BLOGOSPHERE AND INTERCULTURALITY

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Abstract

The paper assumes as a starting point the discursive construction of ethnicity, within the media approach, in which intercultural issues are structured. In this work we stop to the ethnic reference blogs, following the construction of ethnic identity and the perceptions of intercultural aspects in the context of Web 2.0 and new media socio semiotic perspectives.

Blogs became a framework of communication which is characterized by subjectivity and interactivity, which goes beyond the unidirectional nature of traditional media communication. Socio semiotic analysis considers blogging as communication practices in which complex social meanings are achieved.

The blogs are considered as a way for the manifestation of diversity, freedom of expression and opinion. Blogging becomes a form of performative subjectivity, a way by which the speech acts take place in the context of new media communication networks.

Keywords: blog, web 2.0, etnicity, intercultural communication, alterity

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1.A social semiotic perspective of online and collaborative technologies

The changes of the ways in which the organizations are doing their activity are nowadays determined by how the users, frequently identified as customers or business partners interact with the organization, by means of social media applications. In papers, such as (Banias, Malita 2011) the landscape of social media is analyzed, with particular concerns on the power and the multiple benefits. It proves to be very important that management develop appropriate strategies in order to promote businesses on social media ecosystem. On the other hand, blogging and micro blogging bring into light additional functionalities related to the multiple possibilities of communication, advertising and sharing of opinions and figures between homogenous categories of users.

The honeycomb framework for social media building blocks is presented, in order to reflect the importance for dealing with creative consumers and build reliable ways of communication with the consumers. Management shall adapt to the new ways of adapting the services to the social media activities, so as to develop new ways of advertising and promotion.

The process of knowledge sharing should be taken into account the greatest extent, so as to have a reliable image about how the users, which are reunited in focus groups, send and receive to each other information flows. The users communicate to each other in order to share information and to review goods or services from the specific markets. Reputation plays a particular role in the level of trust, granted by the social media environment to the users, based on their ratings and their previous activities, which proved helpful for others.

Blogging frameworks represent an efficient way to represent virtual identities and share important information or opinion with the other members of the scientific or cultural communities, and significantly increase the efficiency of the communication process. Intercultural blogs, such as http://rusilipoveni. wordpress.com/, http://lipoveni-fara-lichele.blogspot.ro/, http://romanahay .blogspot.ro/,http://mesianic.wordpress.com/, http://sperorg. blogspot.ro/ bring the ethnic and cultural minorities in the position to promote their cultural values to their members, but also to the people to which they interact with, in their daily lives.

The investigation of intercultural blogs enroll in an effort to research the information flows of intercultural communication in the new media space, in the context of web 2.0 and its evolution through web 3.0. In (Floria, 2012) representations of ethnic minorities in the virtual environment were were analyzed and discussed about and official websites of Hebrew communities, Lipovan, Armenian and Roma minorities have been visited. Each publication of these ethnicities represent a socio semiotic perspective (Eric Landowski) and a systemic vision of cultural communication (Alex Mucchielli). Social semiotic perspective brings into light the relativity of alterity, which is defined by correspondence to an identity reference, in communication practices which become processes of signification. Social meanings arise in the dynamic interaction between groups and cultures. Blogs that support communication become the support of expression of subjectivity of each individual social actor.

The formal characteristics and blog and website types of applications which are flexibility, usability, operationality, generality, and continuity, are analyzed (Floria, 2012) by reference to some types and structures, such as tree architectural structures, graph architecture structure. The characteristic of flexibility of information systems show their ability to change

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and update the structure so as to be used in diverse and fast changing environments. The operationality of new media is a quality characteristic which support applications of communication studies in order to determine to what extent they meet the goals of reliability, efficiency, flexibility and whether the standards set by the requirements are met by the are achieved by the results of the applications development cycle, concerning blogging applications.

The analysis of the tree architecture, implemented by new media for the communication of information through press articles and online news feeds. The graph structures are implemented for social networks. Other elements are added in the structure of message, such as the double output (double bind) and the subjective dimension of reflective blog – blog, which is set up as a second message, in addition to the central, dominant message expressed by ethnic community site.

2.Virtual worlds, virtual teams and virtual activities in the context of web 2.0 and 3.0

In the paper (Abbatista, 2008) the process of software development for collaborative social applications is described and analyzed. Collaborative applications development became more and more important for the integration of the needs of communication between the participants of the distributed teams in virtual environments.

The communication process is definite for the knowledge sharing and for the human centered objectives. We believe that the agility of social media applications development in distributed environments may be adapted for the virtual activities in intercultural blogging development technique and semantics. The philosophy of blogging applications construction consists of the creation of the means by which the particular aspects and ideas of certain communities are to be exposed to their own members, but also to the general public. In this case, there are many similarities between collaborative agile software and blogging, from which we can mention the following:

- Both categories are dedicated to focus groups of users, to which the applications directly interacts, so as the objectives to be efficiently achieved by the beneficiaries;
- The Internet orientation of the applications, which are accessible to the users by web browsers, without the need of installation of software on the local machines and low client hardware resources;
- The agility of the applications concerning the fast evolution of user requirements and their adaptability to the new user requirements;
- The quantitatively measurable results, in order to have a clear and reliable image about the overall quality of the applications, regarding the satisfaction of the users and their experiences; frequently metrics are used, in order to offer an appropriate expression about the stages of interaction of the users with the software interfaces, until their objectives are accomplished;
- Friendly user interfaces are significant as well, because they assure the success of human computer interaction; collaborative systems and blogging platforms – networks implement very complicated functionalities, methods and algorithms, which have to be transparent for the users and not affect their behavior; the users simply must not be aware of the very complicated procedures which are implemented at the application servers level in the distributed system architecture;

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- The development of this kind of applications presumes the integration of highly productive programming languages and scripting languages, as well as the inclusion of the Service Oriented Architecture, relational databases and Cloud computing. For each new requirement, certain updates in the structure of the system are established and implemented.

Virtual team activities and knowledge sharing in distributed environments brings the possibility of human communication and interaction to new levels, by increasing the speed of common objectives accomplishment.

Blogging and social networking encompass the collaboration and the participation of virtual members of specific teams to envisage new business processes, new goods and services and new ideas. Columnists who affirm that social media is actually destroying the quality of human interactions do exist (www1) and could be true, if their affiliates tend to replace totally the traditional ways of interaction and communication. Blogging and social media have to be just ways to improve communications and bring people into mutual understanding and not to become socially segregational. Talking in meetings and having a cup of coffee while manually drawing some tables and charts on paper keep the pleasure of teamwork away from disappearance and also reduces the duration of the decision making process.

In (Pătruț, 2012) it is mentioned the very dynamic character of the Internet, with concerns on the evolution from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. The web 2.0 becomes a synonym of communication in real time, high-speed communication and collaborative approaches, such as, blogs, podcasts, social networks, sites which create entire communities. Consequently, Web 2.0 is known as "The Read Write Web" (O'Reilly 2005, apud Pătruț, 2012).

However, the specialist's community highlights the evolution towards Web 3.0, which offers a semantic approach in information retrieval, processing and composition. Will intercultural blogs significantly envolve towards web 3.0? We believe they will, in relation with the frameworks and platforms they are developed with, and will offer a more flexible way of information processing.

3.Communication, blogging and social media for intercultural environments

In (Beciu 2011) it is shown that blogs have an autobiographical writing, expressing the subjectivity of their authors. Blogosphere marks the interface between the private and the public sphere, and the discourse mediated by blogs becomes a dialogic discourse, open to others. Intercultural blogs express the ethnic identity in the manner theorized by sociologists such as Giddens, Taylor, Elias Sennett or Beck, in an individual approach. The expressive individualism analyzed ad a specific phenomenon of postmodernity, proposes an approach to social phenomena. It reflects the way in which the individual builds systems independent of power, tradition and collective symbols, but also expresses itself through various activities and social practices. Camelia Beciu (op. cit.) shows that blogs enables individual expressiveness by formulating an alternative or a message of opposition to official discourse (as necessary social and political blogs). In this way, blogs can give publicly visible speeches in a space power (eg. Blogs public persons) or may offer as well reflexive discourses, that bring into question the daily issues in society.

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In (Banias, Malita, 2011) the social media context is analyzed from the educational perspectives, by referring the reports regarding the physical activities of the citizens of the European Union. The main questions appear as consequences to the citizens' behavior in their daily life activities. Informal learning has to be achieved by the incorporation of social media and blogging technologies.

The assurance of a proper information flow for each citizen may be achieved by the use of web 2.0 and social media, which easily go beyond the national and cultural barriers. Intercultural communication mediated by the new technologies increase the level of mutual understanding and cohesion between citizens with different backgrounds, studies and nationalities. It may be immediately stated that even in the context of global crisis the quality of intercultural communication significantly grows, owing to the new technologies.

Mihaela Frunză (2009) shows that blogs can be considered a form of citizen journalism and that form of journalism allows the public participation in building media message. The development of this form of journalism coincides with the development of new communication technologies that enable rapid transmission of multimedia, such as images or video. Although journalists from traditional media become sometimes critique of the blogging process due to the lack credibility sources, the masking the identity of the author, the triviality, the breach of ethics and deontology, others believe that the democratic style of new media indicates an attitude of protest against the tabloid press, the globalization or the corporatism.

In (Beemt, 2011) the research is focused on the interactive media usage of the young people, which are habituated with the new technologies and new devices, such as tablets and smartphones. It appears that the new technologies are suitable means for people cognitive development, have influences on the people and constitute a reflection of modernity and diversity. The interactive activities, regardless of the cultural or social differences and restrictions and sharing their opinions and views about the perception of life itself.

4.Blogging Interculturality as Performative Subjectivity

For Benveniste and his followers, subjectivity is one of the main functions of language, which gives man the position of subject of the communication. Dimension of intersubjective communication system marked pronouns I and You and deictics reveal one language *universalia*: alterity, openness to others (Coşeriu, 2009). Benveniste defines subjectivity as self-consciousness. Subjectivity is constructed based on language and the subject is described only in relation to the interlocutor, in the dialogic discourse. Benveniste opt for a linear view of inter-relationship concerning te concept of dialogue.

Benveniste's concept is complemented by a polyphonic perspective on the text. O. Ducrot believes that the monologic discourse interaction there may be multiple points of view, multiple perspectives, in the way that Bakhtin dialogism defined as a form of interaction of texts (Moeschler, Reboul, 1999). Alterity is necessary to define personal identity. The Others must be spectators of the constitutive exposure of the identity through social discourse (Arhip, 2008).

By extrapolating this discussion in the blogs, we note their powerful subjective character. Many of the blogs are built on axis I - You (and blog http://lipoveni-fara-lichele.blogspot.ro/). Receptors are able to respond verbally, by posting comments or just by browsing the page, recorded by traffic. We believe that blogs can be defined as speech acts (speech acts) (Austin) or language games (language game) (Wittgenstein, JF Lyotard), verbal communication practices with the performative character (Austin, in Moeschler, Reboul, 1999) exerting influence on the receiver.

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Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.

The selected blogs for this analysis are informative (http://rusilipoveni.wordpress.com/, fig. 1 and http://sperorg.blogspot.ro/), polemical or critical (http://lipoveni-fara- lichele.blogspot.ro/, fig. 2, times http://romanahay.blogspot.ro/, fig. 3), or descriptive, developing an identity paradigm, in our case religion (http://mesianic.wordpress.com/, fig. 4).

In Table 1 we present the denotative level of blogs for intercultural discourse analysis.

Blog	Ethnicity	Individual	Cultural/ Social Group	Political group	Connection - official ethnic community	Attitude towards the community
http://rusilipoveni.wordpress.com/	Russian Lipovans	-	+	-	+	positive
http://lipoveni-fara-lichele.blogspot.ro/	Russian Lipovans	+	-	-	-	negative
http://romanahay.blogspot.ro/	Armenians	-	-	+	-	negative

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http://mesianic.wordpress.com/	Hebrew	-	+	-	-	neutral
http://sperorg.blogspot.ro/	Roma people	-	+	-	+	positive

Table 1. The surface structure of discourse blogs

We note that the positive attitude towards ethnicity is complementary with expression of adhesion to the community. This information is available through the link to the official page of ethnicity and the other Lipovan local communities. Attitudes, such as protest is either personally (the author says "revolutionary") or on behalf of a group (Renaissance Front of Armenians in Romania).

The http://sperorg.blogspot.ro/ blog is part of the anti-discrimination campaign SPER (Stop Prejudice against Roma). The campaign is completed, but remained open links to campaign institutional partners (ANR). This blog contains materials made during the campaign. The blog of the Hebrew minority is built on the religious Hebrew dimension with a neutral attitude towards the official community.

In the internal structure of the blogs we found one or more subthemes or categories, observed in other virtual environments and traditional ethnic identity (Floria, 2012), such as ethno-identity themes, historical themes, that of interculturalism (articles on preservation strategies cultural identity, on the one hand, and cultural integration) religious theme (Hebrew, Lipovans Armenians), and a community theme (Hebrew blog refers to charity carried out within the community).

In the case of protesting blogs, the opposition is built on the same lines and legitimation of ethnicity configuration. The "voice" of blogs is integrated in a polyphonic ensemble of identity discourse under a permanent evolution. The use of Romanian Language whithin the blog requires dialectical interpretation of ethnic alterity in relation to the proclamation of identity.

The semiotic square of alterity (Landowski, 1997) is seen as a development of Greimas's semiotic square, which describes the result of interaction of two cultural groups. These groups describe themselves by means of many approaches, among possible *assimilation* (the conjunction of identities, which can reach minority identity agglutination), *exclusion* (complete disjunction), *segregation* (non-conjunction, treating marginal minority), and *acceptance* (non-disjunction, preserve minority identity). We classify the blogs from the analysis in acceptance category, motivating the title of intercultural blog, upon which we have built our argumentation.

5.Conclusions

This paper analyses the way in which the cultural diversity is reflected by new media. Social media technologies and blogging have been considered in research and their effects in the process of intercultural communication have been studied, with the support and mediation

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of the virtual teams and collaboration concepts in the framework of intercultural environments.

The practice of blogging defines the inter-communication exchange, in which the discourse of alterity is accompanied by a personal and reflective ethos. The blogs describe the intercultural, global screen (Lipovetsky), one of the important frames of postmodernity.

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