

Social and Linguistic Impact on the Formation of Abbreviations and Acronyms in Modern

English

Osman Bedel

Moldova State University

Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures

Department of German Linguistics and Intercultural Communication

Specialty 621.04: Lexicology and lexicography; terminology and specialized languages;

translation

Supervisor: Mr. Dumitru Melenciuc, associated professor

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Abstract

This thesis examines social and linguistic influences on the formation and use of abbreviations and acronyms in modern English. It addresses five research questions concerning the popularity of modern English, virtual communication, the formation and spread of shortened forms, possible social effects, and appropriate responses to such effects. Linguistic and empirical literature is considered alongside a 2016 questionnaire completed by 150 Facebook users aged 18–35. The review distinguishes initialisms, acronyms, clippings, informal spellings, and emoticons, and compares studies of observed messages, language attitudes, and measured reading or grammar outcomes. In the survey, 53 respondents described themselves as well versed in abbreviations, acronyms, and emoticons, and 76 as somewhat familiar. Respondents separately reported their own use of broad form types and rated how common named examples were on social media. Five association models are presented with limits concerning variable construction. The survey records self-reports and evaluations rather than participants' messages or language-skill tests. It therefore describes this group's practices and views but cannot establish the historical origins of forms or a general harmful effect on language ability. The thesis concludes with qualified answers to the research questions and recommendations concerning the interpretation of specific effects.

Keywords: online English, abbreviations, initialisms, textisms, social media, self-report survey

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 The Research Problem

Writing in social media, text messages, and instant messages has made short and expressive forms highly visible. Some are abbreviations of longer words or phrases; others are initials, informal spellings, or visual symbols. Their visibility has encouraged broad claims about the future of English and about the skills of people who use them. Yet the existence of a form in an online message, a person's report that they use it, and a person's belief about its social effect are three different observations. A study of one cannot by itself establish the others.

This thesis examines social and linguistic influences on the formation and use of abbreviations and acronyms in modern English, with particular attention to online communication and its proposed social and cultural effects. It combines a critical review of linguistic and empirical work and an analysis of questionnaires completed by 150 Facebook users aged 18–35 in 2016. The survey records participants' familiarity, self-reported use of broad form types, perceived commonness of named forms on social media, and evaluations of proposed explanations and consequences. Published evidence is needed for questions about historical development and observed language use. The questionnaire did not collect participants' messages or test their reading, spelling, or grammar; its answers cannot by themselves establish historical origins or changes in language ability.

The term *online forms* is used as a convenient cover term where the questionnaire groups different phenomena. It does not imply that all the examples have the same linguistic structure or origin. Chapter 2 distinguishes them before the survey's categories are interpreted. This distinction matters because a count of missing capitals in SMS, a count of initialisms in instant

messages, and a respondent's rating of how common LOL is on social media are not interchangeable measures.

The social importance of these forms lies partly in their uneven distribution. A shortened spelling can be ordinary within one conversation and conspicuous in another. Its appearance may reflect a medium's technical features, the writer's relationship with a reader, a shared cultural reference, or a convention learned from earlier exchanges. A form that is readily interpreted by friends may be unclear to an unfamiliar audience. These possibilities make social context relevant to the title's question about impact, but they do not identify a single motive for every instance. The present study asks what can be learned from respondents' reports and how those reports relate to observed practices described in the literature.

The linguistic part of the problem likewise has more than one level. *Formation* concerns the structure by which a shorter or expressive form is made from existing linguistic material. *Use* concerns where and by whom that form is written or understood. *Diffusion* concerns a change in that distribution over time. The research questions connect all three. A survey at one time can describe reported recognition and use, but dated texts are needed to identify a change in distribution, and evidence about earlier examples is needed before an origin can be claimed. Keeping these levels separate permits the thesis to address its broad questions without assigning the survey a historical reach it does not have.

1.2 Aim, Objectives, and Research Questions

The aim is to analyze social and linguistic influences on the formation of abbreviations and acronyms. Five objectives guide the study: to situate modern English historically; identify sources and possible drivers of new forms; explain how abbreviations and acronyms are formed, used, and spread; examine their proposed social and cultural implications; and consider their

development in light of the available evidence. Emoticons and informal spellings are examined where the questionnaire includes them, while their linguistic differences from abbreviations and acronyms remain explicit.

Five research questions guide the study:

1. What changes contributed to the popularity of modern English in relation to traditional English?
2. How has modern English developed alongside communication in virtual settings?
3. How are new abbreviations and acronyms formed, and how do they become popular?
4. Does the use of these forms have a negative social impact?
5. What measures, if any, might address such an impact?

The historical, formation, and diffusion parts of Questions 1–3 require linguistic and documentary sources. The 2016 questionnaire adds evidence about what these respondents knew, reported using, and believed about those processes; it does not directly observe the processes themselves. Question 4 requires a distinction between respondents' evaluations of possible harm and measured outcomes in other studies. Question 5 is addressed as a reasoned recommendation, conditional on whether a specific impact has been established. The five hypotheses H1–H5 appear in the conceptual framework and results chapter, with each interpretation matched to the evidence that can support it.

This arrangement addresses the inquiry through more than a single survey statistic. Historical writing on English and word formation informs the first and third questions. Studies of messages, platforms, and multilingual interaction inform the second and third. Work that measures reading, grammar, or register recognition informs the fourth and fifth. The questionnaire then shows how this group answered questions about those topics. An agreement

rating and an externally documented linguistic observation can be discussed together, but neither should be presented as if it were the other. That principle provides a consistent route from the research questions to the conclusions.

1.3 Why the Distinction Matters

Online writing is not a single register or a fixed list of shortened words. In a corpus of Toronto teenagers' instant messages, Tagliamonte and Denis (2008) found that stereotyped short and expressive forms made up a small share of words under their coding scheme; other grammatical features varied in more complex ways. Lyddy, Farina, Hanney, Farrell, and Kelly O'Neill (2014) reported a larger share of nonstandard features in Irish students' SMS, but that category included missing capitals and other spellings, not just abbreviations. These results need not conflict: the platforms, samples, units counted, and coding rules differ. They show why the present survey's chosen response labels should not be read as a measured rate of nonstandard words in participants' messages.

There is a similar distinction between language use and judgment about language. Squires (2010) analyzed how a recognizable idea of “internet language” is produced in academic and public discussion. Androutsopoulos (2011) argued that innovation within digital writing must be distinguished from transfer into other writing or speech. A respondent may recognize a stereotype, use a form in one setting, and still use conventional spelling elsewhere. Accordingly, agreement with a questionnaire statement about social or cultural impact records an evaluation; it is not an observation that a particular effect occurred.

The question of literacy or grammar requires a further change of method. Kemp (2010) measured reading and writing in a controlled textism task. Wood, Kemp, and Waldron (2014) followed participants over one year and tested grammar-related outcomes. van Dijk, van

Witteloostuijn, Vasić, Avrutin, and Blom (2016) measured grammar and related abilities in Dutch children. These studies differ among themselves, but each observes a task or outcome that the 2016 Facebook questionnaire did not measure. Their findings can inform the discussion; they cannot be assigned to the survey participants.

The distinction also affects how the word *impact* is used in this thesis. A short form may influence the tone of a particular exchange, alter what a reader expects from its writer, or be associated with a measurable performance in a task. These are different outcomes. A judgment that some consequence would be undesirable is not evidence that the consequence occurred. Equally, recognizing a nonstandard form in a proofreading task is not proof that the writer never uses it in informal messages. Chapter 5 therefore answers the social-impact question by specifying the outcome and the evidence available for it, instead of treating every concern about online language as the same claim.

The research contribution is an evidence-led interpretation of the 2016 survey material. Its descriptive counts, named-form ratings, and reported association models are presented for examination. The analysis distinguishes the linguistic classes represented by the questionnaire, compares the survey's measures with those in published studies, and makes the limits of the historical and social claims explicit. It provides an account of what this particular group reported and what the scholarship can establish about the processes examined in the thesis, without claiming to represent all users of English.

1.4 Relation to Earlier Publication

The author's 2017 conference paper, *The Source and the Driving Force Behind the Modernization of English Language by Inventing New Words from Old Ones*, presented a short account of the same line of research (Bedel, 2017). Its abstract restated the questions about

modern English, virtual communication, and the emergence of shortened forms, and reported interpretations of the questionnaire analysis. It is part of this project's scholarly history, not an independent replication with a second group of respondents. Counting the conference paper and thesis as two separate empirical confirmations would duplicate the same argument rather than strengthen it.

The conference format required a compressed statement of conclusions. This thesis gives the underlying categories, instrument differences, descriptive distributions, and model outputs enough space for a more qualified interpretation. The earlier paper connected social-media popularity, rapid communication, and online gaming to language change. The present account keeps those proposed explanations in H1–H4 and reports how they were rated, while distinguishing ratings from observed origins or population-wide language change. This development preserves the author's research trajectory and makes clear where the evidence supports a descriptive finding and where an earlier causal reading went beyond the available design.

1.5 Scope and Organization

The empirical material consists of the 2016 questionnaire and the descriptive and inferential outputs. The survey is cross-sectional and based on recruited respondents rather than a probability sample. Results apply to this group. The literature considered here was available by 31 December 2018. This thesis does not attempt to identify the first occurrence of a form, calculate its prevalence in all English-language media, or determine a causal effect of online writing on language ability.

The term *standard English* refers here to conventions expected in particular formal written settings, not to an unchanging or uniform form of speech shared by all English speakers.

Modern English retains its role in the original questions and hypotheses but is not treated as a measured category with a single date or boundary. The expression *textism* is used when discussing studies that apply it to informal digital-writing features; it may cover more than abbreviations and is not imposed as the questionnaire's own wording. These definitions allow the thesis to preserve the original terminology while avoiding unsupported equivalences.

Chapter 2 reviews the historical and linguistic background, defines the form types, and assesses observed-message, attitude, and language-outcome studies alongside the original five hypotheses. Chapter 3 describes participants, instruments, measures, analysis, and limits. Chapter 4 presents and interprets the survey results. Chapter 5 discusses the findings, answers the five research questions, and gives conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Historical and Lexical Context

Abbreviations and acronyms did not begin with mobile phones or social networks. Cannon (1989) traces written shortening through earlier European manuscript and dictionary traditions and documents nineteenth- and twentieth-century collections of English initialisms. His survey describes a marked expansion of recorded initialisms in technical, administrative, military, and commercial settings before online chat became common. The existence of these earlier uses changes the historical question in this thesis. Digital media may provide new settings for making, circulating, and interpreting shortened forms, but their appearance in a digital message does not establish that the process or even that particular form originated there.

Cannon (1989, pp. 105–108) also shows why a single historical count is difficult to interpret. Dictionaries and specialized lists differ in what they include, and *abbreviation* has been used for clippings, written substitutions, contractions, and initial-letter forms. A growing dictionary may reflect increased collection or a broader field of specialist communication as well as the production of new items. His lexical corpus is evidence of variety in word formation, not an estimate of the rate at which all English speakers used abbreviations. This distinction applies equally to the present study: respondents' recognition of a form, its inclusion in a word list, and its occurrence in messages are different indicators of circulation.

The historical material also shows that the relation between a shortening and its source expression is not always transparent to later readers. Initial letters can correspond to several phrases, while a clipped word may become familiar enough to be used without conscious reference to its longer source. Cannon (1989, pp. 118–122) discusses the uneven passage of specialist forms into wider reference works and the ambiguity that can accompany initial-letter

strings. A study that asks respondents whether they know an item is consequently asking about recognition at a particular time, not about their knowledge of its first maker, earliest use, or original social setting. This is particularly important for Question 3, which joins formation and popularity in one sentence although the two require different evidence.

The pre-digital record does not imply that later communication technologies are irrelevant. It narrows what may reasonably be attributed to them. A new interface can alter the convenience of producing a form, the speed at which it circulates, or the audience that encounters it. It cannot by itself prove that a formation process began there. The relevant comparison is between documented uses in specified periods and settings, with equivalent definitions where possible. The 2016 questionnaire lacks that earlier-and-later design. The present thesis therefore uses historical work to establish continuity in shortening and treats the respondents' answers as evidence about their contemporary descriptions of use.

This thesis also considers the relation between standard English and “modern English.” Standardization concerns the conventions selected and taught for particular public uses; innovation describes changes or choices in what people write and say. The two are connected, but one informal spelling does not show that a standard has been replaced. The survey did not define *traditional English* as a period, a national variety, or a set of measured features. The literature can describe shortening processes and situated digital writing, while the questionnaire shows how respondents evaluated broad propositions about change. This is the basis for addressing the original first and second questions without treating those evaluations as a historical chronology.

The British/American account in H2 needs careful separation. Cannon (1989) describes examples and reference collections from both sides of the Atlantic, but his chosen corpus cannot

determine when one national variety became dominant in English as a whole. The H2 statements ask for agreement with a proposed chronology; they do not test that chronology against dated language evidence. Chapter 4 presents the H2 model, while the historical claim remains unconfirmed by this study.

Gonçalves, Loureiro-Porto, Ramasco, and Sánchez (2018) offer a more direct, though still bounded, comparison of national varieties. They analyzed selected British and American vocabulary and spelling pairs in geolocated English tweets from 2010–2016 and in books published in the United Kingdom and United States from 1800–2010. The selected American forms were widespread outside the United Kingdom in their Twitter sample, and the book series showed a shift toward American variants over the two centuries, especially after the Second World War. These are observations about chosen lexical and spelling contrasts in two written corpora, not a history of abbreviation formation. The book analysis begins in 1800 and therefore cannot establish H2's claimed eighteenth-century turning point; neither corpus measures the thesis respondents' beliefs or the direction of influence for every variety of English.

Their design helps specify what H2 would require. A national-influence argument needs named variants, texts whose place and period are known, and a procedure for comparing their distributions. Even then, frequency change does not show that one nation alone created a form, nor that speakers in another setting adopted it for the same reason. The published book and Twitter materials supply separate views of selected written forms; they are not a direct observation of the six historical propositions rated in the questionnaire. Keeping the source populations and time spans visible prevents the survey model's high fit from being mistaken for independent confirmation of an eighteenth-century historical event.

2.2 Digital Settings and Units of Analysis

Studies of digitally mediated communication examine several settings: SMS, instant messaging, social networks, and other online exchanges. Their interfaces and social practices differ. SMS research often analyzes short interpersonal messages; an instant-message corpus may contain extended conversations; a Facebook questionnaire asks respondents to describe practices rather than supplying message texts. Platform and collection method therefore belong in the interpretation of any finding. It is especially important to specify the unit: messages, words, coded features, people, or ratings. A percentage of messages containing a feature cannot be compared directly with a percentage of people selecting a frequency category.

Herring (2007) proposes describing computer-mediated discourse through both features of the medium and features of the communication situation. Technical arrangements matter, but so can participants, their relationships, purposes, and language choices. This approach explains why a named platform alone is not a sufficient linguistic description. A private exchange among friends, a public post, and a survey question about “social media” may all involve the same service yet invite different writing choices. The present questionnaire records general platform use, personal use of broad form types, and perceived commonness of named forms, but not the audience, purpose, or message context of any actual use. Those missing contextual features prevent a direct comparison with the natural-message corpora reviewed below.

An earlier review by Herring (2004) also questions the assumption that each new communication tool produces a wholly new language practice. Her comparison of instant messaging, SMS, blogs, and older computer-mediated forms treats technical changes and continuities together. It is a conceptual survey, not a count of abbreviations in any of the thesis respondents' messages. Taken with Herring's (2007) contextual scheme, it supports a restrained

account of technology: interfaces can shape the conditions for writing, while social practices influence which available forms people actually choose.

The multilingual part of H3 also requires evidence about language choice rather than an assumption that online contact makes English uniformly dominant. Androutsopoulos (2015) examined four weeks of Facebook wall activity by seven Greek-background students in Germany, supplementing the written material with observation and an interview. Greek and German were central to their exchanges, while English appeared in particular status updates, video-related posts, and borrowed web material. Choices varied by writer, genre, addressee, and the media being shared. The study offers a concrete example of English among several networked resources, not a measure of global English use or of abbreviation formation among the present thesis's adult respondents.

Hülmbauer, Böhringer, and Seidlhofer (2008) provide a broader conceptual account of English as a lingua franca: English can serve as a contact language when participants do not share a first language, while remaining one option within their multilingual repertoires. Their discussion emphasizes the negotiated choice of language and the work speakers do to reach understanding rather than treating one national standard as the sole benchmark for successful communication. This perspective helps interpret the claim that global online contact favors English. Greater access to English does not imply that it replaces other languages in every exchange or that every English-language interaction uses the same abbreviated forms.

The two sources answer different parts of the H3 problem. Hülmbauer et al. (2008) offer a framework for intercultural contact, drawing largely on studies of spoken interaction; Androutsopoulos (2015) observes actual multilingual Facebook activity in a small group. Neither source measures the proportion of global online exchanges conducted in English. The 2016

questionnaire asked respondents to evaluate proposed roles for internet access and intercultural contact, but did not record the languages used in their own conversations. Its H3 ratings can therefore be discussed alongside a multilingual account of English, not as proof that English became universally dominant online or that contact itself formed particular acronyms.

These comparisons suggest an important distinction between access and choice. A person may have access to a platform on which English is visible while still writing to friends in another language. A borrowed English phrase in a video caption is also different from a sustained English-language exchange among multilingual interlocutors. Androutsopoulos's (2015) case study records such differences by attending to users, audiences, and posted materials; Hülmbauer et al. (2008) explain why English can be selected as a shared resource without erasing other languages. H3 includes a plausible question about contact, but this thesis cannot answer it by equating internet availability, English dominance, and acronym production. Those would require separate measures.

The 2016 questionnaire uses broad labels such as *abbreviations*, *acronyms*, and *emoticons*. In everyday language these labels may overlap. For analysis, a form should be classified by what has changed: whether letters were omitted from a word, initials substituted for a phrase, spelling made more speech-like, or a non-alphabetic sign added to express stance. Thurlow and Brown (2003) and Lyddy et al. (2014) both show that observed-message coding requires several categories. Their coding decisions are also reminders that a single aggregate “textism” percentage can hide different processes.

2.3 Shortening and Expressive Forms

An *abbreviation* is a broad term for a shortened written representation, not a single word-formation rule. A *clipping* removes part of a longer word while retaining a recognizable base:

phone from *telephone* is an ordinary English example. A *blend* combines material from two words, as in *brunch*. Neither process requires an online setting (Yule, 2006, pp. 55–56). An *initialism* uses initial letters of a multiword expression and is commonly read letter by letter; an *acronym*, in the narrower convention used here, is pronounced as a word. Terminology varies: Yule (2006, p. 57) calls both letter-by-letter and word-pronounced forms *acronyms*. The pronunciation distinction is an analytic convention, not a claim that the questionnaire applied it consistently. Its label *acronym* is retained when reporting the item.

Cannon (1989, pp. 106–108) demonstrates that these boundaries have been disputed in linguistic writing and dictionaries. His account separates shortening of a single source word, reduction of a multiword expression, and blends that combine parts of more than one source. It also treats pronunciation and written form as relevant to distinguishing letter-read and word-pronounced initialisms. These distinctions are useful here because the original survey lists strings under a broad heading rather than asking participants how they pronounce or interpret each one. A written sequence such as LOL can be classified structurally as an initial-letter form, but its interactional meaning in a particular exchange requires the surrounding message. The survey provides no such context.

Forms such as gonna, dunno, and coz/cuz are better treated as informal spellings or representations of spoken reductions. Their letters do not stand for the initial letters of a phrase. plz and rite compress or respell single words, whereas BRB, TTYL, IDK, and FYI represent multiword expressions by their initials. LOL and ROFL have initial-letter structures too, but their role in an exchange can extend beyond saving characters: they may indicate a reaction or frame a remark as humorous. The questionnaire records only the selected form, so the function in any particular interaction cannot be recovered. Emoticons combine typographic signs to convey

affect or interactional stance; they are not a subtype of word abbreviation. Table 1 groups the named examples by a primary visible feature. The grouping is an aid to interpretation rather than a new coding of participants' messages.

Table 1
Linguistic Features of the Questionnaire's Named Examples

Visible feature	Survey examples	Interpretation
Initial letters of a phrase	BRB, TTYL, LOL, IDK, ROFL, FYI	Short written strings for multiword expressions; pronunciation and interactional function may vary.
Compressed single word	b/c, Plz	A shortened or selectively spelled word; not a phrase initialism.
Informal respelling or represented speech reduction	Dunno, gonna, rite, coz/cuz	A relation to pronunciation or informal speech; not evidence that the form originated online.

Note. The grouping follows the distinctions discussed by Yule (2006) and Lyddy et al. (2014). The examples are illustrative, not a count of observed messages.

Three example lists (pp. 23–26 of the 2016 manuscript) should be read in the same way. They give possible forms and interpretations, but no sampling procedure, corpus size, occurrence counts, or age-specific observations. Their headings describe forms as common among contemporary users or children; the lists themselves do not establish how common any item was or who used it. Several entries recur in the questionnaire, but a list entry is not a respondent's answer. Retaining the examples while removing an unsupported prevalence inference preserves their illustrative value.

The first original list places r for *are*, C for *see*, and U for *you* alongside rite for *right*, nite for *night*, tho for *though*, and thru for *through*. The first group substitutes a letter whose name resembles the spoken word; the second changes the spelling of a single word. Neither is an initial-letter abbreviation of a multiword expression. Other entries represent speech-linked reductions. Wanna and gonna conventionally correspond to *want to* and *going to*, respectively; the original table pairs gonna with *going* alone, which would lose the second element of the

expression. Shudda represents a reduction of *should have*. These forms illustrate how spoken reductions and informal spellings can be written, without showing that digital media invented them or that all users pronounce them identically. The table's single heading, *abbreviations*, is therefore useful as a broad everyday label but too imprecise as an account of formation.

The original list headed *acronyms* is similarly mixed. BRB, FYI, LOL, ROFL, PC, and SMS use initial letters from more than one word, although their pronunciation and meaning in a particular exchange may vary. In contrast, the list glosses EMO as *emotional*, BGN as *begin*, and TNX as *thanks*: each is shortened from one word rather than assembled from phrase initials. BF is given multiple possible expansions, showing that a string alone does not determine a unique interpretation. The original table contains useful material for discussing ambiguity, but its title cannot be used to count all listed entries as acronyms under the narrower working definition in this chapter. Nor can its examples establish a rate of use among children; the 2016 survey sampled adults and asked about only some of the listed strings.

The third list consists of punctuation-based emoticons such as :-), ;-), and :-(. Their visible structure and interpretive function differ from shortening a lexical expression. An emoticon may accompany words, stand alone, or change how surrounding words are read; the list does not observe any of those uses in context. Keeping emoticons as a distinct survey category matters because the questionnaire asks respondents separately about abbreviations, acronyms, and emoticons. A combined claim that all three demonstrate the same lexical process would erase the distinction the instrument itself preserves. The survey distributions show this group's reported use of broad types and perceived commonness of named forms.

This classification also exposes a design limit. A respondent might mark gonna as frequently used in informal writing or recognize it from speech, while understanding

abbreviations to mean something like BRB. Combining those answers as if they measured one uniform process would conceal what was asked. Likewise, a high self-rating for *emoticons* cannot be compared numerically with a rating for the initialisms unless the response scale, context of use, and meaning of the categories are specified. Moehkardi (2016) discusses several word-formation processes in internet-derived examples, but the article's illustrative set cannot establish how common a process is among the thesis respondents.

Form and function must also be separated. Brevity can matter in a constrained medium; a respelling can evoke speech or play; an emoticon can help manage tone in text. Thurlow and Brown (2003) describe both economical and expressive uses in their SMS material. Androutsopoulos (2011) treats economy, spoken-like representation, and expressive resources as recurring descriptions of digital writing. A shorter string does not prove that its writer was under time or character pressure. Nor does an expressive form imply that ordinary words were inadequate. These are interpretive possibilities that need surrounding messages or speaker accounts. The 2016 questionnaire did not observe form choice in context and therefore cannot assign a motive to an individual use.

Formation is also distinct from adoption. A writer can construct an initial-letter form from a phrase, yet that act alone does not make the form familiar beyond the exchange. Repeated use among a group, interpretation by readers, and use across settings are separate steps. Cannon's (1989, pp. 118–122) discussion of specialized and general dictionary entries illustrates that some initialisms become widely recorded whereas others remain tied to a field or become ambiguous outside it. This does not establish a common route for every form in the present questionnaire. It supplies a reason to ask separately how a form is built, where it is used, and how its meaning is

learned. The 2016 data address respondents' familiarity, reported use of broad types, and perceived commonness of named items; they do not trace the diffusion of any named item.

Grieve, Nini, and Guo (2017) make this distinction more precise in their study of emerging words in a dated corpus of American English tweets. *Lexicogenesis* concerns the creation of a form, while *lexical emergence* concerns its subsequent spread in use. A word-formation label such as *initialism* describes one possible construction; it does not identify the first writer, the route by which others learned the expression, or whether the expression became conventional. The authors also distinguish the spread of a form from its *institutionalization* in established usage and discuss *lexicalization* as the development of a distinct form–meaning unit. These are related processes, but a respondent's familiarity rating cannot place a named item at a particular stage of any of them.

The distinction also clarifies what the study means by a new expression. An onomasiological change supplies a new way to name a concept, whereas a semasiological change assigns a new meaning to an existing form (Grieve et al., 2017). A newly built initial-letter string and an established string used with a new group meaning would therefore pose different historical questions. The questionnaire asks about recognition, use of broad types, and perceived commonness of named forms, without dated examples in context that could distinguish those histories. Its evidence is suitable for comparing how respondents answered about the forms, while a claim about lexical emergence would require dated usage with a defined sampling and coding procedure.

2.4 What Observed Messages Show

Thurlow and Brown (2003) analyzed 544 transcribed SMS messages contributed by first-year university students. Their broad category of abbreviation comprised 1,401 instances and

about 18.75% of message content, alongside other coded features. The figure describes their own corpus and definition; it is not a proportion of acronym users. The published methods contain differing contributor counts, so the message count is a firmer description of the analyzed material than an inferred demographic total.

Tagliamonte and Denis (2008) analyzed more than one million words of instant messaging from a Toronto teenage network. Their methods describe 71 people in the analyzed corpus, although the abstract gives 72. Stereotyped short forms and emotional features together accounted for less than 3% of words under their coding. This does not mean the writers' language was identical to formal prose. It means the most recognizable emblems of “internet language” did not dominate this particular corpus; other features required separate analysis.

Lyddy et al. (2014) studied 936 transcribed English SMS messages from 139 Irish undergraduates. They counted nonstandard spellings as about a quarter of word content, but this category included missing capitals. Excluding that feature reduced the share to about 19%. Initialisms were a small part of the coded nonstandard instances. The finding cannot be translated into the statement that a quarter of words were acronyms.

These studies should be compared as designs before their percentages are compared as numbers. Thurlow and Brown (2003) worked with transcribed student SMS and a broad abbreviation category; Tagliamonte and Denis (2008) worked with an extended teenage IM corpus and counted selected stereotyped features; Lyddy et al. (2014) separated fourteen nonstandard categories in transcribed SMS. The denominator also changes: a count of features among words is not a count of respondents, and a share of nonstandard instances is not a share of all words. The numerical contrast between less than 3%, about 19% after excluding omitted capitals, and 18.75% cannot be interpreted as a time trend or platform ranking.

There is nonetheless a substantive convergence. In all three accounts, the most visible short forms are only one part of informal digital writing. The articles examine other resources, including capitalization, spelling, punctuation, and grammatical choices. Their results challenge a description of online writing as uniformly made of acronyms. They do not show that every setting has the same mixture of features. None measured the actual messages of the 2016 Facebook respondents, who supplied questionnaire ratings rather than texts for linguistic coding. The proper comparison is therefore between an observed practice in each published sample and a reported practice in this survey, with the difference made explicit.

The original third question also asks how a form becomes popular. Its written structure can identify a shortening process, but structure alone cannot show who adopted it or where it spread. Eisenstein, O'Connor, Smith, and Xing (2014) studied time-stamped uses of changing forms in 107 million mainly English Twitter messages from 2009–2012, associated with 2.7 million accounts and 200 United States metropolitan areas. Their analysis found that geographic proximity and demographic similarity related to the spread of lexical variants. Even within a medium that connects distant users, the adoption of forms was not geographically uniform. The article includes examples of abbreviations such as *ikr*; its statistical model addresses changing word frequencies across places, not the first coinage or formation mechanism of every item.

The Twitter design makes both the power and the boundary of a large corpus visible. A dated record permits the researcher to compare a term's relative frequency across places and periods, something the one-time Facebook questionnaire cannot do. Yet the observed spatial pattern does not identify the writer who first coined a term or show the interpersonal path by which every later user learned it. The authors' analysis works at an aggregate level and includes several kinds of changing words. It is therefore evidence that spread can be studied with

temporal and geographic structure, not a substitute answer about the creation of the twelve selected forms in this thesis.

Stewart and Eisenstein (2018) approached a different part of circulation using 36 months of Reddit comments from 2013–2016. They compared nonstandard forms that grew with forms that later declined, including initial-letter items among several word types. Dissemination across varied linguistic contexts predicted growth and longer survival in their analyses more consistently than their measures of social dissemination. This does not mean social interaction is unimportant or that all abbreviations have the same trajectory. The study concerns selected Reddit forms and observed frequency patterns; its statistical analysis does not explain why any respondent in the present Facebook survey chose a named form.

The Reddit analysis adds a further distinction: a form may be frequent within a narrow phrase or topic but fail to appear in a wider range of contexts. The authors considered contextual variety when modeling later growth and decline. This gives a more precise meaning to *popular* than a single recognition rating. A form's circulation may be assessed through repeated occurrence, the number of writers or communities using it, and the diversity of linguistic surroundings. These indicators need not move together. The present data contain ratings for selected names but no sequence of dated messages; accordingly, they cannot establish which of the named forms was increasing, stable, or declining in 2016.

These studies separate three steps: a form can be constructed by a recognizable linguistic process, used repeatedly within a network, and adopted more widely over time. Cannon (1989) informs the first step; Eisenstein et al. (2014) and Stewart and Eisenstein (2018) demonstrate ways of measuring the later steps in dated corpora. A single 2016 self-report distribution cannot supply that time series. H4 can therefore be discussed as respondents' evaluations of proposed

explanations, set beside independent evidence about lexical diffusion, without presenting their agreement ratings as a historical test.

2.5 Attitudes, Change, and Transfer

The audience of a message can matter as much as its platform. Kemp and Clayton (2017) examined this question in two studies of Australian university students. The first asked 51 participants to compose or judge messages for friends, peers, and lecturers across SMS, Facebook, and email scenarios. The second examined previously sent messages supplied by 37 further students for different recipients. In both studies, textism use varied with the relationship to the recipient: messages to closer recipients tended to contain more informal forms. The second study's available messages did not fill every participant-by-recipient cell, and the samples were small and mostly women. Its results therefore show situated choices within those samples, not a universal rule for all English-language communication.

This recipient comparison is particularly relevant to the present questionnaire's broad questions about social and professional effects. The 2016 respondents rated categories and proposed outcomes; they did not provide messages to friends, lecturers, or professional contacts. Their responses cannot show whether they changed form choice for different readers. Kemp and Clayton (2017) supply independent evidence that such adjustment is possible, but neither of their studies measured a change in formal writing ability over time. Recipient-sensitive use should therefore be discussed as a contextual practice, not as proof that informal digital writing is invariably beneficial or harmless.

Popular descriptions often treat online writing as one variety associated with young people, speed, and declining standards. Squires (2010) studied the discourse that makes such a variety seem recognizable. This helps explain why a questionnaire about “modern English” may

capture familiar social ideas as well as personal practice. A participant can be familiar with a label without using every form associated with it, and can use a form while disapproving of the general style attributed to it. The survey asks about familiarity, use, agreement, and desirability separately; these answers should remain separate in the analysis. Responses to claims about popularity, influence, or social impact are reported beliefs unless an independent observation supports them.

Historical language change is a different claim. A new spelling may circulate in a digital setting without replacing conventional spelling in school writing, professional writing, or speech. Androutsopoulos (2011) distinguishes innovation inside digital writing from transfer beyond it and finds the evidence for broad transfer limited or mixed. This offers a way to test the logic of an impact claim: identify the feature, establish its earlier and later distribution, specify the settings in which it appears, and then assess whether use outside the original setting increased. A single agreement rating supplies none of that sequence. It can show that a proposed explanation seemed persuasive to a respondent in 2016; it cannot date a form's origin or demonstrate adoption throughout English. Similarly, views about Britain or the United States cannot establish which country was historically decisive in creating forms recognized by this group.

The survey's phrase *modern English* needs similar care. It does not identify one contrastive variety, a historical period, or a measurable set of linguistic features. Standard written conventions used in education and institutional publishing provide one possible comparison, but informal online writing can vary by setting and audience without replacing those conventions. Squires (2010) shows how a socially recognizable image of “internet language” is built from salient features and evaluations. Androutsopoulos (2011) argues that digital writing expands vernacular style choices while evidence for broad transfer remains limited. On this view, a

respondent's approval or disapproval of “modern English” is a meaningful attitude response, but it cannot be interpreted as a measured shift in the standard language.

An attitude can nevertheless have social consequences worth studying. If a reader associates an informal spelling with carelessness, the choice of spelling may affect that reader's impression even when the writer can produce conventional spelling in another setting.

Conversely, a familiar initialism may signal a shared context to an intended audience while excluding a reader who does not know it. Squires (2010) shows that public evaluations help constitute the category of “internet language,” and Herring (2007) places participants and purposes within the analysis of mediated discourse. Neither source establishes how the present respondents reacted to particular real messages. They indicate why a study of social impact should distinguish the writer's ability, the writer's choice, and the recipient's interpretation.

This distinction retains the study's interest in social consequences while assigning it a tractable question. The questionnaire can ask whether participants see short forms as common, useful, expressive, or socially influential. To determine whether these forms alter formal writing, the study would need samples of the same writers' texts across settings or comparable corpora over time. To determine whether they affect communication or skills, it would need defined outcomes and a suitable design. The survey's value lies in documenting the first type of response and situating it beside evidence collected for the others.

Steyn and Evans (2015) tested a related but narrower question with a proofreading task administered to 288 English-proficient secondary-school learners at three academically strong schools in Pretoria. The learners were asked to correct a formal application text containing 52 deliberately placed features across 13 categories, including shortenings, initialisms, omitted capitals, and punctuation. The authors reported that most learners identified more than half of the

target features. This is evidence that many participants in that selected sample could recognize departures from the expected formal register when proofreading. It does not show how often they used those forms in their own informal messages, whether textisms appeared in their independently written school assignments, or whether texting caused any change in their skills. The task also differs from the present survey, which collected adults' ratings rather than a sample of formal writing.

2.6 Reading, Spelling, and Grammar Outcomes

Concern about online forms sometimes centers on language ability, but the answer depends on what is tested. Kemp (2010) asked 61 Australian university students to read and write experimenter-designed messages on an older mobile-phone interface. Textism-heavy messages were faster to produce but slower and less accurately read in that task. The stimuli were unusually dense in textisms; a short-term processing cost in this design is not a measured decline in literacy over time.

Plester, Wood, and Bell (2008) reported two studies of British children that separated texting frequency from knowledge and production of textisms. In the first, children who reported more frequent texting scored lower on verbal and nonverbal reasoning than those reporting none, while greater use of textisms in a translation exercise was associated with higher verbal reasoning. In the second, textism production in an elicited message was positively associated with spelling and writing measures. These patterns cannot be compressed into one positive or negative “texting effect”: the measures, age groups, and tasks differed, and neither study assigned children to texting conditions or established a causal direction. Their distinction between how often a child texts and what that child can do with abbreviated forms is directly relevant to interpreting this thesis's adult self-report items.

Recognizing a textism in a formal passage is yet another outcome. Steyn and Evans (2015) measured that recognition through proofreading, whereas Plester et al. (2008) also elicited production of forms and compared responses with literacy measures. These designs address different questions. A proofreading score cannot be read as the prevalence of textisms in school essays, and an observed textism in a message cannot by itself be read as evidence that its writer cannot produce conventional spelling when required. The survey did not collect either kind of performance measure.

van Dijk et al. (2016) studied 55 Dutch children aged 10–13 using elicited messages and grammar, vocabulary, and executive-function tasks. Some relations between message features and grammar were positive after controls; the textism ratio was not significant in a fuller model. Because the data were cross-sectional, the direction of any association could not be determined. The language, ages, and tasks also differ from the adult English-language Facebook survey.

Wood et al. (2014) followed primary-school, secondary-school, and university participants over roughly one year and compared message features with grammar-related measures. They found no negative association between children's grammatical violations in messages and growth in their grammar-task performance. Small subgroups and short message samples limit a general conclusion. Waldron, Wood, and Kemp (2017) used related participants to examine predictive-text use and language measures; it should not be counted as an independent replication of the earlier study. Its largely limited or mixed associations likewise resist a simple claim that a device feature determines literacy outcomes.

The longitudinal design is stronger than a one-time survey for a question about change, because it observes participants at more than one occasion. It still does not remove every alternative explanation: the children were not randomly assigned to use or avoid particular forms,

and a short sample of messages may not represent their usual writing. The relation between predictive text and grammatical performance is also not identical to the relation between initialisms and grammatical performance. Waldron et al. (2017) address a feature of message production in a related cohort; treating that analysis as a second, independent test of abbreviation effects would overstate the evidential base. These distinctions explain why this thesis compares designs and outcomes before drawing any conclusion about harm.

The studies of children and students further caution against transferring an outcome across age groups. A child learning spelling conventions, a university student reading an artificially dense textism message, and an adult evaluating a proposition about culture perform different tasks. A positive association between textism knowledge and spelling in one child sample cannot be assigned to adults who merely report familiarity with forms. A short-term reading cost in Kemp's (2010) task likewise cannot be treated as proof of long-term loss of literacy. The strongest conclusion supported by this comparison is methodological: claims about skill need a specified skill measure, an appropriate population, and a design capable of addressing time or direction of influence.

Taken together, these works show why observed use, immediate processing, and long-term language outcomes must be kept apart. They do not establish that digital writing is universally harmful or beneficial. The 2016 questionnaire contains no direct language-skill test, so its social-impact ratings cannot resolve this literature.

2.7 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Five hypotheses link broad accounts of English-language change to the questionnaire's statement blocks. Their wording is given below as claims to be examined; listing a hypothesis does not treat it as an established finding.

1. H1: “The evolution of the English language standard has always been influenced by many factors combined since foundation.”

2. H2: “England has largely influenced the making of the English standard language, although it took a dramatic turn to American by 18th century.”

3. H3: “The coming of technology and internet has revolutionized the making of languages with many multi-lingual communities trying to use and apply English as lingua franca.”

4. H4: “Internet and virtual revolution has brought new collections of abbreviations and acronyms into existence.”

5. H5: “New internet-chat-virtual abbreviations and acronyms have brought tremendous cultural and social influences in the society, especially to teenagers and children in schools.”

The hypotheses express the thesis's historical, linguistic, and social concerns. The questionnaire blocks asked respondents to rate propositions related to each one, and the regressions analyze associations among those ratings. A respondent's agreement does not establish the historical chronology in H2, the origin of a form in H4, or effects on children in H5. The literature review and results chapter therefore address each hypothesis on two levels: what the 2016 respondents rated, and what independent linguistic and empirical evidence can support or challenge the underlying proposition. This keeps the conceptual framework while making the scope of its empirical test explicit.

2.8 Position of the 2016 Survey

The prior studies offer methods the questionnaire does not have: observed messages, explicit coding rules, task performance, and in one case follow-up over time. The questionnaire offers a different perspective: a structured account of how 150 respondents categorized their own

familiarity, use of broad types, perceptions of named forms, and evaluations in 2016. This perspective is useful if its categories are named accurately and its limits are respected. Chapter 3 explains how those responses were collected and recorded; Chapter 4 reports what they show without converting self-reports into corpus counts or ability measures.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Study Design and Purpose

This study examined how a group of adult Facebook users described their familiarity with, use of, and views about abbreviated and related forms in online English. A structured questionnaire provided the primary data. The analysis was cross-sectional: each respondent reported practices and opinions at one point in the study rather than contributing a series of observed messages over time. The questionnaire was suitable for describing those reports and comparing responses within the surveyed group. It could not establish when a linguistic form first appeared, how it spread through a population, or whether online writing changed a respondent's language skills.

Published and other documentary sources on the history of English and digitally mediated communication provide linguistic definitions and comparative findings. They are kept distinct from the questionnaire results: an observation reported in another study is not an additional response in this survey.

The design joins two kinds of inquiry because the research questions have different evidential demands. Questions about what respondents recognized or reported using can be addressed from their completed questionnaires. Questions about the historical formation of English abbreviations require dated linguistic evidence, while questions about consequences for grammar or communication require observed behavior or direct outcome measures. The literature review therefore supplies comparisons and conceptual distinctions; the survey itself remains a cross-sectional account of respondents' answers. Chapter 4 presents the survey before Chapter 5 considers how far its findings answer the broader questions.

The unit of the primary analysis is a respondent's selected answer to an item. For demographic and background items this is a category count; for Q9 it is a self-report of personal use of a broad form type; for a named form in Q10 it is a rating of perceived commonness on social media; for the H1–H5 blocks it is a rating of a proposition. These units cannot be collapsed into one general measure of “modern English.” In particular, an answer about familiarity is not an instance of use, and an answer about a possible social effect is not an observed effect. This distinction guides both the tabulation and the language of the conclusions.

3.2 Participants and Recruitment

The study analyzed 150 completed questionnaires from Facebook users aged 18–35. The questionnaire was distributed online. A sampling frame, invitation count, and number of excluded submissions are not reported, so a response rate or probability of selection cannot be calculated. The responses describe the participants who answered; they should not be interpreted as a representative sample of all Facebook users or speakers of English.

The recruitment setting is clearer than the selection process. Participants were Facebook users, but the questionnaire did not establish their places of residence, first languages, frequency of English-language writing, or the routes through which they received the invitation. It records broad age and profession groups, not a verified account of digital-language exposure. Consequently, subgroup differences in an unmeasured characteristic cannot be tested, and Facebook membership is not taken to mean that every participant frequently wrote English social-media posts.

Age was recorded in four bands: 18–22, 22–26, 26–30, and 30–35 years. The boundaries overlap at 22, 26, and 30; a precise age is therefore not assigned from a selected band. The survey also recorded gender, profession, and a self-description of social-media use. The

questionnaire offered a No response for social-media use and Customer Relations as a profession, but neither category is tabulated separately in the descriptive results. Their counts cannot be inferred from the presented table.

3.3 Questionnaire and Measures

The questionnaire begins with demographic items and general questions about social-media use, familiarity with modern English, use of internet slang, and familiarity with abbreviations, acronyms, and emoticons. Q9 asks how frequently respondents personally use three broad form types. Q10 asks how common twelve named forms are on social media; it does not ask how often respondents themselves use each one. These examples include initialisms such as BRB and LOL, together with informal spellings such as dunno, gonna, and coz/cuz. They are reported as named survey items rather than treated as a single linguistic class.

The first eight questions concern age, gender, profession, social-media use, frequency of social-media use, familiarity with social-media-influenced English, internet-slang use, and familiarity with the three broad form labels. Q9 concerns personal use of the broad types; Q10 concerns perceived commonness of the twelve named forms on social media. The subsequent statement sets concern the five hypotheses H1–H5. Appendix C presents the questionnaire items accompanying the descriptive account.

The questionnaire instructions describe a 1–10 scale, while the relevant table headings state 0–10. The results present verbal categories, including Few times a day, Often, and Highly Frequent. Those labels are retained for both questions, but in Q10 they represent judgments of how common a named form is on social media, not personal use. The conversion from numeric ratings to verbal categories is not specified. This chapter therefore reports the category labels and percentages without calculating a mean score or converting them into numbers of messages.

The later sections ask respondents to rate statements about the popularity of modern English, the role of Britain and the United States, internet and social-media influence, the development of abbreviated and expressive forms, and perceived social and cultural effects. The first four sets use agreement responses. The final set asks how desirable an impact would be; its responses do not measure whether any change in grammar, attention, relationships, or professional life actually occurred.

The named-form task also raises a classification issue. Some examples are initial letters of phrases; others shorten a single word, represent informal pronunciation, or are graphic signs. A single aggregate score for all of them would erase this difference. The descriptive presentation therefore retains the original broad labels and separately shows the twelve example-level distributions. The linguistic grouping in Chapter 2 is an interpretive aid applied to the printed examples, not a recoding of individual responses or a claim that participants themselves used those definitions.

The block-to-hypothesis link is as follows. Six Q11 statements concern proposed influences on the popularity of modern English (H1). The H2 analysis concerns six statements about British and American influence. Seven Q12 statements concern technology and online communication (H3). Six Q13 statements concern the emergence and popularity of abbreviated or expressive forms (H4). Six Q14 ratings concern the desirability of proposed social and cultural impacts (H5). These statements describe the model predictors. The construction of each modeled outcome is not specified in the statistical presentation, limiting interpretation of model fit.

The impact items in Appendix C repeat the oral-and-written-communication wording, while the H5 statistical table includes an attention-related predictor. This difference limits an

item-level interpretation of that coefficient. Appendix C retains the questionnaire wording and scale labels so that the descriptive questions can be read alongside their results.

3.4 Data Preparation and Analysis

Completed responses were coded in Excel and analyzed with IBM SPSS Statistics 21. The descriptive analysis gives counts and percentages for demographic and background questions, Q9 personal-use distributions for broad types, and Q10 perceived-commonness distributions for named forms. Pearson correlations, multiple regressions, and reliability results are presented for five hypothesis blocks. Each descriptive percentage uses 150 respondents as its denominator unless otherwise stated.

The method used a closed-ended online questionnaire, automatic receipt of completed forms, coding in Excel, and transfer to SPSS. Survey software settings, submission timestamps, case-exclusion rules, and the conversion of numeric ratings into verbal categories are not specified in this account. Details of participant consent, confidentiality, data retention, and ethics review are likewise not specified here. These reporting limits constrain evaluation of the procedure; they do not establish that a procedure did not occur.

The inferential results are presented separately from the descriptive account. The questionnaire and statistical tables do not specify how the five modeled outcomes were constructed. The models are therefore interpreted with this measurement limit. Statistical significance is expressed as $p < .001$ when a statistical table displays .000; exact larger p-values are retained where they affect interpretation. An association between questionnaire ratings is not treated as evidence of a historical cause or an effect on language ability.

The descriptive analysis treats each questionnaire item as 150 responses. Where counts exist, percentages are the count divided by 150 and rounded to one decimal place. For Q10

named forms, Chapter 4 reports the most selected verbal label; Appendix A retains all ten labels, including zeros. A modal label is not an average score. The unspecified conversion from numeric ratings prevents calculation of mean scores from the presented categories. Comparisons among named forms concern respondents' perceived commonness, not counts of their own written uses.

The reported inferential statistics address different questions. Pearson's r summarizes a pairwise association. A regression coefficient describes one predictor conditional on the others, so its significance may differ from its bivariate correlation. R^2 and adjusted R^2 summarize fit for the modeled outcome, not the share of historical English-language change explained. Cronbach's alpha describes consistency for an item set; without a documented item set and construct, it cannot validate a single historical or social effect. Chapter 4 preserves these distinctions rather than treating the figures as interchangeable confirmations of H1–H5.

The five regression blocks are considered as part of the survey analysis. Their predictor statements can be described, but the computational rule for each outcome score and the item sets used for reliability are not specified. It is therefore unclear whether an outcome score shares items with its predictors or whether the same scale was used throughout. These definitions matter when model fits are very high. The regression values are interpreted conditionally, without treating model fit as independent confirmation of the historical hypotheses.

3.5 Scope of Inference

The study has three main measurement limits. First, reported familiarity, personal use of broad types, and perceived commonness of named forms are different from the forms appearing in participants' actual messages; no message corpus was collected for this analysis. Second, agreement with a proposed explanation describes a belief and does not test the explanation against historical data. Third, a desirability rating is an evaluation, not a test of literacy, attention,

or interpersonal outcomes. These limits shape the questions addressed in Chapter 4 and the comparison with published empirical studies in the discussion chapter.

The study also faced practical constraints: respondents were approached through different organizations, qualitative evidence from language specialists was not obtained, some secondary material required careful assessment, and the survey sampled only younger adults. The organizations and invitation counts are not reported here, so the geographical or organizational reach cannot be estimated. The research did not include expert interviews or a corpus of respondents' messages. Historical and linguistic claims are therefore examined against published scholarship, while the survey results are attributed to the 150 respondents.

The literature is used as a focused comparison rather than a claimed exhaustive review. Sources were selected for their relevance to the original questions: linguistic descriptions of shortening, analyses of actual digital messages, studies of attitudes and register, and research that directly tested language outcomes. They include different populations, media, languages, and measures. Each comparison names those differences before drawing an implication for the present study. No pooled prevalence estimate or pooled effect is calculated across studies whose denominators and designs are incompatible.

Three further boundaries follow from the research design. First, without a dated sample of respondents' own messages, the thesis cannot test whether a particular expression was new to them in 2016 or whether their use of it changed. Second, without a defined conventional-writing comparison, it cannot measure transfer from informal to formal settings. Third, without recruitment and nonresponse records, it cannot estimate how well this group reflects a larger population. Stating these boundaries does not remove the descriptive findings. It specifies the population and kind of observation to which each finding belongs.

Chapter 4 Data Analysis and Interpretations

4.1 Reading the Results

The descriptive findings below concern the 150 completed questionnaires. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place from category counts where counts are available. The results show the composition and responses of this group; they do not estimate the distribution of those characteristics in a wider population.

4.2 Participant Profile

Table 2 summarizes the recorded age, gender, and profession categories for the 150 respondents. Each characteristic has a separate total of 150; the rows should not be added across characteristics.

Table 2
Recorded Participant Characteristics (N = 150)

Characteristic	Recorded category	<i>n</i>	%
Age	18–22 years	36	24.0
Age	22–26 years	61	40.7
Age	26–30 years	32	21.3
Age	30–35 years	21	14.0
Gender	Female	79	52.7
Gender	Male	71	47.3
Profession	Student	57	38.0
Profession	Entrepreneur	18	12.0
Profession	Others	18	12.0
Profession	Accounting	14	9.3
Profession	Lawyers	12	8.0
Profession	Teachers	10	6.7
Profession	Human resources	9	6.0
Profession	Management	8	5.3
Profession	Doctors	4	2.7

Note. Percentages are based on 150 respondents and rounded to one decimal place. Each characteristic was asked separately. Profession labels have been standardized for presentation.

The largest recorded age band was 22–26 years, with 61 respondents (40.7%). There were 36 respondents (24.0%) in the 18–22 band, 32 (21.3%) in the 26–30 band, and 21 (14.0%)

in the 30–35 band. The 18–22 and 26–30 groups were therefore similar in size but not equal. Table 2 records 79 female respondents (52.7%) and 71 male respondents (47.3%).

Students were the largest profession group (57 respondents, 38.0%). Entrepreneurs and respondents in the Others category each numbered 18 (12.0%). The remaining groups were accounting (14), lawyers (12), teachers (10), human resources (9), management (8), and doctors (4). These categories do not establish participants' language proficiency or type of work-related writing.

The profile matters for the interpretation of a study that asks about professional and educational consequences. The 57 respondents classified as students could have had different writing demands from the participants who selected an occupational category, but Table 2 does not link profession to any item-level response. It cannot show whether students endorsed a proposed grammar effect more often than lawyers or teachers, or whether those groups used different shortened forms. The categories describe who participated at an aggregate level. They cannot support occupational comparisons without a cross-tabulation or a specified model of individual responses.

On the social-media-use item, 118 respondents selected Yes (78.7%), 22 selected Sometimes (14.7%), and 10 selected Rarely (6.7%). The figure of 78.7% refers specifically to the Yes category. It should not be paraphrased as the proportion who used any social-media platform, because the other two recorded categories also describe some use.

4.3 Background Responses

Table 3 gives the response counts for five background questions. The percentages use 150 as the denominator for each question.

Table 3
Recorded Background Responses (N = 150 for Each Item)

Question	Recorded response	<i>n</i>	%
Social-media use	Yes	118	78.7
Social-media use	Sometimes	22	14.7
Social-media use	Rarely	10	6.7
Frequency of social-media use	Very Frequently	47	31.3
Frequency of social-media use	Frequently	65	43.3
Frequency of social-media use	Moderate	19	12.7
Frequency of social-media use	Seldom	13	8.7
Frequency of social-media use	Rarely	6	4.0
Familiarity with social-media-influenced English	Yes, Well versed	56	37.3
Familiarity with social-media-influenced English	Somewhat Familiar	70	46.7
Familiarity with social-media-influenced English	Unaware	24	16.0
Internet-slang use	Very Frequently	31	20.7
Internet-slang use	Frequently	40	26.7
Internet-slang use	Moderate	54	36.0
Internet-slang use	Seldom	15	10.0
Internet-slang use	Rarely	10	6.7
Familiarity with abbreviations, acronyms, emoticons	Yes, Well versed	53	35.3
Familiarity with abbreviations, acronyms, emoticons	Somewhat Familiar	76	50.7
Familiarity with abbreviations, acronyms, emoticons	Unaware	21	14.0

Note. Each item has 150 recorded responses. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place.

For frequency of social-media use, 47 respondents selected Very Frequently (31.3%) and 65 selected Frequently (43.3%). Together these categories account for 112 of the 150 responses (74.7%). The remaining choices were Moderate (19; 12.7%), Seldom (13; 8.7%), and Rarely (6; 4.0%). This is a self-description of use, not a device log or a count of posts.

Asked whether they were familiar with modern English influenced by social media, 56 respondents selected Yes, Well versed (37.3%), 70 Somewhat Familiar (46.7%), and 24

Unaware (16.0%). For internet-slang use, 31 selected Very Frequently (20.7%), 40 Frequently (26.7%), 54 Moderate (36.0%), 15 Seldom (10.0%), and 10 Rarely (6.7%). On familiarity with abbreviations, acronyms, and emoticons, 53 selected Yes, Well versed (35.3%), 76 Somewhat Familiar (50.7%), and 21 Unaware (14.0%). Familiarity and use are separate questions; the first cannot be substituted for the second.

Table 3 also shows why the general labels should not be merged into a single exposure score. Social-media frequency is about time or habitual engagement with a medium; internet-slang use is a self-description of a style; familiarity with forms is recognition or knowledge. The two highest social-media-frequency categories contain 112 respondents, whereas the two highest internet-slang-frequency categories contain 71. This comparison uses aggregate counts, not a paired analysis of the same individuals: the table does not show which respondent chose each combination. It indicates only that the marginal distributions differ. A claim that frequent social-media users are necessarily frequent users of internet slang would require a joint table.

The two familiarity items are related in topic but not identical in wording. One asks about social-media-influenced English; the other names abbreviations, acronyms, and emoticons. A respondent could understand “modern English” broadly, narrowly, or differently from the form list. The totals in the well-versed and somewhat-familiar categories are 126 and 129, respectively, but these are separate marginal totals from questions with different referents. Their closeness is not evidence that the same respondents gave matching answers or that either item is a validated measure of linguistic knowledge.

4.4 Personal Use and Perceived Commonness of Online Forms

The Q9 form-type distributions concern respondents' personal use. Few times a day was the most common response for abbreviations (33.3%) and acronyms (42.0%). Quite often was

the most common response for emoticons (33.3%). These are respondents' chosen frequency labels. Because the numeric-to-verbal coding rule is unavailable, the differences between adjacent verbal labels should not be treated as equal numerical intervals.

Appendix A, Table A1 gives the remaining categories, which a modal summary would conceal. For abbreviations, the percentages across Once a day, Few times a day, and Quite often are 12.0%, 33.3%, and 13.3%. For acronyms they are 13.3%, 42.0%, and 3.3%; for emoticons, 16.0%, 8.0%, and 33.3%. These profiles differ in where respondents placed their answers on the response labels. They do not establish that one linguistic type occurred more often in actual messages, because the labels were self-reported, the types were broad, and the conversion from the questionnaire's numeric response scale is not specified.

Table 4

Modal Response to Perceived Commonness of Named Forms

Named form	Most selected category	% of 150 responses
BRB	Few times a day	28.7
TTYL	Few times a day	39.3
LOL	Frequently	35.3
Dunno	Often	24.7
b/c	Once a day	32.7
Plz	Often	28.7
IDK	Few times a day	31.3
ROFL	Few times a day	31.3
FYI	Few times a day	32.7
gonna	Often	37.3
rite	Once a day	22.0
coz/cuz	Frequently	29.3

Note. Q10 asked how common each named form was on social media. The table gives its most selected response label and the percentage among 150 respondents; it does not report respondents' personal use. Full distributions appear in Appendix A.

The twelve named examples provide a more specific picture of perceived commonness on social media. Table 4 gives the most selected category for each example. For LOL, the modal category was Frequently (35.3%). For gonna, it was Often (37.3%), and for coz/cuz, Frequently

(29.3%). These items cannot all be described as acronyms: LOL is read as an initialism in many contexts, while gonna and coz/cuz represent informal spellings or reductions. The table records judgments about named examples, not respondents' use of those forms or their occurrence in a collected corpus. Appendix A gives the complete percentage distributions for the three broad form types and all twelve named forms. It includes zero categories, which the modal summary cannot show, while retaining the response labels and the scale limitation explained in Chapter 3.

The complete distributions reveal variation that the modal category alone obscures. Combining only the Frequently and Highly Frequent labels, 42.0% of responses for LOL and 43.3% for coz/cuz fall in those two categories. The corresponding sums are 10.7% for FYI, 8.7% for IDK, and 0.0% for b/c (Appendix A, Tables A2–A4). The contrast occurs both among initial-letter forms and across formation types; one example cannot stand for the entire class of abbreviations or acronyms. These sums describe perceived-commonness labels in this sample. They do not supply counts of personal uses or messages, equal-interval scores, or evidence that the named strings spread at different historical rates.

The category patterns also differ within a similar visible structure. BRB, TTYL, IDK, ROFL, and FYI are all initial-letter forms in the working classification, yet their modes and upper-category shares are not identical. Conversely, gonna and coz/cuz both represent informal speech-linked forms, but their modal labels are Often and Frequently. This variation cautions against explaining a response solely from word formation. A form's familiarity, meaning, audience, and occasion of use could matter, but the questionnaire did not ask respondents to explain their choices. The results identify variation for further interpretation; they do not establish its cause.

The percentages in Appendix A belong to separate questions. A respondent could select a high label for more than one form, and the aggregate tables do not show how the same person's choices co-occurred. It would therefore be misleading to add the percentages across different forms as though they were mutually exclusive options. The defensible comparisons are within an item across its response labels, or between items as distinct marginal distributions with the shared denominator of 150.

4.5 Association Models

The inferential analyses are organized under hypotheses H1–H5. H1 concerns combined influences on English-language development, H2 British and American influence, H3 technology and internet communication, H4 the emergence of abbreviations and acronyms, and H5 social and cultural effects. Chapter 2 states the hypotheses. The model labels are used so that each reported output remains connected to the author's conceptual framework. Their statistical associations among questionnaire ratings do not, by themselves, test the historical or causal wording of the hypotheses.

Table 5
Model Fit and Reliability Summary

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>α</i>
H1	.976	.953	.951	485.306	< .001	.962
H2	.952	.906	.902	229.982	< .001	.926
H3	.974	.949	.947	378.465	< .001	.962
H4	.964	.929	.926	313.616	< .001	.933
H5	.956	.915	.912	309.239	< .001	.927

Note. Significance values displayed as .000 in the statistical output are shown as $p < .001$. The construction of the modeled outcomes is not specified in the statistical presentation; model fit should not be interpreted as causal evidence.

The analysis includes five sets of correlations and multiple regressions. Table 5 summarizes model fit and reliability. The large R^2 and adjusted R^2 values describe associations

among the modeled ratings; they do not show that the questionnaire explains historical language change. A stronger interpretation would require a defined construction for each dependent outcome, the item sets used for α , and the applicable model degrees of freedom.

Appendix B gives all 30 predictor rows with their standardized coefficients, t statistics, and p values. The coefficients are read within their respective models. A larger standardized coefficient identifies a stronger conditional association in that fitted model; it is not a measure of a factor's historical importance. Because the outcome scores are not defined, the coefficients are useful chiefly for examining the internal pattern of the analysis.

Appendix D gives the 30 pairwise correlations between each named model outcome and its predictor statements. These values answer a different question from the conditional regression coefficients in Appendix B. Every listed correlation has a significance below .001, but some H2 and H4 predictors with strong pairwise correlations have much smaller conditional coefficients and do not meet a .05 threshold in the corresponding multiple regression. Predictor overlap is one possible explanation, but the analysis does not define the outcome construction or fully explain that difference. A pairwise association is not a separate demonstration of a historical proposition.

For H1, the faster-communication statement had the largest standardized coefficient ($\beta = .371, p < .001$). The statement about social media encouraging adoption of new terms was next among the six predictors ($\beta = .217, p < .001$); the emoticon statement had the smallest coefficient ($\beta = .091, p = .007$). All six predictor rows were below a .01 significance threshold. The correlation table gives an association of approximately .947 between the named popularity outcome and the faster-communication statement. Neither statistic shows that faster communication historically made a form popular.

For H2, the postwar American-influence statement ($\beta = .345$) and the industrialization/IT statement ($\beta = .330$) had the largest coefficients. Their p values were below .001. In contrast, the British-Empire statement had $p = .146$ and the social-media-boom statement had $p = .208$ in the multiple regression. Those two predictors did not meet a .05 threshold conditional on the other four. A significant model-level F does not make every predictor significant. Agreement ratings cannot date a transfer of linguistic influence from Britain to the United States.

For H3, all seven predictor rows had reported p values below .01. The limited-word-count statement had the largest standardized coefficient ($\beta = .258$), while the intercultural-mingling statement had the smallest ($\beta = .094$, $p = .004$). These conditional associations are between recorded ratings of proposed explanations. The questionnaire did not measure actual word limits encountered by respondents, the languages in their exchanges, or changes in those practices over time. It would therefore be incorrect to interpret the difference between .258 and .094 as a ranking of causes of English-language change.

For H4, the gaming-session statement had the largest reported coefficient ($\beta = .466$, $p < .001$). The statement that social-media popularity made new forms popular ($\beta = .024$, $p = .376$) and the concise-emotion statement ($\beta = .020$, $p = .637$) did not meet a .05 threshold in the multiple regression. The latter statement concerns emoticons, a different form type from an initial-letter abbreviation. The model's relatively high reported fit thus cannot be taken to show that every proposed mechanism contributed independently, or that an online platform coined a particular expression. The questionnaire contains no dated occurrences of forms with which to test their origin or diffusion.

For H5, the two largest coefficients concerned oral/written communication ($\beta = .356$, $p < .001$) and syntax/grammar skills ($\beta = .346$, $p < .001$). The attention-related row was smaller ($\beta =$

.078, $p = .027$), meeting .05 but not .01. The impact question lists repeated oral/written-communication wording, while the statistical table names attention, so that coefficient requires cautious interpretation. All five rows concern judgments about possible effects, not measured changes in respondents' grammar, attention, relationships, or professional lives.

Across the five models, the conditional coefficient, the pairwise correlation, model fit, and internal-consistency statistic answer different statistical questions. The analyses do not establish causal effects of online forms on English, social relationships, or language ability.

4.6 Summary

The strongest directly documented contribution of this survey is a description of these 150 respondents' reported familiarity with online forms, personal use of broad types, and perceived commonness of named examples. The association models summarize relationships among ratings, with the measurement limits stated above. Chapter 5 compares these responses with studies of observed messages, language attitudes, and tested literacy or grammar outcomes.

Chapter 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 What the Survey Contributes

The survey's clearest contribution is a description of how 150 Facebook users aged 18–35 answered questions about online English in 2016. Among these respondents, familiarity with abbreviations, acronyms, and emoticons was common: 53 described themselves as well versed and 76 as somewhat familiar. Separate questions record their social-media and internet-slang use, personal use of broad form types, and judgments of how common named forms are on social media. These are useful observations about respondents' self-descriptions and perceptions. The questionnaire did not collect examples of their own messages, so it cannot show the proportion of words or messages that actually contained each form.

This distinction becomes important when the results are compared with message studies. Thurlow and Brown (2003) counted features in SMS messages, Tagliamonte and Denis (2008) analyzed an instant-message corpus, and Lyddy et al. (2014) coded Irish students' SMS. Each study's rate depends on its participants, medium, unit of analysis, and feature definition. The survey's category *Few times a day* for broad abbreviations is a personal-use response; its *Frequently* rating for LOL is a judgment about commonness on social media. Neither is a percentage of observed words. The survey therefore complements the corpus studies by describing reported use and perceived commonness, while the corpora answer a different question about forms present in collected texts.

The separation also prevents an apparent disagreement from being overstated. A respondent can report familiarity with an initialism yet rarely write it; an observed message corpus can have few initialisms while its writers know many. The named-form question does not record respondents' own use or identify which platforms they had in mind when judging

commonness. It cannot decide whether an individual chose a shortened form for speed, play, group identity, or expressive effect. Those functions have been discussed in the literature (Androutsopoulos, 2011; Thurlow & Brown, 2003), but they were not directly observed in this sample.

The demographic and background questions help define the audience for this result but do not explain individual form choices. Students were the largest profession category in Table 2. Table 3 separately reports self-described social-media engagement, internet-slang use, and familiarity with broad form classes. The aggregate totals do not link a person's profession or social-media frequency to their judgments about LOL, FYI, or another example. The present tables therefore do not warrant a claim that a particular demographic group drove the pattern. The result remains a distribution of answers within this group, not an account of why any one person selected a label.

5.2 Categories and Interpretation

The questionnaire reflects the broad vocabulary of public discussion about online writing. It groups abbreviations, acronyms, emoticons, and informal spellings in neighboring questions. The results are interpretable as long as the wording of each question is retained. They should not be presented as if all named forms were instances of acronym formation. For example, LOL commonly uses initials, whereas gonna and coz/cuz are informal spellings or reductions. The descriptive table shows how respondents rated these names; it does not establish their etymology. The linguistic distinctions in Chapter 2 help avoid inferring a shared formation mechanism from a shared questionnaire section.

The item distributions also resist a single conclusion that this group perceived all named forms as equally common. Responses in the two highest recorded labels were much more

common for LOL and coz/cuz than for FYI, IDK, or b/c (Chapter 4; Appendix A). That pattern compares judgments of commonness for named examples, not personal use or observed word counts. It illustrates why a claim about the popularity of an entire word-formation class needs a defined sample of forms and a consistent measure.

The original rating instructions also allow two possible numeric starting points, 1–10 and 0–10, and the documented rule for producing verbal labels is unavailable. Consequently, a verbal label should be quoted as a category rather than converted into a supposed number of actual messages. This leaves a bounded but still useful result: the recorded distribution of chosen labels in this group, interpreted according to each question's wording. Better documentation of scale anchors and coding would have allowed more exact comparisons, but those details cannot be inferred from the output alone.

The classification problem matters beyond terminology. If an initialism such as BRB is used to signal a brief absence, its communicative work differs from an emoticon that modifies the tone of a sentence or a respelling such as gonna that resembles informal speech. A single claim that “abbreviations” have an effect on English would need to specify which of these forms, what use, and which outcome is meant. The twelve questionnaire examples are a useful starting point for this distinction precisely because their visible structures differ. Chapter 4 preserves their separate distributions rather than manufacturing a combined abbreviation score from unlike items.

5.3 Beliefs About Language Change

Several questionnaire blocks ask respondents to rate propositions about the popularity of modern English, geographical influence, online communication, and social or cultural consequences. The responses show how propositions were rated; they cannot verify the

propositions' historical truth. Squires (2010) demonstrates why this distinction is substantive: recognizable descriptions of “internet language” are also products of public and academic commentary. A high level of agreement may therefore record an influential idea about language as much as an observed practice.

The H2 claim concerning Britain and the United States illustrates the limit. Even a consistent association among respondents' ratings would not establish a chronology of influence on English. The model summarizes ratings of proposed influences, not historical evidence of when those influences occurred. A historical account would require dated texts, an explicit comparison of varieties and media, and a reasoned account of how those sources were sampled.

The historical comparison by Gonçalves et al. (2018) supplies that kind of dated evidence for selected vocabulary and spelling variants. Its UK and US book series extends from 1800 to 2010, while its geolocated Twitter sample covers 2010–2016. The authors report a long-run shift toward American variants and their wide use in the latter sample. This makes a later American influence plausible for the forms and media studied, but it neither dates a change to the eighteenth century nor measures the formation of abbreviations and acronyms. H2's specific chronology remains unestablished, even after the survey findings are placed beside this external evidence.

Androutsopoulos (2011) draws a related distinction between innovation within digital writing and transfer into other written or spoken settings. The survey's one-time ratings do not establish either kind of change. They cannot show whether a form originated online, whether it moved from Facebook into formal writing, or whether standard spellings were displaced. This does not make respondents' judgments irrelevant. It means the findings belong to a study of reported perceptions and practices rather than a direct history of English-language change.

Cannon's (1989) historical account shows that initial-letter formations and other shortenings predate digital messaging. The first research question is therefore answered by separating a longstanding lexical process from the newer settings in which respondents encountered it. The survey cannot measure whether those settings changed the speed or reach of particular forms.

5.4 Language Skills and Social Effects

The social-impact block asks how desirable certain changes would be. A desirability response is a value judgment about a possible outcome, not a test of whether the outcome occurred. In particular, the study did not administer literacy, grammar, attention, or interpersonal-function measures. It sampled adults aged 18–35, not children. The findings cannot be used as a measured effect of online forms on children's learning or respondents' abilities.

Research using outcome measures gives a more qualified picture than a general claim of damage. Kemp (2010) found that dense textism messages were harder to read in a controlled task, while they were quicker to produce on the device used. That result concerns immediate processing under an unusual stimulus density. van Dijk et al. (2016) found limited and partly positive associations between features of elicited messages and grammar-task results in Dutch children; the cross-sectional design cannot show the direction of any effect. Wood et al. (2014) found no negative association between children's texting violations and growth in grammar-task performance over one year in their sample. Waldron et al. (2017) examined predictive-text use in related participants and found few consistent links to growth in formal language measures. The latter two papers draw on a related project and are not independent replications.

The earlier British child studies by Plester et al. (2008) make the difference between a behavior and a skill especially clear. Reported texting frequency and demonstrated textism

production related to school measures in different directions in one sample; a second elicited-message task showed positive associations with spelling and writing. Neither result can be carried over to the adult Facebook respondents. It also prevents the conclusion from collapsing all uses of shortened forms into a single exposure whose effect is either harmful or beneficial.

Steyn and Evans (2015) offer a closer test of register recognition, though not of the thesis's adult population. In their selected Pretoria school sample, most of the 288 learners corrected more than half of the deliberately inserted textisms in a formal proofreading task. That result counters an assumption that familiar informal forms must go unnoticed in a formal passage. It does not establish how well the learners composed their own formal texts, nor does it measure the effect of texting on writing over time. The distinction matters for the fifth research question: instruction can address context and proofreading, but the present survey has not identified a demonstrated deficit requiring a general ban on short forms.

Together, these task studies show why a measured reading or writing outcome cannot be inferred from the present survey's attitude ratings.

Kemp and Clayton (2017) add evidence about the social context of writing rather than a test of literacy effects. Their two university-student studies found that textisms varied with the intended recipient, with closer recipients generally receiving more informal forms. That pattern supports the possibility of audience-sensitive choice in digital messages. It does not show that the thesis's respondents made the same choices: the survey did not collect their messages or identify recipients. Nor does the pattern establish whether their formal writing improved or deteriorated.

The possibility of context-sensitive writing suggests a practical distinction for Question 5. Teaching a student to recognize when an informal form fits an intended reader is different from

attempting to eliminate the form from every setting. Steyn and Evans (2015) showed that many participants in their selected school sample could detect inserted nonstandard features when asked to proofread a formal passage. Kemp's (2010) experiment showed that unusually dense textism messages could impose an immediate reading cost. These findings support instruction that asks writers to consider audience and clarity in a specified task. They do not establish that a blanket prohibition improves literacy, or that every instance of informal spelling has the same consequence.

Professional communication raises a related but unmeasured issue in the questionnaire. A form that is intelligible among familiar colleagues might be unclear to a new client; the relevant judgment depends on the audience and the purpose of the message. The H5 block asked respondents to evaluate a proposed professional effect, but no professional messages or recipients' judgments were collected. The recommendation is therefore to assess the demands of the actual setting before prescribing a rule. If a concrete problem is reported, examples of the writing and readers' responses would provide a basis for targeted guidance. The survey alone cannot establish the frequency or severity of that problem.

5.5 Reading the Association Models

The five sets of correlations and regressions describe associations among ratings of related questionnaire statements. Their adjusted R^2 values are high, but the construction of the dependent outcomes is not specified clearly enough to interpret these values as an explanation of historical change. The figures are therefore considered within the limits of the survey measures, not as validation of the historical hypotheses.

The individual coefficient results reinforce the need for this separation. In the H2 and H4 regressions, some predictors have reported p-values above .05, even where bivariate correlations

were significant. In H5, the attention-related predictor has a reported p-value of .027, which meets a .05 threshold but not .01. That item cannot be linked confidently to the printed questionnaire because the final section repeats another question where the analysis describes attention. Statistical significance in a model does not repair uncertainty about the wording of its measure, and none of these associations demonstrates a causal effect on language or society.

The five models do not all bear on the same kind of claim. H1 and H2 are framed historically, H3 combines technology and multilingual contact, H4 concerns emergence and diffusion of forms, and H5 concerns social and cultural consequences. A high fit for a score built from contemporaneous ratings would not test a historical sequence or later consequence without a separately defined outcome. Reading the model labels against the questionnaire thus reveals an issue of construct definition, not merely one of statistical notation. Chapter 4 reports the values, while the answers below give each research question the kind of conclusion its evidence can sustain.

The non-significant conditional coefficients in H2 and H4 are also instructive. A model can have a significant overall test even when one proposed explanation adds little distinct information once other ratings are considered. This does not prove that the explanation is false: the question wording, overlap among predictors, and model construction would have to be examined. Nor does a significant predictor prove that the corresponding proposition is historically true. For example, the H4 gaming-session coefficient concerns respondents' ratings within a fitted model; it cannot demonstrate that an abbreviation was first made during online gaming. Statistical association and evidential relevance must be considered separately.

5.6 Limits and Value of the Study

The survey is limited by nonprobability recruitment without an invitation count, its reliance on self-reports, and overlapping age-band boundaries. Some response categories in the questionnaire are not tabulated separately in the descriptive results. The mapping from numeric ratings to verbal categories and the construction of modeled outcomes are not specified. These limits restrict generalization and some statistical interpretation. They do not erase the distributions from 150 completed questionnaires.

The study is most valuable as an account of how this group described online language in 2016. Its descriptive tables can be stated accurately, its mixed form types can be distinguished, and its beliefs can be compared with published observed-message and language-outcome research. The interpretation aligns the study's claims with what its instruments measured while preserving the questions that motivated the research.

Some limits affect different conclusions to different degrees. The absence of an invitation count prevents a population response-rate estimate, but it does not change the arithmetic of a count within the 150 respondents. The scale-label conflict limits interpretation of the Q9 and Q10 ratings, but the percentages still show which labels were selected. The unspecified outcome construction bears directly on every model interpretation. Treating these as distinct problems avoids either dismissing the entire study or accepting every inference from the models. The most defensible result is a descriptive account accompanied by carefully bounded comparisons.

5.7 Conclusions: Answers to the Research Questions

The first question asked what contributed to the popularity of modern English relative to traditional English. The literature documents abbreviation and acronym formation before digital media (Cannon, 1989) and describes more recent writing practices in digital communication

(Androutsopoulos, 2011). The 2016 questionnaire records respondents' agreement with proposed explanations, and its H1 model relates those ratings to one another. The survey does not define or measure the historical popularity of two contrasting varieties, nor establish which factor caused a change in English. Online media were a salient context for the forms and views examined here, but the questionnaire cannot prove a general transition from one variety of English to another.

The second question concerned the development of modern English through virtual communication. Studies of SMS and instant messaging document shortened forms, nonstandard spellings, expressive signs, and other resources, with different rates in different settings (Lyddy et al., 2014; Tagliamonte & Denis, 2008; Thurlow & Brown, 2003). The H3 block records respondents' views about internet access, social media, intercultural contact, and message-length constraints. Together, these sources support a differentiated account of digital language practices. They do not demonstrate that English as a whole changed in the same way across all settings.

Androutsopoulos's (2015) study of seven adolescents' multilingual Facebook activity in Germany found English used alongside German and Greek, with language choice related to audience and activity. Hülmbauer et al. (2008) likewise describe English as one possible resource in intercultural contact. These works qualify H3's broad account of English online, but the present survey did not collect multilingual exchanges that could show when its respondents selected English or used shortened forms for contact.

The third question asked how abbreviations and acronyms are formed and become popular. Linguistic analysis distinguishes initial-letter formation, clipping, blending, and informal respelling; the questionnaire's examples show why these should not all be called acronyms (Cannon, 1989; Yule, 2006). The classification of forms in Chapter 2 separates single-letter homophones, respellings, initial-letter forms, and emoticons. Published work describes

economy, spoken-like representation, and expression as possible functions in digital writing (Androutsopoulos, 2011). Grieve et al. (2017) distinguish the creation of a form from its emergence through repeated use. The H4 ratings show which proposed explanations respondents endorsed. Q9 reports personal use of broad types, whereas Q10 reports perceived commonness of selected examples on social media. None of these responses dates a form's origin or measures its spread through the population.

Dated online corpora show what a study of spread would require. Eisenstein et al. (2014) tracked changing frequencies across United States cities and found that uptake was patterned by geography and demographic similarity rather than uniform across social media. Stewart and Eisenstein (2018) found that broader use across linguistic contexts helped predict which nonstandard Reddit forms continued growing or survived longer. Both works include abbreviated forms among wider sets of lexical items. They support the distinction between forming a short string and establishing its wider use; they do not convert the present respondents' H4 ratings into evidence that a particular platform caused an abbreviation to originate or spread.

The fourth question asked whether the use of these terms has a negative social impact. The survey measured the perceived desirability of proposed outcomes, not actual effects on grammar, attention, relationships, or professional life. Research with reading and grammar tasks gives mixed, design-specific results (Kemp, 2010; van Dijk et al., 2016; Wood et al., 2014). It does not justify a general verdict from this adult survey about harm to children or to English-language ability. The answer to this question is therefore limited: respondents evaluated possible consequences, but a negative effect was not established by the present design.

The fifth question asked what measures might address a negative impact, if one exists. Because this study has not established a general harmful effect, it cannot justify a blanket

prohibition of abbreviations or acronyms. A proportionate educational response would distinguish informal and formal writing contexts, teach the meanings and formation of unfamiliar forms, and assess a defined problem with direct evidence before proposing remediation. The effectiveness of these measures was not tested here. They are recommendations grounded in the distinction between context-appropriate variation and demonstrated difficulty, rather than findings of the questionnaire.

5.8 Recommendations for Communication and Education

The fifth question calls for responses to a defined difficulty. Difficulty understanding a message calls for a comprehension measure; concern about spelling in assessed work calls for samples of that work; concern about professional impressions calls for readers' judgments in the relevant setting. The present survey measured none of these outcomes.

For teaching, the most defensible immediate recommendation is explicit attention to audience and register. A classroom task could compare an informal message and a formal request, asking students which features help or hinder understanding in each setting and why. The purpose is to make choice visible, not to label a student unable to write formally because an informal form appears in a private exchange. The distinction is consistent with the contextual account of mediated writing in Herring (2007) and with the register-recognition task examined by Steyn and Evans (2015). Their findings do not establish that this intervention works, so its effectiveness would have to be assessed in the setting where it is used.

Linguistic explanation can make such teaching more precise. A letter homophone, an initialism, a clipped word, and an emoticon each have a different relation to conventional spelling and meaning. Explaining those relations gives learners a way to interpret unfamiliar items and to decide whether a form is likely to be clear to a given reader. It also prevents a

response to one kind of difficulty from being applied to every kind of digital writing. Chapter 2's classification is suitable for this explanatory purpose; it is not a tested curriculum. Any claim that instruction improved a skill would require a direct before-and-after measure or a suitable comparison.

For institutional or professional writing, clarity and reader expectations provide a more usable criterion than a blanket rule about abbreviations. Some abbreviated expressions are standard within a field, while others are unfamiliar outside a close group. A writer can ask whether the intended reader is likely to recognize the form, whether a fuller wording would avoid ambiguity, and whether the form suits the relationship and purpose. The survey did not collect messages to employers, clients, or institutions, so it cannot supply a profession-specific list of acceptable expressions. Organizations can set conventions for their own documents, but this thesis offers no evidence that one list would suit every setting.

If a particular short form appears to create a difficulty, the next step is to document the difficulty rather than infer it from the form's presence. A teacher might compare actual writing samples in the relevant assignment type; a workplace might examine whether recipients misunderstood messages; a researcher might test whether readers identify or process a form differently from its full expression. Kemp (2010) provides an example of a controlled reading task, although its dense stimuli differ from everyday writing. Such evidence would allow a response to be proportionate to the observed problem. The current respondents' opinions can motivate a question, but they cannot by themselves establish that a remedial action is needed.

5.9 Contribution and Limitations

This thesis brings linguistic categories, respondent reports, hypotheses, and comparative literature into a consistent argument about the social and linguistic impact on the formation of

abbreviations and acronyms. It addresses five research questions and H1–H5 while stating which conclusions come from the survey and which require independent linguistic or historical evidence. The study contributes a detailed account of how one group of adults described online forms and evaluated explanations and possible consequences in 2016.

Two features of the method constrain interpretation. The conversion from the numeric response scale to verbal labels is not specified. The dependent outcomes and item sets behind the five regression models are likewise not defined fully enough to support a strong interpretation of model fit. These limits do not require discarding the descriptive counts and category distributions.

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Appendix A Complete Response Distributions

Tables A1–A4 present the recorded percentage distributions for 150 respondents. Table A1 concerns Q9, which asks about respondents' personal use of broad form types. Tables A2–A4 concern Q10, which asks how common named forms are on social media, not how often respondents use them. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place, so displayed columns may differ slightly from 100%. A value of 0.0 denotes no recorded responses in that category. The original procedure for converting numeric ratings to these verbal categories was not documented.

Table A1
Reported Frequency of Broad Form Types (% of 150 Responses per Type)

Reported category	Abbreviations	Acronyms	Emoticons
Very rare	0.0	0.0	4.0
Rare	0.0	0.0	1.3
Occasionally in a week	9.3	10.7	1.3
Few times a week	14.0	16.0	12.0
Once a day	12.0	13.3	16.0
Few times a day	33.3	42.0	8.0
Quite often	13.3	3.3	33.3
Often	9.3	6.7	5.3
Frequently	5.3	6.7	9.3
Highly Frequent	3.3	1.3	9.3

Table A2
Perceived Commonness of Named Forms, Group 1 (% of 150 Responses per Form)

Reported category	BRB	TTYL	LOL	Dunno
Very rare	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Rare	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Occasionally in a week	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Few times a week	18.7	16.7	0.0	7.3
Once a day	22.7	9.3	14.0	24.0
Few times a day	28.7	39.3	12.7	18.7
Quite often	12.7	16.0	22.0	18.0
Often	5.3	6.0	9.3	24.7
Frequently	4.7	6.7	35.3	7.3
Highly Frequent	6.0	6.0	6.7	0.0

Table A3

Perceived Commonness of Named Forms, Group 2 (% of 150 Responses per Form)

Reported category	b/c	Plz	IDK	ROFL
Very rare	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Rare	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Occasionally in a week	19.3	0.0	6.7	0.0
Few times a week	28.0	9.3	13.3	14.0
Once a day	32.7	13.3	18.7	22.7
Few times a day	12.0	23.3	31.3	31.3
Quite often	5.3	15.3	17.3	12.0
Often	2.7	28.7	4.0	8.7
Frequently	0.0	10.0	6.0	8.0
Highly Frequent	0.0	0.0	2.7	3.3

Table A4

Perceived Commonness of Named Forms, Group 3 (% of 150 Responses per Form)

Reported category	FYI	gonna	rite	coz/cuz
Very rare	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Rare	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Occasionally in a week	0.0	0.0	12.7	0.0
Few times a week	14.7	0.0	16.0	0.0
Once a day	8.0	10.7	22.0	7.3
Few times a day	32.7	16.0	16.7	12.7
Quite often	29.3	22.7	18.0	9.3
Often	4.7	37.3	7.3	27.3
Frequently	4.7	8.7	2.0	29.3
Highly Frequent	6.0	4.7	5.3	14.0

Appendix B Regression Coefficients

Tables B1–B5 present the standardized coefficients, t statistics, and significance values for the five regression models. Predictor wording is retained. Intercepts are omitted because they have no standardized coefficient. The construction of the outcome scores is not specified, so these models are interpreted with that limit. Chapter 4 gives the model-fit summary; Chapter 5 discusses interpretation.

Table B1

Regression Coefficients for H1: Popularity of Modern English

Predictor statement	β	t	p
Popularity of Social Media ensure faster adaption of Modern English	.120	3.48	< .001
Modern English easy to use and apply	.138	4.32	< .001
Abbreviations, Acronyms-faster communication	.371	7.68	< .001
Emoticons-personal feeling to impersonal messages	.091	2.75	.007
Abbreviations, Acronyms, Emoticons-Concise messages	.137	4.70	< .001
Popularity of Social Media ensures adoption of new terms	.217	5.63	< .001

Note. β is the standardized regression coefficient. Significance values displayed as .000 in the statistical output are shown as $p < .001$.

Table B2

Regression Coefficients for H2: Britain and United States Influence

Predictor statement	β	t	p
British Empire made Traditional English common language globally	.051	1.46	.146
Post World War II, America influenced English	.345	8.22	< .001
International English influenced more by American than British	.163	4.55	< .001
American Industrialization & IT spread American English	.330	8.11	< .001
American IT epicentre gave access to developing economies	.189	4.62	< .001
Social Media boom from American spread American English further	.047	1.27	.208

Note. β is the standardized regression coefficient; values below .001 are shown as $p < .001$.

Table B3

Regression Coefficients for H3: Internet and Social-Media Influence

Predictor statement	β	t	p
Greater internet accessibility and cheaper mobile technology	.148	4.30	< .001
Connectivity and communication easier with internet and mobile technology	.127	3.89	< .001
Internet increasingly integrated with other aspects of lives	.163	4.97	< .001
Popularity of social media highly influential for young generation	.158	4.18	< .001
Greater connectivity encourages inter-cultural mingling	.094	2.92	.004
Increasing mingling of diverse cultures influences social media language changes	.155	4.15	< .001
Limited words in social media encourage abbreviations, acronyms, emoticons	.258	6.69	< .001

Note. β is the standardized regression coefficient; values below .001 are shown as $p < .001$.

Table B4

Regression Coefficients for H4: Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Emoticons

Predictor statement	β	t	p
Developed during text messaging and instant messaging	.147	4.53	< .001
Developed to keep up with text-chatting speed and necessity	.193	4.16	< .001
Developed during popular online gaming sessions	.466	9.86	< .001
Became popular through social media usage and popularity	.024	0.89	.376
Emoticons developed to convey emotions concisely	.020	0.47	.637
Emoticons developed to introduce personal dimension to impersonal virtual chats	.236	6.24	< .001

Note. β is the standardized regression coefficient; values below .001 are shown as $p < .001$.

Table B5

Regression Coefficients for H5: Social and Cultural Impact

Predictor statement	β	t	p
Syntax, structure and English grammar skills	.346	7.65	< .001
Oral and Written communication skills	.356	7.78	< .001
Attention and attention deficit problems	.078	2.24	.027
Social and interpersonal skills	.170	5.44	< .001
Professional life and culture	.154	4.06	< .001

Note. β is the standardized regression coefficient; values below .001 are shown as $p < .001$. The printed questionnaire repeats a communication item where the analysis names attention.

Appendix C Questionnaire

The questionnaire items are presented below with their wording, response options, and order retained. Spacing and response boxes have been simplified for readability.

I Demographic Profile

1. Age: 18-22 years; 22-26 years; 26-30 years; 30-35 years.
2. Gender: Male; Female.
3. Profession: Student; Doctor; Teacher; Lawyer; Accounting; Management; Customer Relations; Human Resources; Entrepreneur; Others, please specify.
4. Do you use Social Media? Yes; Sometimes; Rarely; No.

II General Background on use of modern English

5. How frequently do you use social media? Very Frequently; Frequently; Moderate; Seldom; Rarely.
6. Are you well versed with the modern English language, influenced by the social media? Yes, well versed; Somewhat familiar; Unaware.
7. How frequently do you use the internet slang in everyday life? Very Frequently; Frequently; Moderate; Seldom; Rarely.
8. Are you well versed with the common abbreviations, acronyms and emoticons used now-a-days? Yes, well versed; Somewhat familiar; Unaware.
9. How frequently do you use abbreviations, acronyms and emoticons in daily life? The printed instruction reads “On a scale of 1 to 10; 1- Rarely, 10- Highly Frequent,” while the column heading reads “Frequency Scale (0-10).” Items: (1) Abbreviations (dunno, srly, Pls, Tym etc); (2) Acronyms (LOL, BRB, TTYL etc.); (3) Emoticons (the printed form gives smile, frown, and crying-face symbols).

10. How common are these slangs, abbreviations, acronyms used in the social media?

The printed instruction again gives a 1-to-10 scale, while its column heading reads “Frequency Scale (0-10).” Named items in order: (1) BRB; (2) TTYL; (3) LOL; (4) dunno; (5) b/c; (6) Plz; (7) IDK; (8) ROFL; (9) FYI; (10) gonna; (11) rite; (12) Coz/cuz.

III Popularity of Modern English over Traditional English

11. How has the modern English (influenced by the social media) as compared to the traditional form of English, become popular? The printed response key is Strongly agree (SA) = 1, Agree (A) = 2, Moderate (M) = 3, Disagree (D) = 4, Strongly disagree (SD) = 5.

1. Increased popularity and dependence of social media has ensured faster adaption to modern English.
2. Modern English is easy to use and apply.
3. Presence of abbreviations and acronyms help communicate faster and easier.
4. Emoticons help create a personal feel to impersonal messages and texts.
5. Abbreviations, acronyms and emoticons help write concise messages.
6. The huge popularity of social media enables faster adoption of new terms in English.

IV Influence of Internet/Social Media on changing of English Language

12. How has the internet and virtual revolution changed the English language? The printed response key is Strongly agree (SA) = 1, Agree (A) = 2, Moderate (M) = 3, Disagree (D) = 4, Strongly disagree (SD) = 5.

1. Greater internet accessibility and cheaper mobile technology encourages more people to join social media.
2. Connectivity and communication has become easier with internet and mobile technology among people of different cultures.

3. Internet is increasingly getting integrated with other aspects of our lives like health, entertainment and professions.

4. Popularity of social media is highly influential for the young generation around the world.

5. Greater connectivity through social media encourages inter-cultural mingling of people.

6. Increasing mingling of people belonging to diverse cultural influences change in social media language.

7. Limited characters/words in social media platforms encourage use of abbreviations, acronyms and emoticons.

V Evolution of Abbreviations, Acronyms and Emoticons

13. How do new abbreviations, acronyms and emoticons develop and become popular?
The printed table has response columns 1–5; this section does not repeat a verbal response key.

1. Abbreviations and acronyms developed during text messaging and instant messaging popularity.

2. Abbreviations and acronyms developed to keep up with text-chatting speed and necessity.

3. Abbreviations and acronyms developed during popular online gaming sessions.

4. Abbreviations and acronyms become popular through social media usage and popularity.

5. Emoticons developed to convey emotions concisely.

6. Emoticons developed to introduce personal dimension to impersonal virtual chats and communications.

VI Impact of Modern English on Social and Cultural aspects

14. How desirable is the impact of the modern English on various social and cultural aspects of our lives? The printed response key is Very Desirable (VD) = 1, Desirable (D) = 2, Neutral (N) = 3, Undesirable (U) = 4, Very Undesirable (VU) = 5.

1. Impact on syntax, structure and English grammar skills.
2. Impact on Oral and Written communication skills.
3. Impact on Oral and Witten communication skills.
4. Impact of attention and attention deficit problems.
5. Impact on social and interpersonal skills.
6. Impact on professional life and culture.

Note. Items 2 and 3 repeat the oral-and-written-communication wording; *Witten* is retained from the questionnaire.

Appendix D Pairwise Correlations

Tables D1–D5 present the bivariate correlations for the five hypothesis blocks.

Significance values displayed as .000 in the statistical output are shown as $p < .001$. The correlations are interpreted separately from the multiple regression coefficients in Appendix B.

Table D1

Pairwise Correlations for H1: Popularity of Modern English

Predictor statement	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Popularity of Social Media ensure faster adaption of Modern English	.860	< .001
Modern English easy to use and apply	.838	< .001
Abbreviations, Acronyms-faster communication	.947	< .001
Emoticons-personal feeling to impersonal messages	.839	< .001
Abbreviations, Acronyms, Emoticons-Concise messages	.810	< .001
Popularity of Social Media ensures adoption of new terms	.905	< .001

Note. Each coefficient is a separate bivariate correlation with the named outcome. Outcome construction was not fully documented; these associations do not establish historical or causal effects.

Table D2

Pairwise Correlations for H2: Britain and United States Influence

Predictor statement	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
British Empire made Traditional English common language globally	.658	< .001
Post World War II, America influenced English	.861	< .001
International English influenced more by American than British	.717	< .001
American Industrialization & IT spread American English	.834	< .001
American IT epicentre gave access to developing economies	.798	< .001
Social Media boom from American spread American English further	.689	< .001

Note. Each coefficient is a separate bivariate correlation with the named outcome. Outcome construction was not fully documented; these associations do not establish historical or causal effects.

Table D3

Pairwise Correlations for H3: Internet and Social-Media Influence

Predictor statement	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Greater internet accessibility and cheaper mobile technology	.845	< .001
Connectivity and communication easier with internet and mobile technology	.832	< .001
Internet increasingly integrated with other aspects of lives	.838	< .001
Popularity of social media highly influential for young generation	.868	< .001
Greater connectivity encourages inter-cultural mingling	.819	< .001
Increasing mingling of diverse cultures influences social media language changes	.874	< .001
Limited words in social media encourage abbreviations, acronyms, emoticons	.899	< .001

Note. Each coefficient is a separate bivariate correlation with the named outcome. Outcome construction was not fully documented; these associations do not establish historical or causal effects.

Table D4

Pairwise Correlations for H4: Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Emoticons

Predictor statement	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Developed during text messaging and instant messaging	.751	< .001
Developed to keep up with text-chatting speed and necessity	.847	< .001
Developed during popular online gaming sessions	.931	< .001
Became popular through social media usage and popularity	.540	< .001
Emoticons developed to convey emotions concisely	.771	< .001
Emoticons developed to introduce personal dimension to impersonal virtual chats	.822	< .001

Note. Each coefficient is a separate bivariate correlation with the named outcome. Outcome construction was not fully documented; these associations do not establish historical or causal effects.

Table D5

Pairwise Correlations for H5: Social and Cultural Impact

Predictor statement	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Syntax, structure and English grammar skills	.883	< .001
Oral and Written communication skills	.890	< .001
Attention and attention deficit problems	.710	< .001
Social and interpersonal skills	.682	< .001
Professional life and culture	.788	< .001

Note. Each coefficient is a separate bivariate correlation with the named outcome. Outcome construction was not fully documented; these associations do not establish historical or causal effects.