Text Messaging, Text Speak, and Literacy Abilities Among College Students

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In recent years, text messaging has increased greatly in the United States (Reardon, 2008). This surge in text messaging has brought much attention to the possible detrimental effects of text messaging and “text speak” (i.e., the text message abbreviations such as *prolly* for “probably” that are used in text messaging) on grammar and literacy. The current study examined the texting habits, literacy, and grammar skills of 131 college undergraduates. Those students who reported an excessive use of *text messaging* had a significantly higher reading fluency scores. This same group also felt that switching between text speak and standard English did not present a challenge. However, those who reported using *text speak* frequently had significantly lower scores in reading and spelling. These findings suggest that the surge in text messaging may not be problematic in itself; however, the use of the abbreviated vocabulary (text speak) may be an indicator of lower levels of literacy.