

## Micro Fiction: Its Effects on English Language and Literature

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**Abstract:** There needs to be immediate philosophical and critical attention paid to the conditions (technological, social, media, publishing, etc.) that favour narrative concision, to matters of terminology as well as typology within the larger field of micro fiction, and to its poetics and aesthetics, given the widespread popularity of writing and reading very short fiction. In this paper, we explore the claims that flash fiction is a narrative actualization of postmodern frag mentality and the function & impact of concise narration in general and micro fiction in particular, as well as the relationship between micro fiction as well as the short story and the unique characteristics of this (sub)genre.

**Keywords:** Short story, Micro fiction, Twitter fiction, Flash-fiction, Online communication, Internet slang, Net-generation, social media.

### Introduction:

The way we talk and write within the framework of any textual genre is the product of several elements, and we need not appeal to cutting-edge studies in linguistics, mass communication, or literary theory & criticism to demonstrate this [1]. Synthesis, dissemination, and reception of one's statement undoubtedly rank high on this list. It is also evident that the form, substance, and purpose of literary communication have been influenced by the changing socio-cultural conditions and technological advancements, paving the way for the birth of numerous types of electronic poetry as well as modern digital poetics. Definite literary genres are championed, while others are reimagined or given a fresh lease on life. Thus, there is a connection between social media, genre theory, and the interpretation of everyday life.

Micro fiction, also called as minifiction, nanofiction, abrupt fiction, flash fiction, rapid fiction, smoke-long fiction, card fiction, brief short story, very short narrative, etc., is one of the most music styles in the recently developed conditions [2]. The tablet & mobile screen size constraints, as well as the ordinary reader's limited attention span and desire to read lengthy works, have led modern digital media to favour the short text narrative form. Indeed, the internet age has given rise to a plethora of social networking, communication channels, and electronic applications that allow users to quickly record an experience, (re)transmit it to a large audience for little to no cost, and often receive feedback from that audience, which can then be used to alter the original text. An enhanced reading experience and, more crucially, a semantic expansion of literacy and literature can be achieved by combining text with diverse semiotic resources and representational modes, such as images, signs, maps, sounds, music, videos, and so on.

The aforementioned circumstances encourage immediacy, or at least the appearance of it, as they foster immediate authorial responses to current stimuli in the socio-political environment and the documenting and commenting on pressing social concerns [3]. As a result of the texts' relaxed, friendly, or friendly-like tone, the first narrative person and/or the internal point of view are frequently employed. These narrative strategies are associated with a confessional tone, the "externalization" of a subjective perspective, and a

straightforward, everyday writing style. Consequently, the reader's reaction is straightforward as well. It can be in the form of a comment on the text, a demonstration of like or dislike, sharing the text, viewing statistics, etc., or the creation of a new text inspired by the original; this feedback has the potential to alter the original texts, fundamentally altering the author-reader dynamic as well as the communication circuit [4]. This new "collective intelligence" and "participatory culture" are the results of the media convergence of the modern era. However, the quality of the produced texts may suffer due to a lack of critical distance from the creative reason and the larger subject resulting from the immediacy and rapidity with which the experience is recorded and the (supposedly) direct transmission of the impressions it creates. It may also lead to a fixation on minutiae, an overemphasis on the first-person perspective, a projection of hostility, a lack of nuance, a crude or clumsy style, etc. Influential authors have demonstrated that these "pitfalls" can be sidestepped with great effectiveness in condensed narratives, including Borges, Beckett, Ishiguro, Munro, Davis, and a number of others. The fact that short works are well-suited for study and practice in creative writing & literature courses and are the subject of numerous international writing competitions also contributes to their widespread acclaim.

Micro fiction, which I will use as a hypernym term for the very short fiction, iv generates many research questions about not only its thematic and morphological features, narrative methods, etc., or, in a nutshell, its poetics, as well as the repercussions it may have on the very concept of narrativity as well as the reading of narrative [5]. One could do worse than to compare the narrative structure of micro fiction to that of the short story, which appears to be its closest sibling, in an effort to establish a rough description of the term. According to a famous phrase from Edgar Allan Poe's essay "The Theory of Writing," the short story is a piece of creative prose read "atone sitting" (1846). However, the issue of length is not so much important in and of itself, but is related to other matters, such as the impact the text has on the reader. "If any literary work is too long to be peruse at one sitting, we must be satisfied to dispense with the enormously important effect deducible from unity of impression—for, if two proceedings be required, the indiscretions of the world interfere, as well as everything like entirety is at once destroyed," Poe writes in the aforementioned essay [6]. Therefore, an important effect of shorter texts is to encourage a sense of unity or totality in the reader.

Poe had said quite similar things a few years before. In particular, he writes that short prose narrative emerges as the most significant arena of practice for the best writing talent in prose in a critical comment on Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Stories* that appeared in *Graham's Magazine* in May 1842. Poe explains that, in contrast to the lengthy novels, his "short tales" can be read "in one sitting" (anywhere from half an hour to two hours), giving the impression of completeness and cohesion to the reader. The author of these works may achieve his goals because, for the duration of the reading experience, the reader's mind and emotions are completely under the author's command. No fatigue or disruptions have resulted in any outside factor [7].

Brander Matthews, in the tradition of Poe, maintains that "a Novel and a Novelet differ only in length: a Novelet is a small Novel." However, there is a significant distinction between a novel and just a short story. For all its brevity, a true short story is more than just a story. The intrinsic cohesiveness of an effective short story is what sets it apart from

a novel. [...] A short narrative focuses on one person or thing, or on one emotion or set of emotions evoked by one incident.

In this way, "the Short-story is the single effect, entire and self-contained, while the Novel is necessarily fragmented into a succession of episodes" (Short-story is the one effect, complete and self-contained). Such generalizations are supported by contemporary theories and criticisms of the short story. Clearly, there is a vast variety of short story writing, which has undergone substantial changes from its inception to the present day, especially under the influence of modernism and postmodernism, in terms of subject matter, narrative techniques, form, emphasis (e.g., in plot or psychology/climate), targeting, etc. The reader is led to believe that they have a firm grasp on the whole before they have a firm grasp on the parts, and this deception is fundamental to the short story's success. Its narrow focus and the prospect of a single, unbroken reading experience allow the reader to view the work as a coherent, aesthetic whole. Moreover, short stories typically focus on the development of a single or small cast of characters through a series of defining moments that are essential to developing their characterization. Rough character sketches, linear storytelling, temporal and spatial cohesion (or at least a lack of digression), a lack of repetition, exposition, and description, and a surprising climax are all hallmarks of the short tale. Short works are more likely to employ "poetic modes," such as metaphor, synonymy, connotation, symbolism, and lyricism, and to have dense style, high formalization, implication, narrative economy, tight & coherent action.

### **Literature and Modern Technology:**

Literature is evolving in step with the rapid development of technology. Instantaneous digital interactions seem to be the future of social communication now that social media have emerged. Literature is shifting toward shorter and more frequent messages as readers' emotional, temporal, & spatial interaction with books shifts. Flashing fiction, mini-fiction, minute stories, unexpected fiction, hint fiction, mobile telephone fiction, and twitter fiction are all names for the same thing: a new literary genre consisting of extremely brief digital stories. These stories are short because of character or word limits, as their names imply. For instance, Twitter has just expanded their character limit for tweets from 140 to 280. It's no surprise that digital short stories don't have the standard story elements like a setting, characters, plot, conflict, or resolution [8]. The lack of detailed setting and character dialogue in short digital stories forces readers to draw parallels between themselves and the protagonist from real life. Because of this, writers sometimes resort to filler techniques such as acronyms, abbreviations, puns, alliterations, rhythm, and even mistakes to make up for the absence of specifics. Short-story proponents argue that social media encourages a high-brow sort of literary performance.

Readers' attention spans are getting shorter and shorter, which may help explain the rising popularity of microblogging. The authors hope to pique the interest of their readers, even if only a little bit. Some critics of the short story genre dismiss postmodern digital stories as plotless anti-stories and liken them to a trivial trinket designed for superficial minds [9]. Purists of the written word worry that our diminishing linguistic skills are contributing to the trend toward shorter texts. Some people believe that the language of this generation has been ruined because of social media. It's worth noting that very brief stories have been written before. Famous writers have used very few words in their writing before. The famous "For Sale: baby shoes, never worn" by Ernest Hemingway is just six words long. However, the digital storytelling's popularity has skyrocketed the sharing of short-short stories. The impact of technology on both literature and language has been profound.

Further technological progress will unavoidably lead to the development of new dialects as well as literary genres. It is up to us to keep Standard English pure and alive in the face of shifting fashions.

### **Writing on Weibo as Dialectic in a Technological Setting:**

Micro fiction is "a mini-story published in the form of a Weibo posting," according to Baidu Baike, the Chinese Wikipedia. This is "vivid evidence of the extension of the value of the Weibo," they add. Sina broadly defines micro fiction as stories with a word count of 140 or fewer. Although these definitions are overly simplistic, especially when applied to micro fiction in post-socialist China, they do serve to highlight the significance of Weibo as an inseparable natural ecosystem under which micro fiction exists, as well as microns as one of micro fiction's trademark features. Indeed, micro fiction is a form of several emerging micro-narratives like microblogs, micro-cinema, as well as micro-radio, all of which share similar qualities of being compact, brief, and airy as well as having a home on the World Wide Web. 4 Online-literature, screenplays, calligraphy & paintings, photography, and so on have all benefited from the proliferation of micro-narratives thanks to events produced by Internet businesses like Sina's Web Culture Festival in 2012. Since then, a plethora of micro-narrative subgenres have emerged, from micro-interviews to micro-music to micro-events and performances to micro-drives and micro-groups and micro-bars and even micro-philanthropy & micro-girls. In this day of ubiquitous Internet connectivity, many young netizens consider it hip and trendy to own a micro-version of just about anything they can imagine. Even though it would be impossible for us to analyse each and every one of these tiny stories, their Internet-centricity and micro-scale are crucial to our understanding of micro fiction.

Micro fiction owes a great deal to the short-short tale subgenre and the emergence of Weibo as a new digital realm, both of which may be located within the broader context of generic development. There is a lot written about short stories, but not nearly as much about micro fiction. Writers and academics don't seem to agree on how to define "short-shorts," as evidenced by the wide range of terms used to describe them. These terms range from "flash fiction" and "sudden fiction" in English to "palm-size story," "pocket-size story," "smoke-long narrative," and "ant story" in Chinese. Furthermore, while brevity is a primary concern in these works, critics have divergent views on what constitutes a short story. This is a hard cap on the story's word count, below which the reader may be exposed to a noticeably different story in a shorter format. We think this is a bit of a non-issue because word count is never used in isolation to identify a literary genre. Although Weibo has imposed a 140-character limit on micro fiction, this restriction is less of a generic feature in the literary sense and more of a technological determinant that is still undergoing ongoing evolution and has little to do with literary quality. In the case of micro fiction, the mandated short size and the limited writing space that this form offers might stifle rather than inspire creativity, while simultaneously compelling writers to be more rigorous & experimental with their work. Regardless, micro fiction's special ecological circumstances necessitate that it be conceptualized more fruitfully within a broader sociocultural context than within a literary paradigm. That is to say that the Internet, and by extension Weibo, offers a much more nuanced and expansive arena in which the dialectics of micro fiction are shaped.

In terms of its medium, micro fiction is similar to the Internet literature that is actively changing the literary landscape on a global scale. Netizens, either collectively or alone, have actively explored the numerous possibilities of literary creation in this virtual realm, from BBS postings to writings on and for mobile devices to submissions to special literary columns or websites to blog writings to Weibo and longer Weibo writings. To say that the Internet has provided an infinite space with vast potential for the expansion of literary expression may not be an overstatement, given the massive amount of online writing that is still happening in China and the huge popularity that it maintains, especially among the already population of netizens.

Micro fiction takes advantage of the Internet's substantially expanded space. Despite its primary function as a social media site, Weibo also offers a platform for micro fiction that is unavailable in any other online medium. Sociologist Dingxin Zhao, in a recent lecture at Shanghai's East China Normal University and an interview with the city's Dongfeng Daily, calls Weibo in China a "extra-democratic space" because, while it has contributed to democratizing Chinese society by providing a safer space for netizens to voice their opinions, it is also susceptible to manipulation by various influences, including authoritarian and populist ones. As Zhao himself acknowledges, this political arena is just one of many opened up on Weibo, and we believe it has far-reaching effects on the literary realm. Weibo's large user base and multi-directional structure first make it an ideal venue for widespread micro fiction production. The sheer volume of entries in the aforementioned micro fiction contests is evidence enough of the genre's popularity. Because virtually anyone with a Weibo account can post their "work" on the platform, the bar for literary creation and publication is largely lowered by Weibo. Since it's so simple to get your work published, a lot of people will probably take part. It's true that this can lead to sloppy work and the development of bad writing habits that prioritize popularity over quality. However, this medium provides a useful outlet for some previously undiscovered writers who might not have had any other venues in which to share their work with the world. In truth, many high-quality works may be found all over the internet.

### **Social Media and Text:**

Speak Communicating with others allows us to share our ideas, make relationships, disseminate knowledge, grow intellectually, and build upon the efforts of others. The advent of social media has completely altered the way individuals communicate with one another and opened up communication with people all over the world. Tags, likes, retweets, and reposts are just a few of the most widely used elements on social media that facilitate instantaneous communication. The reach of digital social media is boundless because of this simplicity of sharing. Textese, Digi-talk, Message, Tech-speak, & Internet slang are all terms for the short-term dialect that have arisen as a result of social media. Text talk is the primary means of communication for the net-generation in both their personal and professional online connections. Text-speak, much to the chagrin of educators and parents, often features quick bursts of abbreviated content peppered with sentence fragments, misspelled words, and emoticons.

Text speak borrows grammar and vocabulary from Standard English but otherwise mimics informal speech. Text-speak is shorthand for texting on mobile devices; it makes use of acronyms and simplified spellings. The net generation has adapted the English language through the use of abbreviations, omission of non-essential alphabets, substitution of

homo-phones, and de-emphasis of suitable punctuation and capitalization in order to participate in quick dialogues and demonstrate their online presence. Words commonly used in Text-speak are included in Table 1. Teens' adoption of text-speak may also be seen as an attempt to limit the exposure of their private conversations to the general public. Furthermore, Text-speak could be seen as an expression of defiance against linguistic authority.

Text-word speaks shifts have crept into regular English usage. It's not surprise that it would be challenging to learn regular English if using textual alterations was seen as common and accepted. Using appropriate language and grammar when communicating is what is meant by "standard English." It's the kind of speech that's tolerated in places like courthouses and universities. Academics and parents have a difficult time dealing with text-speak since it disregards the conventions of Standard English. The blurring of the line between official and informal writing has educators worried that shortened text rife with misspelled words & grammatical errors is making its way into students' projects. A study found that college students who texted had worse levels of professionalism in their written communication and reading accuracy. Users are moving away from reading and writing in Standard English, and as a result, grammar and language are collapsing. Fundamentally, the application of Standard English grammar norms in writing seems to have fallen into disuse.

The negative effects of Text-speak are well known, both to students and their parents. Many studies have shown that using Text-speak has negative effects. For instance, one study found that students who frequently texted also had trouble remembering Standard English, while another found that students who frequently engaged in informal online conversations also avoided a higher level of vocabulary. These results were confirmed by a second investigation. Sixty-four percent of students used casual language, fifty percent admitted to making mechanical errors (incorrect grammar and punctuation), thirty-eight percent admitted to using texting shorthand, and twenty-five percent admitted to using emoticons. These numbers show that pupils are getting increasingly careless with their spelling, grammar, and punctuation, which is to be expected.

Teachers, parents, and students can all agree on one thing: good writing skills are crucial for future success in school and the workforce. Those who can effectively represent their firm or school in written communications, such as employees or students, are more valued and likely to advance in their positions than those whose imprecise writing style creates doubt, confusion, legal responsibility, and shame. Studies emphasize the significance of strong writing skills for future achievement. Researchers have polled educators, students, and parents about the value they place on strong writing skills. The findings showed that 92% of 2,462 educators agreed that successful individuals must be able to express themselves clearly in writing. Similarly, 83% of parents and 86% of students agree that teaching their children to write well is crucial if they want their children to succeed in life. The parents expressed worry and mentioned that the requirement for strong writing skills is higher now than it was twenty years ago. Despite teachers' best intentions, many students still use incorrect grammar and spelling when writing or speaking in contexts other than school. By analysing 858 excerpts from the English Language Exam given to 16-year-olds between 2004 and 2016, researchers looked to see if there has been a shift in the formality of student writing over that time. The findings revealed that students' writing became more informal between the two years, with this shift being most pronounced among students

with lower levels of academic achievement. The fact that today's youth are more likely to put pen to paper than their counterparts of a generation before is remarkable. However, they appear to have trouble remembering how to properly use Standard English grammar rules. However, studies have also shown that elementary school students who text with fewer punctuation mistakes have a better grasp of Standard English spellings and a faster processing speed when reading written English.

We may put our differences aside and acknowledge that the internet generation primarily communicates through texting and that technology is here to stay. It's up to parents and educators to decide whether to embrace Text-speak as a proficient linguistic innovation or treat it with suspicion. It's crucial to remember that people naturally pick up on the language and accent of those around them. Therefore, the net-generation can't be faulted for learning to comprehend, evaluate, and skilfully respond to Text-speak messages in order to exchange ideas, experiences, and stories. It's possible that the new language advocated by today's digital natives could be categorized as a subset of English, similar to how Standard English is a subset of English. Researchers discovered an intriguing link between texting often, reading proficiency, and correct spelling. Another study found no link between kids' use of Text-speak and their later proficiency in written or spoken English. These pupils' ability to construct valid arguments, articulate clear theses, and organize their ideas coherently provides some solace to worried parents who worry that their children's exposure to Text speak is diminishing their command of Standard English. The tide is turning; some sociolinguists now see Text-speak as a valid literary form. Some words and phrases from Text-speak have also made their way into online editions of standard English dictionaries. Therefore, teachers should stop dismissing Text-speak as a bad language and start treating it like a new subset, genre, or branch of the cultural and social language. According to Birner (1991), it is incorrect to characterize any dialect as "sloppy" or "lazy" because all dialects, including those spoken by people who are not fluent in the standard language, adhere to certain standards. The rules tell us what language actually is, rather than how it should be. Some people think that critical literacy should include an examination of all forms of communication, whether or not we find them worthwhile, on the grounds that any form of communication represents engagement in society.

If a child in the United Kingdom is eight years old and is fluent in both Standard English and Text Speak, they are termed bilingual. Students can learn when it's permissible to utilize Text-speak if the language is recognized as a dialect of English. After all, adjusting to the digital world requires us to retrain our brains to take in new information in a different way. New words are constantly being added to the English language, many of which are encouraged by technological developments and help to improve clarity, inventiveness, and the ability to express oneself clearly and concisely. Considering how ubiquitous Google's search engine has become, the expression "google it" has essentially replaced "search it" in common usage. Therefore, it might be beneficial for both students and parents if teachers actively encourage the use of new vocabulary in Text-speak. Technology is here to stay, and the majority of the net generation communicates mostly through text. It's a tough call for parents and educators to decide whether to embrace Text-speak as a skilled dialect or treat it with suspicion as an unorthodox foreign tongue. Teachers and parents need to understand text speak for what it is: a specialized dialect that necessitates advanced linguistic knowledge to decode. Teachers and parents must adapt

their language skills to the uncharted realm of Text-speak if they are to understand their children's and students' textual conversations on the internet. Thankfully, there are Text-speak translators & manuals available to assist parents in understanding their children's online communication. The only sensible response to the current climate is to recognize Text-speak as a sophisticated language.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, the micro fiction genre's formation and cultivation are intrinsically linked to the alteration and/or expansion of the concepts of narrative, literary, and textual qualities. Rather than a fixed, pre-crafted product' by a literary genius, which an almost pathetic reader is meant to consume at a later stage, literature is increasingly seen and used as a means of enmeshment in an energetic procedure involving an ongoing creation and reception of a web of texts, with the roles of creator as well as receiver being often alternate. Thus, we see literalness as an act(ion), within a larger communication process that includes not just finished texts, but also texts-in-the-making and events that are created, actualized, and activated as they are performed and received. Therefore, the literary "product" can be more or less concrete, more or less ephemeral, more or less fluid, and more or less interactive. It may make use of one or more semiotic resources; it may be permanent or temporary, with its duration according to the period during which it is received.

According to Jakobson's model, digital technology has affected all aspects of verbal communication. More and more people now have the opportunity to become addressers, composers, and publishers of text, with the result being the potential of instant publication in contemporary electronic channels. This means that more people can be targeted because they can get messages at any time, from any location, and at a low cost. More importantly, however, a new, dynamic concept of printed text emerges, one that is not restricted to traditional watertight, stable, hermetic, and definitive print forms but which instead embraces contemporary flexible, fluid, momentary, & changeable Designs & Re-Designs of meaning, mirroring the instantaneous, subjective connection of the authors to their surrounding world in an ongoing and dynamic search for meaning. As a result of the proliferation of social media platforms and online resources, genre has become a fluid and uncertain concept. New digital texts and hypertexts, unrestrained by the constraints of traditional editorial or publishing methods, can be composed, published, negotiated, marketed, and promoted through any number of these channels and media platforms. The ways in which fiction writers reach readers have evolved as a result of technology advancements such as market research and online advertising. While there are still many examples of collections of micro fiction written to be printed in book form (or texts composed in/for other media and afterwards published as a book), the typical individual or collective publication practice for micro fiction is gradually connected to electronic means rather than the "canonical" book format and its conventional claim to authority.

What seems to be the form's "chief cultural appeal: its democratizing & globalizing capacity," is supported here. By harnessing the potential of modern media, texts of micro fiction and, in particular, flash fiction, allow readers to enjoy the "little picture" in fleeting moments that might otherwise go unnoticed. It is a protean, imperfect, fragmentary, and utterly unknowable self and world that one writes and reads about; however, they have emerged as apt means for constructing micro-meanings that are sometimes incomplete but



illuminating in authors' and readers' attempt to comprehend the self and the world they inhabit.

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