

(2008). In F. Sudweeks, H. Hrachovec, and C. Ess (Eds.), *Proceedings of Cultural Attitudes Towards Technology and Communication 2008 (CATaC'08)*, Nîmes, France, June 24-27.

## GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PERSONAL ADVERTISEMENTS IN LITHUANIAN iTV SMS

ASTA ZELENKAUSKAITE  
*Department of Telecommunications  
Indiana University, Bloomington*

SUSAN C. HERRING  
*School of Library and Information Science  
Indiana University, Bloomington*

**Abstract.** This study examines a popular Lithuanian iTV SMS program, *Telejazz*, which broadcasts music and personal ads posted by viewers to the program in the form of text messages. The contents of the televised SMS ads are compared with previous research on personal ads in print media. Despite the novelty and the technical constraints of the convergent iTV SMS medium, content analysis of the personal ads reveals that females and males have contrasting self-presentations and expectations, similar to those found in traditional newspaper ads in English. These findings are interpreted in light of the Lithuanian cultural context, interactional sociolinguistic theories of gender differentiation, and theories of technology adoption/adaption that emphasize ways in which users reinscribe existing social practices in new media.

### 1. Introduction: iTV SMS

Interactive television Short Message Service (iTV SMS) is a media convergence phenomenon in which television viewers can send text messages from their mobile phones to be displayed during TV programming. This phenomenon is especially popular in northern Europe, where it appears in various formats, including 'jukebox' (music video requests), hosted chat, journalistic debate, and text chat only (Beyer, Enli, Maasø, & Ytreberg, 2007). It is also found elsewhere in Europe, in parts of Asia, and, to a limited extent, in the United States. iTV SMS allows spectators to provide quasi-real time input. In this model, spectators are not only passive viewers, but they can participate actively by providing feedback and (in theory) engaging in debate with the contents of TV programs.

The limited research available on iTV SMS has found that regardless of the intentions of the iTV programs, however, SMS posted to them seem to favor personal topics and are often directed to other audience members, rather than to the TV broadcast content (Beyer et al., 2007; Zelenkauskaitė & Herring, 2008). Some such SMS resemble

personal ads, in that individuals describe their physical attributes and request contact with interested others for romantic or sexual purposes (Zelenkauskaitė & Herring, 2008), independent of the content of the television broadcast. This paper describes a study of an iTV SMS program in Lithuania devoted exclusively to personal ads.

iTV SMS builds on the popularity of mobile phone use. According to the European Commission's 2006 report on the E.U. telecommunications market, Lithuania had the third highest mobile phone penetration level, 133%, ranked after Luxemburg and Italy. This means that there were 1.33 mobile phone subscriptions per capita in Lithuania. This ranking reflects a recent surge: Whereas 56% of Lithuanians used mobile telephony in 2003,<sup>1</sup> by 2006, the percentage had risen to 95%.<sup>2</sup> Despite its relatively small size, Lithuania has three mobile phone operators with GSM (Global System for Mobile communications) and DCS (Digital Cellular System) licenses, which have successfully implemented both pre-paid and post-paid mobile phone usage plans.<sup>3</sup> Text messaging via mobile phones, or SMS (Short Message Service), is also popular: In the first quarter of 2007, all customers in Lithuania sent 2.4 billion SMS.<sup>4</sup>

Capitalizing on the popularity of mobile phones and SMS, as well as the tendency for iTV SMS to focus on personal (especially dating and romance) themes, Lithuanian iTV channels have started to offer programming where personal ads, along with some commercial advertising, are the only broadcast content. The *Telejazz* program, for example, broadcasts music as background for scrolling text messages. Spectators can listen to the music, read messages, and participate by sending their own personal ads, which, if they pass the content filter, appear on the left of the TV screen (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. SMS (circled) on the *Telejazz* program, Lithuanian Tango TV.

People pay per message to send SMS to the iTV program, and the program mediates the exchange, allowing senders and those who wish to respond to their ads to preserve their anonymity. Moreover, a web page ([www.telejazz.lt](http://www.telejazz.lt)) provides a complete list of the SMS ads that were broadcast, and archives are available in which past

broadcast SMS are categorized by type (male-seeking-female, female-seeking-male, etc.) and age of sender, to facilitate referring back to the ads later. The address of the web page appears on the television screen above the SMS (Figure 1).

Previous research on personal ads in print media has identified gender differences in the language of self-presentation (Koesten & Wheeler, 1988) that reflect and reinforce traditional gender roles. The goal of the present study is to examine the self- and other-descriptive language in iTV SMS personal ads, in order to determine the extent to which this new convergent media genre resembles the traditional genre of personal ads. To achieve this goal, a corpus of 1,000 SMS was sampled from the web archive for the *Telejazz* program, and content analysis was employed to analyze structural features and word choices in the messages.

The findings reveal that overall, despite the limited amount of information that it is possible to pack into an SMS message, the televised ads typically contain at least two of the following three components: self-description, description of person sought, and purpose for which s/he is sought. Consistent with previous research, Lithuanian females and males manifest different self-description strategies, and men are more likely to seek physical attractiveness in women (Koesten & Wheeler, 1988). Thus, despite the fact that the personal ads were broadcast in a novel convergent medium, they show continuity with traditional print media norms for personal ads in reflecting traditional Western cultural sex roles (cf. Sprecher, 1989). These findings are interpreted in light of the Lithuanian cultural context, interactional sociolinguistic theories of gender differentiation through language, and theories of technology adoption/adaption that emphasize ways in which users reinscribe existing social practices in new media.

## 2. Background

### 2.1. THE LITHUANIAN CULTURAL CONTEXT

Lithuanian society has strong traditional patriarchic foundations (Purvaneckiene, 1998). Accordingly, gender roles tend to be polarized; for instance, Lithuania is one of the countries in which gender differences in emotional expression, such as crying frequency, were found to be the greatest in a study of 30 western and non-western countries (Fischer, 2001). Furthermore, Lithuania's cultural values are grounded in Catholic traditions. While Lithuania does not have an official state religion, 79% of the population self-reported being Roman Catholic in a 2001 census.<sup>5</sup> This cultural context predicts that gender roles will be represented in traditional ways in Lithuanian personal ads. At the same time, sending SMS via mobile phones is popular with both women and men in Lithuania, and women watch television as much as, if not more than, men do. Thus there is no reason to expect, a priori, that iTV SMS technology would promote gender-differential usage.

### 2.2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON PERSONAL ADS

Because of their enormous popularity, personal ads have been studied extensively in traditional print media such as newspapers and magazines (Cameron, Oskamp, & Sparks, 1977; Koestner & Wheeler, 1988; Lynn & Bolig, 1985; Lynn & Shurgot, 1984).

The results of these studies are consistent with traditional sex-role expectations and societal expectations and norms in the context of Western culture.

For example, Koestner and Wheeler (1988) conducted a study of heterosexual personal ads in two print weekly newspapers from Rochester, New York and Minneapolis, Minnesota in the United States. The goal of the study was to reveal to what extent personal advertisers presented themselves in accordance with stereotypical gender roles, and whether they described themselves and the sought partner in physical terms such as height and weight. Specifically, the study aimed to test the "male-taller norm in mate selection" assumption in Gillis and Avis (1980). The study employed content analysis, and selective coding categories were analyzed. The results revealed that appearance was stressed for women and status was stressed for men; women were more likely to offer physical attractiveness and seek status, whereas men were more likely to offer status and seek physical attractiveness. As regards appearance, in accord with the "male-taller norm in mate selection" assumption, women more often sought height and offered slimness, while men more often offered height and sought slimness.

Lynn and Shurgot (1984) analyzed the effects of personal ads printed in a Columbus, Ohio magazine for singles. The goal of the study was to analyze reported physical appearance and its relationship to the number of responses received. Content analysis was used to code the physical description categories gender, height, weight, hair color, eye color, and individual self-description. Statistical methods were used to determine if there was a correlation between descriptions of physical appearance and the number of responses received for an advertisement. The results showed that tall males and light females received more responses to their ads than did their shorter and heavier counterparts.

### 2.3. GENDER STUDIES IN THE ONLINE CONTEXT

In the early days of the Internet, many people believed that text-based computer-mediated communication—which lacks physical and auditory cues—would level social hierarchies based on gender, age, and social status. Specifically, the Internet was claimed to mask personal physical differences, making gender irrelevant (Danet, 1998; Graddol & Swann, 1989). However, empirical studies of Internet communication soon revealed gender differences in mailing lists, chat, and discussion forums that resembled those in offline communication (Herring, 1993, 2003). More recently, gender differences have also been found in private SMS (Ling, 2005; Yates et al., 2004).

For example, Herring (1993) found that in public asynchronous discussion forums, men tend to post more and longer messages and to be more assertive and challenging, whereas women tend to post shorter messages and to be more attenuated, polite, and supportive. In synchronous chatrooms, message length differences level out, but men participate more and are more aggressive, and women type more smiles and laughter (Herring, 2003). Herring attributes some of these differences to the public context, in which men traditionally dominate discursively (e.g., Coates, 1993).

Studies of SMS have focused on private communication. Ling's (2005) study of Norwegian private SMS users found that although the men were earlier adopters of SMS, female users, especially younger females, were more active users. The females had also developed larger social networks in the use of SMS. Additionally, Norwegian

females wrote longer SMS messages than did males. Yates et al. (2004) found gender differences in politeness in British SMS use, similar to those reported by Herring (1993, 2003) for other modes of computer-mediated communication.

Drawing on this previous research on gender differences in personal ads and gender differences online, this study investigates gender expression in personal ads on Lithuanian iTV. The ads are broadcast on television; hence they are public. At the same time, they make use of personal telephones, traditionally a private communication medium. It is not evident, a priori, which gender will post more iTV SMS ads, although the existing research predicts that men and women will present themselves and the qualities they are seeking differently in their ads.

#### 2.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following specific research questions were formulated with respect to iTV SMS personal ads:

- RQ1: What are the structural characteristics of the iTV SMS ads?
- RQ2: What gender differences, if any, are found in ad posting activity?
- RQ3: What gender differences, if any, are found in self-description in the ads?
- RQ4: What gender differences, if any, are found in what is sought for in the ads?
- RQ5: What gender differences, if any, are found in the purpose for which someone is sought in the ads?

Structural and participation analyses were conducted in order to address the first and second research questions. In order to address the third through fifth questions, content analysis of the wording of the ads was employed. The findings are interpreted in light of the Lithuanian cultural context and theories of interactional sociolinguistics and technology adoption/adaption.

### 3. Data

For the purposes of this study, a data sample was collected from the website archives at [www.telejazz.lt](http://www.telejazz.lt). The archives contain SMS that were recently posted on the *Telejazz* television program, which is broadcast nightly from 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. Personal ads must observe technological constraints: Each ad can be no longer than a single SMS message—that is, no more than 160 characters, including spaces. Moreover, ads must follow a certain format that is maintained in the web archives. That is, each SMS is assigned a sequentially-generated unique number, the age of the sender, and the category of advertisement to which the ad belongs. There are five categories from which the user can choose: male-to-male; male-to-female; female-to-male; female-to-female; and other (e.g., couples).

The details of the ad posting procedure are advertised continuously on the TV screen during the program broadcast. In addition, the broadcast displays the URL of the website where the archives are available. In this way, if viewers of the program have access to the Internet, they can retrieve the SMS from their reference numbers and reply to their senders at any time. The website also gives information about multiple ad

retrieval options and how users can send ads back to their cellular phones by inserting the range of the age group they are interested in.

### 3.1. CORPUS

The corpus for this study consists of personal advertisements from two archive sections, female-to-male and male-to-female. Ads from the sections seeking homosexual partners were not included, in order to limit the corpus to a manageable size.

The total number of SMS in the [www.telejazz](http://www.telejazz) archive as of November 5, 2007 was 51,313. Out of this total, 33,488 SMS were sent by males seeking females, and 17,825 SMS were sent by females seeking males. The large number of SMS sent to this program confirms that iTV SMS ads are a popular phenomenon in Lithuania.

For the purposes of this study, 1,000 SMS were randomly selected from this corpus. Specifically, 500 SMS were from the males-to-females archive, and 500 SMS were from the females-to-males archive. The selection was made by generating a random number list using the number randomizer available at [www.randomize.com](http://www.randomize.com).

### 3.2. IDENTIFYING GENDER

The gender of the SMS sender was identified in a two-step process. First, the archive category the ad was actually placed in was considered. Second, the gender of each SMS sender was verified with the help of linguistic clues. Lithuanian has a rich morphology in which nouns and adjectives follow gender (female-male) agreement principles, and participles also indicate gender. Other identifiers included the use of gender indexical words such as 'man' and 'woman.' In this way, the data were coded for gender twice.

This procedure revealed that the archives' accuracy was 100% for the randomly selected corpus from the male seeking female category. However, in the female seeking male category, 7% of the 500 SMS were found to be placed in a misleading manner. That is, 7% of SMS from males to females had been placed in the females-to-males category. These mis-categorized SMS were replaced by other randomly-selected SMS verified to be from females seeking males.

### 3.3. CODING FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS

The coding procedure followed the grounded theory approach proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1973). Within the general guidelines established by previous research on gender differences in personal ads, specific categories were allowed to emerge from the data, and the coding scheme was refined through successive applications to a sample of messages before the scheme was applied to all the messages. The following basic categories were identified, along with a set of values for each: marital status, location, personal qualities (e.g., sincerity, social status), and physical characteristics. Moreover, each SMS was divided into three functional parts: self-description, description of the person sought, and the purpose of the advertisement. Self-descriptions and descriptions of the person sought were assigned values for the same 30 codes for both female and male SMS. Ten purpose categories were also applied to both female and male SMS, bringing the number of codes to 70. In the sought-for category, three age categories were additionally included. Appendix 1 contains a full list of the coding categories.

### 3.4. ANALYTICAL PROCEDURES

The analysis consisted of three parts. The first focused on the structure of the televised ads. The number of basic functional components (self-description, description of person sought, and purpose) included in each ad was counted, and the results were analyzed in aggregate and broken down by gender.

The second set of analytical procedures focused on participation. The total number of ads stored in the archives on a single day was first counted, and the average SMS length by number of words was then calculated for a randomly selected subset of the one-day corpus. The percentage of repetitive SMS was also counted for the sub-corpus. All participation analyses were conducted in aggregate, as well as broken down by gender. The age distribution of participants of each gender was also calculated.

The third set of procedures aimed to reveal gender patterns in SMS content. First, a concordance program that identifies the frequency of words was used to identify general tendencies with respect to lexical choice. This procedure showed that the most frequently used words were somewhat different for females and males. Subsequently, the content analysis categories were defined and the coding scheme was applied to all the messages. The frequencies of each category were calculated and compared for male- and female-authored ads using descriptive statistics.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. AD STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

Three main components were identified in the iTV SMS ads: self-description, description of the person who was sought, and purpose. The first component consisted of the age of the participant and some self-description. The second part consisted of the description of the kind of person the ad writer desired to meet. The third part described the purpose for which the addressor was seeking such a person. The number of components the ad contained out of these three was counted. Despite the fact that the senders were not specifically requested to follow a certain format, around 80% of the ads written by both genders combined contained more than one of the three components, and nearly one-third of the SMS contained all three parts.

*Table 1.* Ad functional components mentioned by both genders combined.

	Senders	SMS
Self/seeking/purpose	27%	31%
Self/seeking	21%	26%
Self/purpose	16%	13%
Seeking/purpose	13%	8%
Self	7%	5%
Seeking	7%	9%
Purpose	5%	4%
none	4%	3%

As Table 1 shows, the tendency to include all three parts was slightly more pronounced among female ad writers. Some gender patterns are also suggested in the tendency to include two parts. Females more often included self-description and seeking, whereas males favored 'self-description + purpose' and 'seeking + purpose' combinations. In general, males tended to mention purpose more often.

#### 4.2. PARTICIPATION ANALYSIS

In order to analyze overall participation, the total number of SMS ads placed by male and female users was counted. The calculations show that male users sent 33,488 SMS, and female users sent 17,825 SMS. Therefore, there were almost twice as many male SMS ads (1.9 times) as female SMS ads. A subset of these data equal to 2,300 SMS each for males and females was used to calculate the repetition of identical SMS. The results show that 415 out of 2,300 SMS by males (18%) were repeated, while 153 out of 2,300 SMS by females (6%) were repeated.

As noted above, 7% of the male seeking female ads had been incorrectly placed in the female seeking male category. This fact suggests two possible explanations. First, males may have employed misplacement of ads as a deliberate strategy to promote their visibility by placing their ads in an unexpected or less crowded location. The second explanation is that the SMS misplaced by males were accidental. However, this explanation seems less likely, given that no SMS ads by female were "accidentally" placed in the males seeking females category.

The average length of SMS in the corpus of 1,000 SMS was 9.9 words. The length of SMS by females and males was similar; however, males used somewhat more words (10.1) than did females (9.7). Thus males contributed more content to the *Telejazz* program, both in terms of number of ads and ad length.

Although mobile phone and especially SMS users tend to be young, the predominant self-reported age of the iTV SMS senders was in the 30 to 40 year range. Female personal advertisers tended to be slightly older than male advertisers. The results for self-reported age of the ad senders are shown in Figure 2:

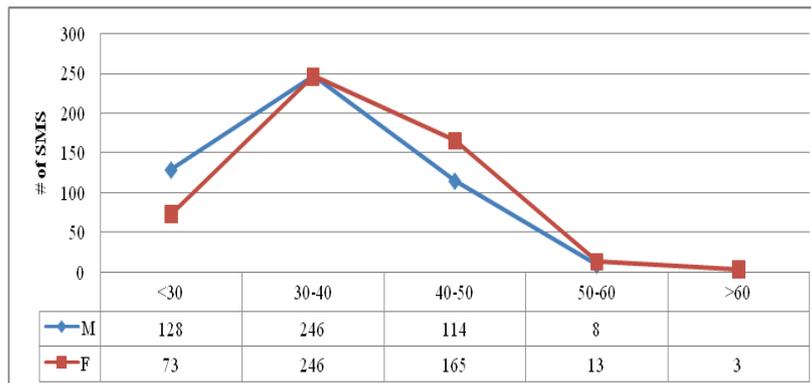


Figure 2. Age distribution by gender.

#### 4.3. CONCORDANCE PROGRAM RESULTS

A preliminary analysis of the contents of the SMS ad corpus was run with the help of the automated concordancing program *Concordance* (<http://www.concordancesoftware.co.uk/>), which generates a ranking from the most frequently to the least frequently used words in a given corpus.

The concordance program analysis was conducted on 2300 male SMS containing 23,315 words and 2300 female SMS containing 22,791 words. The concordance program provided certain insights into the structure of the ads. Males and females both often used the impersonal construction 'is looked for' or a personal construction 'I am looking for...' Both often used the word 'nice.' Specific localities in Lithuania, such as Vilnius and Kaunas, were also mentioned by both genders. However, certain gender differences are also revealed. In a *Concordance* generated list of the 20 most frequently used words (see Appendix 2), the words 'man,' 'woman,' and 'lover' appeared only in the male list, whereas only in the female list did the words 'serious' and 'friendship' appear.

#### 4.4. GENDER DIFFERENCES IN AD CONTENT

##### 4.4.1. Self-description

The SMS ads were manually coded for self-description and other-seeking preferences. The results for the 30 categories for self-description were first calculated for males and females combined. Subsequently, the 10 most frequently-used categories were selected and their distribution was analyzed by gender. Figure 3 shows the results:

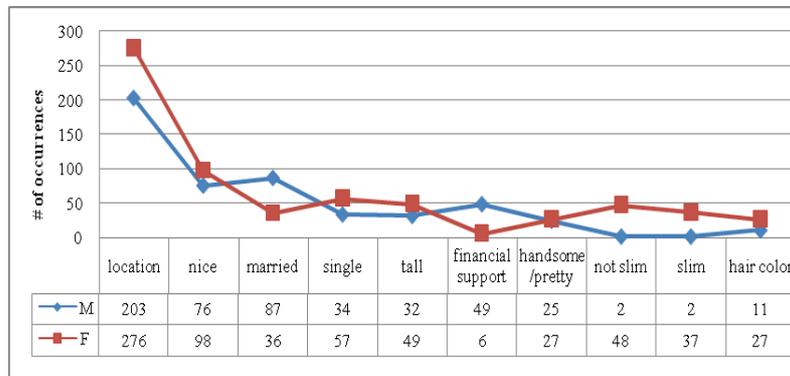


Figure 3. Most frequent characteristics in self-description by gender.

Figure 3 reveals some common tendencies—for example, both males and females most often mentioned their location, and both often claimed to be nice, tall, and attractive. However, males more often stated that they were married and could offer financial support. Conversely, females more often mentioned their weight: that they were slim or not. Females also mentioned their location more often.

Consistent with Koestner and Wheeler's (1988) findings, males mentioned their financial capacities. Therefore, these findings support previous research. The fact that more males said they were married may suggest that more Lithuanian men are looking

for a sexual relationship on the side, as compared to the women, who may be seeking more serious relationships. This interpretation is supported by other evidence, discussed below.

Koestner and Wheeler's (1988) finding that females more often mentioned physical attractiveness was partially supported by the high frequency of female self-description terms such as slim. However, the same number of self-description claims of not-slim occurred, and males described themselves as handsome as often as females described themselves as pretty. Consistent with Koestner and Wheeler's (1988) findings, females described themselves more often in terms of their weight than did males.

#### 4.4.2. Seeking preferences

In the seeking category, the results for the 30 categories were calculated for males and females combined. Three additional categories were added in order to account for age. The self-description analysis did not need to include age, as it is a required component when submitting an SMS ad to the *Telejazz* program. However, for the seeking category, age was coded as follows: similar, younger, or older. Out of these 33 categories, the 12 most popular categories were selected and their distribution was analyzed by gender. Figure 4 displays the results:

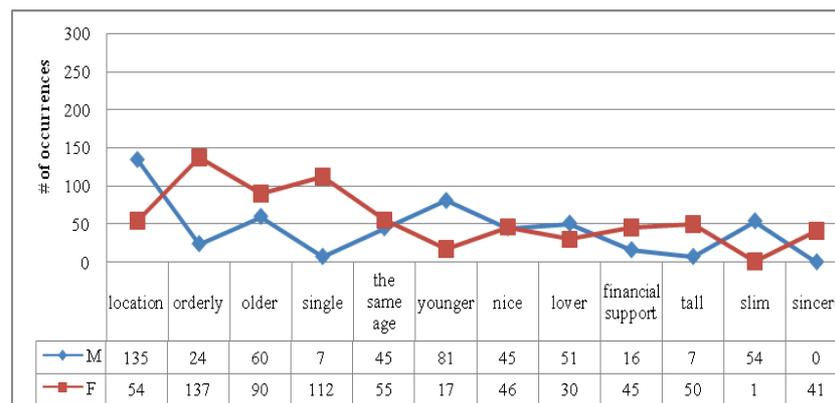


Figure 4. Most frequent characteristics sought by gender.

Whereas males and females mostly used similar self-descriptors, they differed considerably in the qualities they were seeking in a partner. Males more often sought a woman from a specific location who was younger and slim, and who would be their lover. In contrast, women more often sought men who were orderly, single, older, tall, sincere, and who could offer financial support.

Consistent with the Koestner and Wheeler (1988) findings, males were more concerned with weight and physical attractiveness, and females were more concerned with height and financial support, although the females also sought qualities not mentioned in Koestner and Wheeler's study, such as orderliness.

#### 4.4.3. Purpose

As regards the purpose for which they were seeking a partner, females and males again had contrasting expectations. These are shown in Figure 5.

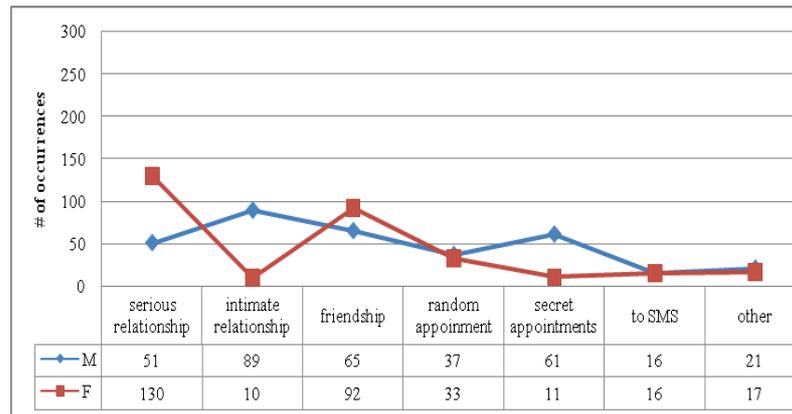


Figure 5. Purpose by gender.

Females sought more serious, long-term relationships and more friendship. In contrast, males explicitly sought physically intimate relationships and secret appointments, perhaps because more of them were married and would find it difficult to meet openly with a woman other than their wife.

Some of the gender differences identified above are illustrated in the following messages, which are typical of those in our sample:

#### Female to male:

SVELNI MIELA MERGINA SUSIPAZINTU SU LAISVU SVELNIU RIMTAI DRAUGYSTEI VAIKINU IS ALYTAUS

*A tender, nice woman would meet a single tender man from Alytus for a serious friendship.*

zavi, laisva sviesiaplauke, noretu susipazinti su simpatisku laisvu VYRU

*A nice, single blond girl wants to meet a nice single MAN.*

#### Male to female:

Virukas iesko lieknos meiluzes nuo 18. . . iki, is ROKISKIO seks pasimatimams, paremsiu finans, ras sms, sk rimtas.

*A man is looking for a slim lover from 18 years old to... old, from Rokiskis for sexual appointments. I can provide financial support, write SMS, this ad is serious.*

Si zinute yra skirta merginai ar moteriai turinciai didziuli biusta. Gal pavyktu tokia sutikti? Labai lauksiu Jusu

*This message is dedicated to a woman who has a big bust. Maybe we could meet? I am waiting for you!*

## 5. Discussion: Research questions revisited

The first research question asked about the structural characteristics of Lithuanian iTV SMS ads. The analysis revealed that within technological (160-character) and format (ad category, age) constraints, ad posters tended to maintain a relatively homogeneous ad format style. About 80% of the ads included at least two out of three basic functional parts (self-description, qualities sought in a partner, purpose for seeking a partner). While some gender trends were observed as regards ad structure, they were not strong. These findings can be explained by the basic function of a personal ad, which is to meet someone who has certain characteristics and who is compatible with the ad sender.

Gender differences were found in participation, however. Males placed many more and slightly longer ads than did females; they also placed more identical repetitive ads, and sent more SMS to an ad space designated for other purposes, thereby increasing their ads' potential visibility. This pattern is consistent with previous sociolinguistic research on male dominance in cross-gender face-to-face interaction (Coates, 1993) and in public computer-mediated communication on the Internet (Herring, 1993, 2003).

The third, fourth, and fifth research questions asked about gender differences in ad content in terms of self-presentation, what qualities were sought in a partner, and the purpose for seeking a partner. The differences found for these categories are summarized in Table 2:

*Table 2.* Summary of gender differences in self-description, seeking, and purpose.

	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
<b>Self-description</b>	married; can offer financial support	weight: in particular, being slim or not; more likely to state their location
<b>Seeking</b>	specific location; younger; lover; slim	orderly; older; single; possibly tall and offering financial support; sincere partner
<b>Purpose</b>	intimate relationships; secret appointments	serious relationships; friendship

The content analysis revealed many similarities with previous research on print personal ads (e.g., Koesten & Wheeler, 1988), as well as similarities with traditional sex roles in Western society more generally. (Married) men offering financial support tended to seek young, slim women for the purposes of physical intimacy, whereas weight-conscious women tended to seek sincere older men who were good providers for serious relationships or friendship. What each gender sought and the other offered was complementary overall, further reinforcing traditional sex roles. It is interesting that gender differences were more pronounced in the 'seeking' than in the 'self-description' category. This suggests that self-perceptions are less stereotyped than other-projections, or that gender differences are emphasized when seeking a (heterosexual) partner.

In addition, certain preferences were found that were not mentioned in previous research. For example, geographic location was a dominant concern in both the self-description and other-seeking categories. Because the program is broadcast throughout Lithuania, ad posters may have sought to limit potential respondents to their ads by identifying their location. Location was mentioned extensively by both genders in their self-description, especially by women. Conversely, in the seeking part, males more often specified the location of their potential partner. These findings may be related to the fact that males more often sought physical relationships; therefore, it was important to them to find a partner located within traveling distance. Women, in turn, accommodated by providing location information more often.

## 6. Conclusions

Overall, the findings of this study show that males and females express different but complementary expectations in Lithuanian iTV SMS personal ads. Moreover, their expectations correspond with gender-differentiated social norms, according to which women are expected to be serious about relationships and therefore, seek serious partners, whereas it is more socially acceptable for men to seek casual sex.

It might be argued that technological factors influence the structure, frequency, and content of the ads. The multiply-mediated nature of iTV SMS programs creates a high level of anonymity, which could account for male SMS that request intimate relationships crudely, in sexually-suggestive ways. Moreover, the technologically-mediated environment enables users to employ certain strategies to make SMS ad content more visible. In particular, males sent repetitive SMS and directed their SMS to an inappropriate category in order to gain a competitive advantage. However, only males employed these strategies, and it is not clear why technology would be expected to affect males differently from females. Therefore, technological determinism does not seem to account for the gender differences found in this study.

The findings conform better to the social construction of technology theory (Bijker & Law, 1992), which holds that people collectively shape new technologies through adapting them to their pre-existing social uses. The gender patterns evident in the iTV SMS ads, despite the fact that the ads were posted in a novel technological environment, show clear continuities and correspondences with offline social norms. Lithuanian culture has traditionally conservative social expectations as regards gender (Fischer, 2000; Purvaneckiene, 1998); this is undoubtedly a factor in explaining the gender differences found in the ads posted to the *Telejazz* program. The public nature of iTV SMS further helps to explain the higher participation level of males: It is consistent with traditional social norms whereby it is considered acceptable for males, but not females, to dominate discourse in public domains (Coates, 1993).

At the same time, the content of the messages, many of which contain explicit sexual allusions, clashes with the traditional conservative Catholic norms of Lithuanian society. This suggests the possibility that new media are driving a trend towards greater liberalism in Lithuania, at least in some domains. iTV SMS embodies the three components of accessibility, affordability, and anonymity—the Triple A—that Cooper (1998; Cooper, Scherer, Boies, & Gordon, 1999) predicted would promote sexual

communication, including pornography, online. Although Cooper's predictions were based on the Internet, they could apply as well to iTV. Conversely, it may just be that the *Telejazz* program is aired during the late night hours where adult content is usually placed, and that the degree of sexual content in the iTV SMS ads analyzed in this study does not depart significantly from the status quo. Research into the contents of Lithuanian iTV SMS posted during daylight hours is needed to clarify this issue.

Finally, if new media reinscribe existing gender patterns, the question arises whether they affect those patterns beyond simply reproducing them. It might be argued that by publicly broadcasting large volumes of SMS that express traditional sex roles, the iTV medium is contributing to their acceptance and spread. However, the *Telejazz* program also devotes space to homosexual personal ads, both male-to-male and female-to-female. These ads should also be analyzed before concluding that the program broadcasts a traditional normative message overall as regards sex roles.

In the meantime, iTV SMS programming is increasing in popularity in Europe and elsewhere, and is available in a growing number of formats, providing useful data for addressing these and other questions raised by this convergent media phenomenon.

## Notes

1. [http://www.vrm.lt/index.php?id=131&backPID=878&pS=1078092000&pL=2674799&arc=1&tt\\_news=326&](http://www.vrm.lt/index.php?id=131&backPID=878&pS=1078092000&pL=2674799&arc=1&tt_news=326&), retrieved March 9, 2008.
2. <http://www.sekunde.lt/content.php?p=read&tid=14820>, retrieved March 9, 2008.
3. [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/policy/ecom/doc/library/annualreports/12threport/sec\\_2007\\_403.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/ecom/doc/library/annualreports/12threport/sec_2007_403.pdf), retrieved March 9, 2008.
4. <http://www.activesec.eu/2007/07/31/lithuania-market-of-mobile-telecommunications/>, retrieved March 10, 2008.
5. <http://www.britannica.com/new-multimedia/pdf/wordat118.pdf>, retrieved March 9, 2008.
6. <http://www.activesec.eu/2007/07/31/lithuania-market-of-mobile-telecommunications/>, retrieved March 10, 2008.

## References

- Beyer, Y., Enli, G. S., Maasø, A., & Ytreberg, E. (2007). Small talk makes a big difference: Recent developments in interactive, SMS-based television. *Television & New Media*, 8(3), 213-223.
- Bijker, W., & Law, J. (Eds.). (1992). *Shaping technology/building society. Studies in sociotechnical change*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Cameron, C., Oskamp, S., & Sparks, M. (1977). Courtship American style: Newspaper ads. *The Family Coordinator*, 26, 27-30.
- Coates, J. (1993). *Women, men and language*. London: Longman.
- Cooper, A. (1998). Sexuality and the Internet: Surfing into the new millennium. *CyberPsychology and Behavior*, 1, 181-187.
- Cooper, A., Scherer, C., Boies, S. C., & Gordon, B. (1999). Sexuality on the internet: From sexual exploration to pathological expression. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 30, 154-164.

- Danet, B. (1998). Text as mask: Gender and identity on the Internet. In S. Jones (Ed.), *Cybersociety 2.0* (pp. 129-158). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fischer, A. H., & Manstead, A.S.R. (2000). Men's and women's lay theories of emotion. In A. H. Fischer (Ed.), *Gender and emotion: Social psychological perspectives* (pp. 71-97). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Gillis, J. S., & Avis, N. E. (1980). The male-taller norm in mate selection. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 6, 391-395.
- Graddol, D., & Swann, J. (1989). *Gender voices*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Herring, S. C. (1993). Gender and democracy in computer-mediated communication. *Electronic Journal of Communication*, 3 (2). Retrieved January 20, 2008 from <http://ella.slis.indiana.edu/~herring/ejc.txt>
- Herring, S. C. (2003). Gender and power in online communication. In J. Holmes & M. Meyerhoff (Eds.), *The handbook of language and gender* (pp. 202-228). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Koestner, R., & Wheeler, L. (1988). Self-presentation in personal advertisements: The influence of implicit notions of attraction and role expectations. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 5, 149-160.
- Ling, R. (2005). The socio-linguistics of SMS: An analysis of SMS use by a random sample of Norwegians. In R. Ling & P. Pedersen (Eds.), *Mobile communications: Renegotiation of the social sphere* (pp. 335-349). London: Springer.
- Lynn, W. M., & Bolig, R. (1985). Personal advertisements: Sources of data about relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 2, 377-83.
- Lynn, W. M., & Shurgot, B. A. (1984). Responses to lonely hearts advertisements: The effects of reported physical attractiveness, physique and coloration. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 10, 349-357.
- Purvaneckiene, G. (1998). Women in the domestic domain. In S. LaFount (Ed.), *Women in transition: Voices from Lithuania* (pp. 48-59). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Sprecher, S. (1989). The importance to males and females of physical attractiveness, earnings potential, and expressiveness in initial attraction. *Sex Roles*, 21, 591-605.
- Yates, S., Mills, S., Lockley, E., & Doherty, K. (2004, July). *Gender, 'face' management and mediated interaction*. Paper presented at the 9<sup>th</sup> International Pragmatics Conference, Riva del Garda, Italy.
- Zelenkauskaitė, A., & Herring, S. C. (2008). Television-mediated conversation: Coherence in Italian iTV SMS chat. *Proceedings of the Forty-First Hawai'i International Conference on System Sciences*. Los Alamitos, CA: IEEE Press.

*Appendix 1. Coding categories and code values for self-description, seeking, purpose.*

<i>Self-description/Seeking</i>	<i>Self-description/Seeking</i>	<i>Self-description/Seeking</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
<i>general info</i>	<i>personal qualities</i>	<i>physical characteristics</i>	
location	nice/charming	sensual/passionate/ sexually attractive	friendship long term/serious friendship
married single/not in a relationship	naughty  orderly/serious	handsome/pretty  tall	secret appointments sex/intimate relationship
with children lover	interesting approachable friendly sincere docile romantic indicates financial status caring well-mannered intelligent	short slim not slim/plump youthful athletic hair (color)  eyes (color) sexual body parts	to talk about sex to SMS random appointment appointments for money  communication other

*Appendix 2. The 20 most frequent words generated by the Concordance program.*

Male			Female		
frequency	Word	translation	frequency	word	translation
1060	iesko	is looking for	876	draugo	for a friend (male)
625	su	with	825	iesko	is looking for
584	is	from	472	su	with
562	vyras	a man	408	ir	and
434	vedes	married (male)	405	is	from
400	moters	for woman	309	simpatiska	nice (female)
365	drauges	for friend (female)	257	rimto	for a serious
338	SMS	SMS	252	draugystei	for a friendship
297	ar	or	222	35	35
291	iki	till	214	40	40
280	ir	and	202	nuo	from
265	simpatiskas	nice (male)	200	rimtai	serious
259	susipazintu	would meet	198	tik	only
250	moterim	with a woman	195	SMS	SMS
246	meiluzes	for a lover	194	moteris	a woman
243	draugystei	for a friendship	186	esu	I am
222	40	40	179	m	years old
218	38	38	170	laisvo	for a single (male)
208	merginos	for a girl(friend)	154	susipazintu	would meet
201	kaunietis	from Kaunas	152	Kaunas	Kaunas

