ...?

Pete Yeah my general thing is that everyone I know has got it, so it seems like a big thing to me.

Victor I wouldn't say everyone I know, a huge percentage of the people I know. But like, I mean there are a lot of people like, like I mean that just don't have it because they can't be bothered just to [inaudible 21.17] or they don't know how it works and that kind of thing. Like they just don't know how to set up an account. Whereas like I mean ...

Q But there's no research on it.

Victor Yeah.

Q All the research is about chat rooms as dark rooms with beastie boys.

Both [laugh]

Pete No, it's totally different.

Q So you've got, you know, if it is common it's quite interesting because it's not really being reflected in what's been written about it.

Pete I mean like if you go on to MSN you will realise like through advertising how much money they are making. You know a lot of people are going on to it from just the general layout. Like something like that ... because basically loads ... the way they make their money is

just by people going on they just have little adverts everywhere and people pay. But because obviously MSN has got its own research so they know how many people are coming on and so they're giving these figures out and so they can charge a certain price back. So if a million people are going on there's going to be a certain price for that kind of advertisement and you can tell by going on how much money they are making and how many adverts are coming up and how like official sort of the things like ... because they probably started out quite low budget.

Victor Like an Ikea then.

Q Do you have, um, a particular identity that you use with ... on Messenger, like I've noticed these really long jokey headers that people have for their identities.

Victor Oh what like what names? Yeah everyone has a name like.

Pete Yeah.

Victor You just ... you just ...

Pete That's what you were saying before about like you're not really judged on your spelling you're just really ... people just like

Victor Being witty?

Pete Yeah just being witty, just generally.

Victor So you give yourself ... you give yourself like a gentle catchphrase at the beginning but they double click it and they read your email address and they know who you are. If they don't know who you are they go 'who is this' and you go 'it's so and so' - oh okay fair enough.

Q Do you change those, do those?

Victor Yeah you change those like every other week.

Q Every other week?

Pete Yeah.

Q And they're ... are they kind of in jokes among the group?

Pete Yeah.

Victor Or just jokes generally. Or sometimes they can be song lyrics.

Pete Yeah that's quite ...

Victor They can be catchphrases.

Pete ... that's quite [inaudible 23.09] because quite a lot of people just have ...

Victor It reflects on your personality. It reflects like on your personality.

Pete It does actually.

Victor It reflects on how funny you are. It reflects on what you like. It reflects on what you like. It reflects on what you don't. It reflects on ... it can reflect on, if you're like, being dumb. It can reflect on if you're angry or not. Like some people, if they're really upset but they want to go on to check email their [inaudible 23.26] is 'go away'. And then everybody ... but the problem is when people do that everyone goes 'what's wrong, what's wrong, what's wrong' and then they never go away.

Pete Yeah. It simply is an identity [inaudible 23.34].

Victor Or somebody who has just put [inaudible 23.36].

Q So what do you actually do on Messenger? Is it chatting, joshing?

Pete Yeah it's just general chatting and it's just joke-like, um.

Q So what's the appeal of it rather than just talking to your friends?

Victor Um, the appeal of it is it's a lot less personal.

Pete Talking to people that you wouldn't usually talk to as well.

Victor It's getting to know people. The appeal of it is learning who people are but not so directly.

Pete Yeah.

Q So you know more ... you ... you have more chance to meet people than you would have had before?

Victor Yeah because I mean I know Patrick really well. So when I go on to MSN, when I'm talking to him I'm just taking the piss the whole time...

Pete Yeah we take the piss, we just ...

Victor ... because I don't need to get to know him through it.

Pete Exactly.

Victor But like when someone else new goes on you're just chatting to them, just seeing generally what they're like, kind of thing.

Q Yeah.

Pete Or like if you like someone and you want to get to know them more like so it's more on a personal kind of basis you just chat to them like seriously through it or just like just chat to them for a ...

Victor It's like [socialise on levels, everyone knows this. Like you get to the point, there's levels like there's a level where you [inaudible 24.37] your own [inaudible 24.38] to someone.

Pete There's the hello basis.

Victor Yeah there's the hello basis. There's like the talkie basis where you'll stop and have a quick chat. There's the basis that you're walking around somewhere, etc, etc. It keeps going up and up and up you know.

Pete There's like the texting basis.

Q So you have a sense of a number of different levels?

Victor Yeah exactly.

Q And those are fairly agreed do you reckon?

Victor Yeah well no I mean even in the adult world it's obvious like you wouldn't like there were some people there that you'd notice and like you'd say hi to but there are some people ...

Q About two?

Victor Well exactly. But there are some people you'll stop and have a chat with, about one [laughs] but again I mean my point is like it's obvious that those levels are there. It doesn't ...

Q But I'm trying to get at why it's so popular because it seems to be that people ... I don't think it's addictive...

Victor Because it's the first level.

Q ... it didn't have one of those agendas about it but it seems to be really, really popular. I mean is there an element of generational fashion? Is there a fashion about it?

Victor No, I wouldn't say so. It's not trendy, it's not cool.

Pete No it's not really fashionable because I mean there are people who blatantly just go on it too much. And everyone knows it and they get told that they go on it too much. It's not really a fashion thing. I think it's just to do more like if you're at home and you're doing your work, you'd rather much do your work and like talk to a friend, just get in a general conversation. And you'd rather do your work and talk to loads of friends and it not cost any money.

Victor And you like ... I mean say someone I like came on, yeah, well like I want to get up on to a level where I'm either like going out with them or whatever, but I've got to go through the entire process. So you start off that because if you never say 'hi' to them you're never going to get anywhere. But the problem is because ... because actual interaction with people is becoming a lot more, something to be nervous about, you know the whole sweaty hands, teenagers thing, like 'go talk to her, man' that kind of thing.

Pete [laughs] Yeah.

Q It avoids that, yeah.

Victor It avoids that by just like you're just innocently trying to get to know them. But if you're interacting with them, they can pick up on anything, any look that you give them, anything you say they can take the wrong way.

Q Now that was said among old fashioned types of internet chat, there was this idea that it caused dis-inhibition and people were therefore far more likely to flirt, but I don't get the sense this is causing outrageous flirting ...

Victor No.

Pete It isn't ...

Q You're more likely to get outrageous flirting perhaps on a text message than you are on a ...

Victor No on a chat room ... on a chat room you're going to get outrageous flirting because basically everyone there ...

Q In Messenger ... in Messenger will you?

Victor In Messenger you won't. On chat room you will, because everyone is there and no-one knows anyone and you're not really going to get to know anyone because everyone is yelling at each other and everyone's so dodgy.

Pete [laughs] Yeah.

Victor Whereas on Messenger you know these people ...

Pete You're going to see them tomorrow. Tomorrow you will see these people.

Victor ... you're connected to these people through someone.

Q So it anchors it?

Victor It anchors it. It anchors it so you don't be an asshole ...

Pete Yeah.

Victor ... because you know that these people are like friends of your friends and you could break friends with them, you could ... they could be someone who like gets you invited to a party next year or something.

Pete If you go up to someone and speak to them it's like ... it's like you want to speak to them and then they start wondering why do they want to speak to them, why do they keep coming up to me. Whereas on the internet you're both there, you might as well chat, it's just that thing, you might as well. Well you know you want to but it just gets generalised as you might as well.

Victor But it isn't said.

Pete You're just talking to them because you might as well then you get more friendly then you can like speak to them later.

Q This teacher was saying to me last week that she thought that the thing about chat room and SMS was it actually increased your social responsiveness you needed in order to be able to use it. It wasn't some ... sort of idea ... there's an idea with SMS and with internet chat, like Messenger chat, that the language is just very dumb and you can't say very much with it.

Pete No.

Victor No.

Q I think there's an idea about language that a lot of what's in language isn't .. it's often the things that are around language where the meaning is. It's called pragmatics, it's like sarcasm ...

Victor Like tones?

Q it doesn't work through .. sarcasm doesn't work linguistically, it works because you understand it's not meant literally.

Pete Yeah.

Victor Or like you use a tone, that's like I think you're so and so, you know, like the king of this, like you're obviously taking the piss.

Q So there is quite ... so would you say that you need to be quite socially skilled to use these things?

Pete I see what they mean, like how can you get across that you're being sarcastic without using a tone of voice but yet we still do.

Victor We use, it's like inverted commas ...

Pete There's a range.

Victor ... it's like how would you do it in a book? You would do it the same way.

Pete Yeah that's what I'm saying like books get across so much and they just use plain words.

Q But they use long sentences.

Victor Yeah they use long sentences but we can put a lot of information into one short sentence.

Pete And it ...

Victor Like went to the park for so and so, pulled. Like a small bit but what your friends actually pick up in is you went to this park, you chatted up this girl and then you pulled them later.

Pete And the thing is it's like and I think it's like on a personal thing like you can say things based on what's happened before, like 'd'you remember what happened last week, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah', it's in relation. So because like with the books the reason you have to write long sentences is you're... people don't know you. You can't use park life.

Victor You're basing a history [inaudible 29.22] upon it.

Pete Yeah. Whereas like I can say things to Pat because he was with me when something else happened ...

Victor3 That had happened.

Pete ... and then this happened. Or ... so and it just makes it a lot more relative to the teller. It's a lot more personal.

Q Okay. So how much of this kind of language carries over into the email? Is email language very informal or is that much more formal? Are you using Hotmail generally?

Pete Yeah.

Q Do most people use Hotmail? Because you can use it anywhere?

Pete Yeah.

Victor Email is a little more formal. Email is ... when I get an email from a friend I generally feel a slight more sense of importance.

Pete Yeah.

Victor Because when you've got ... when you're chatting to someone you can chat and they can say whatever. But when you're writing an email you can't like ... well you can ignore it but it's like writing a letter but on a lot smaller scale. It's like getting this written word which they're saying to you directly ...

Q Why is on a smaller scale than a letter?

Pete Because of effort, it all comes down to effort I reckon, like. If you're on MSN you might as well talk to them. You don't 'might as well' email every person in your account.

Victor Yeah.

Pete When you're emailing someone ...

Victor Yeah it's got a point.

Pete ... there's a specified reason why.

Q Yeah.

Pete And then with a letter, if you're writing a letter you're going through quite a lot of trouble to actually do this.

Victor Yeah. You're going ... you've gone all through this and that's why it's on a small scale because like email it's that little ... it's a lot more effort than just chatting to someone, yeah, but it's a lot less effort than writing them a letter. With a letter you know they've put a lot of effort into this.

Pete And they want to say this.

Victor They want to say it and they want to make sure it gets into your head.

Pete Yeah.

Victor Whereas with email they want to say it and they want it to get into your head but it's not like the most important thing in the world. It's just something they want you to know.

Pete Yeah.

Victor And like email, say you have a fight with someone ... say you had a fight with someone on MSN and they blocked them, yeah, because they didn't want to speak to me, they could still send me an email, unless I block their address which I never have done before, I've never blocked anyone's address before. I don't think I'd have a reason for doing that. But like so say they sent an email saying well look this is my point blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, you sort it out through email and then you unblock them.

Pete Yeah.

Victor You sort it out through email because that way they can't interrupt you or like ... and like you say what you want to say and then they make a direct response. You say everything you want to say on email. They say everything they want to say. You say everything according to that. They say everything back. Whereas with chat it's kind of like talking, they're saying their thing but you're ignoring them because you're so busy you're typing your thing.

Pete Yeah. [inaudible 31.40] less general.

Victor It's like yelling. It's like generally for me just having an argument. He's trying ... I'm so busy trying to say what I'm saying, he's so busy trying to say what he's saying and we never get anywhere.

Q So if you want to make a more developed statement you need to do it through email?

Pete Yeah because it's less general and takes more effort.

Victor But you don't go crazy with like letters and things. You don't write letters to each other.

Pete That's like when you get an email you appreciate that it took more effort and it's less general, in the same way that when someone is talking to you on MSN you realise it's really general and that they're just talking to you for the sake of it really.

Victor Exactly. And I do think you do appreciate it.

Q And a mobile phone might be between those two?

Victor Yeah, a mobile phone is in-between that. But like I don't think you do appreciate it enough with email because with the email you realise that they actually do want to get this point across to you, not because they're trying to piss you off - well sometimes they might be able to - but more because they give a crap because they wouldn't put the effort in if they didn't.

Pete Yeah, for whatever reason.

Victor Exactly.

Q So what happens to the spelling in emails, how kind of?

Victor It works generally along the same basis.

Q How like chat and SMS is it?

Victor It's not as ... it's not as ... it's not as [inaudible 32.37]

Pete Because people aren't in such a rush with email. There's no ... like with MSN people type so fast because as you were saying you'll have ... you'll be speaking for ten people and your screen will be flashing with all these people talking with you at once and everything, so that's the reason for like texting, to type fast on that. With texting you're trying to just do what you're doing as quickly as you can because actually just pressing that thing is quite boring and you're never just texting, you're always dealing other things. Whereas with emails it's like ...

Victor You're actually sitting down and you're writing this email.

Pete you've decided that you're going to send an email. It's more like a priority.

Victor [inaudible 33.09] what you're going to say.

Pete Yeah. So you're not in such a rush. I mean there are obviously some words that people just can't be bothered because there's no need for them to be that long in the first place.

Victor Exactly.

Pete And like because there's not really ...

Q So tonight, how would you spell tonight in an email?

Victor I jut do 2nite.

Q 2?

Victor 2 N-I-T-E.

Q People, how about people?

Victor P-P-L.

Pete No I'd probably spell that properly.

Victor But I don't see the reason like. I mean I can understand like ... I mean sometimes I might spell it properly but generally I don't see the reasoning behind spelling it properly.

Pete Yeah I know what you mean.

Victor I don't see why I have to go through that extra effort just to be ... because my mates aren't going to go ah what the hell are you doing okay you're spelling PPL, yeah it's P-E-O-P-L-E. They're not like that, I don't need to go through that kind of shit.

Pete Yeah they don't care. No-one minds.

Q No-one minds about the spelling?

Pete No-one minds about the spelling. No-one cares.

Q However you did it they wouldn't mind?

Pete Yeah unless you spelt people like P-H-E or like a

Q It's not an issue?

Pete As long as it communicates with ...

Victor Your point in an understandable way

Pete Yeah as long as they understand why ... what it means, you know ... as long as they know what you're saying.

Q So why ... what about this business that some people say that young people are forgetting how to spell because they're using chat and they're using email and they're using SMS and then they're writing essays and they're forgetting how to spell, is that true for you?

Pete Um, it's like

Q Have a think about it.

Pete It's slightly true but like it's ... I don't know.

Victor It's more on the basis of why should we?

Pete Yeah it's ...

Q More on the basis of what?

Victor Why should we? Why should we go through this extra effort when you know what we're trying to say but you're just taking a point because we're not spelling right?

Pete Because I mean it's not like blatantly when they get the thing and it says like 2nite, they know it says tonight so like I don't see why they're getting so worked up about it. Unless it becomes extra work for them then obviously you'll see why because then it's not communicating what you're trying to get across.

Q My experience is that the things that people spell differently on paper are for, at, to, letter homophones in other words, number homophones.

Pete Yeah.

Q Um, you might get in a note, like if someone is leaving a note for me or something, you might get some like people P-P-L, you might.

Pete Yeah.

Q Night you'd get N-I-T-E, you might. But generally speaking it's just letter homophones and number homophones. I don't get the sense that people are just spelling exactly as they do on internet chat or anything when they

Pete No not ... no not at all. I mean there are little habits like I have spelt for with 4 because it's ... but it's not on any sort of a scale at all. It's, um, I just yeah it's ... I don't know.

Victor I just think it's silly like I mean how you've got this... you've got this exam, okay, and throughout your entire like general day you've been writing 2, 4 letter homophones like you say whatever. And then you get to the exam you're writing and this is blah, blah, blah. It takes longer. If you actually put text into an exam, if you actually ... if they... if they ... if that ... like if some of the words were allowed I think I could cut my exam in half.

Pete Yeah.

Victor Because you are so busy like writing through this or like remembering spellings of like apparently and certainly yeah when you can just like try and cut that down into a spelling that you recognise and they might ... they can recognise.

Pete Because I mean that's the thing with texting I don't think anyone, unless they're really like they've done it for too long and they're trying to ... no-one really went out to make it shorter, they just tried to make it easier and quicker...

Q To understand, no-one tried to make it shorter, they tried to make it easier and quicker?

Pete Yeah like no-one purposely went out to make them short it's just that by making them shorter it's the easiest and quickest way of doing it.

Victor Yeah you're trying ... you're not ... it isn't that they're thinking this will be trendy because they cut out words, what they're thinking is I want to say this as quickly as possible. I

want them to know what I'm thinking. I don't want to have to go through the bother of writing all this down in normal chat because it's unnecessary. They'll know what I say.

Q So you're saying it's not trendy but how do you experience it if someone send you a text message that's in totally standard English?

Victor I'm just thinking what the hell are you doing because you're taking so long doing all this.

Pete Yeah and as long as they get it all in one like it's just dumb when people spell everything properly and they know that [inaudible 37.46] through.

Q How often does that happen? I spoke with a group of English teachers, trainee English teachers last week, and what was interesting to me was only five out of the thirty didn't use predictive text, they all punctuated fully and most of them thought that ... most of them tried to spell most words correctly except ...

Pete Yeah, it's generally adults. You just think well.

Victor You can make [inaudible 38.11] really.

Pete Yeah because I mean like the kids ... like we don't have a lot of money as well, so I mean sending two texts that's doubling ... it's halving the amount that you can do really. And so in that sense adults they really ... like £10 credit is not that much to them. But you just think there's no need to spend that money.

Victor Exactly.

Pete Because like you get the text I mean you don't think much of it because you can read. It's like we can all read proper English. So when you get the text it's not like you can't read it because it's not in text form. So not much is thought about it but it's just there's not a lot of need for it.

Victor Exactly. It's not so much that it's hated. It's not so much that you're uncool for doing it. It's a bit more like well really why, why do you have to go through all that when you can just ... because you know I'm going to understand what you're saying.

Pete Yeah exactly.

Victor So like I mean ... it's like ... it's like ... I mean ... it's like yesterday, okay me and the guys, a friend of mine said why don't we go to The Downs and play football. We were all the way in Kingsdown, which is a long way away from The Downs and there were parks all around us. Why go all the way over there to play football when we can just go to a quicker one - which isn't as big maybe - but it's just as green, it's ...

Pete It serves the purpose, we wanted to play football.

Victor Now it serves the purpose. Why go through all that thing of going through all the long way and spending more money, when you can just serve the purpose with cutting it down and I understand what you're saying.

Pete Yeah.

Q What about things like just spelling examples, do you do things like gonna and wanna and goin', without the 'g'?

Pete Yeah.

Victor Yeah.

Q And 'ave sometimes without an 'h'?

Pete Yeah, sometimes, yeah.

Q Are those about saving time or are those about simulating accent?

Pete Yeah, sometimes it's just what you're saying. Like when you're texting sometimes like you're just texting what you would say.

Victor Yeah.

Pete And that's just like me saying to you, I'm trying to communicate and like it's kind of like it is sometimes you text what you would say because you're not really going out of your way to doing it 'ave' 'have', I mean 'ave' is just shorter.

Victor And it also depends on who's saying it. I mean like some people are like ... because it depends how you speak like some people might go 'who dis', yeah? Some people might go no who's this?

Pete Yeah.

Victor Like it depends who you are and how you want to say it. But like some people ... a lot of people actually spell it in their own like spell it ... spell like either who's this or who's dis depending on who they are. Because they're getting the point across of what kind of person they are.

Q But it might sound pretentious coming from someone ...

Victor It might sound pretentious like if I said to Pete now Pete who's dis it's like it's either ... I'm either like doing that kind of voice or I'm taking the Mick.

Pete Yeah I know ... yeah I know he's taking the Mick.

Victor Or I'm ... or I'm just ... or I'll say now Pete who's this? Like he knows that that's actually me just saying it. But if like, I don't know, like, um, let's say, let's say Felix did it. Felix would go 'who dis', like I can imagine Felix doing something like that because that's the kind of thing that he'd say.

Q Okay.

Pete Yeah, it kind of gets it like if I had my personal ... by saying ... texting what you're actually going to say - like say if I was trying to say someone was posh and I was putting on a posh accent like it would only sound posh because I don't usually talk like that. So by texting it kind of ... by texting how it kind of ... by texting personal to you kind of makes everything else relevant as well. So I would know Vic's taking the Mick because he doesn't usually...

Q So it's part of your identity?

Pete Yeah.

Victor Yeah so it's like an underlying thing which we understand because we know each other. Like if I'm texting someone else I won't go through all that because obviously they won't know what the hell I'm going on about they'd be like 'who dis', what the hell's he on about, why is he like trying to be like something he's not.

Pete Yeah.

Q What do you ... how much ... what do you think of English spelling? How did you find English spelling when you were younger at school and so on?

Pete I'm dyslexic so that was just hell really. I didn't [inaudible 41.53] I find it like

Q [inaudible 41.56] you found it very hard?

Pete Yeah I found words that actually do sound like what they're spelt hard enough then it comes to other ones that ...

Q Through and stuff?

Pete Yeah through and like.

Q So you found it quite hard to even get the fairly simple sound spelling correspondences?

Pete Yeah.

Q And then you found an overlay of words where there didn't seem to be much logic?

Pete So basically like probably a non-dyslexic probably grabs hold of like the normal ones quite well, but they might find the other ones a bit difficult and it doesn't ... it's like, I don't know. It's kind of like if you think of it in terms of maths, instead of like learning like a theory which generally works with everything, you just have to remember each sound and like ... not ... if someone didn't teach you how to learn ...

Q So it's different from maths then because there isn't a theory that kind of works, is that what you're saying?

Pete Yeah it doesn't ... it doesn't ...

Victor Sometimes there is. I mean like sometimes like poor and like, I mean, sometimes there's a theory ... there seems to be a theory and there's not or sometimes there is a theory like you can figure out how a word is spelt by the way it's said because you know how it's spelt in other words.

Pete Yeah.

Victor So like [inaudible 43.04] okay I would think it's spelt K-A-I-A or K-I-A, yeah, but it's spelt ... this is a name ... but it's spelt K-A-H-I-Z-A or something, it's a weird spelling. And it's K-A-Z-I-A-H.

Pete Or like could and should. It's like it has got a theory like because I mean could and should sound the same and could and should are spelt in relation but they're spelt weirdly in the theory of every other like English word kind of thing. [inaudible 43.34] I think that's a general sounds of words.

Q And did your teachers ever give you any kind of sense of why English ... why do you think English spelling is like that? Did they ever talk to you about that?

Pete No, they just said it is, and they tried to just give us the easiest way just to remember them.

Victor But there's no easy way.

Pete Yeah.

Victor Like four and hour sound totally different. Four like ours and four yeah. But our in both words. But like paw and more sound the same but it's not M-O-U-R and it's not P-O-R-E.

Pete Yeah I don't know. Is there a reason?

Victor I think it's just like because of like the words in German, Latin that kind of thing and they just thought well they should be spelt this way.

Q There are reasons. There are a few reasons but they don't tend to get taught in school.

Pete Yeah, like I've never been taught why.

Q In some cases it's because the spellings actually fossilise ways that people used to say things.

Victor And we can't be bothered to change it.

Q And some dialects there would be a difference in how the words are pronounced but there isn't in standard English. The main difference is that all those long words, those long difficult words like psychology and ... did you find those difficult?

Pete Yeah.

Victor I found that hell.

Q Actually those words are actually quite easy once you realise that they clip together like lego but they're not English words, they're Greek words with Greek spellings. So the kind of spelling strategies that work with simple words don't work for those because they're actually encoding Greek spellings, not English spellings.

Pete Yeah.

Victor Am I right in thinking that Americans spell through T-H-R-U?

Q No except the people who spell night N-I-T-E. There was an attempt in the early 19th century an American dictionary-maker called Webster ...

Victor That was it.

Q ... tried to actually simplify the American English spellings, that's where color and you know those words ...

Victor Favorite and that kind of thing?

Q Yeah. But he had really ambitious plans. He wanted to make it a whole lot simpler but in the end he couldn't get it through, so some of them changed but not many, or not as many as he wanted. But basically it's supposed to be the case that the English language spelling system ...

Pete Is crazy.

Q ... is as difficult as learning musical notation and lots of people find it really really hard. But it seems to be that when you were in school you were told that you must learn how to spell accurately but you're not told why English spelling is as it is.

Pete No, not at all.

Q And so my sense of it is it's something that young people feel as ... They're told they have to be disciplined about it but they're not told why it's like it. They're not given maths-type reasons for it.

Pete Yeah. It's just like going in it blindly, like if someone says to you take one step forward. Why? You just do it. You don't really want to do it.

Victor But you do it anyway.

Q Yeah.

Pete If you want an education you just do it.

Q So that's what interests me about this other spelling that it's not standard. One of the things that is said about spelling is if we didn't spell everything the same way we wouldn't understand each other. But text messaging and internet chat show that you can understand someone perfectly well even when they don't use standard spellings.

Pete And everyone knows why it is, because it's easier. Like if a word was ever made longer everyone, you know, it wouldn't work because there's no point but there's the general thing that everyone knows why it is ...

Q Well you do get words made longer but they're for particular effects like you get so with reduplication [inaudible 47.17] or you might get, I once saw someone right huge, H-W-Y-O-G-E.

Victor Yeah, that's exaggeration.

Q You do get it for a joke or a special effect.

Victor Or an exaggeration. Like if I was going to say now this is all like some girl's huge bag it would be H-U-U-U-U-G-G-G-E. Yeah, like but if I was like saying to someone so, it would be like S-O-O-O-O it's just like a little jokey like you know [passing the time 47.48]. It's how you say it though, it's like s-o-o-o-o, you know you say [inaudible 47.53] it's actually how it's said. Whereas in like a book it would be written as S-O.....because they don't show you dwelling on the word.

Pete Yeah.

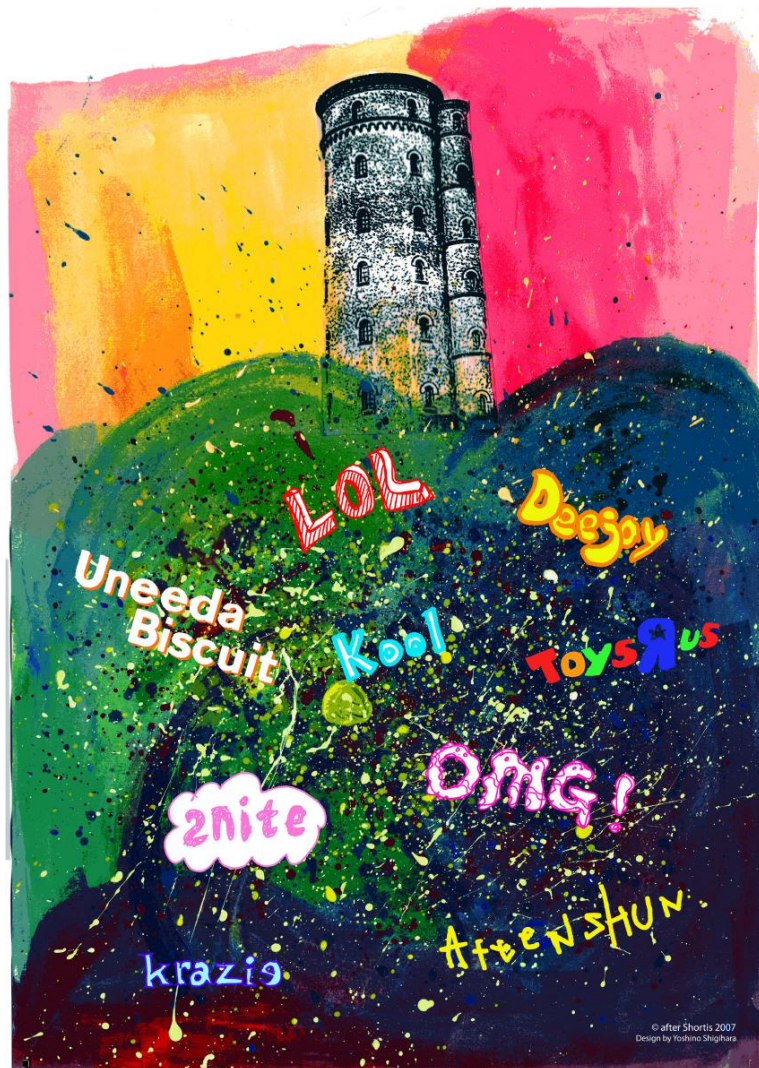
Victor Can we take a break?

Q Yeah. I think I've probably got enough for now actually.

Victor Yeah?

ENDS

Appendix IX



Appendix IX comprises a book chapter, and an article written for students and teachers of English. Both reported on the earlier phase of study.

Revoicing Txt: Spelling, Vernacular Orthography and ‘Unregimented Writing’

The Texture of Internet
Netlinguistics in Progress

Edited by

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CHAPTER ONE

REVOICING TXT: SPELLING, VERNACULAR ORTHOGRAPHY AND 'UNREGIMENTED WRITING'

TIM SHORTIS

0. Abstract

This chapter offers an explanatory framework for the re-spellings associated with new technology txt types such as email, internet chat, SMS text messaging and instant messaging. I start by considering some of the features and patterns of UK adolescents' use of such writing and of the extended ICT-enabled semiotic resources of electronic text. I argue that ICT has enabled an extended set of orthographic choices which users can draw on in order to suit their interests and project their identities. It has offered an extended orthographic palette in place of the normative binary choices of print technology. I argue that such re-spelling is not new but re-cycles popular but relatively undocumented practices from trade names, popular culture and children's transitional orthographies. In the second half of the paper I go on to consider the contextual pressures which act on users' choices from the extended set of options. ICT and the internet have not so much changed spelling as re-regulated what counts as spelling, and in so doing, there is a challenge to the official educational discourses of literacy, and particularly as they apply to orthography. It is a challenge which is problematic in theoretical and pragmatic ways. Are these practices better thought of as localised to a UK experience in the context of the complexities of the arcane English orthographic system, or are they a case in a glob-localised disruption to orthography and literacy in the *internet and language* paradigm which has followed *the age of print*?

the stability of the language conditions which have prevailed during the age of print (Carrington, 2005a). This functionality of ICT respelling, the capacity of users to recover meanings without recourse to glosses, sidelines the popular guides to netspeak and techspeak. In practice, such codification is superfluous, even misleading.

Following this, digital internet has de-regulated what counts as English spelling rather than altered spelling itself. It has not generally led to the invention of radically different new re-spellings and new orthographic principles⁵ although it has diffused and magnified their use. My emphasis is less on the newness of the language and more on the newness of the literacy practices (Barton, 1994): users are variably deregulating spelling and making idiolectal choices in relation to purposes, audiences, their own literacy identities, technological constraints of the form/their own technoliterate competence.

As for the structure of this chapter, it starts with a definition of txt and an examination of one email and two text message examples, before considering the extension of the spelling resources from which users draw in their respelling. I will develop a typology of this popular orthography and outline the factors which motivate these choices before offering a discussion of the theoretical implications.

2. Defining the entity TXT

For the purposes of this paper I am concerned with the spelling found in 'Txt', that is, text entered on mobile phone pads and on keyboards in MSN Messenger and other ICT emergent text forms; related to Txt used in IRC and other digital CMC contexts which are interpersonally and socially-focused; characterised by, but not defined by, non-standard orthography, especially in youth settings; emerging out of contexts of co-constructed interactive written discourse as distinct from composed longer documents to be read without intervening interaction; used primarily interpersonally and for socially orientated reasons rather than ideational functions in terms of Halliday's metafunctions (Halliday, 1979).

In this approach, Txt respelling can be found in a number of different text forms. This working definition does not preclude teasing apart the technoliteracy modalities between email and SMS, or between SMS and Instant Messaging, and to consider Txt as an inflection of IRC chat. Any one subvariety will be better understood by situating it in the intertextuality of other ICT related emergent text forms but as I shall show in the data cited here, the differences

⁵ There are exceptions such as emoticons, although the smiley signifier and similar icons were in use on Tee Shirts and car bumpers long before they were found in the internet.

between email respelling and SMS respelling are less significant than the common denominators.

3. Three Examples of Txt Respelling

The e-mail message in **Text A** (see Appendix) was written by a twelve year old female student from Bristol to a friend using her new computer. It is an elaborate text which typifies the preparedness of young people to explore the possibilities of new digital literacies in order to present a distinctive sense of their individual and peer group identity (Carrington, 2003) and to animate written text with properties previously associated with the spoken mode (Baron, 2005). Its artful transgressions of standard English signal a covert prestige with the writer aligning herself with her peer group identity and seeking to distance herself from the conventions of standard forms, and thus from the conventions of teachers and parents. At the same time this email remains intelligible and straightforward in its referential meaning. We may not know who Pauline is, or why the writer is moving from topic to topic in such an abrupt way; we may infer the email is written in response to a previous over-reaction by the addressee (<Who let the dogs out?> implying 'calm down' and also an allusion to a popular song of that time). But the difficulties in understanding this text lie in establishing the context of meaning in a context-dependent text which approximates the norms of informal conversation. At the level of orthographic realisation the respellings are non-standard but also conventional, accessible and recoverable from context. There is also the sense of a text which has been designed and composed with some care. There are no casual misspellings. At points the writer is at pains to indicate missing letters with apostrophes.

The text exemplifies the kind of non-standard orthography associated with new technology texts in general. It has been suggested that its consistent capitalisation is in itself an allusion to text messaging which in UK contexts in 2001 was often carried out using capital letters only. It is perhaps more extreme in its deviance than we associate with email, now that email has diffused into a mass practice. Other studies have shown how standard English in email is shaped by its audience and purpose.

The email typifies the mixed mode ICT text-type features found in emails, text messages and chat, including features intimating spoken delivery: ICT conventions such as initial points (trailing dots) for the kind of vague completion of utterance associated with the spoken mode; letter and number homophone respellings; phonetic spellings; graphical indicators of auditory paralinguistic features of pitch and volume; respellings suggesting accent, or at least pronunciation stylization, eye dialect ('bout'; 'w'pauline'); and an alphanumerically constructed rebus showing a puzzled face.

This asynchronous email was composed at leisure using a keyboard on a computer with a spellchecker. In contrast to the composed asynchronous email with such facilities and ease of text entry, **Text B** features two ‘mundane’ text messaging interactions between fifteen year olds from south London. In the first, two fifteen year old girls discuss the events of the night before. In the second one of the same girls has a social ‘conversation’ with a boy she has met recently. Here there is a greater preponderance of non-standard spellings but without the compositional ingenuity and relish seen in the previous text. It is also noteworthy that one of these girls is using standard English and predictive text (<I’l> for <I’ll> has been added by her to her dictionary) and the other is using manual entry. In spite of being close friends with many shared values, their practices in this respect are different. Both use the kind of slang associated with youth sociolect. In the case of the girl-boy interaction there is some inconsistency in spelling (e.g. the spelling of school). At the level of spelling this text is again very accessible and difficulties in understanding meaning relate to context dependency rather than orthographic obscurity. The motivation for the use of respellings will be affected more by the manner of text entry. The writers will have had less scope to compose their texts in the artful manner used by the writer of Text A. Here skill in performance relates to sharpness in interaction. In many ways this text is utterly unremarkable text messaging spelling: non-standard and inconsistent yet intelligible and conventionalised. The deviant orthography is primarily driven by the technical conditions and the awkward manner of text entry. There is a minor key of affect. The shortenings may contribute to the sense of informalised digital tenor and teenager identity image. The single use of the winking emoticon allows a semiotic nuancing of meaning which moves outside the strictly linguistic but this is the only instance of this. Taken as a whole these two Txt exchanges appear unselfconscious and routinised.

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orthography takes a different pattern to that found in the previous two texts with a greater proportion of initialisms and graphical effects. Repeated testing of comprehension of this as a text message and in a survey of its respellings leads me to believe users see this as most unlike the kind of orthography they use in their routine text messaging and internet chat. It is a verbal art performance stretching the conventions to the limits of intelligibility and possibly motivated by a distancing from the expectations of formal standard English as expected in school homework. Whilst there is a certain pleasurable engagement with the ingenuity, meaning is not always recoverable from the combination of orthography and context. Several of the features are reported by my respondents as never seen before whilst others such as <bro> are seen as vernacular respellings which would not be used in Txting. This elaborated example shows by contrast the mundane intelligibility of most Txt orthography of the kind found in Text B.

4. A Typology of Text Respelling

Although Txt practices are heterogeneous it can be argued the resources of non-standard orthography are relatively homogeneous, as shown in the texts cited. In these texts and in the larger corpus from which they are drawn, there seems to be a finite set of orthographic principles which account for the overwhelming majority of Txt respellings. These principles can be subdivided into three groupings which relate to motivational principles. Following the model developed by Werry's account of the linguistic features of Internet Relay Chat (Werry, 1996), there are three main motivations⁶:

1. features for economy and text entry reduction;
2. features for giving the respelling a simulation of spoken language;
3. features which involve a shift to multimodal visual and graphical effects and iconicity in which the linguistic sign is pushed into the periphery of meaning making.

⁶ Compare Thurlow 'While young people are surely using their mobile phones as a novel, creative means of enhancing and supporting intimate relationships and existing social networks, popular discourses about the linguistic exclusivity and impenetrability of this particular technologically-mediated discourse appear greatly exaggerated. Serving the sociolinguistic 'maxims' of (a) brevity and speed, (b) paralinguistic restitution and (c) phonological approximation, young people's messages are both linguistically unremarkable and communicatively adept' (Thurlow, 2003).

In detail each of these groupings consists of a number of orthographic devices. Features for economy and text entry reduction comprise such devices as:

- Omission of vowels (<gd> for <good>)
- Letter and number homophones (<r> for <are>, <2> for <to>)
- Initialisms and acronyms for key bindings and phrases (<G2G> for <got to go>)
- Clippings in which words are shortened by losing word ending (<congrats> for <congratulations>)
- Consonant reduction for medial double consonants (<imedtly> for <immediately>)
- Respellings by analogy with other words with more straightforward sound-spelling correspondences (<thru> for <through>, <fone> for <phone>).

Features for giving the respelling a simulation of spoken language include

- Eye Dialect (<tuff> for <tough>)
- Accent simulation (<goin> for <going>, <wiv> for <with>)
- Semiotic features such as capitals to indicate paralinguistic details such as volume or emphasis (<AUFAUFAUF> for dog barking loudly)
- Stage directions in parentheses to indicate nuance. (E.g. ‘ Monsieur (said in a French accent)’)
- Reduplication for stretched sounds for emphasis (<Soooooo>)

Features which incorporate graphical and kinaesthetic devices such as:

1. Emoticons, sometimes from emoticon banks
2. Use of colour, movement, pictorial imagery
3. Alphabetical rebuses such as (<@}-‘-‘---> for a rose (Werry, 1996))
4. Other special effects such as the use of text written in dingbats/webdings or other non-alphanumeric fonts (which may come to mean in Roman alphabet when put into an alphabetical font, as in Jess’s Text A email signature above).

5. Txt orthography as hybridised technosocial meaning potential

To argue that Txt respelling is not new in its linguistic manifestation is not to deny the transforming meaning potentials of emergent Txt forms. However, there are ways in which the linguistic trace is not altered much at the strict level of 'spelling'. From a social semiotic perspective, text spelling is not simply a linguistic matter and the electronic dimensions can function with significant semiotic potential. The language isn't new but the nature of the communication and the communication technology 'literacy event' may be new. The communication practices around the events are also new, as is clear in the ethnographic and anthropological work done by Ito and others, which describe intricate practices not possible with previous technologies, (Castells et al., 2004; Grinter & Eldridge, 2001; Ito et al., 2005; Ling & Yttri, 1999). At the level of linguistic detail the respellings and the underlying orthographic principles can be seen in other texts dating back at least to the nineteenth century⁷.

6. Motivations, features and effects of Vernacular Orthographies

The vernacular orthographies used in text spelling can be shown to have common features of respelling with five main mass-practice domains of use: trade names, popular culture, ICT practices, children's transitional 'creative spelling' and specialised occupational shorthands. The uncoded orthographic principles underpinning the Txt respelling draw from the patterns found in these popular resources and practices. These patterns and features show underlying principles although these are not codified rules. Free variation is possible whereby a word may be re-spelled differently by the same user in the same document.

6.1. Trade Names

There is a longstanding scholarly account of vernacular orthography and the kinds of typology associated with this. Txt spelling is amenable to the descriptive typologies found in this scholarship, most of which focuses on trade names, (Alexander, 1930; Cook, 2004a, 2004b; Davies, 1987; Pound, 1914, 1923, 1926; Praninskas, 1968). Those unfamiliar with this literature may be

⁷ See this 1871 example of a alphabetical rebus parlour game with its use of letter and number homophones: (1871) JC Olin Jewellery Store Contest: Alphabetical and Pictorial Rebus Puzzle. Available at: <http://theoldentimes.com/rebus2.html>

surprised to learn how old some of these respellings are. Alexander, writing in 1930, claimed that <U> for <you> was thirty years old then and was diffused by the use of this letter homophone in a mass market product called *Uneedabiscuit*. Pound carried out surveys of American trade names in 1913 and again in 1923 and noted an extraordinary blossoming of non-standard spelling in between her two studies. Her exemplified 1923 typology of trade names marks much the same orthographic territory as that used in text messaging and popular music⁸.

6.2. Popular Culture

Related to trade names there is a frequent and conventionalised use of respelling in artefacts from popular culture including film, games and music. These are popular culture domains in which non-standard orthographic practices are common and appear to represent resistance and covert prestige. Their widespread use also demonstrates the intelligibility of these non-standard forms to a non-specialist mass audience. They amount to a cultural resource in collective memory, if not one much documented from the point of view of spelling. There is coverage of such spelling practices in graffiti, latrinalia and Hip Hop (Adams & Winter, 1997; Androutsopoulos, J. & Scholz, 1998; Romiti, 1998). More recently there has been work in developing a sociolinguistic account of orthography (Sebba, 2002, 2006).

To take the case of pop music, it is common knowledge that respelling is frequent. Millions of items of popular music media have been purchased by millions of people over the past fifty years. These media have routinely contained respellings and must be considered, along with trade names and advertising, to be offering a ubiquitous experience of vernacular spelling. From the current orthographic word play (for example around <parrowdice> for <paradise>) in Hip Hop and Grime, back to the documentary field recordings of *Negro prison songs* by Alan Lomax and others in the 1930s, pop music has been strongly influenced by African American and African Caribbean varieties, and the respelled representations of those varieties. These resources have been recycled by white European and US artists so it is not just a Black Vernacular English phenomenon. From Eminem's rap, to *Get yer Ya Yas Out* and *Gimme Shelter* by the Rolling Stones, now nearly forty years old, back to the respellings in early 20th century African-American genres, starting with *work songs*, *blues*, *jazz*, *gospel*, rhythm and blues, the white make-over of *rock'n'roll*, and the related genres of *ska*, *rocksteady*, *dub*, *lovers rock*, and *reggae*: pop music has consistently used respelling as a matter of course. It is not just hybridised African-American and African-Caribbean. It is seen too in the titles and lyrics of

⁸ As recorded in the full Oxford English Dictionary.

white working class groups such as the English 1970s group Slade (in itself playing on standard English <slayed>). These musical genres and their respelled documentary framings of artist names, collection and song titles, lyrics and sleeve notes are in so many homes, though the phenomenon is little written about. Such studies as there are develop a sociolinguistic model in which non-standard orthography allows the development of the kind of covert prestige associated with non-standard accent and dialect features.

6.3. Children's Transitional 'creative spelling'

There are many overlaps between the features of children's creative spelling and transitional non-standard orthography (Bissex, 1988; Kress, 2001; Read, 1986; Treiman, 1993) and the linguistic coverage of tradenames referred to above. Children's creative spelling often locates the same pressure points in English regularising more complex phoneme/grapheme correspondences: <nite> for <night>, <becoz> for <because>, <gnys at wrk> for <genius at work>.

Children's transitional orthographies are almost inevitable developmental experiences for every person literate in English. They are not just seen in other younger users but reside in memory as a trace of personal biography. The experience is inevitable, because learning English spelling necessitates encountering 'competing' spelling principles and illegal (non-English) letter string sequences of loan word etyma (such as <psy> for /s/ or <ph> for /f (Albrow, 1972; Carney, 1994; Cook, 2004b). The particular nature of etymological and morphological prioritisation in standard English spelling makes for a double system of sound-spelling and morphological-etymological realisations.

Kress has demonstrated the creativity and confusion this causes in his close analysis of the challenges children encounter in 'loan words' with etyma drawn from other orthographic systems (Kress, 2001). The agency of 17th century lexicographers and the deep orthography they created has bearings on what gets respelt in vernacular orthography and in Txt. English spelling is often based on etymological and morphological motivation rather than simple sound-spelling correspondences (Brenkelman, 1980; Carney, 1994; Scragg, 1974). This leads to certain likely respellings where a phonologically unlikely spelling attracts a regularisation to phonetic correspondence. For example: <nite> for <night>, <wot> for <what>, <fone> for <phone>. Some of these respellings occur as conventionalised respellings in popular texts written for children such as comics like *The Beano*.

6.4. Emergent ICT Text Forms

There is an orthographic intertextuality in spelling practices developed by users across a range of ICT emergent text forms including software programmers' argot and the emergent text forms of email, internet chat, SMS, and Instant Messaging. These text forms may have situational constraints of awkward text entry or limitations in message size. As emergent text forms they have less determinate space and expectations of adherence to conventions than those expected in pen and paper letters. Carrington refers to one subvariety of this ICT-situated orthography as 'squeeze text', a term used for spellings produced by the automatic production of shortened forms by software for abbreviated language use in specialised computer contexts which restrict the size of the message (Carrington, 2003). From a less technical standpoint ICT has spawned a variety of emergent text forms with new and unfamiliar contexts of composition, text entry and interaction. In many cases, these have been innovated by younger users and those with specialised technical knowledge. In many cases they have been associated with informalisation and non-standard spelling. The existence of this profusion of text forms has created an orthographic intertextuality by which users are aware of varied ways of spelling and more relaxed social attitudes towards spelling in emergent ICT text forms (e.g. SMS, MSN), especially given the relaxed *digital tenor* associated with these forms (Posteguillo, 2003). This context destabilises existing expectations about the need to write using standard English spelling and formal tone. The respellings function as an interpersonal marker of informalised rapport.

6.5. Codified and Uncodified Shorthand

There is a fifth context in text-shortening practices adopted in specialised contexts. This includes codified varieties such as *Pitman shorthand*, or the shortened language used in telegraphy and related contexts, and uncodified abbreviated respellings used in impromptu occupational procedures in which there is much repetition – the clippings and other shortenings used by teachers and markers of public examinations in their marginal annotations, to give just one domain: <Punct> for punctuation and so on. Again, these shorthands are based on principles of simplification and reduction related to the kinds of shortening found in Txt. These are longstanding practices not confined to ICT: in 1930 Alexander compared the shortenings of trade names with the shortenings used in simplified spelling schemes.

7. The Effects and Affects of Respelling

In many accounts of respelling in ICT contexts, there is a practical emphasis on the value of respelling in reducing the demands of text entry: this is almost a default explanation (Hard af Segerstad, 2002). Respelling can also alter the meaning potential of the sign and invest it in dimensions of vivid engagement and affect which would not be available in standard forms. In her study of trade names, Praninskas cites a memorable image taken from I.A. Richards, likening the psychosocial effect of respelling to that of walking over flat, even ground giving way to difficult terrain, with all the attendant refocusing and emotional re-engagement (Praninskas, 1968). Katakoka has argued similarly about the effect of orthographic and graphological innovations and transgressions in informal letter writing (Katakoka, 1997, 2003). Re-spellings re-embody the linguistic sign, de-familiarise reading experiences formed mainly in practices which engage with standard English orthography, and can be powerful in eliciting active, engaged modes of re-reading and de-coding. In particular, respelling can embody text with simulations of spoken effects, often with complex psychosocial nuances of emotional affect (Besnier, 1993; Jaffe, 2000a). Respelling can index social, political and cultural stances and dispositions including oppositional stances and covert prestige (Androutsopoulos, 2000; Androutsopoulos & Georgakopoulou, 2002). It can take ludic forms which invoke delight and playful absorption in the manner of the popular appeal of word games and puzzles (Cook, 2000; Crystal, 1993). Respelling can be used as part of identity performance in the context of a society in which identities are multiple and managed (Carrington, 2005b; Carrington & Marsh 2005c; Smith & Kollock, 1999). Respelling nonetheless remains bound to its relationship with the standard orthographic iteration: it feeds off the formal linguistic patterns and naturalised social prestige connotations of the standard forms (Jaffe, 2000a; Jaffe, 2000b; Sebba, 1998; Sebba, 2006). Spelling performance continues to act as a shibboleth which gatekeeps access to educational resources reproducing social class-differentiated access to resources and life chances through the meritocratic 'playing field' of competitive public examinations and the looking glass world of social penalties for failure (Cameron, 1995; Carney, 1994; Carrington, 2003; Carrington, 2004; Carrington, 2005a).

8. The normative Orthographic Palette and the extended Orthographic Palette

From the evidence of the texts examined here, and my collection of messages and interviews, Txt re-spelling practices are far from homogeneous and there are marked variations between users, even within the practices of a

single user, within and across their Txts. My data sets show idiolectal variation over the sociolinguistic clines of class gender and ethnicity, and across the lines of age. To use a phrase like 'the language of Txt' masks practices and events which are highly specific in their motivation in a particular instantiation. Txt spelling is a matter of options but it is also a matter of choices made in the context of complex and varied day-to-day practices, identity positions and immediate practical discourse-in-place contexts.

I suggest the metaphor of 'the orthographic palette' as a model for understanding the actual heterogeneity in the use of Txt respelling conventions. That is: the choices available for spelling words. As I have argued, in disturbing the pre-existing configurations of what counts as spelling, ICT/Txt has disturbed the print standardisation settlement by which only standard English spelling has recognition as an available choice in public writing: a binary with any other choice constructed as a deficit form, motivated by eccentricity, esoteric contexts, partial formation or by incompetence.

To develop the analogy, the normative orthographic palette offers the normative options of the English writing system and its constituents as described by Carney, Albrow and others. It is codified in dictionaries such as the Concise Oxford Dictionary or those found in Spellcheckers. Other types of spelling such as pre-standardisation spellings, children's transitional orthographies, and spellings used in popular culture are not available for public writing and would be considered deficient spelling in terms of standard English accuracy. This ecology of orthographic varieties is a discarded option: seen but with no recognition of it as an available option except for private or low status contexts.

The frequency and ubiquity of Txt language has moved this ecology on to the palette in a set of extended options for users. *Standard English* spelling is available, and often used, along with the options and meaning potentials of vernacular orthography and its provenances. As argued, respellings have different meaning potentials from those found in *standard English* (including consequences for effect, affect and intertextuality).

9. The Force Fields which act on User Choices of re/spelling

In determining the choices of spellings to be made from the 'extended orthographic palette' users are subject to a number of pressures or 'force fields' which impact on their choices: 'technoliteracy'; 'literacy identity'; 'audience and purpose'; and discourse-in-place constraints of time, place and text entry convenience. These schematised 'force fields' are now examined in turn.

9.1 'Technoliteracy': ICT affordance/ potential capability...

The ICT affordances and enhancements made available and the users 'techno-literacy' in being able to access these features limit what can be done. They have inevitable consequences for orthographic control and choices. A measure of 'technoliterate' familiarity with mobile phone procedures is necessary even to be able to enter text in a phone pad. Other determining factors include users' knowledge of, and access to, 'banks of emoticons', phone spelling dictionaries, or the device which determines whether the user is in predictive text mode. To give two specific instances: some of my users routinely entered their textisms into their mobile phone dictionaries and wrote in non-standard forms using predictive text; other users were unable to use predictive text and were constrained to awkward manual entry and its pressure towards shortenings. These novice problems are there for all users at some point in their technoliteracy biographical trajectories and are shown graphically in truncated fragmentary/text messages and comments from absolute beginners.

9.2 Literacy identity: spelling 'stakes'

To learn to spell in standard English is not an easy accomplishment: the attainment has been compared with learning musical notation. Accurate standard English 'performativity' is a key requirement and guiding objective of the literacy curriculum in school. Many users have notions of self-esteem and identity bound up in their literacy identity as a speller and the literacy dispositions of toleration and acceptance they show towards other people's spelling. Non-standard spelling can be a matter of 'high stakes' for personal and professional identity: an inhibition for the accomplished and less accomplished. My respondents had markedly different attitudes towards their need to use standard forms. I am regularly told by academics that they make no use of non-standard forms in their txts. This may not be surprising given the value and currency of standard English accomplishment in academe. However, such choices were not necessarily related to age or literacy accomplishment in simple direct correspondence. Some younger users used predictive *standard English* text spelling claiming they did not like the 'gangsta' covert prestige of non-standard re-spelling. Some older users, including those with higher degrees in linguistics, were happy to use extreme shortenings. Some teacher trainees were at ease with Txt respellings but were concerned to use punctuation and syntax with standard English accuracy. One linguistics graduate, working as a teacher, took an extreme and censorious attitude towards both non-standard spelling and the use of non-predictive text believing these to be trivial and unevolved practices. The point is that Txt respelling is an idiolectal choice

related in part to attitudes and beliefs about the users' literacy identity, in turn related to beliefs about orthography, standard English, identity and social (and technoliterate) accomplishment. There is a variation in these idiolectal choices which cuts across social clines of age, gender and educational attainment.

9.3 Audience, purpose, context, penalty

Audience, purpose and context (social expectations of public discourse) all influence the level of insistence on the use of standard orthographic forms. In formal institutional and public contexts, there is a strong expectation that spelling will be 'accurate' *standard English* and users may moderate their use of Txt respelling in relation to audience. This accommodation may be surprisingly pragmatic and innovative. For example, taking the example of capitalization conventions rather than respelling, one university researcher reported that she used lower case writing in all contexts except in her editing of a journal and when writing to academics whom she did not know. As a 'touch typist' it suited her to write at maximum speed without the redundant markers of capitalization. As a researcher she was confident about her literacy identity: accommodation to the standard form was only necessary when there was a social penalty accruing from the audience and context. Given Txt often occurs in dyadic informal exchange this pressure is less marked in *SMS* and *MSN* than it might be in email. But this account typifies the way users are mediating and filtering the affordances of ICT in relation to audience.

9.4 Physical constraint of text entry/time available

ICT technical contexts can carry situational constraints of awkward text entry and the effort needed to 'get things right' must be traded off against the practical exigencies of a situation. Earlier in the histories of ICTs, the keyboard itself would have been associated with a kind of skilled accomplishment particular to someone who had undergone specific training as in the question "Can you type?". In some cases the need for speed arises out of social expectations that interactive written discourse in *MSN* will be 'quickfire', short entries and in real time. Other times it is the raw physical difficulty of text entry. The practical constraints of the message construction may affect the use of respelling. Composing a Txt message in a hurry on a train may lead to a different pattern of respelling than composing it comfortably at home with no time pressure.

10. Discussion: Standard English Spelling, the Prescriptivist model and 'Unregimented Writing'

Standard language spelling has been ubiquitous in the age of print. As Deborah Cameron has shown, the expectation of a consistent standard language uniformity in spelling was a practice developed during the emergence of print literacy and the nation state regulation of a standard language (Cameron, 1995). Printing houses developed strict craft practices for ensuring consistency in spelling in the interests of what Cameron terms “*verbal hygiene*”. The variation in the spelling of words documented in historical dictionaries underwent a narrowing as the spelling of any word was cut down to a single acceptable form. Spelling was either *standard* and correct or *non-standard* and deficient. This followed the linguistic prescriptivist model associated with the codification of language in the 17th and 18th centuries and attracted the notion of spelling performance as objectively measurable and freestanding from social motivations. This model of spelling could be considered as the orthographic instantiation of what Brian Street has termed ‘autonomous literacy’ (Street, 1984, 1993).

In the post print age of *unregimented writing* in informal contexts, the spelling practices associated with the age of print appear to be giving way to a looser, more permeable sense of what counts as spelling. Spelling is becoming a deployment of choices from a range of options including the standard English form among others. It is a matter of appropriateness and identity rather than a matter of rectitude and uniformity. It is a shift to a model of orthography as a semiotic resource adapted and inflected by users to re/make their meanings and identity positions. This is a model akin to Street’s definition of “*ideological literacy*” in which literary choices can only be understood in terms of social functions and context (not as autonomous regulation for its own sake (Street, 1993)).

Users’ choices from *the orthographic palette* are choices made from a range of spelling conventions and orthographic principles rather than choices from a palette of free variation in which all options are available. As Cook and others have shown, vernacular orthographies are seldom haphazard and often present logical alternative systems to those used in standard forms (Cook, 2004b). The patterns of respelling found in emergent ICT text forms – and there appears to be relatively little difference between the kinds of respelling used in the different forms - show a high degree of linguistic convention, logic and commonality. Many of the spelling choices, the majority of words in most contexts, continue to follow a standard English default.

In this analysis, the Internet, and digital communication generally, have not revolutionised spelling in the sense of altering the possibilities of respelling

linguistically. But they have revolutionised what counts as spelling by legitimising and popularising longstanding vernacular orthographic practices found in popular and domestic culture but underrepresented in public, academic and media accounts of language use, and in linguistic corpora, which largely draw from texts spelt in standard English. There is not much new about vernacular spelling features such as vowel deletion, the use of homophones, phonetic spelling, accent stylisations, eye dialect and the other features listed earlier.

The case of spelling has a bearing on how we may think of the impact of the Internet and *netlinguistics*. Some of the discourse around this prioritises the historical discontinuity and novelty of the effect of ICT on language and linguistic study. In popular discourse much has been made of the analogy of revolution in such collocations as the *information revolution*: it may be more appropriate to think of the metaphoric forces of *deregulation*, *re-regulation* and *cultural flows* associated with a networked society (Carrington, 2005a). The vernacular spelling used in netlinguistic and digital contexts is predictable, norm-related, ubiquitous and culturally allusive. In considering the emerging development of *internet language*, it is necessary to recognise the vast scale and immeasurable frequency of informalised interactive written discourse in Txt. Such texts, which I term unregimented writing, are ungated by the institutional forces of traditional education, print technology and employment. In analysing data it is not easy to show how such language use is *revolutionary* although aspects of it may be unexpected. However it is possible to make a case for the ICT disrupting and re-configuring the cultural flows feeding into *spelling* choices and making spelling less of a prescriptivist expectation.

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Gr8 Txtpeceptions

The Creativity of Text Spelling

Tim Shortis argues that new vernacular forms of spelling are the latest in a creative tradition of rule-based, non-standard orthography which poses little threat to standard spelling but challenges accepted ideas about the function of standardisation.

The term **Txt** is used to refer to the text used in SMS text messaging, instant messaging, internet chat, informal emails and social software.

A manifesto for Txt spelling

Popular media concerns about Txt spelling and the associated allegations of 'dumbing down' in youth text messaging are erroneous. There is considerable creativity and diversity on the part of the users in the ways they deploy the vernacular resources of Txt and there is a longstanding historical basis for such practices; both in 'untutored' domestic contexts, and in popular culture. The logical basis of non-standard orthography, as found in Txt, is also at the root of the intelligibility of some literary verbal art which includes text respelled in non-standard forms. e.e. cummings, James Joyce and William Faulkner come to mind. In these examples too, the non-standard spelling is a source of creativity and vividness and enables a simulation of spoken mode.

The growth of informal writing enabled by new text forms such as SMS and MSN has de-regulated what counts as English spelling rather than altered spelling itself. It has opened up tolerance of a wider range of spelling choices available in day-to-day use and has allowed users new flexibility, economy and means of inflecting nuances of meaning. Seven years after its mass adoption in the UK, Txt is no longer the domain of the 'yoof' who first popularised it: users are now from all age ranges and social profiles. The traditional discourse around codified standard English spelling and its associated binary evaluations of competence and incompetence has given way to criteria based on appropriateness and the pragmatic issue of what works for the user in a given context. Spelling is now a more flexible friend used for functional economy and identity performance as well as to show credible mastery of standard conventions. In effect, the less defined, determinate spaces of what counts as literacy in new text forms have created a context in which there has been an extension of the orthographic palette of meaning-making potential beyond the standard forms listed in dictionaries.

Viral spelling reform

Underneath the excited media coverage of Txt as a youth argot and the purported evidence of moral and linguistic decline, the spelling of Txt can be seen as a mass iteration of a sort of informalised spelling reform but without the official framings of that movement. These framings, as set out in Masha Bell's article in this issue of EDM, include the organised project to unpick the standard English conventions in which print has been conducted for four hundred years and replace them with codified alternative spellings in a new standard orthography. In the case of Txt, there is no codification and no supplanting of standard forms: the standard and non-standard co-exist, and the non-standard is not unitary or prescriptive but may include several variations in the ways to spell a single word.

It does not follow from this that all writers of new text forms such as SMS make use of the extended orthographic palette, or that any one user will be consistent in her or his approach irrespective of the situation. People routinely respell in some contexts and expect and provide standard forms in others. These 'people' are not homogeneous and all individuals exercise their choices and positions heterogeneously and in response to their sense of identity, social affiliations and their perception of the exigencies of the particular situation. So Txt spelling, unlike standard English spelling, is heterogeneous in its practices, with varied idiolectal profiles relating to the individual user's choices, habits, and sense of identity.

The vernacular spelling tradition

The kinds of spelling used in text messaging and other new ICT text forms aren't new but draw upon a tradition of vernacular spelling which we have always experienced but have seldom framed, least of all as a curriculum focus in school English. Indeed the English teacher's designated role in instilling accurate standard forms of spelling in students has created a blind spot in the recognition and treatment of other choices. Digital technology has diffused the orthographic principles which were found



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in pre-digital vernacular literacy practices such as trade names, children's transitional 'creative spelling', popular culture, including comics and pop music, and graffiti as catalogued by Cook and others. Such practices exist in collective consciousness even if the spellings used in *The Beano*, or by the pop group *Slade*, are not recorded in school dictionaries or taught in class. Previously, the ubiquity of standard English in print had naturalised the conventions of the standard spelling choices and rendered other options, such as those listed above, as invisible for serious comment. With the advent of informal writing in new technology text forms, and the daily innumerable millions of routine respellings of Txt, the popular tradition has been foregrounded, although it is still largely misrepresented in media coverage.

Lxtapocrypha: the much-cited-in-the media Scottish schoolgirl's SMS homework produced in response to the request to write up what she did in her summer holidays. Can you understand it and how typical is it of the text messages you see? How does it compare with the txt below, an exchange between two South London teenagers, one of them using predictive text?

My smmrhols wr CWOT, B4,we usd 2go2 NY 2C my bro, his GF & 3:- @ kds FTF, ILNY, it's a gr8 plc.
Bt my Ps wr so (:-/ BC o 9/II tht they dcdd 2 stay in SCO & spnd 2 wknd up N.
Up N, WUCIWUG - O. I ws vvv brd in Mon. O bt baas & ***.**
AAR8, my Ps wr ☺ - they sd ICBW, & tht they wr ha-p 4 the pc&qt...!DTS!! I wntd 2 go hm ASAP, 2C my m8s again.
2day, I cam bk 2 skool. I feel v O? BC I hv dn all my hm wrk. Now it's BAU

ME:
Hey Gems,how ru? How was last nite? Hope u had a gd time...;) I herd the party was rele bad...ppl had an awful time! I guess I shud b glad I didn't go afta all...tbXx

REPLY:
Hey babe I had a lovely time, i'l tell you about it another time...
Yeah I don't know how everyone managed to have such a shit time, thats the gorbeneys girls way! Shall I call you tomorrow, and we can have a big us chat to make up for the last two weeks? X

ME:
It's a date. Speak 2 u 2moz, beast Xx

Alarmism and the media

'Meeja' coverage has repeatedly misreported the actual practices by thinly exemplifying alarmist comment with exotica from a cabinet of textism curiosities (see text panel on *page 24*). In its iterations of an old complaint about language decay and moral panic, Txt has been presented as a new language rather than as a constrained variety of writing with some alterations in spelling and grammar. Actual examples of Txt have been sourced from popular books of dubious provenance and have been furnished with esoteric but seldom-used initialisms and elaborate 'banks' of obscure emoticons. Actual examples of texts are rare in the coverage and the one most frequently cited is far from representative (see text panel on this page).

In this respect, treatment of Txt has echoed the treatment of email as reported by Petrie in her 1999 study in which initialisms and emoticons were similarly over-reported. These two features also feature prominently in the stocking-filler guides to Txt usage found by bookshop tills, and more surprisingly, in a compendium of Txt speak by David Crystal.

One consequence of this misreporting is its obfuscation of understanding of how Txt works: how it is understood with relative ease, and how it spreads. The accessible shortenings of Txt, as of vernacular orthography, include phonetic spelling, vowel deletion, and letter and number homophones for frequently occurring words (see *page 25* for detail). These are easily worked out by speaking them out, whether in Txt, trade names, *Loveheart* sweets, pop music respellings, personalised number plates, or knife-on-a-tree graffiti. In contrast, initialisms and acronyms are unfathomable without prior knowledge of the referent or repeated use. They are types of new word, or new spelling, most often associated with the shortening of complex words and noun phrases from specialised technical domains: so <SCUBA> for <self-contained underwater breathing apparatus>. Some initialisms do also occur for frequently used phrases and collocations, or 'key bindings', as Werry terms them: <LOL> for <laughing out loud> or <lots of love>; <g2g> for <got to go>. However the list is not extensive whereas the lists found in media coverage and popular books about text usage are exhaustive and frequently obscure.

Emoticon panic

Similarly, emoticons are used but they are subsidiary features and much less elaborated than the popular guides suggest. Many Txters avoid using them altogether. Emoticons are unlikely to have the precision of recognisable meaning beyond a few basic types: smiling, grimacing and winking. Essentially they function like accents but to inflect semantic nuance rather than grammatical inflexion – to indicate irony for example. Emoticons do not need the referential precision shown in the bloated emoticon banks because they are always juxtaposed with words and function in relation to their textual surround. Socially-oriented Txt could never have diffused as it has if had been dependent mainly on esoteric initialisms, acronyms and emoticons.

Understanding Txt spelling

The respellings of Txt are 'natural', functional and uncodified in dictionaries, including the peculiar popular dictionaries of Txt mentioned above. They have worked and have spread because the spelling used in text messages and related text forms is linguistically coherent, logical and creative in its orthographic principles and draws upon pre-existing conventions of non-standard spelling. Such spellings are interpreted and replicated by immersion rather than by formal instruction. So Txt is an orthography remade by users in their practices rather than one which depends on being received, learned and directly replicated in the manner of the effortful accomplishment of standard spelling accuracy. This functional focus of ICT respelling – its viral but logical basis and the capacity of users to recover meanings without recourse to glosses, dictionaries and expert reference – sidelines the popular guides to netspeak, techspeak and Txt. In practice, such codification is superfluous, even misleading. So unlike standard spelling, Txt is viral in its diffusion: it truly is caught not taught.

The discourses around Txt are functional rather than evaluative in orientation. This is to say that users of Txt in informal writing are often oriented to understand the meaning of Txt rather than to evaluate the literacy competence of the writer. This represents a shift away from the regimentation associated with writing and its binary of competence/deficit.

Far from being the deficit practice of a moronic default, Txt spelling can be viewed as a source of creativity, diversity and pragmatic cultural accomplishment, and one which indexes significant shifts towards conversationalisation and informalisation in written communication. Technology hasn't driven the change but its use in new text forms such as text messaging, instant messaging, and other social software, (writing which is ungated by the regulation of school, employment and print proofreading), has diffused and indexed the shift to the informal¹⁶. In this, spelling choices have become part of the stylistic repertoire by which users can express their multiple identities rather than a forcing ground of compliance to the standardised conventions of published print.

There is little evidence that the advent of Txt is changing the expectations about English spelling in formal genres and situations. In educational contexts the concerns about standard English spelling accuracy have intensified, at least in the UK. But in the context of factors such as continuing technological change, the hybridisation of spoken and written modes and the globalisation of English, the extended orthographic palette is here to stay – although by its very nature it is likely to elude capture and definitive codification in dictionaries.

In all this Txt represents a rich source of comparison with the efforts and proposals of the spelling reform movement.

An example of an emoticon bank: about 10% of the smileys listed on this website but how many are in actual use?

Emoticons	
Emoticons are facial expressions made by a certain series of keystrokes. Most often producing an image of a face sideways.	
!-(Black eye
!-)	Proud of black eye
#-)	Wiped out, partied all night
#:o	Shocked
\$-)	Won the lottery, or money on the brain
%(:-) Å	Propeller-head
%*}	Inebriated
%+{	Got beat up
%-(Confused
%-)	Dazed or silly
%-6	Brain-dead
%-\	Hung over
%-(Ironic
%-	Worked all night
%-}	Humorous or ironic
%\	Hangover
>>:-<<	Furious
>-	Female
>->	Winking devil
>-<	Furious
>-)	Devilish wink
>:)	Little devil

Source: <http://www.computeruser.com/resources/dictionary/emoticons.html>

The Txt of TXT int nu: pipped to the post by gr8Txtpectations

Vernacular orthography is not a new phenomenon but it is not easy to document in the absence of accessible records. The informal, untutored spelling of domestic literacy practices before the age of universal schooling is more likely to be found in ephemeral low status texts which are of their nature less likely to be kept, let alone published. We are more likely to be able to access the domestic letters, and notes of Byron than his servants but it is the writing of the transitionally literate servants which would be more likely to show informal orthography. In contrast to the lack of records of mundane everyday written language in previous times, such transactions in Txt are now insistently recorded in the 'half-life' of electronic text forms: the emails, text messages and mutating texts of *My Space* and other social software are neither transitory like speech, nor fully permanent like a written record on paper.

Literary texts do include some representation of such language. For example, in an early autodidact realisation of synthetic phonics, here is Dickens's Pip describing his early attempts to teach himself to write and including an example.

Typical example of early 'meeja' coverage of Txt spellings: a newspaper summary of an almanac entry sourced from a stocking filler book of textisms.

10 METRO Wednesday, November 22, 2000

You too can talk text – NALOPKT (Not A Lot Of People Know That)

BY SUZANNE STEVENSON

ALMANACS may date back to ancient Greece – but one has finally succumbed to the modern cult of the mobile phone.

The latest edition of the Hutchinson Almanac has a glossary of text message abbreviations for the first time to try to end confusion over the symbols.

It details 46 phrases used by avid text fans such as NALOPKT, which stands for Not A Lot Of People Know That, and FOCL – Falls Off Chair Laughing.

Emoticons – symbols made from key-stroke combinations to convey emotion – also appear in the almanac, alongside the usual facts such as the tides and phases of the Moon.

The guide follows the publication last month of a mobile phone text message dictionary, WANZILK.

A spokesman for Hutchinson Almanac publisher Helicon said: 'This is an area of much confusion for people.'

About 500million text messages are sent each month, mainly by the under-30s.

KEY MESSAGES

Some of the abbreviations featured in the Hutchinson Almanac:

BTDT – Been There, Done That

PMFJI – Pardon Me For Jumping In

CUL – See You Later

LCW – Loud, Confident and Wrong

WYSIWYG – What You See Is What You Get

DQM – Don't Quote Me

YHM – You Have Mail

FOCL – Falls Off Chair Laughing

TIC – Tongue In Cheek

TTFN – Ta Ta For Now

TTYL – Talk To You Later


LOL – Laughing Out Loud

GGO – Garbage In Garbage Out

NALOPKT – Not A Lot Of People Know That

FUD – Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt

TPTB – The Powers That Be



'But, at last I began, in a purblind groping way, to read, write, and cipher, on the very smallest scale. One night, I was sitting in the chimney-corner with my slate, expending great efforts on the production of a letter to Joe. I think it must have been a full year after our bunt upon the marshes, for it was a long time after, and it was winter and a bard frost. With an alphabet on the hearth at my feet for reference, I contrived in an hour or two to print and smear this epistle' ...

MI DEER JO i OPE U R KRWRITE WELL i OPE i SHAL
SON B HABELL 4 2 TEEDGE U JO AN THEN WE
SHORL B SO GLODD AN WEN i M PRENGTD 2 U
JO WOT LARX AN BLEVE ME INF XN PIP®

The contrast of Pip's transitional literacy is the more marked from the relative sophistication of the vocabulary and syntax in the narrator's previous paragraph. The 'Txt' is replete with comic digs at Pip's partial social and literacy accomplishment: the simulation of 'h' dropping (<ope>) and hypercorrection (<habell>), the mimetic simulation of the deliberative concentration as he writes (<KR WITE>), phonetic spelling (<teedge> for <teach>) or educational referents, and for more complex (loan-

derived) words (<prengt for <apprenticed>) and all sorts of other errors where a rudimentary phonics method cannot of itself determine an orthographic choice: <shal> for <shall>, <Habell> for <able>, particularly where the 'auditory' reference point is a marked regional accent as is suggested in the implied vowel sound of <shorl> and <glodd>. Pip also uses the letter homophones <U> and the number homophones <4> and <2> more recently seen as intrinsic to the new-fangled Txt of yoof.

This extract of represented vernacular spelling is interesting in showing the powerful meaning-making potential of non-standard forms of spelling by comparison with the naturalised homogeneity of the standard. This potential for powerful effects and 'affect' has been a focus for recent sociolinguistic scholarship focused on respelling including Jaffe's analysis of a college canteen notice with respelling and other sociocultural takes on non-standard spelling, notably Mark Sebba's recent book (2007)

Vernacular spelling can also be found in the traces of popular culture in songs and alphabetical and numerical rebuses. Here the focus is more on a playful game of orthographic puzzling out to see how the potentials of spelling can be stretched. Letter and number homophones feature prominently. Here for example is the first verse of a song from 1913 taken from CHIN-WAG, the magazine of the Eton College East End boys project.

ROT, YET NOT.

D R friends, I humbly beg of U
2 tarry and 2 read,
And I promise I'll apologise
2 U-that's if there's need.
My native home's in 0 I 0 –
"Some place" I guess you'll say;
But, gentlemen, I tell U this:
O I O's in U.S.A.

Then there is the old orthographic puzzle spoken by children: YYUR, YYUB, ICUR YY4ME

Or this more elaborate example (see panel, opposite) of a 19th century rebus puzzle where the reader has to fathom out the narrative from the combination of images and letter and number homophones:

The Resources of Txt

Although the choices made by users are heterogeneous, it can be argued the resources of non-standard orthography are relatively homogeneous and linguistically circumscribed, as shown in the texts cited. In these texts and in the larger corpus from which they are drawn, there seem to be a finite set of orthographic principles which account for the overwhelming majority of Txt respellings. These principles can be subdivided into three groupings which relate to motivational principles. Following the model developed by Werry's account of the linguistic features of Internet Relay Chat (Werry, 1996), there are three main motivations⁴:

1. features for economy and text entry reduction;
2. features for giving the respelling a simulation of spoken language;
3. features which involve a shift to multimodal visual and graphical effects and iconicity in which the linguistic sign is pushed into the periphery of meaning making.

In detail, each of these groupings consists of a number of orthographic devices.

Features for economy and text entry reduction comprise such devices as:

- Omission of vowels (<gd> for <good>)
- Letter and number homophones (<r> for <are>, <2> for <to>)
- Initialisms and acronyms for key bindings and phrases (<G2G> for <got to go>)
- Clippings in which words are shortened by losing word ending (<congrats> for <congratulations>)
- Consonant reduction for medial double consonants (<imedtly> for <immediately>)
- Respellings by analogy with other words with more straightforward sound-spelling correspondences (<thru> for <through>, <fone> for <phone>).

Features for giving the respelling a simulation of spoken language include

- Eye Dialect (<tuff> for <tough>)
- Accent simulation (<goin> for <going>, <wiv> for <with>)
- Semiotic features such as capitals to indicate paralinguistic details such as volume or emphasis (<AUFAUFAUF> for dog barking loudly)
- Stage directions in parentheses to indicate nuance. (E.g. 'Monsieur (said in a French accent)')
- Reduplication for stretched sounds for emphasis (<Soooooo>)

Features which incorporate graphical and kinaesthetic devices such as:

1. Emoticons, sometimes from emoticon banks
2. Use of colour, movement, pictorial imagery
3. Alphabetical rebuses such as (<@!-.-'---> for a rose (Werry 1996)
4. Other special effects such as the use of text written in dingbats/webdings or other non-alphanumeric fonts which may come to mean in Roman alphabet when put into an alphabetical font. For example, this signature from a teenager's email: <@!-.-'--->
 which, when converted from dingbats to courier font, reads as < JESS...JESS >

The Disruption to Codification

An early paper about txt messaging started to identify some of the tension points covered in this paper. Eldridge and Grinter's fieldwork was carried out just as text

messaging caught on and reports Txters' frustration about not understanding each other's non-standard spellings. Initialisms were reported as a source of confusion (<dofe> for <Duke of Edinburgh>). They also suggest confusion caused by Txt spelling variations, citing <2moro>, <2morra>, <tomor>, and <2morrow> for <tomorrow>. In all this flux they mention a hope that matters will be sorted out by the codification of Txt language in new standardised forms. However, it is questionable whether these variations would really cause much confusion, and their cited data also shows the pragmatic and intuitive behaviour of users. In this example, two teenagers talk about Tinting practices:

G4: It is. I think my Nana (Grandmother) gets annoyed as well because obviously she doesn't know any of them and I'm writing them. See you don't actually realise you're doing them, you get into a habit of it.

G1: You have to sit there thinking I-S-r; or ob, later ...

G4: It depends who you're writing to, you know, how many abbreviations you use.

Olin Jewellery Store Contest: Alphabetical and Pictorial Rebus Puzzle, from JC Olin Jewellery Store Contest. Accessed 3 June 2006. Available <http://theoldentimes.com/rebus2.html>

OLIN'S PRIZE REBUS!

I will present to the first of my LADY CUSTOMERS who will bring me at No. 29 MARKET STREET, LYNN, a correct solution of this Rebus, a HANDSOME GOLD RING. To the first Gentleman, a SET OF GOLD STUDS. To the first Miss, a PAIR OF DIAMONDS.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1871, by CRANE & CO.
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

The solution to the above must be enclosed in sealed envelopes, with the name, which will be numbered as they are received, and on the 1st of July next, when all the contestants are invited to be present, the envelopes will be opened and the prizes awarded to the successful competitors.

Silver will be given in the Lynn Transcript to the persons entitled to the prizes.

LADIES' GOLD WATCHES, \$25, \$30, \$35, \$40, and upwards.

SILVER WATCHES, \$12, \$15, \$20, \$25, and upwards.

A Large Assortment of PLATED WARE, KNIVES, SCISSORS, RAZORS, POCKET BOOKS, &c., &c.

By mutual agreement all Jewellery Stores in the city are closed on Wednesday and Friday Evenings at 6 o'clock.

J. C. OLIN, 29 Market Street, Lynn.

22- Notice the Turning Table in the Window. ap:by

The quotation shows the ease with which alternative spellings have become habitual and awareness of audience as a factor in determining use of abbreviations whilst the friend (G1) imitates the active, intuitive figuring out of meaning in a non-standard spelling. There is not much sense that a dictionary is missed here.

The viral success of Txt challenges our common sense assumptions about the function of spelling and the need for codification in all matters. The adoption of single forms of spelling was a centripetal pressure associated with the nation state project in the age of print. In the context of printing technology it was implemented strictly in the house styles of publishing houses in the 17th century. The variety of spellings in current use since the proliferation of new ICT based text forms, including the existence of variations for the same word, suggests that adherence to a prescriptive standard at all times is not a prerequisite for mutual intelligibility, at least in informal social contexts. At a time of informalisation, non-standard spelling may even have benefits of affect and rapport in the revoicing of the written word.

It seems likely that standard English spelling will continue to prosper. We learn to write in standard English spelling for credibility and transparency in formal 'high stakes' social contexts where failure to comply will carry social and economic penalties. But other spelling options are available, and in certain situations, with certain participants, such options may be more pleasurable, efficient and appropriate. The teaching of standard spelling is a project concerned with giving students credibility and access rather than intelligibility. Or to put it another way, perhaps collusively, and hijacking an image from a popular treatment of punctuation: Lynne Truss may have been confused that the Panda was a gangsta which ate, shot and left but most of us weren't.

This article is based on Tim Shortis's continuing doctoral study of Txt spelling and vernacular orthography supervised by Gunther Kress and Carey Jewitt at the Institute of Education, London. A longer version of the argument presented here is available. The address for correspondence is timshortis1@mac.com

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¹ For a lists of the respellings seen in vernacular orthography see Vivian Cook's popular treatment of spelling

² It is interesting that the Oxford English Dictionary shows ACRONYM coming into the language during the second world war and its context of intensive technological deployment.

³ For the notion of informalisation and conversationalisation see Fairclough (1992).

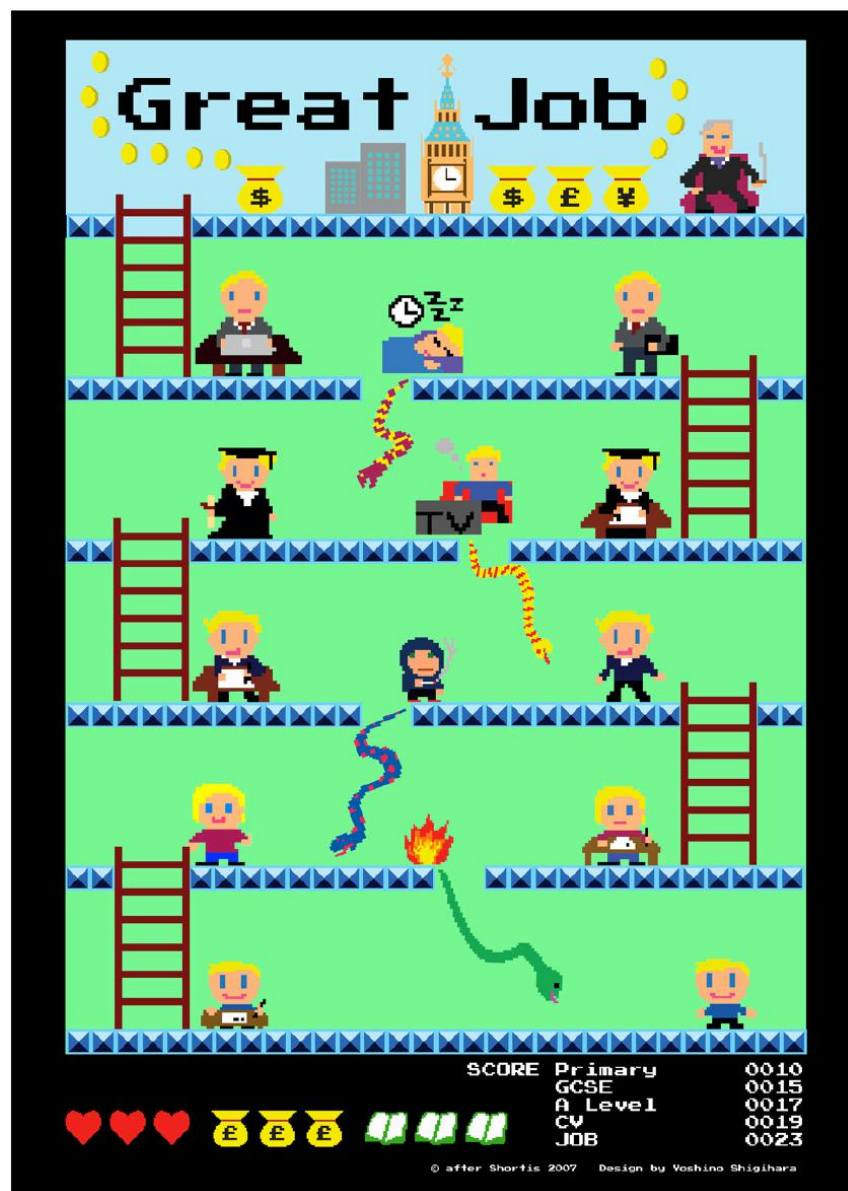
⁴ This quotation has been set out in a consistent font size to maintain the focus on spelling. In the book, two font sizes are used by typographical design in order to suggest Pip's erratic handwriting control. So:

mI dEER JO i oP'E U r kRwITe wELL i oP'E i shAl soN B hABEl 4 2 tEEdGe U JO AN tHEN wE shORL B sO gLODD AN wEN i M PRENGTD 2 U JO wOT LARX AN BLEVE ME INF xN PIP

⁵ See <http://www.villierspark.org.uk/vpabout.php?r=1HEKHGAUA&sub=VHEKJPJBAB> for other copies of CHIN-WAG and the context for this.

⁶ Compare Thurlow (2003) 'While young people are surely using their mobile phones as a novel, creative means of enhancing and supporting intimate relationships and existing social networks, popular discourses about the linguistic exclusivity and impenetrability of this particular technologically-mediated discourse appear greatly exaggerated. Serving the sociolinguistic 'maxims' of (a) brevity and speed, (b) paralinguistic restitution and (c) phonological approximation, young people's messages are both linguistically unremarkable and communicatively adept'

Appendix X



Appendix X samples some of the learning materials and examination papers sourced in the data collected for this study, including the multimedia *All Talk* resource.

Textual data drawn on in this study and its use in formal education settings

This section consists of excerpts relating to data-focused public examination papers or from the multimedia learning design *All Talk* (Blake, Shortis with Powell 2011). Some of the textual data-set cited and analysed in this thesis has been drawn from the pedagogic roles of the researcher and has also been presented in learning designs and public examination papers, as discussed in Shortis & Jewitt 2005. In part this approach was a response to the arguments presented by Kress for the place of the study of mundane text alongside the culturally salient text and the aesthetically valued text (1995:35); the related argument of the Committee for Linguistics in Education (CLIE) for situating the study of standard English in a contrastive landscape of other varieties (2010); the arguments for using facsimile texts reflecting the opening up textual analysis by facsimile representations and the theorisation of multimodal semiotics (Carter and Nash 1990, Kress 1997, 2000, 2003, 2010, Jewitt 2003, 2009). Similar arguments and pedagogic practices had been developed in the late 1980s by Carter's data-focused approach to language study in the *Language in the National Curriculum* project (LINC 1989-1982, see Carter 1991) and related innovations, including the development by George Keith, John Shuttleworth, John Keen, Angela Goddard and others of GCE study of English language from 1985 for the Joint Matriculation Board in Manchester (JMB). The origins of linguistically informed language study in English schools go back still further to the School Council project in the 1960s and particularly the influence of Michael Halliday on that. See Hudson 2007 for one overview of the influence of linguistics in UK education.

SMS spelling choice as curriculum entity in schooled literacy

Situating vernacular orthographic choice in formal educational settings



Figure X.ii Simplified text message data survey designed to elicit discussion of idiolectal and sociolectal variation

Texts set in AQA GCE English Language examinations 2001-2003

	January 2001	May 2001	January 2002	May 2002	January 2003	May 2003
A	Transcript — three African-Caribbean friends looking at a photo album	Recipe for pesto from an American recipe book	Official letter from Bristol City Council about towing away a car	Transcript of part of a sketch in a television comedy show	Poster for the National Coal Mining Museum, seen at a railway station	Transcript of two colleagues talking together at work on their supposed day off
B	Notice to residents in a hotel bathroom encouraging them to conserve water	Back of a London Underground ticket	Extract from <i>Nasty Nature</i> , a book for older children, comprising the opening paragraph and cartoons with speech bubbles	Packaging from a Prêt à Manger sandwich	Notice for bus passengers	Card given by an optician to all contact lens wearers
C	Copyright agreement for an AQA exam paper	Transcript of a monologue of a middle-aged farmer speaking with a Devon dialect	Printout of a conversation in an internet chat room	Two verses of the British national anthem	50-word extract from <i>The Book of Mini-Sagas</i> , as part of a <i>Sunday Telegraph</i> competition	Andy Capp cartoon, in colour with speech bubbles
D	Opening of 'The Bloody Chamber', a short story by Angela Carter	Letter of apology to hotel residents on Portuguese-speaking Madeira about building work	Advertisement leaflet for a personal organiser, including graphics	Extract for the star sign of Sagittarius from the horoscope pages of <i>Sugar</i> magazine	Notice posted through local letterboxes trying to trace the owner of a lost cat	Weather forecast from the Edinburgh edition of the <i>Metro</i> newspaper, in colour
E	Extract from <i>Serious Money</i> , a play by Caryl Churchill	Transcript of two secondary students and a teacher (Asif, Alan and Mr Chambers)	Opening of the novel <i>How Late it Was, How Late</i> , a monologue written in Scottish dialect	Extract from an instruction manual for a mobile phone	Postcard sent from a native English-speaking student, on holiday in Spain, to a friend at home, plus a word processed version	Magazine advertisement for a Renault Clio, in colour
F	Training script for employees selling kitchens over the telephone	Politician's resignation speech, as reported in <i>The Financial Times</i>	Transcript of part of a magic act by Wayne Dobson	Transcript of a television advertisement for claiming compensation for an accident; the rubric describes the visuals	Handwritten note left by a 13-year-old boy for his 12-year-old brother, plus a word-processed version	NHS poster in doctor's waiting room, in colour
G	Transcript of a telephone conversation between a student and a teacher	Extract and picture from <i>The Grinch</i> , a children's story written in verse, containing speech	Transcript of two friends talking about their children	Back of a till receipt	Transcript of the opening of a mobile telephone conversation between two colleagues	Transcript of an announcement made on a train from King's Cross to Edinburgh Waverley
H	Extract and picture from a book entitled <i>Care of Leopard Geckos</i>			Poem 'This Living Hand' by Keats, written in 1819	Transcript of one student interviewing another about his dialect for an English Language A-level investigation	

AQA ENB1 data-sets 2001 to 2003: the peripheral and mundane included in curriculum enquiry 260

Text G

Postcard from Spain: function of the text as a convivial greeting/micro-narrative to a friend including construction and reinforcement of shared identity through references and allusions.

- mixed register and mixed languages (artful crafted effects;
- cultural allusions to lifestyle, popular culture (e.g. cactus 'smutty' subtext);
- ICT and youth sociolect allusions (<he he>);
- structure: greeting apology narrative, sign off in relation to genre conventions of postcards
- setting of apology in parenthesis;
- mixed register and complexity in sixth sentence (nb ampersands to foreground 2+2 contrasts;
- writing frame and genre conventions of a holiday postcard;
- hand writing and space-shifting;
- popular collocations (good old), vogue lexis/slang (done; stuff) and youth sociolect (luv);
- bricolage of texts from diverse sources, presupposes specific shared experiences and attitudes;
- Attention to punctuation for semantic nuances (<!>;< "Los Simpsons">);
- contexts: situational variation; domestic contexts and genre; "home-made" provenance; postcard as artifact (may be kept).

Text H

Function of this informal note to make a point humorously but with menace. Use of humour, allusion and bricolage of reference and style to gain rhetorical footing. Writer seeking to influence behaviour without losing status or compromising peer group and kinship loyalty

- graphology including labelled picture, handwriting, opaque crossings out and signature
- devices used to achieve purposes (including to direct M's behaviour);
- discourse structure; apology, narrative and threat;
- Semi-composed context: grammar of third sentence;
- mixed register bricolage of formal, demotic, insulting, cultural allusions;
- construction of mock serious tone/style in lexical choices (excuse, widently; parentheses)
- hyperbolic imagery (<World War 3 battleground>) and metaphor (<James and the giant Peaches>)
- youth sociolect including leakage from ICT conventions (<u> and <@> and contracted form <k>;
- idiolect and sociolect in construction of tone and identity
- implicit reference, pragmatics and features for humorous effect (non-literal meanings);
- grammatical choices, passive, complex sentence and directive made by implication;
- shared assumptions in context and use of proforms and forenames;
- contexts: situational variation; domestic contexts and genre; "home made" provenance; ephemera - probably not kept, but creating context for conversation (humour argument)

AQA mark scheme indicative content for vernacular texts set in 2003 examination(see Chapter 2)

SECTION B: LANGUAGE CHANGE

Answer **either** Question 3 **or** Question 4.

Each question carries 35 marks.

EITHER

- 3 Texts E to H are from a set of data, gathered by A Level students, relating to SMS (Short Messaging Service) text messaging on mobile phones.

- Text E comprises a selection of the text messages copied by the students from their phones.
- Text F is a list of occurrences of “2nite” taken from their collection of text messages.
- Text G is a word frequency list of the 20 most commonly occurring words in the collection of messages. This list excludes numbers.
- Text H is an article from *Metro*, a free newspaper, about text message abbreviations.

Describe and comment on what these texts show about the developing language conventions of text messaging. Make reference to at least two of the texts.

OR

- 4 Texts I to K comprise excerpts from *Rowbotham's Guide to German Conversation*, published in 1837, and the *Collins Gem German Phrase Finder*, published in 1993. Both books consist of an English-German dictionary of commonly used words and phrases along with other advice and information for English speakers visiting Germany. Extracts from the two books have been arranged into pairs of comparable data.

- Text I(a) comprises the title page of the 1837 book and Text I(b) the cover of the 1993 book.
- Text J(a) comprises the start of the preface from the 1837 book and Text J(b) the introduction to the 1993 book.
- Text K(a) is from the section in the 1837 book which relates to arranging accommodation.
- Text K(b) relates to arranging accommodation in the 1993 book.

With reference to at least two pairs of data explain how some of the features of these texts demonstrate changes in language and style over time. In your answer you should take account of contextual factors such as audience and purpose.

You are not expected to understand any German.

END OF QUESTIONS

Text E

WOT STUDENT DISCOUNT
CAN U GET ON BOOKS?

CHEERS U TEX ME CAUSE U
WERE BORED! YEAH OK
DEN HUNNY R U IN WK
SAT? SOUND'S LIKE YOUR
HAVIN GR8 FUN J! KEEP UP
DAT COUNTIN LOTS OF
LOVE ME XXXXX

NEWAY, ILL SPEAK 2 U
2MORO WEN IM NOT
ASLEEP...

Aww you must be nearly dead!
Well Helen is Coming over to Do
some work And that whill Take
forever!

THINKING OF U ;) X

Y?WHERE U AT
DOGBREATH? ITS JUST
SOUNDING LIKE EMMA C
THAT'S AL!!!!!!!

Now u sound like manky scouse
boy graham,like! I is travelling on
da bus home.wot has u inmind
4 recreation dis eve?

Been up to ne thing interesting.
Did you have a good birthday?
When are u wrking nxt? I started
uni today.

U R THE MOST BEAUTIFUL
GIRL IVE EVER SEEN. U R
MY BABY COME AND C ME
IN THE COMMON ROOM

Wot u up 2? Thout u were gonna
call me!! Txt bak luv A

DO NOT B LATE LOVE MUM

THANX 4 PUTTIN DA FONE
DOWN ON ME!!

Hi jonny!noi'm ok just wanted 2
chat coz avent spoken 2 u 4 a
long time-hope ur doin alrite.have
good nit at js love ya gem.x

PLEASSSSSSSEEEEE TEL
ME V AVENT DONE
SPORTSX

HELLO PEACH! MY CAKE
TASTS LUSH!

G.W.R

LOOK AT AMY U R A
BEAUTIFUL INTELLIGENT
WOMAN AND I LIKE U A
LOT. I KNOW U DON'T LIKE
ME LIKE THAT SO DON'T
WORRY.

Getting tickets 4 walsall tue 6 th
march. My mate is getting me
them on sat. ill pay my treat.
Want 2 go. Txt bak chris.

Wot about on wed nite I am
3 then but only til 9!

No b4 Thursday

Have you finished work
yet? :)

IM REALY SOZ OMAT MY
MUMS 2NITE WHAT ABOUT
2MORO

Turn over ►

Text F

N		Concordance
1	U DOIN? WOT U UP 2	2NITE LOVE ANNIE X.
2	ORRY. U GOIN OUT	2 NITE? PICK UR FO
3	yway? Ey? i wanna c u	2nite .. isnt that wot i sai
4	I HUN! IM NOT COMIN	2NITE--TELL EVERY1 I
5	HUNNY! WOT U UP 2	2NITE? DIDNT END UP
6	doin.. really sorry bout	2nite, love pete xx Tha
7	WEVE GOT A MATCH	2NITE GAINST ---. KEE
8	U GETTING THE BUS	2NITE? IT LOOKZ LIK
9	SOZ IMAT MY MUMS	2NITE WHAT ABOUT 2
10	OLD HER YET. I WILL	2NITE THO. WHAT SH

Text G

N	Word	Freq.	%
1	U	254	3.99
2	I	212	3.33
3	A	125	1.97
4	THE	109	1.71
5	ME	108	1.70
6	IM	75	1.18
7	IT	62	0.98
8	ON	59	0.93
9	MY	57	0.90
10	UP	57	0.90
11	IS	54	0.85
12	AT	53	0.83
13	IN	53	0.83
14	TO	53	0.83
15	YOU	51	0.80
16	BUT	48	0.75
17	HI	47	0.74
18	AND	44	0.69
19	WAS	44	0.69
20	LOVE	43	0.68

Text H

14 METRO Wednesday, November 22, 2000

You too can talk text – NALOPKT (Not A Lot Of People Know That)

BY SUZANNE STEVENSON

ALMANACS may date back to ancient Greece – but one has finally succumbed to the modern cult of the mobile phone.

The latest edition of the Hutchinson Almanac has a glossary of text message abbreviations for the first time to try to end confusion over the symbols.

It details 46 phrases used by avid text fans such as NALOPKT, which stands for Not A Lot Of People Know That, and FOCL – Falls Off Chair Laughing.

Emoticons – symbols made from key-stroke combinations to convey emotion – also appear in the almanac, alongside the usual facts such as the tides and phases of the Moon.

The guide follows the publication last month of a mobile phone text message dictionary, WAN2TLK.

A spokesman for Hutchinson Almanac publisher Helicon said: 'This is an area of much confusion for people.'

About 500million text messages are sent each month, mainly by the under-30s.

KEY MESSAGES

Some of the abbreviations featured in the Hutchinson Almanac:

BTDT – Been There, Done That

PMFJI – Pardon Me For Jumping In

CUL – See You Later

LCW – Loud, Confident and Wrong

WYSIWYG – What You

See Is What You Get

DQM – Don't Quote

Me

YHM – You Have Mail

FOCL – Falls Off

Chair Laughing

TIC – Tongue In

Cheek

TTFN – Ta Ta For

Now

TTYL – Talk To

You Later

LOL – Laughing Out Loud

GIGO – Garbage In Garbage Out

NALOPKT – Not A Lot Of People

Know That

FUD – Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt

TPTS – The Powers That Be



Source: S. STEVENSON, *You too can talk text – NALOPKT*, (Associated Metro), 2000.

Turn over ►

SHOCKER FOR OUR SCHOOLS

'ILLITERATE' BLAST AT TEXT MESSAGE KIDS

IN TEXT...

THE following is an excerpt from an essay written in text language by a 13-year-old girl at a leading state secondary school in the west of Scotland.

The translation is on the right.

My smmr hols wr CWOT. B4, we used 2go2 NY 2C my bro, his GF & thr 3 :-@ kds FTE. ILNY, it's a gr8 plc.

Bt my Ps wr so (-:/ BC o 9/11 tht they dcdd 2 stay in SCO & spnd 2wks up N.

Up N, WUCIWUG - O. I ws vw brd in MON. AAR8, my Ps wr :-/ - they sd ICBW, & tht they O bt baas & AAAAA.

wr ha-sp 4 the pc&qt...IDTS!! I wntd 2 go hm ASAP, 2C my M8s again.

2day, I cam bk 2 skool. I feel v O-:) BCI hv dn all my hm wrk. Now its BAU...

IN ENGLISH...

MY summer holidays were a complete waste of time. Before, we used to go to New York to see my brother, his girlfriend and their three screaming kids face to face. I love New York, it's a great place.

But my parents were so worried because of the terrorism attack on September 11 that they decided we would stay in Scotland and spend two weeks up north. Up north, what you see is what you get — nothing. I was extremely bored, in the middle of nowhere. Nothing but sheep and mountains.

At any rate, my parents were happy. They said it could be worse, and that they were happy with the peace and quiet. I don't think so! I wanted to go home as soon as possible, to see my friends again. Today, I returned to school. I feel very saintly, because I've done all my homework. Now it's business as usual...

BY FRANK HURLEY

SCOTLAND'S schoolkids are turning into a generation of illiterates — because of mobile phone text messaging, experts warned last night.

Many youngsters now write in the abbreviated gobbledygook, rather than standard English.

And there are fears the trend could leave them unable to communicate and get jobs when they leave school.

Efforts

Judith Gillespie, development manager at the Scottish Parent Teacher Council, said: "There must be rigorous efforts from all quarters of the education system to stamp out the use of texting as a form of written language so far as English study is concerned."

"There has been a trend in recent years to emphasise spoken English rather than written language and so pupils think orally and write phonetically."

"You would be shocked at the numbers of senior secondary pupils who cannot distinguish between 'their' and 'there'."

"The problem is that there is

now a feeling in some schools that pupils' freedom of expression should not be inhibited, so anything goes.

"But texting must not be allowed to become acceptable written English — it will only further erode the language."

Dr Cynthia McVey, a lecturer in psychology at Glasgow Caledonian University, said: "Many young people have switched to text writing

because they have done it so often that it has become second nature to them.

"They don't write letters, so sitting down to write or type an essay is unusual and difficult, so they revert to what they know and feel comfortable with — texting. To them it's quick, attractive and uncomplicated."

Tino Ferri of the National Association of School Masters and

Union of Women Teachers admitted: "There are a few teachers who claim that getting pupils to carry out written work using phone text language is better than nothing. How sad is that?"

An Executive spokesman said: "Spelling and grammar are basic skills that are key components of the 5-14 curriculum. Literacy and numeracy will be at the centre of any revised curriculum."

4 Text G is an article from the Sun newspaper published in March 2003.

By detailed attention to the text, and to ideas from language study, comment on the issues raised about language change. You should take account of context in your answer.

You may wish to comment on **some** of the following:

- factors which cause language change;
- attitudes to language change;
- the limitations of the argument and the limitations of evidence provided here.

(35 marks)

All Talk

All Talk was a set of multimedia learning designs for UK school use by young people aged between fourteen and nineteen, and especially those following GCSE courses in English Language. From 2010 until 2013 that curriculum specified a study component focused on spoken interaction and related interaction by digitally-mediated means. Several of the *All Talk* modules recontextualised aspects of this study.

The *All Talk* disk and website consists of mediating texts along with video clips treating the domains of spoken language and digitally-mediated vernacular interaction, or ‘multimodal texts’ (sic), as these were known in schools. The data disk includes film of a mobile phone operator talking through the mobile phones sold between 2000 and 2011 and what these devices afforded text messaging; VOX pops of adults discussing their attitudes towards variant spellings associated with SMS and video of young people either engaged in digital interaction or roleplaying their experiences, with commentaries designed for a teacher audience.²⁶¹

All Talk

English 14-19



A fifteen unit student resource for learning about spoken language and interaction in everyday life

www.bt.com/alltalk

Julie Blake and Tim Shortis
with Alison Powell, Peter Osborn and
Andrew Bailey



"A fantastic resource, brilliantly conceived and executed. It's an inspiration (on so many levels) to everyone interested in language study in schools."

Professor Ronald Carter, School of English Studies, University of Nottingham

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Teacher guide

Students step back from their personal, everyday experience of txt-talk to consider it as language data, social practices and public attitudes.

Offline/online talk – Txt talk

Investigate online and mobile talk: changing language, social practices, public attitudes.

What is the purpose?

This unit offers a way of working with “multimodal” – online and mobile – talk that gets beyond media hype and student over-familiarity. It attends to language data and people’s attitudes using voxpops of people talking about txtting. It also looks at online chat using video and transcription in order to understand its multimodal nature.

Who is it for?

A small amount of the material in this unit relates to Facebook use, which has an age limit of 13+. This, and parental sensitivity to online risk, may make this unit more suitable for GCSE students towards the end of Year 10 or in Year 11. A Level English Language students could evaluate the success of the multimodal transcription method, and either use it or adapt it to transcribe and analyse the longer sequences of online chat between adults on the All Talk website.

What will I find in here?

- Introductory activities, including a map pin timeline
- A sorting activity about students’ experience of txt-talk change
- Speaking and Listening activities and assessment opportunities
- A diamond ranking activity to explore motivations for txt-talk spelling

What will I find on the DVD?

The first video is a set of voxpops in which people of different ages, walks of life and cultural backgrounds talk about txtting. The second is a short edited sample of two young people, Jess and George, having an online chat.

Website extras

Extra features to support this unit can be found at www.bt.com/alltalk

Optimised photocopy masters

Each unit has a student guide and a teacher guide in pdf format. These are optimised for photocopying.

Extra video

There is a video about the development of mobile phones and texting, and extra video of other people doing online chat.

Full transcript

There is a full transcript of the online chat between Jess and George, taken from the screen capture.

Interactive timeline

This allows students to explore the development of digital communication technologies over time www.bt.com/talkintime

Teacher’s notes

There is extra guidance about the unit focus and its intended outcomes; notes about the video and transcript material; classroom questions to get a conversation started; and links to other units in All Talk.

Web links

There is a link to a wide-ranging online survey about txt-talk.

Sample transcript of online chat

	Jess	George	
00:47 - 00.53	Helloooo :d [<< d] D		
		<i>George is typing</i>	00:57 - 00.58
		helloooooo ☺!	00:59
00:57 - 01.03	you alright??		
		<i>George is typing</i>	01:07 - 01.14
		yeah thanks, what about you? ☺	01:15
01:16 - 01.29	goood! yah [<< ah] yeah tahnks [<<ahnks] thanks - you busy this weekend?		
		<i>George is typing</i>	01:35 - 01.49
		nope, no plan atm. Why?	01:50
01:53 - 01.59	few of us are going camping? up for it?	<i>George is typing</i>	01:55 - 01.57
		plans*	01:58
		<i>George is typing</i>	02:09 - 02.26
		sounds good? What time were you thinking of going on Friday?	02:27
02:33 - 02.51	umm..think may be after 6 cuz well we have prety much work till then...	<i>George is typing</i>	02:33
		good!*	02:36
02:53 - 03.06	got a sleeping bag thouh [<<h] though? i've lost mine ☹(N)		

Txt-talk in your times

This activity draws on the student experience likely to be available in class, and invites students to see txt-talk from other angles. Students explore common txt spellings and analyse a sample of online chat, paying attention to its multimodal nature.

Start with a class timeline from the year most students were five until now. Give students four different coloured map pins or stickers, one colour each for email, Facebook, MSN and txtting. They put their pins on the timeline to show if/when they started using each technology on a regular basis. If students have stopped using a technology for online and mobile talk, challenge them to create a way of showing this. Discuss experiences and patterns.

Then focus on mobile phones and txtting. Show the video vox pops then give pairs a few minutes to devise one “yeah but no but” comment about an idea or example they would contest. Discuss these.

The txt data on page 5 is a set of commonly occurring spellings in young people’s txtting. Students use the grid on page 6 to log how they have or haven’t used these words in online and mobile contexts. Invite comparison and discussion using the questions shown.

Move on to some online chat in action using the video of Jess and George and either the multimodal transcript excerpt on page 3 or the full one available on the All Talk website. The question map on page 7 of the Poke message tweet unit could help develop analytical detail. As an extension, students could collect and transcribe a sample of their own online chat for comparison, or use the extra video on the website. If the topic and data types are suitable for your specification, this could be the starting point for a Controlled Assessment.

Finally, consider why txt spelling is like this using the diamond-ranking activity on page 7. There are no right answers to this but scope for much interesting discussion which could be assessed for Speaking and Listening.

Lesson builder

On the spot

For a warm-up before the txt spellings logging activity, have a quick-fire quiz or spot test on the standard English spellings of these words.

Mobile history

Watch the video about mobile phones. What will the future be? Will current forms of txt-talk disappear as mobile phone technology develops? Will our machines make us all do online talk in standard English spelling?

Where has it come from?

If you have access to computers, students could explore the interactive digital communications timeline available on the All Talk website. Ask them all to find a fascinating fact to present to class.

The end of the world is nigh

Students could have fun finding “the end of the world is nigh” articles about txtting in online newspapers. How do the explanations for young people’s txt-talk presented in these compare with the diamond rankings?

Tomorrow’s world

Some students might be interested to research and prepare a presentation on where communication technologies might be in ten years time.

Txt spelling data

Which of these txt spellings have you seen before in online or mobile talk? Which have you used in the past but don't any more? Which ones are you currently using? Think about these questions then log your answers on the Txt-talk logging grid.



Txt-talk logging grid

Log which words you have seen, used to use and use now in the table below. If you have neither seen the word nor used it, write it beneath. When you have completed your log sheet, discuss your experience with someone else.

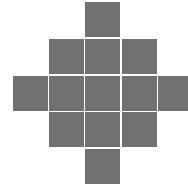
1. What is similar and what is different in your experience of these words?
2. If there are items you see but don't use, what are the reasons for this?
3. If you used an item in the past but don't now, why not?
4. Are there items you would use in online chat but not in txtng, and vice versa. Colour code to show the patterns.
5. What else can you say about the patterns you see?

Seen in online/mobile talk	Used to use	Use now

Explaining txt spellings

Lots of people have tried to explain why people use the kind of language commonly found in txt-talk. The cards below show some of these explanations. Cut them out and arrange them in a diamond formation to show how important each one is, with the most important at the top and the least important at the bottom. Cards on the same row have equal importance. The twist is that there are more cards than there are spaces on the diamond so you first have to choose the thirteen you think are the most important.

Diamond layout



1. Being young	2. Creativity and word play	3. Distractions around you as you txt	4. Failure of the education system
5. Keeping secrets in a special code	6. Lack of confidence with standard English spelling	7. Lack of standards in society	8. Moving as you txt
9. Not wanting to look un-cool	10. Rebellion against standard English spelling	11. Saving money	12. Saving time
13. The challenges of typing	14. Wanting to look like a gangsta	15. Wanting to look super-busy	16. What you're talking about
17. Who you're talking to		18. Why you're talking	

All Talk: Offline/online talk: Poke Message Tweet



All Talk

English 14-19

Offline/online talk Poke message tweet

Explore how online and mobile talk really work. What does it mean to "talk" by tapping into a keyboard, when the people involved can't see or hear each other, and when there may be quite long time-lags between comments? What else is going on in the places from which the people are communicating? How do people style their online self-image?

What will I learn?

- About the variety of language and context in online and mobile talk
- How to create a video observation transcript for multimodal talk
- How to analyse multimodal talk data

www.bt.com/alltalk

BT

Teacher guide

Many students are experts in doing online and mobile talk. In this unit they step back to look at how it works.

Offline/online talk – Poke message tweet

Step inside the written-spoken world of online and mobile talk.

What is the purpose?

This unit offers a drama-based approach to online and mobile talk. Students step back from a language variety they are so familiar with that it can be hard to “see”, re-supplying the context of this kind of interaction in an imaginative way. This is followed by preparation of a video observation transcript of a performance, and considered reflection on this kind of interaction.

Who is it for?

GCSE students with experience of routine forms of online and mobile talk are likely to be engaged by the opportunity to talk about it in class. Those very resistant to improvisation might work as directors or produce a commentary. A Level English Language students might tackle less immediately familiar new media forms, such as Twitter, or be invited to think harder about contexts such as money-making enterprise, or issues such as privacy and surveillance.

What will I find in here?

- Introductory activities, including Facebook-in-reality video starters
- A data-inspired drama improvisation activity
- Speaking and Listening activities and assessment opportunities
- A thinking map to support closer analysis of language in online and mobile talk

What will I find on the DVD?

There are improvised performances by four groups of Year 10 students: these focus on discussion forums, Facebook, online chat and txt-speak. These were produced in the way described in this unit.

Website extras

The extra features can be found at www.bt.com/alltalk

Optimised photocopy masters

Each unit has a student guide and a teacher guide in pdf format. These are optimised for photocopying.

Extra video

There is a video commentary on the discussion forum performance, and a video showing some drama warm-up activities.

Full transcript

There is a full transcript of the four performances which you can adapt for any educational use.

Social networking template

This is an example for modeling a light touch homework in which students look at how this kind of online talk is framed.

Teacher's notes

There is extra guidance about the unit focus and its intended outcomes; notes about the video and transcript material; classroom questions to get a conversation started; and links to other units in All Talk.

Web links

There are links to a variety of YouTube videos in the Facebook-in-reality genre. There is also a link to a copy of Edwin Morgan's poem *The Computer's First Christmas Card* which is fun to look at.

Video observation transcript: in a discussion forum

Action	Speaker	Words	Comments
Computer user sits down at computer	Computer user	oerhhh hmm tut	
Computer user navigates screen with mouse	Computer interface	start	A person plays the computer. What does this say about computers or online talk?
Students on LH side are "inside" of the computer	Computer user	tut	
Nothing happens when link clicked	Computer interface	(2)internet explorer	
Pleaded with, the computer leaps up then freezes	Computer user	(4)come on (2)it's frozen again	How often does this happen when you're trying to talk online?
Computer user scowls then shakes computer hard	Computer hard drive	shake the computer	
Moves mouse then cracks fingers back ready for action	Computer user	huh ffu okay	The user cracks his hands back ready to start typing. Is this really talk?
Computer user is typing in the URL using one finger	Computer interface	(2)double u double u double u dot (.) local-forums dot com	How does typing compare with the speed of face to face talk?
Computer user smiles	Computer user	ahh here we go	
Computer user types in his message using one finger on each hand, sitting almost static; "inside" lads on LH side of screen act out his message using lively physical performance style	Computer user	I've enjoyed New York when I visited (2)but I would never wish to be an American (2)there is something so unsettling about the weird cycle of shooting guns(.) then talking about it then getting therapy (2)then high-fiving each other (2)then contacting your lawyer (2)then getting some more therapy (2) then giving each other more high-fives(.) then shooting your guns(.) then talking about your feelings some more	The user is sitting almost motionless apart from his typing. How does this compare with what's going on inside his head, and with what he's typing?
Computer user types furiously bashing the keys	Computer interface voice	(2)don't you ever stop getting therapy and giving each other high fives question mark exclamation mark question mark	How do people express strong emotions differently in face to face and online talk?
Computer user puffs and scowls	Computer user	huhh huhh	What might happen next in this interaction?
All freeze	Audience	[applause]	

Poke message tweet activity

This activity starts with students exploring a sample set of interactions from a discussion forum, social networking site, online chat and txt messaging (pages 42 and 43). They discuss how these interactions compare with their own online and mobile talk. Their task is then to improvise a performance that shows what they find interesting and/or important about this kind of talk.

To model the activity and further stimulate ideas for the improvisations, show one or more of the video performances. Invite students to think about whether these performances reflect their experience of online and mobile talk, and what they think is important or interesting about it. The improvisation will draw these ideas out further so there's no need to get too analytical here. Keep the discussion at the level of gut reaction and argumentative enthusiasm.

The improvisation activity works best if you get students on their feet, away from their desks and warmed up in body and voice. There is a video on the All Talk website which shows some ways of doing this.

The sample set of interactions could be used as a springboard, or more like a script. Both approaches work and both were used in the performances on the All Talk website.

Then it's show time! If you can film them, the students can first just enjoy each other's performances as an aesthetic experience.

To develop some more considered reflection on the language of online and mobile talk, students could produce a video observation transcript like the one on page 40 using the last column for observations. This could be for their own (filmed) performance, or one of the others on the All Talk website.

Students could then collect their own mobile and online talk data. This could be used for a Controlled Assessment if the topic and data types are suitable for your specification. For analytical practice there is a thinking map resource on page 44 to help students identify and explore relevant details.

Lesson builder

Time for a template

In advance of the lesson, invite students to create a diagram of their own Facebook page, like the Social networking template available on the All Talk website. This will get them thinking about all the information there, not just the obvious interaction.

Facebook in reality

There is a YouTube genre of videos showing, in a humorous way, what Facebook looks like in "real life". The All Talk website has links for some of these. You could show one as a starter for this unit, but you **MUST** check the language and content are suitable for your class.

Running commentary

The video observation transcript could be used to prepare a commentary, as modeled in the extra video on the All Talk website. This aims to explain what the performance has to tell us about the nature of online or mobile talk. The commentaries could be presented verbally, in writing, or in a multimodal way using clips of their performance film. There is an opportunity here for Speaking and Listening assessments.

How does your experience of online/multimodal talk compare with these examples?

Txt-talk

This is a sample of different text messages sent by a number of different people in different situations



Status updates

This is a selection of one person's status updates on a social networking site all containing the word 'jokes'

Jokes 2day after sch :) ha ha ha x Mon at 4.15pm	Has gone really hyper...got college 2moro... going ta be jokes Xx Thurs at 9.15am
Ha Ha lunch is jokes... Tues at 1.15pm	LOL JOKES LOL Thurs at 6.45pm
cant wait till tonight.. huna bee jokesss :) ily bbi xx Tues at 4.00pm	Thinks last night was jokes... Fri at 7.15am
jokes 2daii :) xx Weds at 3.37pm	Is at college and it jokes already. x Fri at 8.00am
ha ha was jokes 2dai.. well apart from hosp but omg :) xx Weds at 7.00pm	Woop Woop in maths...going ta be jokes About an hour ago

Online chat

This is part of a transcript of chat between a male student and a female family member.

Matthew Wetheridge is offline 19.14

Matthew Wetheridge is online 19.15

19.16 Hey Matt

19.16 Hey Liz
how art thou?

19.16 why most fair kind sir and how art thou?

19.18 Most vexed with this ungodly practice that is known
throughout the land as "essay writing"
its rubbish if you ask me
gotta do a new one on 9/11
happy topic
going okay tho so cant complain
looking forward to coming home though ;)
I'm back till the 24th of Jan cos I don't have exams!! :p


19.16 my god!!
24th Jan!!
awww it'll be lovely to have u around
ur rooms all sorted and nice now

19.16 nah i'm staying with Theresa
lol Jokes
I will be staying with yoooooooo
and occasionally her

Discussion forum post

This post initiates a new thread about American culture in a discussion forum




Today 10.32am #1

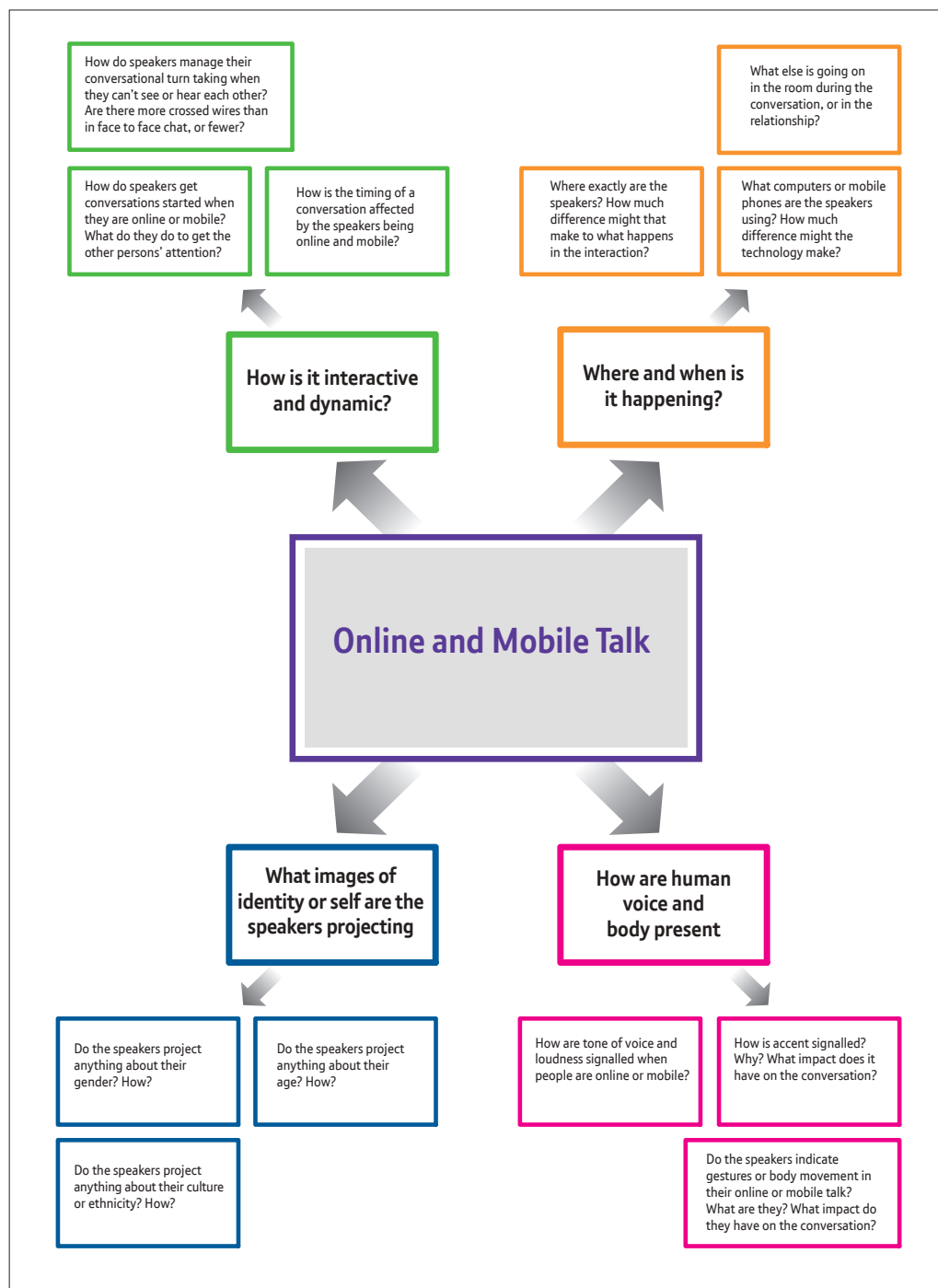
 **New York/American culture**

I've enjoyed New York when I've visited but I would never wish to be American.
There is something so unsettling about the weird cycle of shooting guns then talking
about getting therapy then giving each other high-fives

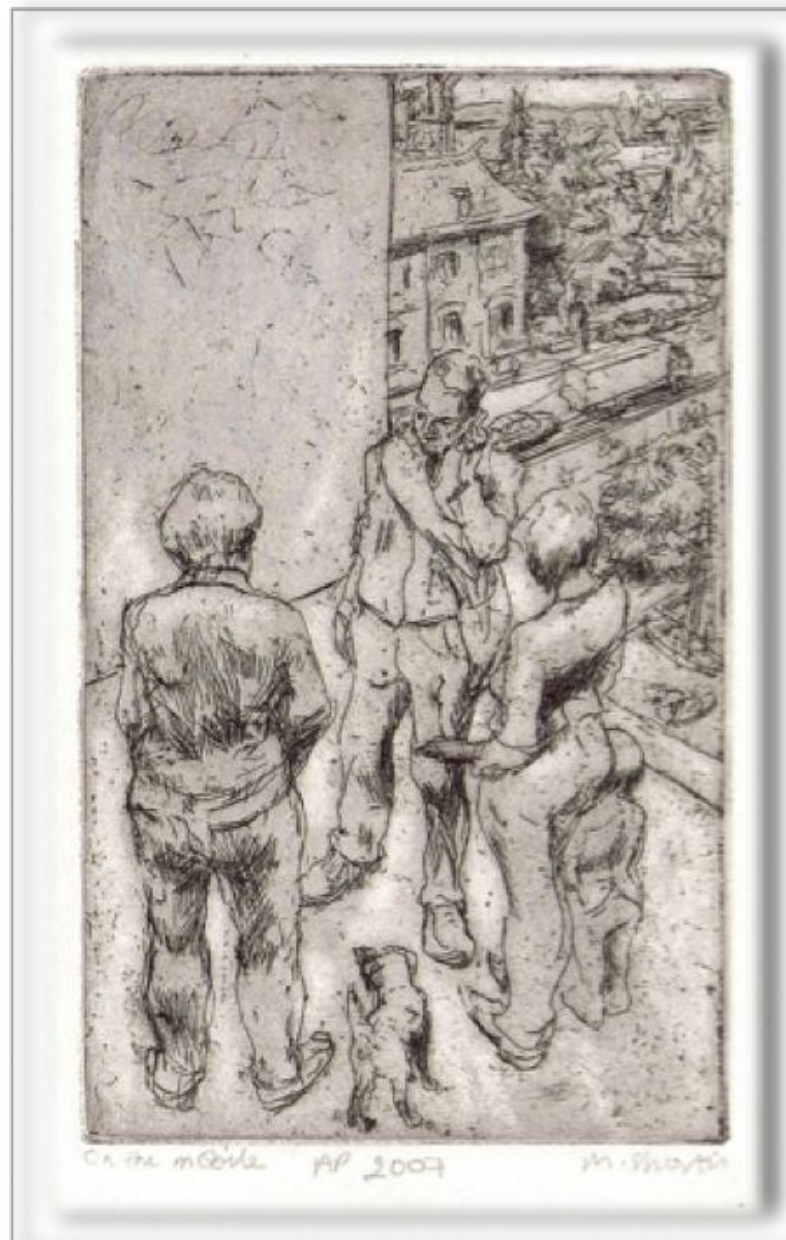
Then contacting your lawyer then getting some more therapy then giving some more
high-fives then shooting your gun then talking about your feelings some more.

DON'T YOU EVER STOP GETTING THERAPY AND GIVING HIGH FIVES TO
EACH OTHER???

 Reply  Reply With Quote 



Professional bibliography



References to conference presentations and to pedagogical designs

Professional bibliography

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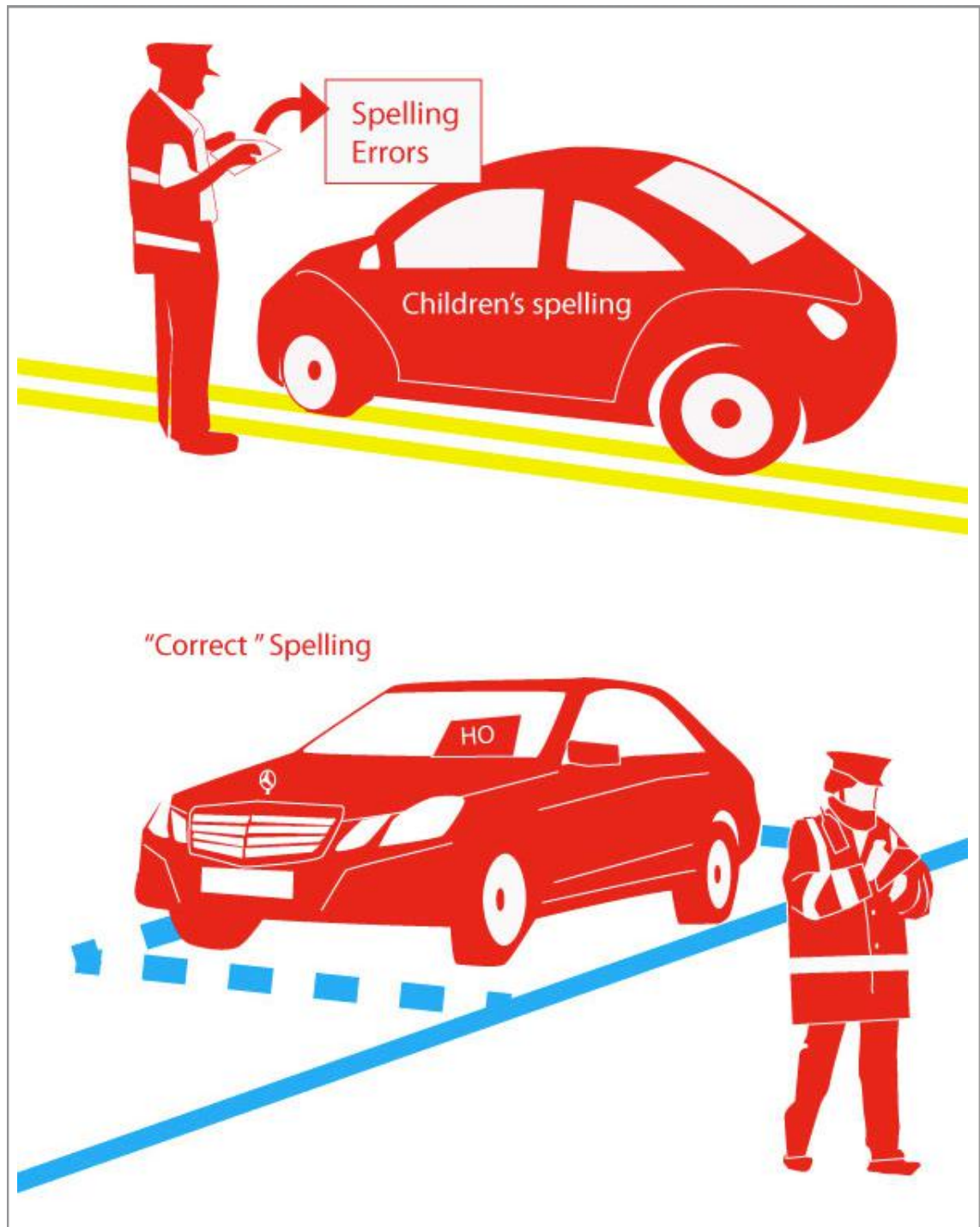
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260 Norman and Oakley 2004:27

261 Over 4,000 printed copies of the *All Talk* booklet copied in PDF in Appendix XII and its accompanying DVD were distributed to all state secondary schools in England and Wales in 2011. By 2012, over 9,000 registered users had downloaded All Talk from the bt.com/alltalk site.

DVD Appendix



Contents of DVDs

The attached data disk contains further supplementary material which cannot be displayed in print or PDF copy.

Appendix A: *Language of ICT* book website from 2001, with SMS section;

Appendix B: *All Talk* pedagogical materials (e.g. SMS-related video);

Appendix C *All Talk* DVD (supplementary material)