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Shun the SMS language for your own good.

November 6, 2014

Language is probably one of the most important facets of human communication. A widely known and acknowledged fact is that for students in India and many other countries around the globe, where English is a medium of instruction – understanding and being able to frame correct sentences in English is a necessary skill.

Yet, grammatically flawed sentences, abbreviations inspired by the Internet slang, punctuation blunders and spelling mistakes are not infrequent. You might wonder, where? You need to look no further than your immediate peer group, or if you are sportively introspective, then yourself.

This is an issue that has been plaguing today's younger generation. Buoyed by the advent of digitization and a 24*7 internet connection to stay connected with our peers, our communication

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habits have changed from lucid, clear cut sentences to shortened, seemingly opaque words. In an effort to assimilate greater information in a short span of time, the age old tradition of using Standard English has taken a severe beating.

The corporate world seems to taken note of the existing trend. Recently, students attending a placement drive for a leading technology firm were in for a surprise. The conventional procedure of selection was slightly tweaked to focus on what was described as 'inter personal skills'. An aptitude test is usually followed by a group discussion round, but the company swapped it for a new round called as the essay writing round. The reasoning behind the change was quite sensible. The company felt students fared well while speaking on a particular topic, thanks to the recruitment training provided by their respective colleges, but were found lacking in analytical writing skills and basic communication etiquettes. The visiting HR officer personally narrated many instances, where the new recruits sent emails without paying attention to the correct format of emails to be sent to a higher authority. He particularly highlighted the inappropriate use of abbreviations and auxiliary verb contractions. For instance, employees used *ur* instead of *your* and seemed confused between the usage of y*ou're* and *your.* He also lamented that the emails lacked a formal tone and appropriate sentence structures.

When cultivated over a period of time, such habits are tough to let go. They inadvertently give out signals of laziness and complacency. If you are one of those text addicts who cannot imagine a life without texting, take a moment to introspect. Are you comfortable with the standard conventions of the English language? Would you be able to frame grammatically correct sentences without basic errors? Are you particularly sure that the internet inspired slang has not crept into your written papers, at least occasionally?

If the answers to the above questions is a resounding NO, then you have your task cut out. Future activities concerning your workplace entail you to be proficient in every aspect of the language and this is the best time to iron out your shortcomings. The following are some of the tips to overcome them:

1. Read everything you can lay your hands on: Newspapers, magazines, journals, published papers, opinions, novels and so on – the sources are countless. It would be even more fulfilling if the source is a reputed one.

2. Use complete words: You might fancy typing *coz* instead of *because* or use *kewl* instead of *cool,* but remember that words of such kind neither have a defined meaning nor will look good in your formal written statements, if they do appear unintentionally. Though it needs a little time and effort, learn to type complete words. Trust me, you will be surprised at how refined your texts look.

3. Use third party apps with auto correct feature: Smartphones keyboard apps like SwiftKey and Touchpal X have the auto correct feature enabled by default. Using the auto correct and prediction feature does not compromise your typing speed and actually helps you send complete words without the extra effort. It is also a great way to experiment and add new words to your vocabulary.

4. Practice: The only way to terminate bad habits in written language is by sincerely practicing whenever it is possible. Maintain a diary, write blogs, contribute to your college literary clubs – the routes to improvement are aplenty.

Remember, a funky tagline replete with errors like *'Mah lyf, Mah rlzzz'* on your motorcycle might elevate your social standing among your peers, but it certainly doesn't look good on your resume!

What is your take on the usage of SMS English? Please leave your comments in the section below.

Image credit : http://shenfisher.blogspot.in/2010/10/textese.html

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One Response to "Shun the SMS language for your own good."

sumaiya mahrosh says:

November 5, 2014 at 12:16 AM

Nice blog .There is high need of understanding the importance of proper use of language.

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