Book Review

Txtng: The Gr8 Db8

Reviewed by N.P. Kurtböke, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Istanbul, Turkey

WHY REVIEW A BOOK WRITTEN IN 2008?

Type TEXTING as a search word and any search engine will yield surprises including cute and warm ''Texting Gloves'' that will keep your ''fingers free'' to enable you to text. In search of course material for *Sociolinguistics*, I had an opportunity to return to Prof. Crystal's TXTING THE GR8 DB8 of 2008 and found a well-known linguist's early reaction to this digital phenomenon as significant.

The observations included in TXTING THE GR8 DB8 determine the course of future research for 'digital linguistics' and many of the questions listed still remain unanswered. Prof. Crystal predicts 'many issues will become clearer in due course' as TEXTING opens up new avenues of investigation, for example, ''Text dialectology is going to be a big subject one day'' (p62).

Linguistic research is yet to come up with new methodologies to discover what happens when people compose a short text message and how texting is affecting the way people think. TEXTING is spontaneous, rapid and requires no professional tuition, it's elliptical in nature, and realizes the graphic potential of writing. Hence, it is classified as a new GENRE that came out of a combination of letters and numbers with differences emerging gender-, region-, ethnicity- and dialectwise. Thanks to TEXTERS, BILINGUALISM has also taken on a new meaning; 'are you able to text?'

TEXTING, Prof. Crystal also observes, is changing WRITING CONVENTIONS adding new dimensions to language. New standards and criteria have been developing and keen texters pay attention to these features. The TEXTING community has become its own regulatory body and this development may be seen as a form of Language Planning usually defined as an organised activity to regulate language issues in a society (de Vries 1991). Such language issues may include the creation of new alphabets, the codification of morphology, standardization, spelling reform, and language maintenance. A two-tier model describing the activities of language planners was proposed by Haugen (1966, 1983, 1987). On the SOCIAL LEVEL, *Status Planning* involved language spread nationally and internationally as promoted by politicians and bureaucrats. On the LINGUISTIC LEVEL, *Corpus planning* involved linguists and lexicographers who resolved normative questions of correctness, efficiency, and style.

Are we talking here about two conflicting norms or is there no 'linguistic novelty' under the sun? Prof. Crystal traces all texting features in use back to their historical beginnings but warns the research community against studying single texts; 'Rather the notion of text dialogue has to be taken on board'' (p58).

From this brief history of TEXTING, we already see that dictionaries of ACRONYMS and ABBREVİATIONS have appeared on the market and new bilingual lexicons of standard and texting languages are on the rise. Attitudes towards the language activities of TEXTERS vary and the public user is making room for both the 'old' and the 'new' in the message. This digital phenomenon currently lacks objective criteria and only new lexical research will show which of the TEXTING vocabulary items may be making their way into 21st century dictionaries.

If the criterion is the degree of reception and assimilation by the language, how can this be measured? Any frequency counts of the "old" and "new" TEXTING words?

When placed within a Language Planning framework, such as the one proposed by Haugen (1987), and when considered in relation to social media activities in many other countries, the changes which have taken place in the lexicon since TEXTING officially began in 2001 may seem less dramatic than the way they seemed when TXTING THE GR8 DB8 appeared almost a decade ago. However, the individual linguist's and lexicographer's attitude to those linguistic changes introduced by TEXTERS may contribute to the number and the choice of the words to be taken into bilingual dictionaries. Those of us who lived through the birth of TEXTING have come to see that the vocabulary we regarded as valuable is not necessarily favoured by the younger generation.

REFERENCES

Cobarrubias, & Fishman,; J. (Ed.), (1983). *Progress in Language Planning: International Perspectives*. Mouton de Gruyter.

Haugen, E. (1966). *Language Conflict and Language Planning*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. doi:10.4159/harvard.9780674498709

Haugen, E. (1983). The Implementation of Corpus Planning: Theory and Practice. In Cobarrubias & Fishman (Eds.), Progress in language planning: International perspectives (pp. 269-289).

Haugen, E. (1987). *The Blessings of Babel: Bilingualism and Language Planning*. Mouton de Gruyter. doi:10.1515/9783110862966

Kurtböke, N. P. 1996 The Impact of Corpus Planning on Bilingual Dictionaries. Proceedings of EURALEX 1996 (Vol. 2, pp. 591-596). University of Göteborg, Sweden.