

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

**SMS AND THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF
TEXT MESSAGES ON RADIO PANEL DISCUSSIONS IN GHANA**

WINCHARLES COKER

2011

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BY

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**THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH,
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FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF
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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:

Date:

Name: Wincharles Coker

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

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ABSTRACT

Over the last two decades, linguistic studies on texting have largely focused on person-to-person practices such that the use of text messages in other language domains, for instance the electronic media, is largely under-researched. To fill the gap, the present study examined the discourse of SMS messages posted during radio panel discussions in Ghana in order to determine whether the messages could be labelled as a special discourse type.

The study was based on a corpus of approximately five hundred (500) messages collected within a period of three months from panel discussions of *Joy FM* and *Peace FM*, both in Ghana. Drawing on the concept of Virtual Community of Practice and Uses and Gratifications Theory, the study indicated that radio panel discussion texting is typified by four basic discourse features that served not only as shortening strategies but also as means to demonstrate the dexterity of texters in their use of language. Further, the study showed that posting messages on radio panel discussions is motivated by six major gratifications, prominent among which are ideological formations and expressions of dissatisfaction about personal, social and national issues.

First, these findings characterise texting on radio panel discussions as a unique discourse type. Second, the findings reveal the nature of public discourse on radio panel discussions in Ghana. Thus, these findings bear theoretical and pedagogical implications as well as raise concerns for media practice.

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DEDICATION

To My Loving Mother, Madam Mary Aggrey

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMC:	Computer-Mediated Communication
CMDA:	Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis
IMS:	Instant Message Service
ISMS:	Interpersonal Short Message Service
JSMS:	Joy Super Morning Show
KMS:	Kokrokoo Morning Show
RPD-SMS:	Radio Panel Discussion Short Message Service
SMS:	Short Message Service
UGT:	Uses & Gratifications Theory
VCoP:	Virtual Community of Practice

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Language is a social currency by which humans trade to meet their communicative ends. It is a material medium for communicating thoughts and feelings, though not the only means. Language is, therefore, the exclusive property of humans, given that it distinguishes us from animals (Verghese, 1989; Yule, 1996; Aitchinson, 2001). In all media of communication, spoken, written, or computer-mediated, language is employed as tokens of discourse.

Discourses represent the actual manifestation of language by its users. It is instructive to see discourse as a behavioural unit made up of utterances that constitute a recognisable communicative event (Stubbs, 1983; Fine, 1988; Gee, 1999). In fact, the use of language as tokens of discourse is a reflection of how users of the language choose to approximate their language in order to communicate their intents meaningfully. Discourses could also be seen as social constructions of reality; they are contained not only in the users' knowledge of the language code, but more importantly, in the knowledge of the principles and norms of language use, knowledge of the situation and knowledge of the world (Fairclough, 1989; 1995; Litosseliti, 2006). This is particularly because the meanings derived from discourse are often socially determined and shared.

In the analysis of discourse, the spotlight is on how meaning is generated through the use of language, and not just the mere systematic description of what the language is, as found in descriptive linguistics (Bloomfield, 1933; Lyons, 1977). Brown and Yule (1983: p. 1) have intimated that discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use because “it cannot be restricted to linguistic forms independent of the purposes or the functions which those forms are designed to serve in human affairs”. Thus, it is not sufficient to view language as a structured system of linguistic correlates as Bloomfield (1933) once theorised. Rather, language exists to help us to “perceive, evaluate, and respond to the physical and social world around us” (DeFleur, Kearney & Plax, 1998: p. 2). It is, therefore, clear that discourse is exploited by users of the language in a bid to “respond to the physical and social world” around them.

One of the chief discourses of mobile communication among people is texting. Texting is currently pervasive the world over owing to the explosive growth of mobile telecommunication and the Internet. It is as a result of the influence of the Internet on texting that such scholars as Höflich and Rössler (2002) labelled texting as “e-mail on the move”. The short message service (SMS) or text messaging is a type of text-based communicative transaction which occurs through the use of at least two mobile phones (Brown, 2002; Baron, 2005; Georgakopoulou, 2006). More appropriately, text messaging is referred to as an “asynchronously text-based mediated discourse” (Thurlow, 2003: p. 4). In sending a text message, interlocutors do not necessarily have to simultaneously

log on to their mobile phones since the message could be retrieved at a later time. Herring (2001) refers to this technical property as persistence of transcript.

Arguably, text messages are the most common type of computer-mediated discourse (Thurlow, 2003; Androutsopoulos, 2006; Crystal, 2008). Unlike in texting which simply requires an appreciable knowledge of literacy and knowledge of the alphanumeric keys of the mobile device, in other computer-mediated discourses such as instant messaging or e-mail one needs to be a computer literate. As is expected, soon after its introduction in Finland as a pilot test by the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) in the early 1990s (Puro, 2002; Campbell, 2008), texting became a more facile means of communication, and has massively spread to many parts of the world.

The impact of texting is remarkably startling. For example, it was estimated that over three billion of the world's population would have a mobile phone subscription by 2008 (Crystal, 2008). It is widely agreed that mobile communication enhances the maintenance of social networks or what Lakoff (1975: p. 147) terms "camaraderie". Many the world over are, thus, adept in using text messages because of the gratifications they seek from the medium as confirmed by a number of researchers such as Mante-Meijer and Pires (2002), Vershinskaya (2002), Chilwa (2008) and Feuba Wanji (2009).

Text messages perform manifold communicative functions because they are recognised by recipients as coherent. As discourses, text messages often make meaning in respect of their rhetorical organisations. Halliday and Hassan (1976) and Halliday and Matthiesen (2004), among others, have observed that coherence

is a basic property of all texts. As well, Thurlow (2003) refers to the ability of identifying the communicative import of a text message as its primary functional orientation. For this reason, grammatical infelicities often take a back-seat in texting since the language of text messaging is characteristically informal. Even so, texters duly recognise the communicative urgency of mobile messages and are, thus, capable of understanding the underlying purposes of the messages.

Statement of the Problem

Exactly two decades after its emergence in the early 1990s to mainly promote person-to-person communication (Crystal, 2008), texting has been extended to other language domains such as the electronic media, particularly the radio. There is little doubt that radio is a significant player in the media landscape. For instance, it is widely known that it is on radio, more than elsewhere, that both public and private opinions are normally expressed, and that radio promotes the development of modern society (McLuhan, 1964; Karikari, 1994).

In Ghana, there are now over 100 private commercial radio services despite a freeze in frequency assignments that lasted from 1999 until 2001 (Ghana Broadcasting Study, 2005). Thus, following the popularisation of the mobile phone in Ghana, many radio networks nowadays encourage Ghanaians to participate in the decision making process by posting text messages to radio programmes. Yankah (2004) has observed that a number of these messages are gradually being 'Ghanaianised' because they are occasionally interspersed with Ghanaian expressions and interjections, and that the content of the messages are sometimes impolitic.

However, there is little scholarly interest in the discourse of text messages on the radio in Ghana. Despite the large body of research on text messaging as a unique type of computer-mediated discourse (e.g. Thurlow, 2003; Herring, 2004; Bieswenger, 2006; Al-Khawalda, 2008), investigations into texting on radio are rare though “as people become more aware of the communicative potential of texting, the range of specialised uses grows” (Crystal, 2008: p. 117). Such an investigation is urgent if we wish to have an appreciable knowledge of the nature of public discourse of texters to radio panel discussions in Ghana. Besides, it is often assumed, though wrongly, that the motives for posting text messages are universally applicable to all domains of language use. For example, the extant literature shows that the basic functions of texting are information dissemination and the maintenance of social contact (Fortunati & Magnanelli, 2002; Ling, 2002; Crystal, 2008). Given this research gap, the present study examined the discourse of text messages posted to media panel discussions, using two popular radio stations in Ghana in order to find out whether the messages constitute a special discourse type.

Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to analyse the types of discourse features of text messages posted during radio panel discussions (henceforth RPDs) in Ghana, and the underlying motivations for posting them. Thus, the research, first and foremost, aimed at finding how texters make meaning during RPDs through the shortening strategies they employ. Closely linked to the above, the present study sought to identify the gratifications texters seek by posting

messages to RPDs. Using this two-pronged objective, the research analysed how texters in Ghana use text messages as tokens of discourse to express their views and thoughts on two radio panel discussions in Ghana.

Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the research sought answers to the following specific questions:

1. What discourse features characterise messages posted by texters to radio panel discussions?
2. What gratifications do texters seek by posting messages to radio panel discussions?
3. In what ways do language varieties enable texters to express their intents on radio panel discussions?

Assumptions Underlying the Study

Three key assumptions underpinned this study. The first was that text messaging is a unique type of discourse (Thurlow, 2003; Bieswenger, 2006; Crystal, 2008). This perspective recognises that radio panel discussion text messaging (henceforth RPD-SMS) is an emerging sub-discourse of texting that is marked by specific linguistic features. It was, thus, assumed that texters are adept users of mobile telephony and so have a pragmatic knowledge of various domains of language use and their corresponding social contexts (Herring, 1999; Georgakopoulou, 2006; Thurlow, 2006). Thurlow (2006), for instance, holds that communicatively competent texters choose appropriate linguistic structures that

commensurate the context of situation, a point equally admitted by Herring (2008a).

The second assumption was that RPD-SMS tends to be more propositional than transactional. Language, according to Brown and Yule (1983), Crystal (1987) and Yule (1996), may be broadly viewed as either transactional or propositional. The transactional function of language is information-driven while language is said to be propositional when it expresses the opinions, viewpoints or thought processes of locutors (Brown & Yule, 1983; Yule, 1996; Crystal, 2008). In essence, text messages on RPDs may be more propositional than transactional, given that texters send in messages to express their candid opinions, values, attitudes, sentiments and gratifications, which are usually emotionally laden (Yankah, 2004; Chilwa, 2008).

Finally, it was assumed that texters to RPDs constitute a community of practice. A community of practice is a group of persons that co-share discursal practices and beliefs (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). As members of a community, they bear knowledge of in-group language practices (Herring, 2008b). These practices include rules, norms and mores that govern how they think, act or text in socially acceptable ways, in order to do things the right way at the right time (Gee, 1999). These shared ways of using language make them out from other communities of practice.

Significance of the Study

The study was worth the effort because of its theoretical significance and concerns for media practice.

In the first place, the research provides an empirical basis for identifying RPD-SMS as a sub-discourse of texting. Herring (2008b) maintains that the ready availability of new modes provides a rich opportunity to study the emergence of language practices, norms and social behaviours as expressed through discourse and to theorise about emergent language phenomena. In this light, the study will unearth “new” linguistic forms used by texters, as pointed out by Thurlow (2006). For this reason, the study is a humble contribution to the growing body of research in text messaging.

Another importance of the study is that it serves as a useful lens for understanding human behaviour. Through the study of text messages, discourse analysts and other researchers will be able to identify the gratifications and motivations texters in Ghana attach to text messaging on radio networks. The research, therefore, sets the stage for understanding such theoretical concepts as identity and community. As Herring (2007) notes, discourse involves speaker (in our case texter) choices which are conditioned not only by purely linguistic considerations but also by cognitive and social factors. Therefore, an analysis of text messages posted to RPDs will help researchers to understand public discourse in so far as “the media are consequential in social life” (Altheide, 1996: p. 69).

With regard to media practice, the study presents both linguists and researchers in media and mass communication with a wider understanding of the discourse of text messages in the electronic media. The research is unique from other studies in the electronic media because it draws on computer-mediated discourse analysis to analyse naturally occurring data (i.e. text messages), rather

than questionnaires and interviews, in order to obtain the gratifications of media consumers (Dominick, 1996; Griffin, 2000; McQuail, 2005). This is because CMDA furnishes the discourse analyst with appropriate tools needed to analyse online and electronic discourses, now in vogue in light of the technological revolution. This move will ensure that the needs and gratifications of users of CMC are adequately analysed for media research awareness.

Finally, the study will stimulate further research in text messages in the Ghanaian context. Although there is scholarly interest in this direction (e.g. Aboagye-Aniagyei, 2009; Coker, 2009), empirical studies of text messages in the electronic media in Ghana are yet to be conducted.

Delimitations

In an attempt to arrive at valid conclusions, the study was limited to the following areas. First, the present research focused on mobile phone text messages (i.e. SMS). Text messages were selected rather than, for example, instant messages (IM) because text messages are more easily accessible than IM (Baron, 2005; Crystal, 2008). Also, given their asynchronous nature text messages can be retrieved from source after a long time compared to synchronous modes such as IM or wiki (Baron, 1998; Renkema, 2004; Herring, 2007). They are, therefore, a good source of data for the analysis of media content.

Secondly, the study was limited to text messages posted to radio in Ghana. Radio was selected over and above television because “radio is more accessible in terms of its affordability and ubiquitous message transmission to rural and

particularly non-literate people” (Karikari, 1994: p. 1). In rural areas where there is no electricity, many people can afford to listen to the radio by using cell batteries, which is hardly the case with television.

Further, the research focused on two private local radio networks, namely, *Joy FM* and *Peace FM*. These stations are located in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. According to Yankah (2004), *Joy FM* and *Peace FM* enjoy massive patronage in Ghana due to their number of affiliate stations across the country.

Also, the study was limited to two radio panel discussions. These are ‘Joy Super Morning Show’ (henceforth JSMS) and ‘Kokrokoo Morning Show’ (henceforth KMS) of *Joy FM* and *Peace FM* respectively. Both are credited to be highly educative programmes and have won the prestigious Chartered Institute of Marketing Ghana (CIMG) awards. They run from Monday to Friday every week, and so provided the present researcher with a readily available source of data.

Finally, the research was descriptive and synchronic in nature. It sought to describe how people in real places use texting to meet their daily communicative ends. The study did not consider language errors as potential markers of linguistic ineptitude as espoused by error analysts (e.g. Yankson, 1994; Edu-Buandoh, 1997; Al-Khawalda, 2008). It emphasised how language is used in sending messages by texters themselves in confirmation of the claim that “what matters is not that it conforms to grammatical rules, but the fact that it communicates and is recognised by its receivers as coherent” (Cook, 1989 as cited in Chiliswa, 2008: p. 12).

Definition of Terms

This section situates the following terms within the context of the study, and thus provides the necessary framework within which to understand their meanings in the work.

Community of practice was first used by Lave and Wenger (1991) to refer to groups of people that share beliefs, values and practices from which members learn. In this context, all texters of mobile messages to RPDs make up a community of practice since they share some linguistic and non-linguistic features of human interaction. They understand not only the form but also the meaning of the messages for communication to take place (Reinghold, 2000; Wenger, 2006; Al-Khawalda, 2008).

Computer-mediated discourse in this context does not refer to the use or application of the computer in the analysis of natural language text (Danlos, 1987). Computer-mediated discourse in this thesis refers to discourse that is technologically mediated via the mobile phone (Renkema, 2004; Baron, 2005; Herring, 2007). The mobile phone may be considered as a mini-computer (Shah, 2009) so that language use via the device may be referred to as computer-mediated discourse.

Computer-mediated discourse analysis is an approach to researching interactive behaviour via networked computers or mobile telephony (Herring, 2007). In this work, it is seen as the study of discourse used in mobile telephones. It adopts the traditional notions of discourse analysis and disciplinary cross fertilisation in the analysis of computer-mediated discourse, accounting for both technical and contextual factors (Herring, 2001; Renkema, 2004).

Discourse refers to language in use. It is a behavioural unit made up of utterances that constitute a recognisable communicative event (Gee, 1999). In this research, discourse is taken to mean language in use that functions in a social context and performs definite functions in human situations (Brown & Yule, 1983; Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 2002).

Discourse feature refers to a distinctive linguistic item or unit of a specific discourse (Fine, 1988). In this context, discourse feature is seen as a linguistic item that makes a particular discourse unique from other discourses. For instance, logographic emoticons and genuine novelties are examples of discourse features used in text messages (Crystal, 2008; Feuba Wanji, 2009).

Discourse function is taken here to mean language used to express a wide range of purposes such as transactional, interactional and propositional (Brown & Yule, 1983; Yule, 1996; Chilwa, 2008). Discourse functions can also be conative and aesthetic (Jakobson, 1960; Lyons, 1977).

Discursive practice refers to rules, norms and mental models of socially acceptable behaviour in specific roles or relationships used to produce, receive or interpret a message. It can also be seen as the spoken and unspoken rules and conventions that govern how individuals think, act and speak in all the social positions they occupy in life (van Dijk, 1977). In the context of this research, discursive practice is seen as conventions defined by communities as constitutive of the group's knowledge (Foucault, 1972; Swales, 1990; Herring, 2001).

Gratification applies to the desires and results media users seek in media content (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974). In this work, gratification refers to the motivations of texters for posting messages on radio panel discussions.

Social context applies to the distinctive settings where discourse occurs (market, classroom, playground, etc.) each with a set of conventions that determine the rights and obligations—what each is allowed and expected to do (Fine, 1988). In this study, social context is taken to mean the overall definition of the situation, setting (time and place), participants in various communicative, social or institutional roles as well as their mental representations, goals, knowledge, opinions, attitudes and ideologies (van Dijk, 1992).

Synchronicity refers to whether or not transmission is essentially instantaneous and interlocutors are assumed to be physically present to read the messages and respond to them (Baron, 2005). Synchronous systems such as instant messaging require users to be logged on at the same time in order to receive messages. In asynchronous systems, messages are stored at the addressee's site until they can be read because the messages can be read at a later time. Examples are text messages and e-mail.

Texter is the writer of a text message (Chiluwa, 2008).

Text message is an asynchronous, text-based technologically mediated discourse (Thurlow, 2003). In this work, text message refers to a short message sent by a mobile phone to a radio network for communication purposes (Jaffe, 2000; Vershinskaya, 2002). It is also known as short message service (SMS).

Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into five chapters. Chapter One has so far laid the foundation upon which the entire study rests. This was done by articulating among other things the research problem, research questions and assumptions underlying the thesis. Chapter Two provides a detailed discussion of both the literature review and the conceptual and theoretical framework. The review of related literature takes into account the historical background of text messaging, its linguistic features and communicative functions among users. This is followed by a discussion of some empirical studies conducted in specific cultures. The chapter ends by discussing the conceptual and theoretical framework that undergirds the present study. In Chapter Three, the methodology employed in the study receives attention. The chapter describes the sampling technique, data collection procedure and methods of data analysis. It concludes by highlighting the limitations encountered in the collection of data. Chapter Four presents the analysis of the discourse features and gratifications of radio panel discussion text messaging. Here, a content analysis of the data is done. The summary, key findings, implications drawn from the findings of the study and recommendations for future research are considered in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter reviews related literature on text messages. It first traces the historical background of texting (SMS) from the early 1990s, highlighting its linguistic features and communicative functions. Also, empirical studies on the use of text messages in specific cultures are reviewed in order to demonstrate how the present study is both similar to and different from previous research. Finally, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the study are discussed, emphasising their usefulness to the analysis and interpretation of the data.

The Historical Background to the Use of Text Messages

As has been expressed earlier, text messaging is a common means of communicating by users of the mobile telephone in many parts of the world. The idea of texting mobile messages began as part of the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) protocol in the mid-1980s. Yet, it was not until the 1990s that the mobile phone operators started to develop the commercial potential of the technology mainly to facilitate communication among people with hearing impairment (Crystal, 2008). Initially, the growth rate was abysmal and slow. One possible cause was the difficulty encountered by the telecommunication companies to determine a realistic tariff for the new service. When this challenge

was finally overcome, the average number of messages per user reached 35 by the year 2000. Today, text messaging is the most widely used mobile data service. Crystal (2008) acknowledges that by 2003, Europe, Oceania and North America each had more than one mobile subscription for every two people. By 2007, several countries such as Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Italy had passed saturation point, with the number of subscription equalling or exceeding the total population due to many people taking out more than one subscription.

The first set of text messages was experimentally sent in Finland in 1992-93 (Campbell, 2008). According to Campbell (2008), at the turn of the millennium, Finland had the highest per capita income. The author is of the view that this high penetration was influenced by the presence of Nokia, the leading producer of mobile phones. The Finns fondly refer to the phenomenal presence of Nokia as 'nokialisation' (Puro, 2002).

In Asian countries such as Japan, the mobile phone is making a massive impact in the lives of many Japanese. With home-made services, popularly known as the DoCoMo and the I'mode, lots of people in Japan have adopted the technology to reflect their personal and cultural identities (Barry & Yu, 2002; Okada, 2005). They embrace text messages because culturally Japan is well known for its lack of involvement in the Internet's explosive growth (Barry & Yu, 2002).

The United States of America, however, is described as one of the countries where text messages were of miniscule importance. Several reasons have been adduced. For example, Yu, Louden and Sacher (2002) have attributed

the slow involvement of young Americans in texting principally to the lack of inter-operability among the various service standards namely GSM, TDMA and CDMA. Another militating factor is pricing. Unlike in many European countries, the cost involved in sending a message to the United States is more expensive than making a simple call (Yu *et al.*, 2002).

In Africa, Nigeria has responded positively to the spread of mobile communication. GSM entered the Nigerian market with the licensing of MTN and then Econet in 2001 during the Obasanjo administration (Chiluwa, 2008). Out of over 53 million GSM users in Africa, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) ranked the GSM industry in Nigeria within the first three years of operation amongst the continent's fastest growing mobile phone markets (Ofulue, 2008). Chiluwa (2008) adds that as at 2004, there were over six million subscribers constituting one-half of the total number of subscribers in West Africa, the part of Africa where Ghana is located. Currently, there are eight mobile service providers in Nigeria (Ofulue, 2008: p. 190).

The use of the mobile phone and text messages among Ghanaians is also positively astonishing. Since the first cellular service, Mobitel, was introduced in 1992, Ghana's teledensity has continued to be attractive and "is deemed as the fastest growing on the continent (*sic*)" (Benoni-Okine & Asamoah, 2007: p. 34). This means that many Ghanaians no longer see the mobile phone as a high-status marking device. Rather, they now consider it a daily necessity. Quite apart from its basic communicative value, the mobile phone in the Ghanaian society, like elsewhere, is now multifunctional. Yankah (2004) explains, for instance, that text

messaging has caught up with the electronic media by which texters are encouraged to participate in decision making process.

Text messaging is a type of discourse of computer-mediated communication (CMC). CMC emerged in the 1970s. Baym (2006) has observed that research into CMC began as computer systems were being installed in large organisational contexts and maverick enthusiasts were creating interactive dial-in bulletin board systems. It is for this reason that CMC was generally referred to as “netspeak” (Crystal, 2001), web communication, electronic discourse or e-language. Baron (2005: p. 3), for instance, defined CMC as “a cluster of interpersonal communication systems used for conveying written texts generally over the internet”. Two years later, Herring (2007) sees CMC as a text-based human to human interaction mediated by networked computers or mobile telephony. As a computer-mediated discourse (CMD), texting over the years has been influenced by two major properties: technical and contextual.

The foremost technical property in text messaging has been synchronicity. Synchronicity refers to whether or not transmission is essentially instantaneous and interlocutors are assumed to be physically present to read the messages and respond to them (Baron, 2005). In this case, both the sender and the addressee must be logged on simultaneously to read the message. Examples of synchronous systems include instant messages and chat rooms. Text messages, on the other hand, are asynchronous. Asynchronous systems do not require that users be logged on at the same time in order to send and receive messages (Herring, 2007). Rather, messages are stored at the addressee’s site until they can be read.

As a type of asynchronous computer-mediated discourse, text messaging allows users to take their time in constructing and editing messages. Hollingshead and Contractor (2006) term this technical affordance ‘reformulation’.

Another important technical property that emerged with text messaging is the size of message buffer. Size of message buffer refers to the number of characters the screen of the mobile phone allows in a single message. While in most e-mail based systems the buffer is effectively limitless, mobile phone text messages are typed within a limit of 160 characters (Fortunati & Magnanelli, 2002; Lorente, 2002; Crystal, 2008).

The knowledge of persistence of transcript has also been useful in texting. This refers to how long, relatively speaking, messages remain on the system after they are received. SMS messages are persistent by default remaining in the users’ files until they are deleted by users themselves. In contrast, most chat systems, Herring (2004) maintains, retain only a few screens of messages in their scrollbar buffer, with old messages eventually disappearing as they are replaced by new ones. Even the messages in the buffer disappear when the user ends a chat session, unless he or she has chosen to log the interaction.

Over the years, it has been realised that texting varies in respect of contextual factors. The factors are represented in Hymes’ (1964) SPKEAKING framework along with additional factors found in empirical CMD research to affect online language use (Herring, 2007). The first contextual factor in sending a text message is participation structure. Participation structure has to do with such factors as one-to-one interaction, whether it is public or private and the degree of

anonymity or pseudonymy. According to Baym (2006), it is this characteristic of CMC which opens the potential for multiple identities, a high degree of privacy and a lower sense of risk or accountability in the use of the medium.

Some contextual factors in texting are gender, age, education and pre-existing sociocultural knowledge of the addressee. Others include the topic, purpose and tone of participants. These factors also have to do with whether the interaction is serious or playful, formal or casual, cooperative or sarcastic (Hymes, 1964; Herring, 2004). Moreover, the activity and the norms surrounding the interaction have to be determined. Examples of activities include information exchange, phatic exchange, virtual sex and flirtation.

Text Messaging as a Hybrid of Spoken and Written Discourses

The composition of text messages shows an expressive facet of language use that has for some time now attracted the interest of scholars in linguistic circles (e.g. Thurlow, 2003; Crystal, 2008) and yet appalled purists (e.g. Bodomo & Lee, 2004; Adedun, 2008). Never before has there been the desire by language users to dramatically break the conventional practices of writing. Chilwa (2008) has noted that the practice of texting is fostering a disregard for laid down grammatical rules in standard language. She, however, observes that regardless of grammatical infelicities in the messages, texters are able to communicate their thoughts in a coherent manner.

Many linguists have attributed the violations in standard writing to the very nature of the mobile phone. They believe that texters resort to all kinds of texting strategies due to the technical constraint of the message buffer, which has

a 160 character limit (Thurlow, 2003; Al-Khawalda, 2008; Crystal, 2008). Other scholars see the violations as both linguistic and pragmatic innovations of texters to meet such ends as the need to be more economical in terms of space and cost. The innovations also enable texters to mimic ordinary speech and be fashionable in their use of language (Herring, 2001; Rivière, 2002). Text messaging, therefore, often occurs in informal settings and so does not require explicitness of expression or knowledge of formality because it is largely meant for person-to-person contact (Cadhain, 2002; Herring, 2007).

As a special type of discourse, text messaging can often be seen as a hybrid of spoken and written discourses. It is the hybridisation of these two traditional discourses that Höflich and Rössler (2002) term “intra-media convergence”. This means that in sending a message, a texter combines the immediateness of speech and the permanence of written communication. In many instances, people text a message as if they are saying it.

Like ordinary speech, text messages are often less formal, and so enable texters to avoid to some extent the various discursal protocols required before they can ask a question or get to the reason why they called (Jaffe, 2000; Cadhain, 2002; Hollingshead & Contractor, 2006). Text messages often allow texters to express themselves as plainly as possible without threatening the face of their addressees if they so wish (Hollingshead & Contractor, 2006). Capitalisation and the repetitive use of punctuation, for instance, enable users to express such paralinguistic resources as stress and intonation, two underlying features of spoken conversation (Thurlow, 2003). Also, the use of truncated constructions,

subject deletions and lack of expletives are accepted in conversational events as meaning is recoverable from a shared background. Like speech, text messages are often structurally simple, fragmented and concrete. SMS communication, therefore, allows for a reasonable use of syntactic and lexical short forms. This possibility lends text messages with an aura of immediacy, ease and spontaneity normally associated with speech.

Similar to written discourse, texting involves participants who are often temporally separated and do not share physical co-presence. For this reason, texters make explicit much of the information that would be carried across by voice, gestures or other non-verbal cues in face-to-face conversation (Baron, 1998; Baym, 2006). They also assume that their readers will share many referents and will respond accordingly. Again, as written discourse text messages are open to reformulation and are invariably permanent in the in-box of the mobile telephone because of their asynchronous character and persistence of transcript (Herring, 1999; 2004; Renkema, 2004). It is, however, not always the case that messages are sent to recipients in an informal style. Given the situational context, sometimes some messages are sent to readers in standard spelling, punctuation and capitalisation in order to be recognised as complete sentences. Since the functions of text messages hitherto thought to thrive in informal situations are now being extended to formal domains (Crystal, 2008), it is important that one knows when or not to choose certain linguistic features that reflect the context of situation. The distinctive linguistic features of text messages are discussed in the next section.

Linguistic Features of Text Messages

Our knowledge of the linguistic features used in texting has been enhanced by a number of scholars. One central issue they raise is that the language encountered in text messages is highly informal. Aboagye-Aniagyei (2009) says that the informal elements in text messages are realised through explicitness, repetition and emoticons. Others include exactness of diction, colloquialism and slang.

According to Thurlow (2003), text messages are distinct in respect of three basic sociolinguistic maxims. These maxims are brevity and speed, phonetic approximation and paralinguistic restitution. The author explains the maxim of brevity and speed to include linguistic processes such as abbreviation of lexical items, the minimal use of capitalisation, standard and grammatical punctuation. Thurlow (2003) defines phonetic approximation as a shortening strategy by which texters try to capture the phonetic sounds of words in their texts. He also explains paralinguistic restitution as comprising such shortening forms as abbreviation and letter homophones. As well, Al-Khawalda (2008), Ofulue (2008) and Coker (2009) speak of code-switching as a marker of informality in texting which helps to express the emotional disposition of the texter. Also, the use of diminutive names, endearment terms, terms of solidarity and first names are examples of address terms used by texters (Sekyi-Baidoo, 2006; Aboagye-Aniagyei, 2009).

Crystal (2008) also identifies some linguistic features of text messages. These include non-standard spellings, initialism, omitted letters, clipping and genuine novelties. The author asserts that non-standard spellings are perhaps the

commonest linguistic feature of text messages. There are three types of non-standard spelling. These are unique spelling conventions such as 2 ('to') and b4 ('before'). Others are phonetic spellings such as u ('you') and oda ('other') as well as general abbreviations (Chiluwa, 2008). According to Crystal (2008), several of the non-standard spellings are so much part of the tradition of English literature that they have been given entries in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. For example, 'cos' is there from 1828, 'wot' from 1829 and 'thanx' from 1936. The author asserts that commercial advertising and pop music especially rap music have all had an influence on the spelling system of texters.

Text messaging is also prevalent because of its potential for initialising words. Initialism refers to the reduction of words to their initial letters (Crystal, 2008). The author holds that people have been initialising common phrases for centuries. For instance, the Latin initialism NB, 'nota bene' meaning 'note well', was first recorded in 1673 and IOU is known from 1618. Other examples are RIP ('rest in peace') and AWOL ('absent without leave').

Another linguistic practice is letter omission. Here, texters shorten their words by omitting letters from the middle or dropping a letter at the end. Herring (2001), Lorente (2002) and Chiluwa (2008) have all said that people tend to omit letters in their texts mainly so as to be economical in their use of the small screen of the mobile phone as well as save some money. A major motivation is because texts with longer messages attract higher tariffs. In omitting letters, texters usually drop vowels of words, which in many languages form the peak of sonority. Also, 'silent' consonants and double medial consonants are dropped.

Examples are *bt* ('but'); *yr* ('year'); *tmrw* ('tomorrow') and *hv* ('have'). Like initialisms, letter omission has well established antecedents. Examples are Mr. and Mrs., names of ranks (e.g. Sgt, Lt), the standard abbreviations for weights and measures (e.g. cm, kg, ft). Also, clipping is a kind of abbreviation that enables texters to reduce words by omitting one of its meaningful elements usually at the end (as in exam) but sometimes at the beginning (as in phone). In morphology, clipping is said to be a word formation process (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973; Greenbaum, 1996). Examples include *absol* (utely); *maxi* (mum) and *lab* (oratory). Genuine novelties are also practised in texting.

The term 'genuine novelties' was first coined by Crystal (2008) to express how texters build on some of the linguistic processes developed in the past. An example is *IMO*, that is, 'in my opinion'. One characteristic of all genuine novelties is that the letters and/or symbols are run together without spaces, which for Crystal (2008) is certainly unusual in the history of special writing systems. For example, 'I only want to be with you' is texted as 'iowan2bwu' and 'iydkidkwd' means 'If you don't know I don't know who does' (p. 54). Further, some genuine novelties are slang or a secret code. For instance, it will be difficult for one to decode *F?* or *a3* without being part of the group which introduced them. While the first one means 'Are we friends?' (after having had a row), the second is a reference to a hoped for assignation – 'anytime, anywhere, anyplace' (Crystal, 2008). Clearly, anyone not in that group will not be able to understand these codes.

It is important to note that even though the linguistic features of text messages are universal, some differences do exist in different cultures (Campbell, 2008). For example, the use of genuine novelties and logographic emoticons may be more Eurocentric than Afrocentric. This may be because mobile telecommunication first began as a western technology, and so Westerners may be more advanced in its use than users in less developed nations.

Communicative Functions of Text Messages

In whichever form it appears, language is said to play the primary role of communication. Communication is of utmost importance to humans as it promotes not only the expression of thought but also the forging of social cohesion. Explaining the fundamental function of language in society, Coulmas (2005: p. 3-4) writes:

Language is a social fact in that every language is a collective product, an artefact created by its' speakers which at the same time enables higher forms of social planning and cooperation to evolve. Society is built on language. There is no human society that does not speak and use its central instrument of organisation.

In essence, the place of language in human affairs is multifunctional. This idea is diagrammatically represented by Aitchison (1994) as seen below:

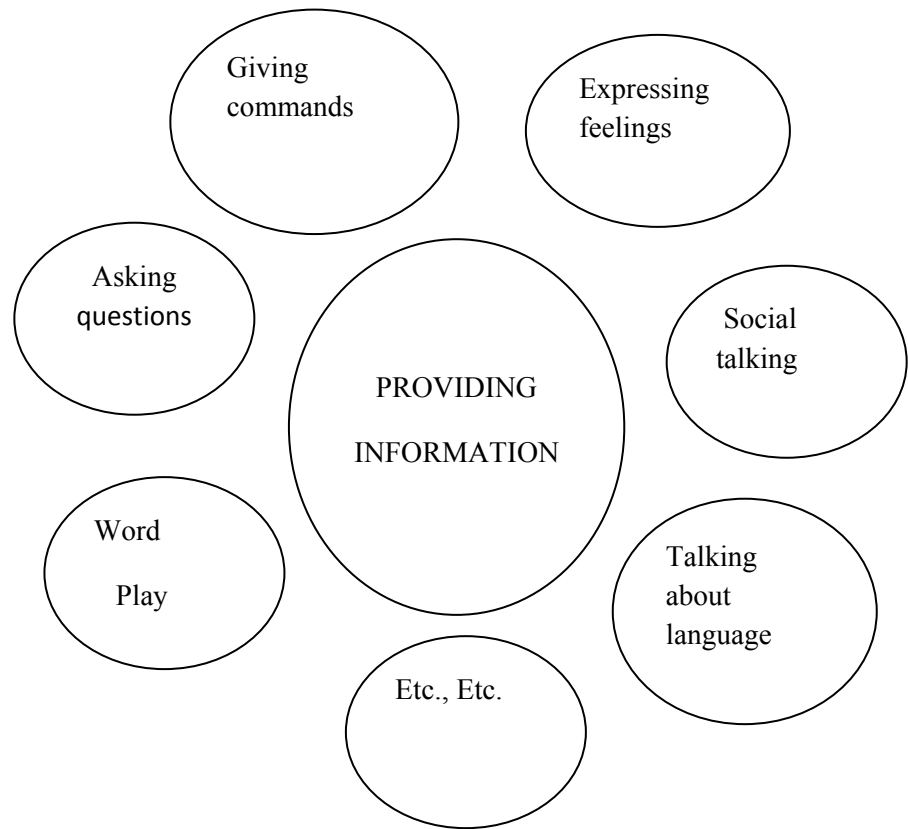


Figure 1. Traditional views of language functions (Adapted from Aitchison, 1994: p. 18)

The diagram demonstrates that the primary function of language is to provide information. Besides this function, language is also used for the purposes of asking questions, giving commands and expressing feelings. Language also promotes ‘social talking’ or phatic communion. Thus, language fosters social interaction among its users.

Text messages are usually transactional. This is because they tend to be information-driven. In this functional use of language, what the speaker or writer (in this case, the texter) has primarily in mind is the efficient transmission of information. Language used in such a situation is “message-oriented” (Brown &

Yule, 1983: p. 2). In this light, text messages help people to plan their lives, coordinate times, arrange or cancel a meeting and check on the whereabouts of someone. Below are some examples of information-bearing text messages:

1. Hi. HR. uuu call mama on 10: am

(Paraphrase: Hi! How are you? Call mum at 10 am.)

2. Ana fi baas

(Paraphrase: I'm in the bus.)

3. ??? is my key

(Paraphrase: Where is my key?)

(As cited in Al-Khawalda, 2008: p. 203)

It is now a common practice that all kinds of organisations post SMS messages to their clients, alerting them on their mailing list to the latest news from their domain. Developments in texting are taking place all the time. These include the emergence of SMS-to-TV chat and texting to radio panel discussion (RPD-SMS). This is particularly true because “as people become more aware of the communicative potential of texting, the range of specialised uses grows” (Crystal, 2008: p. 117). Today, texting is used in many sectors such as governance and politics, education, business, health and science.

Text messages may also be interactional in that they are used to foster and maintain social ties among people. Humans can hardly live detached from both

the physical and social world. In reality, people take delight in fraternising with others, showing how much they care. Höflich and Rössler (2002) refer to this desire of belonging as “virtual fraternity”. In a world where technology is said to be undermining such cultural values as face-to-face interaction and greeting (Akyea & Aziaku, 2009), text messaging can either save or threaten the face of the recipient. Crystal (2008: p. 106) clearly captures the capacity of texting to maintain social ties in the following quote:

All kinds of social relationships can be fostered or disturbed using texting, from the mildest of observations to the strongest of affirmations. People can send messages of support, sympathy, variants on ‘missing you’, variants on ‘get well soon’, a request for a call, a desire to be friends.... It can be a quotation or other remark which simply affirms a shared interest.

Texting, thus, often encourages social cohesion among people. Interactional text messages are usually emotional. They are used to express such themes as love, gratitude and well-wishes. Sometimes also, texters indicate their frustration, pain, anger or sadness through their messages. Following are some examples:

4. Till we meet again I'll miss u dearly. I'll send u a thousand kisses
n a billion hugs to always remind u of de fact d@ I'd 4eva cherish
u (an expression of love)
5. Its either u stop or continue and I stop with u to prevent de 3rd
disgrace (an expression of frustration and pain).

(Quoted from Coker, 2009: p. 12-13)

Texting therefore enables people to inform others and be informed as well as serves as a medium for expressing all kinds of emotions.

Review of Selected Empirical Studies

This section reviews empirical studies conducted on texting across various cultures. Four main thematic issues are discussed with the view to pointing out what remains untreated in the body of literature. These include research carried out on linguistic features and grammatical errors observable in text messages. The rest involve gender as well as communicative functions on texting.

Texting is Typified by Unique Linguistic Features.

Thurlow (2003) carried out a descriptive study of the linguistic nature of text messages among first-year language and communication students at the University of Cardiff. According to Thurlow, the language of text messages is underpinned by three basic sociolinguistic maxims *viz.* brevity and speed, paralinguistic restitution and phonetic approximation. Examples of linguistic processes under brevity and speed are abbreviation of lexical items, the minimal use of capitalisation, standard and grammatical punctuation (e.g. commas and spaces between words).

Bieswenger (2006) also identified similar findings in his comparative analysis of shortenings in English and German private SMS corpora. This, the author did by way of quantifying the distribution of different abbreviation renditions and found that text messages varied not only in frequency but in type. Bieswenger (2006) attributed this phenomenon to linguistic differences between

the two languages. His classifications resulted in five types of shortening in lexical items. These include initialism (e.g. acronym), clipping and letter/number homophones. The rest are contractions and phonetic spellings. Thurlow's findings are similar to those of Crystal (2008) in terms of initialism, clipping and contractions, although the latter uses the term letter omission.

The need for brevity and speed, Thurlow (2003) intimates, appears to be motivated less by technological constraints, but rather by discursive demands such as ease of turn-taking and fluidity of social interaction. He also maintains that paralinguistic restitution seeks to address the apparent loss of such emotional or prosodic features as stress and intonation. This, Thurlow (2003) argues, may be achieved through, for example, capitalisation and multiple punctuation.

Phonetic approximation adds to paralinguistic restitution by engendering the kind of play and informal register appropriate to the orientation of text messaging. Thurlow (2003) contends that even though all principles are served simultaneously and equally, there are, however, occasions where the two maxims override the maxim of speed and brevity. For example, for the sake of paralinguistic restitution, capitalisation (e.g. COME) and multiple punctuation (e.g. what???!!) may be desirable. Crystal (2001: p. 87) calls it "typographic contrastivity". On the other hand, lexical items such as 'ello', 'oda' and 'wan' (what Chilwa (2008) terms phonetic spellings) both serve the need for abbreviation and phonological approximation.

Like Thurlow (2003), Bieswenger (2006) and Al-Khawalda (2008), Chilwa posits that most messages are constructed in an informal telegraphic

style. The results of her study conducted among Nigerain Christians reveal such linguistic features as phonetic spelling, phonetic conventions and general abbreviations. As with Crystal (2008), Chilwa argues that those features are occasioned by the influence of the mass media, information technology and Americanism. She further explains that these texting strategies afford the writer the opportunity to say more within the available space with the advantage of paying less. In this way, she apparently disagrees with Al-Khawalda (2008) on the idea that texters keep their messages short in order to avoid making grammatical mistakes.

Texting Abounds in Grammatical Errors and Affects Literacy.

In another study, Thurlow (2006) was concerned about the anxiety and perception about the impact of text messages on language. The author analysed the metadiscursive construction and popular exaggeration of new technologies such as instant messaging and text messaging by collecting an international corpus of a hundred different print media. Results of the analysis show that the nature of the popular discourse about text messages is generally misplaced. The author emphasises that many people misconstrue what he terms “the evolutionary trajectory of language change” (Thurlow, 2006: p. 18). According to him, one major narrative thread in public discourse about text messages concerns the way language is used. For example, the author observes that many people think that text messages are making a deleterious impact on Standard English. Thus, the most dominant theme from the study resonates with an over-riding sense of moral panic about declining standards of literacy.

A major significance of Thurlow's study is that it introduces two scholarly positions on the subject of texting. These are revolutionists and evolutionists. Revolutionists, according to Thurlow (2006), reflect the opinions of the media and public outcry concerning perceived declining standards in literacy among learners. Thurlow refers to those phenomena as statistical panic. This panic, the author thinks, is due to fictionalised accounts of computer-mediated discourse in general.

Thurlow's interest, however, dovetails towards the evolutionary school of thought. The author seems to reecho the view of Aitchison (2001) that language is dynamic and that it best serves the purpose of its users, although it needs to be appropriated within specific situational contexts. In his concluding remarks, therefore, Thurlow calls for vigorous research to effectively challenge the persistent attitude of concern and negativity surrounding the impact of new media such as text messages on language and social life. Thurlow's schools of thought have been extensively explored by Coker (2010) in his position that texting does not impede but rather promotes literacy among learners.

On the contrary, Al-Khawalda (2008) argues that the language of text messaging is a new variety replete with errors. The author based his analysis on a data of over one hundred SMS messages texted in English by Arabic university students to their loved ones. Al-Khawalda collected the data by instructing respondents to write down each message as exactly as it first appeared on their mobile phones and drop it in his mailbox anonymously. Participants also had the option to forward their message(s) to the in-box of the author's mobile phone.

Drawing on the concept of speech community, Al-Khawalda (2008) found that Arabic native speakers are fond of using abbreviations, speech-like expressions and ellipsis in their messages. The results of the study further show that text messages contain many grammatical mistakes, are devoid of temporal references and contain elements of code-switching. According to Al-Khawalda (2008), code-switching is the most interesting feature of mobile phone text messages (p. 204). For him, Arabic is used when the writer of a message wants to express such passions as love and admiration. He adds that expressions such as ‘yaa amar’ (oh! moon), ‘yaa wardah’ (oh! flower) and ‘walah’ (I swear by Allah) are more emotional than their English equivalents. This finding is consistent with that of Ofulue (2008) who holds that “the messenger chooses the language most appropriate in terms of the naturalness to convey a message in one language over another” (p. 193). An attempt to switch codes thus represents texters’ effort to convey their emotions in English as nearly the same way they would be doing in their mother tongues.

Al-Khawalda (2008) further contends that the shortness and preciseness of a text message can be attributed to the sender’s and/or recipient’s ability in English. He adds that it is the lack of a good command of English that causes senders to minimise their messages so as to avoid any problem in the writing and understanding of their messages by recipients. This view is, however, doubtful because what matters most, as Chilwa (2008) has pointed out, is not the grammatical nature of the message, but rather the fact that it serves a

communicative need which can be appreciated by its receiver. Examples of grammatical infelicities identified by Al-Khawalda (2008) include the following:

1. every 1 see the sun every 1 listen to bird...
2. thats means I have....
3. the one who understand m well.

Based on data such as the examples above, Al-Khawalda concludes that text messages are a new variety of English that contains many linguistic violations.

Away from the perspective of error analysis, Chiluya (2008) believes that text messages are used by texters to achieve specific communicative functions. The author collected data from members of the Pentecostal and Charismatic faith from the Lagos and Ota areas of south western Nigeria between 2005 and 2007. Drawing on the analytical framework of computer-mediated discourse analysis, Chiluya (2008) analysed the data into seven discourse themes. These include faith-based pronouncement, prayer and well-wishing, and admonition. The rest are appreciation and assurance, praise and worship, season's greetings as well as general information and announcement. Chiluya maintains that functionally the messages reflect the character, values and belief systems of the senders. For example, faith-based pronouncement messages, according to the author, appeal to the receivers' confidence in the efficacy of the spoken word, thereby demonstrating Christian values such as love and concern for the well-being of the receivers. The writer considers text messages as discourses because text messages presuppose speech events among interlocutors that share a common social behaviour and cultural values.

Chiluwa's study, however, faces a methodological difficulty. That is, the author did not specify the actual data collection procedure, thereby opening the study to such criticisms as one characterised by introspection. Moreover, given that her data were made up of only fifty three (53) text messages, it is difficult to accept her findings without doubt. This is because the data were not representative enough to warrant her conclusions. Finally, Chiluwa (2008) seems not to have realised that there are difficulties in assigning a primary function or meaning to a text message, a claim well articulated by Thurlow (2003). For this reason, her analysis represents a facile typology of the communicative functions of text messages among her study group. For instance, it is possible that a text posted by a Christian to another could have multiple interpretations as a faith-based, well-wishing and prayer-oriented message.

In sum, two basic scholarly positions can be drawn on the subject of texting. The first argues that such linguistic features as phonetic spelling, initialism and omitted letters are pragmatic and innovative methods used by texters to achieve brevity, speed and economy. Scholars who hold this view include Thurlow (2003), Bieswenger (2006), Crystal (2008) and Crace (2008). On the other hand, others maintain an error analytic position that these texting strategies are deviant language and should therefore be discouraged. Adedun (2008) and Al-Khawlda (2008) are some examples to cite. Research on texting has also shown that it reveals gender variation.

Texting is Gender-sensitive.

In their work, Zelenkauskaitė and Herring (2008) argue that text messaging is changing the way in which men and women have traditionally communicated. The authors analysed a corpus of gender-defined text messages posted on an Italian reality interactive music television channel. The results of the study indicate that women write longer messages, using more emoticons and abbreviations compared to their male counterparts. This finding is similar to those of Fortunati and Magnanelli (2002), Mante-Meijer and Pires (2002) and Ling (2002). In their study of Italian youth's use of mobile phones, Fortunati and Magnanelli (2002) explained that girls text longer messages than boys who typically do not utilise the entire space of their screens but rather opt for messages of about 40 to 50 characters. On their part, girls stress the fact that the space fills up easily, and criticise boys' inability to interpret text messages. According to Fortunati and Magnanelli (2002), girls send their messages in "plain" language without too many expressions, references and suggestions. Ling (2002), Yates, Mills, Lockley and Doherty (2004) and Waseleski (2006) also intimate that females are more active and more pragmatic users of text messages than their male counterparts.

Contrary to Lakoff (1975), Zelenkauskaitė and Herring (2008) found that females used more non-standard language. These include abbreviations or expressive insertions that represent characteristics such as enthusiasm, sadness, emphasis and individuality. The co-authors also found that while women were both economical and expressive, they also came closer to using the 160 character

message limit often than their male counterparts. This may be due to the fact that women are more interactive than their male counterparts (Tannen, 1994; Yates, Mills, Lockely & Doherty, 2004).

A study on gender variation in text messaging was also conducted by Coker (2009). This study examined the discourse functions of texting among undergraduates at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana. Participants who were drawn from all the levels (i.e. 100, 200, 300 and 400) were made up of forty male and forty female students. Data were collected from lecture theatres, departmental libraries and on the main campus of the university. A corpus of over 300 text messages was analysed based on both quantitative and qualitative methods.

A key finding of the study is that while men's language is largely transactional, that of women tends to be interactional. According to Coker (2009), men used text messages to send information and avoid conversation during important moments while women aimed at exteriorising their emotions and maintaining social networks. With respect to message length, Coker observed that men send longer text messages than their female counterparts, thereby contradicting earlier claims adduced by Fortunati and Magnanelli (2002) as well as Zelenkauskaitė and Herring (2008) that women send longer messages more than men do. This, Coker (2009) intimates, may be due to cultural differences.

The study further revealed that men dominated in the use of student Pidgin English. Like Dako (2000) and Sekyi-Baidoo (2002), Coker observed that student Pidgin English was used mainly by male texters in the bid to maintain peer bonding and familiarity among themselves. Females, on the other hand,

rarely acknowledged the knowledge of Pidgin English in their messages partly because they may not like to be thought of as not having been properly educated or being unladylike (Dako, 2000).

Although insightful, Coker's study suffers a degree of indeterminacy. The author, like Chilwa (2008) fails to demonstrate how a single text message could be interpreted as having more than one discourse function despite Thurlow's caution (2003).

The subject of code-switching in texting has also been examined by Ofulue (2008) among educated speakers of Yoruba. The research was ethnographic in nature and so the author relied on the participant/observer method. The author argues that texters are creating new communicative functions as well as extending existing functions of Yoruba within the context of Information and Communication Technology. Following Thurlow (2003), Ofulue found that most messages sent in Yoruba had an orientation of religious friendship maintenance. For her, texters prefer to convey certain aspects of their messages in Yoruba, their mother tongue, as an indication of their communicative intent to add a natural flavour to the messages. The study also reveals that such features as the use of honorific plural nouns which indicate politeness are not lost in the SMS context. Unless otherwise explained as differences in culture, it may be said that Ofulue's (2008) observation contradicts the argument raised by Akyea and Aziaku (2009) that the advent of mobile technology is promoting the use of impolitic language since users are not constrained by face-to-face interaction.

Studies have also revealed the communicative usefulness of texting in many cultures.

Texting Performs Manifold Communicative Functions.

Oksman and Rautiainen's (2002) research is one of the major works that examined the everyday uses of the mobile phone among young Finnish. The study was conducted among children and adolescents, using an ethnographic approach. Instruments such as the interview and observation were used to sample the views of participants and some parents.

A major finding of the study shows that mobile phone users have a laconic knowledge of the discursive demands of the technology and its uses. This mastering knowledge, Oksman and Rautiainen (2002) hold, is relevant in that it prevents social exclusion and guarantees future status and membership of the information society. According to the co-authors, the most important gratification of text messages among Finnish youth is the building and maintenance of social networks. Another use of text messages among Finns is the desire to define one's space in relation to others. Texting provides Finns with a sense of virtual fraternity (Fortunati & Magnanelli, 2002). Virtual fraternity, therefore, expresses a feeling of belonging which the home seldom guarantees.

Fortunati and Magnanelli (2002) also investigated the uses of text messages among Italians. The authors collected data based on a sample of thirty unstructured interviews. Besides fostering social contact, the results show that young people prefer text messages to calls because the former are economical

both in terms of time and cost. Also, the authors' findings indicate that young Italians are fond of texting because it is private and certain to arrive at the recipient's inbox.

The work also discusses the asynchronicity of text messages. Fortunati and Magnanelli (2002) argue that the asynchronous medium of text messages leads to writing alone and reading alone, with no type of immediate contact with the interlocutor. The authors, like Hollingshead and Contractor (2006), assert that texting is less compromising than the verbal exchange. In the latter, the social process for negotiating the sense and building the meaning is second degree because it is diluted in time and space. As a result, text messages can be used to mitigate the effect of any face-threatening acts since they are a sort of written dialogue.

In France, Rivière (2002) studied the gratifications of text messages among the youth. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative measurements and a matrix of interviews. From the study, Rivière (2002) identifies five large categories associated with the uses of mobile phone messages. These include avoidance of telephone conversation, exteriorisation of emotions, fun and maintenance of social contact. Although different authors have presented different renditions for the uses above, these needs overlap. They could, however, be subsumed under the broad labels provided by Rivière. For example, the fifteen-need taxonomy of Höflich and Rössler (2002) is a good case in hand. The gratification of pleasure/entertainment and game playing could be realised as fun, using Rivière's elegant framework.

Writing on the nature of text messages, Rivière (2002) echoes the view that texting is a way of communicating between writing and orality, what Höflich and Rössler (2002) term “intra-media convergence”. It has been said that text messaging minimises the social function of the memory, the author argues. Limited to a 160-character space, texting, Rivière (2002) intimates, is effectively practical in its phonetic and abbreviated writing, a point reminiscent of Thurlow’s (2003) phonetic approximation.

At the dawn of the new millennium, many young Americans were not interested in the technology of texting. This was mainly caused by infrastructural related constraints and high pricing (Crystal, 2008). It is in this context that Yu, Sacher and Loudon (2002) analysed the communicative patterns of text messages among American teenagers. Based on an ethnographic research design, Yu *et al.* (2002) collected data from teenage participants, using the interview method.

The study reveals that existing mobile communication products and interfaces do not support the social interaction and communication behaviours of American teenagers. The study also shows that young American mobile phone users consciously and dramatically vary their communication style, depending on the recipient and social context. Four types of communication needs were identified. These are close friends group communication and school friends group communication. The last two are job contact group communication and parent group communication. Thus, in contrast to previous research, Yu *et al.*’s (2002) work presents a monolithic use of mobile telephony. The study suggests that texters use the medium for the sole purpose of communicating. But like other

studies, Yu *et al.* realise that mobile telephony promotes virtual fraternity, group identity and minimises loneliness.

In Asia, Barry and Yu (2002) carried an ethnographic research on the attitudes of young Japanese about mobile telephony. Cultural markers such as phone usage, friendship and peer groups were examined. The study was conducted among groups of people in their homes, schools, local restaurants and work places based on open-ended interviews of between two and three hours. The results of the study showed that mobile telephony (or the I' mode, as it is popularly known in Japan) is primarily meant for information, as noted by other studies. Also, the medium helps Japanese to establish and maintain social networks as maintained by earlier studies. Besides, the device promotes the personal and cultural identity of the users. According to Barry and Yu (2002), the selection of a mobile phone, the presentation of its mascot and strap and the gestural language created around its use all symbolise personal identity, values and the group with whom users identify themselves.

In addition, Barry and Yu (2002) have held that it is important to consider the sender-receiver relationship in sending a text. For them, I' mode text messaging allows for an informal communication channel generally free from the burden of maintaining the complex hierarchical rules about how to converse, rules that are seldom ignored especially in face-to-face communication. This point has also been raised by others such as Fortunati and Magnanelli (2002).

In Ghana, Akyea and Aziaku (2009) discussed the impact of new media such as mobile communication on basic indigenous cultural values with specific reference to face-to-face interaction and greeting. The authors collected data through informal interviews with service providers and their clientele. According to Akyea and Aziaku (2009), new technology is at variance with the social context and ethos of the African. They argue that new technology is hampering interpersonal relationships, and is, thus, separating Ghanaians from their cultural values.

Using the mobile phone as a case, Akyea and Aziaku (2009) argue that communication among people is nowadays characterised by lack of warmth and emotion otherwise commonplace in a typical face-to-face interaction. Following Yankah (1998), the co-authors maintain that the mobile phone is promoting the use of inflammatory language on the airwaves, given that interlocutors enjoy a degree of anonymity. This point is clearly articulated by Baym. Baym (2006: p. 37) terms such practices as “uninhibited behaviours”, citing examples of these as insults, impolite statements and attacks on individuals or groups. According to Yankah (1998), these uninhibited behaviours can be heard on radio in Ghana.

Unlike Ofulue (2008) and Aboagye-Aniagyei (2009), Akyea and Aziaku emphasise that solidarity terms or greetings are barely used in text messages owing to the informal nature of the medium. The authors therefore claim that such a practice is anti-Ghanaian since when greeting is not performed the context of interaction is threatened.

However, the authors' arguments are contestable for two main reasons. First, it would be noted that sending a text may occur in either a horizontal or vertical plane. A text message is posted to either people of equal status or superordinates. Thus, it seems that Akyea and Aziaku (2009) were preoccupied with how interlocutors of equal status communicate, which certainly will be marked by an air of informality. On a vertical plane, however, a competent texter will use the conventional protocol of language to maintain in most cases a dyadic relationship.

Secondly, text messaging allows for reformulation of ideas in communication. This view is shared by Cadhain (2002) and Hollingshead and Contractor (2006). Contrary to face-to-face interaction where interlocutors can hardly repair damages caused by face-threatening acts, texters, on the other hand, can think through their messages before sending them out to recipients. This prevents them from threatening the faces of their recipients, if they so wish.

Finally, another study that emphasises the communicative functions of text messages is Aboagye-Aniagyei (2009). The study examined the use of informal elements in text messages among forty Ghanaian and five Nigerian undergraduate students at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyse the data. Using a combined framework of Crystal's taxonomy and Brown's communicative orientations and themes, the results reveal sexual and romantic, informational and salutary themes. Other themes include chain messages and friendship maintenance. Explaining the interactional function of text messages, Aboagye-Aniagyei (2009) maintains that

the messages help to build friendship, marriage and romantic relationship. Further, the author argues that texters also make use of politeness markers such as ‘thanks’ and ‘sorry’ in order to mitigate face threats carried by certain face threatening acts towards a text recipient. This claim has also been made by Hollingshead and Contractor (2006) who suggest that new media, such as text messages, enable users to reformulate their messages in order to mitigate the effect these messages may have on recipients.

Summary of Review of Selected Empirical Studies

It is evident that two main threads run through the extant literature. In the first place, the literature brings to light the informal nature of text messaging. Texting is marked by such linguistic features as abbreviations, omitted letters, contractions and phonetic spellings. These linguistic features are employed by texters in order to economise space and/or cost, or be fashionable in their use of language. Verbal behaviours such as the mixing and switching of codes and pidgin also add to the informal colouring of text messages. This is largely because text messaging is predominantly interpersonal.

Secondly, the literature reveals that texting is used to perform many communicative functions among diverse cultures—French, Italian, Chinese, American, Arabic, Nigerian, Ghanaian, to mention but a few. For instance, it can be appreciated that texting enables the youth to inform others and maintain camaraderie. For this reason, several of the studies invariably drew on the theory of uses and gratifications.

In all, the review of the literature clearly shows that text messaging in the electronic media, the radio, in particular, is largely under-researched. Unlike previous studies that focused on person-to-person practices largely conducted from an ethnographic perspective, the present study analysed text messages posted during radio panel discussions in an attempt to examine the discursive practices of texting in the Ghanaian context.

Conceptual Framework

The study drew on the concept of virtual community of practice (henceforth VCoP). VCoP was carefully selected because it bears implications on how members of a community use linguistic resources in characteristic ways. VCoP, therefore, has a direct bearing on Uses and Gratifications Theory, which is discussed under the theoretical framework.

VCoP as a concept was first coined by Reinghold (1993) in an attempt to explain that the Internet can help rediscover or reinvigorate community. In his book *The Virtual Community*, Reinghold (2000) believes that the loss of traditional community values can be regained through communication via the Internet. The VCoP concept has become increasingly popular in discourse studies and communication.

At the heart of this concept is the assumption that people use language on screens (in our case the screen of the mobile phone) for a number of gratifications. These include the need to exchange pleasantries, argue, engage in intellectual discourse and share knowledge. Language is used for the purpose of

sharing emotional support, making plans, brainstorming and even gossiping. As Reinghold (1993: p. 3) further says:

People in virtual communities do just about everything people do in real life, but we leave our bodies behind. You can't kiss anybody and nobody can punch you in the nose, but a lot happen within those boundaries.

It is clear from the above that a VCoP is distinct because it is not bounded by any geographical space. Members that form this community cannot all be located within a given speech community. In Fernback's (1997) terms, a VCoP is a social relationship forged in cyberspace through repeated contact (e.g. chat line) that is symbolically delineated by a topic of interest. For this reason, members of this group do not need to be formally constituted or be co-present in time and space to collaborate, share information or socialise. Hollingshead and Contractor (2006) posit that new technologies are capable of facilitating the creation, maintenance and dissolution of groups among individuals who use different devices such as mobile telephones and computers. These devices, the co-authors maintain, are used to interact over one or more varieties of channels (e.g. audio, video, text) by several forms such as Internet newsgroups, online chat sessions, Instant Messaging and Short Message Service.

Following Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998), Young (2002) explains that a community of practice is an aggregate of people who come together around a mutual engagement in an endeavour. Young (2002: p. 391) vividly describes a virtual community thus:

A virtual community may just as easily operate across a number of continents as across several villages in one small region. They can be, although of course are not necessarily, more open to the involvement of people who are geographically and culturally distant from one another... They potentially go beyond, or perhaps it would be accurate to say they add to established patterns of thinking about communities in predominant national and social terms.

This means that members of a VCoP have shared norms and values, shared ways of doing things, ways of talking and beliefs (Jankowski, 2006; Murillo, 2006; Zarb, 2006). These include norms of organisation, social appropriateness and norms of language use (Herring, 2007). These norms, however, vary from one community of practice to another.

Characteristics of members of a VCoP have been identified by many scholars. It is important to note that communities of practice differ from one another in respect of their shared characteristics. According to Mullany (2000; p. 9) members of a community of practice co-share the following commonalities:

1. Shared ways of engaging in doing things together.
2. Certain styles recognised as displaying membership.
3. A shared discourse that reflects a certain perspective of the world.
4. Knowing what others know, what they can do, and how they can contribute to an enterprise.

5. Jargon and short cuts to communication as well as the ease of producing new ones.
6. Absence of introductory preambles, as if conversations and interactions were merely the continuation of an on-going process.

Clearly, it can be seen that members in a virtual community of practice share a peculiar type of language, common patterns of interaction, a common culture and a common identity although they come from different social and ethnolinguistic backgrounds. According to Baym (2006), members in virtual communities use particular words, phrases or other routines that range from standards of appropriate conducts to inappropriate ones. Kim and Raja (1991) and Baym (2006) identify such practices as name-calling, swearing, insults and impolite statements, and refer to them as “flaming”.

Explaining the effect of these disinhibited social practices, Herring (2007) remarks that public computer-mediated discourses tend to be less polite than private ones, and that individuals who post their messages anonymously tend to flame more than those who post messages in their offline identities. On the other hand, cherished norms such as social support, information dissemination and empathy are also practised among members in a VCoP. It is in this sense that Al-Khawalda (2008: p. 126) observes that

texters share some linguistic and non linguistic features of human interaction and that if communicating parties want true communication, they must agree not only on the form, but also on the meaning of the messages.

It is instructive then to note that the kind of communicative event in radio panel discussion text messaging (i.e. RPD-SMS) involves the hosts of the programmes on the one hand and texters on the other. As per the nature of the programmes, texters seldom require that the hosts send feedback to them via text messages. Rather, the feedback normally turns out to be verbal, often being responses from experts or panelists on the show. This means that members in a VCoP, therefore, operate within conventions specified by this community (Swales, 1990; Jankowski, 2006; Wenger, 2006). Examples of non-linguistic features include the use of emotional icons (i.e. emoticons or smileys) and repeated punctuation to achieve prosody (Herring, 2007; Crystal, 2008). The idea is, thus, expressed that discourse is a form of social behaviour that is realised through discursive practices.

The VCoP is, therefore, important in the present study as it explains the underlying discursive practices common to a community of practice. Discursive practices deal with social action which involves the recognition that members in a VCoP are able to act only in socially determined conventions. Linguistic phenomena evidently constitute social action because whenever texters send messages their messages have social effects. According to Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), the nature of social practices is due partly to the structures of society. They believe that the way people choose to live their lives is influenced by their individual and immediate happenings as well as occasions of social life. Discursive practices, therefore, are ways of acting that have become relatively permanent or habitual. Among texters is observed a special language of

communication for sending messages both in terms of discourse features and functions. For this reason, texters have shared discursive practices. This makes them use text messages to achieve similar gratifications. The VCoP concept, thus, paves way for a detailed discussion of the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

Theoretical Framework

The study was rooted in Uses and Gratifications Theory (henceforth UGT). The choice of this theory recognises the view that the analysis of discourse preferably requires a multidisciplinary approach (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 1997). Thus, the selection of UGT acknowledges the fact that “the wide variety of discourse activities that take place in CMD and the range of human experiences they evoke invites multiple approaches to analysis, including approaches drawn from different academic disciplines as well as different sub-fields of discourse analysis” (Herring, 2001: p. 13). The theory is, therefore, drawn from mass communication, and thereby provides a linguistic framework for analysing discourse in society.

UGT was originally grounded in media studies and mass communication. The theory was first introduced by Elihu Katz in the 1970s when he suggested that people use the media to their benefit. According to Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974), audiences are active people who seek specific media and content to achieve certain results and gratifications that satisfy their personal needs. Specifically, UGT attempts to match one’s wits against others, and to obtain information and advice for daily living. It also attempts to provide a

framework for one's day, to prepare oneself culturally for the demands of upward mobility, or to be assured of the dignity and usefulness of one's role (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974).

The basic assumption of UGT is that the audience is conceived as active users of a medium. This means that users are goal-oriented and seek to achieve their goals through the media source. Significantly, in the mass communication process, much initiative in linking need or gratification and media choice lies with the audience member. Here, it is assumed that it is the individuals themselves that determine what they are going to do with the medium.

The theory also assumes that the media compete with other resources of need satisfaction (Katz *et al.*, 1974). In essence, individuals have several needs. For this reason, many of the observations media researchers make can be derived from data supplied by the individual members themselves. According to Katz *et al.* (1974), people are very aware of their motives and choices and are able to explain them verbally if necessary. They further explain that audience members use the media to shape their own identities.

A third assumption of UGT is that value judgements about cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended while the audience operations are explored in their own terms (*ibid*, p. 17). That said, it is the individuals themselves that place values on the decisions they make. Thus, for communication scholars such as Fiske (1982), McQuail (1987), Ruggiero (2000)

and Littlejohn (2002), UGT springs from the functionalist approach associated with the social sciences.

Following the popularisation of the Internet, telecommunication and computer-mediated communication (CMC), the importance of UGT has been critically assessed. As Ruggiero (2000: p. 27) posits, “the timely intervention of CMC has bolstered the theoretical potency of UGT by allowing it to stimulate research into a proliferating telecommunications medium.” The author holds that the primary strength of UGT theory is its ability to permit researchers to investigate mediated communication via communication content and psychological gratifications within a particular cultural context.

Research on the uses of SMS across Europe indicates that text messaging promotes social contact, companionship, entertainment and information dissemination (e.g. Haddon, 2002; Oksman & Rautiainen, 2002). For instance, Rivière (2002) identifies five uses of SMS among French teenagers. Among these are social contact, exteriorisation of emotion and avoidance of telephone conversation while Höflich and Rössler (2002) supply a fifteen-need gratification typology. One criticism against the theory of uses and gratifications, though, is its inability to provide a clear taxonomy for its analysis (Fiske, 1982). This notwithstanding, UGT is very useful as it seeks to explore the motivations that lead people to make use of a medium in the way they so please.

Relevance of Theoretical Framework to the Present Study

The primary assumption of the uses and gratifications theory lays emphasis on gratifications sought by media audience (Katz *et al.*, 1974; Fiske, 1982; Ruggiero, 2000). This focus is understandably clear given that UGT was basically expounded to elicit information on the psychological motivations why people use traditional media. Despite this popular approach, the present study, however, modified the theory by focusing on the gratifications texters sought to achieve by posting their messages to radio panel discussions rather than the gratifications they sought from the programmes. This modification is important in the sense that, although an attempt to modify UGT was first proposed by Palmgreen, Wenner and Rayburn (1980), its application in empirical research is rare.

The adaptation of UGT was, thus, informed by two main reasons. First, the present modification accounts for spatio-temporal constraints the present researcher faced in collecting data. The study was limited in making physical contacts with texters to explain their motives and intents for posting their messages to radio panel discussions. It is for this reason that the present researcher had to solely rely on their posted messages as the basis for arriving at the gratifications they sought to achieve on radio panel discussions. Second, the modification also attempts to strengthen the UGT theory in view of the emergence of new media such as the internet and text messages. As pointed out earlier, “the timely intervention of CMC has bolstered the theoretical potency of UGT by allowing it to stimulate research into a proliferating telecommunications medium”

(Ruggiero, 2000: p. 27). Alterations in the theory will, therefore, enable us to provide evidence of the validity of UGT in its analysis of new media such as SMS.

The theory is, therefore, useful in linguistic studies such as discourse analysis because discourse analysts emphasise what language users do with language rather than prescribe how the language should be used. For this reason, a key assumption in both UGT and discourse analysis is *use* (Katz *et al.*, 1974; Brown & Yule, 1983). This assumption recognises that users of language choose to approximate their language in response to meeting specific communicative ends. As already pointed out, texters often ignore linguistic violations in their messages because “what matters is not that it conforms to grammatical rules but the fact that it communicates, and is recognised by its receivers as coherent” (Cook, 1989 as cited in Chilwa, 2008: p. 12).

Another importance of UGT in the present study is that it focuses on the needs, motives and gratifications media users seek to derive from specific media choices. The theory is, therefore, important in this work because it enabled the present researcher to move beyond the identification of discourse functions of the messages (Griffin, 2000). Rather, it attempts to bring to light how texters exploit the discourse functions to gratify specific needs for posting their messages on radio panel discussions. In discourse analysis, this objective is achieved by drawing on member resources since discourses are social constructions of reality. Discourses can therefore be interpreted not only from the point of view of the users’ knowledge of the language code but also in the knowledge of the principles

and norms of language use and knowledge of the world (Fairclough, 1995). The next chapter discussed the methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, the methodological procedures employed in the present study are discussed. These include the research design, the description of the research sites and the specific domain of the study. Also addressed are the data collection procedures, sampling method and the tools employed in analysing the data. The limitations encountered in the research and the attempts that were made to solve them are also discussed in the latter part of the chapter.

Research Design

The study was rooted in the qualitative research paradigm. This type of research is “a very personal process because two researchers analysing a transcript will probably come up with different results” (Dawson, 2002: p. 128). For this reason, qualitative research focuses on meaning. This means that qualitative researchers are concerned with finding out how people make sense of their lives, experiences and their structures of the world (Berger, 1982; Cresswell, 1994). The goal of this kind of research, Altheide (1996) posits, “is to understand the process and character of social life and to arrive at meaning...types, characteristics, and organisational aspects of documents as social products in their own right, as well as what they claim to represent” (p. 42). The author adds that

grounding the assessment of the social world in a qualitatively oriented research helps to preserve the processual character of social life. Punch (1998) also sees qualitative analysis as comprising multiple methodologies and research practices for undertaking research of field or life situations that are reflective of everyday life, groups, societies and organisations.

This view is particularly true of the present study in that the researcher was interested in describing and understanding the discourse of text messages sent to radio panel discussions in Ghana. By drawing on the qualitative research design, the researcher was able to give a detailed account of the inherent linguistic features of text messages posted by texters. The design enabled the present researcher to do an in-depth analysis and discussion of the discourse features of text messages and what gratifications texters sought from the messages. Thus, the research employed computer-mediated discourse analysis (henceforth CMDA).

CMDA as a Method of Inquiry

The term “computer-mediated discourse analysis” (CMDA) was first coined in 1995 by Herring, although earliest studies date back to the mid-1980s (Murray, 1985; Herring, 2001). Following the popularisation of the Internet in the mid-1990s, researchers began focusing on electronic and online discourse as a way to understand the effects of the new medium with its focus on technical and situational properties. It is the technical and situational factors that clearly distinguish computer-mediated discourse (CMD) from written and spoken discourses. These properties go hand in hand in providing an accurate description of what kind of discourse CMDs such as text messages are.

As already said, the size of message buffer is a major technical consideration in CMDA. The size of the message buffer of the mobile phone has implications on the types of discourse features used by texters when sending their messages. Contextual issues, on the other hand, have to do with the nature of participants, the setting (both place and time) and ends as found in the ethnography of communication. Other characteristics are activities, topic, tone, norms and genre (Herring, 2004). In effect, both the technical and situational factors described shape language use in CMDs such as text messaging. In essence, CMDA is a special type of discourse analysis concerned with online or electronic discourse by focusing primarily on the unique linguistic features of that discourse and what users of the discourse use them for (Georgakopoulou, 2006; Herring, 2008a).

The analysis of electronic discourse using CMDA, ultimately, is concerned with all the four domains of language use, namely, structure, meaning, interaction and social behaviour. Structural phenomena include the use of special orthography, novel word formations and sentence structure. At the level of meaning, CMDA linguists emphasise the meaning of words, utterances and larger functional units (Longacre, 1992). The interactional level includes turn-taking, topic development and other means of negotiating interactive exchanges. The social level includes linguistic expressions of play, conflict and power (Herring, 2004). However, this present study focused on the structural and functional units of SMS discourse and how they represent the gratifications of texters on radio panel discussions.

CMDA should, however, not be confused with computational linguistics. Computational linguistics is that branch of linguistics that emphasises the use of algorithms in the automatic generation of natural language text, using the computer to determine the relationship between form and meaning (Danlos, 1987). Danlos (1987) posits that computational linguistics deals with how the computer is used to address three fundamental concerns: how to understand the user's message; how to reply to this message, and how to formulate a reply in the language of the user. But CMDA is not the application of computer software in the analysis of discourse. Rather, it is an approach that adopts traditional methods of spoken and written discourse analysis to researching electronically mediated discourse behaviour. CMDA is not a single method but rather a set of methods from which the researcher selects those best suited to his/her data and research questions, and provides a set of theoretical lenses through which to interpret the results of the empirical analysis (Herring, 2004).

Unlike computational linguistics, CMDA thrives on three key theoretical assumptions mainly drawn from discourse analysis. The first assumption in CMDA is that discourse exhibits recurrent patterns. This is because the basic goal of CMDA is to identify patterns in discourse that are present but may not be obvious to the casual observer or to the discourse participants themselves. Patterns in discourse may be produced consciously or unconsciously.

Second, in doing a CMDA analysis it is assumed that discourse involves speaker choices. These choices are not conditioned by only purely linguistic considerations but also social and cognitive factors (Herring, 2004). It follows

then that through a study of CMDA, the researcher can provide insight into both linguistic and non-linguistic phenomena.

The third assumption in CMDA is that computer-mediated discourse is often shaped by the technical properties of computer-mediated systems (Herring, 2004). Such properties as synchronicity and size of the message buffer determine the kind of discourse that goes on in electronically mediated systems such as text messages or e-mail. For example, it is these technical features that explain why the discourse of text messages tends to be informal, full of abbreviations and contractions due to the small screen of the mobile telephone. As a tool for doing discourse analysis, CMDA employs the sampling techniques, methods of analysing and interpreting data traditionally known in the literature of discourse analysis.

In CMDA, as in other empirical social science approaches, the data sample must be appropriate. The data should be sufficiently large to address the research questions such that tests of statistical significance could be meaningfully conducted on the key findings. CMDA uses a number of sampling techniques including random, purposive and convenience sampling methods. Another example is temporal or time sampling technique. For example, in selecting data using temporal sampling the researcher selects all the messages in a particular period of time. Some advantages of this type of sampling are that it is rich in context and also necessary for longitudinal analysis (Herring, 2004). Also, it is possible to combine sampling techniques in research in CMDA. This is done in order to make clear the interpretation of the results.

As with other methods in interpreting findings in CMDA, researchers focus on the validity of their findings. As a rule, CMDA linguists ensure that the interpretation of the results of their studies is close to the data and close to the research questions (Herring, 2004; Georgakopoulou, 2006). Interpretation close to the data involves summarising and synthesising the results obtained by applying the analytical methods to the data. It is at this level of interpretation that the researcher patterns the results. Also, in interpreting data using the research questions, the researcher revisits the research questions raised at the beginning of his or her inquiry and indicates explicitly how the results answer the questions. At this level of interpretation, the researcher attempts to point out which findings are major or minor and which ones are unexpected. Finally, he or she may also demonstrate the theoretical and methodological implications of the findings to the study for further research (Herring, 2004).

One major contribution CMDA offers in the analysis of discourse lies in its identification of the technical features of electronic discourses. As pointed out earlier on, e-mail, instant messaging and text messaging are examples of electronic discourses and, for that matter, computer-mediated discourses. Using the tool of CMDA, the above discourses can be described as either synchronous or asynchronous with respect to whether interlocutors are simultaneously logged on at the time of communication. Thus, whereas instant messaging is synchronous both e-mail and text messaging are asynchronous (Baron, 2004; Herring, 2004). In just the same way, the size of the message buffer also shapes the way people write in computer-mediated systems. For example, while the e-mail imposes no

limits on the number of characters one can write, in texting one needs to do so conscious of the 160 character limit. It is for this reason primarily, as said earlier, that the language encountered in text messages is full of abbreviations, contractions and informalities.

As a type of discourse analysis, CMDA is very useful because it enables discourse analysts to understand the social practices of people. By analysing the discourse of text messages on radio panel discussions in Ghana, one will appreciate the motives, gratifications and thought processes of texters. For example, it is by drawing on the analytical tool of CMDA that one can come to appreciate why texters engage in derisions and insults. The reason is that texters enjoy some level of distance, anonymity or pseudonymy. An analysis of text messages posted to radio panel discussions, using CMDA, will eventually help researchers to have a brighter picture of public discourse in so far as “the media are consequential in social life” (Altheide, 1996: p. 69). The same cannot be said of other analytical tools used in doing discourse analysis such as the discourse completion test or the interview because these tools can hardly elicit computer-mediated discourses, though they can complement them.

Justifications for Using CMDA in the Analysis of Text Messages

One major justification for using CMDA in the present study is that CMDA analyses naturally occurring data, though this raises ethical concerns. Its data collection procedure is highly reliable since it is not elicited experimentally in response to any prompt (Herring, 2001; Thurlow, 2003). Moreover, unlike spoken discourse, text messages do not require longhand transcription and so can

be easily collected. The present researcher was, therefore, not influenced by the physical presence of participants as is usually the case with other data collection instruments such as the interview and participant observation methods (Baron, 2005; Herring, 2007).

CMDA is also useful because it serves as a framework for analysing discourse. The framework, as already explained, is usually multidisciplinary in order to capture the multifaceted composition of discourse (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 1997). It adopts methods, concepts and theories from other language-focused disciplines in its analysis of computer-mediated communication (Herring, 2001). Hence, the concept of virtual community of practice (VCoP) and uses and gratifications theory (UGT) are relevant to the present research. In essence, both the conceptual and theoretical frameworks illuminate our understanding of the nature of the language used by texters by providing a detailed account of the type of discourse they use and what gratifications they derive from using language the way they do. Above all, the two-pronged framework aims at identifying texters as constituting a virtual community of practice since, although they may not be co-present at a speech community, they nonetheless, use similar discourse features and gratifications.

Finally, CMDA can also rely on quantitative analyses. This is termed methodological triangulation (Sarantakos, 1993; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). Even though the study was mainly grounded in qualitative content analysis, it was supported by some descriptive statistics, thereby ensuring a degree of credibility (Punch, 1998; Nwadingwe, 2000; Georgakopoulou, 2006).

Consequently, the use of CMDA in this work is unique from past research on the discourse of text messages on radio. Most linguistic studies do not employ CMDA as a tool in their analyses. Therefore, by using CMDA, the present researcher was able to provide a thorough qualitative analysis.

Research Sites

The research focused on the Ghanaian electronic media with specific reference to radio. The study was conducted at *Joy FM* and *Peace FM*, two private radio stations situated in Accra, the capital of Ghana. These networks were selected for two major reasons.

The foremost justification is that both *Joy FM* and *Peace FM* are arguably the stations that broadcast the best morning shows. For instance, both networks have more than once won the Chartered Institute of Marketing Ghana (CIMG) awards. Moreover, both *Joy FM* and *Peace FM* are sensitive to the language backgrounds of their respective listeners. With its official policy of using Akan, the most widely spoken local language with over 60% of both natives and non-native speakers (Obeng, 1997; Yankah, 2004; Nyarko, 2008), *Peace FM* allows language users from diverse social, cultural, ethnolinguistic and educational backgrounds to express their opinions about ongoing discussions on air either by interactive phone-in-segment or texting. This goal is expressed in the station's motto: "Bringing radio to the ordinary Ghanaian." Similarly, *Joy FM* is patronised by many educated Ghanaians. This means that both radio stations cater for the language needs of Ghanaians.

Another reason is that listeners of *Joy FM* and *Peace FM* cut across the length and breadth of Ghana, and therefore represent a microcosm of the larger Ghanaian society. While *Peace FM* has about fifteen (15) affiliate stations, *Joy FM* can boast of nearly thirty sister stations across the country if those of *Adom FM* are included since the station is also owned by *Joy FM* (See Tables 1 and 2 for the affiliate stations of *Joy FM* and *Peace FM* respectively) . Both radio stations, therefore, reach millions of listeners not only in the capital and Greater Accra region but in many regions of Ghana.

Joy FM

Joy FM is a private and commercial radio station owned by the Multimedia Broadcasting Company. It is located in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. The station was established on 1st May, 1995 at a time when Frequency Board of the Government of Ghana gave out licenses to private companies and individuals to operate private radio stations (Ghana Broadcasting Study, 2005). *Joy FM* broadcasts on a 99.7 frequency modulation, and is not supposed to operate beyond this coverage area. According to Ntiamoah (2010), *Joy FM* is “one of the leading radio stations in the country because it is perceived to be very objective” (p. 22). The station’s medium of transmission is 90% English, with a select number of Ghanaian language programmes, usually religious and social issues, and “targets the middle-working class, educated and upwardly mobile adults” (Yankah, 2004: p. 8).

Joy FM transmits a number of different programmes to its cherished listeners. These include news, entertainment and newspaper reviews of topical issues. Others are commercial advertisements, religious programmes and foreign news such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and World Service (Edu-Buandoh, 1999). The station is considered by many Ghanaians to be one of the most popular and best radio stations in the country. For example, it was the proud recipient of the prestigious Chartered Institute of Marketing Ghana (CIMG) award in 2009, an award that rewards the most distinguishing company for its service to the country (www.ghanaweb.com).

One of its most popular programmes is ‘Joy Super Morning Show’ (henceforth JSMS). JSMS is a morning show segmented to include the newspaper review. It allows Ghanaians to air their views on interpersonal, social and national issues either through interactive phone-in-segments or text messaging. The programme is patronised on the following affiliate stations:

Table 1 Affiliate Stations of *Joy FM*

Radio Stations	Locations
<i>ATL FM</i>	Cape Coast
<i>Adom FM</i>	Tema
<i>Luv FM</i>	Kumasi
<i>Space FM</i>	Tarkwa
<i>Radio Max</i>	Takoradi
<i>Sky FM</i>	Sunyani
<i>Radio Jubilee</i>	Keta
<i>Lolornyo FM</i>	Hohoe
<i>Radio A</i>	Bolgatanga
<i>Star FM</i>	Bolgatanga
<i>Radio Justice</i>	Tamale

(*Joy FM* News Room, 2010)

The table above clearly shows that JSMS is patronised by many Ghanaians in many parts of the country.

Peace FM

Peace FM is also an Accra-based private and commercial radio station owned by Kwame Osei Despite, a private businessman. It was set up on 25th May, 1999, and operates on a frequency modulation of 104. 3. Located at Mile 7, Achimota, *Peace FM* reaches millions of listeners not only in the nation's capital and Greater Accra, but also in Eastern, Central, Volta, Western, Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions of Ghana. With its focus on the ordinary Ghanaian, *Peace FM* is the first radio station to broadcast its programmes in Ghanaian languages, most especially Twi. Yankah (2004: p. 10) testifies thus:

... *Peace FM* took advantage of the large indigenous language vacuum created by the earlier stations, and targeted illiterates, low class Ghanaians, the voiceless majority... To many, this was the hour of linguistic liberation, when they would listen to all Ghanaian programmes and participate in debates on major national and local issues.

Ordinary Ghanaians can now listen to the news, panel discussions, sports, entertainment, educational and religious programmes in their own languages on *Peace FM*. The station, like *Joy FM*, enjoys massive patronage and has also won CIMG awards of best radio station.

One major programme of the station is 'Kokrokoo Morning Show' (henceforth KMS). KMS was adjudged Radio Programme of the Year on the platform of CIMG in 2008. The programme also focuses on national issues, and provides an assembly of experts from diverse backgrounds to facilitate the

discussion on each working day of the week. In addition, KMS is enriched by both interactive phone-in-segments and texting. The programme is highly segmented which includes sports, the weather report, the newspaper review and "Asem Yi Di Ka" (Speak Your Mind). KMS is listened to by Ghanaians on the following radio networks:

Table 2 Affiliate Stations of *Peace FM*

Radio Stations	Locations
<i>Eagle FM</i>	Cape Coast
<i>Rock FM</i>	Takoradi
<i>Space FM</i>	Sunyani
<i>Liberty FM</i>	Sefwi-Wiawso
<i>Dormaa FM</i>	Dormaa Ahenkro
<i>Success FM</i>	Gosso
<i>Shalom Radio</i>	Brekum
<i>Spark FM</i>	Dunkwa-on-Offin
<i>Dynamite FM</i>	Tarkwa
<i>Kiss FM</i>	Drobo

Table 2 cont'd

Radio Stations	Locations
<i>Kings FM</i>	Konongo
<i>Alpha FM</i>	Techiman
<i>Star FM</i>	Atebubu
<i>Filla FM</i>	Tamale
<i>Baks FM</i>	Enchi

(*Peace FM* News Room, 2010)

As can be appreciated, many Ghanains have access to programmes on *Peace FM*.

In sum, both JSMS and KMS are “breakfast radio” programmes (Jones & Jones, 1999). Besides being pacy, active and lively early morning shows, JSMS and KMS also act as “a bridge between the private, family sphere and the more impersonal, public domain of work” (Jones & Jones, 1999: p. 28). The programmes largely present texters with the opportunity to speak their minds on things they find worrying.

Domain of the Study

The domain undoubtedly is the radio panel discussion (RPD). RPD is a radio broadcasting programme that sets the stage for the discussion of social, political, religious as well as economic issues that have become topical or

controversial in the society (Edu-Buandoh, 1999). As already said, Jones and Jones (1999) consider RPD as breakfast radio because it blends the private, family sphere and the more impersonal, public domain of work (p. 28). RPD is certainly dialogical. It takes place between the host, who presides over the discussion, and his panel members who in most cases have expert knowledge on the topic of discussion. Callers into the programme sometimes interact with the host or some members on the panel. According to Edu-Buandoh (1999), the number of panel members for these discussions may range from two to five participants.

RPDs differ from television panel discussions in two major respects. First, panel discussions on radio networks are usually more emotionally charged than those of television. This may be because panel members feel that they are not seen on the screens of viewers. For example, in the 'Daily Graphic' edition of 22nd January, 2010, Eric Ntiamoah expressed his displeasure at the recent pronouncements of some presenters of *Joy FM*, particularly during the newspaper review segment on JSMS. He therefore admonished the management of radio stations to "educate their presenters ... to be mindful of what they say on air and most importantly they must know Ghanaians are discerning people who can make judgements for themselves" (p. 9). The technological affordance of radio, thus, enables panel members to sometimes threaten the faces of others or the listening public (Edu-Buandoh, 1999).

Secondly, more text messages may be posted to RPDs than to television panel discussions. Karikari (1994) has noted that it is on radio more than elsewhere that both public and private opinions are clearly expressed. Moreover,

since JSMS and KMS are run five times in every working day of the week, they attract more text messages compared to those sent to panel discussions on television that usually take place once in a week.

Data Collection Procedure

Data in the form of text messages were collected from the archives of *Joy FM* and *Peace FM*. The data were, therefore, not elicited experimentally from posters themselves. The negotiation was done by presenting a letter of introduction obtained from the researcher's principal supervisor.

The researcher was able to obtain data printed from the stations' electronic equipment for onward analysis. The data were collected between December, 2009 and February, 2010. As radio stations usually delete the messages they receive at the end of their programmes, the present researcher found it imperative to be constantly in touch with *Joy FM* and *Peace FM* so as to avoid being disappointed.

A careful study of the panel discussions reveals that texters from both networks used similar discourse features to post their messages during panel discussions, and that the messages contain similar gratifications. The researcher therefore did not analyse the data on the basis of radio stations but rather as a single corpus.

At the outset, it is important to stress that the analysis and discussion of the data were done from a descriptive viewpoint in line with the delimitation of the research. For this reason, no attempt was made to edit any errors found in the data. It is generally held that linguistic violations do not necessarily affect the communicative import of messages posted by texters.

Sampling Method

Random probability sampling is one of the most reliable sampling methods. This is because it ensures the validity and reliability of the findings of any given research (Sarantakos, 1993; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). However, this sampling method was not employed in so far as it could result in the selection of data that would not have been of interest to the researcher (Herring, 2004). The present researcher could have, for example, sampled incomplete and fragmented text messages.

For this reason, the present researcher used purposive sampling to select data that were most useful for the study. The aim of purposive sampling, according to Cresswell (1994: p. 148), “is to purposefully select ... documents that will best answer the research question”. The present researcher therefore purposively sampled the data so as to select complete and logical text messages in order to analyse them as single communicative units. Truncated and fragmentary texts were thus excluded from the data. Also, the researcher counted text messages posted serially as one entry. Out of a total of five hundred and two (502) text messages, the data sample was made up of four hundred and sixty (460) text messages, comprising 317 and 143 SMS messages collected from *Joy FM* and *Peace FM* respectively (For a detail of data collected on the respective stations, please refer to Appendices D and E).

Methods of Analysis

The basic method of data analysis employed in the present study was content analysis. This was also supplemented by descriptive statistics.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a key methodological apparatus for analysing electronically mediated discourse (Herring, 2004). As a qualitative method, content analysis enables the researcher to understand the process and character of social life and to arrive at a meaning. It also helps the analyst to understand the types, characteristics and organisational aspects of the documents as social products in their own right as well as what they claim. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), a person's or group's conscious or unconscious beliefs, attitudes, values and ideas often are revealed in their communications through a rigorous content analysis. Herring (2004: p. 22) makes the following assertion:

In fact, it is possible to conduct a perfectly responsible CMDA analysis without drawing on any more specific paradigms than language-focused content analysis.... This approach is well suited to analysing new and as yet relatively undescribed forms of CMC, in that it allows the researcher to remain open to the possibility of discovering novel phenomena, rather than making the assumption in advance that certain categories of phenomena will be found.

It is clear from the above that qualitative content analysis is done normally by coding as found at the heart of grounded theory (Punch, 1998; Krippendorf, 2004).

A major advantage for using content analysis is that it is unobtrusive. A researcher can observe a phenomenon without being observed (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000), and so avoids the dilemma of the observer's paradox. This is

particularly true in the sense that the contents being analysed are not influenced by the researcher's presence. Moreover, information that might be difficult or even impossible to obtain through direct observation can be gained unobtrusively using content analysis. Content analysis is, however, criticised for not ensuring the validity of the research findings (Krippendorf, 2004). This limitation can be overcome by advancing convincing arguments as well as conducting replicatory studies.

A central method in doing content analysis is coding. Coding is the process of putting tags, lines, names or labels against the pieces of data. The point of assigning such codes is to attach meaning to these pieces of data. (Please refer to Appendix C for the nature of the coding). Specifically, the researcher employed open coding to summarise the data by pulling together identifiable patterns in order to find conceptual categories in the data. The main function of open coding, according to Punch (1998: p. 210), is "to expose theoretical possibilities in the data." This was followed by axial coding with the aim of finding the relationships between the categories. However, this method of analysis was not rigidly pursued step by step since the analysis of data usually tends to be cyclical. As already pointed out, the method enabled the present researcher to remain open to the possibility of identifying novel phenomena through open and axial coding (Punch, 1998). This process was particularly useful as it encouraged the present researcher to rigorously examine the data in order to arrive at valid conclusions rather than skew findings or think of them *a priori*.

Another method used in the study is descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics was employed given that many content analyses conveniently draw on some statistical computations.

Descriptive Statistics

The study used descriptive statistics as a minor method in the analysis of the data. Descriptive statistics permits the researcher to describe information obtained in simple readable scores (Payne & Payne, 2004). This method was useful because of its relevance in clarifying data and its ability to render data into forms which facilitate the comparison of disparate kinds of information. Commenting on the relevance of descriptive statistics, Fraenkel and Wallen (2000: p. 477) maintain that “the most common way to interpret data is through the use of frequencies (i.e. the number of specific incidents found in the data) and the percentage and/or proportion of particular occurrences”.

Thus, quantitative analyses in the forms of simple percentages and frequency distribution tables were done to account for the frequencies of discourse features and gratifications of text messages on radio panel discussions. The aim of this quantitative analysis was to demonstrate how the frequencies and simple percentages reinforce the qualitative claims of the study. Besides, frequencies and simple percentages, descriptive statistics provides a simpler and more elegant method of quantitative analyses (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

Limitations Encountered during Fieldwork

Limitations in the pursuit of the research were evident in the collection of data and issues of ethics.

Collection of Data

A major challenge in the study concerns efforts at collecting data from the two radio panel discussions, namely JSMS and KMS. It was increasingly difficult to collect additional data from the programmes. The producers were of the view that they did not know of what benefit the study would be to their programmes or their respective stations, although the researcher had painstakingly explained the purpose and significance of the study to them.

The producers of JSMS and KMS were also uncomfortable with the continual printing of messages that were posted to them during the running of their programmes. According to them, printing the texts exerted pressure on the material resources of their stations, even though the present researcher proposed to provide his own printing paper.

Another concern expressed by the producers was that such a study would reveal the behavioural disposition of texters. Kasesniemi and Rautianen (2002) and Crystal (2008) have expressed a similar concern that it is not easy to obtain data in the form of text messages because they often are private and intimate. It was, therefore, felt that the producers aimed at safeguarding the corporate identity of their individual stations. Despite this limitation, the present researcher was able to obtain an adequate corpus for the present study because the data were made up of over five hundred text messages.

Ethical Concerns

The study also faced an ethical snag. It has been said that “whatever the specific nature of their work, researchers must take into account the effects of the

research on participants, and act in such a way as to preserve their dignity as human beings” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: p. 56). Although CMDA ensures that researchers collect data in a naturally occurring process, the methodology nonetheless raises moral issues because it is usually done without the fore-knowledge of the target group (Androutsopoulou & Bieswenger, 2008; Bieswenger & Storrer, 2008).

First, even though the messages that were posted to the panel discussions were already in the public domain prior to this the research, it was considered ethically disturbing to use them as data for the study without texters’ approval. In overcoming this practical limitation, the researcher used generic names (i.e. first names) of texters as they do not refer to specific persons. This attempt aimed at avoiding using the names of texters without seeking their consent because the researcher could hardly get in touch with them in view of the practical difficulty.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the data. Here, particular attention is given to the various discourse features of text messages and how they are exploited by texters to perform specific discourse functions, thereby achieving desired gratifications on radio panel discussions (RPDs) in Ghana. The discussion is done based on the research questions and both the conceptual and theoretical frameworks, namely, Virtual Community of Practice and Uses and Gratifications Theory. The chapter is made up of four sections. The first three parts of the chapter specifically provide answers to one of the three research questions. In the final part of the chapter, a comprehensive summary is provided.

Discourse Features of Text Messages on Radio Panel Discussions

This section of the data analysis answers the first research question:

1. *What discourse features characterise messages posted by texters to radio panel discussions?*

The table below presents the discourse features identified in the data and their frequency distributions.

Table 3 Discourse Features of RPD-SMS

Discourse Features	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Phonetic Approximation	174	37.8
Abbreviation	153	33.3
Letter/Number Homophone	69	15.0
Letter Omission	64	13.9
Total	460	100.0

Table 3 illustrates the discourse features observable in text messages posted on JSMS and KMS. The table highlights the discourse features with the highest to the least frequency and percentage. The analysis and discussion of the data in this section are done based on the order hereby presented.

Phonetic Approximation

The most commonly used discourse feature according to the table is phonetic approximation, which recorded 37.8% of the data set. Phonetic approximation is a texting strategy whereby texters approximate or render a lexical word closest to its phonetic form. According to Chiluya (2008), phonetic approximation is a kind of phonetic spelling that “generally alters or totally ignores the morphological representation of some particular words” (p. 14). Some examples from the data include *de* (the); *kol* (call); *kam* (come) and such complex ones as *monn* (morning or mourning) and *tnkn* (thanking or thinking). Both examples depend on the situational context.

Texters tend to use phonetic approximations in their messages largely due to the influence of commercial advertising and pop music. It is evident from the data that many texters resort to phonetic approximation not only to achieve shortness or brevity in their messages but more importantly to mimic spoken language. The data support the claim by Al-Khawalda (2008) that in sending text messages “words are written in a way similar to their pronunciation” (p. 206). Writing in computer-mediated modes such as text messages is usually spontaneous and casual because it is like a conversation. Thus, by using phonetic spellings, the data reveal that texters seem to assume a certain desire to be heard on radio as though they are the very ones speaking on air. In this regard, phonetic approximations enable texters to express their opinions, thoughts and sentiments about ongoing discussions and debates during media panel discussions. Two basic types of phonetic approximation were evident in the data. These are monosyllabic phonetic approximation and disyllabic phonological approximation. The use of polysyllabic phonetic approximants was rarer in the data.

Monosyllabic phonetic approximation was the most common in the data. This was prototypically represented by “n” and “u” for the additive coordinator “and” and the second person pronoun “you” respectively. Being a unique type of phonetic spelling, monosyllabic phonetic approximation occurred in almost all word classes. Examples are given in the table below:

Table 4 Some monosyllabic phonetic approximations and their corresponding word classes

Monosyllabic Phonetic		
Approximation	Target	Word Class
d/da/de (dis, dat)	the, (this, that)	Determiners
luv, ston, nyt	love, stone, night	Nouns
myn, dem	mine, them	Pronouns
gud, swit	good, sweet	Adjectives
r, hav, kam	are, have, come	Verbs
vri, had	very, hard	Adverbs
wit/wif	with	Preposition
n, bt	and, but	Conjunction

Table 4 shows that texters attempt to sound phonetic, and that they have an active knowledge of the sound system of the English language backed by an appreciation of the context in which a phonetic approximant is used. Although texters are not co-present at a speech community, the data indicate that they nonetheless used similar linguistic features in their constructions of the messages they posted on RPDs. This is because the technology of texting provides freedom from temporal and spatial constraints (Luppicini, 2007). The data therefore support the claims by Mullany (2000) and Zarb (2006) that members in a virtual

community of practice (VCoP) share a similar discourse that reflects the way they perceive the world. According to the data, texters consider language in text messages as brief, phonetic and fashionable.

Unlike monosyllabic phonetic approximation, disyllabic and polysyllabic phonetic approximations are phonetic spellings that are made up of two or more syllables in the text messages posted. Below are some examples:

<i>hapi</i>	<i>happy</i>
<i>unis</i>	<i>Eunice</i>
<i>talkin</i>	<i>talking</i>
<i>fishaman</i>	<i>fisherman</i>
<i>rewardin</i>	<i>rewarding</i>

The use of disyllabic and polysyllabic phonetic approximations was rare in the data. Besides, syllabification does not seem to be affected in polysyllabic approximations. The data also indicate that there was a preponderance of abbreviations in the messages posted by texters on RPDs.

Abbreviation

Abbreviation was the second most common discourse feature of text messages on RPDs, recording 33.3%. The data show that texters make use of short-cuts in communication and are also able to produce new ones. This claim is true of many communities of practice (Mullany, 2000). Abbreviation enables the text writer to say more within the available space, usually with the advantage of paying less (Chiluwa, 2008). An interesting feature of abbreviations in the data is that almost all of them are standard in English and used in formal discourses.

Available evidence from the data supports classification into two types *viz.* abbreviations relating to (a) occupational titles and (b) address terms and institutions. However, it cannot be said that the identified abbreviations are not used in normal, everyday discourses. The point here perhaps is one of extension of use in the domain of texting.

The use of abbreviations to denote the occupational titles or social statuses of addressees by texters was evident in the data. Contrary to Afful's (1998) two basic types of occupation—traditional and Western—the data set, on the other hand, reveals that almost all the occupations and social positions mentioned by texters in the data were Western in nature. These include the following:

<i>DSP</i>	<i>Deputy Superintendent of Police</i>
<i>DCE</i>	<i>District Chief Executive</i>
<i>MCE</i>	<i>Municipal Chief Executive</i>
<i>ACP</i>	<i>Assistant Commander of Police</i>
<i>PRO</i>	<i>Public Relations Officer</i>
<i>MD</i>	<i>Managing Director</i>
<i>CEO</i>	<i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
<i>DJ</i>	<i>Disc Jockey</i>
<i>Dr.</i>	<i>Doctor</i>
<i>Cpl</i>	<i>Corporal</i>

Thus, the preponderance of abbreviations in the data brings to light two basic facts. First, it points out that texters are aware of the small size of the message buffer of the mobile phone, and that they have limited space when texting. The

knowledge of this technological affordance reminds them not to text the full titles of their addressees. Secondly and more importantly, as they belong to a community of practice, texters are aware that their readers will not misconstrue the use of such standard abbreviations. This is because listeners and hosts of media panel discussions co-share common interests and discursive practices.

Further, the use of abbreviations as address terms by texters was found in the data. Some texters deferred to their addressees by using title + last name (TLN) in their messages. Some abbreviations expressed titles with neither first name nor last name. Examples are Mr. (*Mister*) and HE (*His Excellency*). Other abbreviations were, however, not prefixed by any address terms. Below are some examples:

JJ *Jerry John (Rawlings)*

J A K *John Agyekum Kufuor*

Abbreviations denoting names of former presidents Jerry John Rawlings and John Agyekum Kufuor were not prefixed by any appropriate address terms or what Afful (1998) calls “zero address terms”, though this cannot be said to be impolitic. The claim does not agree with the view of Akyea and Aziaka (2009) that the use of mobile telephony in the media encourages wrong cultural practices to thrive in society. It is clear from the data that even though texters are shielded by the anonymity and sometimes pseudonymy of the technologies of radio and SMS, the use of zero address terms is not an exclusive in-group language practice of texters. Zero address terms are also used in everyday discourses other than texting.

The data also indicate that texters preferred to use the abbreviations of public institutions, corporate bodies and organisations rather than their full recognised names. These institutions and organisations are mainly Ghanaian. Examples are found below:

<i>AMA</i>	<i>Accra Metropolitan Assembly</i>
<i>ECG</i>	<i>Electricity Company of Ghana</i>
<i>FDB</i>	<i>Food and Drugs Board</i>
<i>NCCE</i>	<i>National Centre for Civic Education</i>
<i>WAEC-GH</i>	<i>West Africa Examination Council, Ghana</i>
<i>KNUST</i>	<i>Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology</i>
<i>UCC</i>	<i>University of Cape Coast</i>
<i>UEW</i>	<i>University of Education, Winneba</i>

A major significance of the use of abbreviations by texters is that abbreviations represent the foci of the messages received on RPDs. From the data, it was found that texters used abbreviations in order to express their dissatisfactions or concerns regarding a particular institution or to generally contribute to ongoing discussions.

Letter Omission

Another feature of the discourse of text messages in RPDs available in the data is letter omission, which recorded 13.9%. Letter omission is a discourse feature used by “texters to shorten words by omitting letters from the middle or dropping a letter at the end (Crystal, 2008: p. 45). The major difference between abbreviation and letter omission is that in the former a letter or letters represent a

word or group of words while in the latter some letters are dropped either in the middle or at the end of words (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973; Crystal, 2008) . The following examples were found in the data set:

Table 5 Some letter omissions and their corresponding targets

Letter Omission	Target
fr	for
yr	year
govt	government
aftrall	after all
bday	birthday
blesng	blessing
pls	please
wish'g	wishing
undsd	understand
xmas	Christmas

From the examples above, it would be admitted that texters used letter omission as a texting strategy for the purpose of reducing the number of characters found in their messages. The data support Crystal's (2008) observation that letter omission occurs in text messages when texters delete letters from the middle of a word or drop a letter at its end by the process of contraction or clipping. From the data, it could be observed that texters in Ghana dropped either a letter in a word (e.g. *fr*, *yr*) or letters in a word (e.g. *govt*, *bday*, *undstand*). The data point to the fact that

brevity is the import of texting. It was also observed that in omitting letters in text messages, texters often elide the vowel. This is true of the following: *txt*, *fr*, *yr*, *pls* and *changd*. The data also show that words ending in *-ing/in/* were omitted even though they form the peaks of sonority of their syllables. Examples are *wish'g* and *bless'g*.

The examples above demonstrate that texters post messages, using letter omissions. Although exaggerated, the point has been made that people sometimes draw on letter omissions in their messages as an attempt to show how creative they are with the use of language (Herring, 2001). This means that texters manipulate the resources of the language in order to achieve differing gratifications. Given that texters constitute a community of practice, they are aware that readers can recover the loss of omitted letters and therefore understand the communicative import of the messages they receive. Texters co-share ways of doing things, talking and thinking. Herring (2007) refers to this linguistic practice as the norms of language use. The final discourse feature to consider is letter/number homophone.

Letter/Number Homophone

Letter/number homophone recorded 15% of the data set. Letter/number homophones are alphanumeric words that are represented by either a letter or a number in a text message. The use of letter/number homophone as a discourse feature of texting is largely influenced by computer language and mass media English, especially sensational spelling in advertisements and some forms of Americanisms (Chiluwa, 2008; Crystal, 2008). In sending a text message using

letter/number homophones, texters combine both letters and numbers to represent original lexical items. Examples found in the data include *4m/4rm* (from), *b4* (before) and *k4* (Kufuor).

In addition to letter/number homophones already in the extant literature (e.g. Thurlow, 2003; Bieswenger, 2006), two other types of homophones were identified in the data. These are (a) number homophone and (b) number + word homophone. Number homophones were the most common type of homophone in the present data. The homophone 2 representing the preposition *to* occurred thirty two times whilst the number 4 which stands for the preposition *for* appeared twenty three times in the data. Number homophones should, however, not be misconstrued with numerals. The data reveal instances where texters used counting numbers. Here are some examples:

Text 1. Kojo hav raped victims gone 2 hospital 4 docters 2 prove that they have been raped? (JSMS 160)

Text 2. THE GAME GHANA PLAYED YESTERDAY WAS SUICIDAL, MY HEART WAS RUNNING LIKE A CHEETER IN THE WOODS. I WAS HOWEVER REWARDED WITH 5 CHILLED STAR BEER AND 2 GEORGEIOUS LADIES. BLESS U STARS. MORE VICTORIES TO DA STARS, SAME TO ME SNOWFLAKE, TADI"

(KMS 016)

It is clear from the examples above that the numbers 2 (excluding those in Text 1), 4 and 5 were used as counting numbers by texters and not as number

homophones. Number/letter homophones were common in the data perhaps because they are the easiest homophones to use in place of the prepositions ‘to’ and ‘for’. Also used as homophones was the merging of a number with a full written word. Examples are *2day* (today) and *4gotten* (forgotten). Like the other discourse features, letter/number homophones are a useful way texters shorten and reduce the number of characters they sent as text messages on radio panel discussions.

In sum, the analysis of the data reveals four basic discourse features of text messages posted during RPDs in Ghana. Prominent among these are phonological approximations and abbreviations. Others include letter omissions and letter/number homophones. Unlike the findings of previous studies, it was found that most of the discourse features identified in the data further yielded sub-discourse features. For example, monosyllabic phonetic approximation was seen as a sub-discourse type of phonetic approximation. In the case of letter/number homophone, two other sub-types were found *viz.* number homophone and number + word homophone. The data therefore support the claim by Thurlow (2006) that the study of text messages in a different domain could result in the identification of new linguistic features used in texting. Moreover, it was observed that such features as genuine novelties, initialisms and logographic emoticons were not found in the data because they are largely used in person-to-person text messaging.

Uses and Gratifications of Text Messages Posted to Radio Panel Discussions

This section of the chapter provides an analysis of the uses and gratifications texters seek to derive from posting SMS messages on radio panel discussions (RPDs) in Ghana. The section specifically answers the second research question:

2. *What gratifications do texters seek by posting messages to radio panel discussions?*

Table 6 Uses and Gratifications of RPD-SMS

Use and Gratification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ideological Formations	132	28.7
Dissatisfaction and Solidarity	125	27.2
Phatic Communications	94	20.4
Deprecations	56	12.2
Commendations	33	7.2
Attention-Getters	13	2.8
Indeterminate Cases	7	1.5
Total	460	100.0%

Table 6 indicates six basic uses and gratifications texters seek to obtain by posting messages during RPDs in Ghana. These gratifications were identified by keeping in mind Thurlow's (2003) concept of primary orientation. For example, although a text could be considered fairly ambiguous in interpretation, it still may have a

basic communicative function. However, where the communicative ambiguity could not be easily resolved the text was labelled ‘indeterminate’.

Again, the present study runs contrary to a basic finding in the literature. Thus, in contrast to the claim by Rivière (2002), Crystal (2008) and Aboagye-Aniagyei (2009) that the basic motivation for texting is the maintenance of social contact, the study reveals that texting is largely propositional. This is evident in such gratifications as ideological formations, dissatisfaction and solidarity as well as deprecations. Here too, the discussion is done focusing on the highest motivation to the least.

Ideological Formations

Available evidence in the corpus amply shows that the most common use and gratification texters seek by posting messages on RPDs is the need to construct some ideologies. Ideological formations recorded 28.7% of the data set. This gratification is usually conveyed through texters’ expressions of thoughts, ideas, values and opinions concerning ongoing debates and issues raised during panel discussions. Fairclough (1995) and Gee (1999) have noted that ideology is seen in the discourse of people since discourse is itself constructed in the society from which they are a part. In other words, society influences the way people use language. Here are some examples:

*Text 3 Ghanaians proverbial hospitality accommodates
foreigners but unfortunately does not extend to our own.
We must ALL work to change this. **Mac, Acc** (JSMS 008)*

In the text above, Mac bemoans what he perceives as the hypocritical hospitality of Ghanaians as they show more affection to foreigners rather than Ghanaians themselves. Mac expects that the value of love and sense of belonging would permeate the Ghanaian society because Ghanaians are believed to be hospitable. Mac's gratification of this ideology comes to light in his concluding remark when he encourages everybody to join hands in discontinuing this unfortunate trend in Ghana. His concern is echoed by such choice of words as 'we', 'must', 'work' and 'change'. More importantly, Mac brings into sharp focus the indefinite pronoun 'all'; he foregrounds it at the forecourt of the host of JSMS so that it may serve as an added emphasis when the host reads the message on air in the hearing of the listening public. Thus, by the rendition of the indefinite pronoun in block letters, Mac cautions all Ghanaians not to exempt themselves in this crusade. In so doing, the texter thinks that his concern is fully articulated.

As is expected, the data show that the basic function of language is to express oneself and communicate one's ideas to others. Crystal (1987) refers to this language function as propositional. In his own words, the author asserts that "whenever we tell people about ourselves or our circumstances, ...we are using language in order to exchange facts and opinions" (Crystal, 1987: p. 10). As already pointed out, earlier studies such as Lorente (2002), Oksman and Rautiainen (2002) and Aboagye-Aniagyei (2009) have indicated that the most important gratification of texting is to send and/or receive information. What is, however, lacking in this claim is that the discourse functions of text messages vary according to the situational context. It is appropriate then to say that in

interpersonal messaging the most common discourse function is informational whereas texting to media panel discussions is largely propositional. This propositional discourse function enables texters to form their own ideologies in their contributions on RPDs. The ideological formations of texters to media panel discussions are very important in that it helps us to understand the nature of public discourse in Ghana. Two types of ideological formations came to light in the data: (a) social ideologies and (b) political ideologies.

The data indicate that texters posted messages during RPDs in order to express social ideologies and belief systems. This gratification was more dominant. A range of issues including education, health and sanitation, law and order were addressed in the messages. As DeFleur *et al.* (1998) have noted, language affords users the ability to perceive, evaluate and respond to the physical and social world around them. Examples of text messages posted by texters to express their views on the social world around them include the following:

*Text 4 If the POLICE ARE RELUCTANT TO ISSUE OUT A
SIMPLE APOLOGY THEN LETS GET IT CLEAR IF
DAILY GRAPHIC HAV THEIR OWN POLICE MEN
MUST B CHARGD. tino, TEMA (KMS 004)*

Tino writes in the context where the Ghana Police Service has come under serious public scrutiny concerning their wrong labelling of a substance they perceived to be cocaine at the premises of Kinapharma Company Limited, a leading pharmaceutical company based in Accra. According to Tino, the police needed to

apologise to Kinapharma and not to have blamed the ‘Daily Graphic’ that broadcast the news. This is his candid opinion. This social concern for justice, a virtue upheld among Ghanaians, is captured by the use of block letters almost throughout the message. Like Mac, Tino is ensuring that his message achieves the desired gratification and that his thought is fully conveyed. Another example is given below.

Text 5 Kwame, do you know that it is not right to play excerpts of an interview to promote your program or as a jingle without prior approval of the interviewer. Think about it.
Dan Dansoman. (KMS 012)

As can be seen, in Text 5 Dan thinks that it is not proper to get hold of an interview’s excerpt without a prior notification of the interviewer. That the text writer urges Kwame Sefa Kayi, the host of KMS, to “think about it” means he is expressing his/her thought. Although the writer is expressing a concern, he is in the process educating not only the host of KMS, but also the listening public to desist from such a practice. The idea is expressed that it is not socially acceptable to make use of a person's property without the consent of the said person. This appears to be Dan’s primary motivation for posting his text on the show.

Political ideologies were another important motivation texters sought by sending their messages to RPDs in Ghana. The data indicate that texters sent in messages to express their views about developments in the two major political parties in Ghana, that is, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New

Patriotic Party (NPP). According to Fairclough (1995), the media are an effective political public sphere for national debates and discussions of political issues (p. 44). This is true given that the media enable consumers to express their views since they guarantee the freedom of speech (Yankah, 1998). Examples of text messages that reflect how texters express their opinions on political issues during RPDs are cited below:

Text 6 *Kojo, the Exec. is not dictating to the Legislative. As per the NDC constitution, Prez. Mills is the leader of the NDC. He is allowed to suggest or even appoint anybody to any non elective position within the NDC or any group which promotes NDC interests. In any case the legislature is made up of the majority and the minority. Prez Mills dealings with his party men should not be misconstrued as interfering with the Legislature. I would advise that Avoka and Pepuo should learn to keep things told them in confidence. It is such slippery tongues which are creating problems in the NDC Paul Haatso. (JSMS 295)*

Unperturbed by the miniscule message buffer of the mobile phone, Paul in the text above demonstrates that he is an active user of the medium. In his message, he expresses his opinion with clarity and certainty that President Mills is not a dictator as there are checks and balances to ensure that such a thing does not happen. From the text, such expressions as “in any case”, “should not be misconstrued” and “I would advise that” portend an aura of knowingness exuding from his message. As Katz *et al.* (1974) have pointed out, people use the media to

their advantage in constructing their own identity. One such identity created by the texter is that he has deep knowledge in political issues.

Perhaps, another identity he shapes for himself is that he is an avid NDC faithful. This is conveyed in the warning he gives to the leaders within the party to be mindful of what they say to the outside world by zeroing in on Honourable Cletus Avoka and Rashid Pelpuo, former ministers of Interior and Youth and Sports respectively. Thus, by expressing his views about whether or not President Atta Mills is a dictator, the texter also gratifies his need to be identified as a political expert and a strong member of the National Democratic Congress, the party of the incumbent government.

It was not always the case that people posted messages on radio panel discussions to reveal their biases and opinions to ongoing debates or discussions. Sometimes also, they aimed at expressing their displeasure on issues around them.

Dissatisfaction and Solidarity

The use of text messages to express the dissatisfaction and solidarity of texters with unfortunate people recorded a substantial proportion of 27.2% of the data set. This gratification is conveyed through complaints. It is known that people make complaints in order to express their dissatisfaction about someone or something that may not be necessarily present at the scene (D'Amico-Reisner, 1985; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1987; Boxer, 1993). A complaint may therefore be direct or indirect. The data show that people sent text messages on RPDs often in the form of indirect complaints. Despite the indirectness of complaints on RPDs,

most complaints were face-threatening. They appeared as direct confrontations with the objects of complaint. The use of text messages to make complaints fall under two main classifications: (1) social dissatisfaction and (2) political dissatisfaction.

Social complaints were more common than political complaints. As users of radio, texters expressed their dissatisfaction on social concerns whenever the opportunity presented itself on panel discussions as part of their contributions to a programme. Social dissatisfaction using text messages concerned education, health and sanitation, business and finance. Others include science and agriculture. Here is an example:

Text 7 Pls Kwame, what is ECG doing about this constant power interruptions it's so frustrating, is Ghana now becoming like Nigeria hmmm! Tk ofankor. (KSMS 010)

Here, the anonymous complainer was expressing his dissatisfaction about the constant power interruptions by the Electricity Company of Ghana to the host of KMS, Kwame Sefa Kayi. This gratification is conveyed by the rhetorical question “what is ECG doing about this constant power interruption?”, the clause “it’s so frustrating” and the humming expression “hmmm”. Together, these linguistic resources enable the texter to bring to the fore his or her utmost disappointment about ECG’s poor management of electricity in Ghana. In this case, the texter solidarises with all Ghanaians that suffer from the inactions of the staff and the poor services of ECG.

Political discontents in the data were conveyed in some complaints sent by texters to express their dissatisfaction about the performance of government or most especially political leaders and their parties. The analysis shows that this type of motivation is usually face-threatening in nature because it reflects the disdain of their writers towards the object of complaint. An important thing to note here is that texters are very much aware of the anonymity the technology of radio and texting afford them. As a result, they did not find it difficult to express their views even in the most offensive way. This development is in line with earlier claims by Boxer (1993) and Baym (2006) that distance and anonymity can result in the use of abusive and face-threatening language. Below are some typical examples.

Text 8 If our Politicians can deceive us by turning their campaign pledges into nightmare, whom then do we trust for our economic development? The nation deserves a better deal from the NDC. Kabiesi sek, di” (KMS 038)

In this text, the writer thinks that the NDC government has deceived all Ghanaians by not fulfilling their campaign promises. Although this conviction is produced from the texter’s personal assessment of government, the texter assumes that all Ghanaians agree with him or her on this score. Thus, by making this complaint the texter expects government to be up and doing in the running of the economy of the nation. Here, the texter identifies and solidarises with the masses in calling for an economy that can cater for the basic needs of Ghanaians.

Texters also solidarised with others through the discourse functions of requests and inquiries. As per the data, requests and inquiries appeared as discourse functions that sought to let the addressees do a task on behalf of the senders of the texts. According to the data, texters sent mobile phone messages in order to make requests or inquiries about disturbing issues confronting themselves and others. Texters sent messages in order to seek information or obtain some clarification about an issue from the hosts of the radio panel discussions and/or their resource persons in order to show their concerns. Some examples are as follows:

*Text 9 I want to know why we have not consulted Antoa
Nyama on the fire outbreaks? Paa Nii,
Adenta”(KMS 131)*

In this text, Paa Nii would like to know why Ghanaians did not make consultations with Antoa Nyama, a deity located in the Ashanti region of Ghana, and is believed to be very powerful. The writer implies that only a divine force can intervene in the matters of humans given that they themselves are not capable of managing their own affairs. The message demonstrates how Paa Nii solidarises with the victims of fire outbreaks in Ghana. It is clear from the citation above that texters share a common interest by sending messages on panel discussions. The messages indicate the issues of concern texters focus their attention on. These include issues on education, health, the state of the economy and government. Here is another example:

Text 10 Please Kwame, let me use your media to appeal to the government to come to the aid of the people of Enchi by equipping our fire men with facilities. We are at risk. Bismark” (KMS 096)

The gratification of solidarity and support is evident in the texter’s attempt to identify himself with people who are going through difficult times: “We are at risk”, he says. This motivation to show his support for the suffering masses is most urgent in that it emanates from the hazards fires are causing to the people of Enchi. It can also be noted that Bismark’s request expresses his deep concern for the welfare of Enchi. This request thrives on the third assumption of uses and gratifications theory that intimates that the media compete with other resources of need satisfaction (Katz *et al.*, 1974). What this means is that Bismark, the texter, chooses the medium of texting to RPD over and above other media in order to express his dissatisfaction of the government’s performance in the development of Enchi. He therefore identifies himself and solidarises with the indigenes of the community.

In brief, dissatisfactions on radio panel discussions are normally indirect since the objects of the complaints are not present at the time such dissatisfactions are made, although the messages pose a threat to the faces and dignity of their objects of interests.

Phatic Communications

The desire to keep in touch with loved ones was also found in the data. Phatic communication recorded 20.4% of the data. Available evidence from the data indicates that texters posted mobile phone messages during RPDs in order to wish dear ones a happy birthday, success in an examination or to generally wish them well in their endeavours. The data are in tandem with Coker's (2009) claim that well-wishes are in the form of admonition, encouragement and general welfare. Below are some examples of birthday text messages.

Text 11 Kojo wish Olivia of the University of Ghana success in her exams & let her know I will always be there! John, roman ridge (JSMS 180)

It is clear from the ongoing discussion that text messages are more interactional than transactional (Chiluwa, 2008; Crystal, 2008) as they are used by texters to express their emotions. In Text 9, John expresses a well-wish to his dear one, Olivia. According to Ruggiero (2000), people send messages to others in order to obtain some psychological gratification through the message content. This means that John will to some extent feel content that he has been able to wish his loved one success in her university examination. Evidently, a close analysis of the data brings to light two basic types of phatic communication *viz.* direct phatic communication and indirect phatic communication.

Direct phatic communication refers to first person narrative accounts in text messages on RPDs. The messages usually are marked by either the first

person singular *I* or plural *we*. Text messages that express direct phatic messages were very emotional in content according to the data. Here is an example:

*Text 12 I WISH Gifty of old tafo a hapi b'day. may da gud
Lord guidz n protect her. May her age multiply in
thousand folds. (KMS 025)*

It is obvious in this example that the anonymous texter was evoking the favour and blessing of the good Lord upon his or her addressee.

*Text 13 Hi koko, we wish our daughter Romeine of holy trinity
lutheran school Kumasi a hapi b'day. May she be blessed
and highly favored. Fm mr & mrs Kwakye (JSMS 110)*

Here too, the parents of Romeine, the addressee, pray for the favour of God upon their daughter's life on the occasion of her birthday. We gather from Texts 10 and 11 that the texters employed the personal pronouns 'I' and 'we' respectively, thereby having a direct involvement in the acts. In this manner, they satisfy their personal needs of expressing their love to their dear ones. Both texts therefore are instances of using text messages to make direct well-wishes.

Indirect phatic communication, on the other hand, refers to well wishes that appeared in the data as messages read by the hosts of RPDs on behalf of the sender. Here, the sender of the message makes a request to the host to wish a loved one well. One significant difference between a direct and an indirect phatic exchange is that while the latter is a form of a request, the former is not. As per the data, indirect phatic communication is usually prefixed with the politeness

marker “please”, thus indicating a request. This is consistent with the position of Edu-Buandoh (1999) that in media panel discussions, Ghanaians use the linguistic resource “please” to show how polite they are. Examples include the following:

Text 14 *Kojo, please wish Bernard of Tamale a happy birthday for me. I love him very much. Helen (JSMS 100)*

Text 15 *Br. Kwame, pls send a b'day wish to wife, ivy aka nana yaa of zain in ksi. may she live happily to be a good and a wonderful wife...from Emma”(KMS 087)*

For Helen, sending a text message to a radio network should gratify no other purpose than to express her love to someone as special as Bernard in Text 12 on account of his birthday. By sending this message, Helen in the process assures her lover that he is always on her mind and that she is not ashamed to profess her love for him even on air. This gratification is also true of Emma in Text 13.

Available evidence from the data indicates that text messages are also used for the purpose of greeting. Greetings also function as phatic communication, and thus ensure rapport among interlocutors. From the data, texters sent their messages on panel discussions to express such virtues as love, affection and solidarity to loved ones. Two basic types of greetings were found. These are season's greetings and solidarity greetings.

Season's greetings are a universal phenomenon that captures the essence of social relationships among interlocutors. The data are replete with text messages

in this regard. A major reason for this development is attributable to the growth of technology. As Chilwa (2008: p. 18) has clearly opined:

Interestingly, electronic cards and text messages are increasingly becoming an alternative to paper cards. Evidently, during festive periods season's greetings by SMS text messages precede the paper cards and reach more and wider receivers than the ordinary cards. People who may never get the paper cards are easily and satisfactorily reached.

The use of text messages during such important moments as Easter, Christmas and New Year in the Christian context and Ramadan and Eid Adha among Muslims cannot be underestimated in today's technological world. An example is given below:

*Text 16 Merry Christmas 2 beatrice of pokuase n all family
from tonardo of swanlake (JSMS 218)*

Like season's greetings, solidarity greetings were sent by texters to solidarise with and show their affection to loved ones. Solidarity greetings according to the data were targeted at individuals, institutions and even government officials. Here is an illustration.

*Text 17 Good morning Kojo, I would like to send this message to
the Board, Directors, Management and staffs of National
Lottery Authority. May we look past our differences and
reconcile with new challenges up ahead. 2009 was very
eventful and amazing. May 2010 bring us more closer to*

*the road of success and greater achievements. All hail the
duties and possibilities of the coming twelve months!*

Happy XMAS & Happy New Year. Anaafi-NLA (JSMS 256)

After giving his support to the National Lottery Authority in its quest to achieve success, the sender of the message, Anaafi, ends by sending a season's greeting to all the staff of NLA, wishing them a merry Christmas and happy new year. This motivation stems from the fact that the year under review is coming to an end and that the anonymous texter thinks that it is prudent that both the management and staff of National Lottery Authority (NLA) together forge ahead. The texter therefore uses the medium to send a piece of advice to all those who matter in the affairs of NLA. As Wimmer & Dominick (1987) have said, audiences use the media not only to obtain advice but to also throw caution and advise the public.

In brief, the motivation for posting phatic messages and both season's and solidarity greetings show that the position of Akyea and Aziaku (2009) that the new media is harming basic Ghanaian cultural values such as greetings does not fully hold. This is because the data clearly show that texters use politeness forms such as "please" and the modal "may" to make a wish. Another important use and gratification of text messages on radio panel discussions is to condemn other selves.

Deprecations

Not only do texters post their messages to express displeasures that are face-threatening but they also text in order to deprecate individuals and/or

organisations. Deprecations represent a very important motivation texters, as per the data, performed by posting mobile phone messages to RPDs. This gratification recorded 12.2% of the data set. Deprecations and imprecations were usually expressed through such discourse functions as attacks, insults and name-calling. Others appeared as flyting and maledictions. The analysis reveals that such behaviours usually arise in a virtual community such as text messaging largely because texters enjoy a degree of distance, anonymity or pseudonymity. The data illucidate an earlier observation by Yankah (1998) that Ghanaians use abrasive language in the media, especially in the electronic media due to the technological growth of mobile telecommunication. Yankah's (1998: p. 40) concluding remarks on the subject is worth quoting:

As communication becomes more faceless, the indigenous norms of restrained discourse are bound to slacken, taken over by greater openness and candour where affront is inevitable. But this also deepens the communication crisis; for faceless communication on radio-phone in programmes, has yielded its fair share of emotionally charged contributions, which have sometimes been interpreted as discourtesy to authority.

From the citation above, it is possible to say that texters often threaten the faces of their addressees and are discourteous to them because of the distance and anonymity the medium provides. Baym (2006) describes the negative use of language in the new media as uninhibited behaviours. These include flyting,

sarcasm and humour (Crystal, 1987; Baym, 2006). The following examples attest to this.

*Text 18 Sammy-madina) we're sick & taied of
Rawlings's Maafia & tctice afrall what? If he want
to move into his bedroom house... (KMS 073)*

The message above reveals that Sammy deprecates the perceived monopoly and control of state affairs by former president Jerry John Rawlings. This, he seeks by expressing his dissatisfaction in no uncertain terms. For the texter, it would have been better if JJ, as he is affectionately known, remained silent. Certainly, the cliché “sick and tired” will not be appropriate in this context given that it is impolitic for a reference to an ex-president. Clearly, the text is, therefore, a derision on a leading political figure in Ghana. This motivation is likely to stem from the knowledge that social accountability on the airwaves is low so that texters can seldom be held answerable for their use of irreverent language (Kim & Raja, 1991).

As can be observed, the use of discourse to condemn others is usually influenced by a politically motivated ideology. Perhaps, it is for this reason that texters sent messages to directly or verbally abuse political figures and/or the party a said figure is believed to be associated with. For instance, Goshgarian (2004) labels name-calling as the foremost tool used in propagandist politics. Discourses of propaganda are frequently accompanied by distortions of facts and by appeals to the passions and prejudices of the public.

A major objective of propaganda is to persuade the audience to believe the propositions of the speaker or writer. For instance, in deprecating other people of influence in the Ghanaian society texters exploit the discourse function of name-calling in order “to make us form a judgement without examining the evidence on which it should be based” (Goshgarian, 2004: p. 157). The author further adds that propagandists appeal to people’s hate and fear by giving bad names to those individuals, groups, policies, practices, ideas and beliefs which they would have the masses to condemn and reject. This, they achieve by sometimes using foul language. Tracy (2008) refers to the use of innocuous language as face-attack because “it is intentionally rude, disrespectful and insulting” towards its target (p. 171), and some features in such discourses.

From the data, deprecations were normally directed at the two leading political parties in Ghana, namely, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Consider the text below:

*Text 19 KOJO SOME NPP MPS ARE BEHAVING LIKE
FOOTBALLERS ON THE BENCH. THEIR ONLY
PRAYER IS THAT A PLAYER IS INJURED SO
THEY COULD BE SUBSTITUTED TO SHOW
THEIR SKILLS. MARTINS, KSI (JSMS 124)*

The text above explicitly demonstrates the insult and invective the sender of the message uses to malign his opponents on the other political divide. It is possible that the writer of the message is a member of the NDC, and therefore aims at expressing his or her derision for the leading opposition party, the NPP. Note that

the message is rendered entirely in block letters and thus expresses the intent of the anonymous texter to emphasise his or her convictions about the NPP.

In brief, the deliberations point to the fact that texters sometimes posted mobile phone messages to RPDs so as to abuse and deprecate usually political figures, government appointees or political parties.

Commendations

The analysis also shows that texters sent text messages on RPDs in an attempt to commend dear ones. This motivation constitutes 7.2% of the data set. The messages were in the form of thanksgiving for divine providence and gratitude to someone for an act of benevolence. Some messages also expressed commendation for the good work done by the hosts of the two panel discussions. It can be said that the gratification of commendation derived from texting during panel discussions is usually a personal one. The messages were cast in a first person narrative. The following examples further explain the point being made.

*Text 20 I had my break through in 2009, I got myself a job
and enrolment in the University. I'm hoping to meet
my dream lady and possibly marry IN JESUS'
NAME. Dzifa, Ho (JSMS 272)*

*Text 21 President Mills u are definitely doing the right
things. Am proud of you! Given the pace at which
you are moving, i have no doubt that you will leave
Ghana a better place. (KMS 137)*

In Text 20, the texter is satisfied and thankful to his Lord for making it possible for him to get a job and also have admission in one of the universities in Ghana. Thus, the only way to express his gratitude is to share this breakthrough with the entire world and let them know what God has done in his life. This is why he chooses the medium of texting on radio over and above other media in order to reach out to a much larger public. The foregoing also holds for the anonymous texter who avidly listens to KMS in Text 22. The unknown texter expresses contentment and trust in President John Evans Atta Mills' government because according to the texter the president is placing Ghana on the right footing. Thus, this commendation stems from the texter's surety that President Mills, in the texter's own words, will in 'no doubt leave Ghana at a better place'

In sum, texters posted some of their messages to RPDs to show how grateful they are to God or loved ones for a good deed done them. They also use the medium of texting to show how appreciative they are to others. Some messages posted to RPDs were also information-driven.

Attention-Getters

Messages were also posted by texters to get the attention of the public, target groups and public institutions on happenings around them. Available evidence from the data reveals that the sending of text messages to seek this gratification on RPDs recorded 2.8%. Attention-getters were usually carried out by sending information on media panel discussions. In this way, the data sharply contradict earlier claims in the literature which maintain that the basic function of texting is informational (e.g. Haddon, 2002; Rivière, 2002; Coker, 2009). The data clearly

confirm the assumption of the present study that text messages on RPDs are more propositional than transactional.

There are two basic reasons attention-getters recorded a low percentage on radio panel discussion text messaging. In the first place, it is the primary function of the radio as a type of media to inform and also educate the listening public. This means that texters usually seek information on radio rather than being the source of information themselves. Katz *et al.* (1974) have clearly stated that audiences are people that seek specific media and content to achieve certain results and gratifications that satisfy their personal needs. Texters are goal-oriented or better still information seekers that seek information via the medium of texting to achieve their goals through radio. They seek specific content from RPDs in order to remain updated on issues of social and national interest as well obtain information on happenings around the world.

Further, whereas texting is primarily a person-to-person practice, thereby ensuring the provision of information to one another for establishing rapport, RDP-SMS, on the other hand, does not easily allow that. This is because when texters posted their messages on radio panel discussions they did so in an attempt to meet other gratifications such as those already discussed. All the same, two types of attention-getters were identified in the data: personal attention-getters and social attention-getters.

In the corpus, texters sent in messages to panel discussions in order to obtain information about themselves. The example below was sent by a nine-year old girl during a JSMS on February 18, 2010. It reads:

*Text 22 Hi Kojo, i'm Naa 9 yr old pupil of Queens Int Sch, East Legon,
wish to tell you that my father has bought me the book you
choose for the book club. So I wish to join your book club.
Thank u. (JSMS 306)*

As can be seen, the text writer, Naa, sends a message to Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, host of JSMS, to inform him about the fact that she had laid hold of the book he Kojo has recommended for members of his book club, hence her desire to join the club. The message has a personal import because it discusses the texter's desire to join the host's book club. An interesting thing about this text is that although it informs the host of JSMS about the texter's effort at obtaining the prescribed book Kojo Oppong Nkrumah has recommended for his book club, the texter equally uses the medium of texting to RPDs above other choices in an attempt to make a request to the host that she will be glad to be a member of the club. This open declaration on air, Naa believes, will express her burning passion to join the book club of the host.

Text messages were also sent to RPDs to serve as social attention-getters. According to the data, this type of attention-getters out-numbered personal attention-getters. Mobile phone messages with a social touch express the concern and social responsibility of texters about the state of affairs in a particular social setting or the country in general. Here are some examples.

*Text 23 Chaos at Agona Swedru. 2 people dead so far.
Gradually things are getting worse. (JSMS 232)*

In this telegraphic, straight to the point message, the anonymous text writer aims at passing on a piece of social information about the clash between the inhabitants of Swedru and the Zongo community. The chaos was precipitated by the death of one Zongo man at a drinking spot at Swedru. Thus, by this text message the texter seeks to inform *Joy FM* about this development in recognition of the fact that the message will reach the station in the shortest possible time. Here is another example.

Text 24 Kwame the water problem is veri badat dome for two weeks now no water so they shouldn't say is ok is a very big lie'' (KMS 63)

The unknown texter of the message above tells the whole world about the water problem of the people of Dome. This need to avert the situation is accentuated by the statement “they shouldn’t say is ok is a very big lie”, thereby expressing the frustration and anger of the texter. Generally, attention-getters seek to gratify the need for immediacy and instantaneous delivery of results in light of a pressing difficulty.

Indeterminate Cases

The label “indeterminate cases” in the analysis represents 1.5% of text messages in the data. The label expresses a special motivation of text messages posted to RPDs where a particular message could achieve more than one gratification. The data are in sync with Thurlow’s (2003) claim that it is sometimes difficult to account for the gratification of text messages, thereby filling the gap of indeterminacy in Chiluya (2008) and Coker (2009). Indeed,

available evidence in the data shows that some messages posted by texters performed more than one single gratification. For example, some texters combined two motivations such as dissatisfaction and phatic communication, and ideological formation and deprecation. Others include commendation and attention-getters, deprecation and dissatisfaction. Some examples are provided below:

Text 25 BEN FROM ADENTA My funniest politician of the year is Arthur K. The guy is a joker. He got one vote in an election. His party is out of power and, he is pissing about thinking he can transform the party by criticising everybody. CONCERT! (JSMS 248)

The sender of this message combined the need of commendation and deprecation. Although this text message is supposed to be a response to which politician was the favourite of the Ghanaian public in 2009, it is nonetheless derisive towards its target whom the texter named “Arthur K”, obviously Arthur Kennedy, the 2007 NPP Campaign Communication Director. The texter called this politician a “joker” and one who is “pissing about”. Actually, this verb phrase is understood as disgracing the political party one belongs to by way of washing its dirty linen in public. Moreover, the use of the word “CONCERT” written in block letters is indicative of his disgust and derision for Arthur K, a clear example of face-attack (Tracy, 2008). Another example can be seen below.

Text 26 The rape victim must be a very strong teenager to be able to endure 2 rounds of rape each from a

military man and a police man. The question I want to ask is how many matured women can stand 4 rounds of heavy love making? (JSMS 159)

The anonymous texter expresses his or her view about the rape of a teenage girl allegedly perpetrated by the military and police. That is, the texter presents his or her ideology of women who can roll out in bed with men for a long time as being strong-willed. The texter, however, does not consider whether or not the rape victim consented to the act and the possible pains that were afflicted on her due to the forceful act against her will. Yet towards the end of the texter's bias and prejudice, he or she ridicules women through an inquiry in the form of a rhetorical question: "... *how many matured women can stand 4 rounds of heavy love making?*"

In short, some text messages on RPDs seek double or multiple gratifications, thereby providing additional evidence of the indeterminacy of discourse functions of text messages posited by Thurlow (2003).

Uses and Gratifications of Language Varieties Used by Texters on Radio

Panel Discussions

The following section of the chapter discusses some language varieties used by texters on RPDs in Ghana. Specifically, the analysis and discussion of the data is done with reference to the third research question:

3. *In what ways do language varieties enable texters to express their intents on radio panel discussions?*

Language use in the electronic media, especially the radio, is polyglossic. As one of its cardinal responsibilities, media houses such as the radio networks in Ghana aim at educating and informing the listening public through the use of language that ranges from a highly formal and standard language to a less formal and ordinary one (Ghana Broadcasting Study, 2005). Besides English, some radio stations in Ghana make use of such varieties as code-switching and Ghanaian languages such as Akan, Nzema, Gonja, Ewe and Ga. In Ghana, the recognition of the use of other varieties of English apart from Standard English grew from the desire to reach out to the larger public regardless of their educational, social or ethnolinguistic backgrounds. As Fairclough (1995: p. 38) comments:

The media have tried to bridge the gap between the public conditions of consumption by evolving a ‘communicative ethos’ and a ‘communicative style’... which adjust towards the priorities, values and practices of private life. This includes the development of a ‘public colloquial’ language..., a public language for use in the media which is modeled to varying degrees and in varying ways upon the practices of informal, colloquial, conversational speech.

It is, therefore, not surprising that there are varieties of language in the messages the texters posted to RPDs. Available evidence from the data indicates that two basic varieties were identified. These are code-switching and Pidgin English.

Uses and Gratifications of Code-switching in Text Messages on RPDs

Code-switching was evident in the text messages. According to the data, texters switched codes in order to exteriorise strong emotions such as solidarity

with and dissatisfaction about persons and issues. The examples below elucidate the point being made here.

Text 27 *Kwame its pay back time for the NDC but, the unfortunate thing is that the fire destroying state property. Wo ne nyame enye dwuma. Abelenkpe Hubert (KMS 112)*

Text 28 *The govt must seat up because the economy is too hard. YEBREE, EKOM DI YEN (KSM 136)*

Clearly, the embedding of Akan into the matrix language, English, in the texts above enabled the text writers to convey a kind of meaning that is local to Kwame Sefa Kayi, host of KMS. The English version of “Wo ne Nyame enye dwuma” (Text 27) is translated to mean “May God be with you as you work!” while “We are suffering, we are famished” is the English translation of the Akan expression “Yebree, ekom di yen” (Text 28). In other words, it means “May God be your strength”. Yet in the English version of these messages, the imports of these messages could or may not have been fully expressed as they seek to convey the displeasure of the texters.

Elsewhere, Yankah (2004) has asserted that text messages are gradually being ‘Ghanaianised’ because they are occasionally interspersed with Ghanaian expressions and interjections. It is generally known that code-switching is a product of language contact which results from multilingualism or bilingualism (Crystal, 1987; Myers-Scotton, 1993; Hudson, 1996). As is expected, the switch occurred between English, the matrix language, and one of the Ghanaian

languages, prominent among which was Akan. In the words of Hudson (1996: p. 52):

Anyone who speaks more than one language chooses between them according to circumstances. The first consideration, of course, is which language will be comprehensible to the other person addressed; generally speaking, speakers choose a language which the other person can understand.

This means that texters were aware of the domain of language use and so switched codes appropriately in order to communicate the desired intent of their messages by taking into consideration the situational context. This phenomenon is what is termed “situational code-switching” (Hudson, 1996: p. 52). Thus, a close study of the data shows that texters switched the two codes, that is, English and Akan, in order to achieve certain gratifications which could not be easily felt in a monolingual medium of expression, which is English.

From the data, it is evident that texters switched codes not because they were unable to fluently articulate their views in English as has been pointed out by previous research (e.g. Blom & Gumperz, 1972; Myers-Scotton, 1993; Migge, 2007). Rather, they consciously employed code-switching in order to perform certain discourse functions which they could not do in English. Chilwa (2008) refers to this type of code-switching as “intentional code-switching” (p. 196).

Generally, texters used code-switching in their messages in order to solidarise with others. The expression of solidarity in text messages on RPDs

enabled texters to encourage individuals and groups of persons. This view corroborates earlier claims by Crystal (1987) and Ofulue (2008). For example, Crystal (1987) has indicated that a switch in a code when communicating with another signifies that both interlocutors share a common background. Within the context of sending text messages to RPDs, texters, as per the data, switched codes in order to show their solidarity with their addressees about an issue raised in the discussion. Perhaps, texters switch codes in order to indicate that both the texters and their addressees belong to the same ethnolinguistic background.

The functional approach to code-switching has been comprehensively discussed by Myers-Scotton (1993). In her markedness model, Myers-Scotton (1993) maintains that speaker choices are strategic and goal-oriented. According to the author, speaker choices are determined by two broad factors: speakers' interactional goals in an encounter and the interaction's social characteristics, including the extralinguistic nature and the speech economy as well as the setting. In her own words, Myers-Scotton (1993: p. 75) says that:

The main idea behind the markedness model proposes that speakers have a sense of markedness regarding available linguistic codes based on the persona and/or relation with others which they wish to have in place. This markedness has a norm-tree basis in the community, and speakers also know the consequences of making marked or unexpected choices.

In simple terms, when users of a given language switch codes, they do so in an attempt to achieve well defined ends and gratifications such as the needs to

solidarise and express dissatisfaction. Thus, when texters switched codes on radio panel discussions, they did so meaningfully. They switched codes in order to convey certain attitudes towards their listeners.

The attitudes vary from being friendly, irritated to ironic and jocular. Again, this claim reechoes the views of Ofulue (2008) and Coker (2009). Ofulue (2008), for instance, has argued and demonstrated that one of the motivations for code-switching is that it guarantees an effective communication of certain formulaic expressions within which they are created. The author advances that code-switching invests text messages with a degree of naturalness. This means that in switching codes, texters express such strong emotions as love, admiration and happiness. Others include frustration, anger and sadness (Coker, 2009).

In brief, texters draw on code-switching in an attempt to solidarise, express dissatisfaction and strong emotions when posting their messages on RPDs as they contribute to on-going discussions. They also used Pidgin English in their messages.

Uses and Gratifications of Pidgin English in Text Messages on RPDs

The data show that Pidgin English also enables texters to also express strong emotions. Here is an example.

*Text 29 kwami any tin wey get start get end n. p. p for
give prof mills n n. d.c a brake, wetin dem want.
ghana does not belong to them...jopak
komenda (KMS 051)*

(Paraphrase: Kwami, anything that has a beginning has an end.

NPP, give Prof. Mills a break. What at all do they want?...))

Characterised by a reduced grammatical structure (Crystal, 1987; Sekyi-Baidoo, 2002), the pidgin employed in the message enables the texter to express his or her dissatisfaction about the texter's perceived continual intrusion of disturbances from the main opposition party, the NPP. Towards the end of the message, the texter thumbs up for President John Evans Atta Mills. In the following example, the sender of the message expresses his or her discontentment and anger about the police in a rather diglossic style by slotting in the message some Pidgin English in order to carry the import of his or her anger.

Text 30 Police Administration want sit our arrears top.

Dem pay 4 months finish self dey want chop the rest

rest. NO WAY MENSAH OF NEW TOWN.

(KMS 022)

(Paraphrase: The police administration wants to sit on our arrears.

After paying us for four months, they want to embezzle the rest of the money.)

It is clear that the use of the lexical item “chop” in lieu of “embezzle” gives the message its pidgin flavour. By this rendition, the texter vividly expresses his or her disgust for the police administration. Also, by using Pidgin English the texter makes a self identification with the lower ranks of the police personnel, whom everyone knows do not speak English that well, and may be well comfortable

with pidgin. In this case, the anonymous texter solidarises with the oppressed and suffering masses.

It is agreed that pidgin is a variety of a standard language created by speakers who have no common language to communicate with one another (Crystal, 1987; Hudson, 1996). Contrary to studies that have shown that the use of pidgin is a signal of communicative ineptitude among users of the variety (e.g. Dako, 2000, contra Sekyi-Baidoo, 2002), the present study, on the other hand, emphasises the motivations for using Pidgin English. Thus, when texters used Pidgin English, as the data indicate, they did so in order to express their dissatisfaction about social or political issues in the country.

Summary

The chapter analysed and discussed the discourse of text messages on media panel discussions of *Joy FM* and *Peace FM* in Ghana. The analysis indicates that the most common discourse features of text messagees on panel discussions are phonetic approximations and abbreviations. Others include letter omission and letter/number homophone. These linguistic features were often used by texters to economise space and cost as well as to convey their dexterity in language use. Most importantly, these discourse features were employed by texters to seek a number of gratifications, prominent among which are ideological formations and dissatisfaction and solidarity. Messages were also used to express such needs as deprecations, phatic communication, attention-getters and commendations. Such language varieties as code-switching and Pidgin English

were used by texters to express such strong emotions as anger, frustration and disappointment about social and/or national issues.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This concluding chapter comprises five strands. The first strand provides a summary of the entire study. In the second section, the key findings of the present study are highlighted. This is followed by a discussion of conclusions drawn from the analysis of the data while the next part presents the implications of the study. The final section of this chapter, and for that matter this thesis, suggests directions for future research.

Summary of Research

This research has attempted to investigate the discourse features used in text messages that are posted to radio panel discussions in Ghana and the gratifications texters sought to achieve. In this light, the problem the researcher sought to investigate in this study was whether radio panel discussion text messaging constitutes a special discourse. This problem led the researcher to formulate three basic research questions:

1. *What discourse features characterise text messages posted by texters to radio panel discussions?*
2. *What gratifications do texters seek by posting messages sent to radio panel discussions?*

3. *In what ways do language varieties enable texters to express their intents on radio panel discussions?*

In view of the afore-mentioned research questions, the research adopted a descriptive approach. The focus on the descriptive perspective in this research was to provide a detailed description of how texters express their views, opinions and thought processes on radio panel discussions in Ghana. Emphasis was therefore placed on the gratification texters sought for posting their messages. The study was thus not conducted in accordance with models of prescriptive linguistics. For example, such basic discourse features of text messages as phonetic approximations and letter omissions were not considered deviant in usage. In this study, they were seen as constitutive of the pragmatic knowledge and in-group language practices of texters in a different domain of language use. The study also adopted a synchronic approach because it sought to describe how people in real places in the age of mobile telephony use the device in their everyday communicative goals.

The researcher mainly drew on qualitative content analysis. This methodological tool was supported by descriptive statistics. The use of these methods was important because the researcher wanted to demonstrate how statistical evidence could reinforce the qualitative claims of the study. The data upon which the analysis was made were collected from radio panel discussions of *Joy FM* and *Peace FM*, two leading private radio networks in Ghana. The panel discussions used were ‘Joy Super Morning Show’ and ‘Kokrokoo Morning Show’ of the respective stations. The two stations were selected on account of

their number of affiliate stations across Ghana. Also, both *Joy FM* and *Peace FM* are currently the stations with the highest patronage (Yankah, 2004). In all, five hundred and two text messages were collected in a period of three months, that is, between December, 2009 and February, 2010. The actual data set was made up of four hundred and sixty (460) text messages after sieving irrelevant text messages from the corpus.

The data were analysed using Reinghold's (1993) concept of Virtual Community of Practice and Katz *et al.*'s (1974) Uses and Gratifications Theory. This combined framework enabled the present researcher to view texters of messages on radio panel discussions as forming a community of practice, which unlike a speech community or a discourse community, is a virtual community. The framework also illuminates our understanding of how texters co-share discourse features and functions, and thus use language to achieve similar gratifications.

Key Findings

Based on the analysis and discussion of the data, the following key findings were made with specific reference to the research questions.

With respect to the first research question (please refer to pages 127 and 128), the results showed that there are four fundamental discourse features of text messages posted to radio panel discussions. These include phonetic approximation and abbreviation, which are the most prominent. The rest are letter/number homophone and letter omission. Each discourse feature, however, yielded sub-discourse features, thereby corroborating Thurlow's (2006) claim that

the study of text messages in a different domain other than the traditional one-to-one texting would result in the identification of other discourse features. For instance, two other types of letter/number homophone, namely, number homophone and letter + word homophone hitherto uncovered in the literature were identified. Number homophones are, however, distinct from the use of numerals by texters in that the former are numbers used in place of words. Examples are 2 and 4 to represent the prepositions *to* and *for* respectively. The word 'night' is also written 9t among some texters.

It was also found that texters used standard abbreviations when sending their messages during radio panel discussions. The abbreviations texters used represent the foci of their individual messages. Some abbreviations dealt with social figures while others addressed institutions and corporate bodies. For this reason, available evidence supports the classification of abbreviation into two: (a) abbreviations of occupational titles and address forms, and (b) institutional abbreviations.

Further, it was noted that the most frequently omitted letters are vowels. Contrary to linguistic postulations in English phonology regarding the status of the vowel as being the peaks of sonority (Roach, 2000; Cruttenden, 2001), consonants rather functioned as such in most of the messages. The omission of vowels was used not only as a shortening strategy but also as a means by which texters demonstrated their dexterity with language.

Concerning the second research question, the results of the study revealed that text messages sent to radio panel discussions were usually ideological. This

finding is at variance with the extant literature that indicates that the fundamental goal of texting is information-driven (e.g. Fortunati & Magnanelli, 2002; Oksman & Rautianen, 2002; Coker, 2009). The present study found that the messages contained texters' expressions of thoughts, ideas, values and belief systems on social and political issues, and so showcase texters' contributions to ongoing discussions on radio. The ideological formations of text messages on radio panel discussion, according to the data, merit two basic classifications: (a) social ideological formations and (b) political ideological formations. This motivation could certainly not be informational (Crystal, 1987). Thus, radio panel discussion text messaging (RPD-SMS) as a discourse type is less informational. A plausible reason is that many texters send their messages during radio panel discussions to achieve well-defined gratifications other than merely provide information since they know that one major role of media practitioners is to inform and educate the public (Ansah, 1994).

One other major finding of the study shows that that texters posted messages on radio panel discussions in order to express their dissatisfaction and solidarity with others. The results also showed that there was a high incidence of deprecations and imprecations, overtly hostile in message content. Texters verbally attacked and threw invectives at usually social figures, politicians and/or their political affiliations in an attempt to condemn and deprecate politicians. This, according to Herring (2001) and Baym (2006), is partly because social accountability in computer-mediated discourses is low.

Also, texters sent messages to maintain phatic communication. The exchanges were usually direct or indirect and were expressed through season's greetings and solidarity greetings. Season's greetings are text messages sent to dear ones during festive occasions of the year to wish them the best of the season. Solidarity greetings are generally messages posted by texters to dear ones to express their support for and unflinching loyalty to them. As per the data, solidarity greetings tended to be sent to political figures and their parties.

The results also indicated that there were instances where some texters merged or embedded more than one gratification. Some messages expressed such double gratifications as dissatisfaction and ideological formation; solidarity and phatic exchange as well as deprecation and attention-getters. This development confirms Thurlow's (2003) claim that it is sometimes difficult to determine the primary function of text messages.

Finally, with respect to the third research question, it was observed that code-switching and Pidgin English were used by texters to enable them to solidarise with others and express strong emotions. By switching codes or using Pidgin English, texters were able to convey their anger, disapproval and frustration about personal, social and political issues around them.

Conclusions

From the foregoing discussions and findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn with respect to the research questions.

First, it can be concluded that text messages posted during radio panel discussions constitute a special discourse type. Radio panel discussion text messaging (i.e. RPD-SMS) is distinct from the general practice of person-to-person text messaging both in terms of its discourse features and gratifications. For example, whereas genuine novelties (Crystal, 2008) as a discourse feature are mainly used in interpersonal texting it was never instantiated in the messages sent on radio panel discussions. Genuine novelties are often used as codes decipherable only between interlocutors with a shared background, and so cannot be understood by those outside of the camaraderie. In addition, pictograms, logograms and initialisms were not found in the data, perhaps because they are mainly used in person-to-person texting, and hence do not fit in texting on media panel discussions (Feuba Wanji, 2009). It is for this reason that texters are said to be pragmatic users of language as they have an active knowledge of the variegated domains of the use of language and how to appropriate this knowledge in various social contexts.

Second, it can be established that RPD-SMS is more ideological than informational. Language is said to be ideological when it is used to express an idea, an opinion, a thought or a view point (Crystal, 1987; Yule, 1996). Available evidence from the data clearly shows that texters usually sent messages to radio panel discussions to express their views as their contributions to discussions rather than merely seek to inform, be the source of information themselves or to maintain social contact as is mainly the case in interpersonal text messaging.

Finally, the study indicates that texters to radio panel discussions constitute a virtual community of practice. As can be realised from the analysis and discussion of the data, texters exhibited knowledge of “in-group language practices” (Herring, 2008b). Knowledge of the linguistic resources manifested in the use of similar discourse features and gratifications in the communication process of texters on panel discussions. Such similar discursal practices as ideological formations, dissatisfaction and deprecation characterise texters as making up a virtual community of practice, who though may not be co-present at a speech community, do notwithstanding use language in much the same way. It is for this same reason that Al-Khawalda (2008) labelled texters as forming a speech community.

Implications of the Study

The next section, which is based on the findings and conclusions of the present study, discusses three main sets of implications: theoretical, pedagogical and media practice.

Theoretical Implications

This sub-section addresses issues relating to the application of theories. It focuses on the significance of the theoretical framework in enhancing analyses in discourse studies.

The first theoretical implication concerns attempts at grounding theoretical concepts such as Virtual Community of Practice and Uses and Gratifications Theory within mainstream linguistics. Since discourse analysis as a legitimate field of study usually draws from theories and concepts outside of its

own, the use of the proposed theories will go a long way to promote the study of online and electronic discourses (Herring, 2001; Georgakopoulou, 2006). Specifically, this framework will enable linguists and discourse researchers to understand such theoretical concepts as community and identity (Herring, 2008a). In other words, the framework furnishes researchers with the necessary theoretical backing needed to explore language use in electronic discourses in order to, for example, understand how language characterises a virtual community and creates the community's identity. Thus, an analysis of online or electronic discourses such as text messaging will help linguists to appreciate the nature of the public discourse of texters on radio panel discussions. This is because "the media are consequential in social life" (Altheide, 1996: p. 69).

Akin to the above theoretical concern is the need to strengthen computer-mediated discourse analysis as a useful tool for doing discourse analysis. CMDA, as expounded by Herring (2001), largely is favourable to such online synchronous discourses as e-mail, wikis and weblogs. Thus, using CMDA in the analysis of SMS requires a great deal of effort. Even though Baron (2004) and most especially Herring (2008b) in a later publication include SMS within this framework, not much research has been conducted using this design. Examples of studies that have drawn on CMDA include Chilwa (2008) and Feuba Wanji (2009). This trend shows the essence of developing CMDA to fairly deal with all kinds of computer-mediated discourses so as to promote a vigorous and thorough analysis of language use in such discourses.

Pedagogical Implications

Two key issues are highlighted in this sub-section: literacy and collaborative learning.

In the first place, continuous texting promotes literacy skills among learners. Contrary to claims that texting causes communicative ineptitude in the use of Standard English (Bodomo & Lee, 2004; Adedun, 2008; Al-Khawalda, 2008), text messaging, on the other hand, can sharpen the vocabulary and spelling abilities of learners. This assertion has been made by Crystal (2008) and earlier confirmed by Feuba Wanji (2009). Crystal (2008) argues that learners who are dexterous at texting are also found to be the best spellers and writers. In effect, teachers of language can use SMS to bring real communication into the classroom situation, thereby moving away from seeing the language classroom as an artificial or unnatural environment. The learner will by this means be exposed to real communication that is most needed in certain contexts of situation.

Another pedagogical implication is that texting can be used to enhance collaborative learning. SMS can facilitate the collaborative construction of knowledge through the social negotiation of ideas among learners. This kind of social interaction, according to Vygotsky (1978), promotes cognitive development. For example, during group discussions learners can aim at appreciating the use of language in varied contexts (Shah, 2009). Coker (2010) has argued that “in seeing SMS as a type of social English, we aim at enabling learners to be aware of the social role of SMS in communication” (p 16). In Vygotskian terms, teachers can provide scaffolding that will help learners to acknowledge the contextual

background of the messages learners have received in their in-boxes. By activating learners' use of local context, presuppositions and indexicals, language instructors in the process can assist learners to develop their knowledge and mastery of English. This is because learners' knowledge will be extended not only to linguistic competence but at the same time to communicative competence, which is most needed in different situational contexts.

Implications for Media Practice

The present study also bears implications for media practice. Two main issues—theoretical and actual practice—are considered here.

First, this work presents researchers in media and mass communication with the opportunity to extend the uses and gratifications approach. As media research proper, media and communication researchers usually draw on such conventional tools as questionnaires, interviews and focus groups in obtaining data for determining the needs and gratifications of media consumers (Dominick, 1996; Wimmer & Dominick, 1997; McQuail, 2005). In addition to the research instruments above, media experts can extend the uses and gratifications theory, also termed functional analysis, to the analysis of the message content as obtains in the communication chain. Such an attempt will rigorously help researchers to directly obtain information about media users from the viewpoint of language. It will, for example, motivate media experts to identify the many social and psychological factors that go into the realisations of the distinct but related discursual functions of text messages.

Further, there is the need to actively incorporate the study of computer-mediated communication into media and mass communication. As a result of the emergence of new technology, that is CMC, traditional frameworks of communication are fast becoming obsolete (McQuail, 2005). The need to include CMC and CMDA in mainstream communication studies is, therefore, crucial. This move will ensure that the present needs and gratifications of users of CMC are adequately analysed for media research awareness.

Finally, it is important that both radio and television networks censor the content of text messages that are read on the airwaves in order to maintain sanity of expression of thought. Though the media in Ghana, as in most countries, guarantee freedom of expression (Yankah, 1998; Ghana Broadcasting Study, 2005), it remains a challenge to media practitioners to sift uncomplimentary text messages that they receive on their shows. Text messages in the form of invectives and imprecations need not be entertained on the airwaves in Ghana as part of the social responsibility and accountability of the media to the public. Such derisive text messages have the potential of undermining the social, cultural and national cohesion of the nation. Besides, the youth could pick up wrong behaviours from these anti-nationalist and often propagandist discourses (Fairclough, 1995; Yankah, 2004; Goshgarian, 2004).

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings and implications arising from the study, the need for further investigation in the following areas is desirable.

The first line of further research would be to discover what impact such factors as gender, age and education have on how texters choose to post their messages during radio panel discussions in Ghana. A sociolinguistic study in this direction will therefore prove rewarding and consequently bring to light the dynamics of language use in society.

Second, a study of power and dominance as inherent in text messages will equally be promising. Such a research will help to illuminate our understanding of the issues of social imbalance and power asymmetry among Ghanaians through media panel discussions.

Further studies could consider a comparative analysis of text messages of radio and television panel discussions. A study of this sort will have the merit of either affirming or repudiating the claims heretofore adduced. Research with this focus will investigate whether there are similarities and differences between the two discourse types and what factors could possibly account for them.

The present study has focused on the discourse features and gratifications observable in text messages on radio panel discussions. Subsequent studies could examine the rhetorical structure of such needs as ideological formations, dissatisfaction and deprecations. The goal of such proposed studies will be to unearth certain rhetorical moves hitherto unknown in the literature of genre analysis (Swales, 1990) and computer-mediated discourse analysis.

Finally, an empirical study of Ghanaianisms used in texting will be informative. A study of this kind will extend the literature on Ghanaian English to the domain of computer-mediated discourse analysis. Moreover, it will provide

additional evidence of a variety of English appropriated by Ghanaians for various communicative ends, thereby asserting the identity of Ghanaians in hitherto less known language domains.

Final Remark

It is hoped that this study has contributed to research in computer-mediated discourse analysis, in general, and text messaging, in particular in Ghana. It is the researcher's fervent desire that further studies be conducted in our attempt to maximise our understanding of human behaviour and society through the lens of computer-mediated discourse analysis. For as long as computer-mediated communication involves language in any form, there will be a need for computer-mediated discourse analysis (Herring, 2001).

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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
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233 244 659201
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UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE,

FAX: +233 42 32485

November 19, 2009

The Producer

Joy Super Morning Show

Joy FM

Accra

Dear Sir/Madam,

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE RE: MR WINCHARLES COKER

I would like to introduce Mr. Wincharles Coker, a graduate student in the Department of English, University of Cape Coast, to you.

Mr. Wincharles Coker is doing a research into the discourse patterns of text messages for his MPhil Degree Thesis. His topic is **SMS and the Electronic Media: A Discourse Analysis of Text Messages on Radio Panel Discussions in Ghana.**

We would be very grateful if your institution could give him the necessary assistance to enable him to do this research with your data.

We thank you for your assistance.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Dora Edu-Buandoh

Senior Lecturer/Project Supervisor

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

TELEPHONE: + 233 42 30942,
233 244 659201
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November 19, 2009

The Producer

Kokrokoo Morning Show

Peace FM

Accra

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Yours faithfully,

Dr. Dora Edu-Buandoh

Senior Lecturer/Project Supervisor

APPENDIX C

Coding of the Data

PA:	Phonetic Approximation
Abb:	Abbreviation
LO:	Letter Omission
LNH:	Letter/Number Homophone
IF:	Ideological Formations
DS:	Dissatisfaction and Solidarity
Dep:	Deprecations
AG:	Attention-Getters
Com:	Commendations
IC:	Indeterminate Cases
CS:	Code-Switching
PE:	Pidgin English

APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIPT OF TEXT MESSAGES POSTED TO

‘JOY SUPER MORNING SHOW’ (JSMS)

RETRIEVED 18/12/09

JSMS 001 The mayor needs everybody’s support. We should not at anytime condone illegality. The media houses should show the mayor their support. This exercise is long overdue. Kudos to the AMA mayor.

From Kwesi Kumasi.

JSMS 002 Happy birthday to Doreen please play her a nice song.

From Lizzy of Osu

JSMS 003 Happy birthday to Andy, Zenith Bank. **From a Well Wisher.**

JSMS 004 Please wish Akobo and Rita a happy and fruitful marriage **from Emefa PRESEC-Begoro**

JSMS 005 When will the right time for the decongestion ever come when every party is afraid of becoming unpopular? It takes courage to do such an exercise. Doc. carry on, the Lord is on our side. **Nana Esi Tema.”**

JSMS 006 happy birthday to Nii Marma of Ga Dangme youth, am saying prosperity and long life to him” **From Naa.**

JSMS 007 HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO REV GRATIEN TODAY IS your Birthday you are a good husband and exemplary father to our children pls live for a very long time and may God you graciously we love little Octavio and Edwin and wife Annie ”

- JSMS 008 Ghanaians proverbial hospitality accommodates foreigners but unfortunately does not extend to our own. We must ALL work t to change this. **Ma, Acc**
- JSMS 009 Kweku, my problem is with the detention. Why did the police have to detain them when they were still testing the stuff? **Joe**”
- JSMS 010 There’s a high tendency of many Ghanaians to view successful people as crooks, cheats, criminals, narcotic dealers etc. This is the bane of many successful businesses as in the Kinapharma case. **Abednego, Kumasi.**”
- JSMS 011 The police and media should apologize since their behaviour is nothing but local PhD **From Emmanuel**”
- JSMS 012 If the police acted within the confines of the law, then it is in order. As for the reputation of the CEO of kinapharma, it’s rather unfortunate and for the media, they were just doing their job. It looks dramatic, though.”
- JSMS 013 We have had this vindictive culture since the dark days of the 80’s when businessmen were tagged as criminals and State power was used to destroy hard working Ghanaians. How do you encourage others to emulate success it’s a shame. **Nii. tema.**”

- JSMS 014 It's not just Ghanaians, kwaku. We Africans generally fear what we don't understand and hate what we can't conquer! **George. North kaneshi.**
- JSMS 015 The Ghanaian is always in competition with imaginary competitors which makes unhealthy our strife to reach the top!
- JSMS 016 Kinapharma should take this in good faith because pharmacies can be conduits to narcotic productions as cases Italy and India have shown **zola**
- JSMS 017 Why did u even give Jake the platform to make those comments about the presidents.
- JSMS 018 Does jake know the difference b/n corruption and anticorruption? Why did he want to steal a public property?"
- JSMS 019 Hi kwaku do u know dat kinapharma products are de best. Its just unfortunate. Lord Vuvor, Anyako. Volta Reg."
- JSMS 020 I will advise the police to run their armour cars to Bawku to keep the peace instead of Kinapharma offices. COSMAS. NAVRONGO."
- JSMS 021 FROM HASSAN KINAPHARMA SHOULD TAKE THE POLICE ON, B'COS THE STORY HAD ACTUALLY TARNISH THEIR IMAGE."

- JSMS 022 One killer of biz is steeling, kinapharma must not condon it. The police must apologise.
- JSMS 023 The police should show professionalism by apologizing.
- JSMS 024 The fight against illicit drugs needs to be even stronger than what they are complaining
- JSMS 025 UCC does distance learning better so they should join UCC. Sammy UCC.
- JSMS 026 She shld follow his husband to the said hotel, she must carry condom along, im'dtly she the sees them entering she shld hand over the condom to him & tell him polity to play it safe, & tell him u love & care about him. From: Nii ~Tema
- JSMS 027 THE SOLDIERS AGAIN!! WHY CAN'T THEY ALLOW CIVILIANS TO REST? IF THE PEOPLE HAD GONE AGAINST THE AGREED PROCESS OF FEMONSTRATION, HOW HAD IT BECAME THE DUTY OF THE SOLDIERS TO BRUTALIZE THEM? THAT ERA OF THE PNDC BRUTALITY IS NOW HISTORY. SOLDIERS HERE, SOLIDERS THERE! WHY? >>> KAYIBEN >>
- JSMS 028 There is too much corruption in the Land Title Registry office in Kumasi –Kofi

- JSMS 029 NANA AKUFO ADDO YOUR 49 PERCENT IN THE 2008 ELECTION HAS INCREASE TO 52 PERCENT IN DECEMBER 2009 SO RELAX YOUR VICTORY IN 2010 IS ONE TOUCH. FROM DAVID TIANO AFLAO SURVIVAL ESTATE
- JSMS 030 Ghanaians should leave president Mills alone presid, Mills forever.from foxy HOHOE.
- JSMS 031 My wife is a prosecutor n she has refused gifts & bribes. unfortunately such people who try to induce her have threting her several times. I'm worried about her safely
- JSMS 032 Not Mpiani alone every Ghanaian has seen the good works of prof Mills. NDC all the way. Yusif, tamale.
- JSMS 033 Talkin of rewardin incorruptible officials, let think of the deputy min.of energy, Hon. Armah Buah Mp for Ellembelle –fr ELVIS, Accra.
- JSMS 034 The confidence and the will Ghanaian have for NDC government is still intact. No distortion of facts and vilification can rundown the NDC government. joe
- JSMS 035 The NDC wants to use the huge cost associated wit the referendum to deny Ghanaians of the biometric voter registration. Lets resist any referendum for now. **Protozoa**

- JSMS 036 In my view sulley truly lacks discipline and his impact on the team has greatly reduced but we also need to look to the future.
- JSMS 037 Happy birthday to Barbara Serwah Asamoah aspiring NDC National Youth Organizer. **From your mates at Ghana school of law**
- JSMS 038 BIRTHDAY DEDICATIONS TO RICH SOM APIETUK, WISHIN YOU THE BEST THINGS AND ALL U WISH URSELF....FROM YAZMIN."
- JSMS 039 Pls wish Maame Senkyere of Ashongman Estate a happy bday from auntie tilly, her mum dad n sister. thanks"
- JSMS 040 Please wish my sweet wife, Victoria, A happy and Meaning Birthday. Wishing her long life and true prosperity. **Pastor Maclean."**
- JSMS 041 We bring ourselves down. They say when you see a Ghanaian laugh then the other is in trouble. We are like crabs (**No name**)
- JSMS 042 I don't think that the police should apologise to kinapharma because they were doing their professional work. **from Adjanor, koforidua."**
- JSMS 043 The police should be held accountable for their behaviour, the accusation of Rose Atinga was wrong and sums it all up, GUILTY BEFORE PROVEN OTHERWISE"

- JSMS 044 I urge kinapharma to please help the numerous helpless citizens who are maltreated each day by these policemen. Please sue them, we need sanity in Ghana. **Kwaku. ksi**
- JSMS 045 All things being equal, i guess the kinapharma guys enjoyed a hassle-free ride in the police convoy as it cut through the traffic like a hot knife through butter. They can't deny. **From Nii.**
- JSMS 046 After hearing from kinapharma only I can give judgement. You have been mistreated so badly. Forgive them. **kwame.**
- JSMS 047 Kweku, we Ghanaians are too quick to condemn the actions of our public servants, without being familiar with the environment within which they work. **Dan – Anyaa.**
- JSMS 048 Would it have mattered anyway? We laymen have been made to believe cocaine is used in the manufacture of drugs. True or false? **kakra.**
- JSMS 049 This should be a lesson to our able police men and women to be more professional in their dealings. As for the media they are just doing their job. FROM: DERY, Wa
- JSMS 050 To me Kinapharma should take the police to court if they fail to apologize. Ben Bolga."

- JSMS 051 KOJO THOSE WHO VIOLATE THE RIGHT OF OTHERS ARE THE FIRST TO DEMAND TO BE TREATED HUMANELY WHEN THEY VIOLATE THE LAW WHY? MARTIN, KSI"
- JSMS 052 Why should power go off so early morning... **Abeeku @ Kokomlemle**
- JSMS 053 I see hope with Prez Mills. Ghanaians should be patient because it taketime 2 repair an economy that has been rundown. **Butros, tema**
- JSMS 054 Kojo, I want U to wish my wife mercy A happy Brithday. **james from HO.**
- JSMS 055 Kojo have you read Daniel Sliva's books? Especially his Gabriel Alon series. You should they're great!
- JSMS 056 Hi Kojo, will I be able to watch the REAL MAD, BACELONA encounter on my multi tv? What about CHAMPIONS LEAGUE? **Ernest from koftown"**
- JSMS 057 Kojo, are you a consultant to Galamsey operators? It seems u understand their operations too much!" **Edwin, North K**
- JSMS 058 A happy birthday to mr Samuel Markin. Packaging mgr Guinness Ghana Breweries Kumasi. Kaasi. **From a well wisher"**
- JSMS 059 Kojo, if u and i should leave your home and family 2 be up there keeping peace and people are behaving the way they are doing, then we will understand the actions of de soldiers. justice"

- JSMS 060 What do we want in this state? Striping murders naked or shooting people dead which is a lesser evil? Leave the soldiers alone to keep the peace at Bawku. **mbeki accra.**
- JSMS 061 BELATED HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO MRS. MERCY MAMLE TETTECH OF HFC BANK. FROM ALL STAFF OF THE LEAGAL DEPT. OF THE BANK. THANK YOU!"
- JSMS 062 Kojo, please wish our lovely baby Naa Dedei a happy birthday. She is one year old. **From Dad and Mum – Seth n Nancy."**
- JSMS 063 Am Mina of Ablekuma Please help me show appreciation to doctors Eunice ; Irene; Joan; John"
- JSMS 064 Kojo there is light off everywhere and every one is complaining but the ECG is not telling us anything...human as 4 me i will leave this country ooo... **Deta frm Fadama"**
- JSMS 065 Kojo, since that incident at Bawku have you heard any more shooting? Give the soldiers a break –**Tastu Teshie**
- JSMS 066 THIS IS TO WISH MABEL OF PRESEC STAFF SCHOOL, LEGON A HAPPY BIRTHDAY TODAY FROM FELIX FIEBOR, HO ECG"
- JSMS 067 Happy birthday to FRANCES of KNUST. I'm proud of your achievements so far and still wish u very well in the years to come. God bless. **Milly.**

- JSMS 068 Kojo good morning, you and other journalist should be very careful on how u are criticizing the Buwku issue. They should stop fighting and nobody will go after them.
- JSMS 069 Lapaz and its environs for the pst 2 to 3 months have not had water. Can u ask GWSC what is going on. The situation is becoming unbearable. **Joyce frm lapaz.**
- JSMS 070 KOJO PLEASE SAY HAPPY B'DAY 2 JESSICA SHE'S 1 YEAR 2DAY MAY GOD BLESS HER. **FROM MUM N DAD"**
- JSMS 071 I want to wish Mr. A.K Johnson, H.O.D, english edu. Department, U.E.W, a happy b'day. may God grant you your heart's desire. **Frm Emma, Eng. L 300."**
- JSMS 072 What about the pregnant woman who was set ablaze in Bawku in 2008? Have we got the killer?"
- JSMS 073 Happy birthday to Dorothy, may all dreams come true. **Ursula @ 37 Mil. Hosp.**
- JSMS 074 Happy Birthday to Nana Takyiwa of KNUST (Law 4)
.....Enjoy your day
- JSMS 075 Happy birth day to Jessica, may u live to be 99.7 wth God's bless'g. **From Mr & Mrs Anani"**
- JSMS 076 Kojo, how about sending some of the tickets to Adom fm so those of us in Tema and its surroundings can buy comfortably?

- JSMS 077 I want 2 wish Rhoda of korle-bu NTC a HAPPY BIRTHAY. Kojo kill her that am still in luv with her. **Frm BEN**
- JSMS 078 Kojo, the contractor working on the koforidua-oyoko road is killing us with dust. Pls ask him to water the road for us. We the students of k' dua poly are suffering.
- JSMS 079 Can you please ask ECG if they are shedding load. The way they put of light these days is very bad. it covers around kwashieman, Santa maria, Race course, TABORA To sowutuom and it's surrounding areas. It is really frustrating. Pls do somethngabout it.
- JSMS 080 HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO DONALD OF SPINTEX **FROM JAMES**
- JSMS 081 Kojo, i want u to wish my wife a happy birthday. She is madam Alima, teacher @ Juaben Islamic sch. **Ash. (OPARE).**
- JSMS 082 Kojo kindly make today special for PROF COMFORT CHARITY ATUAHENE of Dept of Animal Science KNUST as she celebrates her birthday today. **Frm Isaac of FORIG 26TH November**
- JSMS 083 Kojo, this is the first time in 9 years teachers have received salary arrears with effect from January. NDC has done well but there is room for improvement. I mean our allowances must not be reduced. **John kumasi"**

- JSMS 084 Hello kojo please wish our mum Comfort of Maratha Methodist Christ little band tweneboah, popularly known as auntie esi a happy birthday. **From her children**
- JSMS 085 Honorable Osei Akoto demanding that somebody should show him respect? When he was invited by the ministerial committee on Vodafone did he show them any respect? **Moses, Kasoa.”**
- JSMS 086 Mrs Kimata Sam C.E.O of TOYOTA GHANA CO. today is your birthday. Happy birthday. **Rahman**
- JSMS 087 Kojo you are too good. Give me that song again. **Ike Ho Poly**
- JSMS 088 Happy belated birthday to NANA YAW of HO HOSCAPS. MAY HE BE BLESSED **FROM ADOFO aka KOBBY**
- JSMS 089 The national registration exercise in the greater Accra region got poor publicity. The closing date is Saturday. Can we cover everyone? **From tony in Accra.**
- JSMS 090 Kojo, am a northerner and i support the actions of the military, the actions of my people are very worrying. **Gideon in Manet”**
- JSMS 091 Hi kojo, indeed NDC is a Nurturing Disaster and Confusion party, no wonder, they attack each other on the air. Clearly, NDC performs better in opposition than in government. **From KT, Tantra Hill”**
- JSMS 092 Good morning, can u please play ‘shame on u’ for me? **Harriet**

- JSMS 093 Hi Kojo, i want to say a very good morning to PRINCE MICHAEL of Koforidua Polytechnic. He is the true definition of a good brother. **From: Lilly of Zenith College.**
- JSMS 094 Kojo please help me say a VERY BIG happy birthday 2 LATIFA of Ashfoam Melody of Kumasi. Please tell her she is ma ADIEPENA and will never leave her. **From Ahmed of B.R.R.I.**
- JSMS 095 The GES needs a total reshuffle right from de headquarters to de regional directorates. Favoritism has become the order of the day especially. At the regional level. Government must act quickly. **IKE MENSAH. Ofinso**
- JSMS 096 Happy Birthday to Comfortof UCC –Adehyeh Hall. **From John Ghana Police Service, Accra.**
- JSMS 097 Happy birthday to the greatest mum in the world Charlotte of GCB korle bu we love you deeply mum and God bless u abundantly **from Gegorge and siblings**
- JSMS 098 Happy birthday to Pastor Mary of NIB **from Phillip Archer of TV3.**
- JSMS 099 KOJO, DID I HEAR U SAY "EVER SO OFTEN"? THIS IS WHAT MOST PEOPLE SAY IN GHANA, BUT, STRANGELY, THE CORRECT EXPERSION IS "EVERY SO OFTEN". PLEASE LOOK UP THE USAGE UNDER "EVERY". **C SAM.**

- JSMS 100 Hi Kojo please wish Bernard of Tamale a happy birthday for me. I love him very much. **Helen-Zlifa**
- JSMS 101 Mr Kimata San CEO of TOYOTA GHANA CO. today is your birth day happy birthday
- JSMS 102 Oh Kojo, you will kill me with these tantalizing Amakye Dede songs oo!-**From Joe of Ashongman Est.**
- JSMS 103 WISHING RACHAEL OF MERIDIAN PRE UNIVERSITY A HAPPY BDAY. TODAY IS YOUR BDAY. MAY U LIVE TO BE 99.7 FROM KORKOR. **JANET MUM DAD AND STAFF OF MERIDIAN PRE UNIV."**
- JSMS 104 Kojo, please i'm wish'g tracy of tema new town a fabulous happy birthday, may God grant her all heart desires. **frm frank kwame dada annan"**
- JSMS 105 Kojo, please do me favor and let me know the involvement of the civilians in the trial of the six police men. Treat. **frm k tema"**
- JSMS 106 KOJO TELL ACP AWUNI TO TAKE LESSONS FROM THE CDS AND NOT MAKE CONCLUSIONS ON THE NALERIGU RAPE CASES B4 INVESTIGATION EVEN BEGINS. ERNEST, MADINA.

- JSMS 107 May the good Lord increase His grace, favor, love & fulfillment in the life of Brightina of Queen's Hall, KNUST who celebrated her Birthday yesterday. " **Big Joe-Juaben, Ash:**
- JSMS 108 Koj, MPs are supposed to be known as Honorable but some are a disgrace to the title with the way the talk in Parliament. **Alhaji Ahmed Takoradi."**
- JSMS 109 I thank God for de life of NANA BENYIN he is 3 to day may be favor of de living GOD be with him **from mum dad sisters n grany"**
- JSMS 110 Hi kojo, we wish our daughter Romeine of holy trinity lutheran school, Kumasi a happy b'day. May she be blessed and highly favored. **fm mr & mrs** kwakye.
- JSMS 111 KOJO, please wish all 2nd year home economics students of UEW all the best in their exams as they start this morning, exams **4rm NAFSAT"**
- JSMS 112 My last boy, fred was one last Sunday. My first born, Kobby of KNUST Primary is 7 today. We share in their joy 2day. AMEN
- JSMS 113 HAPPY BIRTHDAY AKYERE OF UNIV OF GH. MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND KEEP AND MAY HE MAKE HIS COUNTENANCE SHINE UPON YOU ALWAYS **FROM DADDY MUMMY ATO AND THE WHOLE FAMILY"**

- JSMS 114 Dr. And Mrs. A. WANTS TO WISH THEIR PRINCESS EDEN of Froebel educational Centre Kumasi, a happy 10th birthday. We wish her all her heart desires and we love her so much. All are invited to the party of praying for her”
- JSMS 115 The girl said a policeman was also involved so, don’t blame only the military. By the way, how could they do 2 rounds apiece on the spot? (**Worlanyo, Legon**)”
- JSMS 116 Bonavista Home by the Atlantic Ocean? I thought its de Gulf of Guinea. I stand to be corrected anyway. **Irene inside Knust.**
- JSMS 117 Kojo, rape is the most invasive crime and the Nalerigu case must be pursued vigorously. To think that any single Ghanaian sees rape as a deserving punishment shows how low our national ethic has sunk. **Sad! Nana, anyaa.**
- JSMS 118 Hello. The issue in bawku is that the NDC has refused to remove AVOKA just like the NPP did With **Mr. MALIK. ABU.**
- JSMS 119 Kojo please wish my dearest, husband; Roland, a happy birthday. I LOVE him more than he can imagine. **Dinah**
- JSMS 120 Kojo who is Doreen andoh paring with tomorrow. **Nana yaw.**
- JSMS 121 The rape is not acceptable; the soldiers should be punished severely.

- JSMS 122 Happy birthday to Bernard, may God grant your heart's desires.
from Ursula, Prince & Akorfa @ 37 Mil. Hosp.
- JSMS 123 This is unacceptable kojo. Those officers have to be expelled and tried. In fact if i had my way i will castrate them with the same gun they molested the girl with. **Abena**
- JSMS 124 KOJO SOME NPP MPS ARE BEHAVING LIKE FOOTBALLERS ON THE BENCH. THEIR ONLY PRAYER IS THAT A PLAYER IS INJURED SO THEY COULD BE SUBSTITUTED TO SHOW THEIR SKILLS. **MARTIN, KSI**
- JSMS 125 Kojo keep dat song rolling i really luv it
- JSMS 126 Da govt must be responsive to the needs of the people.
- JSMS 127 How many rapist can go 2 rounds? Ghana Think Kojo we are being encouraged to register births & deaths but if for a month one can't get his or her certificate with the excuse that computers are not functioning. Where are we going? Oh Ghana Emma. Zeenu.
- JSMS 128 Kojo, why is your focus on the MILITARY HIGH COMMAND when the raping was done by a soldier and a POLICEMAN. What about the police. **Sam, La**
- JSMS 129 HAPPY BELATED BIRTHAY 2 RUBBY AGBOGAH of HO. I pray God grants u many of all your hearts desire, **from an admirer.**

- JSMS 130 Happy birthday to Dr Appiah of Korle Bu Teaching Hospital. May the Lord accomplish all of his purpose for your life. **From your wife Ohenewa.**
- JSMS 131 HI KOJO I WANT TO SAY HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO CHARLOTTE HEATCOTE OF GCB KORLE BU BRANCH. MAY THE GOOD LORD SEE THROUGH THE YEARS AHEAD – (NANA)“
- JSMS 132 Gifty i wish ma dad mr gbemu of sg-ssb kokomlemele happy b'day. May he leave 2 be 99.7“
- JSMS 133 The lady has been able to explain in perfect detail how she was raped, this means she is good at description. So she must be asked to describe the men. Not until she's done that i give the men the benefit of the doubt. **From ata**
- JSMS 134 KOJO, GHANAIS SHOULD ALLOW THE SOLDERS IN BAWKU 2 DO THEIR WORK, THOSE THAT THE CRIMINALS CAME OUT 2 SHOOT DON'T THEY HAVE HUMAN RIGHTS? THEY SHOULD BE TREATED ACCORDINGLY.
- JSMS 135 Kojo please let'ss investigate because we know what the military can do sometimes. Have u 4gotten the 'kumi preku' regime?

- JSMS 136 Kojo has it ever occurred to you that these people are manipulating the press? Please let's be a bit circumspect about these **jerry comm. 20**
- JSMS 137 KOJO I CAN NOT BELIVE THAT OUR OWN SOLDIERS COULD SUBJECT OUR OWN CTZENSS TO SUCH BRUTALITIES IN 21ST GHANA. GOD SAVE US
- JSMS 138 KOJO: 4 rounds of sex will take 2 men at least over 1 hour. Is the girl living alone in a whole house/compound? **yaw, accra**
- JSMS 139 Kojo I am not surprised by this military brutalities The present army commander Blay did same to me when I was teaching at Michel Camp in 1988 at University of Ghana Legon
- JSMS 140 Hi Kojo I thought I will be missing your great morning show when I was posted to a village, but thanks to LUV F.M, I can hear you loud and clear. Keep your good work up. **FROM NAANIBO ERNEST SIENCHEM B/A.**
- JSMS 141 Please say hi to ama of V.V.U. Wishing her good luck in her upcoming exams. **Love, steven**
- JSMS 142 The so-called rape victim's story sounds too glib to be plausible. **Jon. Ho.**
- JSMS 143 A girl raped at gun point will not talk like that. Give the military a break. **Mubarak KNUST.**

APPENDIX E

TRANSCRIPT OF TEXT MESSAGES POSTED TO 'KOKROKOO MORNING SHOW' (KMS)

RETRIEVED 28/12/09

- KMS 001 Sir! DSP Kwesi Fori is somebody I have liked for his professional acumen as a police PRO with lots of respect, but Mr. Ofori has found himself wobbling and unimpressive today because of some peoples' responsibilities. DSP, Kafra. Baf kw od"
- KMS 002 Hi Kwame, I wish DSP Kwesi Ofori will find a way to stay out of de saga his colleagues have created. If he is not careful he will loose his hard earned reputation. Nii. Teshie"
- KMS 003 John- the law and the constitution of Ghana police does not permit them 2 apologize 2 Kinapharma 4 questionable deal."
- KMS 004 If the POLICE ARE RELUCTANT TO ISSUE OUT A SIMPLE APOLOGY THEN LETS GET IT CLEAR IF DAILY GRAPHIC HAVE THEIR OWN POLICE MEN. THE POLICE MUST B CHARGD. Tino, TEMA"
- KMS 005 Kwame I think de police should arrest de informant. Asante, Akyem Banka."

- KMS 006 NDC says they inherited bad economy from NPP but last year Christmas was far better than NDC's "better Ghana Christmas".
By Ken of Tadi."
- KMS 007 From OBOFUO, BANTAMA ALAN FAN CLUB. A few days 2 Xmas, but no money 2 buy my picky cloth, so who can help me 2 get money because Prez Mills has disappointed me this Xmas"
- KMS 008 NDC will still blame NPP even in 2012 for their failure. NDC is not paying contractors that is why inflation is going down. Azaa govt. By ken. Of Tadi."
- KMS 009 Kwame, how can we feel the X'mas mood when U play "ensi me yie" and "maye nhyira" instead of the Winneba Youth Choir's local x'mas carols. (Nomel Senya)."
- KMS 010 Pls Kwame, what is ECG doing about this constant power interruptions it's so frustrating, is Ghana now becoming like Nigeria hmmmnn! Tk ofankor" programs your station is becoming adikan bedi AKIRE B. A. Afiman"
- KMSS 011 JJ, do something before you die you stop talking and leave NDC alone
- KMS 012 Kwame, do you know htat it is not right to play excerpts of an interviews to promote your program or as a jingle without prior approval of the interviewee. Think about it. Dan Dansoman."

- KMS 013 Please stop making fun with this pussy cat interview. You frequently remind us of the murdered children. Its very disturbing. (KOBI-NEWTOWN).”
- KMS 014 Pls pls pls AMA must stop the demolition because timing is very very bad and uncivil. Eld”
- KMS 015 DSP. Kwesi Fori is defending the indefensible.. Ghanaians must be told the truth. EKOW BADE. Cm5 Tema”
- KMS 016 THE GAME GHANA PLAYED YESTERDAY’ WAS SUICIDAL, MY HEART WAS RUNNING LIKE A CHEETER IN THE WOODS. I WAS HOWEVER REWARDED WITH 5 CHILLED STAR BEER AND 2 GORGEOUS LADIES. BLESS U STARS. MORE VICTORIES TO DA STARS, SAME TO ME-SNOWFLAKE, TADI”
- KMS 017 I am glad that Ghanaians are all uniting 4 the sake of soccer and the Black Stars. Let optimism and trust in God be our guiding principles. We should rally behind the young boys because it took a David to kill mighty Goliath. De trophy will surely be ours. Gideon”
- KMS 018 Roman Father K’si, the black stars victory against Angola was ordained by God, d victory will unite our politicians

- KMS 019 Kwame I'm a service person and I will like to use peace fm to appeal to the gov't to try and pay our allowance even December's money has not been paid"
- KMS 020 Patrick Miyella Roman father k'si, Black stars team B is performing wonders just as prez Mills team B own government 4 policy failure. This is matured proper governance NPP must learn from. Willie pee Effia Kuma" from Inspector Asuoba Tannor of Kpeshie
- KMS 021 Ploice wishes Dear wife Linda of NCCE Kibi Happy birthday which falls today 2/12/09."
- KMS 022 Police Administration want 2 sit on our arears. After paying for 4 months, dey want 2 chop de rest. NO WAY. MENSAH OF NEW TOWN."
- KMS 023 This is the day that the Lord has made seven years ago for Chrisantus K. Dery of Christ the King International, that may there be more success, long life, prosperity and above all respectful to all. Have a wonderful Birthday, from your Mum."
- KMS 024 4rm family and friends 2 U NANA KWARTENG APPIAGYEI a. k. a DJ RAMPISCO of WINTECH PROF. INSTITUTE U are celebrating Ur b'day 2day. God bless U soo much."

- KMS 025 I WSH Gifty Awuah of old tafo a hapi b'day. May da gud Lord guidz n protect her. May her age multiply in thousand folds.
- KMS 026 happy x'mas 2 Hon Kwame Despite, PEACE FM n Kwame Sefah, your success is ordained by God n the sky is your limit, keep it up." patrick
- KMS 027 The police have wrongfully trampled on the toes of Kinapharma. They must stop the hypocrisy and render an apology, period. Yaw"
- KMS 028 Everything in the country has become 'go slow' the same way like our president. What a mistake we have for voting back NDC. By Ofosu. Ofoase Kokoben."
- KMS 029 When Ghanaians are talking of high prices n low sales the govt is talking about low inflation. So Pls tell hem to spare us the unpleasant carol "we inherited an ailing economy" Because they are hurting our ears. As for the police, the least said of them the beta. Duke osu"
- KMS 030 Kwame, why is it that our prez always reminding us he is in charge. Is that why for almost 1 yr he is still going round thanking voters. Osei Yaw."
- KMS 031 Chairman, Gud morning, do u know that Mr. Kwadwo Bonsu went there 2 ask sum question concerning how much Ghana balck star's

is going 2 receive as preparation fee? Pls ask Mr. minister for me, as 2 who ordered him 2 do that. Kwame, Sakumono thanks.”

KMS 032 Kwame I thought u asked Tony Yeboah that, should Ghana qualify to next stage what about England who would be our opponent? Yaw Haatso.”

KMS 033 NPP people talk too much they should give way for good governance”

KMS 034 Kwame, so JJ can’t stop casting insinuations at JaK?

KMS 035 Bra Kwame, do u remember the nationality of the coach who took Zaire

RETRIEVED 18/2/10

KMS 036 Ghana is not ready for e-voting simply because we have failed to make popular ICT and other online related programmes in Ghana. Consider ICT as a course of study in our schools and the e-swiciz of our banking sector. Alex, Akyem Abomosu”

KMS 037 Chairman, I’m sorry 2 interrupt your program with different issue. Master kwame, pls help us. WAEC is still pending our result on the internet. Are they trying to hold our chances of entering into the university? WAEC-GH is a disgrace. Emmanuel-K’SI

- KMS 038 If our politicians can deceive us by turning their campaign pledges into nightmare, whom then do we trust for our economic development?. The nation deserves a better deal from the NDC. Kabiesi sek,di”
- KMS 039 Kwame, E-voting will be best to avoid multiple voting in elections, violence, but lack of power supply and illiteracy will cause it.”
- KMS 040 Kwame, if Prof. Mills could get 20,000 dollars for each player why can't the get some money for the 4 years educational plan. They shouldn't joke with our education oooo!. They made me go 2 and half years. Nana.”
- KMS 041 Patrick, our politicians must put aside personal interest and rather concentrate on issues that is sustainable, lets be wise, let's not politicize our education n Health sector.”
- KMS 042 PLEASE DO YOU KNOW THAT THIS YEAR SCHOOL SELECTION LIST HAS NO PREMPER COLLEGE ON THE LIST? FROM ISAAC NEW GBAWE”
- KMS 043 Tell Prez Mills that excessive campaign promises is now a mirage. The commercial drivers who were made to believe that ex Prez Kufour was next to Lucifer and therefore hooked to the NDC'S world of fantasy now we know the reality of the NDC's deception. Kabiesi sek,di’

- KMS 044 Sir! What is de essence of disclosing de figures at de various road and bridge toll collection points so early. Is it to justify de increase or to tell Ghanaians dat de ‘monies e big oooo’ courtesy hon sheik Ibrahim. Baf kw od”
- KMS 045 All Ghanaians must put our trust in God and leave the NDC govt alone. They have nothing good for us except empty promises. By Yaw. Ofoase Kokoben.”
- KMS 046 Mils/NDC should tell us why butchers, farmers, hairdressers etc not represented in the current constitutional review committee this time around. YAWOSE”
- KMS 047 Patrick Miyella Roman father, k’si, prez mills is delivering what he promised Ghanaians, lets change our attitude n unite 4 beta gh.”
- KMS 048 Masta hamza magzin ksi ei n p p u are fighting again why don’t u know that u are in opposition u will remain there fighting 4 us n d c 2 go 4 16 years eyezu eyaza”
- KMS 049 ISSAH OF TOP PROGR INST. ADENTA KWAME WHEN HON. RASHEED PAPAO WAS RESHAFULE BLACK STARS LOSE THE CUP AND THEIR LEGALLY ACQUIRED PROPERTIES THROUGH PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS. HYPOCRITES!”

- KMS 050 KWAME, OUR COUNTRY NEEDS DIVINE INTERVENTION. WE MUST STOP SUSPECTING POLITICAL OPNENTS FOR THE FIRE OUTBREAKS AND CALL ON GOD. BY DANIEL”
- KMS 051 kwami any tin wey get start get end n. p. p for give prof mills n n. d.c a brake, wetin dem want. ghana does not belong to them...jopak komenda
- KMS 052 Pls Kwame, let me use your media to appeal to the gov't to come to the aid of the people of Enchi by equipping our fire men with facilities. We r at risk. Bismark”
- KMS 053 Opanin, what would have happened if JJ's house got burnt before 2009, 7 days after lashing out at JAK or during elections year? Gov't must house JJ in the Jubilee house for the time being. O Y”
- KMS 054 An NPP govt supported Ibn Chambas of NDC. How sad; an NDC govt does not reciprocate! Ie support one of NPP background to fill vacant Ecowas post. From KORINTO.”
- KMS 055 The ku4 administration as the best in the last 40yrs of our political independence. Kabiesi sek, di”
- KMS 056 DAN = SEKONDI There are no meters for new ECG Customers in the TwinCity they should know NO CUSTOMERS BO REVENUE THANK U KWAME”

- KMS 057 Kwame when I hear ur voice every morning I thank God for ur life. I need u to be my friend.”
- KMS 058 Fire at ministry of forairs, fire at markets places, for at the house of jj n.d.c why. You are mocking the holy fire that is why it’s burning you. Anthony akyempim”
- KMS 059 Kwami! The issue of” Gov’t have such us. N. Y. E. P but did not pay us our 3 months pay. Mary tadi.” OKAZO-Who re we deceiving as a pple. De adage united w” Kwame tell the NDC’s that they should stop talking because they have got what they want. From Kojo. Sefwi Bodi.”
- KMS 060 KWAME! WHILE SYMPATHISING WITH THE FORMER PREZ WE MUST ALSO SYMPATHISE WITH THOSE WHO HAVE LOST
- KMS 061 What e dey wan tell we, sey”
- KMS 062 There have been so many revolutions in wold now the whole Ghanaians practice human revolution to change”
- KMS 063 Kwame the water problem is veri badat dome for two weeks now no water so they shouldn’t say is ok is a very big lie”
- KMS 064 Kwame the gallon is not mills gallon but mortuary man gallon. From YAW.”

- KMS 065 I am young not single” Kai sefa, its pay back time 4 NDC but, the unfortunate thing is that the fire is destroying state property. Wo ne nyame enye dwuma. Abelenkpe Hubert”
- KMS 066 YEFIREME OTOO ME FERE FI ELUBO ME SE EGA ASEM NO NPP FO NA MO DZE DIRIN BI NA EREYE”
- KMS 067 With the rampant fire outbreaks coupled with indiscriminate increases of taxes by the ndc govt, posterity will vindicate and confirm Kwami any thing that has starting has end. N. p. p. give prof mills n N. d. c. a brake, what at all they want. Ghana does not belong them”.
- KMS 068 Kwame, I really don’t undsd why we have 2 be in our own country an these lebanes will be sitting on our rights and intimidating us. I need Kwaku baako’s contact or email 2 help me mine is ohenewaa 782000 @yahoo. Com pls its really important.”
- KMS 069 THEY SAY Atta is slow but have they forgotten that when black star is playing with high profile brazil we slow down to win? Leave Atta alone Willie”
- KMS 070 Who born fire? What goes round comes around. God has no hands in this, ask fireman. Frm STEADFAAST, KNUST”

- KMS 071 Watch out the fire will be visiting u the next time. ve u 4gottenthe EC office also got burnt during the NIA exercise. God is watching. 4m unis of petroleum”
- KMS 072 Kwame, why are we allowing MTN to paint the country yellow. It is becoming an irritant. Joe Accra” Atta kenedy book chanse the elephant to the bush, better chansing the elephant. Atta Kennedy follow npp 2008 because he need their securate. Musa”
- KMS 073 Sammy-madina) we ‘re sick & taied of Rawling’s Maadia & Tctice, afrall what?, If he want to move into his 15 bedroom house in”
- KMS 074 We need to organize intercessory prayers for our land. Lord have mercy on Ghana. Sabina, tadi”
- KMS 075 HAPPY BDAY TO NINA. FRM YOUR SWEET SISTER DELA OF ADENTA.”
- KMS 076 Cletus avoka is a quick tempered man in my view so he shd change in this new position for the betterment of Ghana. Kojo, mim b-a”
- KMS 077 WHO BURN DOG. FROM KWAME”
- KMS 078 From Eli I want prez-Mills to sack some of the N.P.P people, Because they are causing fire out-break.”

- KMS 079 Good morning Uncle Kwame I pray 4 u every day I fast 4 u ev Saturday we ar 1 day I want u 2 do the same 4 me 2 get a store room stay belss my Uncle, Ama”
- KMS 080 Sly-to all the NDC leaders in top hierarchy, whenever we call you on a phone answer since we are the NDC foot soldier who fought to gain power but now we have been ignored.”
- KMS 081 Kwame, forget n its fallacy. JJ intensional burnt it with petrol. Even blocks burn into ashes. To have away to live in his agegano empire. Baffoe okainshe”
- KMS 082 Good morning to my landlord, Mr. Morison, Kofi Joshua, Frimpomaa, and Mr. Mante. From Fuseini, Akyem Enyiresi.”
- KMS 083 Kwame Npp cam wit dis big word, outsourcing, Patrick k’si’ i believed there is a false play of the fire out break crisis & govt must order BNI to investigate it, kwame, what is d relationship between u & Yahaya Jamal of Gambia?”
- KMS 084 Gizo ksi is gud dat prof. Mills is playing mafia game with de fishamen pple it will let dem vt 4 npp cam 2010 bcos npp is de nations savia”
- KMS 085 From achimota to suhum and beyond no fuel, kwame pls find out for me, ye bre, from kk”
- KMS 086 Kwame let ghanaians knows that these imf and world bank”

- KMS 087 Br. Kwame, pls send a b'day wish to wife, ivy aka nana yaa of zain in ksi. may she live happily to be a good and a wonderful wife.....from. Emma"
- KMS 088 OH LORD OF MERCY HAVE MERCY UPON DE POOR. THERE IS ABUNDANT OF WATER BUT DE FOOL IS THIRSTY. AND DE POLITICIAN ENJOY DE TAXPAYER MONEY. FROM ALAYE KSI"
- KMS 089 An Npp govt supported Ibn Chambas of NDC. How sad; an NDC govt doest not reciprocate! ie support one of NPP background to fill Ecowas post. From KORINTO." Alex santase please opanin Agyekum which field will agric subject take me to."
- KMS 090 In my view, Cletus Avoka is a quick tempered man so he should change in this new position for the betterment of Ghana. Kojo, B/A
- KMS 091 Good morning Uncle Kwame, I pray for you every day, I fast for you every Saturday. I want you to do the same for me to get a store room. Stay blessed my Uncle. Ama "
- KMS 092 Sly-to all the NDC leaders in top hierarchy, whenever we call you on a phone answer since we are the NDC foot soldier who fought to gain power but now we have been ingnored." Kwame, forget and its fallacy. JJ intentionally burnt his house with ashes. Even

blocks burnt into ashes. To have away to live in his Agyengano empire. Baffoe okainshe”

KMS 093 Patrick k’si, I believe there is a foul play of the fire out break crisis and gov’t must order BNI to investigate, Kwame, what is d relationship between u & Yahaya Jamal of Gambia?.’’

KMS 094 KWAME, OUR COUNTRY NEEDS DIVINE INTERVENTION. WE MUST STOP SUSPECTING POLITICAL OPONENTS FOR THE FIRE OUTBREAKS AND CALL ON GOD. BY DANIEL”

KMS 095 Kwame, any thing that has staring has end. N.P.P. give prof mills n N. d.c.a brake, what at all they want. Ghana does not belong them. Jopak komenda.”

KMS 096 Pls Kwame, let me use your media to appeal to the gov’t to come to the aid of the people of Enchi by equipping our fire men with facilities. We r at risk. Bismark”

KMS 097 Opanin, what would have happened if JJ’s house got burnt before 2009, 7 days after lasting out at JAK or during elections year? Govt must house JJ in the Jubilee house for the time being. Osei”

KMS 098 Kwame any thing that has starting has end. N.p.p. give prof mills n N. d.c.a. brake, what at all they want. Ghana does not belong them.”

- KMS 099 DAN of SEKONDI, There are no meters for new ECG Customers in the TwinCity they should know that NO CUSTOMERS NO REVENUE thank u KWAME”
- KMS 100 Kwame when I hear your voice every morning I thank God for your life. I need u to be my friend.”
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- KMS 103 Kwame tell the NDC’S that they should stop talking because they have got what they want. From Kwabena. Sefwi Bodi.”
- KMS 104 OMENENADOA. KWAME! WHILE SYMPATHISING WITH THE FORMER PREZ WE MUST ALSO SYMPATHISE WITH THOSE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LEGALLY ACQUIRED PROPERTIES THROUGH PREVIOUS THE GAME GHANA PLAYED YESTERDAY’ WAS SUICIDAL, MY HEART WAS RUNNING LIKE A CHEETER IN THE WOODS. I WAS HOWEVER REWARDED WITH 5 CHILLED STAR BEER AND 2 GORGEOUS LADIES. BLESS U STARS. MORE VICTORIES TO DA STARS, SAME TO ME-SNOWFLAKE, TADI”

- KMS 105 I am glad that Ghanaians are all uniting 4 the sake of soccer and the Black Stars. Let optimism and trusts in God be our guiding principles. We should rally behind the young boys because it took a David to kill mighty Goliath. De trophy will surely be ours. Gideon, Komance”
- KMS 106 Roman Father k’si, the black stars victory against the Angola was ordained by God, d victory will unite our politicians
- KMS 107 Kwame I’m a service person and I will like to use peace fm to appeal to the gov’t to try and pay our allowance even December’s money has not been paid”
- KMS 108 Patrick k’si, Black Stars team B is performing wonders just as prez Mills team B
- KMS 109 There have been so-many revolutions in the world now, the whole Ghanaians practice human revolution to change”
- KMS 110 Kwame the water problem is very bad at dome for two weeks now no water so they shouldn’t say it’s ok it’s a very big lie”
- KMS 111 Kwame, the gallon is not mills gallon but mortuary man gallon. FromYAW. Kona”
- KMS 112 Kwame, it’s pay back time for the NDC but, the unfortunate thing is that the fire is destroying state property. Wo ne nyame enye dwuma. Abelenkpe Hubert”

- KMS 113 With the rampant fire outbreaks coupled with indiscriminate increase of taxes by the ndc govt, posterity will vindicate and confirm the ku4 administration as the best in the last 40 yrs of our political independence. kabiesi sek, di"
- KMS 114 They say Atta is slow but have they forgotten that when black star is playing with high profile brazil we slow down to win? Leave Atta alone Willie"
- KMS 115 Who born fire? What goes round comes around. God has no hands in this, ask fireman. Frm STEADFAST, KNUST
- KMS 116 Good morning to Esther of Mamprobi. From isaac of Legon
- KMS 117 Watch out the fire will be visiting u the next time. Ve u 4 gotten the EC office also got burnt during the NIA exercise. God is watching. 4 m unis of petroleum"
- KMS 118 Kwame, why we are allowing MTN to paint the country yellow. It is becoming an irritant. Joe Accra"
- KMS 119 We need to organize intercessory prayers for our land. Lord have mercy on ghana. Sabina, tadi"
- KMS 120 Gizo Kumasi. It's good that Prof. Mills is playing mafia game with the fishermen. It will let the vote for NPP cam 2012 bcos npp is the nation's savior

- KMS 121 From Achimota to Suhum and beyond no fuel, Kwame pls find out for me, yere bre dodo, from kk”
- KMS 122 Kwame, there is some massive demolition exercise at the Achimota overhead. Crowned with police, no one is allowed to go for their belongings except after the destruction. Sad, k asante la paz”
- KMS 123 Last year was full of accidents n now fire... The Holy Ghost fire the NDC sent during the elections to the NPP is now back to sender.”
- KMS 124 NAYYAR OFINSO-Govt should wake up, I suspect foul play. It can't be electric fault, there had been killing of women previously. It's now burning of ministries & other important residences.
- KMS 125 Kwame, pls read my text for me: those people at the toll point when truck drivers get there, they pay 1 cedis no ticket, so government should take note of that. appiah lapaz”
- KMS 125 Kwame, don't u think that all these fire outbreaks has to do with the Nii Duodu holy ghost fire? think about it”
- KMS 126 When I was a kid my mum used to tell me ‘Abonsam’ fireman will come for me if I became naughty. Right now Abonsam Fireman is griping Mother Ghana by the throat! What has Mother Ghana done? Ken. Tema.”

- KMS 127 Craig Murray also says the British gov't gave 38 million pounds for a palm hotel which vanished!! He should name the ndc officials who stole it. Ben"
- KMS 128 Is about time government to speed up the investigations of fire calamities however people take the advantage of president mills leniency and be sabotaging the administration. Alhassan effiakuma"
- KMS 129 After all the ugly noises the NDC parliamentarians have done, they have sheepishly' accepted Prof mills' appointments like a bunch of primary school children. –AKWASI, Abelemkpe"
- KMS 130 Paul Tetteh. Comm.9. Tema. Where are the so called Pastors and Prophets who claimed they predict the victory of President Atta Mills in the 2008 elections, They should come out and tell us where the next fire will occure. God bless Ghana."
- KMS 131 I want to why we have not consulted Antoa Nyama on the fires outbreaks? Prince, Adenta"
- KMS 132 It was this same Craig Murray who wrote that in 2000 some drunken soldiers stormed Dr Afari Djan's house nd chn hostage unless Afari Djan declared the NDC winners of the 2000 polls. Kwame "

- KMS 133 PLEASE FIND OUT FROM THE ARMED FORCES EDUCATION CENTER WHY THE COMPULSORY 15 CEDISS FOR SPECIAL CLASSES FROM 7 AM TO 8 AM DAILY AT BURMA CAMP BASIC SCHOOL. EXTRA CLASSES ARE NOT TO BE FORCED ON ANY PARENT WHEN THE CHILDREN EVEN GET TO SCHOOL THIS IS EXTORTION
- KMS 134 I expect Prez Mills to extend the reshuffle to DCE'S and MCE's. There are bad nuts from these areas. Hamza Effiakuma"
- KMS 135 What an appointment! We should pray, trust and believe in those the government has appointed and I know with the grace of almighty Allah they will deliver. Ali . Allahbar"s
- KMS 136 This is an empty and uninspiring reshuffle. It shows NDC as a tribal political party as appointments do not reflect regional balance-AKWASI, Abelemkpe"
- KMS 137 President Mills you are definitely doing the right things. Am proud of you! Given pace at which you are moving, I have no doubt that you will leave Ghana a better place
- KMS 138 GOVERNMENTS. HYPOCRITES!!
- KMS 139 The govt must seat up because the economy is too hard. YEBREE, EKOM DI YEN