



Volume 6 – Spring 2010
djim.management.dal.ca

NetSpeakWrite: A New Breed of Communication

Amy Paterson

Abstract: This paper examines the recent linguistic phenomena of texting and instant messaging, paying particular attention to the unique linguistic properties exhibited in digital communications. Through an examination of the use and influence of TextSpeak, I conclude that its demonstrated linguistic patterns are unique in conforming to a written standard, rather than the verbal conventions of other languages. Based on these conclusions, I recommend that this new language—here dubbed NetWrite—should be studied on its own unique terms rather than by its effect (or lack thereof) on traditional English.

About the Author

Amy Paterson, originally from New Brunswick, is currently ~~en~~ enjoying her first year of Dalhousie University's MLIS program. She has a previous BA from St. Thomas University and an MA from Simon Fraser University in English Literature. She is extremely interested in the role of libraries in education and hopes to be a writer and a school librarian. This paper was originally written as part of the *Information in Society* MLIS course.

Introduction: What is NetWrite?

In recent years, much ado has been made about the digital revolution and the accompanying communication trends it has introduced. New media for language have been a historical rarity; for hundreds of years, paper held a monopoly over written transmission. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that among the many other issues highlighted by new technologies, linguistic trends should rank among other hot topics (Crystal, 2003). NetWrite has been variously dubbed NewSpeak (Fonseca & Martin, 2009), NetSpeak (Humphrys, 2007), or TextSpeak (Crystal, 2003). The average user may not be able to decode iukwimaitud (see Glossary for a full vocabulary list) but has most likely encountered gtg or imho a time or two.

While Crystal (2003) is frank about his enthusiasm for the new vocabulary, others have described the perceived effects of texting in graphically violent terms (Humphrys, 2007). Whether enthusiastic about the various linguistic innovations of NetSpeak or bemoaning the death—or rape, according to Humphrys (2007, para. 17)—of language as we know it, it is difficult to escape the impact of the new verbiage. Perhaps because many of the more fluent NetSpeak-ers are teenagers and young adults, advocates of traditional language focus on the inherent rebellion seated in the deliberate misspellings and lack of punctuation. Those who fancy themselves more open-minded highlight the creative use of keyboard characters and the demonstrated adaptability to new technologies and faster-paced lifestyles.

The common thread through the opinions of both fans and critics is the comparison of NetSpeak with previous linguistic trends and conventions. Written communication as a derivative or substitute for oral communication has been the traditional way of thinking; spelling is ideally linked to pronunciation, while grammar and punctuation mimic the machinations of tone and body language (Adorno, 1990; Thorndike, 1948). However, the various ways in which text or Instant Messaging (IM) language departs from these conventions, including the lack of punctuation and the inclusion of unpronounceable symbols, indicate that NetSpeak should be considered using completely different criteria than verbally-based, written languages. Speech is expected to be the primary transmission of language from one source to the other; writing conforms to verbal conventions, not only because it mimics speech, but because anything written can also be read. It has only been since the nineteenth century that silent reading has overtaken the former practice of reading aloud in groups (Brown, 2009). Even today, reading aloud is popular with young children.

While, historically, language has been primarily verbal with writing as a secondary means of communication, digital technology has worked towards significantly closing the gap (Walther & D'Addario, 2001). In certain cases, a well-meaning emoticon may carry more

meaning to the recipient than some of the more casual face-to-face interactions, such as a wave or a few words exchanged in passing (Huang, Yen, & Zhang, 2008). NetSpeak has become NetWrite, a new breed of language and one of the first linguistic iterations to exhibit properties of written rather than oral transmission. Moreover, the conventions of NetWrite are inextricably linked not only to writing itself but also to the technologies that mothered them. Therefore, most IM language would be out of place in any other arena. Though NetWrite is usually confined to casual—rather than professional—interaction, its unique properties and growing influence render it a valuable object for study. However, the continued comparison of NetWrite to verbally-based languages glosses over the most interesting and unique aspects of the trend. This paper seeks to define NetWrite purely on its own terms and, in doing so, to illuminate the true character of this fascinating linguistic development. As an additional note on scope, while the observations of this essay may easily be applicable to languages worldwide, explicit discussion will be confined to the conventions of written and spoken English.

Historical patterns and precedents

In his book *Txtng: The gr8 db8*, Crystal (2008) notes that NetSpeak is far from the first linguistic evolution to attract dissent or scorn from traditionalists. In fact, he maintains that there is an historical imperative of scepticism within the realm of linguistic innovation (Crystal, 2008). When writing in English first began to garner popularity in the Middle Ages, similar apocalyptic predictions were levelled against the practice (Crystal, 2008). English is not the only language where this type of opposition has been encountered. For example, the philosophies of Socrates, arguably one of the most influential thinkers in the Western canon, survive only within the works of Plato because Socrates himself refused to write anything down (Plato, 2001). As previously mentioned, IM language requires a different lens than previous linguistic incarnations, but there are some notably similar patterns existing between the current evolution of NetWrite and the first emergence of writing in English as a popular method of communication.

Language is both constantly in flux and ambiguous by nature, so it is expected that it should adapt to the chosen method of transmission (Kolve, 1984). Written English began without punctuation or standardized spelling and with far fewer core vocabulary words than those existing today. While the addition of vocabulary over time is hardly avoidable, writing certainly speeds up this process by providing a permanent record and a potentially faster transmission for new vocabulary. Additionally, like IM language, early instances of literature in English caused previously established words to take on popular new meanings based on contextual usage (Paterson, 2007). This transitory aspect of language would arguably be much less noticeable without writing, because unrecorded context is fleeting, and natural cognitive limitations render listeners unable to accurately

transmit speeches to others or to revisit conversations after the fact (Kolve, 1984). The vocabulary changes grown out of NetSpeak, which will be discussed in further detail later on, have been of a different nature than these early instances, however there is consistency in the pattern of change fuelled by the two different modes of writing.

Fluctuation in definitions and the emergence of new words over time may be innate properties of language, while standardization of spelling and the addition of punctuation marks, are linguistic changes endemic to writing. Early English writings committed thoughts to paper without breaks or differentiations between words, relying on readers to interpret context through performance, and as the story goes, Shakespeare spelled his name six different ways (Baron, 2002). As silent reading began to prevail over public performance and higher percentages of the population learned to read, the development of punctuation marks was necessary to clarify rhythm and reduce ambiguity within written works (Solomon, 1990). Spelling standardization both facilitates the process of learning to read by engraining repeated images in the learner's mind and provides necessary clarity across large groups of people. In fact, Mann (2003) proposes learnability and clarity as necessary organizing factors of written language. In either case, reduction of ambiguity is key, since writing is produced as a relatively permanent record rather than a transitory one. The structural changes of NetWrite are very different to those originally fuelled by writing, but the underlying pattern—structural changes befitting the medium of transmission—is constant in both cases.

Structural changes: From NetSpeak to NetWrite

While the initial popularity of English writing helped lead to common standards of punctuation and spelling, IM language is seemingly accomplishing the opposite. Acronyms are created, and words are pared down to the shortest form possible, while still (hopefully) remaining recognizable to the speaker. This practice of shortening words to their base elements is not a new concept in English; however, never before has this practice achieved the heights of popularity gained through the instant messaging medium. Writing offers a unique way to pare down words, which is unavailable in the verbal plane. Similarly, the spellings of “colour” in the UK and “color” in the US were identical until American dictionary magnate Webster attacked the British spellings (Baron, 2002). While vowels may be deleted haphazardly in texts without significant comprehension loss (Crystal, 2008), the same lack of vowels in a verbal context renders words unpronounceable. While words are shortened in instant messages to save time and space, these factors are of little consideration when words are interpreted aurally. Verbally, vowel sounds provide syllabic differentiation and lend pronunciation cues that consonants are unable to indicate on their own. NetWrite additionally requires that the

recipient already be familiar with the original word and have no need to express it verbally.

The expectation of non-verbal comprehension and use of texts differentiates NetWrite from verbal discourse based on criteria of performativity. Within traditional English, language that is neither true nor false can be classified as performative, in that the expression of it innately accomplishes the stated action (Austin, 2001). However, NetWrite reduces the most active of phrases down to the level of rhetorical gesture. While it is possible that some portion of the population may still sincerely LOL while typing, the phrase has itself become a stock response to a humorous statement, rather than a description of the typist's actions. Similarly, the very nature of an action such as ROFLMAO makes it impossible to type and perform simultaneously. Texters, whether consciously or not, must agree to the conventions of their adopted language, which includes accepting that much of the rhetoric used in chat has no solidity outside the confines of the computer screen.

The lack of real-world performativity inherent in NetWrite extends to the point that many words used in the language have no equivalent pronunciations. Not only is ROFLMAO not actually performed, it is never so much as expressed outside of the virtual world. While it can be argued that ROFLMAO is itself an acronym, one which can be broken down to its very pronounceable component words, many of these acronyms are mentally processed as written; because there is no need to verbalize them, there is no need to break them down to find the original words. Some NetWrite identifiers, such as p911, go so far as to represent an overarching concept rather than an exact phrase. Crystal (2008) writes that it is common with familiar initialisms for people to forget what the letters originally stood for and instead simply accept the contextual meaning by which they know of it. In fact, many acronyms have taken on new significance distinct from their original component words. Though NetWrite terms are not explicitly linked to pronunciations, many of the acronyms that have entered the IM domain have re-emerged into verbal culture, slightly altered. For example, the acronym btw—originally conceived as a shortened version of the phrase “by the way”—is now entrenched into verbal culture in its acronym form. Where many would have once said “by the way”, they now say “btw” (pronounced bee tee dub) in imitation of IM conventions. In verbal terms, “btw” saves no time or space over the more conventional “by the way”. Though the two phrases have the same amount of syllables, the NetWrite term has taken on a life of its own.

Also of import is the dearth of grammar and punctuation conventions employed in NetWrite. One ready explanation for this phenomenon is the sheer number of keystrokes required for inserting punctuation into texts. Another potential factor is that unlike other forms of written communication, since texts and IMs normally exist as short bursts of thought, punctuation is not vital to interpretation. Adorno identifies punctuation marks as

a characteristic of *oral* delivery, arguing that “it is superfluous to omit them as superfluous: then they simply hide” (1990, para. 2). However, since implied punctuation is a character of speech, then perhaps there is no easy equivalent for a purely written communication. If punctuation is employed as a written substitute for tone and pacing (Adorno, 1990), then it can be argued that the range of tone used in NetWrite is sufficiently more focused than that used in other forms of communication. Other than the occasional break-up by text, chat language is most often kept light and conversational. One item of interest is Hatfield’s 1933 research study, which showed that some punctuation items were actually deleterious to reading speed and comprehension. While the study is certainly outdated and only focused on certain types of comma use (Hatfield, 1933), it may be an indication, that the lack of some punctuation in texts may not be as catastrophic as its detractors might predict. Crystal (2008) similarly believes that writing of any kind will be beneficial to teen literacy.

Emoticons: The new body language

Though the tone of IMs and texts are most commonly harmlessly conversational, ambiguity does creep in. In those cases where punctuation is scarce and time-consuming, the texter must find a way to convey meaning and avoid catastrophic misinterpretation of tone. Research has shown that tone and body language are more important to comprehension than words alone; in fact, there exist to date a number of studies suggesting that non-verbal cues carry more weight than verbal or vocal cues in most linguistic transactions (Pease, 1997). This reliance on external factors such as body language could be a problem when translated into any context without these other factors. Walther and D’Addario (2001) argue that emoticons are primarily used as surrogates for more traditional non-verbal cues.

Emoticons began as unique combinations of keystrokes designed to mimic human expression; while there is quite a wide range of expressions available, they are most commonly used to lighten the mood or to draw emphasis from words that could potentially be misconstrued without additional clarification (Brittan, 1995; Huang et al., 2008). Huang et al. (2008) found in their study exploring the potential effects of emoticons, that girls will most often express humour with emoticons, while boys favour teasing or sarcasm. It is of note that both of these prevailing uses express the tone rather than the emotion of the user. The same study also notes that emoticon use is steadily increasing in both sexes (Huang et al., 2008).

While it may be argued that NetWrite is merely mimicking verbal culture by creating enhancements to textual interaction that copy human facial expressions, the realm of emoticons has expanded far beyond their original scope as a substitute for body language. Brittan in a relatively early examination of emoticons notes that “nearly all, like

]:-> (the devil) and :/7) (Cyrano de Bergerac), prove to be not so much emotional states as people with funny objects stuck to their heads” (1995, para. 7). Smiley or frowny faces may have been the beginning, but now many emoticons exist for concepts inexpressible in either body language or conventions of verbal conversation.

In part, the evolution of emoticons reflects a natural human adaptation to the new communication mediums. Creative and innovative use of keyboard characters to make pictures may not always serve any essential function to conversation but may exist only as text decorations and embellishments. Just as illuminated manuscripts were popular in the early days of printing, emoticons also reflect the creative use of the given medium. Crystal (2003) argues that creativity, in addition to saving time and space, is a driving force of IM language developments. In some ways, frequent use of the more advanced emoticons runs counter to the timesaving purpose of instant messaging. Especially when text messaging, which uses a relatively small keyboard (and may only consist of the twelve traditional telephone keys), complicated emoticons may require a great deal of time and thought. Many of the more complex emoticons (as well as acronyms) are not in frequent, active use but instead represent a stylistic feat of originality within unexplored linguistic territory (Crystal, 2003).

In many ways, the language most similar to NetWrite is American Sign Language (ASL), which is the primary means of communication for those with hearing disabilities. Burch, in her study of Deaf poetry and performance, attacks an assumption she sees as prevalent that deafness is a communicative disability, arguing that ASL’s reliance on hand movements to communicate words, letters, and ideas to its audience is a valid alternate means of communication (Burch, 1997). ASL and NetWrite share the distinct characteristic of being non-verbally-based languages, and because of this shared property, they are similar in the ways that each use the given communication medium to decorate word choice. Verbal considerations, such as the sound of the word itself or its rhythm when spoken, are not necessary, but instead, the visual sphere is fully explored.

While there is no need for emoticons in ASL, hand movements can function in a way similar to text embellishments in NetWrite. When ASL users choose the appropriate words for a given context, it is not only the meaning of the word itself that is a factor but also the aesthetic of the hand movements that accompany the word, and its place in the overall flow of the conversation. In the tradition of Deaf poetry, language moves into the visual realm; hand movements, pauses, facial expressions and other visual factors must all be factored into the interpretation of the poem (Burch, 1997). Deaf poetry can only be adequately experienced visually, while NetWrite can only be adequately experienced on the screen. Just as seasoned texters will choose emoticons that complement their words and meanings, ASL users will pick words where the accompanying gestures work well in a visual context.

A new kind of ambiguity

While emoticons compensate for the lack of body language, vocabulary usage in NetWrite has provoked new kinds of ambiguity issues. There is perhaps no written equivalent to the power of tone in the interpretation of vocabulary (Brittan, 1995), which limits texting strategies for dealing with words that hold multiple, varying connotations. However, for the most part, a fairly logical approach seems to have prevailed. First, if variations in tone cannot be replicated, then there must be a tacit agreement among texters to keep conversations light and pleasant. The study of Huang et al. suggested that emoticon-rich IM language may be beneficial to intra-office communications, because the simple pleasure inherent in its use could “foster a caring and cooperative environment” (2008, Conclusions, para. 1). In a similar study, Walther and D’Addario found that 53.5% of emoticon expressions were smiley variations, while only 7.5% were frown faces (2001, p. 327), which may be indicative of the general texting atmosphere. While this is a generalized view of text conversations and by no means a fast rule, it is supported by the fact that NetSpeak’s prevailing vocabulary is dominated by superficial topics and enquiries—*a/s/l*, *ttyl*, and *wayd*, to name a few—and though there are emoticons for anger and sadness, they are most often used with the intent of humour or irony (Huang et al., 2008). Crystal (2008) notes that, while by no means are all texts positive, a majority are sent in greeting, holiday wishes, or exchange of personal news and gossip.

In addition to the generally pleasant tone of IM terms, these communications are stripped down to their basest of elements, and though phrases may not have verbal equivalents, each text concept has a very precise connotation. While removing letters from words and producing slews of acronyms may serve the physical purpose of saving time and space, they also serve the linguistic purpose of pigeonholing commonly used words and concepts. In a way, NetWrite is attempting to create a language from scratch by requiring users’ collective agreement on brand new conventions. *Brb* or *j/k* are just letters on a page, until collectively endowed with meaning. The practice of initialism has been used for years to explicitly connect certain words and phrases to specialized contexts (Crystal, 2008). Perhaps over time, just as with spoken languages, the connotations of each acronym will begin to expand, but that remains to be seen. In some cases, the additional step of assigning concepts to numbers rather than letters has begun, connecting a precise phrase or sentiment with each integer. Currently, numerical signifiers, such as 143 or 182, are relatively rare, but it will be interesting to track the progression of this unique code.

The use of the numerical identifiers eliminates problems that may occur due to NetWrite homographs, such as LOL, which most texters use for “laughing out loud” but is

occasionally used for “lots of love.” While texters are simultaneously attempting to restrict shades of meaning from the actual acronyms, the new type of ambiguity appearing in NetWrite results prominently from homographic confusion (Crystal, 2003). Fortunately, homographic meanings are normally quite unrelated—such as CID, which can indicate either “crying in disgrace” or “consider it done”—and can often be interpreted correctly in context.

While ambiguity is reduced through the employment of very specific acronyms in conversation, one must first understand these acronyms in order for them to be of any use. Humphrys (2007) believes the increasing obscurity of text acronyms may defeat the purpose of clarity and brevity. However, in some cases, the complexity of text language may be intentional, for exclusivity purposes (Crystal, 2003), exemplified by the fact that many NetWrite glossaries have been developed by or for parents who wish to decode their children's conversations. In the same vein, texters may derive pleasure from the fact that their favourite acronyms may be a kind of code shared only by a small group of people (Mann, 2003). Popular text acronyms vary by region, so while there may be little ambiguity to those who share the same acronym set, those out of the loop will have trouble garnering any meaning at all.

New mediums, new messages

One might rightly wonder at this point whether, since NetWrite can be considered by all accounts a valid evolution of language, it may be used appropriately in academic essays and other written communications not intended for verbal use. The short answer is no. IM language is inappropriate when separated from its technological context. In the first place, NetWrite is used exclusively in a conversational context; it shares the transitory properties of verbal communication while existing exclusively in written form. Baron writes that instant messages convert “the monologue of writing into the dialogue of spoken give-and-take. Since the turns are shorter so must our written messages be” (2002, p. 410). Though the conversationalists are physically removed from each other when instant messaging, the conventions of NetWrite assume a shared contextual knowledge between all participants, as well as a basic familiarity with each other. In short, IM language is inherently less formal than other writing (Huang et al., 2008).

In the context of academic writing, on the other hand, one of the purposes is to learn to clearly and fully express viewpoints that may not necessarily be shared by your audience. In this situation, while it is unlikely that papers will be read out loud, verbal concerns such as rhythm and flow still need to be considered as rhetorical components and elements of writing style. Thurlow (2006) synthesizes a number of extenuating factors that affect communication by IM. These include time spent online, participants' levels of motivation, and the relationship of the conversationalists (Thurlow, 2006). These

factors would not translate well to a more permanent piece of writing, such as an academic essay or report. Additionally, in NetWrite there exists the type of immediacy that allows message recipients to ask for additional clarification if necessary. In contrast, most other forms of written communication, such as letters, essays, or even emails, assume a one-way transmission of multiple ideas simultaneously.

Text or IM language is not meant to be a permanent record, and it is common to send a text in a hurry (Brittan, 1995). As previously mentioned, the acronyms frequently used in IM language are much more specific and localized than most vocabulary, but they also vary depending on audience and are prone to frequent changes, based on current trends. Just as texts and instant messages are not expected to elicit verbal interpretation, they are not expected to be revisited at a later date (Crystal, 2008). Most cellular devices have limited storage space for text messages, and many cell phones automatically delete texts that are more than a few weeks old. As for IMs, unless a user specifically archives his or her conversations, they will disappear after the conversation window closes. Some IM clients, such as Facebook Chat, do not contain an option to save your message history; if a user wants to save chat history from this messaging medium, it would have to be deliberately copied and pasted into a text file after every conversation.

Finally, NetWrite encourages a different level of thought than other types of written communication. Nietzsche wrote after discovering the typewriter, “Our writing equipment takes part in the forming of our thoughts” (cited in Carr, 2008, para. 12). Mobile devices exist to promote fast and easy communications, rather than the conscious and deliberate thought provoked by other types of writing. IM language inherently encourages brevity (Crystal, 2003), and while texts are written and sent within a few seconds and then most likely forgotten, longer pieces of writing carry more pressure for precise diction and proper phrasing. Carr (2008) believes that reading on the Internet is quite a different practice than the reading encouraged by print sources. The immediacy of digital information, presented in short bursts, encourages a more superficial style of reading than that of print sources (Carr, 2008).

Crystal (2003) writes that these trends will ultimately have little effect over language in general, precisely because they are so tied to the mediums of use (para. 12). However, Crystal’s implied use of “language” indicates traditional spoken and written language, and while NetWrite may have no lasting effects in the verbal realm, its mere existence has an ever-expanding impact within the world of digital communications. Finally, while it may not be welcome in essays, traces of NetWrite influence cannot help but escape the confines of the screen. The most recent edition of the Oxford English Dictionary eliminated the hyphen from over 16,000 words, a move Humphrys (2007) believes was inspired by the brevity of instant messaging. Additionally, studies have shown that people are gravitating towards shorter sentences, simpler verb tenses and little punctuation

(Uthus, 2007). While Uthus (2007) is in the camp of people who believe text messaging is to blame, this debate is still quite deadlocked (Walther & D'Addario, 2001).

While NetWrite facilitates quick communications among friends or colleagues, the specific type of communication skills fostered by this medium would have little application elsewhere. Outside the world of Internet chatting and text messaging, most communication still uses a verbally-based criteria. Tone and body language, which are non-entities in NetWrite, carry much more weight in other types of conversations. Grammar and punctuation, also downplayed in IM language, are important tools for other types of written communication. While NetWrite may be an innovative linguistic evolution, it is clear that it must always be used as a *second* language.

Conclusion

The unique properties of IM language differentiate it significantly from past iterations of language that consider speech the primary means of transmission. As demonstrated, NetWrite incorporates structural changes that minimize the role of grammar and punctuation and introduces vocabulary with no equivalent pronunciations. Emoticons, the would-be substitute for body language, capture additional concepts unique to the medium and serve as decorations and text embellishments. Finally, the use of acronyms and merging of words decrease the ambiguity that normally accompanies textual interpretation but also eliminates outsiders from gaining access to the conversation. While the explicit link of NetWrite to the medium of electronic communication limits its application, it remains an innovative and culturally significant mode of expression. While critical opinion of this trend so far has been as varied as it is passionate, the first step towards finding the proper boundaries of text language is to release it from the shadow of all that has come before. By separating the traits of IM language from our traditional written communication, the trend will be able to carve out a new place for itself. H8rs of NetWrite fear that it will tarnish or even supplant traditional English in frequency of use. However, on its own terms, NetWrite evolved for chat usage; if there it remains, the two may coexist comfortably. As digital communications continue to flourish, NetWrite will presumably continue on its evolutionary track, and whether a luvr or h8r of these particular linguistic quirks, it will be interesting to see where they will lead.

References

- Adorno, T. W. (1990). Punctuation marks. (S. W. Nichol森, Trans.) *The Antioch Review*, 48(3, Poetry Today), 300-305. Retrieved from http://antiochcollege.org/antioch_review.html
- Austin, J. L. (2001). Performative utterances. In V. B. Leitch (Ed.), *The Norton anthology of theory and criticism* (pp. 1430-1442). New York: W. W. Norton and Company.
- Baron, N. S. (2002). Who sets e-mail style? Prescriptivism, coping strategies, and democratizing communication access. *Information Society*, 18(5), 403. Retrieved from <http://www.indiana.edu/~tisj/>
- Brittan, D. (1995). The shadow of your smiley. *Technology Review*, 98(7), 80. Retrieved from <http://www.techreview.com>
- Brown, I. (2009). Not exactly kindling his passion. *Globe and Mail Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/arts/not-exactly-kindling-his-passion/article1372600/>
- Burch, S. (Spring 1997). Deaf poets' society: Subverting the hearing paradigm. *Literature and Medicine*, 16(1), 121. doi:10.1353/lm.1997.0002
- Carr, N. (2008). Is Google making us stupid? *The Atlantic Monthly*, 301(6), (July/August). Retrieved from www.theatlantic.com
- Crystal, D. (2003). The joy of text. *New Statesman*, 16(774), R16. Retrieved from http://www.davidcrystal.com/DC_articles/Internet4.pdf
- Crystal, D. (2008). *Txtng: The gr8 db8*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fonseca, F., & Martin, J. (2009). Beyond newspeak: Three arguments for the persistence of the informal in the creation and use of computational ontologies. *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*, 7(3), 196. Retrieved from <http://www.palgrave-journals.com/kmrp/>
- Hatfield, W. W. (1933). Objective determination of punctuation. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 26(8), 569-571. Retrieved from <http://www.heldref.org/pubs/jer/about.html>
- Huang, A., Yen, D., & Zhang, X. (2008). Exploring the potential effects of emoticons. *Information & Management*, 45(7), 466.

- Humphrys, J. (2007). I h8 txt msgs: How texting is wrecking our language. *Daily Mail Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-483511/I-h8-txt-msgs-How-texting-wrecking-language.html>
- Kolve, V. A. (1984). *Chaucer and the imagery of narrative: The first five Canterbury tales*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Mann, N. (2003). Point counterpoint: Teaching punctuation as information management. *College Composition and Communication*, 54(3), 359-393. Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/cccc>
- Paterson, A. (2007). "O' wikke fame!": Authority and readership in Chaucer's House of Fame. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Simon Fraser University.
- Pease, A. (1997). *Body language: How to read others' thoughts by their gestures*. London: Sheldon Press.
- Plato. (2001). In V. B. Leitch (Ed.), *The Norton anthology of theory and criticism* (pp. 33-37). New York: W. W. Norton and Company.
- Solomon, M. (1990). The power of punctuation. *Design Issues*, 6(2), 28-32. Retrieved from <http://www.mitpressjournals.org/loi/desi>
- Thorndike, E. L. (1948). The psychology of punctuation. *The American Journal of Psychology*, 61(2), 222-228. Retrieved from <http://ajp.press.illinois.edu>
- Thurlow, C. (2006). From statistical panic to moral panic: The metadiscursive construction and popular exaggeration of new media language in the print media. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 11(3). Retrieved from <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol11/issue3/thurlow.html>
- Uthus, E. (2007, May 7). Text messages destroying our language. *The daily of the University of Washington*. Retrieved from <http://dailyuw.com/2007/5/7/text-messages-destroying-our-language/>
- Walther, J. B., & D'Addario, K. P. (2001). The impacts of emoticons on message interpretation in computer-mediated communication. *Social Science Computer Review*, 19(3), 324-347. doi:10.1177/089443930101900307

Glossary of NetWrite terms

143	I love you
182	I hate you
a/s/l	age/sex/location
brb	be right back
btw	by the way
CID	crying in disgrace <i>or</i> consider it done
emoticon	a facial expression created by non-traditional use of keyboard characters
frowny	a frowning or unhappy emoticon. :(, :-(and :*(are simple examples.
gtg	got to go
h8r	hater
imho	in my humble opinion
iukwamaitud	if you know what I mean and I think you do
j/k	just kidding
LOL	laughing out loud <i>or</i> lots of love
luvr	lover
p911	parent alert
ROFLMAO	rolling on floor, laughing my ass off
smiley	a smiling emoticon. :), :-) and :P are simple examples
ttyl	talk to you later
wayd	what are you doing?