

Alternative Methods for Measuring the Frequency of TXTMSG Abbreviations.

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Recently there has been increased interest in text-message abbreviation processing. Evidence suggests that abbreviations have lexical status, but this revelation raises new concerns. If abbreviations are similar to words, their processing should be affected by variables such as frequency. We used three measures to approximate frequency – Google search counts, familiarity ratings, and knowledge of abbreviation meanings – and investigated their ability to predict perceptual identification of emotion-laden (positive, negative, neutral) abbreviations (e.g., LOL) and pseudo-abbreviations (e.g., LOH). With no consideration of frequency, higher identification rates were found for abbreviations than pseudo-abbreviations and for negative abbreviations than positive abbreviations. When frequency was considered, there was no effect of emotion for abbreviations. Interestingly, only Google counts were predictive of perceptual identification performance and the other approximate measures (familiarity ratings and knowledge of abbreviation meanings) were not significantly correlated with Google counts. These results highlight the importance of developing and utilizing accurate frequency measures in abbreviation recognition research.