

WHEN 'SENSE' BECOMES 'TENSE': SMS LANGUAGE AND CREATIVE DESTRUCTION

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Abstract: *Mobile telephony has a number of service components. One of such is the Short Message Service (SMS). This is the text communication service component of mobile communication systems, especially for mobile phones or cellular phones. The SMS is the most widely used data application in the world. Abbreviations used in SMS are done so much in an arbitrary manner that the "creatively destroy" the grammar of the various languages. Often times these short forms of words create concepts that not only bastardise written communication language but could be misunderstood by those not steeped in this unorthodox form of written language communication. This paper empirically examines the phenomenon of creative destruction as it applies to use of SMS abbreviations vis-à-vis standard written language communication conventions. The study was designed as a survey. Questionnaire was administered to 398 randomly selected study units, drawn from a population of 262,000 tertiary students in Nigeria's Southeast region. The survey questions sought answers to use of SMS abbreviations among these students; their perception of the benefits or destructiveness of SMS abbreviations; SMS abbreviations as a new communication convention among them; factors that prompt the use of SMS abbreviations among them; and effect of the use of SMS abbreviations to their use of acceptable grammatical convention. Analyzed data show agreement among the respondents that the trend of using SMS abbreviations was doing damage to their use of conventional written language communication.*

Keywords Creative destruction, Language communication conventions, SMS abbreviations

INTRODUCTION

SMS (Short Message Service) simply refers to a store and forward electronic mechanism for the delivery of short messages of not more than 160 characters of the English alphabet or 70 characters for the Chinese and Arabic lettering from a sending mobile phone through a central short message centre to a destination mobile phone (Gupta 2014). The SMS concept was developed in the Franco-German GSM cooperation in 1984 by Friedhelm Hillebrand and Bernard Ghillebaert (Erickson 2012). With the SMS came abbreviations which are referred to as SMS language. The 160-character restriction of the SMS necessitates brevity due to space limitation. This has given rise to SMS language which implies all sort of crap abbreviations do not follow any known convention of language grammar, but still communicate; since they make sense. Such sense-making crap abbreviations include unorthodox words like: 2day (Today); ur (Your) ; Bc (Because), U're (You're), Frm (From), Tnx (Thanks), B4 (Before), Dat (That). Today, SMS abbreviations are so pervasive that the "genre" is beginning to be regarded somewhat as an emergent language register in its own right (Vosloo, 2009).

In his capacity as an academic the lead author of this paper receives countless Text Messages from both official and unofficial sources. Consider this Text Message:

*Sir u neva gv me d chance of sayn anyfn wn I cal u, al u do is flata me Y?
Gues dts 1of d tns u no hw 2do bst asid lecturing pple. I 1nt 2c U wn will u
stp d flata.*

This Text Message was sent by a student. The construction shows total disregard for grammatical conventions. Apparently, the sender expects that once the recipient could make sense out of the whole stuff then that could be traded for tense. This trend is popular among young people. [4]

*The burial of d husband of our staff, Mrs Berth Ofegbu up on Thur 26-02-15
at Orlu Imo State. Staff should assemble @ Mass Comm Dept at 8.am for d
journey.*

The foregoing Text Message was sent in by a faculty administrator. The sentence construction is anything but grammatical. But, question is: what does this administrator think in sending out a grammatically defective communication to faculty members? It is still the same idea that making sense eliminates the need for struggling to be tense-wise correct. This is the trend that has come with SMS abbreviations. And it appears to be threatening to be a convention in its own right. This fits into the picture of creative destruction described as "the process of industrial mutation that incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one" (Astrid, Parrissa, Jamie and Arno, 2004).

Put simply, the idea of Schumpeter implies that when a new innovation comes up the old innovation gives way. Creative destruction was the situation in Nigeria when mobile Text Messaging replaced letters slotted at post office boxes. Nobody in Nigeria, today, in the face of mobile Text Messaging, writes letters and goes to the post office to post such letters with the expectation to have them delivered by the post office to a desired destination. That would be strange – out of place; the Stone Age! Could this idea of creative destruction be what we are about to witness with

the inroad being made by SMS language into conventional language communication?

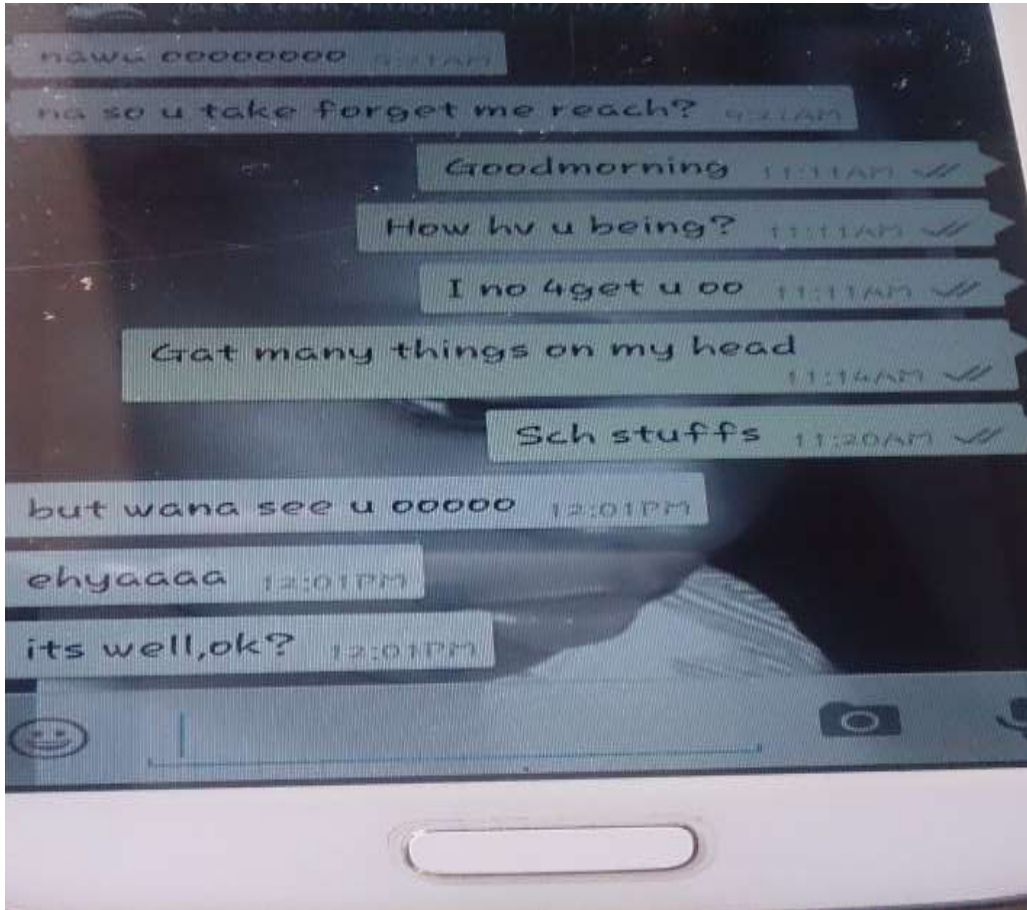


Fig. 1 A typical Nigerian SMS abbreviation

This study investigates the use of SMS abbreviations among select Nigerian tertiary students (with particular reference to Anambra State) in order to ascertain how the idea of creative destruction is becoming applicable in written language communication in the Nigerian context. Specifically the study addresses the following questions:

1. What number among tertiary students in Anambra State can write SMS abbreviations?
2. How convenient is the use of SMS abbreviations to these students?
3. Who among these students can readily understand and interpret SMS abbreviations?
4. What number among these students unconsciously substitutes SMS abbreviations for acceptable grammatical convention in written English language communication?
5. Who among these students can, when occasion demands, remember the right grammatical convention for written English language communication?

Also, the following hypotheses were tested:

Research Hypothesis 1:

If tertiary students in Anambra State make sense of SMS abbreviations, then they are more likely to use them.

Null Hypothesis

If tertiary students in Anambra State do not make sense of these abbreviations, then they are more unlikely to use them.

Research Hypothesis: 2

There is the likelihood that tertiary students in Anambra State who use SMS abbreviation might have good written English sense, based on grammatical correctness.

Null Hypothesis

There is no likelihood that students in Anambra State who use SMS abbreviation might have good written English sense, based on grammatical correctness.

Research hypothesis 3:

The use of SMS abbreviations by tertiary students in Anambra State might likely entail that we are at the verge of a new language communication convention which deemphasizes grammatical correctness.

Null hypothesis:

The use of SMS abbreviations by tertiary students in Anambra State, might not entail that we are at the verge of a new language communication convention, which deemphasizes grammatical correctness.

SMS ABBREVIATION USAGE: PROS AND CONS

A few researchers and theoreticians have unanimous agreement that text abbreviation messaging has a positive effect on students' writing. One study examined how students' use of SMS abbreviation messaging technology affects their writing skills and how classroom teachers can build on students' use of this increasingly popular technology (Schumpeter, 1942).

Another investigated the effect of using SMS abbreviation Message on the development of first year students' spoken and written communicative skills in Tafila Technical University. The findings of his study showed that students who use SMS abbreviation in their communication with their colleagues, friends and families improved greatly in both oral and written skills when it comes to lecture taking in class, since the abbreviation skills enable them to write faster and follow the lecture being given; but a times, it affects their grammatical spellings of standard English language tenses (O'Connor (2006).

Again, a study in 2011 observed that students a times mistakenly use SMS abbreviations to write to their teachers or lecturers which may not be fully understood by their teachers (Al-Qmoul, 2011).

Similarly, another study in the same year investigated the effect of using mobile phone short message service (SMS) abbreviation style of writing on note taking and comprehension of materials presented through an audio system during class lectures. The results of the study showed that SMS abbreviation style of writing improved student's note-taking competence as well as comprehension. Based on these findings, the study recommended that abbreviation style writing should be encouraged to enable students to take notes during lectures (Dansie (2011).

STUDIES ON THE NEW COMMUNICATION CONVENTION (SMS ABBREVIATION)

Short messages (SMS) abbreviation can be of great importance in teaching English language and note taking during classes. On the other hand, it can be very destructive if not controlled and students are left to imbibe make up words, choppy lingo, sloppy spelling and grammatical errors to get a quick and short message across (Sunday Digest. 2014).

On the other hand, it can be a very good tool to boost language skills and sub skills if controlled and written in proper English since it comprises the main corpus of people's communication.

In response to the effect and implication of SMS abbreviation on writing, some researchers and educators believe that abbreviations (SMS) are assaulting the conventional written English tenses since students' papers are full of punctuation mistakes, bad grammar and inappropriate abbreviations. While some claim it has positive effects, due to the fact that it enables student's exposure to writing in a more relaxing and less stressful atmosphere. A third party holds that (SMS) slang language has its own language that has no effect on Standard English (Starovoi, 2012). Irrespective of these assertions, the implication of the use of SMS abbreviation in language communication convention leads to the violation of the rules of grammar and causes unintentional harm to Standard English language communication usage. This in turn can cause communication barriers among English speaking countries in the future.

A study conducted in 2009 examined the implication of SMS abbreviation on the written school work of students. He observed that student's use of SMS abbreviation while writing messages and in their written school work leads to the destruction of language communication convention (Russel, 2012).

Some of the implication of SMS abbreviation is "bastardization"; that is the use of bad grammar, poor punctuation and improper abbreviations in academic writing (O Connor (2006).

Findings from a study conducted to visualize how the adoption of SMS abbreviation in language communication convention affects writing among its adopters, showed that students ignorantly make use of SMS abbreviations in writing (Freudenberg, 2009).

A similar study examined usage of SMS abbreviations among Nigerian university students with emphasis on its implication on the use of conventional English language. Findings suggest that SMS abbreviations used by students generate greater linguistic confusion if not adequately controlled (Ping, *et al*, 2011).

SMS ABBREVIATION: INDUSTRY AND THE ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

SMS messages play very important roles in industries. Most of the industries in Nigeria today make use of SMS text messages to communicate to their colleagues important matters such as company meetings and other important and urgent information which needs to be passed across quickly.

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On the other hand, many researchers have found out that SMS has a positive impact on economic growth. The analysis of the correlation between GDP (gross domestic product) and number of telephones per capital, using data from 45 countries for the period of 1960-1973 showed that causality ran in both directions at statistically significant levels. Time-lagged offsets of one year were used in order to see whether increases in telephone SMS penetration predicted GDP growth on the economy of a nation; or whether GDP growth predicted telephone SMS penetration (Njemanze, 2012).

Another study in 1998 further corroborated that SMS is an investment which is a strong predictor of economic growth (Savage, 1998).

A study in 2008 examined the lag relationship between the investment by telecommunication firms and gross domestic product in the United States. Based on Granger-Sim causality test with a simple aggregate data set, this study found that SMS investment by telecommunication firms was caused by economic activities. It upheld a close correlation between telecommunication (SMS) and economic growth as a growth driver (Lam and A. Shiu, 2010).

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A study in 2004 used the panel data approach to confirm a positive and statistically significant causal relationship between telecommunications SMS and income at the regional level. It also found that SMS messages had a great impact on economic growth (Zahra *et al.*, 2004).

Lam and Shiu further examined SMS message's contribution to economic growth for the period of 1999 to 2005. The regression results indicated that the contribution was positive but insignificant. Therefore, they argued that this might be due to the relatively low level of telecommunications infrastructure in the selected countries used as case studies in their research. [19]

According to Tella, Information Communications Technology (ICT) contributes to economic growth by helping to strengthen the economy and playing crucial roles in specific processes that lead to economic growth. In addition, it impacts positively on the livelihood of the poor (Tella *et al.*, (2007).

Lam and A. Shiu indicate that there is a bi-directional relationship between real gross domestic product (GDP) and SMS development (as measured by Tele-density) for European and high-income countries. However, when the impact of mobile telecommunications SMS on economic growth is measured separately, the bi-directional relationship is no longer restricted to European and high-income countries but also to developing countries such as Nigeria (Lam and Shiu, 2010).

The improvements in the living condition of the people in the rural areas due to the use of SMS have provided the platform for them to communicate easily amongst themselves and with relatives, friends and business associates living elsewhere.

Osoimehin, using Nigerian data over 1992–2007 period employed the Multiple Regression method to estimate the system equation in testing the causal relationship between the likely interdependence of telecommunications SMS messages and economic variables using the times series data. He found out that SMS text messages have impact on the economic growth of a nation (Osoimehin *et al*, (2010).

A study in 2012 explored the socio-economic effects of telecommunication SMS messages in Nigeria measured by gross domestic product (GDP) for 11 years (1999-2009). Their results show that investment in telecommunication is statistically significant and positively correlated with economic growth (Russel, 2012).

SMS ABBREVIATIONS AND ACCEPTABLE GRAMMATICAL CONVENTION

Some students perceive that ‘Yes’ it does affect their ability to write using correct and acceptable grammatical convention. When a person texts using SMS messages he/she uses acronyms such as ‘gud’ instead of good, ‘btw’ instead of between, ‘tnks’ in place of thanks, ‘hw’ in place of how, ‘enuf’ in place of enough; ‘eva’ becomes ever, ‘grl’ for girl, and so on. These forms of SMS abbreviation may not be understood by others for whom the message is meant and the recipient may think that the sender of such SMS message need to go back to school and learn how to write correctly. For some others, they may perceive that even when these tenses become ‘sense’, that SMS abbreviation does not lead to creative destruction of language communication since some ‘sense’ is made. Therefore, they believe that SMS abbreviation style of writing is a creative new form of language tense, in which some people have no clue about the real importance behind it. Although people may say that it does negatively affect the way people write Standard English, some students do not believe so.

The fact that these abbreviations on which text messages thrive are eroding Standard English Language is not in doubt. Perhaps, the inventors of the cell phones, and by extension, the Short Messaging Service (SMS) never figured that it could in any way undermine or lower the standard of any existing international language. While it is not clear whether the advent of SMS has dealt any fatal blow to such language tenses in French, Spanish, Italian etc, it is safe for one to conclude that English Language tense, the official language and lingua franca of all commonwealth nations has been the worst hit by the abuse of SMS abbreviation; affecting the student’s use of correct grammatical tenses.

Inadvertently, the use of popular SMS abbreviations which came with the advent of telephony in the country has so pervaded formal education in Nigeria such that students now write in both classroom and examination settings as if they are texting, pinging or chatting with friends on Facebook or any of the social media networks.

It is no happenstance that, in recent times, the nation has consistently witnessed a phenomenon of mass failure in English Language in both the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) examinations. Not a few persons rightly believe that the advancement of the destructive communication convention, which makes sense become tense instead of the other way round, is largely responsible for the development.

STUDENTS AND THE CULTURE OF SMS ABBREVIATIONS

Some of these new language slangs such as lol, (laugh out loud), pls(please), wt (what), brb (be right back), acdnt (accident), ack (acknowledge), admin (administration), ambw (all my best wishes), app (application), arg (argument), b4 (before), dis (this), etc are usually learned from internet chatting sites and a times from friends who send SMS abbreviation messages to their friends (Beil, George and John, 2008).

Most often, some of these tenses are learned from chat rooms on social networking sites such as 2go, Facebook, Badoo and Whatsapp etc. Some of this form of SMS abbreviations are also learnt from SMS glossary and from web pages such as www.2u2.com.

Although acronyms and shorthand are reported as very popular in instant and text messaging, research shows that many users of SMS abbreviations in south east Nigeria fully understand the meaning of these abbreviations and make sense of them. On the other hand, not all people send or receive instant or text messages written in abbreviations in south east Nigeria. For those individuals, the acronyms and shorthand abbreviations are not understood, as a result, the grammatical sense in the communication is greatly affected; there is a miscommunication in language convention due to the use of these SMS abbreviations.

With the ever increasing use of text messaging among students, especially teenagers, there has been a growing concern among educators, parents, researchers and general public that this practice will alter how the English language is written in the long run.

THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

This study was anchored on the theory of 'Schumpeterian growth'. This theory is a type of economic growth theory which is based on the process of creative destruction. The theory was proposed by Joseph Schumpeter (1928). The process of creative destruction was described by Joseph Schumpeter. It refers to the endogenous introduction of new products, new language, ideals or processes. In other words, the essential feature of Schumpeterian growth theory is the incorporation of technological progress which is generated by the endogenous introduction of new language innovations that could lead to creative destruction of Standard English tenses.

In the light of the foregoing, the gist of the Schumpeterian theory would suggest that the use of SMS abbreviations among students, as a result of mobile telephony, tends to bring about the destruction of written Standard English language.

METHODOLOGY/RESULTS

The survey design was employed in this study. The focus was on tertiary students in Anambra State, therefore the population for the study comprised all tertiary students in the various higher institutions in the state, which is about 106,021. The sample size of 398 was used in this study and this sample size was derived using the statistical formula by Taro Yamane: $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$.

The institutions and undergraduate student's population that was studied are listed in Table 1:

TABLE I: SAMPLE FRAME

S/N	University	Population
1.	Nnamdi Azikiwe university (UNIZIK)	35,462
2.	Anambra state university, Uli/Igbariam (ANSU)	27,633
3.	Paul University, Awka	3,416
4.	Federal Polytechnic, Oko	21,190
5.	Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe	18,320
Total		106,021

A probability cluster sampling technique was employed in to get at the study units. In doing this, the areas under study were all divided into five clusters and labelled as follows

- Nnamdi Azikiwe undergraduate students are labelled cluster 'A'.
- Anambra state university undergraduate students are labelled cluster 'B'.
- St Paul's university undergraduate students are labelled cluster 'C'.
- Federal polytechnic Oko students are labelled cluster 'D'.
- Nwafor Orizu college of Education students are labelled cluster 'F'.

The five clusters were sampled randomly and 80 copies of the questionnaire were distributed randomly to each of the clusters, respectively.

A total number of three hundred and ninety eight (398) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents. The questionnaire was structured in a way that the first three questions sought information on personal data of the respondents while the others are related to the subject matter of study. Both open

and closed ended questions were used. In distributing the questionnaire, 88 copies was distributed to Nnamdi Azikiwe university, 100 Copies to Anambra state university, 60 copies to St Paul’s university, 83 copies to Oko poly and 67 copies to Nwafor Orizu college of education respondents respectfully, using the proportionality rule.

Field data collected from UNIZIK students and Paul University students

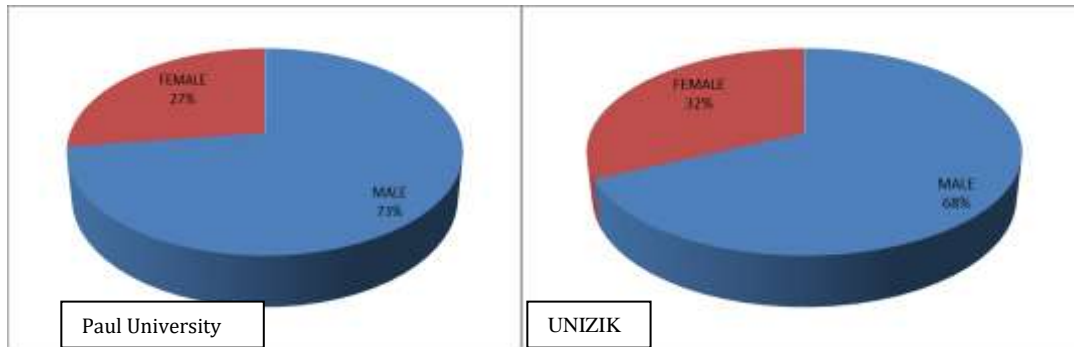


Fig 2. Gender distribution

Data in Figure 2 show that 32% of the female students and 68% of the male students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University were used in this study. While 27% of the female students and 73% of the male students from Pual University were used in for the study.

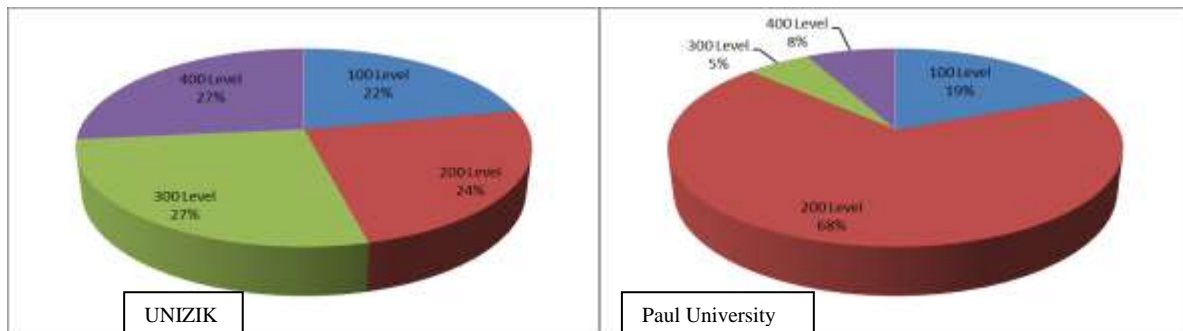


Fig. 3 Academic level

Fig 3 shows the academic levels of the students from Nnamdi Azikiwe University and Paul University; 22% of Nnamdi Azikiwe students used in the study were in 100 level, 24% were in 200 level, 27% were in 300 level and 27% were in 400 level. The same figure also shows that respondents from Paul University used in the study also fell into different categories of academoic levels; 19% of Paul University students were in 100 level; 68% were in 200level ;5% were in 300level and 8% were in 400 level.

Research question 1: Do you at any point in time, use SMS abbreviation?

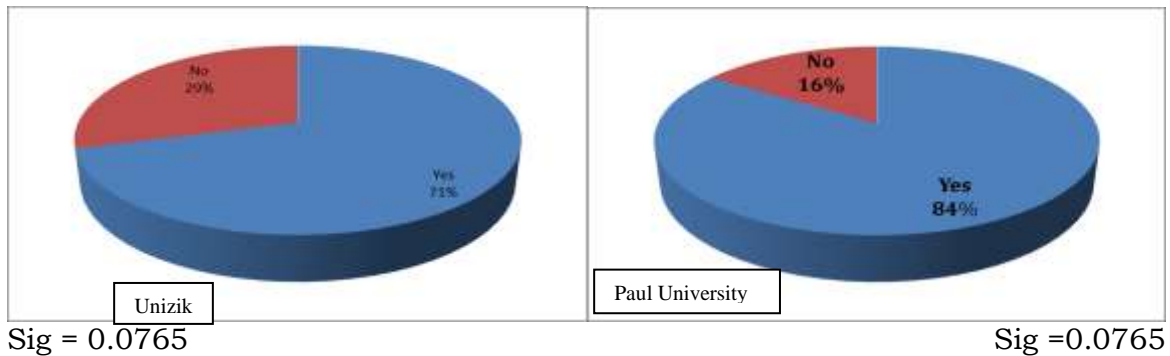


Fig 4. Respondent's Responses to research question 1

In responses to question 1, figure 4 indicates that 29% of the respondents from Nnamdi Azikiwe university disagreed to using SMS abbreviation, 71% agreed using sms abbreviation while on the other hand, 16% repondents from st paul's University also disagreed and 84% agreed to using SMS abreviation. Mann whitney test shows that there is significant at $P > 0.05$. Therefore, alternative hypothesis in research hypothesis 1, is rejected in favour of the null

Question 2: What is your perception on the use of SMS Abbreviation by students?

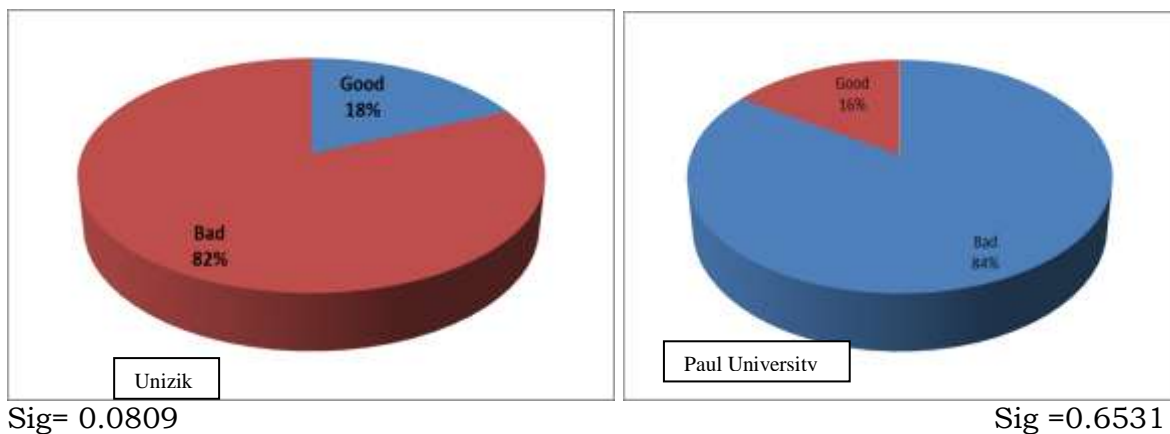


Fig 5. Responsdent's responses to question 2

In response to research question 2, fig 5 graph shows that 18% of Unizik students has a good perceptions about SMS abbreviation while 82% percive SMS abbreviation to be a bad practice. On the other hand, 16% of St paul's university students also percive sms abbreviation as good and 84% also viewed the use of SMS abbreviation as a bad practice. Mann whitney statical analysis of their responses indicate that at $P > 0.05$ there are no real significant difference between their responses. Hence alternate hypothesis in research hypothesis 2, is rejected in favour of the null hypothesis .

Question 3: With the increase in the use of SMS abbreviation, do you think we are at the verge of a new communication convention?

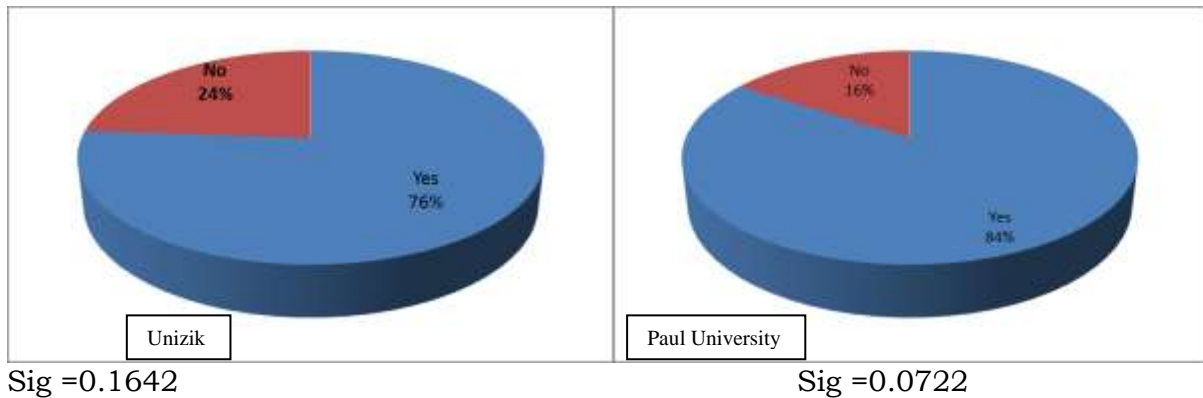


Fig 6. Respondents responses to question number 3

Responses of the respondents as regard question number 4 depict that 24% of Unizik student disagreed and pointed out that we are not at the verge of a new communication convention while 76% of them agreed that the use of SMS abbreviation is an indication that we are at the verge of a new communication convention. Responses of st paul's student as seen in fig 6, also indicate that 16% of the student perceive that we are not at the verge of a new communication convention irrespective of the increase in the use of SMS abbreviation while, 84% perceive that we are actually at the verge of a new communication convention. Statical result for the responses of the respondent as regard question 3 , indicates that their response is significant at $P > 0.05$. Therefore, alternative hypothesis in research hypothesis 3 is rejected in favour of the null hypothesis.

Research Question 4: Do you use SMS Abbreviation because they make sense to you?

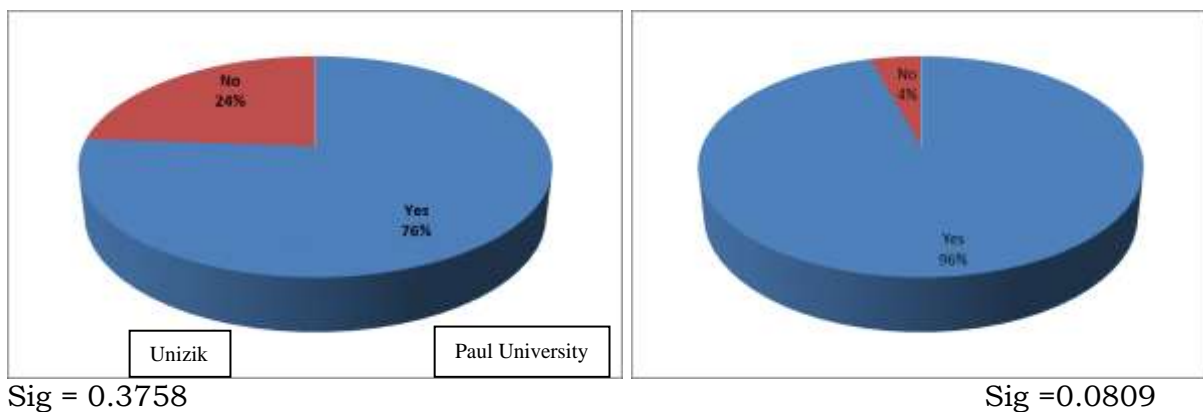


Fig 7: Respondents responses on question 4

Responses of Unizik students in view of research question 4, as shown in fig 7 indicate that 24% of the student do not make use of sms abbreviation because they cannot make sense out of it, 76% agreed using SMS abbreviation because they can make sense out of it. The same proved true in the case of st paul's student, from the same figure 4% of st paul's student disagreed that they do not make use of SMS abbreviation because they can't make sense out of it. But 96% agreed to

using SMS abbreviation since they make sense from it. Analytical result shows that the responses of the respondents are significant $p > 0.05$. hence alternative hypothesis in research hypothesis 1 is rejected in favour of the Null hypothesis.

Research Question 5: Has the use of SMS Abbreviation affected your use of correct Grammar positively or Negetively ?

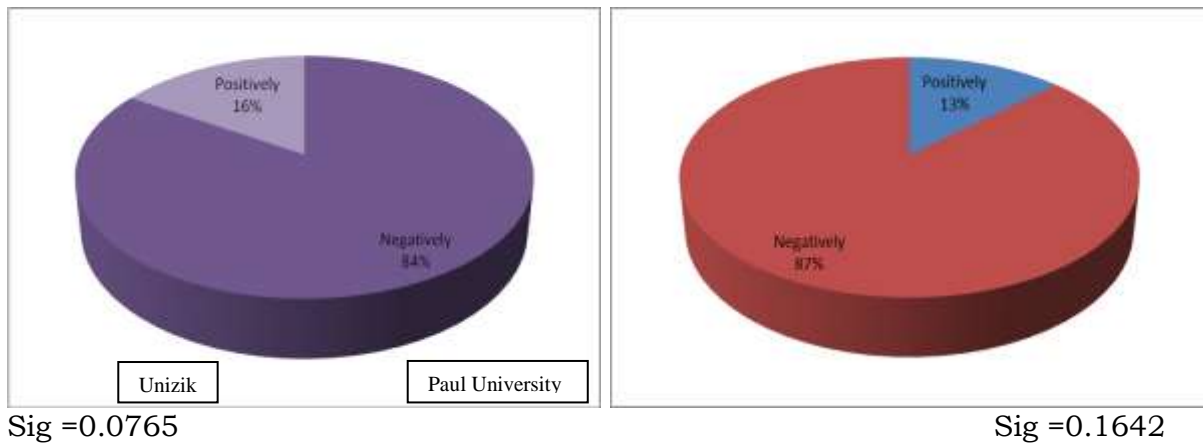


Fig 8 : Respondent responses to question 5

In response to question 5, figure 8 depicted that 16% Of the student in Nnamdi Azikiwe university agreed that the use of SMS abbreviation has affected their use of acceptable Grammar positively while 84% of them responded that it has affected them negatively. For st paul’s students, 13% agreed that the use of SMS abbreviation has affected their use of correct Grammar positively while 87% disagreed to it stating that it has affected their use of correct grammar negatively. These responses of the respondents when analyzed statistically showed that their responses are significant at $P > 0.05$ in line with this result, alternative hypothesis in research hypothesis 2 is rejected in favour of the null hypothesis.

Research Question 6: Do you fully understand these SMS Abbreviation whe you read them?

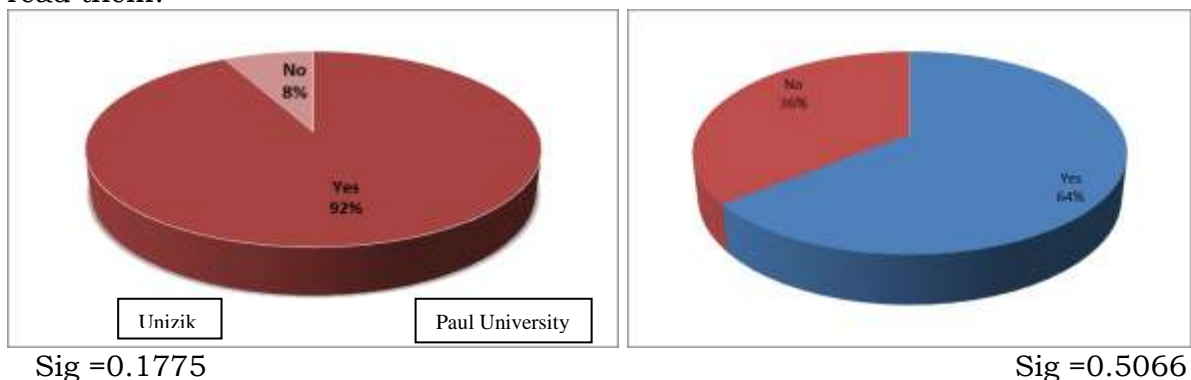


Fig 9: Respondent responses to question 6

Respondent responses to question 6 shown in figure 9 indicate that 8% of Nnamdi Azikiwe university student do not fully understand SMS abbreviations when they read them while 92% agreed that they understand SMS abbreviations when they

read them. On the other hand, 36% of st paul’s university students agreed that they do not understand SMS abbreviations when they read them and 64% did agree that they fully understand SMS abbrevitions whenever they read them. Their responses are significant at $p > 0.05$. Hence alternative hypothesis stated in research hypothesis 1 is rejected in favour of the Null hypothesis.

Field Data Collected from Anambra State University Students and Nwafor Orizu Collage of Education Students

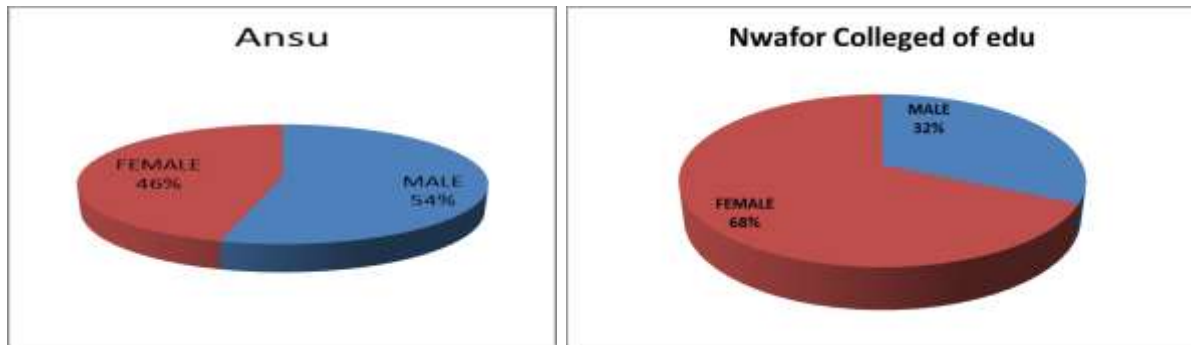


Fig 10: Gender distribution

Responses of respondents from Anambra state University (Ansu) depict that 46% of the respondent are female, 54% are male while, that of Nwafor college of education shows that 32% are male and 68% are female as shown in figure 10 above

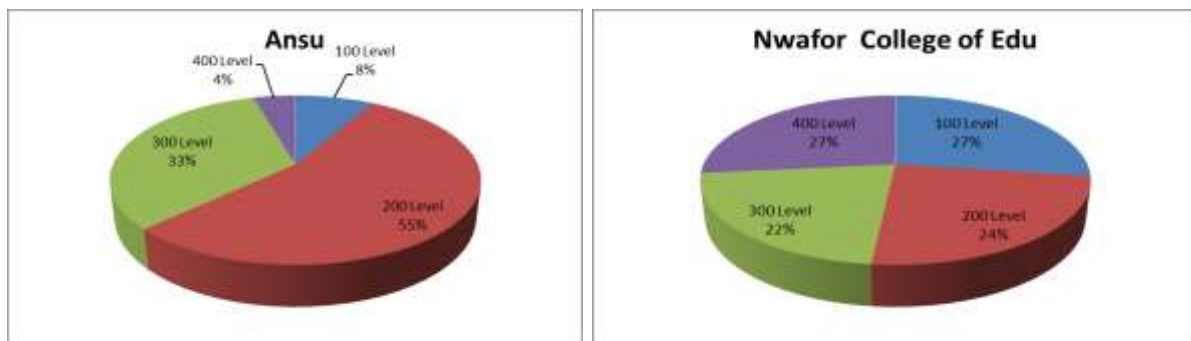


Fig 11. Education level

Fig 11 shows that responses of the respondent as regard their level of education. In Anambra state university, 8% of the respondents are in 100 level, 55% are in 200level, 33% are 300 level while 4% are in 400 level. For Nwafor Orizu college of education, 27% of the students are in 100 level, 24% are in 200 level, 22% are in 300 level and 27% are in 400 level.

Research question 1: Do you at any point ,use SMS abbreviation?

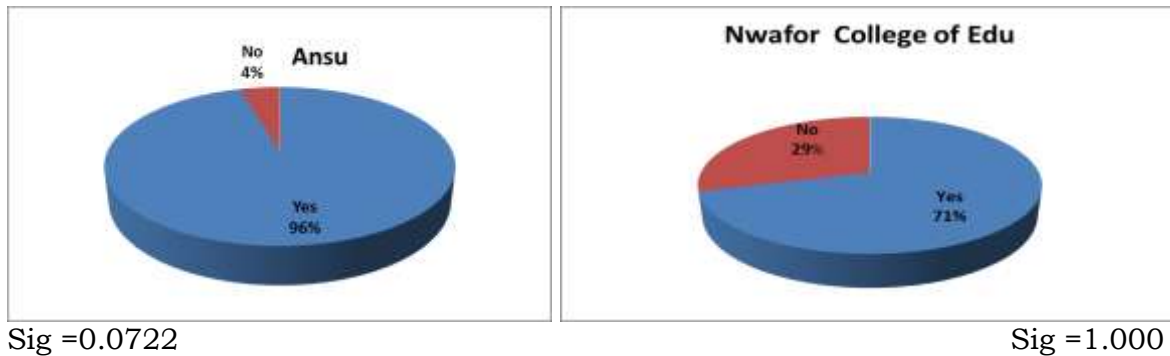


Fig 12: Responses of Respondent to Question 1.

Responses of respondents to question 1 as shown in Fig 12 above indicate that 4% respondents from Anambra state university disagree that they have at no point used SMS abbreviation, 96% agreed that they have used SMS abbreviations while for Nwafor Orizu college of education, 29% disagreed that they have never at any point used SMS abbreviation while 71% agreed that they do use SMS abbreviation. Statistical analysis of their responses indicate that at $p > 0.05$ that their responses are significant. Hence, the alternative hypothesis stated in research hypothesis 1 is rejected in favour of the null hypothesis.

Research question 2: What is your perception on the use of SMS abbreviation by students, good or bad?

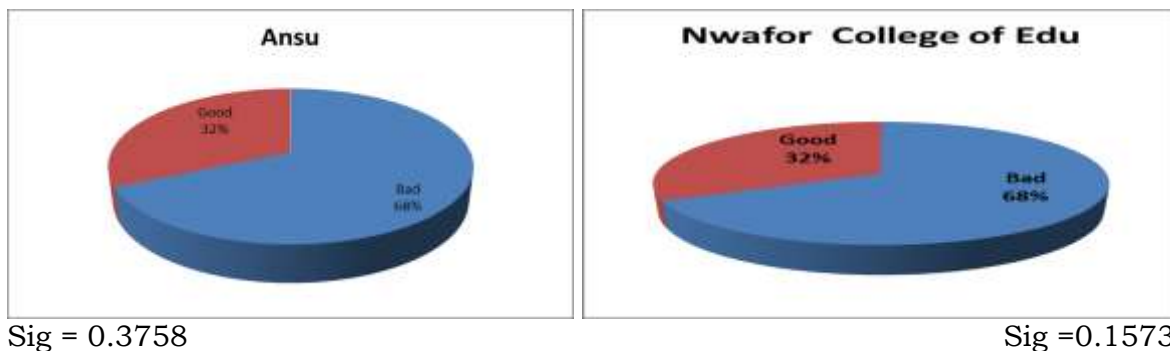


Fig 13: Respondent responses to question 2

Fig 13 shows the responses of the respondent as regard question 2. The figure shows that 32% of Anambra state university students have good perception about the use of SMS abbreviation while 68% have a bad perception of the use of SMS abbreviation. For those respondents in Nwafor Orizu college of education, 32% have good perception on the use of SMS while 68% have bad perceptions about the use of SMS abbreviation. Looking at the respondents responses from the statistical analysis, it can be seen that analysis of their responses indicate that their responses are significant at $P > 0.05$. Hence, alternative research hypothesis stated in research hypothesis 4 is rejected in favour of the null hypothesis.

Research question 3: with the increase in the use of SMS abbreviation, do you think we are at the verge of a new communication convention?

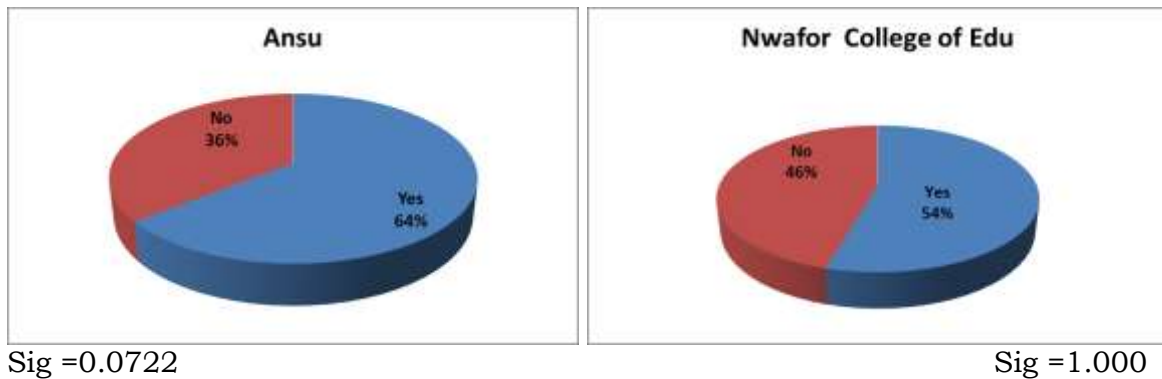


Fig 14: Respondent responses to question 3

Responses to research question 3 shows that 36% of Anambra state university students disagreed, stating that we are not at the verge of a new communication convention while 64% agree that the increase in the use of SMS abbreviation is an indication that we are at the verge of a new communication convention. For responses of the respondents in Nwafor Orizu college of education, 46% disagreed by responding that we are not at the verge of a new communication convention while 54% agree that we are actually at the verge of a new communication convention due to the increased use of sms abbreviation. Analytical result of the responses indicate that at $P > 0.05$ their responses is significant. Therefore, alternative hypothesis stated in research hypothesis 4 is rejected in favour of the null hypothesis.

Research question 4: Do you use SMS abbreviation because they make sense to you?

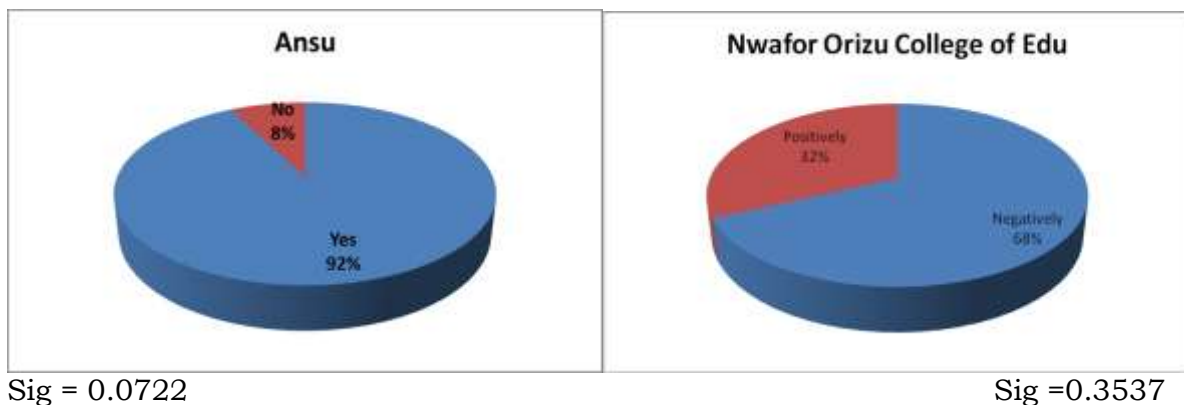


Fig 15: Respondent responses to question 4

Figure 15 shows responses of the respondent on research question 7, the responses of the respondents indicate that 8% of Anambra state university students do not make use of SMS abbreviattion because they dont make sense out of it, 92% of them also agreed that they make use of SMS abbreviations since they can make sence out of it. on the other hand, responses of respondents from Nwafor Orizu college of education shows that 32% of the respondents agree that

they use SMS abbreviation since they make sense out of it. While 68% of the respondents disagreed to using SMS abbreviation because they cannot make sense out of it. Their responses are significant at $P > 0.05$. Hence alternative research hypothesis 1 stated is rejected in favour of the Null hypothesis .
Research question 5: Has your use of SMS abbreviation affected your use of correct english grammar positively or Negetively?

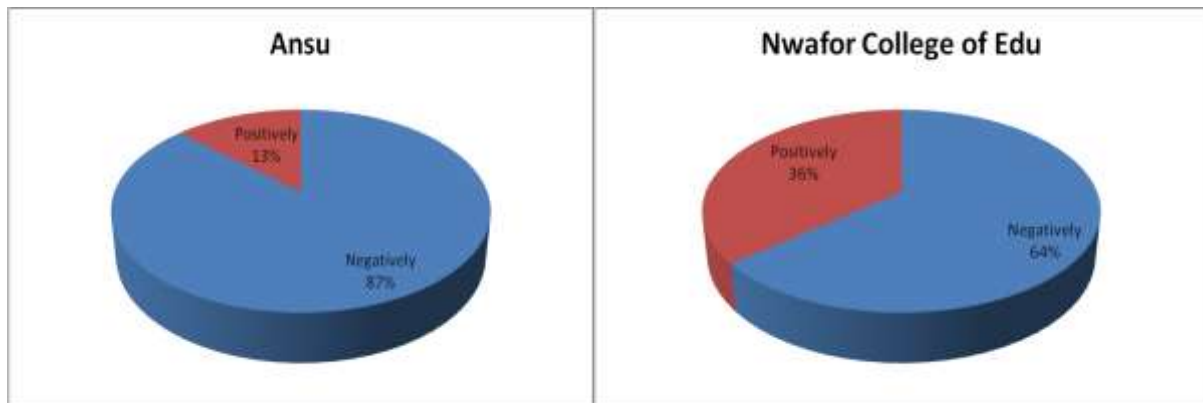


Fig 16. Respondents responses to question 5

Fig 16 show the responses of the respondents to question 8, responses from Anambra state university repondents shows that 13% of the respondent are positively affected in their use of correct grammar while 87% respondents agreed to be negetively affected. On the other hand, 36% respondents from Nwafor Orizu college of education has positively been affected while 64% are negetively affected. This responses are significant at $p > 0.05$. Therefore, alternative research hypothesis 2 is rejected in favour of the null hypothesis .

Research question 6: Do you fully understand these SMS abbriviations when you read them?

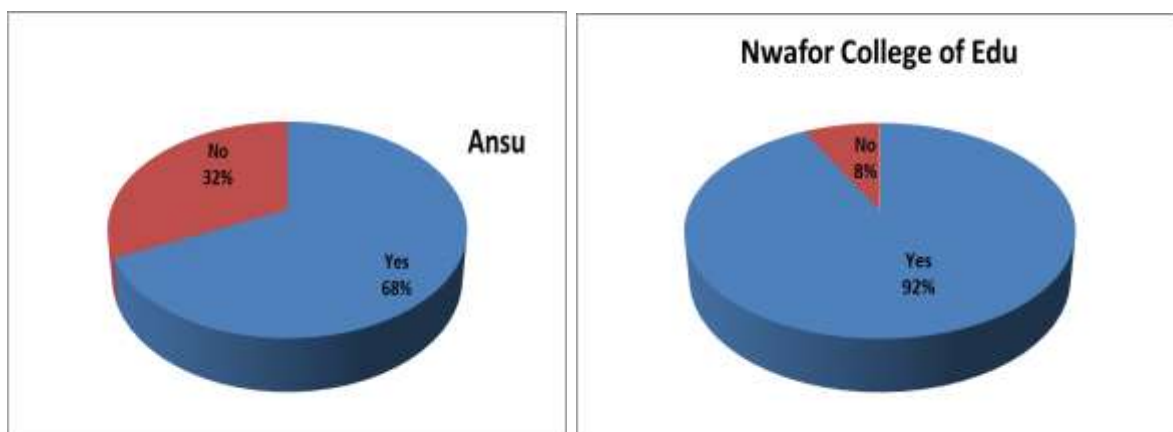


Fig 17: Respondents responses to question 6

Responses of respondent as shown in figure 16 depict that 32% respondents from Anambra state university do not fully understand SMS abbreviation while 68% of

the respondents responded that they fully understand the meaning of the SMS abbreviations when reading it. On the other hand, 8% respondents from Nwafor Orizu college of education responded also, that they don't fully understand the meaning of SMS abbreviation when they see them while 92% agreed that they fully understand the meaning of SMS abbreviation when reading it. Their responses are all significant at $p > 0.05$. Hence alternative research hypothesis 1 is rejected in favour of the null hypothesis.

Field data collected from federal polytechnic Oke students

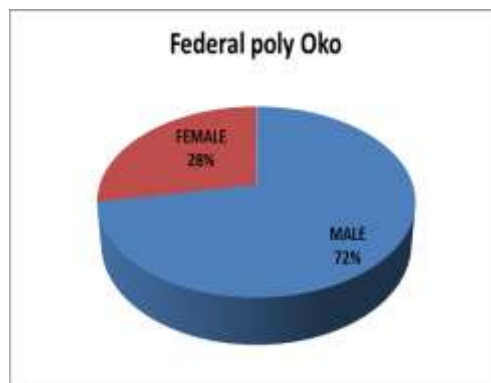


Fig 18. Gender distribution

Fig 18 shows that 28% of respondent from federal polytechnic oko are female while 72% are male.

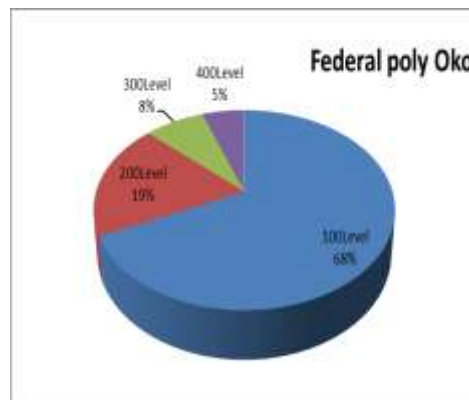
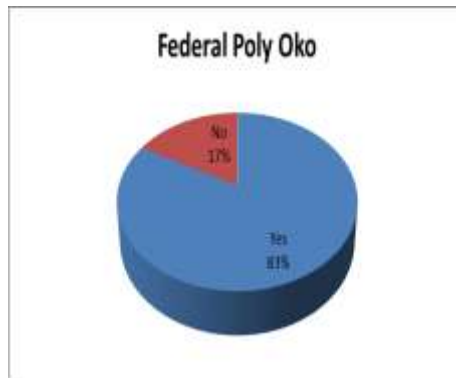


Fig 19: Educational Level

Fig 19 depicts the educational level of each of the respondent from federal polytechnic oko, from the figure it can be seen that 68% of the respondents are in 100 level, 19% are in 200 level, 8% are in 300 level while 5% are in 400 level.

Research question 1: Do you at any point in time, Use SMS abbreviation?

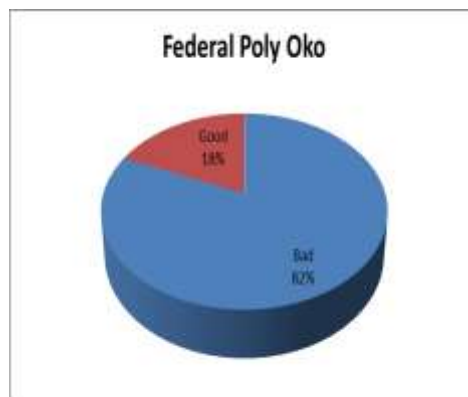


Sig =0.0809

Fig 20: Respondent responses to research question 1

Respondents responses to research question 1 as shown in figure 21 indicates that 17% of the respondent disagreed to using SMS abbreviation while 83% agreed to using SMS abbreviation. Statistical analysis of their responses indicate that their responses are significant at $P>0.05$. hence alternate hypothesis stated in research hypothesis 1 is rejected in favour of the Null hypothesis

Question 2: what is your perception on the use of SMS Abbreviation by students good or bad?

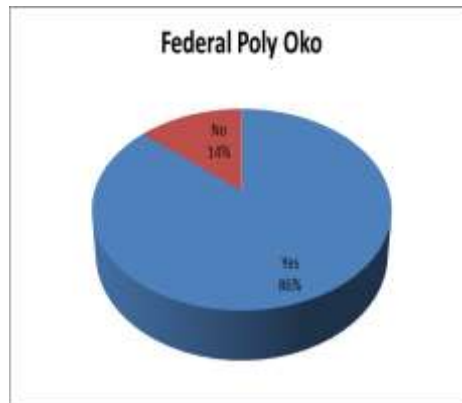


Sig =0.0809

Fig 21. Respondent responses to question 2

Figure 21 shows that 18% of the respondents in question 2, have a good perception about the use of SMS abbreviation while 82% have bad perception about the use of SMS abbreviation. Looking at the statistical result of their responses, their responses are statistically significant at $P>0.05$. Therefore, alternative hypothesis stated in research hypothesis 4 is rejected in favour of the null hypothesis for research question 2.

Question 3: With the increase in the use of SMS abbreviation, do you think we are at the verge of a new communication convention?

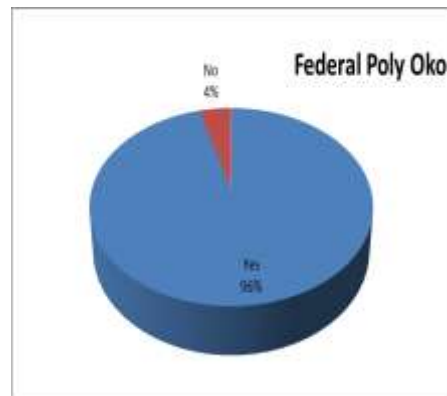


Sig =0.1904

Fig 22: Respondents responses to question number 3

Figure 22 depict that in view of research question 3, that 14% disagree that we are not the verge of a new communication convention while 86% agreed that due to the increased use of SMS abbreviation, that we are at the verge of a communication convention. Their responses is significant at $P > 0.05$. therefore, alternative research hypothesis 4 is rejected in favour of the null hypothesis

Research Question 4: Do you use SMS Abbreviation because they make sense to you?

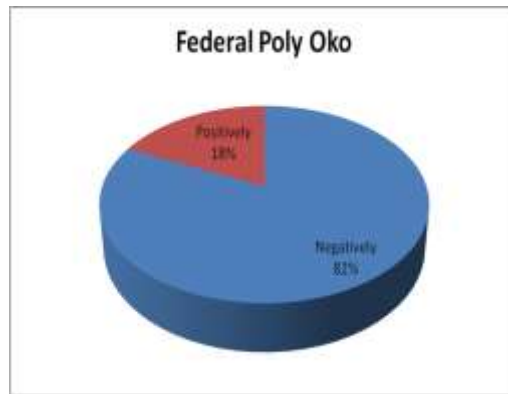


Sig = 0.0809

Fig 23: Respondent responses on Question 4

From figure 23 above, the responses of respondents to question 3 shows that 4% of the reponses don't use SMS abbreviation because it does not make sense to them while 96% responded that they use sms abbreviation because it makes sense to them. These responses when statically analysed indicated that their responses are significant at $P > 0.05$. Hence , null hypothesis stated research hypothesis is accepted in place of the alternative hypothesis as regard research question 4

Research Question 5: Has the use of SMS Abbreviation affected your use of correct Grammer positively or Negatively ?

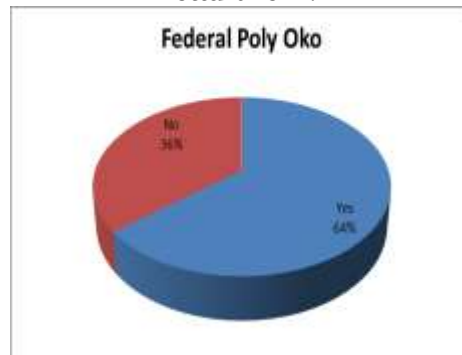


Sig =0.6579

Fig 24 : Respondent responses to question 5

From Fig 24 above, the responses of the respondents to question 5 indicate that 18% of the respondents agree that the use of sms abbreviation has affected them positively while 82% pointed out that it has had negative effect on their use of correct and acceptable english any. Their responses are also significant at $P>0.05$. Hence , alternative research hypothesis stated in research hypothesis 2 is rejected in favour of the null hypothesis.

Research Question 6: Do you fully understand these Sms Abbreviation when you read them?



Sig = 0.5066

Fig 25: Respondent responses to question 6

Figure 25 shows responses of the respondent to research question 6. from the figure, 36% of the respondents agree that they do not fully understand SMS abbrevitiaon whenever they read them while 64% agree to fully understand SMS abbrevitions whenever they read them ,these responses of the respondents are significant at $P>0.05$. therefore, altenative hypothesis stated in research question 1 is rejected in favour of the Null hypothesis.

DISCUSSION

Reliability coefficient analysis results of the data collected from the field showed that the responses of the respondents are not consistent as regard the research questions posed before them. This means that their response varies from one respondent to another. Thirty two percent (32%) female respondents and 68% male were used from Nnamdi azikiwe university, 27% female and 73% male from St paul's university, 54% male, 46% female from Anambra state University (Ansu), 32% male, 68% female from Nwafor college of education, 28% of female respondent from Oko polytechnic while 72% are male respondent used in the research. The respondents used in the study ranges from 100 level to 400 level students of the various schools.

The result to question 1 shows that most of the respondent agreed that they have most of the time used sms abbreviation. Their responses were all significant at $P > 0.05$. The result of the responses to question 2 also shows that 82% of Nnamdi Azikiwe university respondents, 84% respondents from st paul's, 68% from Anambra state University, 82% responses from federal polytechnique Oko responded that the use of SMS abbreviation is bad since it has a negative impact on the use of acceptable grammatical conventions by the students. At $P > 0.05$ the responses of the respondents are all significant. This finding is in agreement with what Danise (2011) said, according to him, the use of SMS abbreviation affect the grammatical use of English language and that most undergraduates o mistakenly use it in writing to their teachers and lecturer. The work also is in line what Freudenberg (2009) said. He observed that the use of SMS abbreviation by students has led to the destruction of language communication convention and O'Connor (2006) noted that the use of SMS abbreviation has led to the bastardization of English language communication convention. The result of the research on the other hand disagreed to what Starovoit(2012) said. According to him, the use of SMS can boast the writing skills of undergraduate student if properly controlled. Result obtained as regard question 3 shows that 76% responses from Nnamdi Azikiwe university students, 84% respondent from St paul's university, 64% responses from Anambra state university, 54% responses from Nwafor Orizu college of education and 86% responses from federal polytechnic Oko all shows that the increase in the use of SMS abbreviation is an indication that we are actually at the verge of a new communication convention. At $P > 0.05$ these responses are significant.

In response to research question 4, result shows that 76% responses from Nnamdi Azikiwe university, 96% responses from St Paul's University, 64% responses from Anambra state university, 54% responses from Nwafor Orizu college of education students and 86% responses from federal polytechnic Oko shows that the respondents all use SMS abbreviation due to the fact that they understand the meaning of the SMS abbreviations.

Result obtained for research question 5 indicate that 84% responses of the respondents from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, 87% responses from St Paul's university, 87% from Anambra state university, 64% respondents from Nwafor Orizu college of education and 82% responses from federal polytechnic Oko agree that the use of SMS abbreviation has effected them negatively. This find is in

agreement to what Ping *et al* (2011) finding, in his findings he observed that SMS abbreviation in language communication convention affect writing skills among its adopters. Njemanze (2012) further examine the effect of SMS on undergraduates in Nigeria Universities and noted that SMS abbreviation cause greater linguistic confusion. The findings and observation in this research work are all in agreement to what Njemanze noted.

Result obtained as regard question 6 from all the respondents shows that 68% respondents from Anambra state university, 93% respondents from Nwafor Orizu college of education, 92% respondents from Nnamdi Azikiwe university, and 64% respondent from St paul's university all responded to fully understand SMS abbreviation when reading and writing them respectively.

CONCLUSION

The research done has shown that the use of SMS abbreviation among the undergraduate students in south east Nigeria is viewed as a bad practice by most of the respondents as compared to the view of those who feel it does not have bad effect on them. This confirms the opinion by Sunday digest 2014 that development (the use of SMS abbreviation) which has led to the creative destruction of language communication convention which can be termed 'SMS abbreviation' in reality has further eroded and will continue to lower the standard of English Language if the tradition is allowed to fester.

Against this backdrop, the increased use of SMS abbreviation indicates that we are at the verge of a new communication convention with reference to the response of the respondents in the research questionnaire. A very high percentage of the respondents are able to fully understand the meaning of SMS abbreviation and the fact remains that a high percentage of the respondents feel that SMS abbreviation has a great negative effect on the use of correct and acceptable grammatical tenses among south east students in Nigeria.

While it is not clear whether the advent of SMS has dealt any fatal blow to such languages as French, Spanish, Italian etc, in line with research conducted, it is safe for one to conclude that SMS abbreviation has been the worst culprit in the abuse of English Language tense, the official language and lingua franca of all commonwealth nations, affecting the student's use of correct grammatical tenses. These students utilize SMS abbreviations even in official writings such as when writing application letter, writing to their lecturers and even in examinations, hence it could be said that when sense becomes tense to these undergraduate students, it becomes destructive and thus, acceptable grammatical convention has been undermined and neglected.

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