

## Review

König, Katharina & Bahlo, Nils (ed.)

*SMS, WhatsApp & Co. Gattungsanalytische, kontrastive und variationslinguistische Perspektiven zur Analyse mobiler Kommunikation*

Münster, Monsenstein und Vannerdat, 2014

*SMS, WhatsApp & Co. Genre- and Variation-based Contrastive Perspectives on the Analysis of Mobile Communication*<sup>1</sup> is a 220-page volume comprised of ten well-documented contributions providing not only a deep insight into the topic of text messaging, but also discussing currently very popular and frequently used competing services such as Facebook and WhatsApp.

Most of the papers outline the current state of research regarding mobile communication and mainly center around SMS communication as presented from different perspectives. Some of the contributions focus on Facebook messages and the use of WhatsApp.

The originality of this volume lies in the diverse approaches through which these issues are probed. In addition to classical content design, three papers also feature a contrastive and comparative analysis of German and Chinese SMS communication. Short messages are presented from various viewpoints: the volume's first paper highlights the current state of research, but also further analysis perspectives. The second contribution examines new ways of exploring the subject of SMS and analyses short messages expressing gossip. The author traces back how



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1 Our translation.

the linguistic characteristics of gossip were transferred from spoken language into written communication.

A further article provides a comparative analysis of conversation starting sequences in text messaging and private messaging on Facebook, two forms of communication made possible by mobile phones and computers that bear the characteristics of orality in written texts. The analysis of text functions in messaging also is of crucial importance. One of the papers of the volume focuses on this subject and dissects the contact function of text messages, seen as a means and medium of keeping in touch, focusing on text messages written to make appointments.

The three papers examining German and Chinese text messages provide an intriguing and original comparative and contrastive analysis. One of the papers identifies the criteria for expressing reproaches in German and Chinese text messaging, the second one investigates the way in which people address each other in German and Chinese text messaging, while the last paper of the three highlights code switching in SMS use. All these comparative articles bring the similarities and differences between the two systems to the fore.

The concluding paper of the part dedicated to SMS use offers a gender-specific analysis of SMS communication based on the example of salutation and closing formulas in order to probe the existence of stereotypes in the way women and men use text messages. The last paper of the volume sets forth an analysis of the linguistic variety of text messages with regard to the use of dialect in the case of a group of speakers from the Low German language area. The paper dedicated to WhatsApp, the new form of communication, backtracks its rise, linguistic characteristics and differences to text messaging, but also underlines the way in which technological progress are mirrored in mobile communication.

The style of this volume is clear and elevated. Each paper provides extensive conclusions and research possibilities, but also varied lists of references for further reading. This volume will most certainly enthrall readers with a scientific interest in new media, mobile and computer communication, but can also be used as a starting point for further analyses from different perspectives.

**Reviewed by**

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