

## **NETSPEAK IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION IN UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC SETTINGS**

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### **Abstract**

*We are living in the age of digital communication as Internet has completely changed the mannerism of language communication in academic settings. This qualitative study aims to investigate the impact of Netspeak on English language communication in university settings. The purpose is to understand how Netspeak affects and alters language interactions resulting in changing the face of academic language communication for teaching and learning purposes. The study analyzes the role of Netspeak in university settings affects the language structure and academic interactions in classroom setting from formal to informal. The semi-structured interviews of English language teachers were conducted to collect data. The findings suggest that Netspeak is an informal form of communication and therefore its role in teaching and learning communication should be minimal while with the excessive use of Netspeak the case of academic communication is otherwise at present. Netspeak cannot be denied but its use must be curtailed to maintain formal communication standards in the academic world.*

**Keywords:** *Netspeak, English language communication, university, academic setting.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

*David Crystal (Crystal, 2001) created the term "netspeak" in 2001. Crystal characterizes Netspeak as 'not only a new variant of English, but a complete new medium, similar to speech and writing in its uniqueness and generality and subsuming a significant deal of linguistic variance.' Netspeak is influencing students'*

perceptions of what academic writing is (Belal, 2014; Hashim, Yunus, Ibrahim, Jeri, & Sukr, 2018). Linguistic patterns and abbreviations have become key aspects of the digital revolution, which has changed academic communication. Researchers state that these changes have led to research on how they affect university language norms and communication styles. It is truism that the excessive use of Netspeak in university educational settings indicates a major sociolinguistic shift resulting from the digital revolution. Netspeak characterized with its informality, frequent use of abbreviations and Emojis has penetrated into wide areas of academic communication. It has resulted in disrupting established formal language norms and communication conventions. Scholars and language teachers debate the implications of Netspeak for academic discourse and pedagogy. It is important to understand how Netspeak influences the way people speak and communicate in academic settings for navigating the complexities of modern academic discourse. Tong (2019) described the many kinds of English Netspeak, including abbreviation, compounding, homonyms, and emoticons. While some see Netspeak as reflecting the evolution of language habits and cultural traditions, others are concerned about its role to challenge academic discourse and writing. The introduction of Netspeak into an academic setting has implications for academic engagement and participation beyond the linguistic implications. Netspeak is said to often blur the boundaries between formal and informal communication styles. The result is changes in academic interactions in educational contexts. It is critical to create an inclusive and effective learning environment for understanding how Netspeak influences student-teacher interaction, peer collaboration, and classroom dynamics. The Netspeak threats pose challenges for teachers who have tasks of preparing students for academic and career success through communication skills. The students need to develop skills to steer a variety of language communication platforms as digital communication becomes more prevalent in academic settings. A pedagogical dilemma occurs in an effort to find a balance between promoting digital literacy and maintaining academic standards and it requires innovative approaches and strategies. This study is conducted to explore the changing landscape of academic discourse and teaching practices in the digital age with the interference and impact of Netspeak as prevailing form of academic communication. The study focuses on thoroughly examining the impact of Newspeak on language conventions, communication patterns, and teaching methods for promoting effective communication and teaching in modern educational settings.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Digital communications has dominated communication and information sharing in academic settings beyond any doubt. Netspeak is becoming increasingly common in university academic settings. Netspeak has become the most attractive part of oral discussions and assignments writing. Netspeak, with its charms like

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*shorthand expressions and abbreviations, has become a fundamental component of academic interactions of both teachers and students. It has a significant impact on the communication activities in university settings. The present study is grounded in digital communication scenario in university academic world.*

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

*Netspeak has certain charms for its users and the same applies to the users in academic settings. It also causes significant challenges to the academic users. These challenges include threats to formal language norms that have no place in formal communication settings. These blessings turn into curses and result in decline of academic language skills and standards. This study aims to fill this gap of exploring the implications of Netspeak integration in educational settings and recommend strategies to avoid drawbacks by examining the complexities of Netspeak use and determine the controlled use of Netspeak in academic settings.*

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

*The study deals with the following specific objectives:*

- 1. To explore the use of Netspeak in university academic setting.*
- 2. To explore Netspeak used in oral and written academic discourse.*
- 3. To trace the impact both negative and positive of Netspeak on classroom communications.*
- 4. To suggest the recommendations for controlled use of Netspeak in university academic setting.*

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

*The study is significant as it explores the use and challenges posed by Netspeak in academic settings. Netspeak has attained a dominant place in English language communication in a university academic setting. These days most of the educational practices through language communication highlight the extended use of Netspeak. This excessive use of Netspeak makes it an integral part of English language communication due to the digital age. On the other hand, use of Netspeak in academic settings presents some challenges for academic communication norms. This concept generates the need for a detailed understanding of language evolution in the digital environment. The purpose of this study is to inform language teachers and learners to effectively control the integration of informal communication like Netspeak in academic settings led by digital communication.*

### **LIMITATIONS**

*This study has some limitations even if it provides valuable insight into the role of Netspeak in English language communication in university academic settings. The participants' bias as individuals may provide socially desirable responses during the interview. The study may not fully reflect its scope due to diversity of experiences*

across academic institutions. The study limits generalizability as the results may not apply to all academic settings.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Ayu (2018), Netspeak is an example of a linguistic revolution since the internet has improved language structures and functions. In contrast to the concerns voiced by these language purists, Wei and Wenyu (2014) claim in their paper that the advent of Computer Mediated Communication benefits language learners and academics by exposing the creative qualities of languages. Netspeak is one of the new language forms, and it is used interchangeably with names like Netlish, Weblish, Internet language, cyberspeak, electronic language, computer-mediated communication, and so on (Maslac, Vasic, & Darrer, 2004). According to Hussein and Lingwood (2012), the impact of Netspeak on students' academic English is threefold: First, a relaxed approach towards Standard English. Second, there is a greater usage of symbols, dots, ellipses, and abbreviations at the expense of capital letters, and punctuation is either absent or minimal. Third, the new digital terminology makes its way into offline writing. Social media has the greatest influence on writing as a language skill (Saha, K., Leadbeater, C. 2019). Netspeak is now fashion in academic communication with all its negative impacts. Academic settings are full of Netspeak use. Baron (2008) is of the view that Internet has severely transformed the manner of people's communication. The role of Netspeak in university academic settings reflects the broader sociolinguistic changes brought about by digital communication technologies. Crystal (2006) in an original, comprehensive study regarding the effects of Internet towards the English Language states that we are on the edge of the greatest up rise of language. Netspeak is the product of digital communication. In recent years digital communication has found its place in all communication activities socially and academically. Hence, traces the development of Netspeak from early internet forums. The journey continues in contemporary social media platforms. The previous studies show that there is a need to understand the use and impact of Netspeak on academic interactions in oral and written activities. In this regard's scholars conduct a study to investigate the impact of Netspeak on university students' academic writing styles. Brown (2023) explores the way students apply digital communication tool like Netspeak to interact with peers and teachers. Patel (2024) explores the prevalence of Netspeak in student assignments regarding plagiarism. The purpose is to address the concerns about academic integrity of students' writings avoiding academic dishonesty. The research also examines the multimodal nature of Netspeak. The study focuses on how within academic contexts students combine visual and textual elements into their digital communications. Lee and Kim (2022) identify the relationship between university students' use of Netspeak and digital literacy skills. The findings show excessive use

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*of Netspeak generates variations in students' ability to critically evaluate digital communication settings. Jones (2019) investigates the intersection of Netspeak and social identity. He examines how linguistic markers within digital discourse reflect and construct individuals' identities in academic settings. Nguyen (2021) investigates manifestations of how Netspeak across different academic disciplines and linguistic populations. The study highlights the diversity of Netspeak practices. Further, implications for understanding language change and evolution in academic contexts are emphasized. Previous research has examined the prevalence of Netspeak in online discourse and its impact on language norms and communication patterns. In educational contexts, research has examined the role of Netspeak in student-teacher interactions and its impact on academic writing. Chen and Wang (2020) use of Netspeak and faculty feedback in higher education institutions. They identify the correlation between the use of Netspeak and English language proficiency of university students. Their study examines the impact of Netspeak on the effectiveness of feedback provided by instructors and the resulting impact on student learning outcomes. Analyzing qualitative feedback practices and student responses reveals the subtleties of communication dynamics and identifies tactics to increase the value and usefulness of feedback in the digital age. Additionally, the also examine the impact of Netspeak on academic integrity in a university setting. The researchers draw on insights from linguistics, education, and ethics to explore ethical issues related to the use of Netspeak in academic writing, assessment, and research. The multifaceted nature of the academic integrity issues raised by digital communication technologies is highlighted as having implications for policy and practice initiatives to promote interdisciplinary, ethical behavior by scholars and educators. The research further examines the role of Netspeak in negotiating the cultural identities of international students studying at Western universities. Through extensive interviews and textual analysis, the researchers examine how the use of Netspeak reflects and shapes students' cultural identities, interpersonal relationships, and experiences of adjustment to a multicultural academic environment. Their findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interactions between language, culture, and social identity construction in diverse educational settings. Lee and Kim (2019) conduct research on university teachers' perceptions and practices regarding Netspeak and digital literacy. Researchers conducted surveys and interviews with faculty across a variety of disciplines to explore faculty attitudes toward Netspeak, their experiences integrating digital communication technologies into their teaching practices, and their views on the importance of digital literacy in higher education. Their research provides insight into the advancement of teacher development*

initiatives aimed at increasing digital literacy and using technology to promote effective teaching and learning. The research conducted by Thangrag (2015) and colleagues investigate Netspeak, a popular shorthand used by internet users, and its influence on student writing. It emphasises the necessity of recognising linguistic facts and avoids making assumptions about casual language usage. The research contends that Netspeak is not linguistically unusual and is common among the younger generation. Despite concerns raised by educators, the research tries to emphasise Netspeak's issue, goals, relevance, and limits, with the goal of making it a part of language rather than a cause of decline.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study was qualitative. The data was collected through purposive sampling. Semi-structured interviews of teachers were conducted. The interviews covered the perspectives of teachers and students. Thematic analysis of data was done. The key themes included the diverse perspectives and experiences of using Netspeak in English communication in the classroom. The focus was on exploring and analyzing the teachers' views about the advantages and disadvantages of using Netspeak in university academic settings. The thematic analysis provided comprehensive understanding of the use and impact of Netspeak in university academic settings.

## **FINDINGS**

### **LANGUAGE CHANGES IN WRITING STYLES**

Qualitative analysis shows that Netspeak elements such as acronyms and emotions are integrated into written academic discourse and are perceived as changes in writing styles. The excessive use of Netspeak dominates academic writings. This change is not acceptable formally in writing though there is compromise on oral communication activities. An agreement among respondents was seen that the advantages of Netspeak formally turn into disadvantages. Writing in formal settings must be kept formal without any compromise on formal standards.

### **DYNAMICS OF COMMUNICATION IN THE CLASSROOM SETTINGS**

The use of Netspeak changes classroom communication dynamics. The dynamics change from formal to informal. Although using Netspeak offers students comfort zone of communication but it also disrupts academic activities. Teachers can serve as models suggesting that explicit guidance and reinforcement of academic language norms are important for the development of effective communication practices by the students. These results highlight the delicate balance between integrating digital communication trends in classroom interactions and maintaining formal academic standards in academic settings.

### **AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE TOWARD NETSPEAK**

The interview results reveal diversity of awareness and attitudes toward Netspeak in university settings. The responses show that some people see Netspeak as

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*a natural evolution of language that reflects the evolving communication environment. Others expressed serious concerns about its threats to undermine language skills and academic standards. These diverse responses highlight the complex nature of integrating Netspeak into oral and written academic discourse. There is an agreement among respondents that a balance should be created to effectively manage linguistic diversity in university academic settings.*

### **DISCUSSIONS**

*The qualitative data analysis revealed that the use of Netspeak by teachers and students though appeared very attractive and advantageous but proved negative and threatening to the formal language skills and standards affecting both oral and written communication skills. The use of Netspeak across academic contexts does challenge formal language communication skills and standards. The study showed the increasing trend in the use of Netspeak encouraging informal linguistic forms in formal communication. Dynamics of communication in the classroom Data analysis provided valuable insight into the complex impact of Netspeak on communication dynamics between students and teachers in the classroom. It highlighted that Netspeak influences verbal interactions. Additionally, this study identifies instances where Netspeak promotes more equitable communication practices by allowing students to freely express their opinions by overcoming barriers of formal language communication.*

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCHES**

*The data analysis of the responses leads to the following recommendations:*

- 1. Digital communication is dominant form of communication is social interactions including academic communication activities therefore the impact of Netspeak should be recognized.*
- 2. Students find a comfort zone by using Netspeak in academic communication therefore they should be given proper guidelines for how to control and avoid Netspeak in formal communication.*
- 3. Netspeak should be integrated in academic communication in oral discussions only and strictly banned in written activities.*
- 4. There is a need to create comprehensive awareness among students to develop restricted attitude towards the use of Netspeak to avoid its disadvantages in formal communication activities.*

### **CONCLUSION**

*There is valuable information about the interaction between Netspeak and English language communication in a university academic environment. The integration of Netspeak highlights the need for a detailed understanding of the evolution of language in the digital environment. By taking a broader view of*

language use and interpersonal interactions, educational institutions can adapt their teaching tactics and language instructions to promote inclusive and effective communication in the digital age. Moreover, it is important for educational institutions to foster a spirit of open communication and collaboration among stakeholders to effectively navigate the complexities of Netspeak integration. To overcome the complexities of Netspeak integration, it is also important for educational institutions to develop a culture of open dialogue and collaboration between stakeholders. Universities can develop comprehensive strategies that promote linguistic diversity and promote common understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by Netspeak while maintaining scholarly communication standards. Through collaborative efforts and ongoing research initiatives, academia can maintain progress and adapt to the evolving linguistic landscape of the digital age, ensuring that languages remain powerful tools for disseminating knowledge and academic research. Going forward, it is important to conduct additional research to address the research gaps identified in this study and provide evidence-based interventions that promote linguistic diversity and academic integrity in university academic settings.

**List of Frequently Used Netspeak in University Academic Settings**

KA	Also Known As	IDC	I Don't Care	TBH	To Be Honest
SAP	As Soon As Possible	IDK	I Don't Know	TC	Take Care
FN	Bye For Now	IMO	In My Opinion	THNX	Thanks
TW	By The Way	ISO	In Search Of	TTUL	Talk To You Later
M	Direct Message	K	OK	TYSM	Thank You So Much
2F	Face To Face	LMK	Let Me Know	WUT	What You Think
AQ	Frequently Asked Questions	LOL	Laugh Out Loudly	YW	You Are Welcome
YI	For Your Information	MP	My Pleasure	4GET	Forget
L	Good Luck	NP	No Problem	TY	Thank You
R8	Great	OIC	Oh I See	VM	Voice Message
HRU	How Are You	OMG	Oh My God	HAU	Ho about you



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