

# Speech is Speech, Writing is Writing

- on language in the new written media

**EVA SKAFTE JENSEN**

In this article it is argued that what we witness in texting, chat, Facebook updates, twitter etc. is not spoken language, neither is it 'written speech' or some kind of hybrid between spoken and written language. Speech is speech, writing is writing. Claiming that the language in the new social media is 'written speech' or a hybrid between spoken and written language confuses what constitutes speech and writing on the one hand and other categories such as intimacy, formality and the like on the other. In the article it is maintained that speech and writing are discrete categories, whereas the other categories are continuous. For three areas it is shown that what we see in the new social media should be taken seriously as written language. The three areas are 'turn taking', pronunciation-like spelling and other creative uses of graphics, and expressive language. In conclusion, the paper stresses the importance of conducting analyses on the terms of the data themselves rather than by imposing more or less adequate methods and observations taken from other fields of investigation.