

Title: Difference in Emotional Perception of Grammatically Correct Text Messages between Generations

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The cell phone has rapidly become an integral component of communication. A generational divide in technological fluency has supposedly materialized, calling for investigation into how individuals of different generations emotionally perceive grammatically implied meaning in text messages. Previously, only two studies have examined the role of the period in text messaging (Gunraj et al. and Houghton et al.). The goal of this study is to include lengthier responses ending with or without a period, rather than single-word responses, and examine the relationship between age and emotional perception of such punctuation, thus expanding on previous research to examine the proposed generational difference. I hypothesize that individuals aged between 18 and 27 will perceive exchanges ending with periods as very insincere, with individuals aged twenty-eight or older perceiving the exchanges as most sincere. A survey was administered to 50 participants, 28 of which were 27 or younger. Participants are asked to read text message exchanges and rate the level of sincerity based on their emotional perception of the conversation. Data reveals that individuals aged above twenty-eight years old perceive text messages ending with and without a period as more sincere than those aged twenty-seven and below, particularly shown by total sincerity ($p=0.001$). I conclude that older individuals do not perceive the negative connotation that has become prominently associated with the period. Cooperatively, the youth defining mobile communication standards and development of a novel implementation of grammar in texting ultimately fosters the “digital divide” that leaves users feeling ironically detached from communication.

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