The Textual Functions of Personal Weblogs:
Stability, Diversity, and Change

14. Norddeutsches Linguistisches Kolloquium
Halle, 15. bis 17. März 2013

Peter Grube
Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg
Cognitively Speaking

I’m stealing a quote from a book because I couldn’t have said it better myself.

“I don’t know if my family has any idea how difficult it is for me to think clearly and remember things. I’m too scared to tell anybody because they might not view me as the same person I used to be.”

~Connie: mother of two, MS patient for 11 years (from “MS and Your Feelings” by Allison Shadday, LCSW)

That is all for now. Because I just can’t find the words… hehe😊

Working on the Wardrobe

I recently had a minor MS flare-up and opted for the round of Soluna
drol infusions. I just finished tapeing down with Prednisone pills so I’m
officially off the steroids. I hear that steroids can be addictive but I think
I’m in the clear on that one. However, I am developing a different sort of
Flutterby!

the online home of Dan & Catherine

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Friday, December 11th, 1998

Local rant: The Political Hearings Drinking Game

Local rant: The Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies

Sorry, but these hearings are just rife with material. Can we prosecute any of these bozos for lying when they refer to their political opponents as "my dear colleagues" or even worse "my dear friends from across the aisle"?

Lost in all of the noise, there's a new NETFUTURE out.

There's been an update to the Political Hearings Drinking Game, I'll check any suggestions mailed to me at home and incorporate them later when I get home.

Need To Know is out this week, starting with a Doug Englebart quote that got me thinking:

"The real question I've been working these past 50 years on is how to augment the human intellect through collective thinking"

It seems indicative of something that the mouse, as used in point-a-doodle interfaces, hasn't really augmented the high end of "the human intellect", it's brought the low end into a world and set of discussions they really don't understand. Couldn't we have just left them with TV? Sorry for the cynicism, the background of politicians talking has that effect.

Quote of the day from the proceedings: "This is not an indictment, this is an impeachment", used to justify a lower standard of proof than an indictment. As damning an admission that this is a politically motivated action if ever there were one.
## Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Studies (selection)</th>
<th>Functions detected (selection)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Gumbrecht (2004), Nardi et al. (2004), Brake (2007), Reed (2005), Baumer et al. (2008), Rosenberg (2009)</td>
<td>community building, therapy, information, confession, updating friends and family, documenting life, democratic self-expression, expressing point of view, thinking by writing, boasting, self-validation, sharing experience, filtering, research and knowledge work, self revelation, creative self expression, making money, influencing others, entertainment</td>
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<td>observation</td>
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<td>Survey</td>
<td>Lenhart &amp; Fox (2006), Baumer et al. (2008)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Herring et al. (2004, 2005, 2006)</td>
<td>typology of journals, filters, k-logs</td>
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<tr>
<td>analysis</td>
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Research Questions

1. What textual functions can be considered typical of the genre Personal Weblog?
2. What is the diachronic dimension of these functions in terms of stability, diversity, and change?
Structure

1. Introduction
2. Data, Theory, and Method
3. Textual Functions
   3.1. Filter
   3.2. Update
   3.3. Sharing Experience
4. Conclusion: Stability, Diversity, and Change
Structure

1. Introduction
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Data : Overview

• insider reflections on textual functions, e.g.

• results of ethnographic studies

• diachronic corpus of Personal Weblogs
### Data: DIABLOK (*Diachrones Blog Korpus*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Texts</th>
<th>Postings</th>
<th>Token</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Period I</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Weblogs</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1997-2000</td>
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<td>773</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Period II</strong></td>
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<td>II.A</td>
<td>2002-2005</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1035</td>
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<td>II.B</td>
<td>2006-2008</td>
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<td>649</td>
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<td>II.C</td>
<td>2009-2012</td>
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Textual Function: Working Definition

• complex task a text is produced for
• may contain various components:
  – informatory
  – appellative
  – obligational
  – contact

• genres characterised by set of functions
• has to be reconstructed from various sources:
  – community‘s metadiscourse
  – metacommments stating function explicitly
  – textual indicators on several layers

(Brinker 1983; 2000; 2010)
## Indicators for Textual Functions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>multimodal structure</th>
<th>performative formulae gramm. structure style pictures / other elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>semantic structure</td>
<td>topic (s) topic treatment stance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>context</td>
<td>cotext participants ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Brinker (1983; 2000; 2010), adapted for the current purposes.
Method: Generating Functional Categories

I. quasi-open coding → metadiscourse → preliminary categories

II. quasi-open coding → linguistic analysis → weblog postings with functional labels → refined categories

III. selective coding → linguistic analysis → all weblog postings in DIABLOK → refined categories

IV. new material (interviews, surveys, …)
Method: Generating Functional Categories

I

quasi-open coding

metadiscourse

preliminary categories

II

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linguistic analysis

weblog postings with functional labels

refined categories

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15
Method: Generating Functional Categories

I  quasi-open coding  →  metadiscourse  →  preliminary categories

II  quasi-open coding  →  weblog postings with functional labels  →  refined categories
    ↓  linguistic analysis

III  selective coding  →  all weblog postings in DIABLOK  →  refined categories
    ↓  linguistic analysis

IV  new material (interviews, surveys, …)
Reconstructing Functional Categories

I. quasi-open coding → metadiscourse → preliminary categories

II. quasi-open coding → linguistic analysis → weblog postings with functional labels → refined categories

III. selective coding → linguistic analysis → all weblog postings in DIABLOK → refined categories

IV. new material (interviews, surveys, ...)

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4. Conclusion: Stability, Diversity, and Change
Three DaveNet pieces from April: Hail Mary!, Hail This! and Bill Gates on Java. (I guess Java inspires football analogies.)

New Frontier sites: Calvary Presbyterian Church, Barreau du Québec, The Pixel Pen.

It seems like I'm pointing to HotWired's Packet channel every day. Today's piece by Simson Garfinkel is an invaluable explanation of how MAE West works. Our ISP, Conxion, is linked into MAE West, which means that DaveNet and Scripting News come thru the MAE system (I think...).

ZipIt is a Macintosh program that zips and unzips archives in a format fully compatible with PKZip for the IBM and zip implementations on other systems. It's vastly easier to use than the Windows equivalent program, WinZip, which is a dauntingly complex maze of wizards and vacuous help files.

ZipMagic -- use zip files without unzipping them. (Windows)
Wednesday, June 4, 1997

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ZipMagic -- use zip files without unzipping them. (Windows)
Filter: Scripting News (period I)

Wednesday, June 4, 1997

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ZipMagic -- use zip files without unzipping them. (Windows)
Former botspot.com honcho Marcus Zillman has started a new online 'bot information and services site at: http://www.bottechnology.com/. If you're interested in intelligent technology, check it out.

If you're one of those people who doesn't care for math but wants to better understand the use of statistics in our culture, check out the Glossary of Mathematical Mistakes at: http://www.mathmistakes.com/. This site explores the way numbers are manipulated and misused.

The NY Times has a interesting "on this day" feature at http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/index.html.
Filter: *Fairytale* (period II.A)

[03 Nov 2004|04:56pm]

Link from matchboy...

www.anotherfouryears.com

They have an RSS feed too so you can put it on your friends page...

www.livejournal.com/users/another4years
August 09, 2005

daylight-saving time?

now i know how some of you don't really like daylight-saving time in the first place, but now it would seem we are going to have an extra month of it.

Another month of daylight-saving time?

i guess that's not all bad. we could use a little more day light. yet the reason congress is extending daylight-saving time is odd. they say it will save energy.

that's right this little measure is in the new energy bill that was signed yesterday. i know this is going to just confuse the fuck out of people. already people use it as an excuse to be late. now most people won't even know what the right day to change over is.

this time technology will be against us. most of our tech will have to be retaught how to tell time. they won't change as they normally do. they'll change on the wrong day.

what a small little mess that will be.
## Filter: Summary

| multimodal structure | • elliptical constructions  
|• concise matter-of-fact style  
|• hyperlinks are central |
| semantic structure | • various topics without topical coherence  
|• treatment: descriptive  
|• stance: epistemic / evaluative |
| context | • author‘s web travels |
| function | • informatory (source, content, evaluation)  
|• appellative (follow the links) |
Friday. October 28. 2005

doodoodoodoo

Working at main office today. STOP. Going very well. STOP. Had Mexican food and Starbucks. STOP. Big smiles all around. STOP.
Update: An Insider’s View (period II.A)

Friday.October.28.2005

doodoodoo

**Working** at main office today. **STOP.** Going very well. **STOP.** **Had** Mexican food and Starbucks. **STOP.**

**Big smiles all around.** **STOP.**
Update: ... Life of L... (period II.A)

Thursday, September 02, 2004

[...]

Ok, I'll stop quoting Jefferson Airplane (or Starship or what have you) and move on to updates. Angish can be dealt with later...

Well, I've been going to the gym pretty much religiously lately. I don't know if I've lost any weight, but now I worry that I'm putting on bulky muscle..again.

I've been out and about, having a fairly good time. Looks like the test of me will be reveiling itself when school starts...hopefully I'll pass.

I jus finished Michael Moore's book, "Stupid White Men". [...] Saw the MTV Video Awards. They were MUCH better then last year's publicity stunt fest.

Well, having that all summed up, I must be off to get ready. I'm getting my hair done today. Good thing, since my roots are looking pretty trailer by now. Oh, and by the way I got Windows XP (yay) so I'll be....happy.
Update: ... *Life of L*... (period II.A)

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Update: Summary

| multimodal structure | • elliptical constructions  
|                      | • concise, even telegraphic style |
| semantic structure   | • topic: *What’s been going on?*  
|                      | • various, only loosely related subtopics  
|                      | • treatment: descriptive / narrative  
|                      | • stance: epistemic / evaluative |
| context              | • often *friends / family* addressed  
|                      | • limited amount of writing time  
| function             | • mainly informatory |
[...] i was in the salon on saturday waiting for my sister to get done with a client (so she could dye my hair purple), and sat talking to my step-mom, who was also waiting for my sister to get done with the paying client. anyway, she mentioned that it was surprising that it hadn't rained that much today, i responded with "oh, is there supposed be a storm coming in?". when she said yes, it hit me that other people tune in to the weather and get a forecast of what the weather will be like for the next couple days. i just walk out my door and see what it's like. the weather doesn't matter online.
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Thursday, March 8, 2012

A warning

Okay, I admit it. I made a boo boo. I posted on the U.K. Amazon readers site by mistake. [...] I got so many vicious replies, people accusing me of trying to sneak in self promotion (as if that’s punishable by death), people reading the book samples and then saying how much they sucked, people posting on the forum calling me all kinds of horrible things. [...] 

My warning to all authors out there is to stay away from the Amazon forums altogether. It’s not worth the little promotion you get with all the jerks surfing them who have nothing better to do than rip apart your self-esteem. [...]
Sharing Experience: Summary

| multimodal structure | • complex structures  
• cohesive devices  
• idiosyncratic style |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| semantic structure  | • single topic  
• sub topics: event + reflections  
• treatment: descriptive / narrative  
• stance: epistemic / evaluative |
| context             | • varying audience scope |
| function            | • informatory (event + reflections)  
• appellative (warning, advice) |
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Functional Patterns in *Bump* (period I)

November 12, 1998---Hot Seat---
I'm learning more every day about what it's like to work for a company that is in the transition after being acquired by another company. It's very uncomfortable at times. It is also frustrating. I know that some of the people that I work with probably won't make it to the other side of the transition, maybe I won't. [...] I'm actually enjoying watching it unfolding.

**How an Apple Developer Thinks**
Interesting *Salon article* that seems to compare Linux's emergence to the Reformation that split the Catholic and Protestant branches of Christianity. This is news?

*RasterWeb* points to *Revelation Records* on the *Apple Computer* site.
Stability, Diversity, and Change

Percentages of weblogs per period exhibiting selected functional patterns
Stability, Diversity, and Change

Percentages of weblogs per period exhibiting selected functional patterns
Percentages of weblogs per period exhibiting selected functional patterns
Contact Function:

Sunday, 17 March 2013
I’d like to...

...thank you for your attention.
Internet Archive

Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg

English Version

Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg

- Informationen über die Universität
- Rektorat und Zentrale Universitätsverwaltung
- Fakultäten, Fachbereiche, Institute und andere wissenschaftliche Einrichtungen
- Zentrale Einrichtungen
- Namen, Verzeichnisse, Adressen
- Studium & Forschung
- Tagungen, Kongresse, Ausstellungen und besondere Veranstaltungen
- Wahlen der Universität
- Studenten-Seiten
The Globe of Blogs

Globe of Blogs :: Browse by Weblog Topic :: Meta :: Personal Weblog

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] [8] [9] [10] [11] [12] [13] [14] [15] [16] [17] [18] [19] [20] [21] [22] [23] [24] [25] [26] [27] [28] [29] [30] [31] [32] [33] [34] [35] [36] [37] [38] [39] [40] [41] [42] [43] [44] [45] [46] [47] [48] [49] [50] [51] [52] [53] [54] [55] [56] [57] [58] [59] [60] [61] [62] [63] [64] [65] [66] [67] [68] [69] [70] [71] [72] [73] [74] [75] [76] [77] [78] [79] [80] [81] [82] [83] [84] [85] [86] [87] [88] [89] [90] [91] [92] [93] [94] [95] [96] [97] [98] [99] [100] [101] [102] [103] [104] [105] [106] [107] [108] [109] [110] [111] [112] [113] [114] [115] [116] [117] [118] [119] [120] [121] [122] [123] [124] [125] [126] [127] [128] [129] [130] [131] [132] [133] [134] [135] [136] [137] [138] [139] [140] [141] [142] [143] [144] [145] [146] [147] [148] [149] [150] [151] [152] [153] [154] [155] [156] [157] [158] [159] [160] [161] [162] [163] [164] [165] [166] [167] [168] [169] [170] [171] [172] [173] [174] [175] [176] [177] [178] [179] [180] [181] [182] [183] [184] [185] [186] [187] [188] [189] [190] [191] [192] [193] [194] [195] [196] [197] [198] [199] [200] [201] [202] [203] [204]

About A Girl's Life :: Danielle
(http://aboutagirlslife.blogspot.com/)
Musings of a transplanted midwestern woman on life, politics and completely random things.
Location: Alexandria, Virginia 🇺🇸

About everything :: Jane
(http://www.livejournal.com/users/bluejane/)
Nothing much to say though.
Location: Johore, Malaysia 🇲🇾