

**ABRIDGEMENTS IN ACADEMIC WRITING: A STUDY**

Kalaimathi. S

*(M.Phil Research Scholar, The American College, Madurai)***ABSTRACT**

Abridged form of the words which are used in informal writing gains the interest of the writing community as they convey the message clearly as the huge formal words do. Therefore this will be helpful when these forms are accepted in academic writing. Texting is done by almost everyone to update their activities through the social networks. People use short forms of the words while texting to save time. In addition to this aspect of time saving, messages in short forms are quite readable and understandable though there are few deletions and neglecting of vocabulary. This study makes the analysis on the perspectives of the students in the usage of the abridgements of the words in academic writing. The study is done through the reply and responses provided by students to the questionnaire provided to them. This paper will elucidate the functions of the use of the short forms in formal academic writing.

**Keywords:** *Abridgements, Readable, Understandable, Easy To Pronounce, Time Saving.*

© Copyright VEDA Publication

**INTRODUCTION**

A shortened form of a word or a phrase used instead of the full version is called as the abbreviation. Today's techno-natives, the students are capable of framing abbreviations while typing texts as they are very much fond of chatting on the social networks. These texts help us to send messages easier and communicate faster than typing the whole words and sentences formally. These kinds of abridgements are similar to the advanced use of the language. The very purpose of communication,

which is conveying the message to the receiver, is achieved though the words are shortened. These abridged spellings have accurate pronunciations rather than the full form of the words. Therefore, if such abridged spellings are allowed in formal usage, then it will help the students to catch the right pronunciation. These shortened spellings help students to write fast in exams and can avoid spelling mistakes too. This can be an innovative task for the students to learn and deal with the new abridged versions of the vocabulary. This paper will deal with



the responses of students in permitting them to use such condensed writing in academic writing.

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Youngsters of the 21st century are very much fond and dependent on certain social network apps to interact with the world and to share their creative ideas. They are so fast and smart enough to act as multi-taskers to save time. They like to use shortcuts and easy way of approaching anything and everything. This paves way for them to hate those acts which are time consuming. Texting and updating status are like brushing and bathing now-a-days. Everything which is instant and easy to approach is the like and want of the people. Texting in the form of abridgements to save time is one of the important developments in English language as it acts as the coinage of new terms. Communication is done effectively though the words are condensed. People find no difficulty in reading and understanding "bcoz" for "because" etc. Therefore if students are allowed to use the same form of abbreviations they could find it easy to convey what they are saying in the examination answer sheets.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The present study is made after the needs and likes of the 21st century language learners. Malinowski said about language that the enrichment of vocabulary includes the acquisition of new words, new modifications of words already in use, new ways of using words already acquired, new phrases and new constructions. In 1966, Chomsky said at a conference that it is the language teachers who must validate or refute specific proposals to enhance the language learners. The practices and likes of the current era of students and the review made above which says about the need for changes in the enhancement of the language learning skill forms the background for this study.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How are short forms being developed and used by the current generation of students?
2. How can abridgements develop the pronunciation skill?
3. How this condensed writing help the students during examination?

### HYPOTHESIS

This study is made with the assumption that the idea of using abridgements in academic writing will bring a positive statement of agreement from the students who learn English as a second language in the post graduate level.

### RESEARCH DESIGN

The study for this paper is on using abridged spellings in academic writing. The subjects taken for this study are 20 students selected in random from post graduate level who are learning English as a second language. The questionnaire consists of 10 statements which are assessed on a Likert-type five point scale from 'strongly agree, agree, no idea, disagree to strongly disagree' with 5, 4, 3, 2&1 points respectively for all positively worded statements. . The first three variables are framed in a way to assure their usage of short forms. The next two variables assure how they shorten the words. The next three variables state the benefits of using abridgements in academic writing. The last two variables show their feeling of using the short forms in writing if permitted.

The responses of the students for the variables are discussed below.

### RESULTS

The questionnaire which is arranged with four sections of statements provided to the subjects brings the following results. The first three variables assure the students usage of short forms makes the first section. The first variable 'I use short forms while chatting for most of the words' brings a positive response from the subjects that 45% of them strongly agreed and 40% of them agreed. For the second one 'I can read and understand the meaning of the abridged message' 45% strongly agreed and 35% agreed. The third variable 'I use short forms while taking notes in class' has 45% of response on strongly agree and 35% on agree. The fourth and fifth variables which make the second section confirm the way in which the subjects shorten the words. The variable 'I shorten the word as they sound, and omit the letters which are not pronounced' brings the maximum of 55% percentage of response on agree and 20% percent of them strongly agreed. For the next variable of this category 'I replace the letters of



the word with right sound' 45% strongly agreed and 30% agreed.

The third section consists of the next three variables which bring out the benefits of using abridgements in academic writing. The students response for the variable 'I can save time if short forms are used in exams' is 30% on strongly agree and 50% on agree. The next variable 'I can remember the shortened spellings, and can avoid mistakes' brings 40% response on both strongly agree and agree. The last variable of this section, 'I can pronounce the words perfectly as the short forms go with the sounds and not spelling' brings out 40% response on strongly agree and 30% on agree. The last two variables show the feeling of the students in using the short forms in academic writing if permitted forms the last section. The variable 'I feel like I created a new word and feel free in using it' brings out a positive reply of 35% and 45% on strongly agree and agree respectively. The last variable 'I promote short forms to be used in academic writing' shows the interest of students for a change as 25% of them strongly agreed and 30% agreed on it but 20% of them equally disagreed and had no idea on it. These responses from the students bring a positive comment on promoting the use of abridgements in academic writing.

### DISCUSSIONS

We live in the world of technology. Techno-natives, are the students of this generation. They are influenced by technology and electronic gadgets in all the walks of life. They are all fond of soft copies rather than hard copies and they have most of their needs fulfilled by a single gadget, mobile phone. They want to do more than a work at a time. They are time conscious and therefore they want to save time in doing all the activities. So they prefer shortcuts and short forms. In the same way to save time they develop short form of words and use them in their chats which in no way affect the sense of the messages they share. More than 80% of the subjects taken for the study agreed that they use short forms in chats and they can easily understand them too. Again 80% of them agreed that they use short forms while take notes in the class too.

English is a mandatory language as it is global. Skills in English are very important for everyone to survive in this competitive world. One should be capable to listen, speak, read and write in English. Speaking is the skill which is easily tested as soon as we get introduced to a stranger, therefore one should be skilled enough to sound the language efficiently. As English is a foreign language it is difficult to pronounce the words of English correctly. It includes sounds which are not in our mother tongue. Another problem with pronouncing the English word rightly is its spelling. The spelling of English words differs from the sounds. Practice towards those sound makes one sound it perfectly.

The newly coined short forms help in sounding the word rightly as they omit the unwanted letters in the word which results in the one to one correspondence between the spelling of the word and sound. For example the word "good" is spelt as "gud" while texting which sounds perfectly rather than the correct spelling. This could help students to say the word without confusions. And this could enable them to read the words fast as they are short and are with one to one correspondence between sound and spelling. 70% of the subjects agree that they leave the letters which are silent when the word is pronounced and they replace the letters with the right sounding letters to make them appropriate with the sound.

Content testing is the common way of analyzing the knowledge of the students in our curriculum. The writing skill of the student which involves the skill of reproducing what one knows is tested within a limited time scale. Therefore time management is the most needed factor for a student. Abridgements help one to share the content in a faster way than in writing the whole word. As the short forms themselves are clear enough to convey the meaning the extra letters can be deleted. If the abridged mode of words used in texting is allowed in exams the writing speed of the students also get increased as they practice this kind of writing everyday rather than that of using formal words and phrases while chatting through communicative apps as well as for taking notes in the class.



Students are asked to take notes in the speaking speed of the teacher. This makes them to use the shortest possible way to spell the words in an understandable way for further reference. Therefore if they are allowed to use the condensed spelling, they can write in the speed of taking notes which would help them to finish the task in time. In the examination point of view students can score more as they could avoid spelling mistakes. Because they are using familiar spellings which won't confuse them with extra letters and which have one to one correspondence with the sound and spelling. 80% of the subjects taken for study agree that they save time when they are allowed to use abridgements in exams and again 80% of them agree that they will avoid spelling mistakes in writing as these condensed words possess spelling as they sound. 70% agreed that they can pronounce the word perfectly if they follow the condensations.

This helps the students to coin new spellings for old terms which are similar to coinage of new words. In a wide scale abridgements help students to be creative and innovative. 80% of them agreed that they feel free to use the short forms. This can be permitted to help the students to score more and avoid errors in spelling and pronouncing the word. 55% of them are eager in promotion of abridgements in academic writing.

The limitation noticed by some subjects is that the students will forget the right spelling of the words if abridgements are allowed. The suggestion given to avoid this limitation is that shortened spellings should be taught along with their original ones as we study the abbreviations and acronyms. Abridgements are not new as we are already using the terms like TV, Fridge, Photos etc. and everyone know the original spelling of the word too.

### CONCLUSIONS

The paper made a research from students' perspective in using abridgements. It recommends for the inclusion of them in academic writing as it possess the advantages like time saving, easy and correct pronunciation and reduction of spelling errors in exams. Allowing abridgements in spellings will make the students feel free as they have much writing practice in using them.

### FURTHER RESEARCHES

Allowing abridgements in academic writing will be a mammoth change in English Language Teaching. More research on the ways of shortening the words should be made so that abridgements can be accepted.

### REFERENCES

- [1]. Cruttenden, Alan. *Gimson's Pronunciation of English*. UK: Hodder Education. 1962. Print.
  - [2]. Gurrey, P. *The Teaching of Written English*. London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd. 1954. Print.
  - [3]. Rivers, Wilga. M. *Communicating Naturally in a Second Language: Theory and Practice in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1983. Print.
  - [4]. Strevens, Peter. *Papers in Language and Language Teaching*. London: Oxford University Press. 1965. Print.
-