

# Netspeak.com: How English is changing online

---

Heather Lotherington  
Faculty of Education

---

IRLT presentation 4/11/04

---

# Introduction

---

*sk8Celine* (12:17:10 AM): do u like bon jovi?! (u better say yes!)

*sk8Celine* (12:17:12 AM): :-\*

*honeygarli* (12:17:18 AM): sorry for taking you away from your work

*sk8Celine* (12:17:23 AM): eee!!!!!!!!!!!!

*honeygarli* (12:17:26 AM): jovi is alright

*sk8Celine* (12:17:46 AM): would u go to concert w/ me?! :-D

*sk8Celine* (12:17:56 AM): on reading wk

# Netspeak

---

YAY!!!!!!! *I'm Learning Kanjis!!!!!!* says: **are you popular?**

*It's hard love but it's love all the same. Not the stuff of fantasy but more than just a game.* says: **meh....depends on who with.**  
**i'm friends with a lotta different kinds of ppl**

*It's hard love but it's love all the same. Not the stuff of fantasy but more than just a game.* says: **how bout u?**

YAY!!!!!!! *I'm Learning Kanjis!!!!!!* says: **not at all**

YAY!!!!!!! *I'm Learning Kanjis!!!!!!* says:  
**i have 4 friends in my school at most**

# A bunny hill guide to grammar

---

❖ Grammar = language structure

❖ Syntax (sentence grammar)

- ◆ I ain't got good grammar.

- ◆ \*Ain't grammar got I good.

❖ Morphology (word grammar)

- ◆ \*She is tell a story.

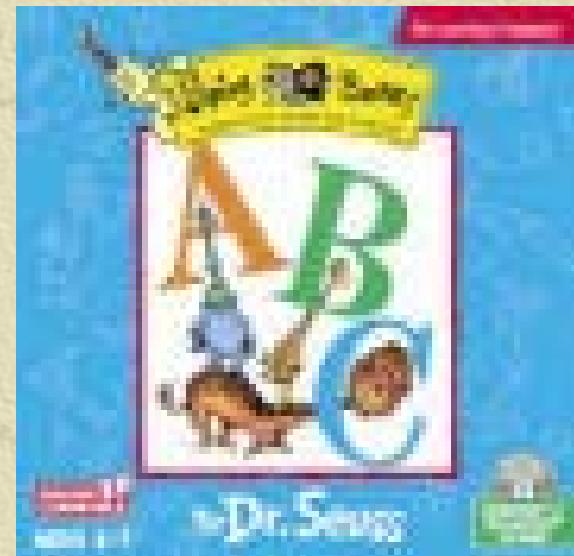
- ◆ I be cool.



# Spelling and other fun stuff: orthography

---

- ❖ spelling = frozen literacy convention
- ❖ nation - nationality
- ❖ nacion - nacionalidad
- ❖ great - meat
- ❖ ghoti = 
- ❖ colour - color



# Punctuation :)

---

✳ “Oh no!”, she exclaimed, “it’s punctuation!”



# English ... nu & improved

---

## ❖ Orthographic conventions

- ◆ *sk8Celine*

## ❖ Syntactic conventions

- ◆ would u go to concert w/ me?! :-D

## ❖ Discourse innovations

- ◆ *honeygarli* (3:59:18 PM): the capitalization always shocks me
- ◆ *sk8Celine* (3:59:27 PM): oh - sorry
- ◆ *honeygarli* (3:59:27 PM): it's like you are yelling at me!

## ❖ Sociocultural conventions

- ◆ *It's hard love but it's love all the same. Not the stuff of fantasy but more than just a game.* says:

# What the d8a say: orthography

---

## Orthographic conventions

Acronyms:	lol	gtg/g2g
Emoticons:	:)	:P    :O*    :@
Abbreviations:	w	plz    b/c    nite
Hybridizations:	sk8	2day
Homophones:	u	4
Onomatopoeia	hahaheeehee	
Nonlinguistic representations:	~~~~~	
Stylistic possibilities:	waaaay	sooooo

# What the d8a say: orthography

---

## ✳️ Synonymy

- Haha
- lol
- :)
- ☺
- ~~~~~
- :D

# What the d8a say: syntax

---

## ❖ Sentential and phrasal acronyms

- ◆ ttyl      wuciwug
- ◆ g2g

## ❖ Optional punctuation in sentence marking

- ◆ can u answer my q cuz I gotta tell my mom

## ❖ Expressive use of punctuation

- ◆ shit!!! I just remembered that I have the stupid word assignment due on Tuesday!:-)

# What the d8a say: syntax

---



Optional capitalization

- its ppl from canada I think selling stuff.



Expressive capitalization

- FAINT

# What the d8a say: discourse conventions

---

## ❖ Asymmetry in formality across conversations

- *honeygarli* (12:18:31 AM): I didn't say I for sure would!
- *honeygarli* (12:18:34 AM): and aren't you going away?
- *sk8Celine* (12:18:39 AM): i dont know i 4sure am
- *sk8Celine* (12:18:43 AM): going

# What the d8a say: sociocultural conventions

---

## Identity markers

$\sim * \wedge *HeAtH\sim * \wedge *$

# What the d8a say: sociocultural conventions

---

## Names

- BinLaden              wittgenstein              tumptymoose
- smile                  waxpants                  Melonhead
- genital herpes              Kooth Decay
- Don't mess with me 2day or ill ghetto u up
- It's hard love, but it's love all the same. Not the stuff of fantasy but more than just a game.
- Roxstar69                  &\*\*^)(^))&%()

# My summ'r hols\*

---

My summ'r hols wr CWOT. B4, we usd 2 go 2 NY 2C  
my bro, his GF & thr 3 :-@ kids FTF. ILNY, its gr8.

Bt my Ps wr so {:-/ BC o 9/11 tht they dcdd 2 stay in  
SCO & spnd 2wks up N.

Up N, WUCIWUG -- O. I ws vvv brd in MON. 0 bt baas  
& ^~~~~.

AAR8, my Ps wr :-) -- they sd ICBW, & tht they wr ha-p  
4 the pc&qt ..IDTS!! I wntd 2 go hm ASAP, 2C my  
M8s again.

2day I cam bk 2 skool. I feel v O:-) BC I hv dn all my hm  
wrk. Now is BAU...

\*This piece was not part of our data. Thanks to Tabitha Burridge for locating this essay, published in *The Sunday Herald*.

# My summertime translated

---

My summertime was CWOT. Before, we used to go to New York to see my brother, his girlfriend and their three screaming kids face to face. I love New York; it's great.

## My summer holidays

My summer holidays were a complete waste of time. Before, we used to go to New York to see my brother, his girlfriend and their three screaming kids face to face. I love New York; it's great.

¶ 2

---

Bt my Ps wr so {:-/ BC o 9/11 tht they  
dcdd 2 stay in SCO & spnd 2wks up N.

But my parents were so worried because of  
the terrorist attack on September 11 that  
they decided we would stay in Scotland and  
spend two weeks up north.

¶ 3

Up N, WUCIWUG -- O. I ws vvv brd in  
MON. 0 bt baas & ^~~~~.

Up north, what you see is what you get -- nothing. I was extremely bored in the middle of nowhere. Nothing but sheep and mountains.

## ¶ 4

---

AAR8, my Ps wr :-) -- they sd ICBW, & tht  
they wr ha-p 4 the pc&qt ..IDTS!! I wntd 2  
go hm ASAP, 2C my M8s again.

At any rate, my parents were happy. They said that it could be worse, and that they were happy with the peace and quiet. I don't think so! I wanted to go home as soon as possible, to see my mates again.

¶ 5

---

2day I cam bk 2 skool. I feel v O:-) BC I  
hv dn all my hm wrk. Now its BAU...

Today I came back to school. I feel very  
angelic because I have done all my  
homework. Now it's business as usual...

# Bibliography

---

- Crystal, D. (2001). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge, U.K.: New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson, J. (2003). Teachers call for urgent action as pupils write essays in text-speak. *Sunday Herald*, 02/03.  
<http://www.sundayherald.com/31826>
- Lotherington, H. (in press). Authentic language in digital environments: Research perspectives in CALL. In J. Egbert & G. Petrie (Eds.), *CALL research perspectives*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Erlbaum.
- Lotherington, H. & Xu Y. (2004) How to chat in English and Chinese: Emerging digital language conventions. *ReCALL* 16 (2), 145-157.