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Pop culture: Text messaging

By definition, pop culture was defined as culture that widely distribute through mass media through the world. In light of this definition, text messaging became a popular culture in our society. Text messaging phenomenon was started commonly used professionally and personally by all web users through instant messaging (IM), chat lines, and now most widely used through cell phone texting as a mobile data service. This paper will focus on the most popular text messaging method with its history, its process and its social impact on language.

Historically, text messaging began in 1993 in Finland with Riku Pihkonen as the first person who sent a phone to phone text messages via the Short Messaging Service (SMS) technology. Although cell phone text messaging usage was low at the start due to complication in development of its billing system, its demand, as shown in subscription rate and usage, has steadily risen. According to marketing research in 2007, 74% of all mobile phone users worldwide or 2.4 billion out of 3.3 billion phone subscribers were active users of the Short Messaging. Statistically, text messaging service was most popular in Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. The leading of usage were Finland, Sweden and Norway with over 85% of the population used SMS, 80% of European active users, and trailing off with over 60% North American active users. As for extreme usage, the largest average usage of text messaging service, by mobile phone subscribers, was in the Philippines with an average of 27 texts sent per day by each subscriber.

Subsequently, the process of text messaging to become a popular culture, particularly amongst teenager users, began with the influence of the popular online chat program among youngsters such as MSN, Yahoo messenger and AOL. Afterward, cell phone used rate were increased while the age of children when they received their first cell phones had been younger, the esteem and personal satisfaction level gained by sending an instant message to recipients had increased. Text messaging was considered as the most popular mobile phone application. As advertising agencies used text messaging as one of marketing means in various ploys including SMS voting, download pictures, songs, or games to reach their primary targets including teenagers. Along with better technologies to produce low cost, fast and convenient service, text messaging is now well demanded among adults and business users to quickly become the most effective and most popular communication ways for all ages. While the average text message costs about \$0.10 per message while the average call costs \$0.20 a minute, some specific

text service preferred rate plan such as unlimited text messages, would cost next to nothing. As better features became available from new technologies, text messaging was the new faster, better, cheaper and more convenient ways of communicating. It was a new form of interaction with broadcasting service capability as one could send the same message to 20 people in the same time.

Lastly, the most obvious social impact of text messaging was on language. The use of text messaging had changed the way people talk and write since there were limited characters per text. People tended to use abbreviations, acronyms or short words instead of caring about grammar and complete sentence. According to the research by Rosen et al. (2009), it was found that young adults who used abbreviated text language-based such as LOL, 2nite, ASAP, etc. in daily writing produced worse formal writing quality than those young adults who used fewer linguistic texting in their daily writing. This suggested that the act of using texting language into shorten communication words led poorer quality communication young adults or a decline in use of formal language.

In conclusion, text messaging became a popular culture as an individual integrated in to their everyday lives as they watch and listen to advertisements used on television, in movies and pictured in magazines. While text messaging was a great new form of technology for communication throughout its history, process and social impact on language, the negative impact is equally significant in a decline in quality of language usage as shown in a rise in spelling, grammar and formal writing problems.

Sources:

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