

HASHTAGS – A NEW TEXTUAL CONSTRUCT

by Tina Thode Hougaard

This paper considers the extent to which the hashtag may be defined as a new textual construct. Though there are various ways of using hashtags as keywords to a Tweet or for other meta-communicative functions, I assume that all hashtags relate to the rest of the Tweet in a specific way. Examining this relation between the hashtag and the Tweet in the context of Relevance Theory, I argue that the hashtag is a paratext that meets media-specific constraints, in that it transcends the single Tweet and connects it with other Tweets of relevance. I conclude that the hashtag is to be understood as a structural and semantic transmedia connector.

1. Introduction

On Twitter, the hashtag is used both as a tool for making a writer's post searchable (Zappavigna 2015), and as a marker and indicator of the context, i.e. as an explanatory and illuminating framework for the whole Tweet. Via hashtags, the writer guides the reader through the decoding of the entire post, by identifying its overall theme. Often, hashtags also help the reader to decipher the writer's intention in writing the text, and by extension, the modality of the post, i.e. whether it is intended to be true or false, or meant to be taken ironically. In this article, I will argue for an understanding of the hashtag as an aid towards decoding the meaning of a Tweet, and that this latter process obeys the principles of iconicity and relevance (Ulbæk 2005: 36). I will further argue that the hashtag, together with the rest of the Tweet, establishes a textual microsystem in which a sense-making coherence between the hashtag and the rest of the text in the post is postulated. To use a hashtag is to assume that, since the hashtag and the other parts

of the post are placed in the same textual microsystem, the reader will intuitively understand the system as a comprehensible whole. The hashtag affects the way we understand the rest of the Tweet, and the Tweet makes specific understandings of the hashtag possible and plausible. It imitates the cognitive work being done while reading headlines in a newspaper, or – in a more micro-linguistic scope – while decoding the impact of a text's punctuation. Together, the hashtag and the rest of the post deliver a complex message whose accuracy and functionality depend on this collaborative process, in which the hashtag's specific speech act (Austin 1962) is at play: it informs one that this is worth participating in, and sharing with one's followers.

In explicating the functionality and inner logic of the hashtag, I will apply two approaches at the same time:

1. A structural description is provided of the hashtag as a new textual construct that is mainly negatively defined as neither a headline nor a propositional sentence (the hashtag can provide the entire post with a propositional dimension, but rarely is this proposition located in the hashtag itself). The hashtag is a paratext, i.e. words or signs that anchor the core of the text to the rhetorical situation in the way that headlines or signatures do (Togebly 2014: 299). A hashtag affects the reception of the full text, even though it often concludes the post by being placed at the end. Unlike a headline, the hashtag transcends the text surrounding it, telling the reader that it is a part of a greater context, and is acting as a guide to this context.
2. Pragmatically, the hashtag will be described as a context marker, helping the reader to infer the propositional meaning (theme, modality, and intention) of the Tweet and its potential social discourse (what could be said about a given topic).

2. *Types and structures of hashtags*

According to Kate Scott, Twitter did not include hashtags in its original conception, but since 2009, hashtags have been widely used as ‘a system to tag and track content on the site’ (Scott 2015: 12). On Twitter, the use of the ‘hash sign’ (#), together with a word, a phrase, or a sentence without spaces, transforms the entity into a hyperlink, often used to mark keywords or topics, to make the Tweet searchable (Zappavigna 2015), and to ‘coordinate content over a longer timeframe’ (Scott 2015:12). But often, hashtags also function as a ‘guide to the reader’s inferential processes when interpreting the utterance’ (Scott 2015: 13). Therefore, the hashtag is repeatedly referred to as having two main functions:

1. As a keyword categorizing Tweets in relation to their topic, thereby making them searchable;
2. As meta-communication, guiding the readers’ understanding of a Tweet (Page 2012; Kunneman, Liebrecht & Bosch 2013; Scott 2015; Hougaard 2015).

In both functions, the hashtag is connected to the associated text (the main post) by functioning either as a part of a sentence, for example, as a subject or object (Zappavigna 2011: 792), or as some kind of supplement. Typically, the hashtag is placed at the end of the Tweet (Hougaard 2015: 157), and it sometimes appears together with one or more other hashtags. But one also sees Twitter users transform central words within the sentence to hashtags, probably in order to highlight their Tweet (Scott 2015: 14), thereby drawing the readers’ attention or making the Tweet easier to find. The strategy of using many detached hashtags is even more common on Instagram, where the posts are often furnished with a series of very different (often trending) hashtags, serving the exclusive purpose of attracting a lot of clicks (Hougaard 2015: 151).

Keyword hashtags are generally either ordinarily occurring nouns (including proper nouns), or Twitter-specific words or phrases in ‘Twitter

lingo’ (for example, #dkpol, meaning ‘Danish Politics’ or #dkmedier, meaning ‘Danish Media’). In order to understand the meaning of such hashtags, the reader has to be familiar with the different types of abbreviation that are prevalent on Twitter. Among the 100 most frequently used hashtags in Denmark, 76 contain either acronyms or various non-standardized abbreviations such as *pol* (politics) and *kom* (communication) (Kjær 2015); reproduction of the first part of the word makes these hashtags easily recognizable (Hougaard 2015: 153). A lot of (virtually codified) abbreviations such as *LOTR* (Lord Of The Rings) and *iOS7* (iPhone Operative System 7) occur, which makes it necessary for outsiders to search for further background information by clicking on the hashtag. This is one part of ‘the inferential processes that a reader may have to go through when interpreting a ‘Tweet’ (Scott 2015: 15). I will use Relevance Theory to explain the next stage of the inferential process.

3. *Hashtags – a sign of connection*

3.1. Cohesion within the Tweet

According to Relevance Theory, ‘human cognition is geared towards maximizing relevance’ (Scott 2015: 13), and seeks a way to make all kinds of communication relevant, that is, both significant and important to the reader. The first part of this inferential process is to search for further background information; the next part has to do with ‘[c]onstructing an appropriate hypothesis about explicit content’ (Wilson and Sperber 2004: 615) of the full statement, by focusing on the hashtags. Whether used as keywords or meta-communication, the hashtags are read as belonging with the rest of the Tweet, constituting a full statement; and, in accordance with the principle of iconicity of meaning (Ulbæk 2005: 36), what is placed adjacent (physically or temporally) to an element has a semantically close relationship to it. Therefore, with regard to Twitter’s use of hashtags, I suggest that from

a pragmatic perspective, the semiotic part of the hashtag, the ‘hash sign’ (also called the pound sign or the number sign), is understood to operate as a connector between the verbal content of the hashtag and the rest of Tweet. The ‘hash sign’ is an explicit marker of cohesion within the statement, meaning that the verbal content of the hashtag is connected to the proposition of the other parts of the Tweet. Therefore, the way the ‘hash sign’ works is similar to that of conjunctions and adverbials (Togeby 2003: 117).

3.2. Coherence transcending the Tweet

The next step in understanding the work and effect of hashtags is to perceive the whole hashtag as creating or postulating coherence among statements containing the same hashtag. Keyword hashtags are often used strategically, as a way of connecting a single statement to other Tweets concerning the same topic (more or less explicitly); by reaching readers searching for statements concerning a specific topic, the ‘hash sign’ constitutes a semantic connection among fragments written by different Twitter users at very different times. In this way, the ‘hash sign’ works both within the single Tweet and beyond its boundaries, by connecting all Tweets containing the same hashtag.

The Danish hashtag #ældremad (#seniorfood), which trended in the autumn of 2014, could serve as an example. In relation to a political discussion of the food served by Danish elder care providers, 92 Tweets containing #ældremad could be read on Twitter between the 30th of September and the 12th of November of that year. The first Tweet (example 1) was written by a professional communicator; it referred to an ‘open letter’ from the president of the NGO ‘Kost og ernæring’ (Diet and Nutrition) to the Danish municipalities. The Tweet, which paraphrases an old Danish proverb¹, also contains the hashtag #dkpol, manifesting its clear political aim (see example (1)).



Jeanette Ellen Bauer @funtastic689 · Sep 30

Man kan ikke både spare og have god mad i munden. #justsaying #ældremad #dkpol kost.dk/aabent-brev-ti...

- (1) ('You can't cut costs and have good food in your mouth at the same time'; #justsaying #seniorfood #dkpol).

This Tweet was repeated after two hours, and shortly after followed up by a Tweet addressed to the Minister for Health:

- (2) ('Can't we agree that #seniorfood is also senior care?' #dkpol @Astridkrag).



Jeanette Ellen Bauer
@funtastic689



Follow

Kan vi ikke blive enige om, at #ældremad også er ældrepleje? #dkpol @Astridkrag

View translation



Måltidet er også ældrehjælp		POLITIKEN 24/06/2014
<p>UNDERRENSNING</p> <p>DIFTA PARER FORNØJELSE FOR KØDT & EINKØRINGS- FORMLINDET</p> <p>NÅRMÅN læser artiklen om fremtidens hjemmehjælp, når én ting ganske klart: Måltiderne, madservice, er ikke nævnt med et ord i teksten. Og det er ærgerligt. For en stor del af vores tilværelse og så som ældre er trods alt måltider. Hvad er det, måltidet kan, ud over det rent fysiske?</p> <p>Måltidet er et fremragende værktøj mod seneplejens, som reformen også skal inddrage. Måltidet er en social beg-</p>	<p>venhed, hvor vi deler stort og småt. Hvor vi taler sammen, griner og hygger os. Vi spiser mere, når vi spiser sammen med andre. Og det er godt for især de ældre, der har lidt svært ved at tygge og synke. Når man bliver ældre, svinder appetitten. Med appetitten svinder også brokøden og kømageriet.</p> <p>Et kedeligt faktum: 60 pct. af borgere i ældreplejen er i risiko for underernæring. Underernæring er ikke noget, man bliver på en dag. Det kommer langsomt ansigende. Hvis ikke ernæring er en af hjemmets opgaver i hjælp til selvbetjening, forsvinder jeg desværre, at endnu flere ældre kommer i risiko for underernæring. Det betyder store udgifter for kommunerne, når ældre er underernærede. De underer-</p>	<p>nærede har ofte lavere funktionsniveau og tager dårligere mod behandling for andre lidelser. De bliver senere indlagte, der behøvet er ikke, hvad det har været.</p> <p>Ernæringsvejledning, ernæringsvejledning, uddrag af madservice, måltidsgruppen, spisestovner og måltidsvarter er bare nogle af de mange foranstaltninger, vi kan give kommunerne, når de nu står over for opgaven med at tilrettelægge forløbene. Det kost- og ernæringsfaglige personale findes allerede i kommunerne. Her er en oplagt mulighed for, at kommunerne bruger den viden, de kost- og ernæringsfaglige går rundt med. I sidste ende gælder det ikke kun de ældre fysisk, psykisk og socialt. Der gælder også kommunekassen.</p>

This Tweet received 8 Favourites, 3 Retweets, and 2 Twitter-user comments on the statement, one of the latter coming from the Minister for Health. The total number of tweeters using #ældremad is 45, and their approaches to the topic are either socio-political or humorous. Viewed in their entirety, these Tweets (held together only by the hashtag #ældremad) provide us with an impression of the public opinion at that time (it should be noted that in Denmark, Twitter is mostly used

by politicians, journalists, media people, and other opinion makers). The Tweets are widely diverging but no one monopolizes the political meaning of the hashtag #ældremad; and, since everybody is free to use it, without running the risk of appearing partial, a democratic debate is made possible.

In sum, I suggest to view the ‘hash sign’ as a sign of connection – both within the Tweet, and among Tweets and Twitter users that otherwise would not be connected.

4. How hashtags puzzle the reader

4.1. Inferring through hashtags

Adopting speech act terminology, one could say that since in interactions, we want both to communicate content (through locutionary acts), mark relations (through illocutionary acts), and obtain effects (through perlocutionary acts), the hashtag often helps us to do all of this in a very economical and concise way (Hougaard 2015). As part of a statement, the hashtag helps the reader both to understand the proposition expressed and the Twitter user’s attitude towards it (Scott 2015).

Reading a Tweet containing one or more hashtags, one goes through a pragmatic process using ‘the full range of inferential tasks identified in relevance theory’ (Scott 2015: 9) in order to make everything relevant. As readers, we invest a lot of energy trying to make sense of the communication and determine its importance for us. Upon receiving a communication, we assume that its sender had a specific intention with exactly this statement, sent at this specific moment.

Scott shows how, also when it comes to Tweets, the process involves ‘disambiguation, enrichment of vague terms and reference assignment’ (Scott 2015: 15) and derivation of the implicitly communicated meaning, that is, the implicatures. Her conclusions are that, when it comes to Twitter, the participants want to keep an informal, casual, that is, a conversational, style. They ‘avoid including background informati-

on as part of the main message itself' (Scott 2015: 18), because this information would make the information structure more formal and convoluted. Instead, important background information is given via the hashtags. As an illustration, consider the following example (3), where the Twitter user writes about an experience she had just had as a media researcher, using the hashtag #forskerliv (#researcherslife):



Stine Liv Johansen @StineLiv · May 11

Hentede #tinder i fire minutter. Panisk angst for fx at møde en eller anden far fra børnenes skole eller noget. #forskerliv #mraf14

- (3) (Pulled up #tinder for four minutes. In a panic that I might meet someone from my children's school, or something like that.' #researcherslife #mraf14).²

More explicitly, the statement might sound like this: *When you are a researcher you sometimes have to do something that may compromise your personal life, such as being on Tinder.*

Following Scott's reasoning, the consequences for communication are many. In the explicit version, a lot of the interpretation has already been done, as the implicatures are made explicit, causing the imagined Tweet to be much longer (actually, it would be even longer if all pieces of information were explicated) and less appealing, because the reader's cognitive competence is not challenged as much as it is in the first, more implicit version. The second, explicated version does not fit the 140-character limit, and the conversational style has disappeared. The inclusion of a hashtag allows the Twitter user to make 'certain contextual assumptions accessible to the reader, without interrupting or disturbing the informal, casual tone of the utterance' (Scott 2015: 13; my emphasis). The hashtag is both economical and informal, without the user having to sacrifice conciseness.

4.2. Hashtags as cognitively rewarding

In keeping with its informal style, the Tweet has stronger 'poetic ef-

fect’ (Sperber & Wilson 1986: 217 – cited by Scott 2015: 18), which makes the reader’s interpretation more cognitively demanding, while also involving a higher degree of participation and ‘a large share of responsibility in imagining’ (Sperber & Wilson 1986: 221 – cited by Scott 2015: 18). This use of hashtags has a certain resemblance to that of interjections on Facebook. Even though no character limit exists on Facebook, a lot of the participants prefer a style of communication that makes the interaction brief and efficient. According to Relevance Theory, this means that the writer could communicate in order to exploit the ‘cognitive effect’ of the Tweet, by realizing its ‘contextual implication, a conclusion deducible from input and context together, but from neither input nor context alone’ (Wilson & Sperber 2004: 608). In the case of interjections, these are bound to the immediate context as a direct – sometimes even physical – reaction to the context; alternatively, they may require the context indirectly in order to be fully understood (Hougaard 2013: 170).

Owing to their shortness and immediate decipherability, the use of interjections and hashtags is an efficient and economical means of communication; at the same time, they appeal to the reader’s curiosity, due to their propositional incompleteness (Hougaard 2013: 182). The reader has to look within the context for a full understanding, and sometimes, this deductive act requires a willing attitude, an imaginative effort, and perhaps some further clicks. When it comes to the use of hashtags as hints, this ‘willing approach’ is also needed, as in example (4):



Ditte Giese @dittegiese · May 5

Jeg har glemt min telefon derhjemme, og jeg sværger, at det gør fysisk ondt på mig at undvære den #fomo #firstworldproblems #junkie

- (4) (‘I forgot my phone at home, and I swear that being without it hurts physically’ #fomo #firstworldproblems #junkie).

The first hashtag, #fomo means *Fear Of Missing Out*,³ and refers to a

state of mind where you fear that you will miss out on something great online. Together with the third hashtag, *#junkie*, it stresses and confirms the specific understanding of the whole Tweet, namely that, when the writer is without her phone, she physically senses a fear of missing out; this actually indicates that she is addicted to her phone as a means of being in touch with the online world. Within Relevance Theory, this is a rather straightforward and simple process of comprehension (except for the fact that many Danish readers will have to search for the meaning of the abbreviation *#fomo*). With regard to the expansion of the abbreviation, *#firstworldproblems*, the cognitive challenge is somewhat greater. At first, the reader must understand what is meant by ‘first world problems’, in contrast with the customary ‘problems of the third world’, namely, ‘[p]roblems [stemming] from living in a wealthy, industrialized nation that people in the third world would probably roll their eyes at’.⁴ In the context of the social media, the ironic meaning of this specific hashtag is rather well-known; its harsh effect on the reader has also been exploited by the campaign ‘Water is Life’,⁵ in order to capitalize on Westerners’ self-reproach vis-à-vis their own affluence.

Using the hashtag *#firstworldproblems* in a Tweet entails this sophisticated use of irony, along with the writer’s unexpressed hope of converting it into a signal of self-deprecation, by telling the world that the writer is aware that, after all, her complaints are out of proportion. To arrive at this understanding, the reader has to realize, and agree with, the fact that among the three hashtags, this specific one has a separate relation (i.e. relevance) to the sentence proposition – a very distinct and crucial relation. Nothing in the typology of hashtags or the sentence’s structure fosters this interpretation, and therefore the reader’s inferential work is even more demanding: she must determine the scope of this relation, that is, its relevance, and furthermore, whether this interpretation affects the reading of the other two hashtags.

According to Relevance Theory, inference is a process of rewarding, since ‘an input is relevant to an individual when its processing in a context of available assumptions yields a POSITIVE COGNITIVE EFFECT’

(Wilson & Sperber 2004: 608; capitals in original). This means that in interactional intercourse, we seek ‘a worthwhile difference to the individual’s representation of the world: a true conclusion, for example’ (ibid.). As stated by Wilson and Sperber, this positive cognitive effect makes us continue our process of decoding in the hope of discovering a positive effect. The self-deprecation in example (4), for instance, maximizes the relevance of the statement by inviting afterthought and self-reflection, thereby making the statement more momentous and rewarding, and raising it above the everyday level of the Tweet.

5. *Could hashtags be seen as media-specific paratexts?*

5.1. Hashtags as paratexts

The cognitive challenge is also at stake if we view the hashtag as a paratext. A paratext represents a threshold that the reader must cross in order to reach the regular text; examples are headlines, titles, and the like. The paratext is placed next to, or in connection with, the regular text, prejudicing and influencing the reception of the regular text (Frandsen 1991: 79); in this way, it controls, as well as elicits the reception of the text (Frandsen 1991: 87). Being a threshold, just like the paratext, the hashtag is neither located within the sentence nor without. Even though it is usually located at the end of the Tweet, and seldom opens one, the hashtag has the power to influence, and even determine, the reception of the full Tweet.

The hashtag’s cognitive control of the information structure and reader interpretation of the Tweet could be compared to that of a punctuation mark. A full stop, a question mark, or an exclamation point all have a very different impact on a text, but they share the fact that punctuation marks, apart from separating phrases and sentences, are essential to making their meaning clear. They add certain modalities and functions to sentences, (such as asking or commanding), and thereby guide their interpretation (Elbro & Farø 2013: 17). As

trained readers, we are used to keeping an eye on punctuation, owing to its vital impact on our understanding. Readers of Twitter perform a similar, significance-seeking action. Being typographically highlighted (hashtags on Twitter automatically turn red the moment you finish writing them) makes them a ‘visual variable’ (Frandsen 1991: 82). Hashtags are eye-catching devices, similar to paratexts.

Being the result of previous interpretative work done by the Twitter user, the hashtag either categorizes (summarizes) or adds (transforms) information, similar to Frandsen’s characterization of the paratext’s interpretative function (as either summarizing or transforming; 1991: 91). In either case, the hashtag constitutes a strategically most important field of the Tweet.

Held up against this delineation of paratexts and their functionality, I therefore define hashtags as paratexts. But at least two media-specific factors make them a bit different. For one, importantly, while paratext has no crucial restrictions on length, a hashtag may be no longer than 140 characters (actually, in order to function as paratext, the hashtag must leave some characters to regular text). A second difference is that the structure and form of the hashtag must be comprehensible, even though it must be written as one word. As one way of meeting this constraint, Twitter users capitalize the first letter of each word in a phrasal hashtag, for example, #DagensTalent (#TalentOfTheDay) or #FritValgVarBedre (#FreeChoiceWasBetter); alternatively, and less frequently, (prohibited) word spaces may be indicated by (permitted) underscores, for example, #vild_med_dans (#dancing_with_the_stars). Classifying the hashtag, despite these differences, as a paratext, would make it a social media-specific paratext, that is, a paratext subject to certain restrictions,⁶ but, as I will now argue, also a paratext holding extra digital functions in bringing detached Tweets and Twitter users together.

5.2. Hashtags as social media-specific paratexts

Yet another factor, of great importance for the classification of hashtags

as media-specific paratexts, deserves to be mentioned; this factor calls for a different or extended terminology. While a paratext guides, and to some extent even controls, the reception of the full text, the extended functionalities of the hashtag transcend the single Tweet by facilitating the connections between Tweets and participants. New media texts differ in several ways from traditional texts such as the newspaper article: when reading texts on Twitter, the reader enters a ‘fragmented, changing and complex world’ (Kjeldsen 2008: 43), where consistency and coherence are no longer provided by the editors of the medium, but must be crafted by the readers. A text of this kind primarily exists in the form of single bits that every reader puts together differently, transforming the text ‘until the final product no longer resembles the original’ (Gurak & Antonijevic 2009: 500), but rather exists as an ever-changing compound to whose structure the reader is free to contribute, remixing it with her own reading experience (Fagerjord 2010). Thus, the reader becomes part of a participatory culture where sharing and creating are the dominant activities (Jenkins 2009: 5).

Inasmuch as Twitter, as a medium, is characteristically both fragmented and complex, hashtags may be understood as rebuilding the lost coherence through a reverse process of facilitating and promoting, by supporting a network and bringing people together, based on mutual interests. Such a view is supported by recent research on Twitter and hashtags, investigating topics such as networks and communities (for an overview, see Muntean, Morar & Modovan 2012), trend-tracking (Chew & Eysenbach 2010), hashtags as collaborative arguments about what is newsworthy, as a device for mobilizing and showing solidarity (Papacharissi & Oliveira 2012: 257-268), and as a means of using hashtags for coordinating political activities, for example, antifascist protests (Neumayer & Valtysson 2013).

In trend-tracking, the focus is on how current hashtags tell you where ‘to go when you want to find out what people are saying about a topic right now and in order to involve yourself in communities of shared value that interest you in this given moment’ (Zappavigna 2011: 804);

that is, they are an indication of how people react to a specific topic and what people call it, in a kind of ‘folksonomy’ (Zappavigna 2011: 791). Zappavigna describes hashtags as also functioning interpersonally, that is, as relational processes, since the choice of hashtag is the writer’s “call” to affiliate with the values in the Tweet’ (Zappavigna 2011: 799). Zappavigna calls this ‘ambient affiliation’ (ibid.), and emphasizes that hashtags offer the participant the opportunity to identify with a certain cause or with a certain circle of people; however, the affiliation is ephemeral and works only as long as the topic in question is up-to-date and trending: ‘[T]he affiliation is ambient in the sense that the users may not have interacted directly and likely do not know each other, and may not interact again’ (ibid: 801). In a pessimistic perspective, one could say that hashtags support the kind of blind follower effects that value ‘sheer quantity’ (Gurak & Antonijevic 2009: 500) and currency over authenticity and community.

6. Conclusion: The hashtag as a transcendent paratext

We have seen how hashtags operate at both the intratextual and the intertextual level, that is, both within the Tweet and between Tweets and Twitter users, and how they support either the inferential process of understanding the full statement, or the relational process of connecting statements and users; in other words, the hashtag operates as a multifunctional help text. This specific kind of paratext functions at the edge of the textual system; both as a threshold and as a perspective that situates the text. Hashtags are transcendent markers of interpretation and affiliation: They catch our attention; they help us to economize on our use of language without losing concision; they infer the intended information; they arouse our curiosity; they make connections; and, they meet some of the new media constraints. As a textual entity, the hashtag transcends communication by providing a meta-communicative perspective on the text, both marking and supporting its interpretation, and mapping out a never ending route of

further connections and perspectives. Hashtags should be understood as transmedial, structural and semantic connectors: as signifiers of a promising participation.

*Tina Thode Hougaard
Aarhus University
north@cc.au.dk*

References

- Austin, John L. 1962. *How to Do Things With Words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chew, Cynthia & Gunther Eysenbach. 2010. Pandemics in the age of Twitter: Content analysis of tweets during the 2009 H1N1 outbreak. *PLoS ONE* 5 (11): e14118. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0014118.
- Elbro, Carsten & Ken J. Farø. 2013. Tegnsætning med mening. *Mål og mæle* 36(1). 17-23.
- Fagerjord, Anders. 2010. After Convergence: *YouTube* and Remix Culture. In J. Hunsinger, L. Klastrup & M. Allen. (eds.) *International Handbook of Internet Research*. Dordrecht: Springer. 187-200. DOI: 10.1007/978-1-4020-9789-8_11
- Frandsen, Finn. 1991. Avisens paratekst – et nyt område for medieforskningen. *MedieKultur. Journal of Media and Communications Research* 16. 79-97.
- Gurak, Laura & Smiljana Antonijevic. 2009. Digital Rhetoric and Public Discourse. In A.A. Lunsford, K.H. Wilson & R.A. Eberly (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Rhetorical Studies*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications. 497-507.
- Hougaard, Tina Thode. 2013. Hmmm...Interjektioner på Facebook. In I. S. Hansen, P. Widell & T.T. Hougaard (eds.) *MUDS 14. Møde om Udforskningen af Dansk Sprog*. Aarhus Universitet. 167-184.
- Hougaard, Tina Thode. 2015. #hashtags #metakommunikering #nøgleord. In I.S. Hansen & T.T. Hougaard (eds.) *MUDS 15. Møde om Udforskningen af Dansk Sprog*. Aarhus Universitet. 149-170.
- Jenkins, Henry. 2009. *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture. Media Education for the 21st Century*. Cambridge, Mass. & London: The MIT Press.
- Kjeldsen, Jens. 2008. Retoriske omstændigheder. *Rhetorica Scandinavica* 48. 42-63.
- Kjær, Mark B. 2015. Twitter Top 100 danske #hashtags. <http://prxpress.dk/twitter-liste-over-100-danske-hashtags/>.
- Kunneman Florian, Christine Liebrecht & Antal van den Bosch. 2013. The perfect solution for detecting sarcasm in tweets #not. Proceedings of the 4th Workshop on Computational Approaches to Subjectivity, Sentiment and Social Media Analysis. Association for Computational Linguistics. 9-37.

- Muntean, Cristina I., Gabriela A. Morar & Darie Moldovan. 2012. Exploring the Meaning behind Twitter Hashtags through Clustering. *Business Information Systems Workshops*. 231-242.
- Neumayer, Christina & Bjarki Valtysson. 2013. Tweet against Nazis? Twitter, power, and networked publics in anti-fascist protests. *MedieKultur. Journal of Media and Communications Research* 55. 3-20.
- Page, Ruth. 2012. The linguistics of self-branding and micro-celebrity in Twitter: The role of hashtags. *Discourse & Communication* 6 (2). 181-201.
- Papacharissi, Zizi & Maria da F. Oliveira. 2012. Affective News and Networked Publics: The Rhythms of News Storytelling on #Egypt. *Journal of Communication* 62. 266-282.
- Scott, Kate. 2015. The pragmatics of hashtags: Inference and conversational style on Twitter. *Journal of Pragmatics* 81. 8-20.
- Togeb, Ole. 2003. *Fungerer denne sætning? Funktionel dansk sproglære*. København: Gads Forlag.
- Togeb, Ole. 2014. *Blandt blot genererne – ikke tekstarterne! Om sprog, tekster og samfund*. København: Samfundslitteratur.
- Ulbæk, Ib. 2005. *Sproglig tekstanalyse – introduktion til pragmatisk tekstlingvistik*. København: Academica.
- Wilson, Deirdre & Dan Sperber. 2004. Relevance theory. In L.R. Horn & G. Ward (eds.) *The Handbook of Pragmatics*. Oxford: Blackwell. 607-632.
- Zappavigna, Michele. 2011. Ambient affiliation: A linguistic perspective on Twitter. *New Media & Society* 13 (5). 788-806.
- Zappavigna, Michele. 2015. Searchable talk: the linguistic functions of hashtags. *Social Semiotics* 25 (3). 1-18.

Notes

¹Man kan ikke både blæse og have mel i munden”, meaning: You can’t have your cake and eat it.

² In this context, #mraf14 is an abbreviation of *MedieReceptionsAnalyseForår14*, and serves as an example of a more internally applied hashtag.

³In Denmark, FOMO could also mean *Fashion On My Own*.

⁴<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=First+World+Problems>

⁵https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxyhfiCO_XQ

⁶The length and structure of the hashtags probably have a fundamental impact on both the writer’s and the reader’s cognitive competence and preferences, but elaborating that assessment is beyond my professional capacity.