(._.)/ dont 4get 2 txt me plz! Linguistic and Discoursal Features of Short Message Service by Female Texters

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ABSTRACT

The practicality and limited space of SMS have become features encouraging the emergence of various forms of SMS language. An analysis of SMS from 20 Acehnese female students in the University of Syiah Kuala was therefore carried out to inspect the elements of language employed within the text messages. The data of 110 SMS gathered through a mobile device were thoroughly analyzed and later categorized into linguistics and discoursal features. The result showed that female students tend to write about their psychological conditions in SMS by employing logogram and pictogram. A number of findings on omitted letters and nonstandard spelling were also indicated in their SMS. They rarely used initialism and shortening in writing the text messages because it is believed that these features can diminish intelligibility. These females also wrote complex messages and employed various languages into their text messages, including the national language (Indonesian), the language of their religion (Arabic), the language from media influence (Japanese), and their mother tongue (Acehnese). Their circumstance of being multilingual has expanded their linguistic performance in employing, typing, and inventing lively SMS. It is also interesting to discover that these texters created new symbols that are not generally found in SMS to identify their reciprocal relationship of the same culture and belief.

Keywords: linguistic features; discoursal features; short message service; females; multilingual

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of various communication tools has greatly influenced the way people interact with one another. SMS, which stands for Short Message Service, also known as Texting, has formed a new way of interaction for each person to exchange different information to others. To use this tool, people only need to type their messages into a certain device from any place for the recipients without needing to wait for a long time to get their messages delivered. Despite debates that texting can hinder literacy (Humphrys 2007); research has shown contradictory evidence towards this perception (Crystal 2008). Crystal (2008) depicts that a person would need a substantially developed literacy awareness to be skillful in texting. He further illustrates that senses of language sounds, the comprehension of alternative spellings and communicative needs are needed in producing intelligible messages among the texters.

SMS is known as a prime communication tool which allows the subscribers to exchange written information with a simple delivering style (Le Bodic 2005, Njemanze

2012). It enables people of different locations to keep in touch in a fast way including those from close and integrated cultures to remain in contact and to be aware of each other's movements while they are physically separated (Horstmanshof & Power 2005). By using this device, those who are not in the same place at the same time can exchange words and maintain communication. Moreover, the service offers such considerably cheap cost (Ali & Aslam 2012); it is convenient, quick and does not have rules of language which allows creativity and creates the feeling of secrecy.

Text messaging is used for various purposes, from exchanging messages and keeping in touch with friends and families (Ling 2005, Al Rousan, Aziz & Christopher 2011, Thurlow 2003) because it connects people to others just by using a mobile device (Hashemi & Azizinehad 2012, Guthery & Cronin 2002). It is not only known to contribute in maintaining the daily life relationship between mates, friends, and family, but also engages those who are involved in academic circles such as students. Text messaging is mostly done among peers since it requires some shared knowledge from the interlocutors (Grinter & Eldridge 2003). Mtega et al (2012) further describe that the development of SMS results in the increase of exchanging information between teacher-student and student-student. Mahmoud (2013) adds using SMS is now a habit of students both at high school levels and university level. Therefore, with the advantages it offers to the users, SMS is popular among students. It helps them reach their peers in short time. Furthermore, because there are no rules for language use, they can freely text and not worry about making mistakes in typing their message.

Nonetheless, the need to put all of one's thoughts in an SMS within limited characters has evolved into the phenomena of multiple writing styles in texting. Indeed, this novice form gives impact on written language. Thus, it is essential to inspect the language use developments to avoid misconception among communicators and record the texters' writing styles as variations of written language. Hence this paper investigates the linguistic and discoursal features in English SMS created by university students, especially females, to gain a better understanding of their language of text messaging. Previous studies have mostly focused on the differences between male and female texters (Al Rousan, Aziz & Christopher 2011; Balakrishnan & Yeow 2008; Bassam 2014; Heidari & Alibabaee 2013; Keong et al 2012; Newman 2008; Rafi 2008). Seeing that women's language is seen as inferior and something that stands out from the norm (Coates 1988, as cited in Jakobsson 2010, p. 2), it is deemed important to conduct this study that specifically focused on female texters to fill in the gap.

FEATURES OF SMS

SMS only allows the subscribers to send short messages (Hillebrand 2010). Its service limits the users to interact within a space with the total of 160 characters per message. Indeed, this limitation becomes an aspect to be considered by all users. The 160-character limit of each SMS encourages abbreviation and the development of codes between those who text regularly (Horstmanshof & Power 2005, Bieswanger 2007). By having such limited space for their messages, the users of SMS have created new ways of texting using various styles, such as using a letter or even number to represent a word (as in *y* for *why* and *2* for *to* and *too*), mixing both letters and numbers, (as in *sum1* for *someone*), shortening the original word (as in *hv* for *have*), and contracting word (as in *dont* for *do not*). All these aspects are meant to fit their messages without exceeding the limit.

Grinter and Eldridge (2003) further reveal unique short forms in text messages which include the use of abbreviations (as in *mins* for *minutes* and *ritten* for *written*), sounds (as in *fone* for *phone* and *gr8* for *great*), acronyms (as in *PWB* for *please write back* and *gf* for

girlfriend), and foreign letters (as in ü for *:-)* or a *smiley face*). Meanwhile, Rafi (2008) finds the use of abbreviations in pronoun (as in *u* for *you*) and conjunctions (as in *n* for *and* and *bcoz* for *because*). He also obtains some forms of condensed words, such as *bro* for *brother* and *sis* for *sister*.

As a communication device which has various advantages, SMS is favored by almost everyone because it saves time, space and effort. It is quite popular among students because SMS conversations can establish relationships by sending or receiving SMS by economising the cost and time (Keong et al 2012). A student can inform what is needed to another student, and this recipient after receiving the message, may reply whenever it is convenient to do so.

The original motive of students' use of SMS is because of its accessibility and low cost (Balakrishnan & Yeow 2008, Horstmanshof 2004, Keong et al 2012). Furthermore, it is well known that SMS language has its own style among certain groups of people, especially teenagers (Cullington 2011). Njemanze (2012) mentions its extension of use to creativity and the limited binding of grammar rules (as long as it is within comprehensible language between texters). With scarce hassle on grammar rules, users may type using not only letters but also symbols to create codes and such. Therefore, texters use their own language conventions, which make SMS communication to be viewed as a code for youth (Döring 2002) that are private and handy.

Barton (2004) describes linguistics within two basic terms: structure and function. She explains that structure is known as the unit of language including sound, syllable, word, phrase, clause, and sentence within one language. While function is the way people use language for certain purposes, whether informational, expressive, or social (Schiffrin 1994, as cited in Barton 2004). She further proposes discourse analysis as a method to inspect how specific features of language provide interpretation of texts in various contexts. She adds that discourse analysis is used to investigate small details of language like aspects of sentence structures or features of texts, and contexts including genres and sociocultural world views. In short, linguistic and discoursal features of language are the elements of language structure and function, and the contexts growing in certain sociocultural views. Both are essential in allowing the researcher to analyze and explore the language of text messages.

Various linguistic features have been found to be applied by texters. Crystal (2008, pp.37-62) mentions six distinctive linguistic features in SMS, they are:

(1) *Logograms and pictograms*, each of them serves one purpose to show action by using different characters in the messages. Logograms are those features which are typed as single letters, numerals, and typographic symbols to represent words, parts of words, or even noise associated with actions such as: *2b or not 2b* for *to be or not to be*, *zzzz…* to suggest *sleep* and even *…* to suggest *boredom* or *silence*. Pictograms, on the other hand, use visual shapes or pictures to represent objects or concepts, such as: *;)* to suggest *wink* and *(^_^)* for *smile*.

(2) *Initialisms* is noticed when words are reduced to their initial letters. It is sometimes also called acronyms or alphabetism. The examples are: *gf* for *girlfriend* and *AML* for *all my love*.

(3) *Omitted letters* are found when letters are dropped whether in the middle or at the end of the words. Usually, the letters dropped are the vowels. The examples are: *txtin* for *texting, xcln* for *excellent*, and *msg* for *message*.

(4) *Nonstandard spellings* are words which are manipulated by the texters. Several common findings of this feature are *skool* for *school* and *dat* for *that*.

(5) *Shortening* is in which the user eliminates or omits important part of words, such as *Mon* for *Monday*, *Tue* for *Tuesday*, and in *Aug* for *August* as well.

(6) *Genuine novelties* is known as symbols with various meanings and are usually found in slang or code which are not meant to be spoken aloud. They mostly emerge from

borrowed abbreviations and produced through texting games and competitions, such as *iydkidkwd* for *if you don't know I don't know who does* and *IMHO* for *In My Humble Opinion*.

The aforementioned linguistic features are apparent from the style of the message writing. It is not only recognized from the use of a single letter, number, and symbol to indicate words but also the omission of letters and part of words as well as other innovations performed in the text messaging activity.

In some studies, logograms and pictograms are also known as emoticons; it is short for emotion icons. Park et al (2013, p. 466) allege that in text-based communication, "emoticons are not limited to conveying a specific emotion or used as jokes, but rather are socio-cultural norms, whose meaning can vary depending on the identity of the speaker". It is reported that the horizontal style (e.g. ":)") is known to be preferred by western countries whilst the vertical style (e.g. "^-^") by eastern countries, and this infers that westerners smile and frown with their mouth, whilst easterners do so with their eyes. Therefore, people from different cultures may distinguish and use facial expressions in their own distinctive ways in text-based communication. Furthermore, Wang (2004) finds that the Americans tend to use emoticons for information motivations, whilst the Chinese tend to use them for social interactions. Both also had different perceptions on some of the emoticons. However, Wang (2004, pp. 78-79) also claims that the Internet today does "promote cross-cultural sensitivity and expose users to various different cultures and communication practices". Due to this, people can change their insight of their own culture and may take on the typical communication behaviors of another culture.

In the discoursal features of SMS, Elvis (2009) describes message complexity as construction of sentences or clauses that contains multiple thoughts, whilst a simple message contains a single thought in a sentence or clause. From this point of view, it can be clearly understood that message complexity is indicated through the number of topics and sentences in one message. The more thoughts or topics a message contains, the more complex the message is. Conversely, when a message contains only a single thought or topic, it becomes a simple message.

Code switching and mixing are also found in SMS, especially if the texters are bilinguals. This corresponds to Bassam (2014) who says that the behavior of code-switching is not only apparent in spoken, but also in the written communication. Code switching is an action of using and changing the linguistic elements or the use of more than one language in order to manage the information into certain context while doing interaction (Bloomer, Griffths & Merrison 2005, Nilep 2005). Moreover, Nilep (2006) mentions that studies on the phenomena relating to language variety use code as a term to indicate the use of multiple languages.

Furthermore, Bullock and Toribio (2009) add that code-switching covers the linguistics notion from the use of single word in a sentence to the modification of other language aspects. Apriana (2006) researched language mixing and switching in SMS and obtained several examples on the use of multiple languages (in Bahasa Indonesia and English in the case of her data). She concluded that texters typically mix or switch languages when they are in an informal context among groups of acquainted networks. Mixing and switching are done to further indicate that they are in the same community and better express their group identity.

FEMALE'S LANGUAGE USE IN SMS

The notion of women and men using language differently has been of interest to many researchers for years. Tanner (1990) and Wood (2001) consider that men and women

communicate very differently as if they came from different planets. Lakoff (2010) further asserts that the differences in men and women language use are visible in any society in the lexical choices, ways of talking, and interactional patterns. Parkins (2012) also discovers that women express more of their emotional situations in face-to-face communication. Their characteristics include the expression of happiness, sadness, and fear.

In view of that, evidence has also shown the differences on the use of SMS between male and female texters. Newman, Groom, Handelman, and Pennebaker (2008) found that women tend to write messages pertaining to psychological process, social process, and verbs. The use of pronouns and social words are commonly found in their text messages. Some other results also show that women employ various psychological process, negations, as well as references of places relating to the home. Meanwhile, men prefer to include information about current concerns. The text messages they created employ more word length, numbers, articles, and prepositions. In addition, they tend to use swearing patterns. These findings are almost similar to that of Al Rousan, Aziz, and Christopher (2011) on Jordanian students. Their study which focused on typographical features between male and female texting discovered that females contribute a larger amount of punctuation and emoticons while male participants employ more letters, number homophones, and phonetic spellings.

Another study by Heidari and Alibbaee (2013) looked into the linguistic features (initialization, truncation, alphanumeric homophones, logographic emoticons, and punctuation) and discoursal features (the use of opening, closing, message complexity, use of English words and abbreviations) of SMS by Iranian students. In term of linguistic features, the text messages show that females are fond of using logographic emotions and punctuations such as comma, question mark, and exclamation mark. Then, in discoursal features, female texters write more complex messages, use more formal opening and closing, abbreviations, as well as English words. The males, on the other hand, favor linguistic features such as initialization, truncation, alphanumeric homophones, and full stop as punctuation in their text messages. The result on discoursal features also show that they write short and simple messages, use informal closing and opening, use less abbreviation and English words.

Crystal (2008) further concludes that women text longer messages with better use of grammar, employ more abbreviations and emoticons, maintain traditional conventions of orthography, use more greetings and farewells, and express a wider range of content. Similarly, the study by Keong et al. (2013) on Malay university students' use of SMS also found that females employed more emotions, onomatopoeic and wrote longer text messages than males. Some culture aspects such as the Malay particle "lah" and English translation of Malay proverbs were also used among these students. To conclude, women have more characteristics in using their SMS language. They are particularly expressive in their text messages and commonly use complex messages compared to men.

METHODOLOGY

Due to the differences which occur in men and women's language in SMS, this study focuses only on the SMS written mostly in English by female texters. This study intends to look further and more in depth into the phenomena of women's language use in SMS through the linguistic and discoursal features.

We collected SMS that were written mostly in English from 20 female students (ages 20-23) who are majoring English in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Syiah Kuala in Aceh, Indonesia. We chose only female participants in this study due to the fact that female uses more text messages for interaction and also writes longer sentences (Al Rousan, Aziz & Christopher 2011, Heidari & Alibabaee 2013). We also

selected them based on their consent and availability of data. We manage to collect 110 SMS that were sent to their friends.

We had employed discourse analysis to study the language used in the texts. This approach is suitable since "the discourse of text messaging is shaped as much by people's awareness of who they are texting and how they want to come across" (Tagg 2012, p. 3). This means that texting also has discourse markers of facial images formed through the use of combined punctuation symbols that explicitly indicate people's attitudes and feelings, such as those found in speaking styles. The data were then scrutinized and sorted into the categories of linguistic and discoursal features of SMS by Crystal (2008) and Heidari and Alibabaee (2013). In the aspects of linguistic features, we referred to Crystal's (2008) and Heidari and Alibabaee's (2013) characteristics; they are logogram, pictogram, omitted letters, nonstandard spelling, initialism and shortening. Meanwhile, in discoursal features, we adapted Heidari and Alibabaee's (2013) aspects such as message complexity and the use of mixed languages in the SMS. We referred to these two categories because of two reasons. First, the participants in this research were females, whose messages are known to be complex in most cases. Second, it was based on the situation in Aceh, in which the speakers are known as multilingual speakers (i.e. Acehnese as their mother tongue, Indonesian as their national language, Arabic as the language of their religion Islam, and English, their foreign language which is taught since the secondary to the tertiary levels). After analyzing the occurrences of both features, we used a simple statistical formula to convert the frequency of occurrence into a form of percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF SMS

In the aspect of linguistic features, the frequency and percentage of findings for each feature are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Linguistic features

No.	Linguistic Features	Frequency	Percentage
1	Logogram	115	38.21%
2	Pictogram	76	25.25%
3	Omitted Letters	53	17.61%
4	Nonstandard Spelling	34	11.30%
5	Initialism	12	4.32%
6	Shortening	10	3.32%
Total		300	100%

Table 1 shows that the most common linguistic feature employed in the SMS was logogram with 115 occurrences (38.21%). This is followed by pictogram with 76 occurrences (25.25%), omitted letters with 53 occurrences (17.61%), nonstandard spelling with 34 occurrences (11.30%), initialism with 13 occurrences (4.32%), and the least was shortening with only 10 occurrences (3.32%). They are further explained below.

LOGOGRAM

The forms varied from the use of letters and numbers that indicated words, and even words indicating actions in logogram. Some examples of this feature are illustrated below (D refers to Data). They are identified in bold in the original SMS forms, and underlined in the SMS interpretation in square brackets. Non-English words are italicized.

D1:   *Salam*, guys. As *Maghrib* starts at around 6.20, let us start our *Disbid* today at 7 pm ya. Please be punctual. **C u** when I **c u**, guys.
[Hello, guys. As Maghrib (evening prayer) starts around 6.20, let us start our Disbid (program) today at 7 p.m., okay. Please be punctual. <u>See</u> <u>you</u> when I <u>see</u>, guys.]

D2:   **Aaah**.. Dat brown mask **huh**..
I thought a mask for beauty **u** knw..
Nyahaha, my bad :p
Yup, I'm free tomorrow, i can't imagine i'll get my freedom back **fufufu** (#*lebay*).
Ok, tomorrow is fine.. What time?
[<u>Aaah</u> (indicate an action of wondering)…That brown mask, <u>huh</u>…(indicate an action of realization)
I thought a mask for beauty, <u>you</u> know.
<u>Nyahaha</u> (foolish laugh), my bad <u>:p</u> (stick out tongue)
Yup, I'm free tomorrow. I can't imagine that I'll get my freedom back, <u>fufufu</u> (evil laugh) (#exaggeration).
Okay, tomorrow is fine. What time?]

D3:   Nah, no worries. Happy watching then.. Don't **4get** to take a break once in a while..
I've finished my job, i should go home now..
[No, no worries. Happy watching, then. Don't <u>forget</u> to take a break once in a while.
I've finished my job, I should go home now.]

In logogram, we found *u* for *you* and *hahaha* for *laugh* as the most frequent used forms in the data. Meanwhile, the use of numbers was only found in few cases such as in D3, where *4* was used to indicate the word *for*. Furthermore, a mixture of number and alphabet was also noticed such as in D3. The form *4get* was used to shorten the real word *forget*. The employment of these kinds of logograms was to condense words. The female students did this in order to save time and type their thought quickly. Besides, it also allowed them to fit their messages into the available space. Whereas, they used action logograms in order to show their emotions to the recipient. They could convey their happiness by including some forms of laughter such as *nyahaha* and *fufufu* such as found in D2.

This finding concurs with Parkins (2012) who argues that females tend to express more of their emotional situations. Ling and Helmerson (2000) further correspond by stating that it is the women that generate the power of SMS to be alive. By employing those expressions that deliver their actions by words, they could communicate feelings with the other texter as if they are communicating face to face.

PICTOGRAM

The use of pictograms was quite popular among female students. This feature was created by using certain symbols to create icons which suggest action. From the data gathered, some forms of pictogram were revealed as in the following samples.

D4:   **(._.)/** L…
I had asked Z to deliver the absent, is it in your hands now? Sorry to make you wait for such a long time **(-.-)**
[<u>(._.)/</u> (greeting while rising one hand) L,
I had asked Z to deliver the attendance list, is it in your hands now? Sorry to make you wait for such a long time <u>(-.-)</u> (apology)]

D5:   Anytime L **:***
It can't used anymore, cse no time for us to go there **:(**
[Anytime L <u>:*</u> (kiss)

> It can't (be) used anymore, because there is no time for us to go there :((sad face)]

D6: are u that busy??? I think we should go out.. you can tell me everything anyway.. can u use any social media? Since my credit is running out Puls limited… **>.<**
[Are you that busy? I think we should go out. You can tell me everything :) (smile) Anyway, can you use any social media? Since my credit is running out :D (wide smile) I have limited credit left >.< (irritated)]

From the data above, each kind of pictogram is created to represent various emotions. The use of *:)* indicated *smile*, *:(* for a *sad face*, *:D* for a *wide/happy smile*, and *:** for a *kiss*. These forms are widely known since they are also available in today's mobile phone's symbol menu. However, some other pictograms found in this study, such as *(._.)/* to symbolize *greeting while raising one hand*, *(-.-)* to *express apology*, *-_-* to indicate *boredom or annoyance* were not available in the application. These pictograms were creatively fashioned by these texters to further demonstrate their emotions and actions.

We further discern that the texters' culture and belief also played an important role for innovatively creating more symbols that are not available in the mobile phone's application to express more emotions and actions. This corresponds to Park et al (2013) that in text-based communication, groups of people from different cultures may employ certain facial expression to communicate their socio-cultural norms, whose meaning can be at variance depending on the identity of the texter. In the Acehnese culture, the way of greeting another person is by saying "*Salam*" (or in its complete form, *Assalamu'alaikum,* which means "peace be upon you" in Arabic) while nodding the head once and raising the right hand towards the person(s) to be greeted. In the data, we found the establishment of the symbol (._.)/ to express their cultural way of greeting, that is to express their identity as Muslims. Therefore, it is interesting to discover that these texters created new symbols that are not generally found in SMS to identify their reciprocal relationship of the same culture and belief. As Wang (2004) has pointed out, the online network today has elevated cross-cultural consciousness in communication practices.

OMITTED LETTERS

In using SMS, texters try to put their ideas into a limited space. Therefore, omitting letters in some words was common. Some findings on this feature are presented below.

D7: M, can u bring my charger tomorrow ? **Bcse** I really need it. My phone **isnt** working well without the charger ._. **Dont** forget to bring it ya M **thankyou** :*
[M, can you bring my charger tomorrow? <u>Because</u> I really need it. My phone <u>isn't</u> working well without the charger ._. (annoyed) <u>Don't</u> forget to bring it, M, <u>thank you</u> :*(kiss)]

D8: yes it's with me now, Y
never mind Y, I know u're so busy **bcse** of 1 and another **thng**
thankiss ya Y for the absent
[Yes it's with me now, Y.
Never mind Y, I know you're so busy <u>because</u> of one and another <u>thing</u>
Thanks for the attendance list Y.]

D9: No L, u know lah today is heavy rain, **im** so lazy to go **cmpus**, like u right :p
[No L, you know today it rains heavily, <u>I'm </u>so lazy to go to <u>campus</u>, just like you, right :p (stick out tongue)]

The data shows that most forms of omitted letters involved the omission of vowels (i.e *bcse* for *because*, *thng* for *thing*, *cmpus* for *campus*). However, in some cases, the omitted elements found were removed spaces (i.e. *thankyou* is combined instead of *thank you*) or apostrophes (i.e. *isn't* for *isn't*, *don't* for *don't* and *im* for *I'm*). This happened because they tried to condense the words in their SMS in order to fit their messages to the space available. Another reason was the practicality in typing. To use such punctuation, the texters have to search to press one or more keys to use it. Thus, it became easier not to include it in their messages.

As Horstmanshof and Power (2005) and Bieswanger (2007) allege, the limited available space of 160 characters in a SMS urges texters to abbreviate and develop codes that are plausible among them. By being efficient in texting, the cost is also spared.

NONSTANDARD SPELLING

Nonstandard spelling is indicated through the word spellings. In this feature, the real word spelling was manipulated by the texters without altering the pronunciation and meaning of the word. Some examples of nonstandard spelling noted from the data are as below.

D10: I don't knw M, so I ask u about it **tonite -_-**
      Not yet, evenmore I dont download that file. I'll read it tmrrow, can u bring the file tomorrow, **plzzz** ? **:***
      [I don't know M, so I ask you about it <u>tonight</u> -_- (tired)
      Not yet, I didn't even download that file. I'll read it tomorrow. Can you bring the file tomorrow, <u>please</u>? :*(kiss)]
D11: **Okeeee thnkisss** M **:***
      Yuph, until October 31st right ? Today is Novmber 3rd, how was it? **._.**
      [<u>Okay</u>, <u>thanks</u>, M :*(kiss)
      <u>Yes</u>, until October 31st right ? Today is November 3rd, how was it? ._. (curious)]
D12: A *chan,,* am blue.. nobody here.. what are you doing? Am at *prodi* **rite** now
      [A sister, I am blue. There is nobody here. What are you doing? I am at the study program <u>right</u> now]

We noticed several distinct forms of nonstandard spelling as shown in the data above in which modifications were based on the word's pronunciation and the texter's writing style. The words such as *tonite, plzzz*, and *rite* were modified based on the pronunciation of the original words *tonight, please*, and *right*. Others found in data were *owch, yuph* and *buzyness* that represented *ouch, yup*, and *business*. Meanwhile, the word *thankisss* which represented *thanks* was modified based on the sender's style. Nevertheless, the role of Bahasa Indonesia could also be clearly noticed in this aspect such as in the spelling of *oke* for *okay*. Despite the way they were typed, these words were used appropriately based on their functions in delivering the texters' thoughts.

Elvis (2009) claims that SMS brings new vocabularies, expressions and words with itself. Thus, this feature changes the degree of formality in text messages compared to conventional writings (Marzuki 2013) and expands the informal written English words in communication. The expressions the texters employed to omit or modify the word spellings in the text messages became codes which are concerned as the SMS language style.

INITIALISM

Initialism is indicated by the employment of first letters of certain words in order to represent the full words. However, the findings on initialism were very limited, which means that

initialism was not very popular among these respondents. Several samples on initialism are presented in the following.

D13: Beauty life Y, I miss my damn perfect life like it too **:|**
LPJ Y **LPJ**
I don't finish it yet, no one frm advocation ask it to me **.=.**
[Beauty life, Y, I miss my damn perfect life like it too :| (annoyed)
Laporan Pertanggung Jawaban (accountability report) Y, *Laporan Pertanggung Jawaban* (accountability report)
I don't finish it yet. No one from the advocation section asked me about it .=. (angry)]

D14: Yesss, today we feel free :) **tq**
Do you mean **KHS**? It is ready to be taken.
So, hve u seen on fb? The announcement for **TM**, I dnt hve quota yet for googling
[Yes, we feel free today :) (smile) *Thank you*.
Do you mean *Kartu Hasil Studi* (study report)? It is ready to be taken.
So, have you seen it on Facebook? The announcement for Teaching Method. I don't have quota for googling, yet]

D15: N *chan*..I'm sorry I cannot make it…**btw** did u go to **USM**??
[N sister, I'm sorry I cannot make it. By the way, did you go to *Universitas* (university) *Serambi Mekkah*?]

A number of occurrences recorded for initialism indicated that the texters tended to employ this feature in Bahasa Indonesia instead of English. Samples D14 and D15 each showed initialism in Bahasa Indonesia which referred to academic references such as *KHS* for *Kartu Hasil Studi* (Study Report), *TM* for *Teaching Method* (name of a course), and *USM* for *Universitas Serambi Mekkah* (Serambi Mekkah University). This was due to the topics of interaction the texters put in the messages since most of them were created to discuss academic matters. Meanwhile, the findings in English were very low. There were only 4 English initialisms found from the total of 13 occurrences, including *tq* for *thank you* and btw for *by the way*. We assumed that less initialism was used since too much may cause confusion among the texters.

SHORTENING

Among the linguistic features occurring in the data, shortening was the least used by the female students. This feature was derived by omitting parts of a word without changing the meaning. Several samples on shortening can be seen below.

D16 : Hi, C :D You know what? Last night I just re-arranged my folder and I found….
Our old **pics** XD haa~ I miss that moment
('-' /\) what do you think if some girls in our class gather at one cozy place and have a nostalgia someday? Only some girls.. not boys. **-,-** you exactly know what kind of boys in our class.
:3 Waiting for your respond soon~
[Hi, C :D (wide smile) You know what? Last night I just re-arranged my folder and I found our old pictures XD (excited) haa~ (exhale) I miss that moment
('-' /\) (hold hands) What do you think if some girls in our class gather at one cozy place and have nostalgia someday? Only girls, not boys -.- (annoyed). You know exactly what kind of boys are in our class.
:3 (acting cute) Waiting for your respond soon]

D17 : Haha
i still in bnda,**:)**
oh, come on..
you can do that..
who is ur **adv**?
[Haha (laugh)
I'm still in Banda Aceh, :)(smile)
Oh, come on.
You can do it.
Who is your <u>advisor</u>?]
D18: From Math, **Bio**, History, PBSI, n I'm forget about the last one!
Haha
Stay cool, **sist.**
[From Math, <u>Biology</u>, Bahasa Indonesia, and I forgot about the last one!
Haha (laugh)
Stay cool, sister]

All the samples above showed common shortening which are known in SMS by skillful texters. Therefore, no confusion would occur between them. The shortenings are such as *pics* for *pictures, adv* for *advisors, sist* for *sister*, and *Bio* for *Biolog*y. Others found in data were *eng* for *English* and *feb* for *February*. Other shortened names of the months were also often found in the students' daily communication.

DISCOURSAL FEATURES OF SMS

From the data analysis, we found 171 discoursal features employed in the text messages. The details of the findings on this feature are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Discoursal features of SMS

No.	Discoursal Features	Frequency	Percentage
1	Message Complexity		
	Simple	39	22.81%
	Complex	71	41.52%
2	Mixed Language	61	35.67%
	Total	171	100.00%

Table 2 showed that female students employed more complex messages than simple ones. There were 71 (41.52%) complex messages and 39 (22.81%) simple messages. Furthermore, it was also known that female students used multiple languages in their SMS. There were 61 (35.67%) text messages found written in more than one language.

MESSAGE COMPLEXITY

In this aspect, messages were classified based on their complexity and ideas employment. A message was classified as complex if it employed more than one thought or idea. Conversely, it was considered simple when it only contained one thought or idea. Some samples found for complex and simple messages are presented in the following.

COMPLEX MESSAGES

D19: :3 It is called… *roda selalu berputar*. Hahahaha. Maybe it's my turn now, fufufu..
Should we ask them? "Heyyy, when will you need our beloved lpj?"
(-.-) they are busy or..what? Let it go.. and let's build a snowmaaaann~~
You better hurry, so when they ask, you can serve it with a cool and elegant style
B) "LPJ? Here it is, take it~"
[:3 (acting cute) It is called "life is a spinning wheel." Hahahaha (laugh). Maybe
it's my turn now. Fufufu (evil laugh)
Should we ask them? "Hey, when will you need our beloved report?"
(-,-) (tired) Are they busy or what? Let it go, and let's build a snowman~
You better hurry, so when they ask, you can present it with a cool and elegant style
B) (being cool) "The report? Here it is, take it~"]

In D19, the texter informed the recipient about her life condition. Then, she started a discussion about a group of people. She continued with a song lyric and finally gave advice to the recipient. There were three separate ideas which were included in this sample, which made it to be categorized as complex message.

D20: Hahaha.. of course not,..
It is such a long time i don't meet u especially in our beloved prodi..:D
u rarely go to campus y?
[Hahaha (laugh) of course not.
It is such a long time that I don't meet you especially in our beloved study program. :D (wide smile)
Do you rarely go to campus?]

The texter started the message with a confirmation and then continued with talk of meeting the recipient. The thoughts she typed were considered separate. The thought of confirmation showed no relation with the chance of meeting. Thus, this message was considered complex.

D21: Hahaahaaa okee, iya nih finally internship,, how about your project? When did you are sidang?
[Hahaahaaa (laugh) Okay, yup, finally (I am on) internship. How about your project? When did you have your thesis defence?)

This message was considered as complex from the amount of information that could be gathered. Several thoughts that could be identified were confirmation, the mention of her current activity, and a concern for the recipient's project.

The findings on discoursal features clearly suggested that female students mostly wrote complex messages, and this feature was similar to Ling (2005) and Rafi (2008). Instead of making a simple message which contain single idea or thought, they put multiple thoughts in one message altogether. It was done to save time and to get quick response for several things in concern.

SIMPLE MESSAGES

D22: Yes of course, I am watching tv, how about **u**?
[Yes, of course, I am watching TV, what about you?]

This message contained only one idea. The sender and the recipient were exchanging information about an ongoing activity.

D23:   would u like come out this afternoon?? lets go to *kapal apung* after *ashar*.. how?
[Would you like to hang out this afternoon? Let's go to *Kapal Apung* (a tourism site) after *Ashar* (afternoon prayer). What do you think?]

In this message, the sender included only one idea of intention. She was asking the recipient to go out with her.

D24:   Oke, I beg you to teach me how to answer toefl's structure
It makes me crazy
[Okay, I beg you to teach me how to answer TOEFL's structure.
It makes me crazy]

The idea that could be identified from this message was a request to teach by the texter to her recipient. Therefore, the message was identified as simple message.

MIXED LANGUAGE

The notion of mixed language was included in this study in order to reveal the languages that occurred in the students' SMS. This element was first analyzed by noting any text message containing more than one language. Then, we inspected the languages employed in the text messages. The samples of the data analysis result can be seen below.

D25:   Thanks..
(English)
Di auditorium fkip, the specific place is at *gedung prodi..*
(Indonesian)   (English)   (Indonesian)
U know where is it?
(English)
[Thanks.
In FKIP auditory hall, the specific place is at the study program building.
Do you know where it is?)

D26:   *Ia* R,   the last day. *Doushite*?
(Indonesian) (English)   (Japanese)
[Yes, R, the last day. Why?]

D27:   Hm, I have to accompany *cecek*   n her baby back to hospital for check up..
(English)   (Acehnese) (English)
Then, going to library. Dat's all.
(English)
Sure..   *Ba'da ashar* then..
(English) (Arabic)   (English)
[Hm (thinking), I have to accompany my aunty and her baby back to the hospital for a check-up.
Then, I am going to the library. That's all.
Sure, after *Ashar* (afternoon prayer) then.]

From the 61 cases or 35.67% occurrences, there were 5 different languages recorded by the researcher. The five languages were English, Indonesian, Arabic, Japanese, and Acehnese. In terms of mixing language, the female students mostly mixed Indonesian in their English SMS. This was owing to the fact that Indonesian was the national language of the country and used in formal education. The use of Arabic was found in several cases for filling the gap in terms of time and religious duties, such as in *ba'da Ashar* which means *after conducting the Ashar (afternoon) prayer*. Meanwhile, the use of Japanese was indicated as an influence from media to the participants' language use. Surprisingly, as a group of ethnic Acehnese, the students did not employ much of their native language into the SMS. Instead, there were only two samples found for Acehnese, which was the use of *cecek* which means *aunty* in English.

In addition, the participants in this study also employed mixed language in their text messages. This concurs with the theory that bilingual females use more code-switching in their text messages (Heidari & Alibabaee 2013, Bassam 2014). Despite the fact that SMS were mostly written in English, other languages were also incorporated. They were the national language (Indonesian), the language from the students' religion (Arabic), the language from media influence (Japanese), and the ethnic language or mother tongue (Acehnese). The data showed that there were more text messages written with mixed language in the study, which means most female students wrote their messages in more than one language.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the female university students employed various linguistic and discoursal features in their SMS. From 306 forms of linguistic features and 171 cases of discoursal features found in 110 SMS, the results showed that logogram (37.58%) and pictogram (24.51%) were mostly employed, followed by omitted letters (17.32%), nonstandard spelling (11.44%), initialism (6.86%) and shortening (2.29%). Logograms and pictograms were mostly employed in SMS due to women revealing their psychological conditions during texting, such as their emotional states and thoughts. Initialism and shortening were the least used because it is believed that too much of these features can diminish intelligibility. These texters further created more complex messages in multiple languages compared to simple messages. While most SMS were written in English there was evidence of use of Indonesian, Arabic, Japanese and Acehnese. Being multilingual allowed them to employ, type and invent lively SMS. Culture and belief played a role in constructing more creative symbols that are not available in the device's application to show mutual relationship, and to further express their emotions and actions.

Nonetheless, this study is not without limitations and so we propose some suggestions for future research. The present study only focused on female students' text messages within the age range of 20 - 23. Thus, different results may be found by collecting data from other groups of age range. This study is also limited to certain language aspects. Further research on other language aspects can greatly contribute to the phenomenon of language use in communication through SMS.

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