ABSTRAK
Artikel ini merupakan suatu kajian hasil penelitian yang berhubungan dengan penggunaan bahasa dalam SMS ditinjau dari sudut sosiolinguistik. Kajian hasil penelitian ini difokuskan pada proses yang mendasari perlunya dilakukan penelitian ini, pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian dan teori-teori yang mendukung dan berhubungan dengan studi yang dilakukan oleh peneliti. Hasil kajian studi ini menunjukkan bahwa masih ada sejumlah permasalahan yang patut untuk dipertanyakan terutama kontribusi penelitian ini terhadap dunia pendidikan dan masalah yang ditimbulkan dari penggunaan bahasa SMS yang tidak tepat jika ditinjau dari sudut kebahasaan (spoken and written language) dan budaya (culture).

Kata Kunci: Sosiolinguistik, Pengunaan bahasa SMS

INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses a research article that is written by an author. The paramount discussion is focused on the process of the research carried out by the researcher. The structure of this paper falls into three parts namely introduction, discussion, and conclusion. This first part is introduction. It presents generally the underlying process of the research and research paradigms used by the author in this study. The second part is discussion. This part discusses and evaluates the things that relate to the research approach including the use of theories that underpin this study. The third part is conclusion. It provides some conclusions that deal with the results of discussion and identifies some issues that are still questionable.
To start with, it will be given some explanations why the author is interested to investigate this problem. It is undeniable that the existence of technology has given a positive contribution within a variety of sectors such as information and technology, scientific and knowledge, health, education, industry, etc. The emergence of various technology devices nowadays has proved that technology has brought a significant influence for human life and knowledge development. In addition, the technology devices that we use currently may be different from the ones that we use in the past. One of examples of technology development in terms of communication namely use of text message through mobile phone. By using this device we send the messages quickly and its delivery cost is relative cheap. However, the length of message is limited. As a result some SMS users have to use some numbers for words or they make word shortening. This case has attracted some researchers to do research that deals with mobile phone SMS usage. Some researches that relate to use of mobile phone text messages have been conducted previously by some researchers such as Crispin (2003) who studies the sociolinguistic of young people’s text messaging; Bodomo and Lee (2004) that examines linguistic features of SMS text in Hong Kong; and Awonsi (2004) that researches about ‘A Social study of SMS text messages as register and Discourse in Nigeria”. In addition, Sala (2006) also investigates the peculiarities of mobile phone usage in Cameroon. From the result of the studies above has arisen the author’s interest to conduct a research that relates to language use of mobile phone SMS particularly in Cameroon and Nigeria in terms of linguistic features and culture specificities. This is based on consideration that very little research has been done by Cameroonian either on the language of NICT (New Information and Communication Technology) in general or SMS in particular. It is also
inspired by the author’s assumption that language varies in relation to the different users; hence the author wants to find out how texters from both countries have succeeded in reinventing conventional linguistics forms to communicate.

In relation to research paradigm the author takes Ling’s perspective. Ling (2001) points out that there are the effects of growing modern technology on language. He adds that ‘modern science and technology constantly need new words and expressions to cover their concepts and ideologies’ (p.25). In dealing with mobile phone SMS usage, the author assumes that the development of technology, communication and information that is so rapid has brought influence on language. The author also considers that there is current thinking in society about the impact of NICT and linguistic variation on the English language. Furthermore he states that many studies have been conducted in the domain of Short Message Service (SMS) that reveals that there are the effects of this medium on language use. From some studies and perspective that the author uses in this study, we can see that the research paradigms that he uses for his research are very little and limited. He does not have concepts, and ideas that can support his research.

DISCUSSION

We have discussed the underlying process of this research and the research paradigm that is used by the author in this study. This following part is discussion about research approach used by the author in this study. I begin this discussion by looking at first on research question that is formulated by the author, and then I continue to discuss some things that relate to research approach such as research design, research instrument
and data analysis. The research question in this study is not explicitly stated, but if we look at the purpose of the research we can see that the problem of this study is about language use of mobile phone SMS particularly in Cameroon and Nigeria in terms of linguistic features and culture specificities. In terms of research question I refer to McTaggart’s (1996) perspective. McTaggart (ibid) asserts that one of things that we can ask in appraising of an educational research report is ‘is the research problem conceptualized appropriately’. In my point of view, the research question of this study is not clear enough stated because in the objective of study the author states that he wants to examine and evaluate the language use of mobile phone SMS in Cameroon and Nigeria from both linguistic and cultural matter, but if we read the abstract of this article we can see that is not the only one problem that the author wants to investigates; furthermore he is also interested to find out how Cameroonian and Nigerian texters have reinvented conventional linguistic and communicative practice to express their thought. After reading this article I do not find the author discusses about conventional linguistic and communicative practice in relation to mobile phone SMS usage. What I find here is the author presents more the data that relate to linguistic features of SMS text usage and discusses a little about the culture specificities that deal with the delivery of SMS texts. From this case I assume that the author does not have a clear problem about the research problem that he wants to research as the research question is formulated well.

Choosing an appropriate research design is important for a researcher. By determining it we will know what kind of research that is used by researcher in order to answer and discuss his research question. In dealing with the research design, in this
research article the author does not mention specifically what kind of research design that he use. That is why we have to think what kind of research is this. However, I presume this research type is the combination of quantitative and qualitative research. Why I consider this research design uses quantitative approach because the author uses figures or numbers and percentage in presenting the data that relate to linguistic features from the sample of SMS texts and put them in the form of table and column. Besides, in collecting data the author also uses questionnaire and observation in which I assume he will describe or interpret the result of data from both these instruments. Therefore, I suppose the research design that the author uses in his study is quantitative and qualitative approach or it could be only quantitative approach. In order to make our assumption is true, we need to look at the research instruments that the author uses in collecting data to answer his research question. In this article the author mentions there are three instruments used for this research namely questionnaire, observation, and sample of SMS texts. Before we furthermore look at these three instruments, we need to know also who population and sample in this study. The population of this study is Cameroonian and Nigerian. The research setting is carried out in four towns namely Yaounde, Buea, Calabar, and Enugu. These towns are chosen because the author considers the culture of SMS text is popular among urbanites. Here we can ask some questions such as (1) how does he know if the culture of SMS text is popular in these towns? (2) has he done preliminary research previously? (3) what does the author mean about the culture of SMS text is popular in these town? (4) does it mean that the culture of SMS text in other towns from both countries is not popular or what he means that many people intend to use more SMS text in communicating instead of direct calling? (5) how many the exact number of
towns that the researcher chooses? (is it two towns for each country or more than two
towns for one country). All these questions are not explained clearly by the researcher in
this research article. In relation to sample of study, the researcher selects university
students and lectures. Again the researcher does not explain why he takes these both
groups as sample of study. In addition, the author does not mention also how many
number of samples for each this group. He only mentions there are 72 informants in this
study.

As mentioned before questionnaire, observation, and sample of SMS texts are
three instruments used by the researcher in this study. Questionnaire consists of 12
questions that are designed by the researcher. The aim of questionnaire is to test
Cameroonian and Nigerian’s knowledge on mobile phone SMS usage. The
questionnaires are given to 72 informants and then the author gives rate 97.22%. In this
case we can ask some questions again; for example (1) is it appropriate use of
questionnaires to answer the research question? (2) is it open questionnaire or close
questionnaire? and (3) what does it mean 97.22%?. Apart from the author does not give
the examples of questionnaire that are given to informants and here it is not clear also
who the informants that are meant by the researcher. Observation is the second
instrument the author uses in collecting data. In this research article there are no
explanations about how the observation is done, where and when the observation is
carried out, who conduct the observation, and who are observed (are they teenagers,
adults, university students, or lecturers?). Another instrument is sample of SMS texts. In
terms of this the author gathers 600 corpuses of SMS text messages but not 300 corpuses
of text messages as mentioned in the abstract of this research. In the abstract of this the author also mentions that he collects 300 SMS text messages from 72 informants from both countries. It is contrast with what the author states in his research report because SMS text message are not obtained from the informants but what is collected from informants is questionnaire. Therefore, it is not clear from whom the author gets the corpus sample of SMS text. In addition, the author does not explain also how the author can obtain the sample of SMS text messages. He only mentions that the messages are downloaded and analyzed on the basis of language features and sociolinguistic variables.

We have discussed about research design and research instrument in this study. The next discussion is about data analysis. In this article the author does not explain how he analyzes the data and what analysis method that is used to analyze those data. In the abstract of this research the author states that in analyzing the data the data he uses some views and theories on written and spoken discourse communication. However, we don not find the theories that are meant by the author. What I find here is the author only presents the data that relate to linguistic features that are found in the SMS message in the form of table and column and writes the number of their percentage without explaining, or interpreting what he means with the percentages. In relation to statistical analysis, According to Spratt (2000) statistical techniques can be classified into two types namely descriptive statistic and inferential statistic. In this case because the author uses the percentage in presenting the data that deal with linguistic features, so I presume that the statistical analysis that is used by the author is descriptive statistic. While for the data that deal with questionnaire and observation the author does not include them in this research
report. Therefore, there are no discussions and data analysis that relate to questionnaire and observation in this article.

In dealing with the use of theories that underpin this study, I find the author does not have strong theories of knowledge that can support his research because he just refers to some studies or researches that are conducted by some researchers in terms of mobile phone SMS text usage. The process that he uses in discussing and answering the research question is not clear enough to give a better understanding for society about the usefulness of this research.

CONCLUSION

From this research article we can conclude that the author has tried to answer and discuss the research question that relate to language use of mobile phone SMS particularly in Cameroon and Nigeria in terms of linguistic features and culture specificities. Nevertheless, there are still many weaknesses in terms of this research process. In addition, it is a bit strange in his conclusions the author does not mention or give conclusions about the culture specificities that he means.

From the result of the research findings that is done by the author, there are some issues that are still questionable. The first question is what the contribution of this research for education world is. The second question is what the problems that emerge because of inappropriate languages use in terms of SMS text for instance English; does it affect SMS users’ English ability whether in spoken or written language. The third second is what the problems that emerge from culture’s perspective in which in this
article the author mentions that both Cameroonian and Nigerian do not only use their mother tongue in using SMS text messages but also they use some other languages such as English, French, and German (does it mean that they will lose their language identity?).

References:


