YOUTH AND MOBILE PHONES:
SOMETHING MORE THAN A FASHION

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This paper is a summary of the issue number 57 (June 2002) of the Spanish Journal "Revista de Estudios de Juventud" (Journal of Studies on Youth), entitled "Juventud y Teléfonos Móviles" (Youth and Mobile Phones), issued four times a year by the "Instituto de la Juventud" (Youth Institute), a governmental body belonging to the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs.

The original idea of this issue took place in mid 2001 and it consisted in gathering a number of important contributions from scholars from all over the world in order to see what is going on regarding the use of mobile phones by youth. Two basic hypotheses underlying this were in my mind: one was that most scholars are thinking only in terms of his (her) country without realizing that, due to globalization processes and even to deeper sociological rationales, the behaviour of youth might be fairly the same all across the world. All in all, this hypothesis has come true. Most, if not all, people read literature written in English besides the literature written in their own language, but very few, if any, read other literature which may not be either in English or in his(her) own native language. And those who have English as their own language are generally the ones who read only English literature. So, if a certain amount of candidness is permitted, one may be tempted to believe that social scientists are still fundamentally "provincial" in the sense that they still look at the world and analyze it only in terms of their own country. So it seems that we are not as globalized as we are told, especially those who have English as their native language for whom the only existing world is the one where English is spoken.

And second, it appears that mobile telephony is, like any other technological innovation, a true killer application, and more so insofar as young people are concerned. This underlying suspicion has come true, too.

So, I addressed myself to my various scholar friends from an important part of the world to ask them to cooperate in this issue of the journal. The result is a magnificent intellectual product, most probably the first one so far where this social phenomenon is dealt with on an international basis. The relation of authors and titles can be found in the "references" at the end of this paper. The contributions, finally, came from Finland, Norway, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Great Britain, France, Russia, Japan and the U.S., besides Spain. All in all, twelve countries. It is also interesting to know that they were 19 persons, of whose ten women, participating as authors.

The authors were asked to keep a rather common structure in their articles: first, they were supposed to give the basic facts and figures of mobile telephony in his(her) country, especially focused on youth; second, they were expected to give the result of his(her) piece of research regarding the use of mobile phones by youth; and third, they were asked to present a short sample of abbreviations used by the youth in SMS writing in his(her) country. This third part has been of special interest due to the fact that youth language is particularly straightforward and candid, and because one can easily conclude that the rules underlying SMS communication and its language are exactly the same in all languages all over the world. As far as candidness, Enid Mante and Dóris Pires show expressions very much sexually-oriented taken from written SMS messages.

Setting up the issue

Approaching the issue of how youth uses the mobile phone is a challenge that must force the researcher, adult by the way, to avoid topics about it, and the social sciences have the obligation to deal it with seriousness. Because, it must be asserted from the very beginning, that mobile telephony and its use by youth is not a simple fashion but a truly deep sociological phenomenon that has important sociological explanations. Mobile telephony is thus more a sociological revolution than a technological one. As Claire Lobet and Laurent Hening, the Belgian authors, maintain: "reality is more complex, and some of the deep sociological phenomena are hidden behind the massive mobile phone adoption by people". For one thing, human communication, and especially machine-mediated human communication, is an old reality having its roots in the very beginning of our species, some 50,000 years ago, in the African savanna. Just two novelties have been developed recently: first, Meucci (not Graham Bell, as it is now known) discovered the possibility of modulating human voice within an electric wire (that is, the telephone), in the last fourth part of the 19th century, and second, hardly a few decades ago when the mobile phone was finally developed whereby the human voice can be modulated through air waves. It should be noted, however, that the correct way of calling it is "wireless telephone", so neither "cellular" (as in Italy, the U.S. and some Latin American countries) nor "mobile" are correct, because only the personal user is mobile while the device is just "portable". Very much like the laptop, which is a "portable computer".

Speaking world-wide, the whole issue of the youth journal gives a very interesting picture of de developed countries as far as mobile telephony. Europe, and Japan, are leading nowadays the deep technological as well as sociological revolution that is taking place by the mobile telephony, with penetration rates roughly in the 80%. The U.S. is just about half that penetration. LiAnne Yu, Gareth Louden and Heilo Sacher, the authors of the article on the U.S. explain the various reasons for this, but it is not too unfair thinking that the European success is due to the GSM technology that the whole of Europe has adopted, so we may speak of a "scale technology" as well as there exists the "scale economy". In this instance, together with the car

innovation, Europe is leading. Then there is Russia, and Olga Vershinskaya explains very candidly the drawbacks that this country is facing after its insertion in the Western world. Speaking of mobile telephony in Russia is just speaking of Moscow and Saint Petersburg--hardly no more than that.

Access, adoption and use

The various authors in the journal explain that there are three basic phases in the entire process under study. The first one has to do with getting to know what mobile telephony, and SMS, is all about; then, there is the moment of adoption, insofar as the gadget may be bought by the user or just be given to him(her) as a gift by his(her) parents, and third, which is sociologically by far the most important phase, the particular way of domesticating the telephone, that is, the way of using it.

Access happens within the reference group and when sociological processes such as "initiation rites" (Richard Ling) take place. Both are part of the overall socialization process through which patterns of thinking and behaving are transmitted to the newcomer.

Adoption generally takes place as a parents' gift. Further in this paper a more detailed account will be given in the context of security actions taken used by the parents. Low price, incentive policies by the operators and facility of use are at the bottom of this massive success.

As to the use, most -if not all- articles clearly point out the ability and competence by the youth to use the mobile phone, the need of a certain amount of training which is provided by the "older" youngsters, pretty much along the lines of the good old oral tradition within the tribe -the old wizard explaining things to the astonished members-. We have been reminded several times in sociology that we are villagers, that is, that we live constricted in small communities. Finally, the domestication takes place when use and meaning of the device come together into cultural resonance. And not only resonance, but a true social re-invention insofar as the SMS success was not particularly foresighted by the sharp and clever telecommunication engineers. Mobile telephony, and more so SMS, is a clear example of a particular instance where social demands outweighs technological supply. That is why mobile telephony is such a killer application everywhere.

The articles, finally, point out that penetration and, most of all, use of mobile phones by youth is not by far a uniform social fact, in the sense that age and gender, and both variables at the same time, account for most of the social variance.

Within the family context, Leopoldina Fortunati builds up the concept of "virtual brotherhood" to explain the inner drive felt by the youth to use the mobile phone (or the SMS) in order to communicate with his(her) "virtual brothers and sisters", since he(she) has no consanguineous brothers and sisters due the ever shrinking size of present-day family. Modern family, with just two (at the very

most) or even one child (which is the modal figure nowadays in Europe), is very much favouring the need for the teen-agers to communicate outside the predominantly "adult"-sort of familial group.

Youth, however, get increasingly tired and bothered by the SMS as they grow older and so they start communicating more and more through voice. They need fresh oral communication and do not bear the SMS asynchrony. They do not only call their peers but they start calling their older and adult members of the family and they begin self-organizing their lives. And the mobile phone starts to be precisely portable, because one of the main findings of this journal is that mobile phones are primarily "private" personal phones used by youth for the sake of privacy, and not so much for the sake of portability. Some of the figures show that just about half of the calls made by teenagers take place in the young's bedroom. So it is privacy and not mobility that matters.

Gender, as it has been said, accounts for differences, too. The younger boys do use their phones very much for games, and their attitude before the phone is mainly game-oriented (playing with it, a toy-like sort of thing) while girls speak more than write, they communicate with each other, so that this constitutes a sort of "pre-socialization process in order to become the keepers of the social network" (Richard Ling), or to keep the "socio-emotional communication" (Joachim Höfflich and Patrick Rössler). But both, boys and girls, keep similar "security patterns" before the parents to safeguard and reinforce their personal and collective identity in order to being able to emancipate from them.

Explaining the boom

The various authors explain why the mobile telephony has been a boom not only among adults but most particularly among youngsters.

Virpi Oksman and Pirjo Rautianen, the two ladies writing from Finland, very beautifully express the awe felt by youngsters before the telephone that makes them cry: "I have all my life on the top on my hand". And of course, the young's life on the top of their hand is being deeply communicated and tied up with the peer group, thus provoking a particular sense of feeling full of enthusiasm and joy. Enid Mante and Dóris Pires, from the Netherlands, speak of a youth that stays for many years within the educational system (from the kindergarten to the final university studies, almost a third of human life) leading a very busy and intense life (studies, sports, hobbies, peers…) and with very little money, as they are passive workers, non active ones. This generates what they call a "unique social space", strong and firmly closed unto itself, where interpersonal relationships, gangs and various groups acquire a powerful meaning. Mobile telephone, then, takes up the role of communication mediator, and hence its high social meaning and importance. Jasper once said that "being is to communicate", and communication is precisely what makes the difference between non-living and living matter.

The recurrence to the reference group, as the Dutch authors point out, is a leitmotive of practically the rest of articles to explain the mobile unbelievable success. The primary group creates among youngsters two urgent needs: identity and communication. First, an identity need, because youngsters need to know and feel who they are, young among youngsters, lovers and loved, in an unique, non-transferable and private space. There is the need to get away from their "hopelessly old-fashioned" parents (Richard Ling). Therefore, identity and privacy go together. And secondly, communication, because youngsters do need to build up their social structure made up of values, norms and behaviour-- that is, the ingredients of culture. Furthermore, it has been found that the mobile telephone is an instrument -more for boys than for girls, it must be said at once- that helps organizing the everyday life, planning meetings and contacts, actions, happenings... thus helping to develop maturity and autonomy, the two adult features of utmost importance.

Identity need is further accomplished by youth by way of "personalizing" the mobile device, and this is a feature that can be found all over the countries analysed as well. Young people find extremely attractive and fitting their deepest drives of identity the fact of choosing the various forms of covers, colours, icons, ringing tones, decoration, shape and size of their mobile phones. Makers are creating all sorts of gadgets, including the "heart-shaped telephone" to meet those drives of youth identity. The final goal is identifying the device with their body, making it not a prosthesis (which implies a malfunctioning organ that has to be substituted) but as an extension of the body, ear, voice, and touch, very much in the old McLuhan's tradition of media as extensions of man. Furthermore, the mobile phone is looked upon almost as a jewel. The mobile thus becomes a dear machine that, for the youngster, becomes him or her.

Richard Ling, from Norway, speaks of the "initiation rites", that is, of the telephone as a "rite of passage" in the anthropological perspective. Rites of passage were important landmarks in the primitive societies, and still are although nowadays more mitigated. Giving the mobile phone to the teenager can be somehow considered as a transit from childhood to adolescence.

Leopoldina Fortunati and Anna Maria Manganelli, from Italy, speak of the above-mentioned "virtual brotherhood". The word "virtual", although not univocous in its meaning, conveys a certain notion of space and time which are free from physical constraints thanks to the use of information and communication technologies (ICT). So they are speaking of a particular spaceless and timeless brotherhood that arises from familial loneliness which urges teenagers to break up the household physical constrain and to go into other vicarious brothers and sisters. This loneliness, they argue, is not only due to the fact that the family size is decreasing, but mainly to the so-called "new economy" which forces more and more adults to long working journeys and consequently to less and less "being at home". The particular working set up for women, although it varies substantially from country to country, is pointed as a possible cause for them for having less children and staying less time at home. Therefore, the lack of parents-children dialogue must be filled up with the children-friends dialogue, and here it is where the mobile phone gets in. It is

simply too easy and handy for the youngsters, and fulfils its anti-loneliness role extremely well.

Joachim Höffler and Patrick Rössler, from Germany, speak of the "deficit of social and emotional ties" in this paradoxically non-communicated society. Some research in the articles mentioned here speaks of emotional messages reaching 70% of all messages, while others are openly erotic, where the SMS, as well as the e-mail, has real advantages as they do not need face to face intercommunication, so shy people can write things that they would not dare to say before the other person.

It must be contended here, as all authors do, that this type of phone we are speaking of is mainly a "personal" device. It is personal because, as mentioned before, it is personalized according to the user's taste. But it is personal above all because youth think of this phone as a means for individual communication, and so the space in which this interpersonal communication takes place becomes trivial and non important. The fixed phone could likewise be considered a personal phone, but it mostly lacks the privacy requirements that the teenager so highly cherishes. Likewise, public space (where fixed phones usually are placed) do not fit the privacy eagerness. So, mobile telephony is not so much an issue of mobility (or portability), but one of privacy. This is the reason why, according to LiAnne Yu, the North-American author, there are so many behavioural differences between the U.S. patterns of use and the rest of the world in relationship to mobile telephony. She argues that there are technical reasons for such differences (for instance, the various co-existing cellular systems, the particular ways of payment and so on), but the reason why North-American youth do not go so much for mobiles phones lies in the fact that second and third telephones lines in the U.S. are so cheap that teenagers fulfil their communicative drives well enough from their home rooms through a different telephone line than that of their household, a line that it is used only by him or her.

Another important finding of the various papers here mentioned has to do with the wrong concept of globalization. No doubt, this word certainly applies to world-wide present-day realities, such as the world economy, world speculation, world transport, health, the military, multinational enterprises, and world mass-media. But the mobile phone, both for adults and youngsters, is primarily, if not exclusively, for local spaces, for communication with peer groups and reference groups, all of whom live almost around the corner. Communication contents have to do mostly with local affairs, daily lives, mundane and non transcendental issues. It is a local, non distant place, and a synchronic time, only slightly asynchronic between the sending and the receiving of the SMS. Some authors speak of the funny use whereby the youngsters call up a friend to ask whether he(she) has received a SMS message that he(she) has just composed and sent. So the mobile phone is personal and local.

What is interesting to point out is the claim most frequently expressed by adults whereby technologically-mediated communication, be it fixed phone, mobile phone and SMS messaging, forbids or reduces face to face communication. Most authors, however, contend that this is by far a false interpretation of

reality. As it seems to happen, technologically-mediated communication, most of the times, does prepare further face to face contacts, so that present-day youth is probably more communicated than ever in the history of mankind.

The parents' approach

Traditionally, there has been a certain amount of generational conflict within the family group, yet, nowadays this conflict seems to be strongly decreasing. In Spain, at least, this is the case. Likewise, it appears that parental behaviour related to mobile phones is clearly pro-children, and not against them, as it can be seen in most articles.

Once again, Richard Ling speaks of the mobile phone in terms of a "digital leash" in the most strict canine context, that is, the peculiar umbilical cord that ties parents with their children. In another words, parents are happy buying phones to their children so they know where they are. It thus plays the role of a security device to keep the child safe. Furthermore, one could argue that parents are wrong in the sense that what they would really, and deep down in their hearts, love to buy is a GPS equipment, and they feel that the mobile phone could take up its functions. In sum, we are witnessing to the good old Orwellian "Big Brother" sort of phenomenon. Richard Ling also calls the mobile phone the "magic helper" that helps follow up the physical steps of the children. One may reflect upon the fact of whether this extremely high parental zeal is matched with the surveillance of the virtual space where children do navigate in the internet. And one may lay the hypothesis that parents are worried about the physical space where their children are, but not about the virtual space where their children navigate, which indeed can be far more dangerous than the physical one. Just think in terms of racial, nazi, violent or even sexist web pages.

Leslie Haddon, from Great Britain, speaks of the "bedroom culture" to convey the research findings in his country whereby parents prefer having their children in their rooms, and calling from there, that outdoors. Parents are happy thinking that their children are at home, home sweet home, while they are away from it... working many hours and commuting long distances everyday. Thus open, public spaces have become dangerous for youngsters, according to parents. So, if this is so, one may be inclined to think that two thousand years of so-called civilization have done little in regards to achievement of human values. It seems that the old Hobbean insight "homo homini lupus" holds still true.

Again, Leopoldina Fortunati and Anna Maria Manganelli bring forward an interesting "aporia" (Greek word for "contradiction" or "paradox") whereby parents think that, thanks to the mobile phone, they are in control of their children, while children think that they are free from their parents. Both parties wrongly "think" what they think, because the other side is not neither thinking

nor doing so. It is theatrical simulacrum, not reality. So the mobile is somewhat helping consolidate such simulacrum.

SMS LANGUAGE: NEITHER CRYPTIC NOR NEW

Perhaps one of the most outstanding findings of the twelve articles of this issue of the Journal is that youth have very similar, if not identical, patterns regarding the use of the SMS (I-mode in Japan) and the language used in it. Young people are "Jugglers (or prestidigitators) of the written language", according to the Italian authors, because of the extreme facility with which they press the phone little keyboard with their thumbs.

So, the presumed novelty that adults are so much speaking of nowadays has to do with the gadget, not with the type of language. Forms do change, but the core of the written language remains. There is an anecdote about Victor Hugo that, when he finished writing his famous novel *Les Miserables*, we went to rest to a friend's farm, but he was anxious to know what the public's acceptance of his novel had been. So he sent a postcard to his editor with just this laconic message: "?". The editor did not need more *bits* of information, and so likewise he answered him with another equally concise message: "!". The novel had been a massive success. We may conclude that concision and abbreviation is the rule, not the exception, in communication, and this is the case in the SMS language as well. The Hebrew language does not have vocals. Shorthand and stenography are compression algorithms more powerful than present-day *zip* software. OK means, in old English, "oll korrect", using two characters instead of twelve. Morse code expresses the "E" and the "T" -the most used words in English- as "." and "-", in order to increase the transmission speed. Mathematics uses short symbols worldwide accepted (like +, -, x, and /), and everyone knows what the graphic language means: for instance, the sickle and the hammer in the former Soviet Union, the Svastic in the Nazi regime, the David's Star in Israel, the Red Cross, the $...

Another common worldwide pattern of SMS use is writing numbers instead of letters when the former have autonomous meaning: 2 for "two", 4 for "for", and the like.

Operators in most countries have published small "dictionaries" to help young people in writing according to the peculiar SMS "shorthand", but it seems they are not particularly necessary as socialization processes provide the newcomers with good, practical and efficient ways of doing it.

Everyone of the authors present the most commonly used abbreviations used by the youngsters in the SMS. Perhaps the one of these most commonly used may be the expression "I love you". Here is, in the table, the way each of the writers say this is written in their respective language:

ABBREVIATED WAYS TO WRITE "I LOVE YOU" IN THE VARIOUS LANGUAGES HERE COMMENTED		
TQ	Te quiero	Spanish

Jtem or jt'm	Je t'aime	French
Ikvjou	Ik houd van je	Dutch
Hadili	Hab dich lieb	German
Tam	Ti amo	Italian
ILUVU	I love you	English
ILU	I love you	English
Luv u	I love you	Russian (used in English!)
Mrs	Minä rakastan sinua	Finnish
GID	Glad I deg	Norwegian

Carole-Anne Rivière, the French author, argues that the patterns of voice and text are pretty much the same, yet, written SMS messages have a higher degree of privacy, have less ties with space and time (youth value this very much as they can surreptitiously send messages from/to the classroom) and finally, there is cost: sending a SMS message is always cheaper than calling.

Synoptic Summary

	NORWAY	FINLAND	BELGIUM	HOLLAND	FRANCE	ITALY	UK	GERMANY	RUSSIA	JAPAN	USA

USER PROFILE	9-12 years: 0%
	13-20 years 90%
	Adults 85%
	Male 91%
	Female 79%
		9-12 years 60%
		13-20 years 90%
		Adultos circa 90%
			80% of those less 25 have a mobile.
			
			Penetration rate = 75% (January 02), estimation: l 80% in Dec 02
				12-16 years 80%
				Adults 60%
				Average entire propulation: 70%
					NO DATA	15-24 years 77,2%
						25-34 years 75,8%
						35-44 years 70,0 %
						65% of households have a mobile.
						42% of them, more than one.
						Male adults. 80%
						Female adults. 70%
							15-24 years 88%
							25-34 years 87%
							35-44 years 88%
							Average population 79%
							Prepaid: 77%
								12-19 years:
								    1999 14%
								    2000 49%
								    2001 74%
								
								Average population in 2001 62%
									18-29 years 54,4%
									
									Hardly no SMS
										DoCoMo, HAS 33 million users. From Feb,99 to Feb,00:. 1 more million per month. Sept, 2000: 12 mm illion subscribers to I-mode.	10-19 years: 25% .
											
											Today only 15% use SMS.

ACCESS	Mostly parents give during religious confirmation	Parents' gift	Gift for girs (25%) and for boys (20%). Boys get the mobile mostly by their own.	NO DATA	NO DATA	Parents' gift	Christmas gits and August gift.	Parents' gift .	Mobile is viewed as a nice gift	Gift. .	NO DATA
USAGE PATTERNS **- For what** **- Key issues .** **- Learning** **(Everywhere male children teach to teir parents and sisters how to use it***)*	Free communication channel	Communication tool. Safety	16% use it as SMS 15% for chatting and 44% to feel together (TÓTEM TRIBE) Fashion object	NO DATA	Key elements: - Agility. - Privacy. -Asynchrony (SMS)	Mainly for parent-children getting in touch.. 50% for calling. .	Communication tool within the peer group .	Usage depends upon educational level of parents Male youth: negative correlation. Female youth: positive correlation	User thinks he can be controlled.	It is used as a means for getting in touch, without privacy invasión.	Low usage because they prefer the internet. The mobile phones are tools for adult professionals.

THE MOBILE AS AN OBJECT: -Identitty. -Equality. -Autonomy	Three characteristics.	Three characteristics.	The mobile is a tool for transmission of information about gender, social status, ethnic group, character and personality.	Not having a mobile means your're a marginal being, something dreadful for youth.	The mobile addresses new ways of living	Sort of virtual brotherhood through the oral communication	If youth don't get messages, something is wrong. They feel outset from the group..	The mobile offers the possibility of anonymous communication, but its use is predictable and is subject to patterns.	New concept of loneliness: if you don't get messages, you're isolated.	Si no tienes correo por I-mode, eres un MARGINADO.		NO DATA
PROS AND CONS	-Autonomy. -Coordination of activities.	Parents want to guarantee children safety and mobile facilitates balance between work and family.	For youth: -Silence. -Amusement. -Emotion. -Management of expenditure For adults: -It permits liaison with children.	For youth: -Comfort -Low costs.	For youth: to have a nice time. SMS permits better conflict management.	For youth: to replace brothers and sisters that don't have, as web as escaping from parental control. For adults: space localization of children.	For youth: -Privacy. -Peer group communication -Management of expenditure. For parents: -Socialization -Keep children safe at home. ..	For youth:: -Time shortening. -Safety. -Sociability. -Self-confidence. -Being reachable.	Safety Mobile is bought when car is bought.	Itr permits to break down spiritual bareers of personal relationships (and the interaction strict norms)		Mobile makes youth feel being controlled. They prefer pagers.
USAGE DIFFERENCES	Children use it mainly the Male youth for activity coordination. Male youth for maintaining social networks.	For adolescents it's a means for organising activities of everyday life and for building social swtructure. Adulst use it for controlling expenditure and globalization.	70% of adults use SMS; 95% of youth use SMS	75% of calls are to peers, more so than adults.	Youth use mobile and SMS for discovering personal relationships, and because griten communication has a non-inhibition effect.	Adults use less functions than youth.	Youth like to borrow their mobile as a sign of friendship.	Youth use mostly the SMS, whereas adlts use the mobile to reach and being reached. Percentage of girls having mobile phone is higher, and the use is more emotional..	Youth use more the SMS than adults.	Youth use the mobile for being reachable. Parents use mobile for their professional activity and to keep in touch with children. .		There is more than one telephone line in the households, because it's cheap, so mobile is less necessary.
THE SMS USAGE AND ITS RULES: - Abbreviation - Fitting spelling and pronunciation - Digit use for sound representation	THERE ARE SMS SPELLING RULES. There exists a web page with abbreviations.	THERE ARE SMS SPELLING RULES Suelen tomar palabras del inglés. Efectuan llamadas "BOMBA"	THERE ARE SMS SPELLING RULES Advantages: No noise 52% Saving money 30% Convey emotions 17% Amusement 13% 15-18 years: 92/100% 15-25 years: 94/97%	THERE ARE SMS SPELLING RULES 18% of youth, only SMS Until 14 14 years, 90% use it, and 25% between 15 and 34 years of age.	THERE ARE SMS SPELLING RULES Advantages: .No noise . Time saving . Money saving . Keep ties anytime, anywhere.	THERE ARE SMS SPELLING RULES	THERE ARE SMS SPELLING RULES They feel as an obligation to anwser message. Its use means more solidarity among youth and means status within the group.	THERE ARE SMS SPELLING RULES For youth, SMS handling means social prestige.	THERE ARE SMS SPELLING RULES For adolescents, SMS means gratification. Girls are more practical in its use.	THERE ARE SMS SPELLING RULES Use English characters. They think about the mobile: -cheaper - More confidenctial - More amusing - Don't get distracted the person being called.	THERE ARE SMS SPELLING RULES I-mode: They use ideograms The main norm is abbreviating.	No usan SMS. They use: - Pagers -e-mail e-mail through PDAs

By way of conclusion

Many more things could be said about this outstanding phenomenon. But the space constraints force to conclude by way of presenting some very brief conclusions:

Telephone is more personal than portable:
- Fairly half the calls take place from/to the bedroom
- Young people want privacy and avoid parental control
- Young people love personalising the gadget; a jewel more than a prosthesis

Primary group, peer group, gangs…:
- Compulsory communication drive
- Compulsory group membership

Virtual brotherhood:
- Small family size.
- Loneliness leads to communication

Digital leash, GPS:
- Parental drive for spatial control. Big Brother.
- Simulacrum: parents think they control children; children think they are free from parents
- Most likely, parents are ignorant of virtual spaces visited by children

Contents of calls/SMS messages:
- Mostly dating, appointments, which prepare further face to face contacts
- Mundane conversations
- Mobile phone facilitates first gender encounters

SMS language:
- The same worldwide
- Abbreviations
- Numbers instead of letters

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