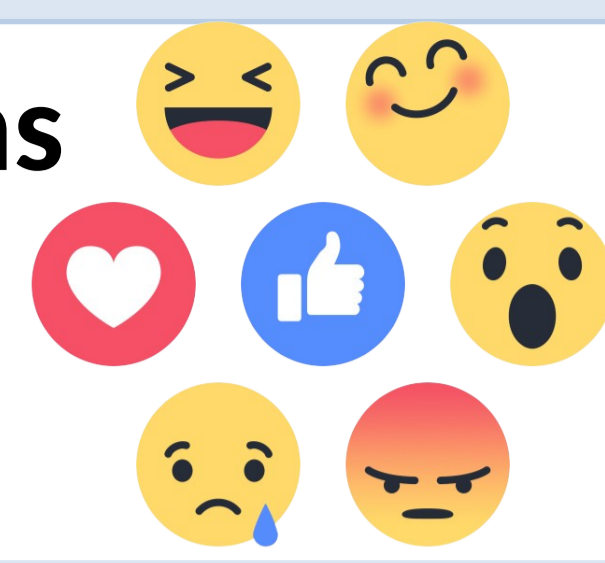




Identity performance of older Greek-Cypriot Facebook users: Analysis of Communicative Functions

Stephanie Tilliridou



Timeline About Friends Photos More

Status Photo / Video Life Event

Intro

1. Introduction

Thesis Research Question – how do older Facebook users use semiotic and linguistic features to project different online identities on Facebook wall posts

Chapter Aim: Data analysis of Facebook wall posts based on their communicative function in order to identify:

1. the purposes these wall posts achieve and
2. what identity work is done through achieving these purposes

2842 posts were collected during a period of 6 months from 13 Facebook users aged 51 to 67 years old

Friends - 476

2. Communicative Functions, Self-Presentation and Identity

Communicative function in this study is defined as the purpose or end that is achieved by the use of linguistic and/or semiotic means. The relations between means and ends are multiple in both directions, the same means serving varied ends and the same ends being served by varied means' (Hymes 1964 p.10)

Communicative functions in relation to identity: Identity work of Facebook users is affected by the styling of an utterance and the communicative ends they aim to achieve
POSTING framework by Tagg et.al (2017): P: Participants, O:online media ideologies, S:site affordances, T:text type, I:identification processes, N:norms of communication, G:goals or immediate purposes or ends when posting (i.e communicative functions)

Facebook users have a semi-conscious awareness of these elements when thinking about how their posts will be received, interpreted by their social networks and thus, this has an impact on their self-presentation and identity online. As a result, the goals or communicative functions they wish to achieve affect their self-presentation strategies.

References

Hymes, D., (1964). Introduction: Toward Ethnographies of Communication . *American anthropologist*, 66(6, part 2), pp.1-34.

Lee, C., (2011). Micro-blogging and status updates on Facebook: texts and practices. In: Thurlow, C., Mroczek, K. (Eds.), *Digital Discourse: Language in the NewMedia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jones, R. (2016). Surveillance. In A. Georgakopoulou & T. Spilioti (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of language & digital communication*, 408–411. London & New York: Routledge.

Tagg, C., Seargeant, B. & Brown, A. (2017) Taking offence on social media: Conviviality and communication on Facebook. London: Palgrave Pivot

3. Classification of communicative functions

Lee's (2011) categorisation of communicative functions was used as a starting point for analysing and coding the posts collected in my study

17 categories were identified using a top-down and bottom-up approach used for the coding (i.e moving from the general coding system provided by Lee (2011) to the more specific categories which emerged from my data, but also creating new categories based on the data of my study)



By taking into account the types of events and activities selected for sharing with their Facebook friends, we can infer the ways in which the participants present themselves to their social network and, thus, the range of identities they deem relevant for this type of interaction.

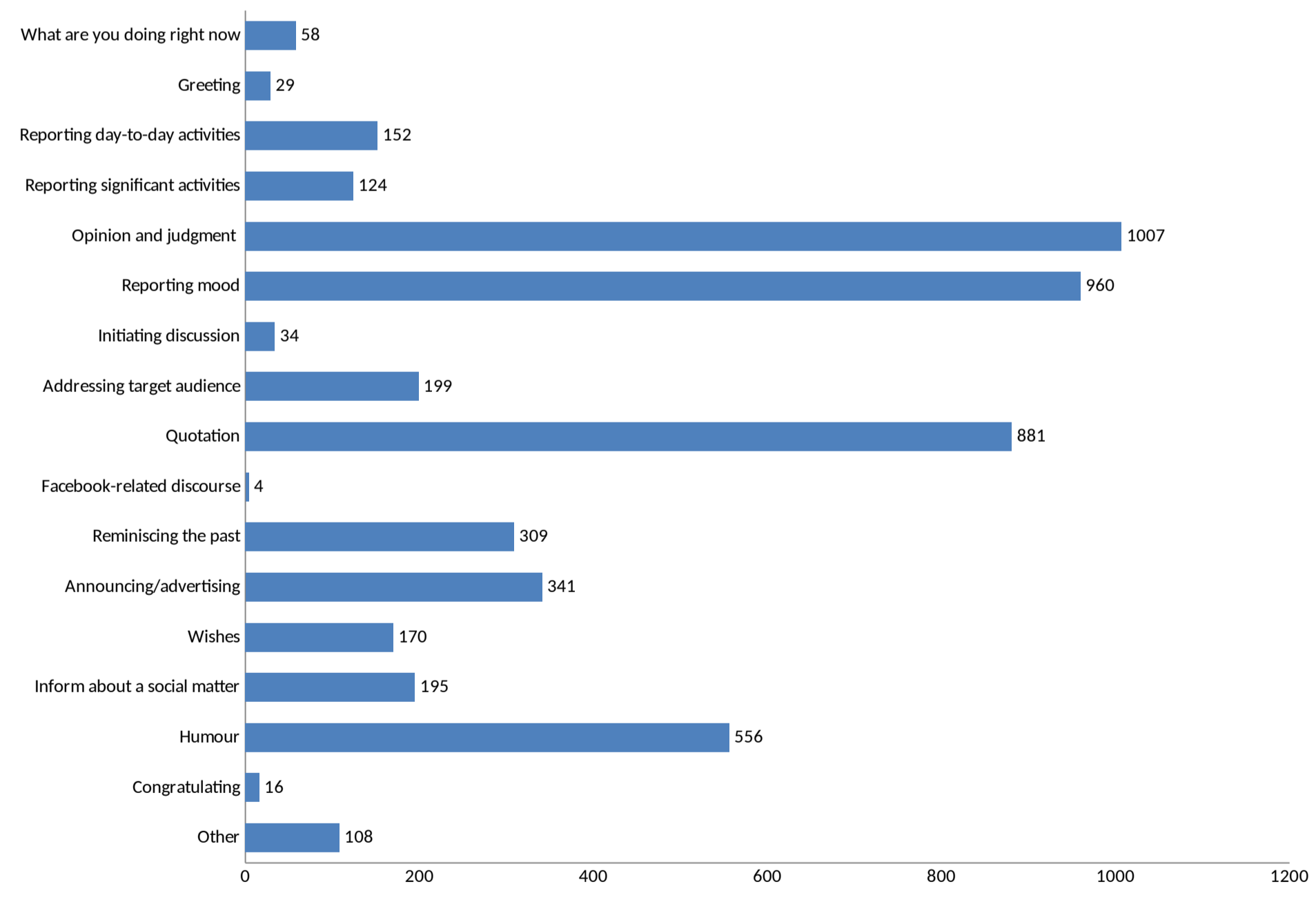
4. 1 Reporting Activities

- participants reported on specific events and provided information on certain activities in their everyday lives
- Professional identity
- Identity as mobile citizens (see example 1)
- Lifestyle identity (see example 1)



Example 1

4. Analysis of Communicative Functions



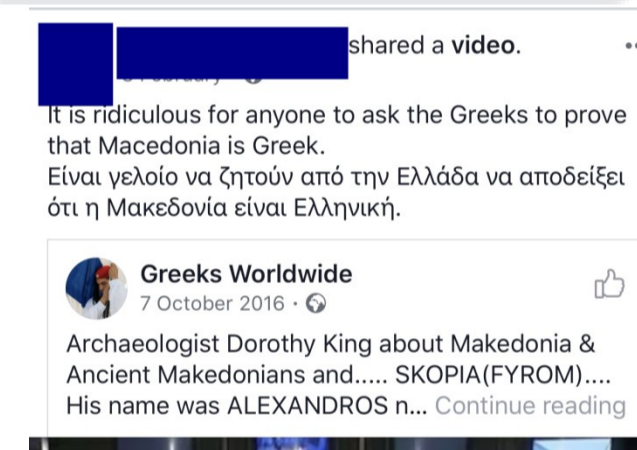
Most popular categories: 'Opinion and Judgment' (1007, 19.6%) , 'Reporting mood' (960, 18.7%), which often co-occurred with expressing their opinion on an event or matter, posts with 'quotations' (881, 17.1%)

Like Comment Share

4.2 Reporting Mood/ opinion

- Political Identity (see example 2: the participant used both English and Greek to express his opinion on a political issue)
- Religious Identity
- Parent or Family Identity related to the age of the participants as most of the participants have already had children of their own and parenthood and family play a significant role in their lives.

Filters Manage posts



Example 2

4. 3 Sharing Humour and Quotation

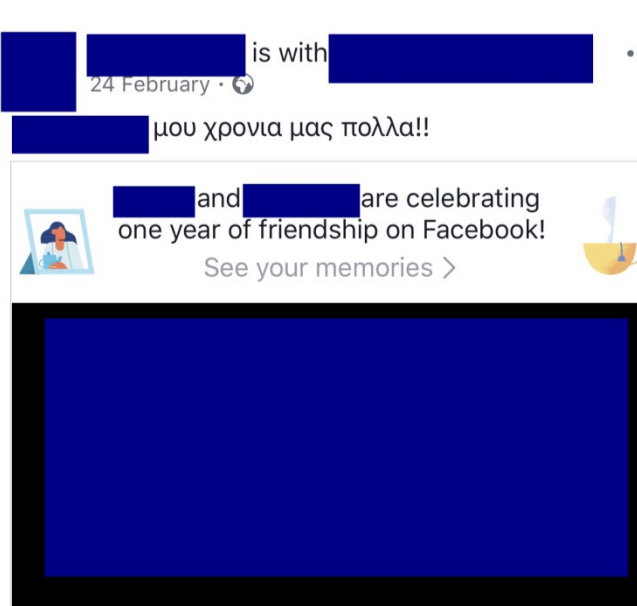
Humorous Identity: humour was often expressed through other people's words and texts
Lee (2011, p. 9) notes in her study, perhaps Facebook offers a space in which participants feel even more motivated 'to show off their wit and creativity, allowing target readers to display their own cyber literacy in comments and responses'

4.4 Addressing and interacting with other users

Participants addressed target audience using tags or addressing a specific group of people verbally or when they initiated discussion with questions

4.5 Sharing wishes and memories through Platform Affordances

some communicative functions were facilitated by Facebook's new functionalities (see example 3)
Jones (2015) highlights the importance of taking into consideration the affordances of the online platform an analyst is examining



Question for the poster readers:
What do you think would be a natural next step for my research? Example 3