



Generational Differences in the Use of Textisms

1

INITIAL RESEARCH

“What is the impact of textisms on literacy?”

Project evolution

Impact of textisms on literacy



Impact of textisms on literacy *across generations*



Differences in the use of textisms across generations

2

CURRENT QUESTION

“What are the generational differences in the use of textisms?”

Previous research

- The three sociolinguistic maxims of conversation (Grice, 1975; Thurlow & Brown, 2003)
 - Brevity and speed (textisms)
 - Paralinguistic restitution (*sigh*)
 - Phonological approximation (waddup)
- Textism-literacy naturalistic study (Drouin & Driver, 2014)



What are textisms?

- ❑ Contractions
- ❑ Initialisms
- ❑ Symbols
- ❑ Single letter/number homophones
- ❑ Combined letter/number homophones
- ❑ Nonstandard spellings

Methods

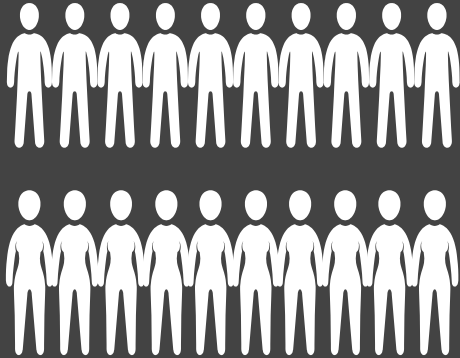
Naturalistic data

- Participants
- Textism density ratio

Survey data

- Analysis and coding

Generation X

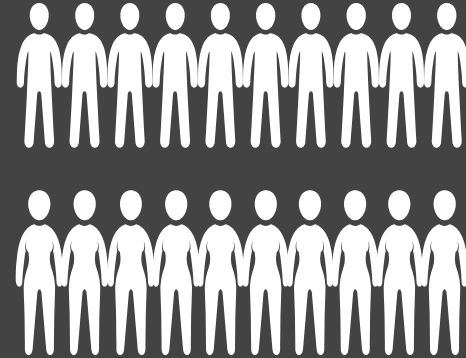


10 males 10 females



40 total
participants

Generation Z



10 males 10 females



Why Generation X and Generation Z?

Gen X

- 48-50 years old
- College degree

Gen Z

- 14-16 years old
- High school



1,000 texts

7,581 total words collected

3

RESULTS

Naturalistic data



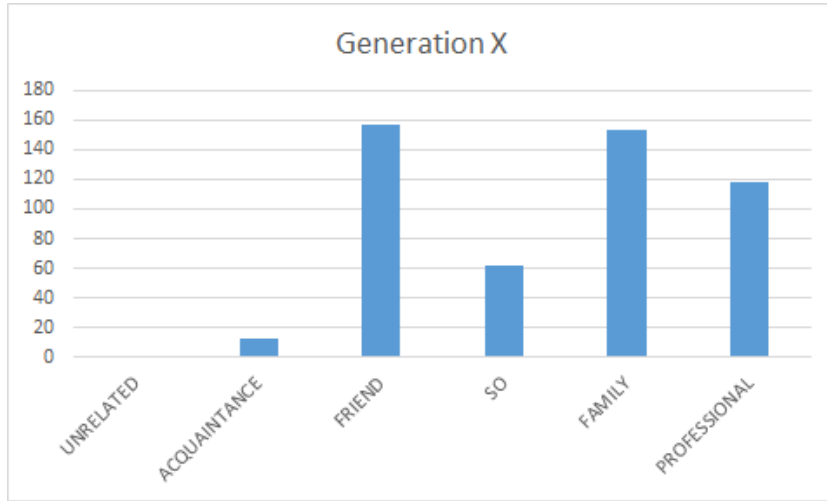
Generation X

≈ 0.0501

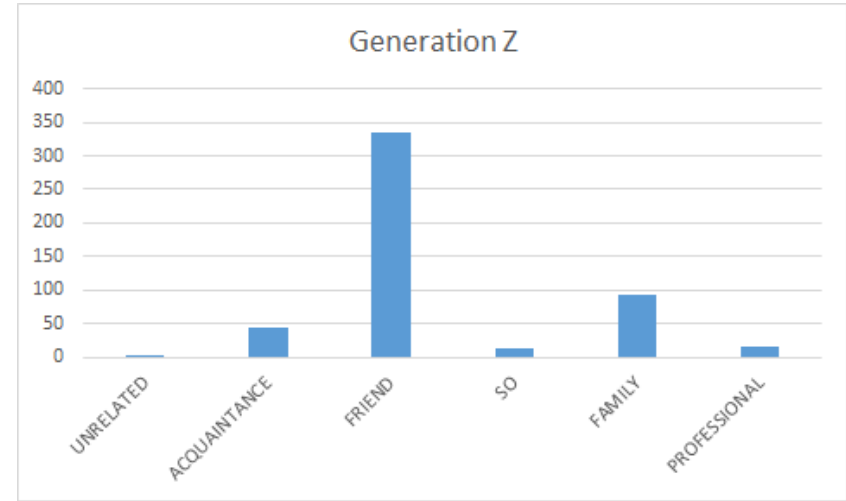
Generation Z

≈ 0.0615

Gen X



Gen Z



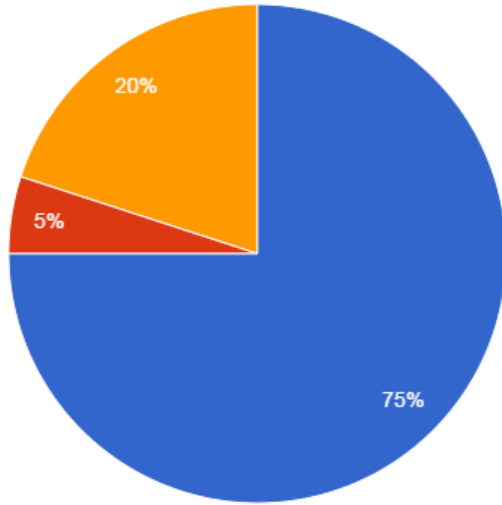
Number of texts sent to each type of relationship

4

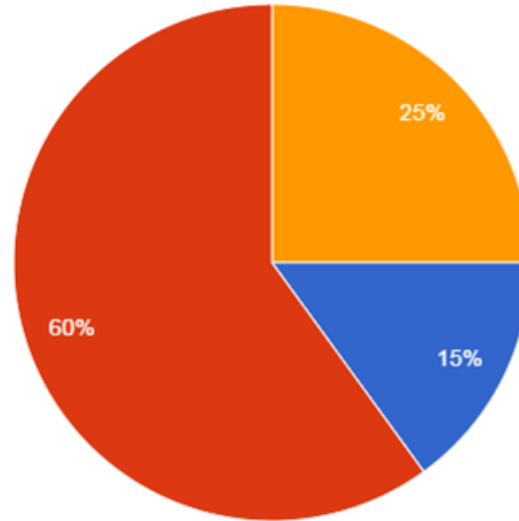
RESULTS

Survey data

Gen X



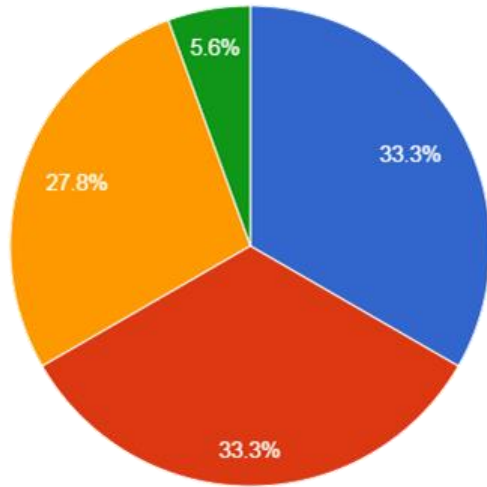
Gen Z



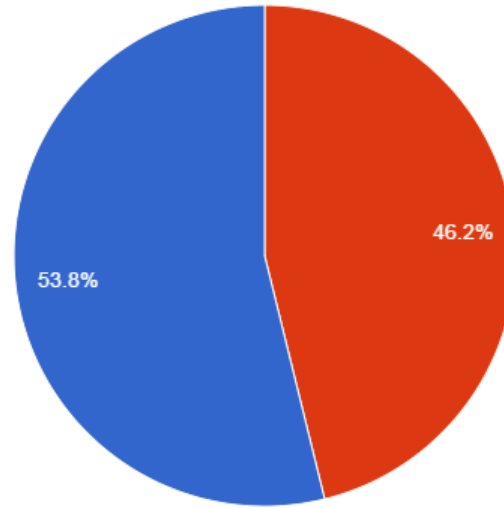
- Between 20 and 40
- Less than 20
- Greater than 40

“How many texts do you send in a day?”

Gen X



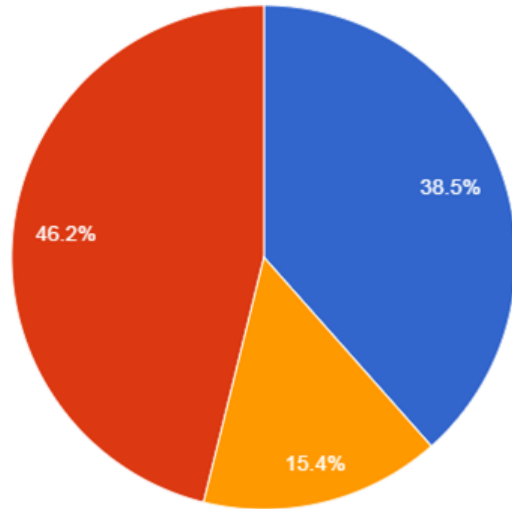
Gen Z



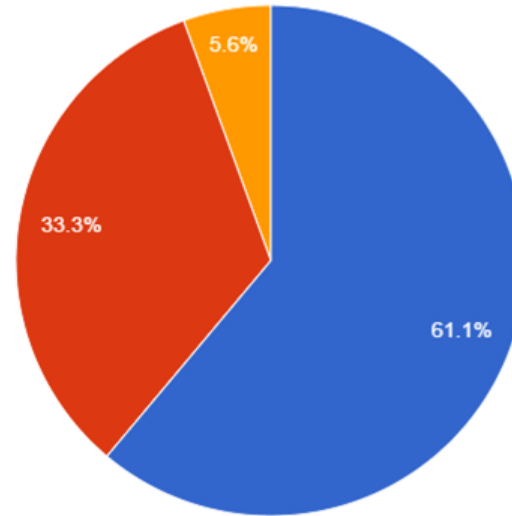
- More textisms than average
- About the same
- Fewer textisms than average
- No textisms at all

“Tendencies when texting people younger than you”

Gen X



Gen Z



- Fewer textisms than average
- No textisms at all
- About the same

“Tendencies when texting people older than you”



96% of participants

Who do use textisms, do so because it's faster/saves time

7.6 words

Per text

37.2 characters

Per text

Conclusion

- Textism “myth”
 - No time to save
- There are social reasons for the use of textisms
 - Generation X: Fit in
 - Generation Z: Learned

Discussion

- ❑ Problems with self-reporting
 - ❑ Insights on people's perspectives
- ❑ Textisms might have made a difference in the past
 - ❑ Where the “myth” comes from



Multi-tap keypad

Further Study

- Effects of textisms on literacy across generations
- Study on saved time using textisms
- Focus groups

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