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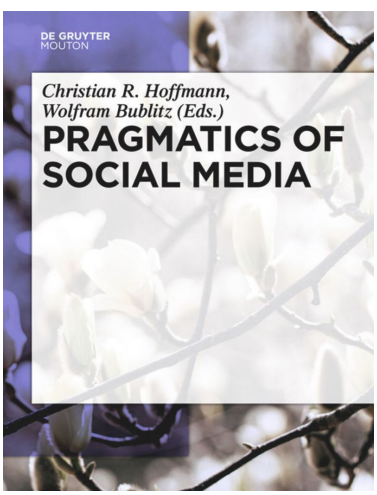

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Book review by	:	Yuliani Kusuma Putri

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Editors' Profiles

Christian R. Hoffmann is a senior lecturer in English linguistics at the University of Augsburg, Germany. His work has focused on narratives in both old and new media and on the pragmatics of digital communication. At the present, he is an editor of a book volume on new trends in the pragmatics of telecinematic discourse. His research has mostly been about a cross-genre corpus of annotated TV transcripts and a monograph on the pragmatics of film practice.

Wolfram Bublitz is a Professor Emeritus of English Linguistics at the University of Augsburg, Germany. After earning his doctorate from the University of Hamburg, he received his habilitation from the University of Trier, Germany. His work experiences include Full Professor at the University of Braunschweig in Germany, Exchange Professor at Northern Illinois University in the USA, and Visiting Professor at the Universities of Pittsburgh, USA, and Hamburg, Germany. His research interests mainly focus on text analysis, constructivist pragmatics, and computer-mediated communication. Some books he has edited include Coherence in Spoken and Written Discourse (1999), Metapragmatics in Use (2007), Englische Pragmatik (2nd ed., 2009), Foundations of Pragmatics (2011), and The Pragmatics of Quoting Now and Then (2015).

Book Overview

The book entitled "Pragmatics of Social Media" was edited by Christian Hoffmann and Wolfram Bublitz and published in 2017. This book is the 11th volume of the "Handbooks of Pragmatics" book series, which consists of 13 separate volumes, The entire volume of the book provides an ample overview of the field of language studies, especially Pragmatics. This book, published for the first time in Germany, was published by the publisher De Gruyter Mouton. This book has 724 pages and consists of five subjects, namely: (1) The nature of social media; (2) Social media platforms; (3) social media and discourse; (4) social media and identity; and (5) Social media functions.

Core Review of the Book

In the pre-digital era, communication always used media as a tool for people to communicate with each other, such as voice messages or written messages. However, social media has lately become a communication medium that is widely used by the public. The development of science and technology, especially in the field of communication and computers, has allowed a transition in the way people communicate. Social media, which was originally only designed as a tool to share information, later developed into a communication medium that allows all users to exchange ideas, express expressions, and so on.

In the first part of this book, Landert explains that in social media, several terms often overlap with each other, namely participation, interaction, and engagement between users. She explained that participation is a form of communication that is broader and more comprehensive than interaction. Furthermore, she explained that participation is a form of communication that involves emotions and user evaluations. This was continued by Dynel, who stated that the push of social media as "something important for everyone to have" and the increasing number of users interacting with each other shifted the way social media works. Previously, social media was intended to provide information to the public, with the quality of the information being assessed, the target audience being determined, and status being determined; however, social media has recently become out of control. The public can freely write down things they like, whether general information or personal information, without going through the proper social media mechanism. Bos & Kleinke also emphasized the same thing: that social media has changed the realm between what is private and what is public. However, they added that between the realms of privacy and the public, there is a realm of sociality that bridges the two. He contends that social networking is a field in which people can share information, ideas, and opinions, but they can also protect each other's identities and interests.

In the second part, this book discusses the pragmatic phenomena in social media such as blogs, YouTube, Twitter, and so on. In this section, it is explained in stages how the development of interaction and communication on social media and its impacts have been addressed. Each social media discussion is accompanied by empirical evidence from the study's findings.

Part III of this book explains that the posts on social media are not only controlled by the system but also by internet users, where users can communicate with each other, add, change, tweet, or comment. Forbenius & Gerhardt argue that the power of direct interaction between individuals will decrease due to the shift in communication in this era, especially in social media. They argue that communication on social media is less synchronous, more ad hoc, and lacks intimacy between communicators. This part also describes how to research critical issues related to social media, such as user anonymity, freedom of speech rules, user identity, and so on.

The fourth part is the longest and contains a comprehensive discussion that is not only from a pragmatic point of view but also involves other perspectives or fields of knowledge that are still related to how social media users interact and how they build their identities in the internet environment. Locjer and Bolander revealed that identity on social media can be seen in the situational and cultural context of its users. They argue that the user's identity can also be studied from how the language is used, gender,

expertise, and so on. This part also discusses how social users construct, change, and organize their identities and how they introduce their identities to the public. At the end of the part, an interesting fact is also stated: the identity of a user also reflects the identity of a particular group (fans, etc.).

Finally, the last part explains extensively how the problem of speech acts has been happening on social media so far. Some speech acts, such as liking, commenting, disapproving, responding, and so on, become pragmatic phenomena that need attention. This is so that the communication that exists in social media can run according to its function.

In general, this book is very suitable to discuss how the process and development of communication in social media are so dynamic. This book also raises critical themes and is accompanied by research results as empirical evidence. Although this book is fairly complete, it still has shortcomings, namely that several sub-sections are quite complicated to understand for ordinary people due to the use of unfamiliar language and so on. Therefore, it would be better if, before reading this book, you also read the previous volumes, which presented the basic concepts of pragmatism.

Conclusion

This book will be useful for pragmatists who seek to conduct research on dynamic issues on social media. With the never-ending development of social media, computer-mediated communication continues to shift. Although this book was published in 2017, when social media was not as developed as it will be in 2022, it can be a reference for further pragmatic studies on social media.

Reference

Hoffmann, C. R., & Bublitz, W. (Eds.). (2017). *Pragmatics of social media*. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.