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HYBRID DIALOGUES: TRANSCENDING BINARY THINKING AND MOVING AWAY FROM SOCIETAL POLARISATIONS

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Hybrid Dialogues: Transcending Binary Thinking and Moving Away from Societal Polarisations

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION
HYBRID DIALOGUES: TRANSCENDING BINARY THINKING AND MOVING AWAY FROM SOCIETAL POLARISATIONS

Cornelia Ilie[1]

This special issue of the *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Studies and Environmental Communication* offers a peer-reviewed selection of thematically representative papers presented at the 5th ESTIDIA Conference hosted by the Università degli Studi di Napoli L'Orientale, Naples, Italy, on 20-21 September 2019. The theme of the conference was "*Hybrid Dialogues: Transcending Binary Thinking and Moving Away from Societal Polarisations*". This conference brought together a wide variety of thematic and disciplinary approaches to hybrid dialogues in various communities of practice across time and space. A major topic concerned the dynamics and challenges posed by constantly shifting boundaries between complementary and overlapping patterns of communication (public/ private, face-to-face/ virtual, formal/informal, spoken/written) and of mindsets (trust/ distrust, liberal/ illiberal, inclusive/exclusive, tolerant/intolerant, cooperative/confrontational, open-minded/prejudiced/ narrow-minded, flexible/inflexible).

The risks and challenges posed by the increasing use of virulent polemics in both on- and off-line communication involve shifting interfaces of a wide range of context-specific dialogic practices. Conflicting, and often contradictory, understandings of socio-political issues, cultural concepts and historical events are fostered by a proliferation of binary thinking, whereby one side of the divide is set up as positive/right, and the other as its negative/wrong counterpart (Dascal 2008, Munné 2013). Binary or dichotomous thinking is responsible for producing and/or maintaining historically unsustainable hierarchies and inequitable power relations. As a counterbalance of dichotomy-based beliefs and ways of thinking, a variety of hybrid forms of dialogue are needed to cross the frontiers of established dichotomies, questioning the legitimacy of increasingly conflictual, aggressive and divisive encounters (Sunstein 2007, Mason 2015) conducted both offline (in public meetings, TV debates, political and parliamentary debates, etc.) and online (on social media, such as Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat).

The public access to new media has radically altered the way in which government institutions operate, the way in which political leaders communicate with the citizens, the way in which citizens get more engaged in politics. This resulted in an increased level of instability and unpredictability into the publicly unfolding communication process. Interpersonal connections and relationships established through offline co-presence have the potential to expand via communication in online spaces. Social media applications and platforms enable professionals who are physically separated to work together and be virtually co-present, communicating orally or in writing, formally or informally, synchronously or asynchronously.

[1] Strömstad Academy, Sweden

Online dialogue shares certain features with face-to-face dialogue, such as users' connection strategies and bi-directional communication flow.

The development of a wider public sphere and a diversity of social networks has opened up the possibility of disputing the dominant position of traditional media, enabling the emergence of multiple voices and visions through increasing participation in discussions off- and online.

We are increasingly witnessing online communication environments that trigger and stimulate creative and productive dialogues, often in combination with face-to-face dialogues, a process that has gradually engendered the emergence of hybrid dialogues. At the same time, we are also witnessing a proliferation of misperceptions and misrepresentations of world phenomena and societal events (Beaufort 2018), which involve the mismanagement and manipulation of interpersonal relations and institutional power networks, leading to an environment of apprehension, suspicion and insecurity, strongly amplified and aggravated in recent times by anti-social discourse and behavior, extremist movements, and hate speech. In such cases, dialogue, instead of being a meaningful and creative exchange of ideas, can turn into an aggressive exchange of mutual criticisms and aggressive accusations (Jones, Chik, and Hafner 2015, Papacharissi 2009, Tannen and Trester 2013). In situations when interlocutors fail to listen to each other, genuine dialogue turns into a pseudo-dialogue ('dialogue des sourds') made up of disconnected sequences of monologues, or simply into a mock-dialogue of audience-targeted and media-supported performance (Baym 2010).

A promising development in the ongoing paradigm shift in communication processes is represented by newly emerging forms of dialogue, such as the 'hybrid dialogues', which mark a movement towards more inclusiveness and easier accessibility. These hybrid dialogues shape and are shaped by inter-connectedness and co-performativity, since they are discursive interactions during which participants enact their private and public identities in online and offline performances, building interpersonal relationships through intertwined face-to-face and virtual communication (in various political, business, educational communities of practice), and making use of complementary formal and informal discourse styles. This current development and the emerging dialogic instantiations represent a major goal for researchers engaged in exposing the current dissemination of false information and manipulative messages, of dichotomy-driven and polarizing slogans, as well as the rhetorical fallacies vehiculated in ideologically manipulative propaganda, whereby the frequent repetition of misconceived one-dimensional notions is creating artificial divisions and barriers in society, between and within socio-political groups, institutions, and various categories of citizens.

The researchers who participated in the conference have addressed the many shifting aspects of dialogue hybridisation, on the one hand, and the various challenges of thinking based on false premises and deficient information, on the other. A wide range of theoretical approaches and empirical tools have been used to problematise and investigate the dynamics and challenges posed by constantly shifting interfaces between complementary and overlapping forms of communication: offline/online, public/private, spoken/written, formal/informal.

The authors of the papers included in this special issue have explored types of hybrid, polarized, or asymmetrical dialogue that are to be found in the discourse of various communities of practice, as well as the impact of the increasing use of social media on the shift in linguistic registers and interpersonal relationships, the polarising discursive and metadiscursive mechanisms deployed at the interface of the private and the public spheres, and the types of stereotypical assumptions underlying gender-related discourse patterns.

In her paper, Kim Grego problematises the linguistic and discursive polarisation between expert and non-expert positions as they are displayed in the press, where highlighting extreme opinions brings greater news value. The focus is on the linguistically and discursively polarised media reports about the rescue of 12 Thai boys trapped in a cave in 2018. The author exposes the binary opposition constructed by the media between cave-diving experts and other experts, on the one hand, and between experts in general and non-experts, on the other. The findings show that science and technology dissemination is still needed in persuading non-expert audiences and leading the popular debate.

Investigating letter of application for a scholarship context, Heiner Böttger, Laura Ickinger, Deborah Költzsch, and Georgios Ypsilandis contrast the strategical choices in application letters referred to in previous studies with those examined in their corpus of application letters for travel scholarships, written in English by German speakers. Their analysis reveals that the German rhetorical strategies of this specific discourse genre, commonly presumed to use mostly rhetorical appeal to logos, exhibit in fact several types of ethos and pathos arguments. A major conclusion points to cultural factors as a significant element influencing strategic choices in the dialogically framed rhetoric and logical argumentation, and the need for rhetorical education of students, including more detailed specification of the criteria for editing self-presentations in cover letters.

Gelu Olivian Tudose's article is devoted to the examination of multi-purpose and persuasive strategies used to promote global cosmetic brands for men on Instagram. His findings indicate that the posts adopted different formats available on the platform, aiming to present both traditional and counter-stereotypical products often separately, or focused on everyday life experiences, emphasizing concerns for balancing multiple roles in the context of emerging technologies in contemporary societies. Particularly interesting was a post of NIVEA Men that portrayed a young man doing dishes, which is not uncharacteristic of the posts analyzed from the same profile, as the brand seems to assume the responsibility of teaching consumers how to be adults.

The goal of Ghosn and Bilge's article is twofold: on the one hand, they scrutinize the interfaces of digital and factual identity features of young French people of Turkish origin expressed on social networks, which reveal the fact that they do not feel represented in the public and media space; on the other hand, they examine the current preference for gender-related selectivity, built on an ethnic and religious basis, in the social relations and interaction patterns of young Turks. The authors found a multi-layered and complex debate about what it means to be Turkish in France, which reveals a variety of behaviours seeking to reconcile identity claims and social cohesion needs through social networks, as well as the tendency to partly integrate into the wider social community, and partly turn inwards to one's ethnic and cultural community.

The last article of this special issue draws some general conclusions about the correlation between ongoing dialogic forms of interaction and the newly emerging patterns of human socialization. Starting from the premise that cultures undergo constant processes of hybridization and the modern hybrid coexists with aspects generating modernization, Mariselda Tessarolo argues that the hybrid space online and offline is simply a new form of social space, where the boundaries between physical and digital spaces have been blurred since technologies became instruments of socialization. According to her, our preferences are shaped by our relations, intertwined with prevailing social images and expectations. Following the fragmentation of the present, the distancing from the past, and the loss of stable references, some of the most impactful consequences are the constant rise of individualism in all its manifestations, and the sense of participation, rather than belonging.

POLARISATION OF EXPERTISE IN THE NEWS MEDIA: THE THAI CAVE BOYS' RESCUE

Kim Grego[1]

Abstract: *A corpus of English-language texts from news media sources worldwide was analysed to verify how the polarisation of the various options reported about the rescue of 12 Thai boys trapped in a cave in 2018 was constructed linguistically and realised discursively. Quantitative findings were interpreted from the perspectives of domain-specific languages, media language studies and media psychology. News sources were able to construct polarised opinions among experts but not among lay audiences, for lack of expert knowledge of both the journalists and their readership.*

Keywords: *Tham Luang Cave Rescue; caving; English-language news media; lexical analysis; ESP; specialised terminology; popularisation; polarisation; Critical Discourse Studies*

1. Background

The event contemplated in this study refers to the disappearance, on 23 June 2018, of the Wild Boars football team, made up of 12 boys aged between 11 and 17 and their 25-year old coach. They remained trapped in the well-known Tham Luang cave, situated in the North of Thailand, having walked into it for a short visit, but being surprised and imprisoned there by an unexpected flood. As the water level rose, making it impossible to enter the cave, for several days the world remained suspended about the fate of the football team, whose young age contributed to making the news particularly emotional and engaging. Not only, as the days passed, the media worldwide kept covering the story with the little news that filtered from the official Thai sources. The scarcity of information added to the heated debate that arose among professionals as well as non-professionals about the possible ways of extracting the boys, all ultimately rescued alive from the cave after 22 days. The operation set up to save them required a mighty complex effort by experts from various disciplines, such as geology, hydraulics, and medicine, with cave-divers being especially involved. No speleological accident had ever had such great resonance and coverage by the media before, and it earned itself an almost immediate *Wikipedia* entry (cf. "Tham Luang Cave Rescue", first created on 30 June 2018).

For the purposes of this study, it seems relevant to report a timeline of the events that took place over slightly more than three weeks.

Date	Events
23 June 2018	Soccer team boys and coach get lost
02 July 2018	Team and coach found alive trapped deep into cave
02-07 July 2018	Local and worldwide debate on rescuing options
08-10 July 2018	Four boys extracted per day over three days, including coach
Tot. 12 days	
10+ July 2018	News of boys' sedation published

Table 1. Timeline of events

[1] University of Milan, Milan (Italy).

2. Aims

This study aims to analyse the positions that emerged in the debate as to what the best way to rescue the boys was, comparing the different solutions proposed by the various experts. These apparently tended to be presented by the press in dichotomic pairs, as (multi)-polarised positions:

- those of the experts endorsed by and answering the Thai government's (henceforth the local experts) vs those of the international (or non-local) experts,
- the cave diving experts' opinions vs those of all the other experts.

Specific research questions therefore included how this sort of polarisation in the press is 1) constructed linguistically and 2) realised discursively. The former is meant to focus on the lexical and syntactic choices and usages; the latter will take into account textual strategies as well as social practices employed in conveying news with a specific angle and, thus, steering the audience's views in certain directions.

3. Corpus and methods

In order to carry out the analysis, a corpus of texts was collected from English-language newspapers worldwide, which included the Thai local paper *The Bangkok Post* published in English. These were retrieved from the *Factiva Global News Database*, with settings including all English-language newspapers, authors, companies, subjects, industries, regions, and the search terms being *CAVE* AND *BOYS* AND *THAILAND* AND *RESCUE* AND *DIVERS*. Nouns were deemed the most suitable word class for corpus selection, since they are known to occur frequently both in newspaper headlines, for conciseness (Fowler 1991: 98), and in specialised language, which makes ample use of nominalisation as a general trend (Gotti 2003). In the following, qualitative analysis, verbs and other lexical words were of course also considered. The time range selected went from the day of the accident, 23 June 2018, to the end of the year, 31 December 2018. The resulting corpus, named Thai Cave Rescue (*Thai.Ca.Re*.), comprised 2489 articles. After manual screening, 1819 duplicates and 14 irrelevant articles (which, although containing all the search terms, were related to other stories) were eliminated, making the final result a collection of 656 texts from 38 countries, totalling 510,613 tokens, 443,156 words and 20,702 sentences. Although this is by no means a large corpus in absolute terms, it was considered sufficiently sized and varied for the qualitative analysis that was meant for this study. The temporal distribution of the articles (Fig. 1) logically sees a peak between the end of June and the beginning of July, during the unfolding of the event itself, but a slight increase was recorded in December, when the media review the year's main stories.

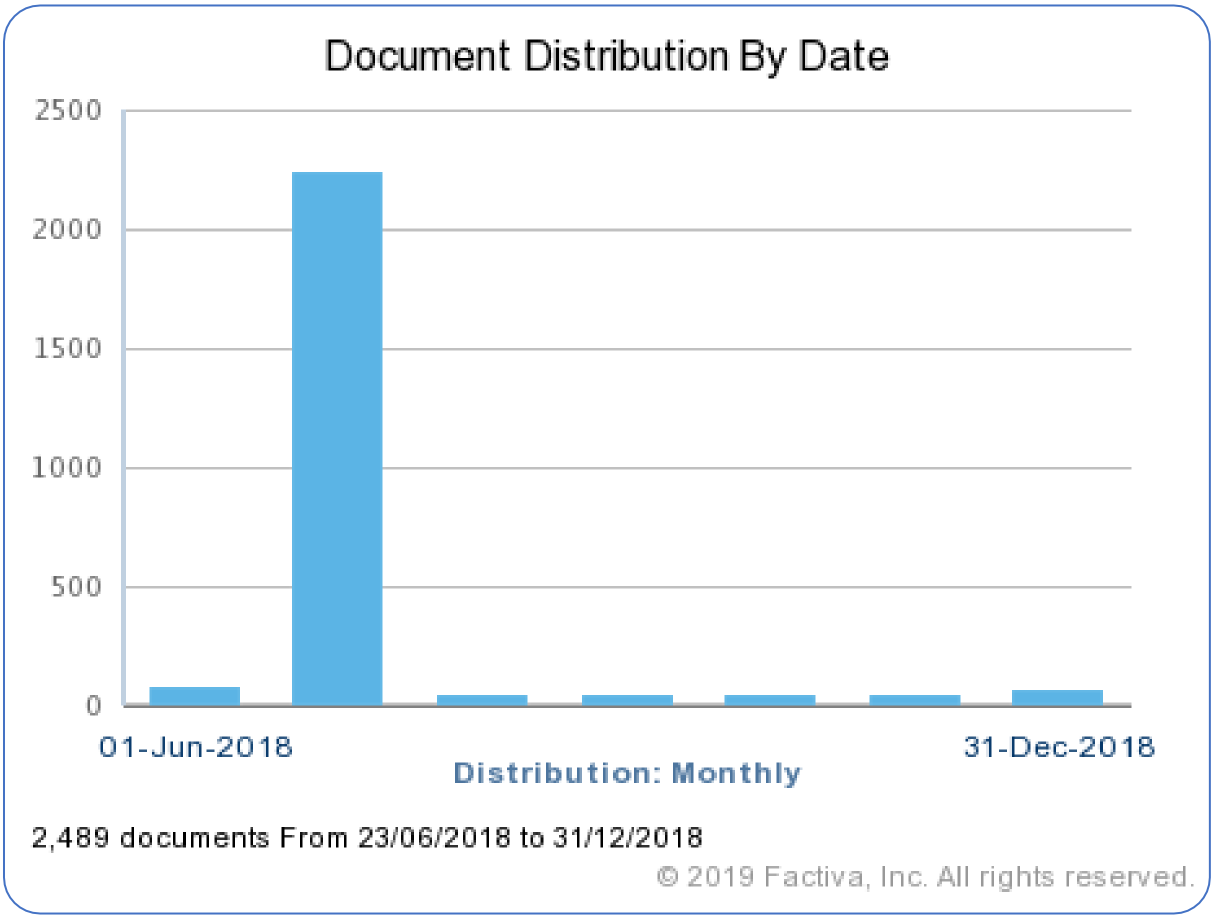

Fig. 1. Document distribution by date, before selection

The method applied was mixed, using *SketchEngine* (Kilgarriff & Rychlý 2003) to analyse the data quantitatively, but essentially going for a qualitative investigation, whose main interest was mostly lexical. Domain-specific English, or English for Special Purposes (Garzone 2006) were useful to identify and extract specialised terminology through *SketchEngine*. Media studies (Himelboim, Chang, McCreery 2010, Kang et al. 2011; McCluskey, Kim 2012) and media psychology provided the means to discuss the issues of discursive construction (Richardson 2007), especially through appraisal (Martin & White 2005), argumentation (Walton 2007) and attitudes (Briñol & Petty 2015).

4. Linguistic construction

4.1 Naming the experts

It is ascertained that "[c]ontemporary news values offer reasons for news presence favoring polarization. Those advocating polarized views offer a higher potential for conflict, a common news value", since "[p]olarized views provide more clearly identified "two sides of a story" that represent balance" (McCluskey, Kim 2012: 576-577). The first step of this investigation was therefore quantitative, to establish who the 'poles' or the experts in the story were. The corpus was thus searched for the lemma *EXPERT**. As a noun, it appears 414 times or 81.08%[2], and its most typical modifiers are as in Table 2.

[2] Frequencies are given as normalised to 10,000.

Modifiers of *EXPERT** (n.)	Frequency (absolute)	Score (Typicality)
diving	28	10.58
medical	16	9.95
British	23	9.83
foreign	12	9.82
international	16	9.77
diving	9	9.72
cave	51	9.58
cave-diving	7	9.40
caving	7	9.39
disaster	6	9.11

Table 2. Modifiers of *EXPERT** (n.) and frequencies

It appeared clear that the experts involved in the event were mostly from the caving/cave-diving and the health-related fields. Not only, looking at the verbs with *EXPERT** as a subject, to see what the experts 'did' in the story: it emerged that they especially said (*SAY**, f. 43), had (*HAVE**, f. 35), were (*BE**, f. 23), and warned (*WARN**, f. 23), see Fig. 2.

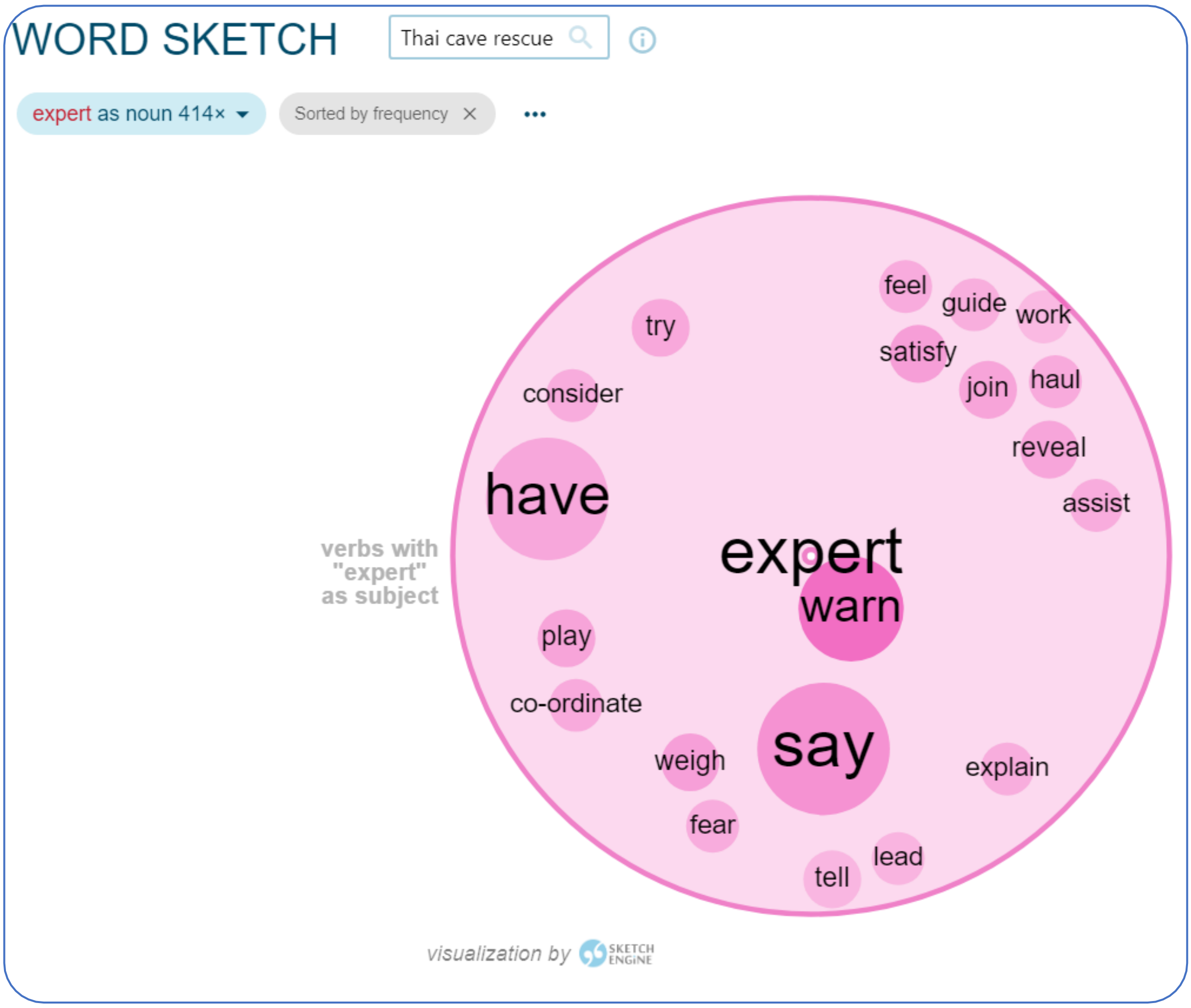

Fig. 2. Verbs with *EXPERT** as subject

The ensuing picture was one in which caving and medical experts (see Table 2) were described, (*BE*, *HAVE*), and their statements and opinions were reported (*SAY*, *WARN*, *HAVE* and *BE* as auxiliaries) (see Fig. 2).

The next quantitative step, aimed at detailing all the specialists involved in the rescue, apart from cave-divers and doctors, was the extraction of multi-word key-terms, since these, which are often the result of scientific word-formation, were deemed especially representative of specialised discourse, while single-word ones would be more generic (Garzone 2006). The operation was carried out setting the minimum frequency to 1 (the corpus being of a limited size), comparing it against *SketchEngine*'s English Web 2015 (enTenTen15) own reference corpus, and considering the first 1,000 items retrieved. These were then manually labelled, applying to them hand-picked 'semantic labels', to classify them qualitatively into four different groups:

1. general experts, especially representatives of the Thai government, in charge of operations and especially of external communication (TG);
2. cave-diving experts (CAVD);
3. health and medical experts (MED);
4. Elon Musk (EM).

Category number 4, though unexpected at first, on second thoughts was no complete surprise. The involvement of the famous tycoon of Tesla fame and cofounder of PayPal is due to his also possessing The Boring Company, an enterprise founded in 2016 that specialises in the construction of underground tunnels. For this reason, he became involved in the Thai boys' rescue when he volunteered to build a small submarine capsule that could contain and extract one boy at a time. He did manage to have the prototype realised in a few days, although in the end it was not used. A serial tweeter, he also got involved in the debate between specialists that is of interest here, often providing harsh and even questionable statements. His presence may not be quantitatively enormous but, if we are to consider the various 'voices' in the debate, his ought to be included. Table 3 sums up the semantic labels assigned to the first 1,000 most frequent multi-word key-terms connected with specialised discourse.

Expertise	Label	Frequency
1. general experts, esp. representatives of the Thai government	TG	21
2. cave-diving experts	CAVD	231
3. health and medical experts	MED	47
4. Elon Musk	EM	25

Table 3. Semantic labels assigned to multi-word key-terms

4.2 The Thai Government's and the cave divers' views

The following step was the study of the lemma OPTION*, as an indicator of the variables in the debate. Apart from occurring 137 times (2.68%), it indeed proved useful in revealing the different positions and opinions in the debate about how to save the boys. These can be differently attributed to the four kinds of expert actors identified before. For instance, it is clear how, in the first days of the debate[3], the Thai Government were inclined towards either waiting for the water level to decrease or digging the boys out, while the cave-divers were always in favour of diving them out, see examples (1) and (2).

(1) Options considered included **waiting until water levels subside** [TG], or **teaching the group to use diving gear** to navigate the flooded cave [CAVD].

[3] Considering that the missing team were spotted late at night on 2 July and the rescue operation began on 8 July, the debate lasted 5 days. Thailand's time zone also meant most English-speaking countries would report what had happened there the following day.

03.07.2018, CY, *Cyprus Mail*, 59, emph. added[4]

(2) Here are a few ways the hungry and weak boys could get out, none easy options. Could they **dive out** [CAVD]? Could they **be dug out** [TG]? What about **walking out** [TG]?

03.07.2018, UG, *New Vision*, 66, emph. added

After the first couple of days, though, the local government also started to consider the diving options, as seen in ex. (3).

(3) Chaing Rai Governor Narongsak Osatanakorn said **teaching the group to swim and dive with breathing masks was one option** [CAVD, TG], while **finding mountainside shafts and other entrances was another** [TG]. The other option is to **wait for the waters to recede**, which could take some time [TG].

04.07.2018, AU, *Shepparton News*, 91, emph. added

By the third of the five days that passed between the discovery and the rescue of the football team, the options did not seem to change much, with waiting, drilling, and diving remaining the three most discussed possibilities. A fourth option had to be added, though, when Elon Musk produced the idea, first and, in almost no time (it was ready by 9 July and arrived at the location the following day), a prototype of a child-sized pod that could be used to extract the boys through the water, see ex. (4).

(4) Plan A is to teach the boys to dive so that **they can dive out** of the cave escorted by navy divers, and the governor reported that the boys have begun doing practice dives in the cave [CAVD]. Plan B is to drain the cave system so that **the children can walk out** of the caves wearing life jackets [TG]. Plan C is to **drill down to the cave** where the boys are stranded and rescue them that way [TG]. A novel idea is being floated around the site this morning: the possibility of **inserting a tiny capsule into the cave**, in which the boys can be placed one by one and guided the approximately 4km journey from their cavern to the cave's entrance [EM].

05.07.2018, UK, *The Guardian*,121, emph. added

While most experts and non-experts agreed that these were the four most viable options, not every one of them tended towards each in the same way. In fact, some harsh criticisms were also voiced, by other experts interviewed by news journalists:

(5) "You're going to take people with no experience and put them in water that is not only moving, but there is no visibility," said **Rick Murcar, president of the U.S.-based National Association for Cave Diving**. "Without having proper training, putting them in that environment **greatly increases risk level**, not just for the child, but also the diver."

08.07.2018, US, *New York Daily News*, 219, emph. added

(6) But the plan has detractors.

"Cave diving is a very technical skill and **it's extremely dangerous, especially for an untrained diver**," **Mr Anmar Mirza, coordinator of the US National Cave Rescue Commission**, told AFP.

Mr Pat Moret, a rescue consultant[5], told CNN that **diving the boys out would be a "worst-case scenario"**.

"It will be diving in what is effectively muddy water, possibly fast-flowing, with no sense of direction. You can't tell what's up, down, sideways."

04.07.2018, SP, *The New Paper*, 96, emph. added

[4] Each example reports the date, the country of the source, the publication, the progressive identifying number of the document in the *Thai.Ca.Re.* corpus.

[5] What is a 'rescue consultant' exactly, anyway?

Other times, appreciation was expressed for one of the experts directly involved in the incident, in this case the local governor, i.e. a representative of the Thai Government:

(7) The former governor of Chiang Rai province has emerged as the public face of the rescue operation, which has captivated and unified Thais for more than a fortnight.
Osatanakorn had officially been transferred to a governorship in the smaller, neighbouring province of Phayao since the boys became stuck in the cave on 23 June.
But his **training as an engineer** and his **management skills** earned him a continuing role as head of the command centre.
His leadership has won him **national popularity**, including calls on social media that he become prime minister.

08.07.2018, UK, *The Guardian*, 206, emph. added

By 7 July, however, the situation had become critical, due to lack of sufficient oxygen in the cave where the team was stranded and, in addition, more monsoon rain was expected to start on 11 July, so an emergency decision about acting had to be taken, see ex. (5).

(8) Most critically, the oxygen supplies in the cave where the group is located are dropping. This has led to media reports citing Belgian **divers working with the rescue** suggesting a rescue attempt is imminent [CAVD].

09.07.2018, UK, *Independent Online*, 250, emph. added

Since waiting was out of the question, drilling required time and Elon Musk's mini-submarine would reach Thailand by 10 July, only the cave-diving option was left. The debate between experts, amplified globally by the press and taken part in by the lay people through the channels of the participatory Web 2.0, was over – or maybe not.

4.3 The medical experts' view

Missing from the picture for the whole time of the initial debate on the rescue options were, indeed, the health and medical experts. Four at a time, between 8 and 10 July, all the teenage footballers and their coach were extracted from their natural prison in a blitzkrieg-like operation, authorised by the Thai Government but not highly publicised until it was all and successfully over. Starting from 10 July, once the positive news had spread around the world, the details of the rescue started to emerge, and a new debate, this time involving the medical experts, began.

In the *Thai.Ca.Re.* corpus, the days between 2 and 8 July only see the presence of multi-word key terms from the health and medical domain in relation to the conditions of the trapped victims and the possible repercussions they could face inside and/or once outside, but not during the actual rescue. For this reason, perhaps, the MED terms did not emerge once in connection with *OPTION**. Analysing the 47 multi-word key terms from the MED domain, the second most frequent one (after *GOOD HEALTH*, obviously referring to the condition of the survivors once rescued) is *AUSTRALIAN DOCTOR* (f. 44, s. 84.8). A manual check of its occurrences revealed that the first mention of this expert is in a *Sydney Morning Herald* article from 8 July, which reports he had given the medical 'go-ahead' for the rescue to begin, see ex. (6).

(9) And an **Australian doctor** with **specialist caving expertise**, Richard Harris, has **played a key role** in the rescue operation - **giving final medical approval** for the operation to proceed on Saturday after examining the boys deep inside the cave complex.

Harris, an anaesthetist from Adelaide, has extensive cave-diving experience and it's understood his presence was specifically requested by some of the British divers participating in the rescue mission, as they were familiar with his expertise in what is a relatively small cave-diving community.

As well as the Australian doctor, another Australian, a friend of Harris, and six Australian Federal Policedivers are involved in the operation - meaning a total of eight Australians are participating.

08.07.2018, AU, *The Sydney Morning Herald – Online*, 203, emph. added

The short article also provides the name of the doctor, his specialisation as an anaesthetist, and his own expertise as a cave-diver. The focus of the text, however, seems to be not particularly on Harris but on the role and number of Australians in the operation: that is a trend that emerged after the successful completion of the operation, i.e. each country participating in it with one or more of their 'experts' proudly reporting about it.

Thus, it is probably for his Australian nationality and for the proximity between Thailand and Australia, even in time zones, that the first occurrence of *AUSTRALIAN DOCTOR* was in a Sydney paper. It did not take long for European, US and other sources to relate and amplify Harris's presence, as details of his role emerged as more than just 'giving the ok' to extracting the boys. On 8 July, UK time, the *Guardian* was already writing that

(10) Richard Harris, an **Australian doctor** with **extensive cave-diving experience**, went into the chamber on Saturday, examined the boys and **approved them for the operation**, authorities said. He was also part of the rescue.

08.07.2018, UK, *The Guardian*, 206, emph. added

Yet, it was in the days following the complete extraction of the Wild Boars soccer team and their coach that other MED single- and multi-word key terms appeared in the press. When checking, *ANAESTHETIST* (f.: 63 or 1.23%), obviously referring to Dr Harris, does appear as a frequent keyword, and it is moreover correlated to other terms such as *SEDAT** (f.: 42 or 0.82%), *DRUG** (f.: 42 or 0.82%), *ANTI-ANXIETY MEDICATION* (f.: 12, s.: 23.95), *MILD SEDATIVE* (f. 6, s.: 14.43), *ANTI-ANXIETY DRUG* (f.: 6, s.: 12.62), *KETAMINE* (f.: 15 or 0.29%), *ALPRAZOLAM* (f.: 2 or 0.03%), *ATROPINE* (f.: 2 or 0.03%). Indeed, looking at the multi-word key terms, it was initially reported that the boys had just been given mild anxiolytics:

(11) Those concerns led rescuers to approve a **mild sedative** that calmed the youngsters, according to Thailand's junta chief Prayut Chan-O-Cha.

10.07.2018, UG, *New Vision*, 334, emph. added

(12) Prayuth Chan-ocha, the Thai prime minister, confirmed that they had been given **anti-anxiety medication** to help stay calm.

10.07.2018, UK, *The Telegraph Online*, 336, emph. added

(13) THE schoolboys rescued from a flooded cave system in Thailand were dosed with an **anti-anxiety drug** to stop them panicking during the terrifying underwater mission, the country's prime minister has admitted. The authorities had previously denied the children were drugged but Prayut Chan-o-Cha confirmed that they had been given anxiolytic 'to make them not excited, not stressed'.

12.07.2018, UK, *Scottish Daily Mail*, 453, emph. added

However, scanning the 42 occurrences of *SEDAT** in the corpus, one learns that, as the days went by, the youngsters were, in an escalation,

(14) **heavily sedated** to prevent them panicking

08.09.2018 UK The Press and Journal 608, emph. added

(15) **sedated** - they were **unconscious**

12.07.2018, KY, *iNews Cayman*, 468, emph. added

(16) each boy was **sedated and strapped** to a stretcher with a full-face goggle and an air tank to ensure they would not panic.

18.07.2018, UK, *coventrytelegraph.net*, 554, emph. added

(17) administer **life-threatening drugs to sedate** the 12 boys and their soccer coach on their way out

27.07.2018, AU, *The Advertiser*, 599, emph. added

(18) **sedate them with a cocktail of drugs** (the **heavy hitter** being **ketamine**, applied by injection into the thigh) during the rescue operation.

01.12.2018, CH, *South China Morning Post*, 639, emph. added

This information obviously stirred up shocked reactions and a debate among both the various specialists involved and the lay people, for the deontological, ethical and moral implications involved in that choice. However, it cannot be said to have been so harsh as the debate preceding the rescue, because the event was known to have had a happy ending and the story was no longer as newsworthy as before. For example, the Thai Government first denied the news, then had to admit it:

(19) There were **conflicting reports** in the hours after the rescue about the extent to which the boys had been medicated before they were brought out. The **Thai prime minister** on Tuesday **denied** reports that **they had been sedated**

12.07.2018, KY, *iNews Cayman*, 468, emph. added

(20) **Mr Prayut denied** this, saying: '**All of the children were conscious** during the operation.'

12.07.2018, UK, *Scottish Daily Mail*, 453, emph. added

(21) **Thailand's PM admits** that **schoolboys were dosed** with an anti-anxiety drug

15.07.2018, UK, *Mail Online*, 514, emph. added

The 'popular' debate revolved mostly around the information, highly advertised by British tabloids for instance, that ketamine in particular had been used. The first to report the news was the *Scottish Daily Mail* on 12 July:

(22) One of the British divers said: 'I was told the boys were given a dose of **ketamine** [**a horse tranquilliser often used as a recreational drug**] to keep them calm. An American military diver added: 'Those kids were proper **knocked out**.'

12.07.2018, UK, *Scottish Daily Mail*, 453, emph. added

But it was mostly the *Sun* and the *Mail Online* that picked up the story and made it into a topic for popular debate:

(23) Cave kids given drug for rescue. The 12 boys trapped in a flooded cave **were given club drug ketamine** to stop them from panicking while they were rescued, a source told *The Sun*. […] **Ketamine**, an anaesthetic which induces a trance-like state **known by clubbers as the k-hole**, can have **serious side-effects**.

12.07.2018, UK, *The Sun*, 467, emph. added

(24) Thai rescue boys 'were **drugged with KETAMINE**': Youngsters given doses of **horse tranquiliser** to stop them panicking say divers as gripping footage of underwater mission is released

15.07.2018, UK, *Mail Online*, 514, emph. added

Because the shocking piece of news was told with the benefit of hindsight, a combination of alarming and reassuring language is used, with phrases such as

> "boys WERE sedated", "gripping footage", "were dosed", "terrifying underwater mission", "proper knocked out" (text 453); "given club drug ketamine", "Ketamine, an anaesthetic which induces a trance-like state known by clubbers as the k-hole, can have serious side-effects" (text 467); "Youngsters given doses of horse tranquiliser", "were dosed with an anti-anxiety drug", "The treacherous conditions in the cave system", "claustrophobic tunnel compared to the 'S-bend' of a toilet" (text 514),

alternating with

> "the boys and their coach had been 'incredibly resilient'", "We were extremely fortunate that the outcome was the way it was", "It all went according to plan" (text 453); "BOYS' JOY AFTER ESCAPE", "have been filmed smiling in a hospital", "Their recovery is said to be going well", "Thankfully, it worked. We're all delighted that everyone made it out safely" (text 467); "the cave will be turned into 'a living museum'" (text 514).

The result is that the *Sun*'s and *Mail Online*'s articles, rather than raising a real debate, tried to stir an *ex-post* polemic on comparing the medical and recreational use of the same drug, and hoping this would cause people to be scandalised. Their nationalistic inclination nonetheless tended to take over, since the story had ended up well anyway, and the rescuers were mostly Britons.

In the *Thai.Ca.Re.* corpus, the first detailed and 'expert' mention of how the sedation of the young boys really took place occurs quite late during the year, in an article dated 30 November:

> (25) Dr Harry consulted widely, seeking the opinions of other medical experts in Thailand and abroad. In the end, the anaesthetist came up with **a combination of three drugs**. First, he would give them **a 0.5 milligram oral dose of alprazolam**, an anti-anxiety drug better known by its trade name, **Xanax**. Giving the boys a tablet of this while they were still with their friends would hopefully take the edge off any fear they had as they prepared to leave.
>
> **Next, he would inject ketamine** into a muscle in one of their legs – this would be the main sedative. A powerful drug originally developed as an animal tranquiliser, it has also been used as a painkiller for humans and, in more recent times, as a recreational drug by partygoers. It was also known to knock out memories – perfect for the job inside Tham Luang.
>
> Dr Harry would use five milligrams of ketamine per kilogram of body weight, to put the boys to sleep. Ketamine acts fast but doesn't last long – about an hour. The rescue, however, would take several hours. This meant that Dr Harry had to instruct each of the recovery divers how to re-administer the drug using a syringe pre-loaded with a top-up dose of 2.5 milligrams for every kilogram of body weight. The divers would carry the drugs and needles in pockets in their dive wetsuits.
>
> **The last drug, atropine, was to reduce the amount of saliva in the boys' mouths**. This would also be injected into their leg muscles.
>
> 30.11.2018, AU, *Courier Mail – Online*, 636, emph. added

Both the amount and the accuracy of the details, in addition to what could be identified as a slightly more specialised style than most newspaper articles, lexically and syntactically, called for a manual screening of the Australian article. This, indeed, turned out to be nothing else but an excerpt from one of the first books about the Tham Luang cave rescue, Cochrane (2018). This is in fact a completely different genre from the newspaper articles in the corpus – often written overnight from scant press releases from a military government, to go online as soon as possible – it is a long journalistic report, for which the author has had the time to collect a significant amount of information once the story was already over, to consult with experts and possibly to interview the primary and secondary actors in the story. The extract that appears in the article can on the one hand be rightfully considered as part of the corpus, as it was published by a newspaper and retrieved according to the selecting criteria, but of course, on the other, is not in itself representative of the standard language of the *Thai.Ca.Re*. corpus. Even if it may have come too late during the year to leave on readers the same impression that the articles from the event's period did, it did, nonetheless, clarify the actual medical details of the rescue operation for the same audience, who could then decide informedly and for themselves what position to take in this particular – the sedation – debate.

4.4 Elon Musk's view and the people's opinion

In general, most of the lay people's opinions may be found in the comments to the online versions of the various articles, which have not been collected for this particular study but could naturally be a useful source of information to research. An impression of the popular view may be seen using *SketchEngine*'s word sketch function applied to *PEOPLE*: as the main pre-modifier, it shows *MANY*, which testifies to the emotional and practical worldwide involvement in the story; the same applies to two of the verbs having *PEOPLE* as an object, *INVOLVE* and *CAPTIVATE*; instead, the verb *BLAME* following *PEOPLE* only appears 3 times (0.05%), and each time to say the opposite, i.e. that nobody blamed the coach for the accident.

Possibly, it was Elon Musk who mostly represented – as well as stimulated – the popular opinion. As a graduate in economics and physics, with a lifelong involvement in technical and engineering companies (e.g. PayPal, SpaceX, Neuralink, Tesla, The Boring Company), he represents a real hybrid between an expert and a layperson: he (and his staff) certainly knew about drilling tunnels, but he was also as certainly no cave-diver. As such, he clearly had a right to express his informed opinion on the rescuing options, as any other expert in one of the fields involved in this international and multi-disciplinary operation. What stood him apart from many other potential opinion makers is how he imposed himself on the scene of the rescue through his high visibility as a billionaire entrepreneur, enhanced by his quantitative and qualitative use of Twitter as a communication channel. This also created a hybrid type of sub-genre in many of the Thai.Ca.Re corpus articles, since those that reported his tweets often did so by simply pasting screenshots of his tweets directly within the article, thus maintaining the entire multimodal framework of the tweet genre, as well as its collaborative multimediality, since most of these articles would be online and allow comments by readers. Analysing the lemma *TWEET**, whose frequency is 135 or 26.44%, when used as a verb (f.: 43 or 0.84%), 29 out of 43 times it has Musk as a grammatical and/or a logical subject. The peculiarity of Musk's position in the story also includes his heated exchange of opinions with other experts, again taking place on Twitter, but being dutifully reported in the papers, which in this way ended up writing not only about the physical reality but about a digital reality too. The pivotal example is the exchange between the British cave-diving expat Vernon Unsworth, who had long been exploring the Tham Luang cave area, and Elon Musk. On 13 July, Unsworth said of Musk's child-sized capsule idea "He can stick his submarine where it hurts" and "It just had absolutely no chances of working" (CNN 2018). In an equally gentlemanly way, Musk tweeted back at the criticism expressed against his pod, on 15 July, calling the one behind it a "pedo guy" (Musk 2018). The incident quickly returned on the level of reality when Unsworth sued Musk for defamation, asking 190 million dollars in damages on 17 September 2018 (17.09.2018, US, *NYTimes.com Feed*, 611), and losing to him on 6 December 2019 because Musk's tweet, by then long deleted, did not mention Unsworth explicitly.

Whether Elon Musk's prototype submarine could have been a viable rescuing option or not, his role in the incident remains highly representative of the bickering between the various experts, and between them and the lay people (who flooded Musk's Twitter account with comments, replies and retweeted him endlessly), made possible by the technological means – in this case Twitter, as well as the Internet itself – that allow them to convey their views and conduct their debates continents away from each other but only a few minutes apart.

4.5 A main actor's view

Four months after the Tham Luang cave incident, Italy's annual caving associations' meeting hosted a talk by the European Cave Rescue Association about the Thai boys' rescue, given in that particular occasion by Chris Jewell, a cave-diver from the British Cave Rescue Council, and one of the four rescuers who personally took part in the operation[6]. Having attended the talk as a caver belonging to an official caving association, the author decided to contact Mr Jewell for a short interview about the facts of July 2018, with the aim of directly reporting a main actor's view on it. Among the questions, two were about the various experts' opinions and the ensuing debates, and were answered as follows[7].

Q1. About the medical aspect of the rescue - *The sedation of the boys caused some sort of commotion in the press when it came to be known. Could you say how the final decision was taken, i.e. whether it was decided by the Australian anaesthetist and veterinarian[8] alone or was that a group of medical operators and/or the cave-divers themselves?*
A: The idea of sedation [MED] was pitched by team UK [CAVD] and Dr Harris [MED] was invited [CAVD] with this in mind. However, it was only when he arrived that he could consult [MED] with the Thai military medical professionals [TG] and see the boys for himself [MED] that the final authorisation was given [TG]. He [MED] had to believe it was possible it would work and convince [MED] the Thai authorities [TG].

Q2. About Elon Musk - *Would you like to say a word or two about his role and presence in the story?*
A: Nothing to say really. It's true we [CAVD] did consult with Elon [EM] and suggest [CAVD] he [EM] try building a capsule but, when the item arrived [EM], we [CAVD] never had the chance [TG] to inspect it and didn't need it [CAVD]. I [CAVD] can't say for sure if the capsule [EM] could have fitted in the narrow passageways, but I suspect not [CAVD].

The labels as per the categorisation illustrated in Table 3 were added afterwards, of course, to create a visual rendering of the different views by the main actors in the debate. Even a simple graphic expedient such as this quite clearly shows how intertwined and interdependent the options were, as well as the quantity and quality of the roles played by the actors in the decisions. It also suggests that a) no matter what the official sources first denied or later admitted, the idea of the sedation had been there from the beginning, and that b) no matter what his tweets or the various actors stated at the time about it, the idea of using Elon Musk's

[6] "Risultati e soccorso speleosubacqueo, il caso della Tahilandia", presented by Chris Jewell (British Cave Rescue Council), during the 12th European Cave Rescue Meeting, on 2 November 2018, within the International Caving Meeting 'Casola 2018, Nuvole', Casola Valsenio, 1-4 November 2018.
[7] Permission to report the contents of the interview, citing his name, was given to the author in writing by email on 22 August 2019.
[8] Dr Craig Challen, see section 5.

submarine once it arrived was never practically taken into consideration. Whereas the answer to the second question clarifies aspects of the 'experts vs non-experts' debate, the belief is that Mr Jewell's answer to the first question frames the debate between experts especially well, focusing as the press did not or could not do on the low-profile yet fundamental role of the medical experts, possibly kept quiet intentionally for the disastrous consequences that the whole operation could have had, starting from, but not limited to, the sedation part.[9] Although the administration of the specific combination of drugs could still be debated scientifically and deontologically, it seems as evident that only the cave-diving expertise of the medical professionals could provide their view with an added value that other medical specialists might not have had.

5. Discursive realisation

The articles in the Thai.Ca.Re corpus were examined according to the 'polarised' categories of experts identified in Table 3 (TG, CAVD, MED, EM). A limited but hopefully representative number of examples of the opinions of each were reported in the previous sections, showing in synthesis that, as far as the experts are concerned, **the Thai Government**'s ones appear constructed as hard-working and well-intentioned as indecisive and immobile, fundamentally without the necessary expertise to reach a viable solution. They are also represented as concerned and pressing for the kids' safety, both sincerely, as a national concern, but also from the pressure of the international scrutiny on what is, *de facto*, a military-governed country. Expressions of appreciation for the former local governor Narongsak Osatanakorn (ex. 6) alternate with critical portraits of the Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha (ex. 10, 11, 12, 18, 19, 20). Clearly, the press found it difficult to sympathise with the self-appointed ex-military turned head-of-government of Thailand, a well-known figure, while the local governor possibly represented a new face, easier to reach and communicate with, and the spokesperson from whom most of the information that was literally let filter through about the incident came, and thus on whom reporters depended for their work. The good portrait of Osatanakorn painted by a broadsheet like *The Guardian* (6), however, highlights his *expertise* as the main reason for depicting him positively ("his training as an engineer and his management skills earned him a continuing role as head of the command centre", ex. 6), therefore insisting on his *specialised knowledge* as a solid reason for his political leadership. The suggestion that he be possible Prime Minister material ("His leadership has won him national popularity, including calls on social media that he become prime minister", ibid.) surely comes, as stated, from social media comments, and is possibly influenced by the liberal stance of the newspaper, certainly not in favour of a military regime. Regarding the military, the Thai navy seals are shown in yet another different light: perhaps due to the two casualties among them, and even as representatives of the Thai people, too low in the ranks to represent the regime, they usually receive a sympathetic appraisal. They seem to embody the hard-working though not-expert-enough, in spite of their rigorous training, labour force that did most of the initial dirty work, before the foreign cave-diving heroes moved in.

Speaking of whom, **the international team of volunteers** that contributed to bringing the soccer team out of the cave and into safety again obviously emerge as the heroes of the day.

[9] Indeed, as emerged on 16 July, "Thailand gave diplomatic immunity to three Australians who helped a boys' soccer team escape from a flooded cave, in case "something went wrong", its foreign minister said on Monday." (16.07.2018, VN, *Tuoi Tre Newspaper*, 534)

From a Critical Discourse Studies perspective, the British team, in particular, are especially celebrated and placed in a higher position, power-wise ("the sourcing and construct of the news is intimately linked with the actions and opinions of (usually powerful) social groups", Richardson 2007: 1). It is indeed true that it was them who led the successful rescue, but the key issue lies exactly in the *success* of the operation: what if it had not turned out well? They could have made the wrong choices or simply been unlucky, and the whole thing could have turned into a corpse recovery. Would they have still been celebrated so much? The hypothesis is that they would, as they are depicted as the stereotypical Western hands-on, no-nonsense experts, who land in a peripheral, less technologically developed country and save the day with their *expertise* and practical attitude, gaining the respect, benevolence and gratitude of the people locally and worldwide. Apart from or perhaps in addition to their stereotypical representation provided by the media, they did embody some real Western values: the primacy of technology (back to the notion of expert and expertise), the right and duty to make free choices (in this case having potential life-saving effects), the willingness to take responsibility for the outcome of such choices, the generosity to offer help voluntarily without a personal gain. These very same features of the international rescuers could have made them perceived as standing in a dominant position, patronisingly looking down on the locals that were unable to solve their own problem. Was the positive outcome of the story the reason why they were not perceived as such? Was it the volunteers' humble attitude emerging from all their interviews, statements and declarations before, during and after the incident?[10] Did the international press, interested in highlighting the role that each country that sent an expert to the field had, portrayed them as uninterested, selfless heroes? The British and the Australian press, respectively 'owning' the CAVD and the MED experts, certainly worked towards such a discursive construction, but this could not have been successful or even possible if indeed the main actors had said something different from their matter-of-fact (under)statements like "Rick Stanton: 'Are we heroes? No, we were just using a very unique skill set'" (18.07.2018, UK, *coventrytelegraph.net*, 550) – which, incidentally, brings the issue back to the notion of expertise. The British cave-divers expertise was never put into question, and they could actually negotiate from a higher standpoint with the fastidious Thai regime, yet not for their white, European, Commonwealth, English-speaking powered social profile, but for the mere reason that they possessed unusual specialised skills restricted to a very small number of people worldwide. It was the fact that they were 'invited' by a helpless Thai Government for their unique expertise that allowed them to push for the buddy-dive (one kid held by one cave-diver) option when the time ran out. It was the same thing that let them deal amicably yet firmly with Elon Musk, who could be said to incarnate the same Western values. The role of their cave-diving expertise in the successful rescue is unquestionable, that of luck will never be fully ascertained.

The view in the debate of **the medical experts**, as shown by the analysis, did not surface clearly before the rescue was completed, but only came out and was thoroughly discussed – criticised, in certain cases – afterwards. The fact that their functions and decisions emerged once the danger was over, on the one hand, protected them from open criticism (after all, things *had* gone well), on the other, it did not show them as powerful actors in the game, or not as powerful as the frontmen, the British divers. Thus, in the corpus studied, it could be said that the MED experts came in second in the story – except perhaps in the Australian press, who

[10] The lemma *HERO** occurs 272 times or 53.27%, but always attached to the CAVD team by journalists and never self-attributed.

could boast the presence of both Dr Richard Harris the anaesthetist and Dr Craig Challen the veterinarian as representatives of their country.

> (26) Dr Harris's dive partner, Dr Craig Challen, has been revealed as the second key Australian involved in the rescue mission. The vet, from Western Australia, is one of Australia's leading technical cave divers.
>
> 12.07.2018, AU, *The Morning Bulletin*, 402

The role of the Perth veterinarian in the story would deserve a separate study of its own: by some popular sources associated to the choice of ketamine as a 'horse tranquilliser', he was one of the medical experts in the rescue team who injected the boys during the dive out. The fact that he happens to be a "world-class cave diver" (01.12.2018, CH, *South China Morning Post*, 639), *as well as* a veterinary, is what justified his presence, of course, although an inversion of the relevance of his double expertise – veterinary first and cave-diver as a secondary aspect – is what probably made him the subject of speculations. This leads to two considerations about the MED experts. Firstly, they were not really seen as decision-makers in the team until their role emerged *after the rescue* as actually very powerful actors in the story. Secondly, they brought to the fore the issue of multi-layered expertise, of which cave-diving is only one: for instance, the recognised leader of the four British cave-divers, Richard Stanton, is a former firefighter, which adds another set of highly specific skills to cave-diving.

Finally, the fourth expert considered in the pre-rescue debate was **Elon Musk**. He was self- and media-constructed as a day-saving jack-of-all-trades, a self-made tycoon with a big brain and a bigger heart. As such, he definitely also embodied the same Western values mentioned in relation to the CAVD experts (belief in technology, freedom of choice, individual responsibility in taking action but also corporate-like teamwork and coordinated problem-solving, as well as selflessness in lending help to the weaker). What, then, made the Thai Government lean towards the CAVD men and not Musk? The possible answer is multi-layered. Firstly, with his show of real generosity, decisiveness and constant flow of social media communication, his position was, paradoxically, much clearer for a public who had little idea of what a cave system like Tham Luang (or any other, for that matter) is like. Probably envisaging a cave like a straight tunnel, and a submerged cave like a tube filled with water, the layperson would share with Elon Musk the common 'Jules Verne-like' sci-fi background of a submarine being an optimal way of navigating it. However, even the sensationalist *Mail Online,* although days after the happy ending, came to see that the situation was not, literally, so straightforward, describing the cave as a "claustrophobic tunnel compared to the 'S-bend' of a toilet'" (15.07.2018, UK, *Mail Online,* 514). The simile is basic but, for once, realistic: the syphons connecting the various chambers are precisely as bending, at times twisting around their own axes and, especially, featuring very narrow strictures (Ellis 2020). It was never tried out, but the rigid mini-Nautilus designed by Musk's engineers would have at least encountered issues in its journey through the toilet-like tunnel which at times allowed the passing of only one single oxygen cylinder at a time (Grafton-Green 2018). Nonetheless, during the days of the pre-rescue debate, Musk's option seemed to stand some chances, even being listed as a candidate for a Plan D by the *Guardian* on 5 July (ex. 4), and received some huge if mixed feedback by Twitter's popular audience. Back to why it was ignored, if not openly scorned, by the Thai authorities, the second consideration to make is possibly about the origin of Musk's role in the story. While the British, Australian and other international cave-divers (after a lot of hesitation and under as much pressure by foreign cave-divers living locally, like Mr Unsworth) were ‘invited’ by Thailand, Elon Musk, as well as being a self-made man, also arrived on the spot self-invited. And, in spite of the money, time, staff and work that he actually poured into his option, which was initially appreciated and amplified by the press worldwide to share with their audiences, what soon went wrong was, at the popular level, the suspicion that his aim might be seeking publicity for his enterprises more than trying to provide help, while at the specialised level it was that he and his people’s *expertise* (drilling not caving, spacecrafts not submarines, and certainly not cave-diving) was not fully relevant to the problem. Once more, it was not a matter of *quantity* of expertise as much as of its *type* and *quality*.

6. Critical analysis

As seen from the analysis, all the above experts’ options (TG, CAVD, MED, EM) were repeatedly laid out in numbered and lettered lists in long and frequently updated newspaper articles (ex. 4), random experts in just one of the plurality of disciplines involved in the rescue were interviewed locally when journalists looked for authoritative opinions, like “Mr Pat Moret, a rescue consultant” (ex. 6), or “Dr Petrina Craine, an emergency medicine resident physician in Oakland, California, [who] warned the fungal lung infection can cause death, in extreme circumstances” (10.07.2018, UK, *Mail Online*, 350). Occasionally, the voices of cave-diving experts – “Mr Rick Murcar, president of the U.S.-based National Association for Cave Diving, ex. (5); “Mr Anmar Mirza, coordinator of the US National Cave Rescue Commission”, ex. (6) – were also reported, and often made to debate with or even against those of the CAVD team. Incidentally, in the reported examples, (5) and (6), the views opposing those of the CAVD team came from US cave-divers who, although Americans contributed in several ways (“UK cave experts and an American military team are helping Thai navy Seals in their efforts”, 29.06.2018, UK, *The Independent*, 16), were conspicuous for their absence among the leading rescue.

In spite of the clarity of the options on the plate, the discursive construction was not and could not be conducted in a strictly argumentative way: for a start, because the proposers of the various options clearly did not debate them on the papers but on site, under the protective cover of the Thai regime filtering the information. Then, since it was left to the press to lay out the options and discuss them, the journalists appeared disoriented due to their lack of knowledge and expertise about such a complex situation, sometimes consulting their own local experts, far from the site and as uninformed, to little avail. Thirdly, the technical debate seemed out of reach of the lay public, who “is presumed to have certain goals, and the public is also taken to have certain information on a particular issue at any given time […] constantly changing as a news story breaks” (Walton 2007: 223), but who in this case was even more ignorant about the details of the context and could not judge. Finally, it was difficult for the press to create polarisations *within* the public about this story, because “a mass media argument must be built on what van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984) called ‘common starting points’ in a discussion” (Walton 2007: 224), while in the Tham Luang incident all of the world’s audiences agreed on the fact that the boys’ safety was the priority and that anything that could be done to save them should be done. Also in terms of attitude, the popular audience was difficult to steer toward one or another of the options: for example, thinking along the lines of elaboration and validation (Briñol & Petty 2015), the readership could give as much thought as they wanted to the various options, but the little knowledge they owned and were provided with by the press was probably not enough to sway their attitude or even to develop one. Just as well, validation, and self-validation in particular, could not very much take place either, as their own stereotypes and experience about cave-diving accidents was, statistically, from limited to non-existent, and even the original source, another key factor in news evaluation, were the Thai Government's restricted, repetitive and occasionally contradictory press releases. Then again, overall, there could be no appeal to popular opinion in favour of one option, when it was all naturally bent toward the single aim of saving the young team – "personal relevance", or the appeal to the idea that 'they could be anyone's children' – intertwined with the "entertainment goal" (Briñol & Petty 2015: 283). Speaking of sources, Kang et al. (2011: 723) proposes that "source credibility cues not only activate heuristic processing, but could also influence systematic processing"; their study finding "evidence suggesting relative heuristic values of source cues based on perceived psychological distance. The more proximate the source cue, the greater its influence on perceived credibility of the message." (ibid.: 731). While true in the case study they produced and applicable to several others, it should nonetheless be considered that, although the structure, administration and reception of news in recent decades has been changing globally, especially in the online format, "those in the periphery and in the core do not necessarily take full advantage of it to overcome historical inequities in international communication" (Himelboim, Chang, McCreery 2010: 309). Thus, since "the location of the major news agencies in core countries – AP in the United States, AFP in France, and Canadian Thomson-Reuters with headquarters in the United States" (ibid: 310), proximity was not considered "a good predictor for foreign news coverage" (ibid.: 309). In this case, the story was very newsworthy even if it came from the 'periphery' of the world and, though it is true that the main press agencies did get most of the news faster than the others, the location, the language and especially the military government of the country did not make it any easier for them, and possibly favoured some nearby sources in Southeast Asia and, among the English-speaking countries, in Australia. It is also true that, no matter the place and quantity of the sources, both central and peripheral countries worldwide showed some deep interest in the story, as demonstrated by the variety of countries that the articles in the *Thai.Ca.Re.* corpus come from, limited to English news sources as they are. For this reason, it may be affirmed that the polarisation evidenced in the media mostly regarded the main expert actors, and not the lay audience. Among them, for the motives laid out above, the press was not precisely able to create polarised opinions but rather a form of "entertainment", in Martin and White's (2005: 104) understanding: "those wordings by which the authorial voice indicates that its position is but one of a number of possible positions and thereby, to greater or lesser degrees, makes dialogic space for those possibilities. The authorial voice entertains those dialogic alternatives". These dialogic alternatives entertained by the press were indeed picked up by the readers in the interactive channels, i.e. in comments to articles and in the huge "number of different venues, ranging from websites of news media (e.g., nbc.com) to social-bookmarking sites (e.g., digg.com), social-networking sites (e.g., Facebook), and microblogs (e.g., Twitter)" (Kang et al. 2011: 719), as well as in "news portals, such as Yahoo!News (http://news.yahoo.com), and news-aggregator sites, such as Google News (http://news.google.com), where each piece of news is accompanied by several source labels, often displayed together on the interface" (ibid.)

7. Conclusions

This investigation meant to analyse the different positions emerged in the debate around the Thai Luang Cave incident of June-July 2018, and how such expert and non-expert positions were linguistically and discursively represented as polarised in the press, since "extremes are more intuitively novel, entertaining, and colorful, representing another common news value

[…] [while] [m]oderate voices may be more difficult to portray as exciting than extreme voices" (McCluskey, Kim 2012: 577).

Thus, having reviewed the main actors' views as presented in the *Thai.Ca.Re.* press corpus, and having compared them against the information received directly from one of the British cave divers personally involved in the rescue, it may be concluded that expert opinions about the Thai cave rescue were represented by the press explicitly constructing polarisation and binary thinking, especially between the experts' opinions, for the sake of newsworthiness, but also partly out of their scarce knowledge of cave-diving technical expertise and language, which were consequently often ineffectively transposed to the lay public (Grego 2019). In the overlapping polarizations between cave-diving experts and other experts, and between experts in general and non-experts, the cave-diving niche skills emerged as the most persuasive for the Thai Government under pressure. The positive outcome of the operation did not allow any real criticism or further debates afterwards. On the contrary, it consolidated the primacy of the Western values embodied by the CAVD actors, at a global level, and rewarded, among the Western participants, the Britons and the Australians in particular. What could have happened if things had gone wrong, luckily, cannot be fathomed. It appears that, whatever the reasons why it was successful, or just simply *because* it was successful, this story for once reaffirmed the relevance of specialised over partly- or non-specialised expertise: "not all 'powerful' voices are malicious: they might be powerful by possessing useful knowledge and skills, for example healthcare workers", Partington, Taylor (2018: xiv), or even cave-divers. It also proves that science and technology dissemination is still needed in persuading non-expert audiences and leading the popular debate, because "nor is 'empowerment and 'disempowerment' a binary distinction; there are degrees of (dis)empowerment and also different types" (ibid.), especially when one of the main issues in news production and reception remains "how well or poorly informed the main-stream media are, as well as its inbuilt privileging of drama, crisis and alarmism" (ibid.: xvii).

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APPLYING A TRICHOTOMOUS POLARIZATION TO RHETORICAL STRATEGIES: GERMAN SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

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Abstract: *The study of rhetorical strategies has been expanding over recent years. In the academic field, professional and academic mobility programs exist, the successful acceptance of which involves, in addition to the presentation of a curriculum vitae (cv), the process of writing a letter of application (often referred to as a cover or motivation letter). This small-scale study investigates rhetorical strategies in a semi-authentic, cross-cultural, letter of application for a scholarship context, contributing in part to a longer, ongoing investigation on German rhetoric. It is hypothesized that a number of strategies may be directly transferred from the native German language culture. Comparisons with strategical choices that had been recorded in previous studies that had followed the same procedure are also discussed (James, Scholfield, & Ypsilandis, 1992; Al Abbad, Al Mansur, & Ypsilandis, 2019; Farnia, Ypsilandis, & Ghasempour, 2019). 22 letters of application were collected concerning a travel scholarship, written in English by German speakers, addressed to an American Committee. Data were initially analyzed in terms of the three Aristotelian rhetorical strategies of logos, ethos, and pathos by a three-member committee of linguists. A mixed qualitative and quantitative analysis with frequencies of the dependent variables (the strategies used) followed, and the relevant independent variables were recorded (i.e. gender, experience with other languages, experience in writing application letters, etc.) to test for associations. Surface and deep rhetorical structures were also considered. Frequencies of the dependent variable (quality of strategy used according to the Aristotelian framework) were distributed across the three Aristotelian categories, with logos argumentation coming first in the sample's preferences (Alred, 1997). Logos argumentation drew on logical reasoning for applying, following a coherent structure without redundant self-presentation sections (Bell, Dillon & Becker, 1995; House, 2006), while ethos strategies involved predominantly identity construction and sharing common values with the recipient. Pathos argumentation displayed charged language and claims of financial inability, but this appeared only rarely. An equal number of mixed strategy use was also registered. These involved strategies of co-occurrence of two rhetorical appeals in one plea (Ilie, 2004) which initially appeared to relate to one of the aforementioned Aristotelian categories. This reveals that the German rhetorical strategies of this specific discourse genre (application letter writing) in this sample, thought to be related to logic (logos) alone, included several ethos and pathos arguments co-occurring in its discourse. Associations tested among the dependent variables (the strategies) showed statistically significant correlations between ethos and pathos argumentation. In conclusion, the persuasive tactics in this occasion of this German sample were expressed through the use of all the registered categories, some of which would be expected to lead to a number of pragmatic pitfalls, violating maxims of politeness, similar to those registered in previous studies conducted with other cultures.*

Keywords: *rhetorical strategies; strategical choices in application letters; rhetoric and logical argumentation.*

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1. Introduction

The investigation of rhetorical structures in cross cultural communication has been receiving an augmented interest over the last decades as a result of internet communication, international student exchange programs (*Erasmus* or *Comenius* student and staff mobility program), and more recently, due to easy population movement. In exchange programs for example, one of the selection requirements applicants have to complete, along with supplying their cv, is an accompanying letter. This, in effect, is a social situation role-play act of self-advertising linguistic ability that most people, students in particular, have experience with and "offers the applicant a more open-ended 'creative' opportunity for favourable self-presentation" (James, Scholfield and Ypsilandis, 1994). Most of these applications are written in an international language and so English is used as a channel of communication. One of the major problems which arises from this fact is that in written texts of this type, a different weight applies to word use in different cultures as "each cultural world operates according to its own internal dynamic, its own principles, and its own laws, be those either written or unwritten" (Hall and Hall, 1990: 3). Therefore, the context of application letters, as a genre of written rhetoric, becomes of extreme value because political decisions, such as *who gets what*, are often based on this tool, this is thus worth investigating. The process unfolds in a form of a two-stage interaction, dialogue-procedure between the applicant and the reviewer, which always produces a simple form of two, for most cases, genres of correspondence: a) the writing and submission of the application letter, and b) the response-reaction by the reviewers, in the form of received feedback, whether for the success or failure of the overall act. It is this precise condition that makes the situation unique and challenging since the applicant who commits the initial act is not offered a second chance to correct him/herself, should s/he realise pragmatic pitfalls had occurred in his/her correspondence and thereon alter his/her tactical/strategic approach. Thus, the context in which such letters operate provides an excellent opportunity for a study of persuasion, particularly in academic environments. In intercultural correspondence in particular, pragmatic failure of this sort is more likely to occur as pragmatic differences in the use of rhetorical strategies and persuasive tactics (the differences between the two are compared in detail in Al Abbad, Al Mansur and Ypsilandis, 2019) are argued to be transferred across cultures (Kaplan, 1972; Kasper, 1992; 1997, Connor, 1996, 2011), leading to a significant proportion of misunderstandings directly related to these two independent variables (strategies and tactics).

The rhetorical strategies, the persuasive tactics, the selection of vocabulary and the syntax used by the applicants in the letters, partially reveal their identity which, on the one hand, a) is suggested to have evolved throughout adolescence and stay relatively stable afterwards (Thomsen, Lessing, Greve, & Dresbach, 2018), while on the other, b) it adapts to social and environmental changes (Lawler, 2014). In this respect, the study of identity construction through the type of rhetorical and persuasive appeals in letters of application becomes a demanding task which may be related to or be found in various forms, such as: cultural identity, national identity, religious identity, body identity, teacher identity, or language identity (Balkin, Schlosser, & Levitt, 2009; Brown & Heck, 2018; Caldwell, 2016; Espeland, Dieckhoff, Gutiérrez, & Gutierrez, 2002; Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, 2011; Tabouret-Keller, 2017).

This is a study involving a written completion task, a request for a scholarship, aiming to elicit data of this specific speech act, and further attempt to analyse instances of persuasive tactics or rhetorical strategies both quantitatively and qualitatively. Although it is hypothesised that participants would predominantly resort to their L1 rhetorical and persuasive conventions in such situations, by means of Kasper's (1992) pragmatic transfer, it is also acknowledged that these are also declared to be dynamic (Al Abbad, Al Mansur and Ypsilandis, 2019), change over time (Kaplan, 1966) and may be influenced by other independent variables, such as, gender, age, previous knowledge or experience in writing application letters, subject of study and knowledge of languages other than English or even be part of the individual characteristics of the applicants. The aim of this work is to register and analyse the rhetorical choices in this German sample at this moment in time (synchronic study) and act as a trigger for scholars to make longitudinal comparisons on the topic (diachronic target). In addition, the perlocutionary effect (Austin, 1962) of certain strategies is examined in relation to the use of the same strategy and the registered reaction of native speakers of English given this had appeared in previous studies following the exact same scenario. Kramsch (2020: 2) describes the perlocutionary effect as the consequence brought about "or effects on the actions, thoughts, or beliefs of hearers by means of uttering words" and ascertains that the study of "perlocutionary effects have not received the same level of attention in the field of pragmatics as other aspects of speech acts" (ibid).

A longer-term goal is to create a list of a worldwide acceptable and suitable persuasive tactics and rhetorical strategies that would not result in pragmatic pitfalls which cause erroneous negative verdicts by reviewers of different cultures, and further, to increase awareness of applicants on the matter by incorporating this finding into the language teaching syllabus. The topic is initially approached bibliographically, in the first chapter, by looking at relevant secondary sources on rhetoric, and German rhetoric in particular, as umbrella terms of written requests; a review of previous categorisations of rhetorical strategies and persuasive tactics follows on. Methodological details are presented, and the analysis of results follows using quantitative statistical analyses with qualitative comments and examples from the data gathered. Major findings are discussed in the Discussion and Conclusion sections. Clearly, data of this type may be only representative of this or other similar speech act situations, and do not regard or describe the entire rhetorical spectrum of the German example.

2. Background

Persuasion as a process used to convince 'the other' and persuasive tactics, have been well documented in various research articles and books (Connor, 1996, 2011) sometimes under the umbrella of rhetoric or related to particular types of requests. Al Abbad, Al Mansur and Ypsilandis (2019) and the citations within, suggest two forms of persuasion. A *strong form*, which leads to action; it is 'action inducement' (Guerini, Stock and Zancanaro, 2004), and may be linked in cases to coercion, and a *weak form* that requires a rather passive agreement by the individual. While the two terms are often used interchangeably in the related literature, in Al Abbad, Al Mansur and Ypsilandis (2019) a distinction between the two is attempted. While both persuasion and rhetoric contain some sort of influencing (convincing), they differ in a number of significant ways based on the implicit and explicit distinction. *Persuasion* is distinguished as a tactical implicit procedure in which: a) relative implicit knowledge (awareness) in the act is employed, b) arguments are adopted and rarely created, c) paralinguistic features and other means as well (behaviour, setting an example or use of force) may be included. In addition, it is often downgraded to a skill. On the other hand, *rhetoric* is proposed as an action: a) based on explicit knowledge and ability to decipher (decode) and encode strategically, b) deploying arguments after careful selection and organization, while c) it is expressed only through linguistic means. Finally, it is often upgraded to an art. As both processes require at least one person in the audience to begin to develop, it is only the rhetoricians who are equipped with the relevant knowledge to take this matter into account strategically and further explicitly incorporate an intentional and structured selection of plans, depending on who is standing, reading or listening on the other side; in other words, of having the skills to purposefully converge or diverge (Giles, Coupland, Howard, Justine and Nikolas, 1991) according to their audience capacities or expectations. Note that, despite the fact that these notions appear as two distinct poles in their analysis, it may be pointed out that there can be many gray zones between the two[5].

2.1 Categorizing Persuasive Strategies

Various professional, life and academic fields employ persuasion in different settings of communication now that persuasive skills are needed for humans to exist successfully in the communicative environment (Gamble & Gamble, 1999). Persuasion is thought to include a wide range of meanings (Stiff & Mongeau, 2003), and various scholars around the world are showing a growing, keen interest as to how this practice is deployed. A definition to describe the construct was provided by Simons (1976: 21) who saw the process through "human communication designed to influence others by modifying their beliefs, values, or attitudes". A distinction needs to be made here between the three systems mentioned above. In the first two, *beliefs* and *values,* the occurrence of any modification does not necessarily result in any reaction from the audience. However, in the case of *attitudes*, scaffolded development may be expected. Notice that not all persuasion techniques are appropriate for a particular communication circumstance, so these should not be applied concurrently. Depending on the specific circumstance of the communicative setting (e.g. political speech, letter of application) the strategies differ in their relevance and therefore also in their usage (Hannken-Illjes, 2018). This observation by Hannken-Iljes (2018), concerning appropriacy or suitability of a strategy for a specific circumstance, was examined experimentally earlier by James, Scholfield and Ypsilandis (1994) in a sample of subjects from different nationalities. In particular, subjects were asked about the suitability of a set of persuasive strategies both in English as a lingua franca and in their mother tongue, and findings confirmed initial hypothesis in that judgements of suitability are predominantly based on first language cultural linguistic conventions.

A number of scholars attempted to harness persuasion through systematic approaches and divided persuasion in different categories. A few of these will be outlined here in order to show the differences between them, and to assist the researcher to follow the line of this study. One of the most known classifications was proposed by the Ancient Greek, Macedonian philosopher

[5] A suggestion by Cornelia Illie at the 2019 ESTIDIA conference in Naples, Italy and Spyridoula Bella from the National and Capodistrian University of Athens.

Aristotle who suggested that persuasive strategies can be organized into two different types: *artificial* and *non-artificial*. Whereas *non-artificial* strategies are not created with the help of rhetorical tools which may thus be borrowed from other users, or be commissioned without the individual being fully aware of the process, *artificial* strategies are produced by the speaker himself or herself who, in that respect, needs to have substantial knowledge of how persuasion operates. Such an *artificial* set of strategies were again divided into three persuasive subcategories: *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*. Depending on the content quality of the argument used, these aim to stimulate different impressions on the listener/reader in different aspects of communication and thereon create a liaison between speakers and listeners (Table 1).

Logos	Content Logical argumentation
Ethos	Competence Trustworthiness Enthusiasm
Pathos	Transmission of emotions from addresser to addressee

Table 1: Distinction of artificial persuasion based on Aristotle

While the *logos* line of reasoning is straightforward, as it is based on the mere content and logical argumentation, pathos and *ethos* are more complex concepts. Regarding *ethos*, it is understood that the speaker tries to convince the listener through his fundamental knowledge of the topic (competence), while at the same time presenting his trustworthiness with respect to his character and the content of his speech. Notice also that, the speaker tries to convey an element of enthusiasm in order to persuade the audience. As for the *Pathos* arrangements, these seem to seek to evoke favourable emotions in the listener aiming to work with his/her emotive feelings.

Other known classifications include, Connor & Lauer's (1985) division who separated persuasion into fourteen logical, four ethical, and five affective categories. A little later, Johnstone (1989: 145), divided persuasion into three different categories: *quasilogical* argumentation, *presentational* persuasion, and *analogical* persuasion. She argued that *quasilogical* argumentation (corresponding to logos) is an "informal, non-demonstrative" (1989: 145) type of reasoning with the goal of convincing the listeners. This is achieved by appearing to be similar to logical argumentation on a propositional as well as on a linguistic level. *Presentational* persuasion (corresponding to pathos), on the contrary, is "based on the assumption that being persuaded is being moved, being swept along by a rhythmic flow of words and sounds" (1989: 148). Johnstone (1989) emphasizes that in this case the audience is persuaded by the repetition, paraphrasing and call for aesthetic. Visual metaphors are often used to support this type of persuasion as the listener is made aware of the argumentation even through visual stimulation. The third distinction, *analogical* persuasion (corresponding to ethos), convinces the communication partner by "the indirect mode of storytelling" (Johnstone, 1989: 149). The speaker tries to win the listener over by "calling to mind, explicitly or implicitly, traditional wisdom, often in the form of parable or fablelike stories" (Johnstone, 1989: 149).

The above classifications seem to have moved in parallel to Aristotle's classification and attempted to provide a more thorough understanding of persuasion related to the quality and the scope of the argument employed by the individual. As shown above, several paradigms share common features so that a single sharp-edged definition of the term persuasion is not obligatory (Stiff & Mongeau, 2003), nor is it possible to offer a clear-cut categorization as different cultures interpret strategies in different ways. In other words, definitions and categorizations are 'culture specific' (Ypsilandis 1994; Alred, 1997).

More recent classifications include the one by Boella, Hulstijn, & van der Torre (2004) who divided interactive computing, persuasive strategies into a scale of three different levels of personal dynamic, that could be applied to human interaction as well, depending on the power relations between the speaker and the listener, which are expressed in different levels related to authority. The authors divided persuasive axioms between those intending to command, convince, and suggest. Al Abbad, Al Mansur and Ypsilandis (2019), following Aristotle's initial arguments of artificial and non-artificial division, distinguish persuasion attempts from rhetorical strategies across the explicit/implicit scale, although the two terms (persuasion or rhetorical strategies) are used interchangeably in the related literature. Al Abbad, Al Mansur and Ypsilandis (ibid) see persuasion being deployed implicitly and propose the term *tactic* to be linked to the procedure while they understand rhetoric being expressed by using explicit knowledge possessed by the orator and thus expressed through a *strategic* development.
Rhetoric could be divided into a) its surface semantic-level structure where the meaning is transparent to an international audience, and does not require any further specific cultural knowledge, and b) its deep pragmatic level structure where speakers' intentions may remain obscure to those unfamiliar with the related culture. It should also be noted that classifications appear to be theoretical and rigid, giving the impression of being clear cut when in reality they fluctuate. There are certain cases that: a) may not belong in one category only (alone) (James, Scholfield & Ypsilandis, 1994), b) belong to a continuum (as suggested in a discussion by Spyridoula Bella and is proposed in Bella, 2019) and c) may receive a different pragmatic weight in different cultures. Finally, pragmatic pitfalls in persuasiveness may also be attributed to language cultural norms transfer, and false understanding of the target culture, resulting in the production of attempts to converge to the norms of the L2 culture that are linguistically non appropriate for the situation.

2.2 German Rhetoric

The German contribution to the discussion on rhetoric is large and systematic, initially concentrating though, on classical rhetoric (Trautmann, 1975). Comparatively less is known about the rhetorical strategies of German and more specifically of this specific speech act, i.e. writing a letter of application for a scholarship. Among the articles on German rhetoric in the writing of English compositions is Gerald J. Alred's (1997) where the author describes it as ordered, formal, serious and direct with "long, <u>complicated</u>, loose sentences as well as <u>unusual word order</u> and <u>faulty idiomatic usage</u>" particularly due to the Germans' inclination to be thorough. In this description it may be possible to identify examples of language transfer (see the underlined text in the above extract).

In addition, the same scholar discusses the values of order, formality, directness and display of good manners. Alred's revealing contribution, with references to the work of other scholars, results from personal experiences in the country and his keen observations and data collected from teaching a Business English writing course as a visiting professor at Justus Liebig University in Giessen, Germany (department of English). In that respect, his study may be seen more as a work of action research rather than being an empirical systematic procedure that may suffer with all the problems resulting from qualitative analysis, i.e. unreliable external validity of the study (not representative sample of the entire population), and absence of quantitative data analysis which would help the reader understand how many of the participating subjects have expressed a certain linguistic behaviour of note in the dataset. Despite these shortcomings, Alred presents a valuable and detailed understanding of German rhetoric in relation to culture through the factors of *context* and *time* adopted from Hall (1976), and further examines the German themes of *order* and *directness*. Alred does not simply denote German linguistic behaviour but tries to understand and offer possible explanations. He also looks at how Aristotle's concepts of logos, ethos and pathos assist in accommodating cultural differences of writing which he finds as a framework that can be applied internationally. In his study, *Context* is divided into high and low depending on cultural familiarity and knowledge between individuals. In a high-context communication (e.g. as one can find in Arab countries) participants communicate 'economically', while in low-context situations (as one can find in the USA or Germany), "participants assume they share little knowledge and must communicate in great detail" (Alred, 1997: 356). As for *time* Alred refers to Hall (1976: 178) who argues that some cultures view time as 'flexible and circular' and thereon may seem 'chaotic' and 'undisciplined' while others, as "a result of their experience with industrial production…, place importance on scheduling and emphasize the completion of one task at a time". The scholar suggests that, the German love of order, orderliness, logic, perfection and precision may be an effect of *context* and *time* while total absence of 'small talk' and emphasis on 'goal directed' German discourse is attributed to *orderliness* and *a will not to waste time*. *Directness* is another suggested feature of German discourse (Hall and Hall, 1990) which is attributed either to context, as communicators of low-context cultures 'rely on verbal self-discourse' (Victor 1992), or due to 'honesty' or even to *orderliness* as well as *not wasting time* (Alfred, 1997).
Significant contribution to culture-conditioned discourse behavior of English and German can be found in House (1996, 1998, and 2006) in a series of articles with different procedures for data collection "from open self-directed dyadic role plays followed by (immediate or delayed) retrospective interviews, to discourse completion tasks combined with meta-pragmatic assessment tests, and the analysis and evaluation of written texts and their translations" (House, 2006). Among her findings, German talk is considered to be 'goal oriented' with total absence of 'small talk' which Alred (1997: 359) explains as "a matter of orderliness as well as not wasting time".

3. Method

The data in this investigation were collected from a realistic role-play letter of application completion; a written discourse completion task (WDCT) following the exact same scenario used in previous studies (James, Scholfield & Ypsilandis, 1992; 1994, Ypsilandis

1994, Psaltou-Joycey & Ypsilandis, 2000; Papadopoulos & Ypsilandis, 2017; Al Abbad, Al Mansur & Ypsilandis, 2019; Farnia, Ypsilandis & Ghasempour, 2019) which involved the participants replying to an advertised call for a fictitious study scholarship in the USA. Following the exact same scenario ensures that, the linguistic choices of participants are comparatively influenced by the same social and situational variables and this allows us to offer comparisons between the findings of the studies. The framework for both the current and previous studies was chosen particularly because of its importance of the task in the social, academic and professional life of individuals, which may be placed under House's (1989) 'standard' social situation, and the familiarity of participants in performing the act. Letters were collected and analysed both quantitively and qualitatively with, where deemed necessary, references to Grice's (1975) maxims of politeness. It should be noted that despite the condition that this WDCT data is not real, it is possible to claim that they are realistic, as most participants in the sample were familiar with the task they were asked to complete.

3.1 Participants

22 subjects were initially approached of whom: a) 19 were university students with German as their first language and formed the subject sample b) 1 had Italian as his first language, c) 1 was a housewife, and d)1 presented an incomplete letter. Subjects described in (b), (c) and (d) were eliminated from the sample to make it more avouched given the participants' target native language and their educational background. Three researchers, two postgraduate students and one professor of applied linguistics, with experience in German rhetoric were used as judges for categorisig the strategies used by the applicants and two of those to provide insight knowledge concerning the personality of the applicants, a factor which proved valuable for a better understanding of a deeper pragmatic weight of the structures.

3.2 Tools

The instrument used to elicit experimental (simulated or realistic) speech-act data in a controlled condition is a prompt that asks participants to write a letter of application for a fictitious study scholarship offered by an institution of a host country. SPSS version 25 was used for the data analyses.

4. Analysis

This study follows Aristotle's framework of rhetorical strategies, in agreement with Alred (1997: 368) who maintains that "although the application, or working out, of ethos, logos, and pathos must be culturally specific, the notions themselves seem capable of moving across cultures". Insights from the other classifications and phraseology, namely, Connor & Lauer's (1985) and Johnstone's (1989) systems of analysis are also used. Initially the descriptive frequencies of the independent variables are presented followed by the frequencies of the dependent ones. Associations between the independent and the dependent variables are reported only when these are statistically significant. Where deemed necessary, the analysis incorporates qualitative comments and examples that support them. The dependent variables are discussed in two sections: a) the surface structure, and b) the deep structure of each persuasive appeal in terms of the illocutionary force communicated by the author and the perlocutionary effect this may have on English natives. The latter relates to the semantic level of the appeal while the former to its pragmatic force which may be hidden underneath. This second level of understanding was possible to reach due to the acquaintance of the two researchers with the members of the research sample. Examples from all types of the appeals used are offered in the analysis.

4.1 General observations

Participants started the application letter by referring to the reason for applying and without any self-presentation section or any other *conversational routines* (the term is from House, 1982, 2003). Applications of this sample confirm the basic characteristics of German rhetoric as these were found and discussed in the related literature (chapter 2.2 above); they did not lack coherence, or focus, paragraphs were well organized, and vocabulary was appropriate in all but a very few cases.

4.2 Descriptive statistics of the independent variables

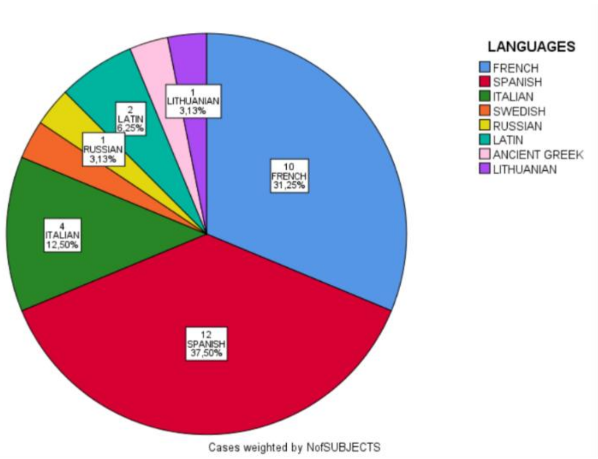
Gender-Languages spoken other than English. 15 (78,9%) female and 4 (21,1%) male subjects responded to a written call and wrote a letter of application for a scholarship in English. Table (1) below gives the exact percentages.

GENDER

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
MALE	4	21,1	21,1
FEMALE	15	78,9	100
Total	19	100	

Table 2. Distribution of gender

English was the main foreign language spoken by all the 19 subjects who participated in the study. Spanish (37,50%) came second in their preferences and French (31,25%) third. Italian (12,50%) also appeared in their selection as did Latin, Swedish, Russian, Ancient Greek and Lithuanian (Pie Chart 1).



Pie Chart 1. Other languages

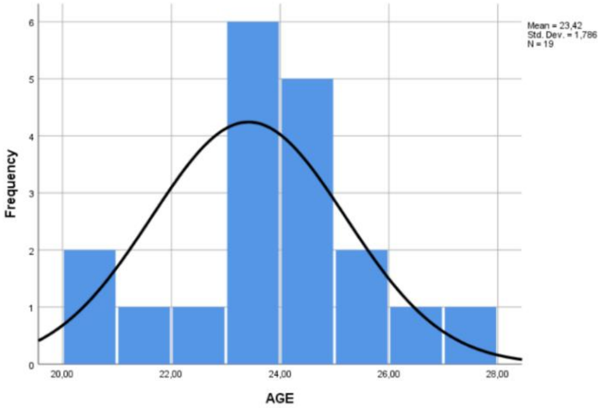
Area of study. Given the very small sample, the decision was made to merge, participants' *subjects of study* into two major areas, i.e. humanities 14 (73,7%) and engineering/business 5 (26,3%). Table 2 below reveals the distribution.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
HUMANITIES	14	73,7	73,7
ENGINEERING / BUSINESS	5	26,3	100
Total	19	100	

Table 2. Subject of study.

Cross tabulations pursued between *gender*, *area of study*, *language interest* (independent variables) and *type of argumentation* (dependent variable) in the application letters did not reveal any statistically significant associations.

Age. The *age* of the participants varied between 20 and 27 years (Mean=23,4) and standard deviation was recorded at s=1,7 (n. 19) which shows that dispersion of the *age* factor was small; data points were close to the mean. This can be verified in the following distribution line plot with bars (1).



Distribution Line Plot with Bars 1. Age of participants.

It confirms that most subjects were found to be between the s of 24 and 25. This element makes the sample very sound regarding the *age* variable, the educational level and background of the individuals involved in the study.

Experience in writing application letters in German

It was possible to separate the sample in this case into two groups of equal sixes, between those who had been taught how to write a letter of application in German and those who had not. One subject did not answer the question while only two of those participants had learnt how to write an application letter in English (Table 3).

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
NO	9	47,4	50	50
YES	9	47,4	50	100
Total	18	94,7	100	
Missing	1	5,3		
Total	19	100		

Table 3. Experience in writing a letter of application in German.

A point biserial statistical test did not reveal any significant correlations between the dichotomous nominal variable (*knowledge of writing an application letter in German*) and the dependent continuous scale proportional selection of tactic registered (*number of strategies employed by the subjects per category*). This indicates that in persuasiveness, at least, culture remains a strong influential element.

4.3 Descriptive statistics of the dependent variables (surface structures)

The following table (4) offers the descriptive statistics of all the dependent variables (collectively), i.e. the number of appeals used by the participants of the sample to promote themselves according to the Aristotelian division.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
LOGOS	19	3,0	8,0	5,2	1,6
PATHOS	19	,00	9,0	3,2	2,6
ETHOS	19	,00	9,0	2,5	2,5
Valid N	19				

Table 4. Descriptives of the strategies used.

It is revealed that, *logos* (logical) appeals are the most used tactic, by *all the subjects* (5,2%), as it appears more times in *all letters* with its appearance-rate ranging from a minimum of 3 to 8 times per letter. Pathos tactics follow (3,2%), however these are not employed by all subjects as they appear from 0 times to 9 in some letters. The same is found with ethos tactics (2,5%). It may be possible to claim that, in spite of *logos* coming clearly first in all of the subject's preference of persuasive tactic, *ethos* and *pathos* arguments are also included in their tactical approach. Below, data for each persuasive tactic are presented separately.

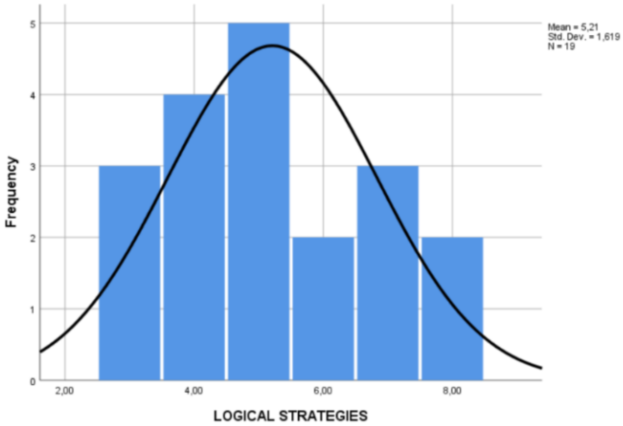
Logos.

Logos seems to be the dominant strategy in this sample. Below there are two examples denoting how this tactic was employed.

e.g.1. …hereby I would like to apply for a scholarship for the Fulbright Program to improve my English skills in an authentic setting.

e.g. 2. Since I am studying psychology being fluent in another language besides my mother tongue will provide me with the chance to work with people whose mother tongue is english besides with the german speaking folks.

In both cases above, the applicants are using *quasilogical argumentation* connecting the reason for applying with a matter of personal interest and professional development in an acceptable manner without using charged language and without violating any of Grice's maxims of politeness. The graph below presents the distribution of logos in the entire sample, in the form of a line plot with bars.



Distribution Line Plot with Bars 2. *Logos.*

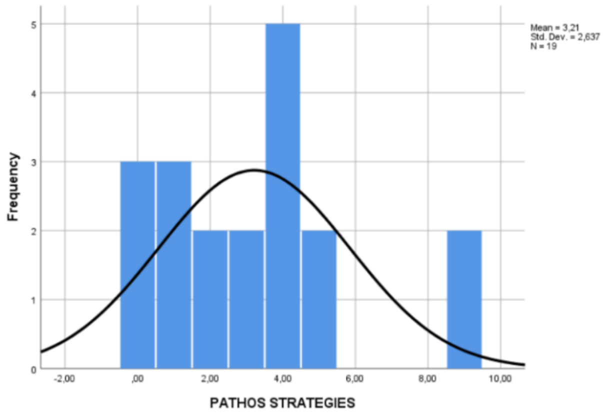
The bell curve Gaussian line plot with bars, shows the distribution of *logos* tactics in the sample. In most of these *logos* arguments, the award was related to their personal situation as in e.g. (2) above (further studies or professional development) or secondly to improve their linguistic skills, as in e.g. (1) above (their knowledge of English language and culture). It is evident that all subjects included this type of argumentation in their letters with the majority being on the left side of the curve (subjects who used it between 3 and 5 times) while 7 subjects used it 6 or more times. No subject used it less than three times.

Pathos.

Pathos emotional appeals seem to come second as a preferred tactic of this sample with a slight difference from the *ethos* strategies which is presented below. Three representative examples of pathos appeals are the following.

e.g. 3. Living and studying in the USA is one of my big dreams and with this scholarship, it could become real.
e.g. 4. My financial situation would never allow me to make an experience like this on my own and I really would like to participate in this famous program above all I love the United States since I have been there a few times in the past for holidays.
e.g. 5. Living and studying in the USA is one of my big dreams and with this scholarship, it could become real.

In these examples the applicants seem to attempt to evoke the reviewer's emotions using charged language (illocutionary act) with exaggerated or complementary expressions (*my dreams…. could become real*, *this famous program*, *I love the United States*) or by making a direct reference to their financial status (*my financial situation would never allow me to…)*. Direct sentences produce a certain perlocutionary effect on the reviewer and allow him/her to recognise the intentions of the applicant (Searle, 1975). However, in doing so, the applicants violate Grice's maxims of politeness as they do not leave any options open for the recipient. In a similar study (James, Scholfield & Ypsilandis, 1992), native speakers of English considered expressions of this type unsuitable for use in a situation such as this, as it is claimed they create a degree of emotional blackmail on the reviewer. In this light, the perlocutionary effect was different than the attempted illocutionary act.



Distribution Line Plot with Bars 3. *Pathos*.

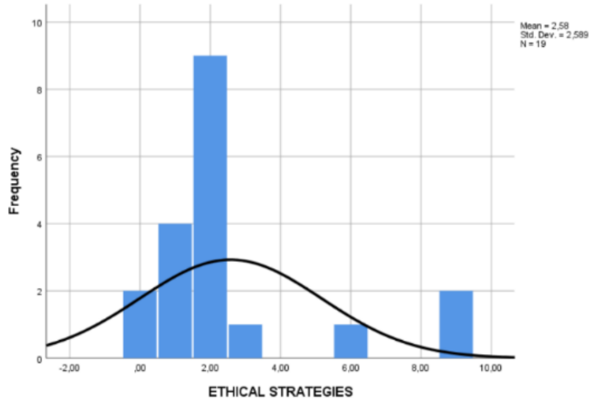
In contrast to the widely spread distribution of *logos* strategies in this sample, the spread of *pathos* emotional appeals concentrates from 0 use to 5 times per letter. This strategy was not used at all by 3 participants while another 3 used it only once in their letters. 4 participants used it 5 times and another 2 included in their tactical spectrum 9 times. The rather extensive use of this strategy was not expected as it had not been discussed at all in the relevant literature (Alred, 1997, Bell, Dillon & Becker, 1995) and may thus not be considered as a typical German strategic choice.

Ethos.

Ethos tactics are third in line of the rhetorical spectrum with a very small difference behind *pathos*. The examples below illustrate how these were used.

e.g. 6. While in high school, I worked extensively with my local Habitat for Humanity branch to help build homes for low income families.
e.g. 7. To be prepared for some of the different tasks during my stay abroad, I am attending a refreshing English course and I also have taken part in an intercultural training at my University.

In example 6 the applicant is trying to construct an ethical identity of him/herself, declaring his/her participation in *humanitarian home building for those in need* to receive a favourable, perlocutionary effect, reaction from the recipient and gain ground over other applicants. Another ethos example used by the applicants is a statement showing that they are trying to get *prepared* for the scholarship before it is even decided (not giving the reviewer options). These face-enhancing and identity constructing illocutionary efforts may violate the maxim of quantity as a perlocutionary effect (avoid redundancy, be as informative as you can but not more than that). The distribution line plot (4) below presents the spread of ethos strategies in the sample.



Distribution Line Plot with Bars 4. Ethos.

It is clear that, *ethos* appeals concentrate at a lower frequency level than those of *pathos*. Two applicants included ethical appeals 9 times in their letters, a high proportion by a very small number of participants. The other participants did not use this type of strategy widely. One participant used it four times and another one used it 9 times. Two participants did not include it in their letter at all. This distribution may support a hypothesis of an individual versus a cultural impact in rhetorical preferences, a hypothesis which is further investigated below.

<u>Correlations among the first three dependent variables</u>.

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the number of appearances of the three strategies in each letter for each applicant respectively and investigate statistically significant differences among the dependent variables (the strategies).

Logos Strategies – Pathos Strategies	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	2,0	3,1	2,7	18	,013
Logos Strategies – Ethos Strategies	2,6	3,0	3,8	18	,001

Paired Samples T test.

A) A statistically significant difference in the scores for *logos* (*M*=5,2, *SD*=1,6) and *pathos* (M=3,2, SD=2,6) strategies is recorded; N=19, t(18)=2,7, p=0,013 (level of significance). It is evident that the null hypothesis is rejected. The rejection of this H_0 indicates that those subjects who used predominantly *logos* tactics did not use *pathos* strategies as well.

B) Another statistically significant difference in the scores for *logos* (*M*= 5,2, *SD*= 1,6) and *ethos* (M= 2,5, SD= 2,5) strategies is also recorded; N=19, t(18)=3,8, p=0,001 (level of significance). The null hypothesis is rejected in this case as well. The rejection of this H_0 indicates that those subjects who used *logos* strategies did not use *ethos* tactics as well.

A Pearson bivariate test was employed to examine possible correlations among the three dependent variables (the strategies) to locate possible relations that could further enrich our understanding of German rhetoric.

	N	Sig. (2-tailed)	Pearson Correlation
Pathos and Ethos Strategies	19	,035	,486*

Pearson Bivariate Correlation Test.

A Pearson bivariate test between the first three dependent variables revealed a statistically significant moderate correlation (r= .486) between the pathos and the ethos persuasive appeals at p= 0,035, l level, N=19 (2 tailed) of significance. This shows that those subjects who employed *pathos* tactics also employed *ethos* appeals as well, which may support a hypothesis that persuasive tactical selection may be a matter of personality and not nationality only. The analysis below which looks at the pragmatic level of the data (with the assistance of the two researchers who were well acquainted of all the subjects involved, may clarify this issue further).

Descriptive statistics of deep structure persuasive tactics pragmatics.

In order to understand better, the quality and deep (pragmatic) value of the persuasive tactics used by the applicants, two of the researches re-examined the registered strategies with insights from their knowledge of the participants in this sample. It appears that the *pathos* and *ethos* argumentation used by the applicants co-occur with *logos* appeals on certain occasions, despite their overall statistically low practice by the applicants. Ilie (2004) refers to these rhetorical appeals - transcending binary categorization - as 'pathos-oriented logos'. The term she suggests arises from the role and function of these type of appeals in political discourse in general and parliamentary debates in particular. Moreover, *ethos* tactics were also co-occurring with *pathos* appeals ('pathos-oriented ethos'). The following table offers the percentage of appearance (means) of these appeals in the sample: a) *pathos*-oriented *logos* (,73%), b) *ethos*-oriented *logos* (1,4%), and c) *pathos*-oriented *ethos* (,57%).

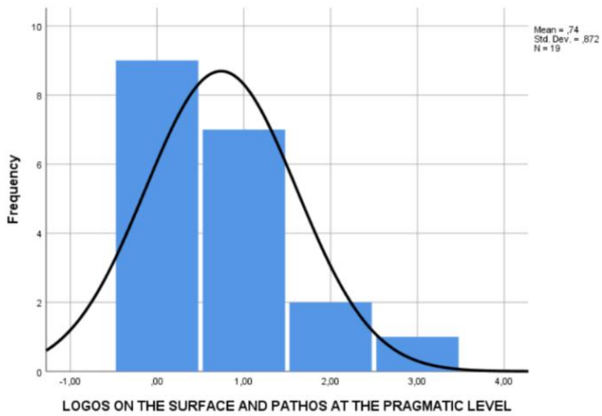
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Logos on the surface and Pathos at the pragmatic level	19	,73	,87
Logos on the surface and Ethos at the pragmatic level	19	1,4	1,67
Ethos on the surface and Pathos at the pragmatic level	19	,57	1,21

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of deep rhetorical types.

Ethos and *pathos* orientated *logos* strategies co-occur in the sample. Following, two examples of each case are presented.

e.g. 7. Almost five years later I am still convinced that it was the right decision and during my studies at the University of Hildesheim I learned a lot about pedagogy, social contexts, gender studies, but also about myself.
e.g. 8. That is why I am applying for such a travel scholarship, which would guarantee me a stay in the USA, mainly through financial aid.

The German judges have decided that in example (7) the applicant attempted to construct a positive image (identity construction) for himself in order to receive a favourable consideration by the reviewers. In this light, while the strategy may look, on the surface, to be a logical appeal, after careful consideration they decided that it should be understood as a *pathos* identity construction attempt involving life experiences, an emotional stamp of the applicant. In example (8) another applicant starts his sentence again with a logical argumentation and adds the need of *financial aid* at the very end of the sentence, in a gentle manner, but as a condition for his staying in the country. This is an indirect strategy for claims of financial aid where the applicant does not refer to the subject in a direct and transparent manner but connects it to the scholarship award obliquely. The speaker means what he says but there is an illocutionary act at work further to the obvious one (Searle, 1975). Claims of financial aid were recorded also in previous studies (in more direct ways) employed by Greeks and Iranians (James, Scholfield & Ypsilandis, 1992, 1994; Farnia, Ypsilandis & Ghasempour, 2019). The graph below shows in more detail the distribution of these types of strategies in the sample (Distribution Line Plot with Bars 5).

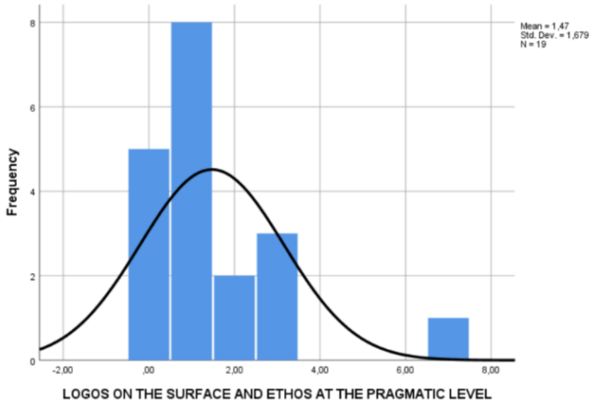


Distribution Line Plot with Bars 5.

Despite the low frequencies of *pathos*-oriented *logos* argumentation appeals, 10 subjects used this form of appeal from one to three times in their letters (in a decreasing development), 9 subjects totally avoided this strategy. This finding may indicate that this strategy is not typical of German rhetoric and comes to support the previously stated hypothesis of rhetorical choices may be also a matter of personality and not only nationality. A similar occurrence is revealed for *ethos* argumentation. The following examples illustrate the claim.

e.g. 9. While my emphasis was heavily laying on the historical part of my studies which was influenced by my work for different museums and my jobs … at the history department of my university
e.g. 10. Besides my studies, I'm working as an intern at the retail company Aldi Süd, where I'm installing in different departments and I'm getting the opportunity to fulfill responsible tasks

In both examples above, the applicants attempt to increase credibility, construct an identity and promote their character by making a detailed reference to their professional development and skills which may seem logical on the surface structure (the illocutionary act). However, a closer look by the two German judges, revealed that this is a recital of the applicants’ qualifications which also violates Gricean maxim of redundancy with information that would be expected to appear in a cv, in a more neutral manner with facts and figures. A similar approach, in a previous study, was judged as egocentric by native speakers of English (James, Scholfield & Ypsilandis, 1992). The following Distribution Line Plot with Bars offers the spread of this cluster schematically.



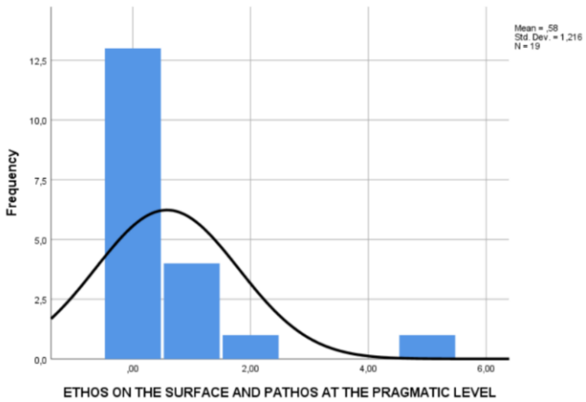
Distribution Line Plot with Bars 6

Ethos-oriented *logos* appeals are found to be used even more times (1,4%) than *pathos* in this sample, and by more subjects: a) eight subjects used this form of appeal once, b) two subjects used it twice, c) three subjects used it three times, and d) one subject used it seven times. Notice however, that 5 applicants did not incorporate at all this strategy in their letters.

Finally, *ethos*-oriented *pathos* appeals were also used in the letters. Examples 12 and 13 clarify the claim.

e.g. 12. I believe firmly in their mission to build “a world where everyone has a decent place to live.”
e.g. 13. While recapping on my time there I realized that I never really felt the classic „Culture Shock“ that many of my friends had told me about so again I challenged myself to go somewhere else, somewhere that is completely different from what I’ve known so far.

In example 12 the applicant is trying to establish a connection with the reviewer, sharing noble values and beliefs while in example 13 another one presents himself as an easily adaptable person with an international culture. While these may be understood as ethical strategies to increase credibility, the judges valued it as being *pathos* attempts to gain the favour of the reviewer. The Distribution Line Plot with Bars 7 shows the dispersion.



Distribution Line Plot with Bars 7

It becomes evident from the dispersion that there are only very few occurrences of this example; four subjects using it once and another two using it two and five times respectively. The low occurrence may not support an illustration of a German cultural rhetorical feature but rather an individual characteristic of the applicant. This finding again supports the hypothesis of individualism in rhetorical preferences.

Correlations between the dependent variables at the semantic and pragmatic level.

Finally, a correlation coefficient test was performed to examine statistically significant associations between the dependent variables under this understanding.

	N	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pathos strategies – Ethos on the surface and Pathos at the pragmatic level.	19	,687	,001

Table 6. Statistically significant correlation between the two tested dependent variables.

The above claim of this form of tactical appeal being a personality matter is confirmed by the a close ($r= .687$, $N=19$) statistically significant correlation ($p= < .001$ level) between those who have used *pathos* strategies and those who used *pathos* appeals hidden under an *ethos* argumentation.

5. Discussion

The hypothesis that predicted extensive use of logical appeals by German subjects in this sample has been supported partially by the evidence, as logos persuasion proved to be the dominant strategy. It appeared in all letters and it was used by all applicants, despite the fact that the subjects of this sample employed rhetorical tactics from the full range of the Aristotelian variety. This finding meets the characteristics of orderliness, formality, display of good manners and directness without, however, there being complicated sentences and unusual word order, perhaps due to the high level of English of the participants. In this respect, German rhetoric is distinct from other studies that explored the same variable in other cultures, in that logos appeals best suit the representation of the German rhetorical tactic of this sample, and this may relate to *the image Americans hold about the Germans being stern* (Alfred 1997). Pathos and ethos argumentations are used much less and by a small number of subjects in this sample which may indicate that they are not very welcome in this educational tribe, however they are not totally lacking. Most strategies used by the applicants fitted into the trichotomous division suggested by Aristotle however there were cases that did not fall into the framework proposed by the Greek Macedonian philosopher. This element transcending the trichotomous polarization would need to be explored further. On the one hand, as stated in the bibliography (Alred, 1997; Bell, Dillon & Becker, 1995; House, 2006), letters were coherent and well-structured without any self-presentation sections, or any other *conversational routines* and use of *phatic moves*, features which appeared extensively in academic female Saudi talk (Al Abbad, Al Mansur &

Ypsilandis, 2019). However, significant similarities with previous studies did arise and are discussed below. A few examples of this spectrum are:

a) Reference to the applicants' personal financial situation and the use of charged language was made, as was also witnessed with Greek and Iranian writing for the same purpose.
b) A marked attempt by the applicants to find common ground and relate themselves to their reviewers probably to gain their favour.
c) The use of direct and indirect strategies, co-occurring with logical argumentation. Attempt revealing a more global approach of student international tribe to gain preference.

What is not found in this sample is:

a) The strong element of patriotism, the love of the country as was witnessed in Saudi Arabic letters (Al Abbad, Al Mansur, & Ypsilandis, 2019).
b) The direct egocentric claims or analogical persuasion witnessed in application letters written by Greeks (James, Scholfield & Ypsilandis, 1992).
c) The religious element which appeared in Iranian and Saudi applications (Al Abbad, Al Mansur, & Ypsilandis, 2019; Farnia, Ypsilandis, & Ghasempour, 2019).

A few more findings however, have also been noted, such as: a) a smaller percentage of tactical selections attributed to individual choices rather than resulting from a cultural root, b) use of a variety of strategies rather than a predisposition to the use of one strategic type, c) a small number of co-occurring rhetorical strategies of ethos and pathos oriented logos, not fitting into the trichotomous categorization. The study has also verified an issue of global interest in that, international tribes (students being one of them) exist and share common global rhetorical characteristics in the use of this speech act on top of those marking their cultural origin.

The independent variables tested for association with the dependent variables were not statistically significant. Age, gender, subject of study, or knowledge of how to write application letters of this type did not seem to provide significant change in rhetorical attitude which seems to remain strongly related to the element of culture and not training of application writing. Finally, the L1 of the individuals remains a significant factor of influence as "subjects are guided by their first language pragmatics" (James, Scholfield & Ypsilandis, 1994: 331).

6. Conclusions

This study has confirmed experimentally earlier suggestions and claims on the topic. Culture remains a significant factor influencing strategic choice in rhetoric, and logical argumentation is a characteristic of this sample. *Pathos* and *ethos* tactics recorded reveal a strong personality factor of discourse that often remains neglected by researchers. Personality factors and identity construction efforts need to be further examined, in future studies, as do independent variables to investigate their deployment. Similarities with applicants of the same international tribe, students from other cultures, have also occurred showing that rhetoric has an international dynamic (it is being enriched along time), probably due to more extensive and increased communication among nations. Internationally accepted persuasive tactics (such as *logos*), as these appear in many cultures have low probability to contribute to pragmatic pitfalls. *Ethos* and *pathos* strategies would need to be used with caution (or be avoided) in application letters of this type as these may create a negative climate on the rapport between the applicant and the English reviewer (an unsuitable perlocutionary effect for the occasion), when they are not carefully phrased and included. It should be noted that *ethical propositions* are perhaps intended, solely or partly, to evince emotion or to prescribe conduct or to influence it in special ways (Austin, 1975). Thereon, strategies containing a strong *pathos* or *ethos* illocutionary force by applicants would need to be carefully examined in relation to the recipient audience.

Furthermore, there are some practical and social implications from this work: a) on the *practical side,* the need for rhetorical education arises as an add on to the language learning syllabus (both for L1 and L2) for all learners, which may not change rhetorical preference but would contribute to a better understanding between cultures and avoidance of pragmatic pitfalls (both productive and receptive, Thomas, 1983) b) on the *social side*, implications relate to the process maintained for scholarships, which needs to be organized with carefully selected specific criteria, disclosed to the applicants, irrespective of self-presentation tactics in cover letters. These criteria would have to be described in great detail in order for applicants to be made aware of what is required from them, and so protect them from committing linguistic pitfalls which may result in them losing a scholarship. In this light, selection procedures will be more objective, and the candidates finally selected for the job more suitable.

Among the shortcomings of this study are the low numbers of participants (low external validity of study) and the concentration on one specific group (students). Although rhetorical choices of this sample may not apply to the wider spectrum of the society (German population), they are indicative of the rhetorical tactics of the group investigated.

Research of this type may also contribute, as a strong element, to global communication and understanding, so moving away from societal polarizations. We concur with Hautli-Janisz & El-Assady (2017:172) in that "investigating rhetorical structuring on a larger scale will, therefore, have benefits for argumentation mining as well as discourse processing in general" and we conclude with a remark from Alred (1997: 353) stating that "understanding the rhetoric of culture is an important step in accepting and negotiating cultural differences". We submitted data from this study to help increase knowledge in this direction.

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PROMOTING COUNTER-STEREOTYPICAL PRODUCTS ON INSTAGRAM: THE CASE OF COSMETIC PRODUCTS TARGETED TO MALE CONSUMERS

Gelu Olivian Tudose[1]

Abstract: *The advertisements promoting cosmetics to men elicited the attention of researchers, who looked at the strategies used to market these products, traditionally targeted to women. This study contributes to the emerging literature on the topic by examining such portrayals on Instagram. Specifically, 298 posts from three global brands were analyzed in terms of their depictions of products and actors. Results indicate the overall absence of women actors and an emphasis on the personal life of men.*

Keywords: *counter-stereotypical products; nontraditional gender portrayals; cosmetics; Instagram; masculinity; binary thinking; social networks; content analysis; gender identity; gender stereotypes*

Introduction

Cosmetic products are not usually associated with men. However, it became more common to see brands also targeting them to male consumers lately. This shift could be partly attributed to the new identities depicted in the media (Buchbinder 7). Cosmetics for men can be considered counter-stereotypical products because they are "targeting a group that is opposite to the typical user group associated with the product" (Gill and Lei 496). This paper examines the posts used to promote them on Instagram. With over one billion monthly active users as of 2018 (Instagram), this social network is increasingly popular and thus the practices of brands on the platform are worthwhile studying. The prominence of visual content is an important trait for this product category, allowing brands to highlight the benefits of the products.

This study builds up on the recent literature that investigated the messages promoting cosmetic products to male consumers (Coupland; Del Saz-Rubio; Harrison; Scheibling and Lafrance). In doing so, it draws on research interested in self-presentation and gender on Instagram (Baker and Walsh; Carah and Shaul; Reichart Smith and Sanderson). The concepts of counter-stereotypical products (Gill and Lei) and gender cues (Sandhu) are used to shed some light on the relation between the nature of the products and the depictions proposed in posts related to them.

The messages used to promote cosmetics for men were previously analyzed in the context of print advertising (Coupland; Scheibling and Lafrance), television commercials (Del Saz-Rubio), and websites (Harrison). However, to the knowledge of the author of this paper, there are no studies particularly interested in the messages used to promote these products on Instagram. In this case, the decisions regarding the portrayals of the actors could be influenced

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by features of the platform. It has been argued that normative gender portrayals could become more visible based on how algorithms evaluate the attention they receive (Carah and Shaul). It was also suggested that the perceived originality of the content of brands could play an important role for the consumers (Casaló et al.). By analyzing how brands promote cosmetic products on Instagram, the study aims to address this gap in the academic literature.

Background

Previous studies interested in the manner in which cosmetics for men are promoted returned relatively consistent findings. An earlier analysis of magazine advertising conducted by Coupland included advertisements of products targeted both to women and men. She noted that the advertisements targeted to male consumers adapted discursive strategies used in texts targeted to women. For instance, it was discussed the use of stereotypes related to masculinity, specific lexical choices, or the objectification of the male body. The author observed an evolution in the recent advertisements, in that they adopted a more serious perspective on the issues related to skin care. In another study of a website selling cosmetics to men, Harrison discussed about "a dialectic that encourages men to be consumers of feminine-style products while also allowing them to maintain the qualities that have traditionally been gendered as masculine" (192). The analysis also indicated the use of attributes associated with masculinity to identify the products as masculine, the objectification of the male body in an attempt to make the consumers more careful of how they look, and an emphasis on aspects related to health.

More recently, Del Saz-Rubio analyzed television commercials of prominent global brands. According to the author, the commercials constructed differences in how men and women used the products, linked the products to seduction abilities, portrayed actors in stereotypical activities such as sports, or focused on men's creative abilities. Scheibling and Lafrance analyzed print advertising from *Esquire* magazine and described how the advertisements emphasized that using the products can serve as a means to control one's own body, to obtain a competitive advantage over other men, or to engage in heterosexual relationships. Depictions that focused on balancing the family and working roles or a nostalgia for past roles of men were also discussed.

The studies reviewed here pointed either to "conflicting discourses" (Coupland 57), "contradictory types of masculinity" (Harrison 192), "hybrid and flexible masculinities" (Scheibling and Lafrance 234), the dialectic (Harrison 192), or the paradox (Del Saz-Rubio 216) that characterizes the consumption practices of these products. Their results reiterate the centrality of a normative or a dominant masculinity. This model is usually related to heterosexuality and it could be associated with traits such as activeness or aggressiveness (Rovența-Frumușani, *Concepts fondamentaux* 50). The studies usually discussed these portrayals in the context of hegemonic masculinity (Connell).

Similarly, studies on self-presentation on Instagram noted the prevalence of normative gender portrayals. In their analysis on the use of brand-related hashtags, Carah and Shaul argued that users could rely on gender norms in order to generate attention, and in turn, the platform presumably renders more visible such depictions based on the attention they receive. The authors suggested that this may reduce the possibilities of self-presentation for users if they seek to generate attention. In another study, Baker and Walsh analyzed top posts related to clean eating. They identified manifestations of gender stereotypes and hegemonic masculinity (Connell), also concluding that: “Despite the common assumption that social media allows for more fluid presentations of gender, top posts conformed to hegemonic conceptions of gender” (Baker and Walsh 4567). However, the analysis of Reichart Smith and Sanderson of the content posted by athletes on Instagram returned mixed results regarding the gendered portrayals. The authors found both representations that adopted and contradicted gender stereotypes. For instance, contrary to previous studies, they noted the depictions of women in active poses.

Based on the above mentioned literature, it can be expected the posts of brands that promote cosmetics for male consumers to reproduce normative gender portrayals. Thus, the following research questions are addressed in this study:

RQ1: How are promoted the cosmetic products targeted to male consumers on the dedicated Instagram profiles of the brands?

RQ2: How are constructed the identities of the male actors on the Instagram profiles that promote cosmetic products targeted to male consumers?

Method

This study uses the content analysis, which was defined as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff 24). It was considered particularly suitable and widely used for studying gender roles in various media (Neuendorf 292). The posts that were analyzed are from the profiles targeted to male consumers of three well-known global brands: L’Oréal, Nivea, and Dove (see table 1). The brands were selected from the top of the most valuable cosmetics brands in 2019 realized by Brand Finance (12). According to this ranking, L’Oréal was considered to be the third, Nivea was the sixth, and Dove was the thirteenth.

Table 1
The Instagram Profiles Selected for the Analysis

Brand	Country	Instagram profile
L’Oréal	France	L’Oréal MEN EXPERT Official (@lorealmen)
Nivea	Germany	NIVEA Men (@niveamenusa)
Dove	United Kingdom	Dove Men+Care Global Channel (@dovemencare)

The main criteria that guided the selection of these brands are as follows. First, the brands had to be associated with counter-stereotypical products, as defined by Gill and Lei (496). In this case, examples may include moisturizers, masks, and cleansers, products that are usually associated with female consumers. Second, the brands had to use a dedicated Instagram profile to promote products targeted to male consumers. These products are usually labeled using suffixes, such as “for Men” or “Men” (Coupland 57). Third, although the frequency of posting may vary, the profiles had to contain a reasonable number of posts to be analyzed. Fourth, the global profiles were preferred, when available, mainly for reasons of comparability. An exception was Nivea, where a global profile was not found. In this case, the profile targeted to the consumers from the United States was selected. Lastly, all profiles had to contain a verified badge that indicates the fact that they are official. The corpus of the analysis consists of 298 posts from the three profiles. The most recent one hundred posts from each profile were analyzed, excepting the profile of Nivea Men, that contained only 98 posts when the analysis was conducted (July 2019).

Given the nature of the content to be analyzed, a coding scheme was developed departing from studies that addressed the gender in the context of Instagram self-presentation (Baker and Walsh), television commercials (Knoll et al.), and print advertising (Odekerken-Schröder et al.). For each post, the following data were coded: the type of post, the type of products depicted, and the gender of the actors. The type of post refers to one of the three options available at the moment on Instagram: photo, video, or a gallery where multiple photos and videos can be added. For the type of products, it was coded if the posts depicted traditional products, counter-stereotypical products, both, or there was no product depicted. Two considerations should be made regarding this variable. First, some traditional products may propose cosmetic benefits. Still, they were considered traditional products in this study. Second, although products for beard care are an emergent category, often associated with certain subcultures, these products were not considered counter-stereotypical products, as they are already associated with the male consumers. Regarding the gender of the actors, it was coded if the posts included only male actors, female actors, both, or none.

Coding was also conducted at the level of the actors. After excluding the posts that did not contain adult human actors (adapting the procedures described by Knoll et al.), the following variables were considered: the gender of the main actor, the age of the main actor, and the context in which the actor was presented. The gender of the main actor was coded as male or female. The age of the main actor was evaluated as 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, over 50, or not distinguishable. Finally, the context was described as: private, if the actor was depicted in a personal setting; family, if the actor was accompanied by other family members; public, if it was characterized by a social or professional orientation; or not specified, if it could not be determined or in the case of an abstract setting.

The coding procedures were designed to be applied on all posts. Previous studies differ in terms of the type of posts that were selected, either by analyzing only images (Carah and Shaul; Reichart Smith and Sanderson) or also including videos (Baker and Walsh). However, as it can be argued that videos and galleries constitute an integral part of the contemporary consumers' experience on Instagram, they were included in the analysis.

Results

RQ1 asked how the cosmetic products targeted to male consumers are promoted on Instagram. The analysis at the level of posts (see table 2) indicated that, as expected, these products were mainly promoted through photos, but the videos and the galleries were also used to some extent. It was observed that the traditional and the counter-stereotypical products were often depicted separately, with a relatively small number of posts presenting them together. More than a quarter of the posts from each brand did not depict any product, focusing instead on other elements. In the posts of Dove Men+Care, the products were almost absent, as more than three quarters of the posts did not display any. It must be noted that the products were coded only if they appeared in photos or videos and that the mentions in the captions were not counted. Regarding the actors promoting the products, it can be observed the overall absence of women in the posts. In the entire sample, there was only one post that depicted a woman alone. Very few posts included both male and female actors, excepting the posts of Dove Men+Care, where this proportion was about one third.

RQ2 focused on the depictions of the male actors, which were found to be the main actors in all posts, excepting one (see table 3). It should be noted that the main actor was defined not only in terms of prominence in the posts, but also as the actor whose perspective was favored, in order to have a better understanding of the intended recipients of the messages. The most represented age groups were 30-39 and 20-29, followed by 40-49, as evaluated by the author. The age group of over 50 was almost absent in the posts that were analyzed. Regarding the context in which the actors were presented, excepting the case of L'Oréal Men Expert, the posts from the other two profiles depicted more actors in contexts related to the personal life, either in private contexts or in family contexts.

Table 2
Description of Posts from the Three Profiles

	L'Oréal Men Expert	Nivea Men	Dove Men+Care	Total	
Variable	n = 100	n = 98	n = 100	n = 298	%
Type of post					
Photo	79	84	68	231	77.5
Video	14	10	19	43	14.4
Gallery	7	4	13	24	8.1
Type of products					
Traditional products	16	32	17	65	21.8
Counter-stereotypical products	47	28	3	78	26.2
Both	8	13	2	23	7.7
No product depicted	29	25	78	132	44.3
Gender of actors					
Male actors	48	35	33	116	38.9
Female actors	0	0	1	1	.3
Both	5	1	33	39	13.1
No actor depicted	47	62	33	142	47.7

Table 3

Description of the Main Actors in Posts from the Three Profiles[a]

Variable	L'Oréal Men Expert n = 53	Nivea Men n = 35	Dove Men+Care n = 66	Total n = 154	%
Gender					
Male	53	35	65	153	99.4
Female	0	0	1	1	.6
Age					
20-29	30	16	2	48	31.4
30-39	0	8	42	50	32.7
40-49	22	0	5	27	17.6
50+	0	0	5	5	3.3
Not distinguishable	1	11	11	23	15.0
Context					
Private	3	19	2	24	15.7
Family	0	1	48	49	32.0
Public	32	8	12	52	34.0
Not specified	18	7	3	28	18.3

a. The values corresponding to age and context are for the male actors

Discussion

The analysis indicated that the posts adopted different formats available on the platform, presented traditional and counter-stereotypical products often separately or focused instead on everyday life experiences, and featured mostly male actors. This last finding is in line with those of Scheibling and Lafrance, who reported that among the advertisements they analyzed, more than half portrayed only male actors and almost a fifth did not include human actors (228). An explanation could be the use of gender cues to convey the gender of the products (Sandhu 300). In other words, if male actors are mostly depicted, the products could be perceived as more masculine. This could help in dealing with the various barriers specific to the adoption of counter-stereotypical products (Gill and Lei).

Most of the actors depicted were in their twenties and thirties, indicating that these groups are assumed to be more willing to use the products. It was observed that more posts depicted actors in contexts related to the personal life. This finding is in line with the results of Reichart Smith and Sanderson, who observed that the posts of athletes that were analyzed also tended to focus on their personal life (355). Although this could be partly attributed to the products that are usually consumed privately, it is also surprising given that previous studies noted the visibility of actors in roles such as sportsmen (e.g., Coupland; Del Saz-Rubio).

The posts depicting private settings were often associated with the use of the products or everyday life experiences and were mostly found on the profile of Nivea Men. Interestingly, some of these posts portrayed actors in nontraditional activities. For instance, a post of NIVEA Men portrayed a young man doing dishes and framed domestic chores as rather unpleasant activities, relating them to the adult life. This message is not uncharacteristic of the posts analyzed from the same profile. In a way, the brand seems to assume the responsibility of teaching consumers how to be adults, also given that most of the actors featured were in their twenties and sometimes thirties.

When the actors were depicted in family contexts, male and female actors were portrayed more frequently together. These depictions were almost exclusively found among the posts of Dove Men+Care, which included more mature actors and a lower proportion of counter-stereotypical products. In a post of Dove Men+Care Global Channel, a nuclear family is visually presented, while the verbal messages focus on the importance of the time spent with children and advocate for paternity leave. These were both recurrent themes in the posts of this brand that were analyzed. The use of themes related to family and work was previously observed by Scheibling and Lafrance and this could be related to concerns of balancing multiple roles in the context of emerging technologies in contemporary societies (e.g., Rovența-Frumușani, "Les nouvelles technologies").

As for the public settings, sportsmen, professionals, or celebrities were observed, sometimes instantiating hegemonic masculinity (Connell), as discussed in previous studies (Coupland; Del Saz-Rubio; Scheibling and Lafrance). Although featured by all brands, public settings were more visible in the case of L'Oréal Men Expert, where many posts were characterized by a laboratory setting with the actors being shown while testing the products. Arguably, these messages perform an ideological function of science, that is, they draw on discourses valorized in contemporary societies (Buchbinder 37-38). For example, in a post of L'Oréal MEN EXPERT Official, it is stated: "Getting a clean face is pure science." The statement is followed by details about the product, accompanied by laboratory imagery. An emphasis on rationality (Harrison) was also observed in the posts of the other brands presenting various statistics. Previous studies discussed the use of scientific arguments in the promotion of cosmetic products, targeted both to women (Coupland) and men (Harrison). However, a difference from other messages targeted to women, "which appear to expect women to be in thrall to scientific expertise" (Coupland 52), is that the posts revolving around a laboratory setting often adopted a more humorous, playful tone.

Conclusions

This study examined the messages used to promote cosmetics to male consumers on Instagram. It was argued that the overall absence of women in the posts could be interpreted as instances of gender cues (Sandhu), used to create new associations between the products and the consumers. The portrayal of actors across different contexts was discussed, and some patterns such as addressing young adult and family-related issues or the use of scientific arguments were described. A limitation of the study is that it primarily adopted a quantitative approach and it was descriptive in nature. Future research could address the discursive strategies used to promote cosmetics for men on social networks. It could also investigate the perspectives of consumers to see how do they relate to the messages proposed by brands, particularly if such messages are appropriated or subverted. A potential direction could be to investigate the use of hashtags, as they are able to convey meaningful information about the ideologies underlying the representations of the body (Gurrieri and Drenten 101). Although the depictions analyzed in previous studies were criticized for reproducing inequalities (e.g., Del Saz-Rubio 216; Scheibling and Lafrance 236), it can be also argued that the increasing associations of male consumers with these products could contribute to challenge the binary thinking inherent to this product category.

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IDENTITY INTERACTION ON SOCIAL NETWORKS : THE CASE OF YOUNG FRENCH PEOPLE OF TURKISH ORIGIN

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Abstract: *Our proposal relates to the axis asking whether there is empirical evidence that there is a greater tendency to want to communicate with known people in online interactions. We will answer this question by integrating it into an identity issue, as it has been addressed in recent years. Our work thus proposes two main components. The first is based on a theoretical approach to "social networks", "digital identity" and "young people". The second part sets the guidelines for our empirical work on the use of social networks by young Turks living in France.*

Keywords: *identity; digital; immigrants; social networks; young Turkish immigrants; France; Turkey; digital identity; immigration in France.*

Introduction

In France, Turkish immigration differs from all others by its cultural differences, its late start and the absence of historical links with Turkey. Today, more than seven hundred thousand Turks live in the French metropolis. The high rate of young Turkish immigrants imposes certain questions such as the integration of this new generation within Turkish society, but also the place of Social Networks in the identity claim of these young people. The problem of this research is to define the links between the identity claim of young people of Turkish origin and the use of new digital channels.

In the first part, we call for work that takes a critical look at the concepts identified and that questions the principles established, sometimes questioning them, even updating them and completing their definitions.

The second part is based on an observational approach. After having determined the specific characteristics of Turkish immigration in France, our approach is to observe the identity particularities of young French people of Turkish origin expressed on Social Networks because they do not feel represented in the public and media space. The question is whether there is empirical evidence showing that there is a greater tendency to want to communicate with known people during online interactions.

What work in Social and Human Sciences?

Digital Identity

The concept of identity depends on so many disciplinary and methodological approaches that it is understandable that it is only partially appropriate to satisfy the entire

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scientific community. In their paper, R. Brubaker and F. Junqua take a critical look at research on the concept of identity. In particular, it is distinguished by two questions: the first asks how researchers understand "identity", and the second questions the need for a term that is "so heavily loaded, so deeply ambiguous"[3]. They point out the semantic imbroglio of which identity is the object because the concept suffers from both overload and semantic insufficiency, since it contains "every type of affinity and affiliation, every form of belonging, every sense of community, link or cohesion, every form of self-understanding and self-identification", which finally no longer allow us to clearly distinguish its contours. The authors highlight the excessively wide range of its definition and conclude that the concept cannot easily lend itself to "social analysis" (ibid.). Finally, the authors consider the term to be unnecessary and propose more precise and specific terms that satisfy the context to which "identity" is attached.

For this reason, declaring identity in the "plural" makes it possible to establish precautionary principles that more satisfactorily reflect the results of research conducted on the subject. We can thus "consider it as a set of representations and practices that circulate in social groups and that allow one or more forms of identification"[4], a definition that seems to us to be better adapted to the semantic mutations that identity undergoes. Indeed, identity takes on an even greater thickness when it is addressed in the context of social networks. The plurality of identity, in cultural, confessional or other terms that constitute the social reality in which the individual lives, is juxtaposed with that created by the same individual in a virtual world that by definition allows much greater freedom of expression and representation. The question thus consists in knowing what are the extensions of identity within the strict framework of social networks. What more does it develop? What does it show that is different?

The question of digital identity must first be clarified with the following three precautions. Firstly, we mean by "digital identity" or "online identity" the one that the Internet user builds and wants to put forward on the Internet for those who will consult his/her account or interact with him/her. It is therefore the product of a more or less intentional and calculated construction whose objective is to make various characteristics (physical, linguistic, cultural, etc.) stand out. On the other hand, the digital identity is built in a progressive and changing way - by removing, replacing, adding information on one's profile or on one's photo. Finally, digital identity can be expressed in three different ways: through the profile displayed by the Internet user, the profile that he/she intentionally makes visible (man/woman, age, etc.), through the photo that represents him/her (avatar), and finally through his/her text or iconographic messages. The epistemological difficulty in analysing identity lies precisely in its changing and protean characteristics.

It "is not given once and for all, it is constructed and transformed throughout existence".

The studies that talk about it often each adopt a particular terminology to talk about the

[3] Brubaker, R, Junka, F., 2001, *"Au-delà de L'« identité » in Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*. [Article]. - 2001. - Vol. 139. - pp. 66-85.

[4] Amsidder A., Toumi, F., Daghmi, F., 2016, *L'identité au pluriel*, Actes du colloque d'Agadir.

practically vital link between young people and digital media: "paradigm of identity", "extension of self"[5], "mirror of personal identity", "technology of self".

Selfie is considered a means of expression that participates in the creation of digital identity (idem), regardless of the social network used: Instagram, Facebook or Twitter. The selfie allows another type of relationship based essentially on photos, and the choice to display oneself only by means of a photo greatly participates in the representation of digital identity. This visibility determines the recognition of one's existence vis-à-vis others, all the more so as it is enhanced by an "I like" or a "like". The selfie thus potentially determines a chain of reactions due to the appearance of a photo and proves that you exist precisely because others react to the photo that represents you. The absence of a photo for many young Internet users is the opposite, namely the fatality of invisibility in digital space. The "identity use" of the selfie[6] is determined by several factors. First of all, the creation of a "symbolic universe" that includes the clues, values and elements that are predominantly shared by the community to which the user of the selfie belongs. This study underlines that the authors of selfies voluntarily avoid reproducing a photo that resembles that of their identity card in order to show one that represents them more accurately and is more "original". This originality then often counts with the important participation of the community, which helps the user of the selfie to express characteristics of his personality that he himself struggles to enunciate, and above all to "script" them before sending them on the web.

These practices are in line with Cardon's analysis because they demonstrate "a strategic willingness [...] to manage and act on others by displaying and hiding certain traits of one's identity"[7].

Young people

Like "identity", the concept of "young people" suffers from excessive use and a diversity of representations in the literature studied. We deliberately point out that it "suffers" from this because the meaning given to it from one article to another is very flexible.

The official texts specify its contours a little more precisely. For the “Centre d'Observation de la Société”, "young people" refers to those who "have left adolescence, without yet having entered adulthood". This category thus refers to those under 25 years of age: "young people include children (approximately 0-11 years), adolescents (11-17 years) and young adults (18-24 years)[8]". The United Nations and INSEE, for their part, choose the interval 15-24 years for their studies. UNESCO specifies that it uses different meanings of youth depending on the context in which they live. It defines it as follows: "For activities at the regional or international level, UNESCO uses the United Nations universal definition of youth, which defines the term 'youth' as persons between 15 and 24 years of age. It helps to ensure statistical coherence between regions. For activities at the national level, for example when implementing a youth programme at the level of a local community, "youth" can be understood

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[5] Junger-Aghababaie, M., 2014, « Interaction par l’image et l’identité en ligne : le cas des selfies », L’Autre, Volume 15, pp :365-368

[7] Cardon, D., 2009, « L’identité comme stratégie relationnelle », *Hermès, La Revue* 2009/1 n°53, pp.61-66
http://www.observationsociete.fr/definitions/jeunes.html

in a more flexible way. UNESCO will then adopt the definition as used by the Member State concerned"[9].

In the scientific literature, we find that "young people" refers to an unduly large sample of the population in France and is characterized by its heterogeneity and diversity. Proof of this is the literature that we have chosen to study this young population, which is the driving force behind its identity-building in the digital world. What age sample should be used to characterize these young people? In the end, the sample is very broad, both in the first age group chosen (9 years old) and in the last (35 years old). The following panel is representative: 9-16 years old[10] (Livingstone et alii, 2011), 11-25 years old[11], 15-25 years old[12], 17-25 years old[13], 18-28 years old[14].

In sociology, studies also point out the lack of clarification, for various reasons. A. Roche reminds us that the sociology of youth in France is a "minor sub-discipline devoted to a minor object", [...]. The problematic definition of the category "youth" has long been a hindrance to the development of this field of study, which remains highly dependent on political and social concerns". M. Dagnaud, working on "young people and social networks" who grew up with the Internet, includes them in the 15-30 age category[15].

We have noted in the previous lines that a 35-year-old person surprisingly finds himself in the same "youth" category as a 9-year-old child. The question we are asking is therefore the following: what elements finally allow us to characterize a "young person"? To answer this question and to contribute to this question, we have drawn on several studies that have worked on the use of social networks by "young people".

The analysis of these studies leads to several results. In some cases, the age range selected refers to a multi-ethnic population of a specific urban community, and more specifically of two cities[16]. In others, they are university students[17] , online discussions focusing specifically on the relationship between Franco-Maghrebians or the use of peer-to-peer networks in Europe[18].

The empirical study of youth has sometimes required the implementation of interviews, participant observation or focus group management. Whichever approach is chosen, it relies heavily on the notion of trust with the audience studied and mutual respect. It is indeed difficult to expect satisfactory results on the qualitative level if one proceeds otherwise. It should also

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9 http://www.unesco.org/new/fr/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/youth-definition/

10 Livingstone, S. at alii 2011, Risks and safety on the Internet : the perspective of European Children. Full Findings. London. EU Kids Online, LSE

11 Kervella, A., Loicq, M., 2015, « Les pratiques télévisuelles des jeunes à l'ère du numérique : entre mutations et permanences », Études de communication, 2015/1 (n° 44), p. 79-96

12 Lafrance, J.P., 2005, « Le phénomène télénaute ou la convergence télévision/ordinateur chez les jeunes », Réseaux, 2005/1 (n° 129-130), p. 311-322

13 Junger-Aghababaie, M., 2014, « Interaction par l'image et identité en ligne : le cas des selfies », L'Autre, 2014/3 (Volume 15), p. 365-368

14 Amri M., Vacaflor N., 2010, « Téléphone mobile et expression identitaire : Réflexions sur l'exposition technologique de soi parmi les jeunes », Les Enjeux de l'Information et de la Communication, Volume 1, pp.1-17

15 Dagnaud, M., 2011, Génération Y. « Les jeunes et les réseaux sociaux, de la dérision à la subversion », *Débats*

16 Amri M., Vacaflor N., 2010, « Téléphone mobile et expression identitaire : Réflexions sur l'exposition technologique de soi parmi les jeunes », Les Enjeux de l'Information et de la Communication, Volume 1, pp.1-17

17 Junger-Aghababaie, M., 2014, « Interaction par l'image et identité en ligne : le cas des selfies », L'Autre, 2014/3 (Volume 15), p. 365-368

18 Livingstone, S. at alii 2011, Risks and safety on the Internet : the perspective of European Children. Full Findings. London. EU Kids Online, LSE

be noted that the sample studied may be limited or, on the contrary, very large. It may involve the analysis of about fifteen interviews[19], seven people[20] or even twenty-five thousand young people[21].

Turkish Identity and its evolution

Alliance of "nationalist identity" with "Muslim identity"

Turkish nationalism, founded after the Republic established in 1923, was based on a project of Western inspiration, particularly French, and built a "new" nation integrating all the populations (Turkish, Kurdish and others) present on the territory. The Turkish Republic was founded on three major principles: republicanism, secularism and nationalism. These three principles formed the ideological basis of the republican state[22].

From the 1980s onwards, Westernization was transformed into a series of individual projects, without losing its nationalist connotation, which was defined by the desire to achieve a standard of living equivalent to that of Westerners and to have Turkey fully recognized by the Western powers, which were always suspected of having bad intentions towards it. After joining the Atlantic Alliance in 1952 and signing an association agreement with the Community in 1963, Turkey's European choice became a reality when it applied for membership in 1987. The origins of this fundamental and probably irreversible choice lie in the long history of the Turks. The same period was characterised by "liberal nationalism"[23] launched by the then Prime Minister, Mr Turgut OZAL. This nationalism was the result of economic liberalism, individualism but also manifestations of cultural and ethnic belonging.

After the Gulf Wars, two divergent processes of national construction emerged. The first was a nation from above, Turkish, secular, western, modern, and the second was a nation from below, socially disadvantaged, Muslim, ethnic, traditional. Against the growing uncertainty "from below", identity-building was organized around cultural themes, making national identity a collection of defensive values: religious, ethnic, or various combinations of the two.

Today, polarized on the question of its Muslim and national identity, Turkey is often a victim of its identity problems. After adopting a series of important political, economic and legal reforms after coming to power in 2002, the AKP government neglected the process of accession to the European Union[24]. The AKP is above all the product of the evolution of Turkish Islamic parties and constitutes a new form of political Islam and Islamism that could be described as neoIslamism[25] and which, for its part, does not aim at any radical transformation of society.

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[19] Amri M., Vacaflor N., 2010, « Téléphone mobile et expression identitaire : Réflexions sur l'exposition technologique de soi parmi les jeunes », Les Enjeux de l'Information et de la Communication, Volume 1, pp.1-17

[20] Junger-Aghababaie, M., 2014, « Interaction par l'image et identité en ligne : le cas des selfies », L'Autre, 2014/3 (Volume 15), p. 365-368

[21] Livingstone and alii, 2011

[22] Tuncay M., 1981, *La fondation du système mono-parti en Turquie* (Turkiye'de Tek Parti Yonetiminin Kurulmasi), Editions Yurt, Istanbul

[23] Insel A. 1995, *La crise de la société turque*, 8ème édition, Istanbul, Edition Birikim

[24] AKP: The Justice and Development Party was founded on 14 August 2001. It is the result of a split within Turkish political Islamism which took off in the early 1990s with the rise of the Refah Party

[25] Zarconet T., 2004, *La Turquie moderne et l'Islam*, Paris, Editions Flammarion

Turkish immigration and its particularities of identity

Turkish immigration to Europe is the last official migration wave of the Glorious Thirty. The shortage of labour on the one hand (especially in Germany) and the surplus on the other (Turkey) have pushed Turks to emigrate to meet the demand of European countries. This immigration developed in the 1970s through family reunification and asylum applications linked to the crisis context.

Turkish immigration to France has several particularities: it is a late immigration compared to the others, and more precisely, from the last official immigration of the "Trente Glorieuses"(Glorious Thirty)[26] with Asian immigration and immigration from Black Africa. Thus, we are talking about recent immigration that is still developing. Most Turkish immigrants are Muslims and this is a particularity that it shares with the Maghreb community in France.

As for the identity particularities of the Turkish immigrant, this latter shows a particularly intense dynamism in creating complex infrastructures of socio-economic networks. The Turkish population is heterogeneous and conveys its own culture. In other words, the migratory field is irrigated by men and women with their beliefs, ideologies and forms of expression. From radio to daily newspapers, from videos to film festivals, from restaurants to travel agencies, not to mention political, trade union and associative activities and the opening of places of worship, Turks are present and active.

The Turks are led to favour a "community" type of integration, they are mostly Muslims and suffer, in fact, more discrimination. Moreover, first-generation Turkish women are rarely in employment. In the early days of Turkish immigration, Turkish nationals were mainly single men. They mostly imagined their presence as temporary and saw their work as a means of building up capital to change their social position upon their return to Anatolia[27]. This first stage does not last: the closure of the borders and family reunification have accelerated the advent of a more “family oriented” phase of the immigration process. The plan to return definitively to Turkey was abandoned, but the economic and social links and networks with the homeland were maintained. Gradually, the establishment of transnational politico-religious organisations linked to Turkey in immigration societies will give Turkish immigration a diasporic appearance. During the 1990s, Turkish immigration will be considered special because of its community solidarity and will be qualified as an "exception" to the republican model[28].

Young Turkish immigrants in France

The community withdrawal of Turkish youth in France

One of the most important characteristics of this population is that half of them are under twenty years old. This is an extremely important factor in terms of integration and schooling.

Observation of the Turkish population has demonstrated the particularity of the Turkish diaspora in Europe, which is characterised by its "community withdrawal" and strategies for defending traditions. This analysis may be partly true. However, despite all the strategies adopted, the second generation having grown up and attended school has interacted with French

[26] The Glorious Thirty refers to the period of strong economic growth and improved living conditions experienced by the vast majority of developed countries between 1946 and 1975

[27] Establet, R., 1997, *Comment peut-on être français ?*, Fayard

[28] Tribalat, M. 1995, « Faire France : Une enquête sur les immigrés et sur leurs enfants”, *Politique Etrangère*, n°2

society and these have certainly acted in the construction of its identity and social representations[29].

A large number of sociologists, anthropologists and experts on geographical mobility and migratory flows refer to the cultural distance that Turkish nationals maintain from French society, even going so far as to speak of "identity withdrawal". For these observers, French citizens of Turkish immigrant origin, compared with other immigrant communities, are said to be totally resistant to assimilation into the host society.

Today, there are many criteria for identifying Turkish immigrant descendants: nationality, Turkish language and Muslim religion. Young people of Turkish origin are distinguished by their heterogeneity due to the simultaneous existence of community solidarity and stigmatization (religious in particular). These young people are in fact at the crossroads of several social worlds (community, majority society, "ghetto") whose logic of action is sometimes contradictory, which can make it difficult to position themselves in terms of identity and society.

Some young people from Turkey are characterized by "selective" assimilation[30], insofar as matrimonial, associative and economic exchanges are largely between compatriots. These young people suffer relatively little discrimination and are less affected by unemployment[31], thanks in particular to the existence of opportunities offered by companies in the construction sector[32]. As a result, pursuing general and long schooling can be risky and costly, which explains the commitment to short schooling.

The use of Social Networks by young Turkish immigrants

The collective dimension is important but it does not prevent the development of a "subjective" identity. This is exemplified by negotiations with the community and by "accommodations" aimed at making individual aspirations and the moral prescriptions of the community congruent[33]. Young Turks implement - voluntarily or involuntarily - selectivity in their social relations, built on an ethnic and religious basis. They frequently mobilise themselves in community, religious or cultural structures and maintain the Turkish-Islamic synthesis in their choice of marriage. From this perspective, boys join public spaces in a communal manner by forming exclusively Turkish youth groups. Girls, on the other hand, make themselves invisible in the public spaces of the neighbourhood so as not to be symbolically associated with social groups considered immoral. Nevertheless, they criticize the sexual injustice or lack of individual freedom they may suffer.

The use of Social Networks by these young Turks, especially Facebook, reinforces the characteristics of community withdrawal. The young Turkish immigrants of 93 do not

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[29] Armagnague, M., 2013, « Les descendants d'une immigration communautaire en France : l'exemple turc », *Revue Asylon(s)*, n°8

[30] Portes A., Zhou M. 1993, « The new Generation : Segmented assimilation and its variants", Annal of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Volume 530, pp:74-96

[31] Silberman, 2006, « Les secondes générations sur le marché du travail en France : une pénalité ethnique ancrée dans le temps », *Revue Française de Sociologie*, n°47

[32] Brinbaum & Kieffer, 2005, « D'une génération à l'autre, les aspirations éducatives des familles immigrées : ambition et persévérance », *Education & Formation*, n°72

[33] Armagnague, M., 2013, « Les descendants d'une immigration communautaire en France : l'exemple turc », *Revue Asylon(s)*, n°8

communicate with Turks from other suburbs or other cities. This indifference can go as far as discrimination according to the place of origin of the parents in Turkey.

Young Turks integrated into the French social system refuse integration into the French socio-cultural structure: they prefer to continue parental customs, i.e. to reinforce community withdrawal but by adapting the use of Social Networks and especially Facebook to the "Turkish" way. In this context, there are many examples. The "Good Volkan Corner" is a commercial advertisement website on which posting and reading an ad is free. It is the 100% Turkish version of the "Good Corner" where young people barter and/or sell and buy among Turks. Another example is the "Istanbul Blog" (www.leblogdistanbul.com), developed by an "ex-Parisian", which tells the cultural and entertainment plans of Istanbul. This blog attracts many young Turkish immigrants for several reasons: content written by an ex-Parisienne / the language (French) / the style of the 100% French blog / the emotional sharing of the desires of young Turkish immigrants who go on a trip to Turkey and/or wish to return to live there. We can cite the examples of "Nous les Turcs" (on FB) with thirty-nine thousand followers and "Les Turcs" (on FB) with twenty-five thousand followers.

They are all community pages, with a conservative and nationalist tendency. These pages reflect the current political orientation in Turkey and its impact on Turkish immigrants in Europe. The role of the current government and President Erdogan is not negligible in this area: for the first time in its history, Turkey has recognised the identity of the Turkish immigrant; the right to vote is given to Turks living outside Turkey's borders, Erdogan's direct appeal to Turkish immigrants and the speeches giving them a sense of power over their compatriots in Turkey (the great wound of Turkish immigrants who have left Turkey). This whole strategy of seduction by the political authorities has attracted young Turkish immigrants to their country of origin, especially from a cultural point of view, and has enabled their parents' "reconciliation" with Turkey.

Conclusion

The speed with which the Turkish population living in France has appropriated the new technologies is no doubt due in large part to the fact that the products and services derived from them are, for the most part, effective instruments for supporting the hypermodern individual. The NICTs and Social Networks have brought the hope that the best will emerge, the good news, the opportunity not to be missed. Today, certain uses of NICTs refer to the security needs expressed by the young contemporary Turkish immigrant. On the one hand, by allowing them to have virtual access, without constraints of time and space, to a very rich set of information likely to feed a decision-making process in the face of an unforeseen event. On the other hand, by giving them the feeling, wherever they are, of remaining connected to their group, of being able to mobilize their networks if necessary. In short, thanks to NICTs, the modern young Turkish person feels less alone in facing the complexity of his "foreign" environment and the uncertainty associated with it.

There is a certain debate today about what it means to be Turkish in France. The latter are trying to find out whether their communication efforts can withstand their differences. How to reconcile identity claims and social cohesion through social networks? It is the responsibility of communicators, politicians and citizens to build cultural cohabitation between the different Turkish and French identities. Communicating means less and less transmitting, rarely sharing, more often negotiating and finally cohabiting[34]. This interactivity can only come about through the recognition of differences and the construction of cultural cohabitation.

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COMPLEXITY OF DIALOGUES ON THE NET

Mariselda Tessarolo[1]

Abstract: *Hybrid dialogues are shaped by interconnection and by co-performativity, which allow the staging of private and public identity and on-line and off-line performances. Interpersonal relations are thus built in different environments using dichotomic and polarized slogans, but also making rhetorical "mistakes" that are then conveyed in the political and ideological propaganda, with the frequent repetition of one-dimensional notions. Cultures undergo constant processes of hybridization and the modern hybrid coexists with aspects generating modernization both in the technical-economic structure and in the social structure; an example lies in the forms of communication and public debate.*

Keywords: *Hybrid dialogues; dichotomic slogans; polarized slogans; repetition of one-dimensional notions; mass-self communications.*

Introduction

Technological evolution has affected all communication media and the speed of IT innovation poses a challenge for sociological research and analysis**.** Information technology has altered the geography of social life, transforming the traditional relation between physical environment and social situation**.** Technological media have added new kinds of experience. Interpersonal communication thus modifying the previous situation. Indeed, communicators are no longer conditioned by presence in the same place or access to information. This implies that it is possible to have the same experiences without sharing the same contexts, and that personal experience is no longer rooted in physical proximity. Instead, it is linked to the use of tools and to shared forms of electronic communication[2].

Integration in the social sphere does not simply supply individuals with new places where old roles are to be interpreted, but acts rather by introducing anthropological changes. If the nature of human beings is made up of the characteristics and limitations of sensory processes, then technology has contributed predominantly to forming cognitive categories by enhancing their development. We agree that technology concurs to shape the essence of man and that the evolution of technology has become the evolution of man[3]. The forms of production that may be applied to interpersonal communication at a distance offer the possibility of investigating "new" types of communication, oral or written, and the situations in which they take place[4]. In interpersonal communication at a distance, the communicators must possess the

[1] Scholar Senior of Studium Patavinum-University of Padua, Italy.
[2] Communicative levels are: interpersonal communication, cultural communication and mass communication. Tessarolo M. La comunicazione interpersonale. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2007.
[3] Longo G.O. Il nuovo Golem. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1998: 39.
[4] Goffman, E. Forms of Talk. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981.

same technologies, but they must also have a mutual desire to communicate with others, known or unknown, with whom they share the same interests. It is therefore not enough to possess a biological sensory apparatus, a technical apparatus is needed as well: precisely here in this duplicity lies the mediation, which is also the first form of hybrid communication due to information technologies.

Hybridization, moreover, makes it possible to waive the face-to-face rule with this type of communication. When face-to-face becomes offline, interlocutors are no longer bound to be present in the same space at the same time.[5] Such a combination is no longer a rule with distance communication media: communicators may be present together, but not necessarily. Moreover, the spoken/written dichotomy is no longer sufficient to explain the kind of interaction taking place between two communicators with a mobile phone, on a chat, by e-mail or on Twitter or other platforms. Bauman[6] defines the typical discomfort of post-modernity as a "dream of purity" and observes that the idea at the heart of the concept is that of "aesthetic retouching", with an aim of eliminating something that spoils harmony. Without the vision of a perfect state of things, the idea of cleanliness would not exist. In its place are filth, promiscuity and disorder. The pure model,[7] even for communication, does not entail a mixture and, if such is the case, then a hybrid is present: something that is mixed, dirty, a half-breed regarded as unacceptable. Communication has its own types of impurities as well. In verbal communication there is a mixture with non-verbal communication. Starting from this dichotomy that is "obvious for the speaker", some scholars went so far as to hypothesize that the non-verbal is even more important than the verbal. On the other hand, already in ancient times, parallel modes of communication such as oral and written communication were themselves issues of discussion when trying to establish the primacy of one over the other, because orality involves greater humanity and participation. However, if we remember Plato and the ancient philosophers and poets, it is because they came to us through writing, which has widened the space not only for communication, but also for human knowledge.

Contemporary technological communications have increased the modes of personal and social explication: offline communication, and online communication as well, where the communication mode and the presence or absence of the communicator are staged, but also private life and public life, building very wide interpersonal relations. The result is mixed social communication, with writing, video and voice, because telematic communication is made of all this. Purity is sought everywhere and we can agree with Bauman when he says that every form of purity has its field of action. Hybridization has always entailed a sense of promiscuity and there continues to be a feeling that the hybrid is spurious, and therefore impure. However, due to the changes that have taken place most recently, the hybrid is no longer something that diminishes the previous *status*, on the contrary: it increases its base value and may be regarded as an extraordinary added value. In this work, we are of a mind that the second meaning of the term "hybrid" is to be accepted and shared.[8] The most shared symbolic construction is that the

[5] As in the *hic et nunc* of tradition.
[6] Bauman, Z. Il disagio della post modernità. Milano: Mondadori, 2002.
[7] The pure model is a reflection of a perfect state of things, where nothing needs to be added or eliminated.
[8] A good example of the positive meaning of hybrid is found in "prosumer" (the union of producer and consumer).

concept of hybridity is intentionally ambiguous. The term indicates the intermediate space between two areas of purity[9].

Hybrid in communication

So-called mass communication included a variety of information media – such as the press, radio, television, cinema; which were then joined by other media whose structure is not similar to that of mass media (meaning a source and an audience), but rather an individual communicating through a technological instrument: telephone, photography (in the past letters went through the mail systems, as well as telegrams). In information, society was offered a sort of *agora* by newspapers and magazines and by political television. In the current state of things, the boundaries between the different communication media are blurred. The hybridization between physical space and digital space generates transmediality, and this is a condition that imposes itself as generalized in digital communication. Media narratives and the various forms of communication are present on different platforms, sometimes with significant variations in their forms of communication and in their modes of interaction with reference audiences as well. The forms of co-construction shared by production systems and participatory cultures in the practices of transmedia communication are highlighted because innovation and changes are always a challenge, to be faced by the various disciplines with sensitivity and new tools.

Hybrid dialogues therefore feature a duplicity. Firstly, the interconnection and execution allowed by the use of diverse communication media; secondly, the keeping of the message addressed to the private and/or to the public sphere. The latter performance is new, because thanks to social media everybody can intervene publicly, although the audience is a restricted group of people and generally what is said has the form of statements rather than that of starting points for a true debate. Such a situation depends on the fact that cultures undergo constant hybridizations because the exchange between subjects and groups of subjects occurs very fast, as it follows the speed of technological development. A consequence of this situation is individual activation of a "top-down" type. In fact, while technologies were expanding, there was a detachment from executing orders (what is referred to as "following the leader") and a marked increase in activation from the bottom up (grassroots), arising from comparative debate among peers. This passage leads to wider participation by those who use social media, for example, in tools allowing for more coordinated use as compared to the first web media.

A mediated experience is subject to the intrusion of events that are far from daily awareness, since technologies are accepted if they are based on interests that mediate between local and global interests[10]. Most recently the situation has evolved, especially with social media that reinforce online use by constantly intermediating "interpersonal" communication. Such dynamism has modified the juxtaposition of local and global within the sphere of personal use of social media, quickly taming several global phenomena that are no longer perceived as distant and not real. We are currently between two levels of social life, that is, a generalized co-presence of local environments, to which we remain bound for certain aspects of our life, and

[9] Hannerz, U. La complessità culturale. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998.
[10]Giddens, A. Le conseguenze della modernità. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994.

unanchored realities, within whose scope we increasingly gravitate[11]. The disembedding of social systems from their social context and their re-installation in different space and time contexts happened very quickly. Today this shifting of technological practices is one of the major constructors of social meaning. The Internet is not responsible for individualism, but it has provided social media users with the possibility of forming an appropriate material support to spread it on the net and help it become the prevailing form of sociality[12].

Technology has brought about a horizontal society whose characteristic feature is precisely the horizon, while in the offline community it does not seem to be a necessary condition, even though it is present. Relations present themselves as hybrid, meaning that online and offline are mixed because most social network users – and therefore social media users – widen or strengthen those links that previously existed offline. This is due to the fact that the web allows the possibility of easily scrolling through messages. The ease with which a smartphone connects with the web has facilitated the creation of hybrid spaces. Moreover, the use of mobile technologies (as interfaces of connection) blurs traditional boundaries between physical spaces and digital spaces.

A community implies a combination of relations and mobile technologies. Connections do not take place only in physical space, but rather in a space of a new kind where physical and digital merge, thus changing the way in which users that inhabit it perceive their physical space. The concept of cyberspace applied to the Internet at first only focused on network nodes as disconnected from space.

It is hardly ever possible to identify the separation between physical and digital spaces because hybrid space is movable and conceptually different from the space defined as "augmented/virtual reality":[13] a person who uses a smartphone can do so while moving around town and, with one single tool, he/she is able to perform other actions as well – making phone calls, writing text messages, taking photographs, photographing themselves, reading text messages, communicating by Skype, reading information on Google.

The subjects acting in urban space have a continuous communication channel that allows links within the community to which they belong to be maintained and strengthened, making the exchange with other communities and other social actors easier. The location is an integral part of a participatory process that may start and continue on the net. The members of hybrid communities, usually those who use social media, are mostly inherently motivated and driven by their passion rather than a desire for profit.

New technologies have become a sort of extension of our body, increasing our sensory abilities and allowing their continuous connection.[14] Living in "augmented reality"[15] is a perspective in which the digital and the physical are amalgamated, as they form part of one reality, although they have different features. In this case as well, we may say that it is more contemporary to consider virtuality and being online as something that increases the possibilities of human communication. Internet has become a communication medium thanks

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[11] Giaccardi, C., Magatti, M. La globalizzazione non è un destino. Mutamenti strutturali ed esperienze soggettive nell'età contemporanea. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2001.
[12] Castells, M. Mobile connection on society: A global perspective. Cambridge: The MIT Pres, 2007.
[13] Even this concept can now be considered outdated.
[14] An extension of the senses, in the words of Marshall McLuhan.
[15] Castells M. Galassia Internet. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2002.

to the Web 2.0, the so-called social web comprising the social media, where what is seen is not only the increase of a mass communication phenomenon, but an authentic consumption phenomenon which users access daily to share information and contents.

Community discussions are enriched by the specific characteristics of online exchange. Cross references are enacted: copying messages written by peers and integrating their statements with one's own, for example, is a common practice in virtual communities. As a consequence, discussions persist over the years due to the ease with which messages are saved, stored and can be retrieved from databases. The same is true of forums with a database allowing the storing of messages, which can subsequently be searched by electronic query. We could use the term "time rewind" for the action of accurately reviewing and collectively processing a discussion, something seemingly almost impossible face-to-face. It shows that memory may be retrieved, even on online sites.[16]

Many communities that were analysed have created sophisticated online records where insights and suggestions that are more generally relevant are organized into a more formal *corpus*. Finally, the members of a community who are involved in several other connected communities at the same time have a chance to consult alternative forums, thus presenting additional information and enriching debates within a community with diverging ideas.

It is possible not to reduce online interaction to a version of communication lacking the "real" experience of face-to-face interaction. But online interaction adds new opportunities that go beyond the traditional face-to-face settings. The Internet is not just another channel that merely connects people, but offers a variety of social techniques and dynamics that may not be attained only face-to-face.

Which hybrid?

When we speak of hybrids at an interpersonal level, we must specify which hybrid is in question: in some cases, hybrid dialogues are shaped by interconnection and by co-performativity, which seemingly allow the staging of private and public identity and online and offline performances. Interpersonal relations are built in different environments using dichotomic and polarized slogans.

Consistent with this choice, Chadwick[17] focuses on movements of collective actions expressing what he calls the current phase of organizational hybridity, meaning the organizational forms that have emerged from new modes of space-time interaction, enabled by the Internet and social media. Knowledge of the real trends of information technology consumption aimed at deciding between hybridization and cross-mediality, between the private and the televisual, and the dynamics of access to new information media is what should guide the action of the authority to protect information pluralism. This also applies when the people interacting are in very distant places from one another.[18]

[16] Therefore it is actually retrieved memory, not "augmented" memory!
[17] *Chadwick* Andrew. *(2007).* 'Digital Network Repertoires and *Organizational Hybridity*' Political Communication, 2007, vol. 24, no. 3, 283-301.
[18] Sunstein, C. R., Republic.com. Cittadini informati o consumatori di informazione? Bologna: Il Mulino. 2003. Sunstein also asks whether new technologies can be at the service of democracy, and what attitudes must be adopted to put them at the service of democratic ideals.

The problems regarding the conflictuality between online and offline discourse will in any case remain. One is the fact that the new media can foster a growing sense of belonging and sharing, as well as a sense of exclusion and isolation. The development of mediated communication should create a new kind of experience that changes and amplifies the previous one. If we have the tools, we should no longer be conditioned by being in the same place, nor by interpersonal communication, nor by access to information. In fact, different individuals can have the same experiences without sharing a similar life context. The fact that the mediated experience is shared is not grounded in physical proximity. The sharing is granted exclusively by access to the same forms of electronic communication.

The organization of the virtual environment requires a physical and cognitive effort and the building of virtual communities is a demonstration of the subjects' need to create social relations expressed in the desire to be together, even if not in the same place, but through a distance discourse on shared topics. A human desire to communicate develops with greater or lesser difficulty in all contexts, and collaboration grows in a framework of cooperation managed by the participants, be they online or offline: cooperation exists in all forms of communication, although with different graduations. In an online context, subjects are aware of interacting and negotiating forms and contents. Only in interpersonal communication, however, is cooperation among interlocutors constantly monitored and corrected to ensure that the communication itself is maintained. Online communication, nonetheless, should have a collaborative framework.

As Castells observes[19] the Internet is a transmission lever towards a new society ("network society"), and therefore a new economy. The Internet has produced forms of new economy with new ways of managing financial markets and companies, it has generated new forms of online socialization and it constantly raises new political implications regarding civil participation from the bottom up.

In the case of political information, a citizen's consumption of news is less wide and more articulated, meaning less cross-media and less hybrid, in terms of different media, as compared with information consumption of a general nature. A relation of trust is forged between citizens and source: the more a source is chosen as primary source, the more it will be used by citizens in forming a political opinion[20].

Political engagement has often been used as a communication channel for an audience that subsequently adhered to that movement, according to a "top-down" logic, where individual activation mostly responded to "passwords" coming from the top. This is the opposite sense of "grassroots" logic with its hinges on conversational construction and peer discussion. Following the hypotheses formulated by Bimber, Flanagin and Stohl[21], the distinctive trait of the new phase inaugurated by the spreading of social media and by the fact that these are used in a coordinated way, as compared to more traditional web tools, characterizes the coordination process between individuals and the various groups, which are active on much more flexible and decentralized specific issues and almost completely independent from the presence of a formal organization of the movement itself. These scholars try to reconstruct the modes of

[19] Castells, M. Galassia Internet. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2002.
[20] Ruschi, F. Sciogliendo il nodo, per una genealogia del diritto internazionale. In *Juro Gentium*, Vol. IX, 2012, 21-41.
[21] Bimber, Bruce, Flanagin Andrew J., Stohl, Cynthia. Reconceptualizing Collective Action in the Contemporary Media Environment. In Communication Theory, 2005, Vol. 15. No. 4, 365-388.

collective action by taking as their starting point the communication protagonism of individuals, mostly ignoring the organizational aspects of the movements, with the awareness that one of the primary effects of new technologies of communication and information is precisely public domains more porous and easily crossed. Knowledge of the real trends of information technology consumption aimed at a vote decision, between hybridization and cross-mediality, between the private and the televisual, and the dynamics of access to new information media is what should guide the action of the authority to protect information pluralism. The form of communication based on social media technologies is defined by Castells[22] as "mass self-communication", underlining the radical element present in this new communicative possibility to be found in the hybridization of the self-generation potential of the contents, self-direction of the emission and self-selection of the reaction – all features of interpersonal communication. A revolutionary consequence of these new media is the destabilization, or at least problematization, of a series of dichotomic categorizations corresponding to our habitual way of classifying socio-economic phenomenons: sender/receiver, producer/consumer, private/public, intentional/non-intentional, virtual/real, relational/mediatized. In particular the overcoming of the latter distinction between what regards interpersonal relations and what regards the mediation of communication is a centre point for the social media field.

Conclusions

Hybrid space online and offline is nothing else but a new form of social space, where the boundaries between physical and digital spaces have been blurred since technologies became instruments of socialization. It is important to underline that hybrid space is constituted mainly by the technology, but also by the use of that technology made by users. Mobile phones do not subtract physical space from users, rather they increase it by strengthening connections among users in the space where they live. Mobile phones allow the possibility to move and communicate at the same time. The prevailing social practices of network society occur in a space of flow that connects with the space of the places proving themselves to be complementary, because the space of flows includes social relations occurring in urban space. Hybrid space is like a concept that is produced and embedded by social practices, where the support structure is an infrastructure made of a network of mobile technologies.

The space of flows is conceptualized as a new, characteristic, spatial form of social practices that dominate and shape the network society[23]. In such a space, the material infrastructure making social interactions possible consists partly of digital technologies and partly of a physical network.

Smartphones are capable of incorporating the Internet into public spaces, thus allowing physical and digital spaces to be redefined. Every interface transforms not only social relations, but also the spaces to which it is incorporated. The concept of hybrid spaces is generated in order to provide an open space. Since the moment the Internet became mobile, the communities formed in cyberspace have been able to find new spaces of interaction among urban spaces. The most relevant feature of the smartphone is the way it defines how mobile interfaces can

[22] Castells, M. Galassia Internet. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2002; Castells, M. Mobile connection on society: A global perspective. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007.
[23] Castells M. Mobile connection on society: A global perspective. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007.

influence our interaction with other users and with the space we inhabit. One of its primary functions becomes navigating physical space. Access to the Internet, coupled with the possibility of detecting the location, allows users to relate with one another in one physical and digital space. Changing our experience of space means not only interacting in a new way with other people, but also redefining the space in which we live. Electronic space is essentially social space, location loses its value, but further possibilities appear with new localization systems. Virtual proximity recreates a sense of co-presence among those who use it. Hybrid space is a more open, more movable, more unitary space: access to the Internet, together with the possibility of detecting the location, allows users to relate in one physical space, a physical/digital hybrid. It is actually a widening, a novelty that allows us to redefine the space in which we live.

Our experiences are not only a personal fact, they also configure as a mainly social fact. Our preferences are shaped by our relations, intertwined with prevailing social images and expectations that are, in turn, nurtured by our identity and by the culture in which we are immersed. Language and consequently dialogue have a mainly dialogic nature. Language is not limited to the transmission of information, but triggers a process of continuous interpretation. With the Internet we have been training in another language: zero/one, yes/no, true/false, a binary language. We have created a faster and faster experience and adjusted to the speed required by the tool. All this certainly has anthropological implications[24]. Furthermore, use of the Internet requires us to manage an ever growing amount of information, differentiating its relevance.

The net is therefore a new form of sociality that highlights the main transformation of complex societies. It has materialized (been realized) in the new form that adds itself to the many forms that are present in "real" society. For many years now, there has been a tendency in contemporary society toward the evolution of social relations characterized by a slow but constant rise of individualism in all its manifestations. A new system of social relations centred on the individual and the telematics connection networks are a very strong part of the innovative solutions of society's dimensions. The communicative space where such connections live and die brings about a convivial mode of communication[25]. On the net, what prevails is not the corporate sense of belonging, but that of a society of participation.

The dominant features of communication on the net, partly reinforcing the features that were formed in the period defined as post-modernity, are fragmentation of the present, breakage with the past, lack of depth and the loss of stable references. We see the traditional divisions on which modern western thinking was based being overcome, such as – for example – the separation between subject and object, representation and reality, science and myth, fiction and history. It is the triumph of the affective,[26] a search for contact with the other but, at the same time, their alienation (estrangement)[27].

If compared with online solidarity, face-to-face solidarity shows that the collectivity is strong when interaction with the other is not necessary, and weak in the opposite case. With globalization, the meaning of some words has changed: if once people were each other's

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[24] Franchi, M., Schianchi, A. Scegliere nel tempo di Facebook. Roma: Carocci, 2011: 119.
[25] Tessarolo, M., La comunicazione interpersonale, Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2007.
[26] Boccia Artieri, G. Stati di connessione. Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2012.
[27] Tessarolo, M. Il Web 2.0 e la socialità virtuale, in Vita e Pensiero,2012, n.2, pp. 371-385.

"neighbour", now with individualization all people are strangers and, in the case of social networks, it is desirable to have a circle of connected people[28]. It seems to Bauman that the most fruitful consequence of virtual proximity is that stable bonds are not necessary. Being connected is less costly than being sentimentally involved, but the bonds thus established are less intense[29].

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[28] Sennett R. Rispetto. Bologna: Il Mulino. 2004:177.
[29] Bauman Z. Amore liquido, Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2004: 82.

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