Ana Maria Munteanu, Aida Todi[1]

Language and identification of the self on the sites of Romanians Abroad

Abstract: *In a globalised world, the importance of borders is decreasing gradually encouraging migration and mobility and clustering cultural threats. Driven by various reasons (work, study, marriage and family reunification, career, etc..) a growing number of people in emerging states decide to leave their home and to settle, temporarily or permanently, in developed countries of the EU. With a massive migration phenomenon, mother tongue becomes cultural capital in online identification. It seems that linguistic framework has a major role in the process of adaptation and integration of immigrants restoring the community connection between de-located individuals or groups and facilitating the formation of self-help networks. That role appears to be related both to the multiplication of online platforms created and used by Romanians from abroad and to a ritual function that makes possible the identification with a community niche. Online narratives promote positive and pragmatic images of the self, reinforce and motivate identification in the framework defined by correct and expressive uses of language, regenerate the cultural and social capital - "the world becomes a fable", stories intersect, reorganizes the perception of realities - in the familiar language environment.*

Key words: *cross-cultural interaction, online narratives, knowledge stock, subjective reading of events.*

Introduction

Freedom of movement, the wide range of the migration phenomenon and the issues raised by integration on an European labour market, have brought up the issue of the harmonization of the two identities and citizenship: that of the country of origin and the European one, the constraints of the specific migration situation, the symmetry or asymmetry of the cross-cultural relation generating tensions in everyday life situations. Some of these have been exacerbated by politicians and the media (England - 2006-2007, Italy - 2009-2010, France - 2010), making it difficult to negotiate identity at the ethnic boundary - a borderline that reinforces cultural difference at the level of self-perception in interactions with others. With a massive migration phenomenon, mother tongue becomes cultural capital, facilitating adaptation in a different environment by maintaining or

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restoring the community connection in the de-located aid networks, relocated online (Brubacker, 1997, Patrick, coord., 1999).

How perception of the self and national culture materializes in the exchanges of messages on the Internet *in* and *through* the linguistic material generated in virtual interactions as critical mass of messages reflects both the increasingly higher share of this channel among the ones used by migrants and persons planning to work abroad and the way in which cognitive resources and identifying images can be mobilized in an area larger than that of the national territory through *online* platforms.

As we know, sites created *by* and *for* Romanians abroad are numerous and online communication redefines social structure by creating an interactional space free of constraints, but not of models and knowledge resources, directed towards interpersonal efficiency and pragmatic attitudes. Online communication platforms answer the need for information and communication in Romanian, and equally a need for self-valuation through cultural identification. At the same time it reflects the asymmetry of the migration situation as "it is not cultures that come into contact, but individuals, groups belonging to different cultures" (Abdallah-Préceille, 1986). This mobility reconfirms an older idea of Preiswek and Perrot (1975): "culture does not have a descriptive value, however description facilitates the analysis of the relations established among societies and the difficulties that may arise on this occasion", that is the symmetry or asymmetry of the cross-cultural relation determined by various factors, other than culture itself, is accompanied by perceptions and categorizations that can block or – on the contrary - support cultural identification.

Continuing earlier work by the authors (Munteanu & Todi, 2007, Todi, 2007a, 2007b, 2008), the study aims for a better understanding of communication in the Romanian Diaspora, particularly developments determined by recent migration, looking at the extent to which sites and blogs of Romanians abroad make use of national identity marks in dynamic cross-cultural contexts and whether the cultural baggage that individuals carry into labour and interpersonal relations is or not also valued beyond its effective uses, such as representational space and the semantic frame of the interactional exchange, which imply a new pattern in which Romanian is "practiced" as interpersonal rite, dramatizing a home.

Language and culture from the perspective of the „everyday life" category

As baggage that connects to the predecessors' and successors' horizons, but also to the multiple horizons of the consociates through shared culture, the language practices of migrants activate the cognitive dimension of interactions within the virtual community, they also do this by modelling which serves as an example offered to the others - among which is that of a good speaker, someone concerned with the accuracy and expressiveness of language use as a condition for confirmation of the cultural membership system and a condition of being "inside", while being physically "outside" Romania.

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The selected corpus to be analysed includes Internet narratives as linguistic environment where various horizons of expectation are projected arhitecturing a "dramatized home "; if and how uses of Romanian language evolve *alongside* cultural identity marks; and which are the images that contribute to the semiotic mapping of identity and personal achievement under the new conditions of freedom of movement and massive migration. On the other hand, we are interested in how the symbolic extension of personal self beyond the power of cultural institutions and the proximity horizon can still generate a community and how online platforms as a “weak communication matrix”(Friedman, 1980) shapes rites and communication practices. Our hypothesis is that the linguistic environment and expressiveness explicitly or implicitly acquire in this situation a patrimonial value and this value extends to language uses in characteristic work and career situations, symbolically coating the indexical world of success and contingencies, despite the physical distance and splitting representation between "there and here," all under the species/label/type/form of "outside Romania". But precisely because it betrays the crisis of that "home" in the real space, cultural identity marks become clearer in the virtual space. The uses of linguistic material in self-narratives reflect the adequacy of paradigm of the intangible patrimony introduced by Christian Wulf in *Globalization and Intangible Cultural Heritage. Opportunities, Threats and Challenges*, *The Regional Meeting on the promotion of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for countries of Europe and Northern America* (Kazan, Russia, 15-17 December 2004), also included in the Proceeding of the International Workshop: "Identity and Globalization" (2005, coord. Bârlogeanu Lavinia).

According to sociologist Alfred Schütz(1985), the social world is a structure with four interfering areas:

1. The horizon of the predecessors who are no longer physically present but to which contemporaries continue to be connected by the structure of meanings within which identification takes place. Generation of daily experiences carves routes in branches of memory, an action exerting a pressure on imagined borderlines, which define the in-out mechanisms.

2. The horizon of the successors, of the generations to come.

3. The horizon of the consociates, the individuals who share the same environment with "us".

4. The horizon of the contemporaries, those who share the same area.

He believes that "*subjective reflexivity*" whereby individuals live and filter everyday experiences is correlated with *interpretation acts* that give rise to typifications deriving from common experiences and practice (Lebenswelt), so that separation of the same experiences leads to a social environment “taken for granted”, circularly iterated at the level of perception as well as by the regulated expectations of the individuals who make up the social world as a world experienced, perceived, interpreted in a dynamic process of valuation / devaluation, re-generation. The world experienced under the same horizons is perceived as being automatically created, regulated perceptions and expectations being reflected in language, mediation being dependent on "the knowledge stock" in circulation.

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This stock meets, confirms or invalidates and typifies expectations for project-stage actions or actions in progress developed by virtue of two types of meaning networks (instrumental and symbolic), both related to lived experiences, practices and interactions, the sources of typifications (institutionalisation).

The way in which Schütz –a businessman by day and philosopher at night, according to a statement by Husserl – conceives of the typical factor as being conditioned by the "stock of knowledge" generated through practice and multiplied in communication circuits that support the living world, ensure the durability ("maintenance" as repair and operation) of the connection to action through interpretation of its feedback is different from the "Ideal type" theorized by Max Weber as a type of eidetic essence that governs practical life. Legitimising the priority of cultural sciences against exact or natural sciences, the ideal can be defined as a "verticalization operator", a perpendicularization, the same way as imaginary numbers refer to real numbers in mathematics (Basarab Nicolescu, 2008).

Unlike Weberian approach, Schütz's model relates the symbolic factor to the practical common sense. If there is the risk of simplifying things, as demonstrated by the deviations occurring in real life and which derive from limiting meaning to common perceptions and representations in a globalised world as an economic playground, a geopolitical arena, etc., the creation of de-located networks illustrates the need to communicate with their fellow countrymen as a motivation to create virtual niches, language being both a frame and operator of differentiation/identification. At Schütz, and later on at his followers Berger and Luckmann in *The Social Construction of Reality*, typification (institutionalisation) implies regulated experiences and perceptions related to the near horizon. If this author conceives of experienced life, action and the possible as being related to the proximity space, the online environment tends to shift the symbolic boundaries of the ego-self-alter. Under the new conditions, the language pattern plays an important role in maintaining or relocating routes and marks of cultural difference, being an eco-cultural mechanism of online communication and identification.

Online narratives – psychological readings following a pattern

The linguistic material through which the person's self-exposure on sites and portals in the "frame" of stories experienced directly is achieved, sends a "stock of knowledge" whose wide circulation maps out new routes between various levels of the real and the realms of expectations concerning success and risks, regenerating and "readjusting" the symbolic figure of identity through models of individual success.

Oscillations allow for comparisons and generalizations, provide information of general interest about lifestyle, about opportunities of the professional environment, but also about contact situations where individuals are faced with implicitly or explicitly impaired self-images in direct interactions and contexts of media, political discourse, conversation, involving marks of latent and manifest tensions. Everyday life lived "away" from the country is submitted to a psychological reading following a pattern and set up in an exemplary story. Individuals build their community in the virtual environment by narrating

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themselves, a valued self-oriented towards confirmation, an orientation which motivates the search for a familiar environment, the online language community.

Individuals living in a familiar social environment (*taken for granted*, a given fact, a familiar context) use the knowledge stock in circulation and form standardized expectations developed according to certain types of institutionalised meanings connected to *two main networks of concepts*, namely a) motivations, objectives, goals connected to the future (*in order-to motives*) and b) motivations connected to past cases (*because motives*).

The former articulates *prospective intentionalities*, while the latter category correlates a chain of elements of past experiences under a *psychological reading of events*.

The approach to online environment in the light of this model reveals some methodological limitations that we consciously acknowledge. The typical factor is translated to the online environment whose continuous expansion is the equivalent of "the creation of society" in constructivist theories. The premises of this strategy are comprehensive, the model preserving its pertinence in explaining the generation of online space by the joint effect of practicality and symbolic figures (in this study, the actual individuals who "expose" themselves becoming sources of knowledge and role models for their fellow countrymen) that facilitate mediation, as well as the virtual community. The rise of the number of virtual "meeting places" for Romanians at home and in the Diaspora is part of the process of functional differentiation of the communication platforms, "junctions" (points of suture) of self-images, useful information, interpersonal rites of certain users and motivations, perceptions, knowledge and identification needs of other users. The driving force behind this online social networking is the communication interfaces set up by entrepreneurs grouped in associations and companies – ie. FEDROM – The Federation of Associations of Romanian Immigrants in Spain. Portals such as www.fedrom.org, or www.romaniinlume.com include links to specialized sites covering mainly the recruitment and placement of the labour force in various Western countries, for example the EGV-Recruiting site specializes in placing young physicians from Romania and the Diaspora in Germany, France, Britain, Sweden, Norway – the EGV not only promotes the company image, but it also develops an access platform to the European market designed for a category of users with a high training profile.

In addition to trademarks of the recruitment agency, application guides for various suggestions on how to approach a career feature "success stories" of young physicians in the form of short narratives that bring forth both types of motivations related to in order-to / because motives. Narratives posted are variations on the same argument – the success guaranteed by changing the professional environment for young professionals recruited by the company, but (schematised) didactic exposure of each case does not preclude the honesty and sensitivity of the person who reveals himself/herself for the benefit of those who access the site. Change for the better is invariably a result of the agent's intervention but the stories are credible; they honestly report experiences, feelings, the "passage" between the two overlapping and inter-determined moments of crisis that legitimise action, the narratives following a pattern:

1. *the macro-level crisis* of the health care system in Romania [the motivation to leave the country shared with others, is obvious, *taken for granted*] → 2. *the lack of personal horizons*, a state of uncertainty about future chances → 3. *the decision to leave the country*, the individual searching for a different road → 4. *the company's help* appears and it invariably leads to the solution → 5. uncertainty is therefore reduced by an *effective guiding*

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of the intermediate steps by which → 6. the gap between expectations, desires is bridged, and *successful integration* to the new position takes place 7. the implicit conclusion that the self-narrative - *self disclosure* - is *worth being shared to the others being* serving as a possible useful example to follow and as a possible way out of crisis.

Since the background of these narrative operations is not fictional (Romania, Germany, France, Sweden) references to actual institutions and locations extend the evidence in the virtual space suggesting *the disappearance of the division between virtual (potential) - real*.

Dr. Mihaela Jardan, Neurology resident - Mecklenburg Vorpommern:

"I will soon get to the end of the probation period, it's incredible how time passes ... *I managed to integrate myself quite well* into the German system and *I love order and the Germans' way of working*. I'm sure that you can get quality and safe medical practice in other countries such as France or Italy and the language would be easier to learn, of course, but as much organization and correctness as here, I don't think you can find anywhere else. *I was a bit afraid at first*, however, the shifts are very different from those at home. Here I learned what *true responsibility towards a patient* means. Here you have vary many available diagnosis and treatment methods and you should use them rationally, to be able to help the patient. If something went wrong, you share part of the blame. On the other hand, now I feel professionally fulfilled. I no longer have that feeling of frustration from back home that, look, I know how to do it in theory, but unfortunately I have no chance to put my knowledge into practice."

Dr. Louise Dicu - Resident physician Internal Medicine - Saxony – Sachsen

Adjustment to the new job was a little difficult at first, because it was an entirely new environment for me, but *still it was pretty fast*. My colleagues helped me a lot. It amazed me that most residents are foreigners. *Romanian colleagues are also numerous and they helped me with adjustment* to a foreign country and a new job. Right now I can't say that I met with great hurdles at the new working and living environment, *everything went smoothly*. Thank you for this opportunity to try something new and for all the support and help you gave me.

Dr. Veronica V.

My name is Veronica V., I am 34 years old and I'm from Iaşi. For almost three years I've been working as a consultant in the field of obstetrics - gynaecology. Since September I've been living in Germany, on a work contract in my field in a clinic in Bavaria. My collaboration with the recruitment company actually started in May with the interview in Iaşi, of which I was given proper notice. I admit that at first *I was a bit sceptical*, but *later on, I was impressed* by the responsibility and professionalism shown by the crew.

I don't know if it was my luck or if it was entirely the company's merit, probably a bit of both, but in a very short time I got various job offers in Germany. To all my worries and questions I received a prompt answer every time, so, with the support and the ground prepared, I could take off for Germany in a short time. Here I had the pleasant surprise to get to know Mr. Dietmar Adam who supported me throughout the interview, the success of

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> my employment at the clinic where I currently carry out my activity is certainly due to him. After that, things developed fast, *I was promptly informed about all the documents and formalities necessary for my authorization as a physician in Germany*, so in September I took off again and right now I am living my dream. My collaboration with EGV company did not end with my arrival in Germany, I continue to receive a prompt answer to any question. There is an "engine" that sets into motion immediately for anyone with an earnest desire to work abroad, in this case in Germany, and I think that, for physicians, being in contact with the medical world abroad is important."

These different phrasings of the same topic confirm each other in advocating for the solution, as well as for personal opportunity to work in the EU. Variation of the information offer and language is in relation to the labour markets and the formative stakes aiming to reduce the bias of the common perception and market demands.

The same portal post, under the title "All about the strawberry", a set of materials covering both general and specialized information: technical details, cultivation method, areas and particular characteristics of the cultures in Spain, organizations, companies, contact persons, job offers, etc. The structure of the package and information richness reflect the market development level in contrast to mass media stereotypes of the Romanian strawberry picker confronted with all the vicissitudes and humiliations of illegal work, a symbolic (negative) image influential at the level of common representation. The generation of the common frame of interpretation for the benefit of individuals and Romanian communities by redistributing the information and the stock of knowledge - legislation, requirements, opportunities, and, always in the first place, the job offer but also events, political, social, cultural and religious issues and so on - recommends the portal of the trust "Actualitatea Românească" (Romanian current issues), www.actualitatea-romaneasca.ro, the online version of “Ziarul Românilor” (Romanian’s Daily), distributed in 12 European countries. The trust also publishes the weekly *Magazinul românesc* (Romanian magazine). Both publications, by their distribution area, but also the quality of the online version, make an outstanding contribution to shaping the "common horizon, by sharing the same information environment with "us", action-oriented, an "us" expanded towards the horizons of globalisation, but equally integrated in each of its cross-cultural projections in the Romanian communities in various regions and countries of Europe.

The difference from a news portal registered in Romania consists in the distancing from the tabloid format, preferred by readers at home, a distance that defines itself by the relevance and objectivity of the political, economic, cultural analyses, by the quality of the sources, the balanced reports on the political, cultural life, the successful models provided, identification being equally open to Romanians everywhere, implicitly to those in Romania, the target audience being nevertheless the Romanians in the Diaspora. After reading it, we conclude that the elites are not lost, they grow, and the communication style reflects the set up of a user profile that benefits from European education.

An unusual portal, neither public nor commercial, but community-oriented, is managed by the Radio station *Dor de țară* (Homesickness), broadcast in England. The station operates on a very low annual budget of 1500 euros (!..), a fact which accounts for the reduced amount of information - offset by the quality and variety of the music programs with Romanian songs from all times.

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Life stories, identifying pictures, communication genres

The main genre where one's life becomes a knowledge resource is the portrayal interview. The portrait of the interviewee is an opportunity to decipher the *other*'s world by switching from stories and confessions to evaluations of systems and institutions. The profile of the virtually exposed self corresponds to a pattern – an organizing figure as an alternative to the depreciated self-image in the media, political, cultural discourse contexts, or in response to everyday life avatars. This image of the successful Romanian is typified, since it maximally answers the regulated expectations. Language uses reflect the preoccupation for the accuracy of expression, as is the case with other Romanian cultural publications. Interviewees selected on account of succeeding in establishing themselves in their adoptive country, speak about the inherent difficulties of the start, under the conditions of differential policies whereby access to the social hierarchy is strictly conditioned by validation of studies and qualifications and recognition of diplomas. In Italy, for example, the system does not encourage highly qualified immigrants, and prejudices about foreigners are partially overcome. However, there are plenty of people who break this barrier, setting an example of determination and work, as related in the interview taken by Grațiela Philip from "Gazeta Românească" (Romanian gazette). Essentially," self exposure" and personal narrative as a means of exploring typical situations for immigrants are involved in a textual play – of choosing / selecting / challenging moments and plans of interest for a psychological reading which merges various cognitive dimensions (motivations, difficult moments overcome by determination, crucial experiences, knowledge resources put into circulation, convergence of tests towards a form of wisdom, etc.).

Title

> A Romanian resident in Ancona wanted at all costs to validate her studies completed in Romania and work in accounting.

Informative utterance

> Gabriela Nicoleta Băncilă is 33 years and was born in Caracal. After graduating from high school in Craiova, Department of Mathematics and Physics, she attended the Faculty of Economics of Craiova, specializing in International Transactions. After graduating in 2001 she settled in Italy. She decided to validate her studies and enrolled in college in the hope that in the future she could achieve professionally in Italy as well.

Switch from information to narrative

> - "I chose the Faculty of Economics and Commerce of Ancona "Universita' Politecnica delle Marche", one of the most selective faculties in Italy, where *they were quite drastic regarding validation of 4 years studies completed in Romania. I had to complete three more years of college and in 2006 I graduated with the score of 106/110.*
>
> *During college I decided to opt as well for the compulsory term of professional practice in the profession of chartered accountant - dottore commercialista - which takes another three*

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years. I was lucky because I was able to attend university and complete the part-time practice term at the same time. In 2008 I graduated from college - laurea specialistica - with the maximum score of "110 e lode" and I can say that it was my first professional achievement."

Evaluation by the duality of the relationship "us - them" (Italians)

- Have you encountered difficulties due to the fact that you were Romanian?

- "*In the beginning it was quite difficult, as for all Romanians coming to a foreign country, because you have to get by, to start from the bottom and my only support was my husband who is Romanian as well and has been living in Italy for some time already. It was quite hard to find a studio where I could complete the compulsory professional practice. In Italy the practice - tirocinio formativo – is not paid.* I completed it at Studio Pellegrini where I went several times to speak with the permanent holder of the position and after almost a year he finally agreed.

For Italians it seemed quite strange that a Romanian would carry out such a profession. Not many people with high qualifications come to Italy, as happens with other immigration countries, such as the United States or Canada, due to the difficulties encountered in the validation of studies. If, in other countries, people who have completed college are welcomed with open arms, it's not the case in Italy. Italians complain that most immigrants form an unskilled labour force, as we all know that we are good at nothing except cleaning, elderly care, on construction sites etc. Foreigners with high qualifications wishing to settle in Italy are clearly discouraged by the Italian system and bureaucracy, and if they settle here in time most of them give up on the validation of their studies. "[...]

Evaluation by the duality "I/me - us"

What's your opinion about the Romanian community in Italy?

"In my opinion, the media has distorted the facts and manipulated public opinion to divert the Italians' attention from the real problems the country faces, such as the economic crisis and rising unemployment rates. It's true that the actions of Romanians in the Peninsula leave much to be desired, but I think that if the law were applied more strictly, these cases would be isolated. Who broke the law, must carry out his sentence. My advice to all Romanians is to never forget where they started and even if you manage to achieve you need to show a lot of modesty in everything you do. "

In the online version of the publication "Gazeta Românească", Daniel Neamu posts on October 5. 2010 (5:02 p.m.), the story of the Romanian actress in "La ballata della badante elettrica". The subtleties of the journalistic strategy consist in creating a connection between two levels: the real person's destiny and the symbolic double, the character, in which the others recognize and project themselves. The technique originating in the theatre (Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*) puts into practice Peter Brook's axiomatic statement that "the force of the theatrical language comes from the capacity of the sign to open a multiplicity of meanings" (quoted in Monique Borie, *Phantom and doubt Theatre*, 1997). Daniel Neamu's story articulates the concrete referent with the theatrical sign,

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resulting in a "cultureme" an aggregation of signs entwined with daily life that reveals a style, an identity and a perception widely shared and socially replicated: the profile of the Romanian immigrant and that of the scenes where the real person *becomes, transforms into* the dramatic character, intersecting social realities, the theatrical sign being a support of representation and identification. The journalist's role is related to the operations of decoupage, tracing routes in the branching of details, switching between styles: informative, narrative, analytical and between the psychological and the sociological reading of the migration situation, of engendering the dualities real - symbolic, cognitive-pharmacological (in the sense of a redistribution of self-knowledge in communication circuits and in everyday life).

Informative introduction (utterance)

> Elena Sava, a graduate of the Faculty of Theatre in Târgu Mureş, emigrated to Rome in 2007. The foreign caregiver in Italian families, the so-called "badante [the typified Romanian immigrant profile], *become the main character* in a play entitled "La ballata della badante elettrica", which for two years has been performed in theatres all over Italy. [reality-theatre articulation utterance] *The actress who plays the part of the badante actually worked for a while as a badante*. She is a 31-year-old Romanian, Elena Sava, a graduate of the Faculty of Theatre in Târgu Mureş. Elena emigrated to Italy three years ago. She gave up on the status of actor at the theatre of Piatra Neamt, where she had been assigned, and started from scratch in Rome.

Narrative ellipse, *"the true story"* - the narrative space is defined (furnished) by the oscillation between two concrete defining contexts in terms of personal fulfilment - "at home, in Târgu Mureş (ascending, studies), in Italy (descending, underpaid jobs below her qualification).

> Elena Sava graduated from the Faculty of Acting in 2004, in Targu Mures. After her mother's death, she realized that she can no longer live on the miserable salary at the theatre and decided to emigrate to Italy. "I had been having contacts with Italy for a long time, my mother and sister had been living there for many years, they had put me through college. In 2007 I settled permanently in Italy. I had been visiting Italy since 2002, spending one month there every summer, but in 2007 I stayed for good. Because I could no longer afford to live in Romania with on a 100 euro salary, which was what I earned at the Theatre of Piatra Neamt, where I had been assigned after graduation. This is the salary in Romanian theatres, what everybody earns".

> A long period of time when Elena Sava discovered the hardships of immigrant life followed: "The first three months I have been doing the cleaning in a bar. For a month I was a *badante* as well, I replaced a girl who was caring for an old man of nearly 100 years. It was hard: a lot of work, little money. Then I worked in cleaning by the hour, I was moving around Rome all day, changing a few busses and the tube, swinging from one end of the city to the other for a few euros. During that time I was very lucky I had my sister, who has been living in Italy for 18 years, and who put me up at for a year without me paying anything. It was a very difficult period, which lasted for a year", Elena told us.

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Change of destiny favourable career development:

> Later on, she managed to find a decent job, as financial consultant in a firm in the centre of Rome in charge of credits and real estate brokerage. "I took up a course in financial advising, then I managed to get a job here. I had a total change in career, and if I am doing well now, I owe it entirely to my boyfriend who has always supported me".

Passage towards a higher level of professional achievement and articulation of the real destiny with the dramatic character

> After having experienced these difficulties personally, Elena Sava had a first contact with the theatre world in Rome. She attended an event organized by a Romanian cultural association, at Passo Scuro, where she was invited by the writer Laura Masielli, the author of the "Badante Electrice". Thus she found out that they were looking a Romanian actress to play the part of a *badante*: "She liked me after seeing how I recited a few poems by Eminescu, in Romanian. She asked me to recite in Romanian, but afterwards to translate the meaning of the lyrics. Then she offered me the part of the housekeeper in "Badante Elettrica", for which I am paid as a professional actor.

Informative insert:

> For nearly two years, the play has been performed in cities across Italy. So far there have been around 50 performances.

Cut-out by re-contextualisation of the story from the perspective of another double portrait: the expert (sociologist) and the author of the play, while preserving the convention of the actual story where characters take turns to confess, giving rise to a circularity that reinforces, disambiguates contexts, selects and typifies:

> The writer Laura Masielli, the author of the play "La Badante Elettrica", is a sociologist by formation. She told us that the idea of a play whose main character is a housekeeper came to her when she noticed that "*the traditional Italian family was not prepared to receive a foreign badante amidst them. It was something new. I witnessed many scenes in Italian families, where the presence of a badante gave rise to jealousy or even pathologically racist feelings*", declared Laura Masielli.

The informative insert on the expansion of the theatre project results to other contexts

> The author also mentioned that the play was well received by Romanian and Polish audiences, especially in cities with large numbers of immigrants, such as Ladispoli and Perugia.

Intervention of argumentative pivoting from the informative to the cognitive area

> Laura Masielli wrote two books about migrant communities in Italy, "Nero ma non troppo" and "Tintillo, ovvero l'arte di non possedere nulla", both published by Armando Printing House. The author hopes that "La Badante Elettrica" will become "a wide project involving more the Romanian community in Italy."

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Conclusions

Online narratives promote positive and pragmatic images of the self, reinforce and motivate identification in the framework defined by correct and expressive uses of Romanian language, regenerate the cultural and social capital - "the world becomes a fable", stories intersect, reorganizes the perception of realities - in the familiar language environment. It stimulates distance interaction, it develops subject areas and functional languages, drawing attention to networks that capitalize on the wealth of information and the trust in fellow countrymen, in self-help networks created on this basis. The self-story and the portrait interview are communication genres typified under various online formats. Wide-use information is redirected thematically and focused on speeding the issuing process for the work visa, other documents, on facilitating the contact with the authorities, the conditions for rapid integration. The functional uses develop the practical "knowledge stock" accelerating the penetration of certain terms and lexicalisation. As cultural mediation parallel to mass mediatization in the Romanian language frame, it is an alternative rich in information created by transversalization of the various communication circuits within and outside the national space, language being a resource of the de-located community.

At the *micro level* – of cultural expression and self-image - the online environment portals provides through the portals of Romanians - especially those in the European area - attractive new identification resources in the scope of mother tongue communication.

Online mediation - the level of the emerging community expressing itself in the horizon of the language created by the predecessors - within certain limits, typifies alternatives to confusion and identity crises that can affect, to a larger or smaller extent, the destiny of Romanian language in the construction of everyday experiences, speaking the mother tongue in the language frame of the virtual community becomes the "norm" of access and valued expression of personal experiences and equally of recognition by fellow countrymen (back of recognition), an implicit mutual component of socialization.

The semiotic mapping - *the level of culture* - redistributes, "rearranges" the cognitive elements by production and reading of personal narratives, selected and presented as they express exemplary (vicarious) experiences and routes. This level – the culture of existential changing and the crisis that accompanies it reflects the social and national identity crisis as liminality (in the sense of social crisis, especially in the van Gennep-Turner model), a passage rite practiced in interpersonal communication in the online space - from the lack of horizon of the life "back home" to regaining the self in a new career stage in Western countries. The crisis moments succeed one another in stories, they create a common pattern with a symbolic function as well, as personal narratives become an (interpersonal) cultural resource. The cognitive content intersubjectively mobilized provides the tools to reason and overcome the existential crisis by following the example of those who have succeeded and by the resources of direct interactions and those mediated in the community of fellow countrymen. In this way the online platform takes part in a socio-dynamics richer in information and knowledge, promoted by individuals and culturally connected networks, correct and expressive use of the language being a condition of membership of the online Romanian community.

Platform *functionality* and the *management* that they involve, reflect in addition to standardised communication skills, the ability to search for balance – which can not be

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found *outside* the online environment, thus, although the online environment relativizes the Andersonian concept of community imagined by the bridging between the real and the virtual, it serves similar functions, up to a point.

The *cultural framework* reinforces the accessing motivations as a significant tendency to translate and recode the "real" from the categories of daily interaction to the mediated ones, the vehicle being the meaning shared by fellow countrymen. The linguistic material sent and received in de-located multi-centred communication, is processed cognitively, language being more than a mediation-interposition tool, i.e. a connector (bridge) for independent individuals and networks. Facilitating cognitive and relational nucleations of the *web of life* and *linking* type among various referents of the same type of personal journey, the world of words becomes a " social place" of transformation and interpersonal convertibility of adjustment and cross-cultural contact experiences, negotiation of identity and difference, as micro-social functions in the process of social structuring. This rediscovery of the complexity of the familiar and the importance of eco-cultural balance in the design of online communication platforms accompanies the movement of the concepts of identity and language from the field of "soft" subjects (linguistics, anthropology, sociology, education sciences) to "hard" subjects, i.e., international relations, effects of globalisation, security studies (Barry Buzan, 1990, Ole Weaver, 1993, 1999 Bill Mc Sweeney, Ken Booth, Ersel Aydinly, Bahgad Korany in A. Aydinli, James Rosenau, coord., 2005)

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