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Linguistic properties and aspects of blogging within the context of Netspeak

Within the context of Netspeak, and English as a global language, weblogs (blogs) are defined as frequently modified web pages in which dated entries are listed in reverse chronological sequence, are becoming an increasingly popular form of communication on the World Wide Web. The present paper introduces blogs as an asynchronous type of online communication that share features with asynchronous discussion forums. The paper presents the origin of blogs, the blogosphere – who blogs and about what - and most importantly, why people blog. The scope of blogs is argued to have expanded dramatically over the past decade, making blogging more of a multifaceted tool than a specific type of Internet platform. The paper outlines the basic linguistic features of blogs and gives an overview of basic blog types and their corresponding linguistic properties and aspects. The paper serves the purposes of characterizing the properties of the emergent blog genre, situating it with respect to the broader genre ecology of the Internet. The idea is to provide an empirical snapshot of the weblog in its present stage, as a historical record for purposes of comparison with future stages of evolution, and to contribute to a theoretical understanding of how technological changes trigger the formation of new genres, which in turn may affect the genre ecology of a larger domain such as the Internet.

Key words: Netspeak; blogs; asynchronous online communication; blogosphere.

1. Introduction

1.1. *The Aim of the Paper*

The present paper introduces *weblogs* (*blogs*) as a particular Internet situation within the context of Netspeak as a brand new medium of online communication.

More specifically, the paper portrays blogs as an asynchronous type of online communication which shares a number of features with asynchronous language normally found in various online discussion forums or groups. The paper presents the origin of blogs, the blogosphere – who blogs and about what, why people blog, and most importantly, it provides an outline of the linguistic properties and aspects of what are considered to be the three major basic types of blogs.

In doing so, the study relies on the findings, the analysis and the conclusions contained in the sections of Hadžiahmetović Jurida (2012), focusing on the linguistic properties and aspects of Netspeak, and its distinctive features in the context of English as a global language, keeping in mind its fast growing dominant effect in everyday lives. The paper further examines and describes some distinctive features of blogs within the context of Netspeak, primarily on the lexical and orthographic levels, highlighting its innovative nature given that, according to Crystal (2001: 91), the most general features of Netspeak distinctiveness are currently found chiefly in graphology and the lexicon, as these are the levels of language where it is relatively easy to introduce both innovation and deviation.

In terms of selecting the corpus, I was guided by the idea of choosing public Internet sites with free access to blogs, simply for reasons of convenience, and the fact that most users automatically opt for such Internet sites.

1.2. *The origin of blogs*

Generally speaking, a blog, the abbreviated form of weblog (or web log) is a type of personal column posted on the Internet. It allows a user or a group of users allows the user to enter, display, and edit posts at any time. Blog was declared 'word of the year' by the dictionary publishers Merriam-Webster in 2004. Other terms that came into use with the introduction of blogs include:

- *bloggers* – those who blog
- *blogging* – an activity carried out by bloggers
- *blogstorm* or *blogswarm* – blog attracting a considerable amount of online attention
- *blogsite* – a web site providing web log services (Blogger, LiveJournal etc)
- *blogroll* – a listing of favorite links to other blogs
- *bleg* – short of begging blog is a blog that contains a request to readers
- *bloghorrhea* – condition of a writer whose blog goes for too long
- *blogosphere* – the totality of all blogsites
- *moblog* – a blog which consists chiefly of posts sent by mobile phone

- *audioblog* – a blog that includes adding and downloading music
- *photoblog* – blog including digital photographs
- *vlog* – short of *videoblog* is a blogs that allows adding video clips.

According to Herring et al. (2005), weblogs (blogs), defined as frequently modified web pages in which dated entries are listed in reverse chronological sequence, are becoming an increasingly popular form of communication on the World Wide Web.

Although some claim that the earliest blog was the first website created by Tim Berners-Lee in 1991 (cf. Winer 2002), the present-day format first appeared in 1996, and the term weblog was first applied to it in 1997 by Jorn Barger. The clipping *blog* came into use after Peter Merholz started pronouncing *weblog* as *wee-blog* in early 1999. Since mid-1999, Herring et al (2005: 1) state that blogging as an online activity has been increasing exponentially, enabled by the release of the first free blogging software (Pitas), and fuelled by reports from the mainstream media of the grassroots power of blogs as alternative news sources. The 2003 estimates place the number of sites calling themselves blogs at over 1.3 million, of which about 870,000 are actively maintained. Moreover, as blogging software becomes easier to use, the number of bloggers continues to increase.

According to Baron (2008: 108), the humble beginnings of blogs trace back to the late 1990s, when a handful of web denizens began compiling lists of the URLs for online pages that the creator of the list found to be interesting. Given that these listings were literally logs of web locations, Jorn Barger's term *web log*, coined in 1997, made eminent sense. Early weblogs included Dave Winer's Scripting News, Cameron Barrett's Cam World, and Barger's Robot Wisdom, though some purists date the first web log back to 1991, when Tim Berners-Lee, father of the World Wide Web, created *What's New?* pages that linked to other web sites.

Baron argues that many early weblogs consisted of just headlines accompanied by links to pages bearing the actual stories. Other weblogs offered brief news summaries or discussions of contemporary topics, alongside the links. One rule of the game was that the logs needed to be updated on a regular basis. Weblogs soon gained in popularity. With increased visibility, the phrase "weblogs" morphed into *blogs,* argues Baron, much as *God's blood* became shortened to *'sblood* in Shakespeare's day. Free blogging tools made it easy to join the blogging revolution. Ever-more powerful search engines began bringing up hits on the blog postings of obscure bloggers.

1.3. *Who blogs, and about what?*

According to Baron (2008: 109), there are blog writers and blog readers. The July 2006 statistics, provided by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, reported that about 12 million American adults blog (8% of Internet users), while about 57 million American adults (39% of Internet users) read blogs. Other research found that 9% of people surveyed said they read a political blog almost every day (Graf 2006).

Involvement with blogging varies across cultural milieu. In the UK, only 2% of Internet users wrote blogs in early 2006 (a quarter of the U.S. figure)[1]. Furthermore, only 13% of those surveyed in the UK had read an individual's blog in the preceding week, compared with 40% in the US, 25% in France and 12% in Denmark. 12% of UK readers had read a newspaper blog in that week, compared with 24% in the US, 10% in France and 9% in Denmark.[2]

Baron further argues that the scope of blogs has expanded dramatically over the past decade, making blogging more of a multifaceted tool than a specific type of Internet platform. Most blogging services are found to offer a range of options the blogger controls, such as the following: i) Who may read the blog in the first place? ii) Is the blog password-protected? iii) Does it have an unlisted URL?, and iv) Does the blog take comments?

In these regards, access controls on blogs are similar in nature to privacy settings on Facebook. In fact, the similarity between media goes further. On some blogging sites, Baron argues, the opening page contains a profile of the blogger that looks amazingly similar to what you find on Facebook or MySpace.

The control issue becomes particularly nuanced with individual blogs primarily intended for a recognised circle of friends. Herring et al (2005)[3] find that, on these kinds of blogs, the average number of comments posted by other people approaches zero, which is probably all for the better. Baron reports (2008: 109) that, as Nardi and her group found in their interviews with adult bloggers, bloggers wanted readers but they did not necessarily want to hear a lot from those readers because many bloggers liked the fact that they could be less responsive with blog-

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[1] British Market Research Bureau April 2006, reported by Caslon Analytics.

[2] http://www.caslon.com.au/weblogprofile1.htm.

[3] Cited in Baron (2008: 109).

ging than they could be in email, instant messaging, phone, or face to face communication. They seemed to be holding their readers at arm's length.[4]

2. Types of blogs

This section of the study seeks to characterise the properties of the emergent blog genre, and situate it with respect to offline genres, as well as with respect to the broader genre ecology of the Internet.

Generally speaking, all blogs are said to share four basic features, as follows:

1. blogs are predominantly text-based (though graphic supplements are becoming increasingly common)
2. the entries appear in reverse chronological order (that is, most recent first), with an archive kept of earlier postings.
3. blogs are frequently updated, and
4. blogs contain links to other web sites.

In practice, Baron goes on to highlight that only the first two criteria are consistently found in today's blogosphere. As the medium attracts ever-larger numbers of users, bloggers are free to decide for themselves how often they wish to post and whether they care to invite other users (via links) to other URLs. A study of more than 5,000 blogs (done by Susan Herring and her colleagues at Indiana University[5]) found that 42% were not linked in any way to other blogs. Baron argues that, over time, blogs have evolved from strictly current events sites to arenas for more varied self-expression.

Figure 1 below presents a sample blog (Herring et al. 2004: 4), with the first screen of the home page of a typical blog. Its title, Lazy Gnome, appears in the header of the page, along with two other text descriptions: 'living at the bottom, lost in the middle' and 'Lazy Diary'. The rest of the page comprises two columns, one focusing on the presentation of entries in reverse chronological order, and the other a sidebar containing links, an interactive poll, and an image with an updatable 'Iraq Body Count'. Although it is not visible in this image, the page also has a footer containing the author's full name.

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[4] Nardi et al. (2004: 228)

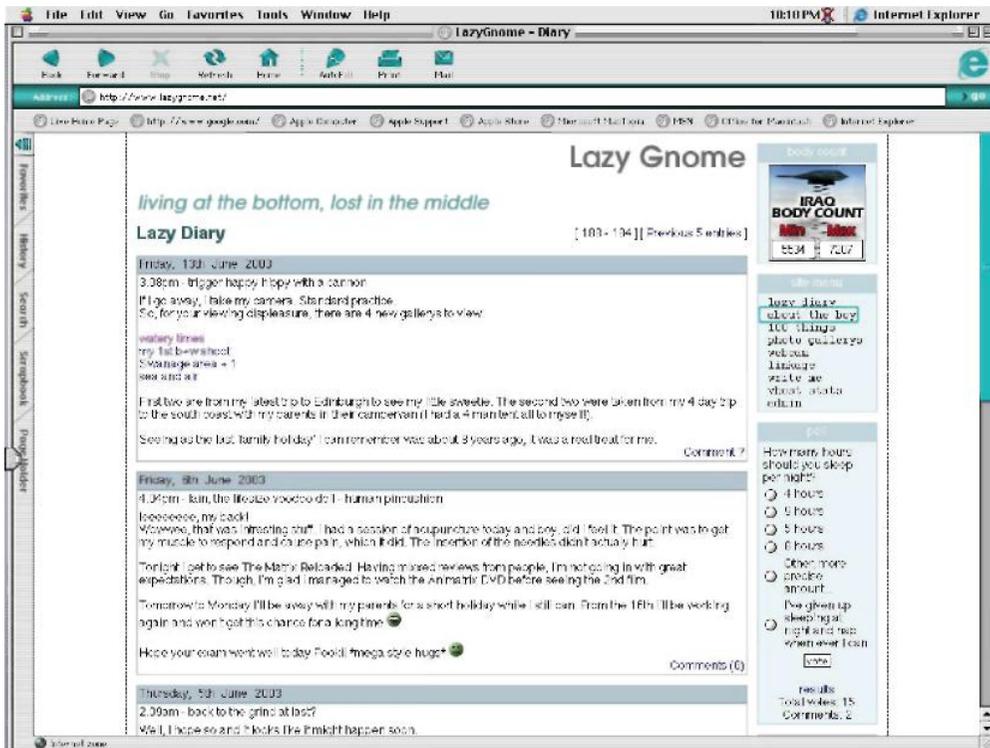[5] Herring, Kouper, Paolillo et al. (2005)

Figure 1. A sample blog.

More specifically, Herring distinguishes between the following three basic gen-res of blogs:

- topical (or filter) blogs
- personal journals (or diairies)
- the so-called knowledge blogs (or notebooks)

2.1. *Topical blogs and their features*

Topical (or filter) blogs are exemplified by the news-based and political blogs that have figured prominently in the popular media's discussion of blogging. In this type of blog, the blogger is said to "pre-surf" the Web and direct readers to selected content. The content of filters is external to the blogger (e.g. world events, online happenings, etc.). Here is an example (taken from www.blogs.telegraph.co.uk), simply illustrating a topical blog:
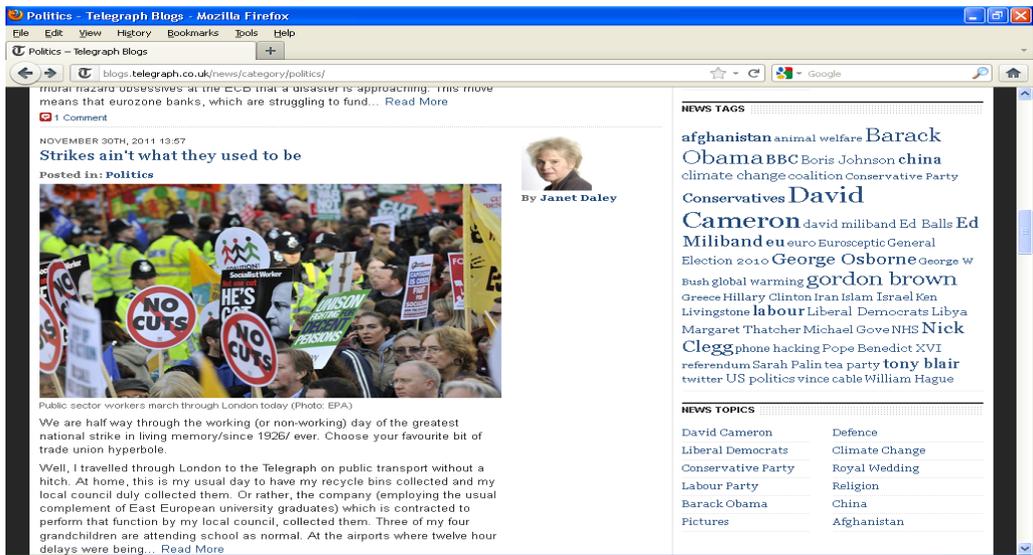
Figure 2. An example of a topical (filter) blog.

Another example of filter or topical blog is shown below (taken from: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/huffpolitics-blog/:

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- **Paul Ryan On Benghazi: 'I Don't Know' If There Was A Cover-up**
  - *WASHINGTON– Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) said Sunday that he does not know whether President Barack Obama intentionally misled the public about the nature of the September 2012 attack in Benghazi, Libya, backtracking from previous comments that the administration had engaged in a "cover-up."*
  - *"What we now know from congressional testimony is that the number two man in Benghazi, the deputy chief of mission, informed his superiors including the secretary of state that this was a terrorist attack," Ryan said during an appearance on "Fox News Sunday."*
  - *"Those of us who have had the briefings, seen the videos, know there was no protest involved. To suggest afterwards that this was the result of a spontaneous protest, we now know is not the case. So the burden of proof here is on the administration's side. It is -- why did they continue to push this kind of a story when they knew nearly immediately afterwards that that was not the case?"*
  - *"Do you believe that the White House purposely misled the American people on Benghazi to try to beat you and Mitt Romney and win the election?" host Chris Wallace asked.*
  - *"I don't know the answer to that question," Ryan responded. "Rather make a*

conclusion before an investigation has been completed, we just need to investigate this for the sake of good government."

- *As recently as last week, Ryan insisted to conservative radio that there is "no doubt" a cover-up took place, an assertion that remains on his* official congressional website.

- *But a day after Ryan's talk radio appearance, the White House released* more than 100 pages of emails *that cast doubt on the Republican theory that the administration had altered its talking points about the attack for political gain.*

- *The emails detailed revisions to the talking points that were ultimately used by UN Ambassador Susan Rice in appearances on Sunday talk shows. Although one State Department email did voice concerns about the talking points being "abused" by members of Congress to "beat up the State Department," the documents show that both the CIA and the State Department had urged revisions, with both agencies voicing concerns that the talking points not interfere with an investigation into what had taken place in Benghazi. The repeated GOP refrain that Rice had been responsible for doctoring the talking points was discredited.*

- *Ryan, the 2012 Republican vice presidential nominee,* repeatedly attacked *the Obama administration on Benghazi during the campaign.*

This is a typical news-based blog. There is almost no difference between this blog and an online newspaper column. Therefore, the blog in question closely resembles written language found in newspaper articles. Language is quite formal and follows the patterns of Standard English, with correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. This is a consequence of copy-editing done by most media companies that examine, change and alter received news before they are published; in this case online.

The only issue where this blog differs from a newspaper column is the use of hypertext links. Blogs are very important in this matter in a way that they allow users to post raw material online that has not been previously edited.

On the other hand, there is little resemblance with asynchronous online communication. That is to say, topical blogs feature very few typical Netspeak features (special fonts and styles, attributive adjectives, prepositional phrases). Specifically, there were only these three found out of the 50 typical Netspeak features as proposed by Crystal (2001), and examined by Hadžiahmetović Jurida (2012), and, not surprisingly, the ones found to be shared do not belong to the lexicon and orthography as the major fields where innovation and creativity can be easily employed.

This is, most likely, the reason why, over the course of years, personal journals as a type of a blog, have become the most popular type of blogs. They are posted

online exactly as the user wants them posted without interference and editing. Therefore, they seem to be the most interesting type of blogs in terms of analysis, as shown in the following section.

2.2. *Personal journals and their features*

Personal journals or diaries, following the earlier lead of web diary sites such as LiveJournal. This genre also might include travel blogs intended for readers back home, open blogs from soldiers in Iraq, or replacements for the annual Christmas letter. The content of personal journals is internal to the blogger (the blogger's thoughts and internal workings). Below is an example of a personal journal blog, taken from www.escnation.com/blog:
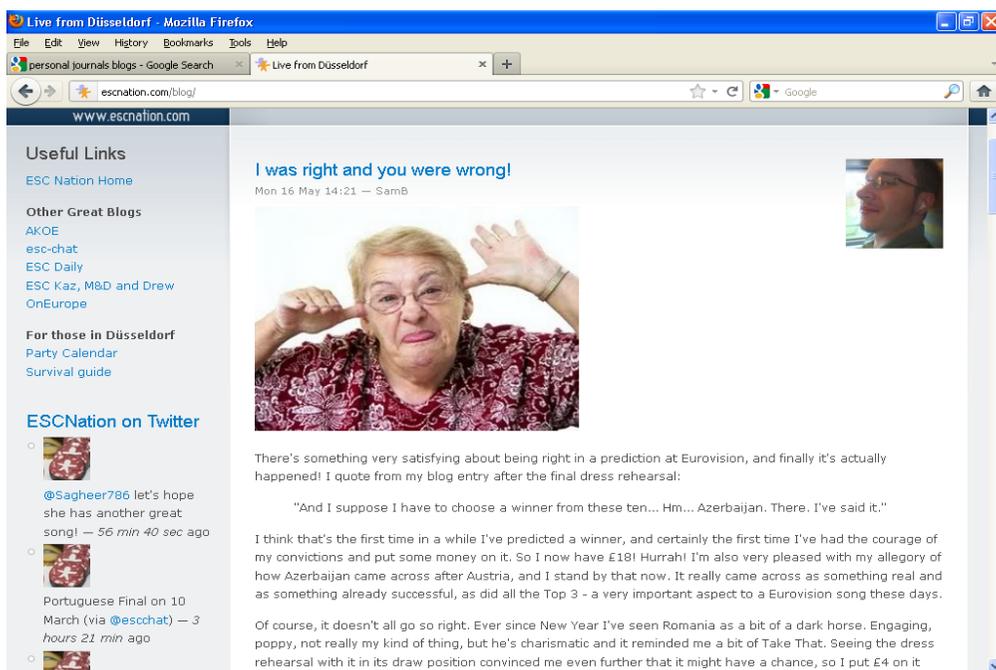

Figure 3. An example of a personal journal blog.

An example of personal journal is shown in the extract below (http://janefonda.com/merry-christmas-to-all/)

> *I wish all my social media friends a wonderful Holiday. I am in Aspen, Colorado. Been here 5 days and return home today. Not skiing. Too nervous I might throw out my hip or knee replacement but, gotta say, if we come back next year I'm gonna bite the bullet and do some easy slopes. Ditto Richard. He hasn't skied this time*

either. BUT, I did walk up Buttermilk Mountain in the snow, ascending from 7500 to 10,500ft. It was challenging because I haven't been working out for 2 weeks because of travel and promotion work. It took 2 hours. Oh boy, was my body sore that night! But I was so glad I did it and grateful that my friend, Annika, gave me the motivation (she's of Swedish descent!) and led the way.

The style of writing in the previous extract resembles a stream of consciousness, as it seems that it expresses the author's thoughts and feelings, just as they pass through their minds. Most importantly, there are several distinguishing features of Netspeak that can be found in the extract. Some of these features are:

- subject ellipsis (*Been here 5 days…, Not skiing., Too nervous I might…*),
- omission of auxiliary verbs *have* and *be* (*Been here 5 days…, Not skiing., Too nervous I might…*),
- deviant spelling (*gotta, gonna*),
- contracted forms (*I'm, hasn't, haven't, she's*),
- use of capital letters to refer to shouting (*BUT*),
- beginning a sentence with a coordinating conjunction (*BUT, I did…, But I was so…*), replacing a word by a number (*5 days, 2 weeks, 2 hours*),
- omission of punctuation (*missing comma*).

Crystal (2006: 244) identifies this style of writing as the one that has never been seen in a public, printed form, outside of literature, and even there it would take an ingenious novelist indeed to capture its innocent spontaneity and unpredictable thematic direction.

Personal journals are likely to provoke a number of replies from other readers in the form of comments. The result is often a discussion which resembles an asynchronous chatgroup. For example, the above mentioned Jane Fonda's blog entry was commented thirteen times. Three comments received additional replies as shown below:

> nancyincali says:
>
> December 27, 2011 at 10:46 pm
> *Merry Christmas to you & your family Jane.*
> *I loved your interview on Joy Behar, both of you were so funny. I have a diet question for you, Jane. I've overeaten and gained a couple pounds over the holidays. Do you have any ideas, secrets, suggestions for taking these extra pounds off QUICKLY (since they came on quickly)? I know exercise is important, but what about fasting? or an over-the-counter diet pill? Problem that I'm having is now I'm hungrier then ever.*

> *I also wanted to let you know that I gave my mom "Prime Time" for Christmas,*
> *she started it last night and LOVES it.*
> *Thanks for all your posts I enjoy reading them.*

Jane says:
> December 29, 2011 at 3:27 pm
> *Nancy, do NOT fast or take any pills. That will screw up your metabolism*
> *and the weight will come right back on. The trick is to workout/burn more*
> *calories than you take in so get your a– in gear…start walking, go to the*
> *"Y" whatever to get active and don't eat fattening foods.*

As discussed in Hadžiahmetović Jurida (2012: 82). the communication here takes place in postponed time, as it takes almost two days for the first comment to receive a reply. Although the comments display many features of writing, they are written in a way that is quite informal. Typical Netspeak features found here, including the following:

- loose sentence structures
- capital letters used for shouting,
- contractions and phrases used in everyday conversation (*get you're a- in gear; go to the "Y" whatever;*),

are just some of the features that display properties of speech. It is therefore hard to put blogs on either side of the formality scale. More likely, they belong somewhere in the middle, displaying properties of both. However, more importantly, they display a number of Netspeak features as explained above.

2.3. *Knowledge-blogs (or notebooks) and their features*

The so-called knowledge blogs (or notebooks), are the type of blogs where individuals share their skills or expertise on particular issues. Notebooks may contain either external or internal content, and are distinguished by longer, focused essays.
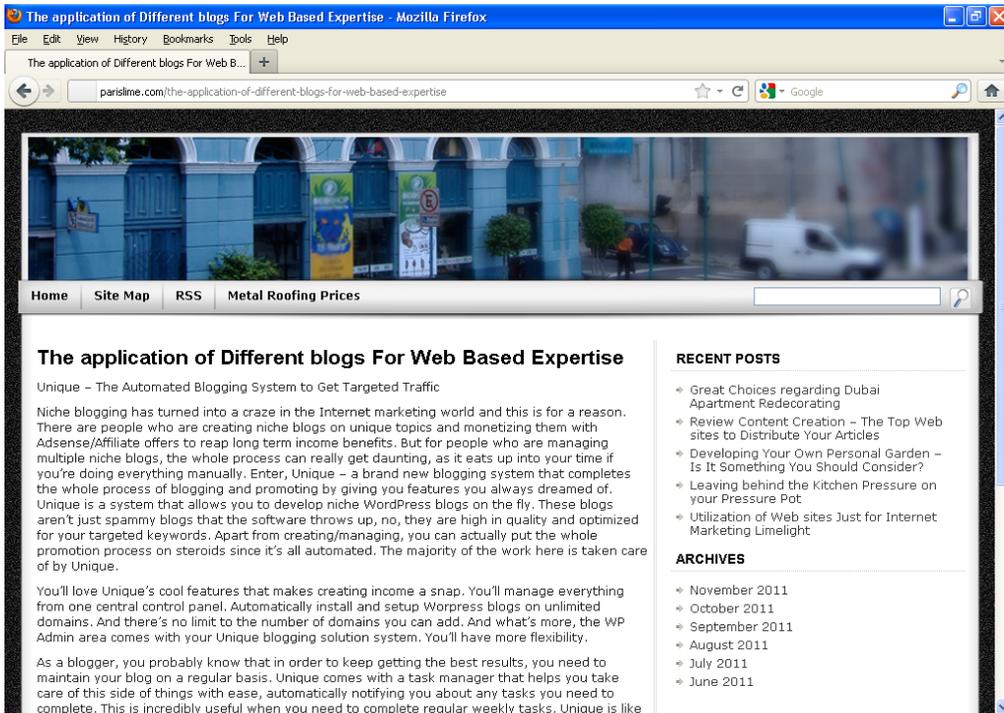
Figure 4. An example of a notebook blog.

In the example below, David Crystal shares his language expertise: (www.david crystal.com/blog):

On giving advices

A correspondent writes to ask whether he can write advices instead of pieces of advice in a report.

Advice is certainly one of those uncountable nouns that's developing a renewed countable use in present-day English, along with researches, informations, and the like. What surprises people is to realise just how long-standing the countable usage is. In the case of advice, the OED has citations dating from the 15th century. 'Getting good advices' appears in one of William Caxton's translations (1481). We are not talking downmarket usage here. The Duchess of Newcastle in 1664 talks about being 'attentive to good advices'. And here's Gibbon in 1796: 'These are so many advices which it is easy to give, but difficult to follow.'

The examples continue right down to the present day, but the 18th century saw a shift away from the countable use when prescriptive writers took against it, preferring a partitive expression (such as piece of advice) - and also against other such nouns such as information, which also had a long history of countable use (with citations from the 15th to the 18th century). Advices fell out of use in standard

English, accordingly, but retained its identity in regional speech. The OED has some modern quotations, but they are all Caribbean and South Asian.

What seems to be happening is that the original instinct to use advice and the other words in both countable and uncountable ways is reasserting itself. People who have not been influenced by a prescriptive mindset in school are most likely to use it – which mainly means the millions learning English as a foreign language. Often the countable usage is reinforced by an analogous countability in a mother-tongue (as with informations in French). But it would be wrong to see the renewed plural use as solely an L2 phenomenon, as it is present in regional dialects, both national and (as the OED recognizes) international. I suspect it will become a standard usage again one day. In the case of informations there are signs of this already happening, in that the legal profession continues to use the plural form routinely in various special contexts. But advices isn't standard yet, so in formal writing I would say stick with the partitive form for the time being.

In the above extract, Crystal answers a query from another linguist in a form of an online lecture, thus replacing the classroom with a blog. Making an uncountable noun countable with the introduction of partitive expressions is discussed. The lecture is given in writing, however the language used closely resembles speech, which brings us back to the inevitable question, and one of the most intriguing and interesting things about Netspeak, as a form of communication – the extent to which it relies on the features of both speech and writing. As in the case of topical blogs, it can be said that knowledge blogs share very few typical Netspeak features, given their form and nature.

In addition to these three basic categories, other researchers have identified additional blogging genres, including support groups. Another category is blogs created for academic purposes.

Herring et al. (2004: 2) underline that, although the earliest blogs were, in fact, filters, the journal type has now become more common. As Herring reports, for Blood (2002), blogs are unique (or, as she puts it - native) to the Web, rather than carried over from off-line genres.

Other typical features of blogs include the following:

- characterictic entries-posted-in-reverse-chronological format, derived from the software used to create and maintain blogs
- update frequency: they should be updated on a regular basis
- patterns of use: the prototypical blog is focused around links to other sites of interest (or other blogs) on the Web, with blogger commentary for added value
- socially interactive, community-like in nature (highest in journal-type blogs):

o blogs linking to one another
o blogs allow readers to post comments to individual entries, thus giving rise to "conversational" exchanges on the blog itself

In terms of statistical sampling, Baron reports that it turns out that the blogs getting the least press are actually the most prevalent. In support of this statement, Baron highlights (2008: 110) that, of the 203 blogs that Herring and her students analysed (randomly selected through the blog-tracking web site blo.gs), more than 70 percent were of the personal-journal variety. Another study using random data from blo.gs examined the demographics of bloggers:

Figure 5. Jeff Stahler: © Columbus Dispatch/Dist. By Newspaper Enterprise Association, Inc.

Not surprisingly, the style of writing found across blogs varies with respect to genre. Personal journal blogs are more likely to use language that some researchers say exemplifies female writing style, while topical/filter blogs contain more male stylistic features. Interestingly, Baron believes that this generalisation holds true regardless of the author's actual gender.

The study made by Herring, Scheidt et al. (2005) serves the purposes of characterizing the properties of the emergent blog genre, and situating it with respect to

offline genres, as well as with respect to the broader genre ecology of the Internet. The study fulfilled both of its major goals, as follows:

- to provide an empirical snapshot of the weblog in its present stage, a s a historical record for purposes of comparison with future stages of evolution
- to contribute to a theoretical understanding of how technological changes trigger the formation of new genres, which in turn may affect the genre ecology of a larger domain such as the Internet.

The analysis provided by Herring, Scheidt et al (2005) suggests that the blog is neither fundamentally new nor unique, but that it, along with other emergent genres driven by interactive web technologies, occupies a new position in the Internet genre ecology. Specifically, it is said to form a de facto bridge between multimedia HTML documents and text-based computer-mediated communication, thereby blurring the traditional distinction between these two dominant Internet paradigms, and potentially contributing to its breakdown in the future. This, in a way, reminds of the situation where it is rather difficult to draw a line between speech and writing, when it comes to Netspeak, if possible at all.
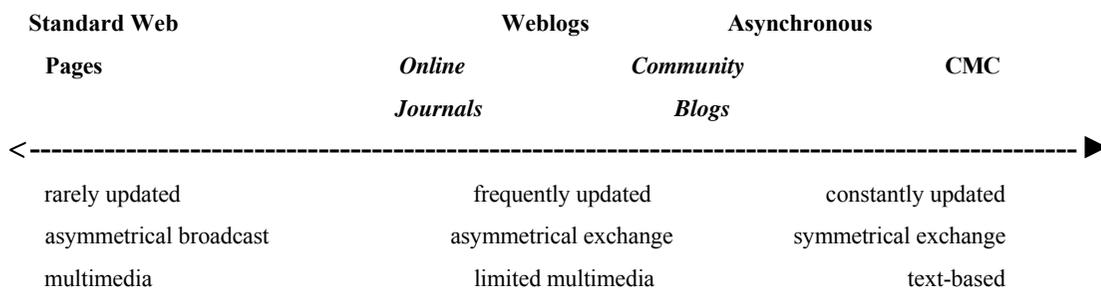
Standard Web Pages	Weblogs *Online Journals*	Asynchronous *Community Blogs*	CMC
< --- ▶			
rarely updated	frequently updated		constantly updated
asymmetrical broadcast	asymmetrical exchange		symmetrical exchange
multimedia	limited multimedia		text-based

Figure 5. Weblogs on a continuum between standard Web pages and CMC.

3. Web Genres

Recent years have seen a growing interest in the identification of genres on the World Wide Web. Herring, Scheidt et al. (2005: 2) claim that, as a type of web document, blogs are related to – and some would claim, replacing – personal home pages: both are typically created and maintained by a single individual, and their content tends to focus on the creator or his/her interests. While theirs is the first systematic genre analysis of blogs, personal home pages have received considerable attention from Web genre analysts.

Herring, Scheidt et al. (2005: 2) provide the following overview of approaches to personal home pages by other authors:

- Crowston and Williams (2000) cite personal home pages as an example of an "emergent" (rather than a "reproduced") web genre;
- for Dillon and Gushrowski (2000), it is the first uniquely web-based genre;
- Bates and Lu (1997), Chandler (1998)) and Dillon and Gushrowski (2000) identify structural characteristics of personal home pages, including the presence of personal information about the creator, number and patterns of hyperlinks; layout; presence of formulaic welcome messages; and iconographic and technical features.
- Content analyses have been conducted of the home pages of business web sites (Ha & James (1998), while Arnold and Miller (1999) find gender differences in the structure and content of home pages created by academic professionals.

Herring, Scheidt et al. agree that the findings of the latter two studies suggest that older practices from related off-line genres carry over into the web genres, making them at least partially "reproduced" in the sense of Crowston and Williams (2000). Detailed analysis made by Herring, Scheidt et al suggests that blogs are neither unique nor reproduced entirely from offline genres, but rather constitute a hybrid genre that draws from multiple sources, including other Internet genres.

3.1. *Why Blog?*

People choose to write blogs for a variety of reasons. According to the Lenhart and Fox[6] (the Pew Internet & American Life Project), adults' top four motivations for blogging in 2006 were as follows:

- to express themselves creatively
- to document their personal experiences or share them with others
- to stay in touch with friends and family
- to share practical knowledge or skills with others

The first three reasons suggest that a lot of personal journal writing is taking place. The final category – sharing knowledge or skills – is an indication of knowledge blogs. Interestingly, Baron concludes here that this last group of bloggers seems ripe for participating in Wikipedia.

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[6] In Baron (2008: 111).

Baron reports (2008: 112) that bloggers in the Nardi study also shed light on why people blog. Subjects identified the following five main reasons:

- update others on activities and whereabouts
- express opinions to influence others
- seek others' opinions
- "think by writing"
- release emotional tension

For bloggers, the medium constitutes an important platform for free speech. There are no demands for your credentials before you take the floor. But bloggers' freedom extends even further to controlling audience access and audience input.

4. Conclusions

When discussing blogs, the general focus is on the written text they contain. However, modern blogging software often welcomes visual display. Baron puts forward some interesting questions (2008: 114) – What if you cut out the text entirely and only upload graphics? If the images are still photographs, you enter the world of photo-sharing, made popular by such services as Flickr. If you are into movies, welcome to YouTube.

The resent study has shown that blogs have features in common with personal homepages. It has also shown that personal journals, as one of the three basic types of blogs as classified by Herring (2004) and Baron (2008), actually display the largest number of Netspeak features. The analysis of the basic types of blogs has shown that it is the personal journals that most resemble the online communication found in an asynchronous setting, followed by topical and knowledge blogs. The number of features typically observed with the language of asynchronous online communication (discussion forums) includes the following:

- The non-linear nature of the interaction
- Threads (semantically related messages)
- Anaphoric cross-reference between messages
- General feedback reactions found as opening sentences
- Short messages, giving the interaction a dynamic touch
- Members accommodating other members: despite members coming from various backgrounds, they come to use certain types of grammatical construction, jargon, slang, or abbreviations, thus sharing linguistic character
- Use of rhetorical questions or tag questions to express personal opinion and stress an utterance

- Absence of lengthy quotation
- Providing opportunity for equal participation
- The peer-group factor

In conclusion, according to Crystal (2001: 147), it is highly likely for a sample of a blog to display a similar use of linguistic features listed and presented above. Crystal also finds the language of asynchronous messaging 'a curious mixture of informal letter and essay, of spoken monologue and dialogue'[7], which, at the same time, 'lacks some of the most fundamental properties of conversation, such as turn-taking, floor-taking, and adjacency.

According to Crystal (2001: 1), there are widely held anxieties about the effect of the Internet on language and languages. This primarily relates to various issues of social concern, such as politics, economy, privacy, security, crime, intellectual property rights etc., where authors draw attention to the dangers of the Internet, but on the other hand, there are authors who are primarily concerned with linguistic issues. Several highly interesting questions still remain:

- Will the Internet herald a new era of technobabble?
- Will linguistic creativity and flexibility be lost as globalisation imposes sameness?

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Lingvistička obilježja i aspekti blogova u kontekstu Netspeaka

U kontekstu Netspeaka i engleskoga kao globalnog jezika, blogovi, koji se definiraju kao često modificirane internetske stranice na kojima se unešeni podaci navode obrnutim kronološkim redoslijedom, postaju sve popularnijim oblikom komunikacije na Internetu. U ovome se radu daje prikaz blogova kao asinkronog vida *online* komunikacije koji dijeli neka od razlikovnih obilježja sa asinkronim forumima za diskusiju. U radu se daje prikaz podrijetla blogova, predstavlja se blogosfera – tko blogira i o čemu – i, najvažnije, zašto ljudi rade blogove. Smatra se da se broj vrsta blogova drastično proširio tokom protekloga desetljeća, što blogove čini višestruko korisnim sredstvom nego običnom vrstom internetske platforme. U radu se prikazuju osnovna lingvistička obilježja blogova, kao i prikaz osnovnih vrsta blogova i njihovih lingvistčkih obilježja i apsekata. U radu se karakteriziraju obilježja bloga kao žanra u nastanku koji svoje mjesto nalazi negdje između ostalih mnogobrojnih žanrova na Internetu. Glavna je ideja empirijski predstaviti blogove u njihovom trenutačnom stanju i obliku, radi usporedbe s njegovim budućim stadijima evolucije, istovremeno pridonoseći teorijskom shvaćanju procesa putem kojeg tehnološke promjene pokreću formiranje novih žanrova, što, s druge strane, može utjecati na cijeli skup žanrova iz šire domene kao što je Internet.

Ključne riječi: Netspeak; blogovi; asinkrona *online* komunikacija; blogosfera.