The Blogging Artist: a Genre-Analysis Approach

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Abstract

Building on the now classic approaches to Discourse Analysis offered by Swales and Bhatia, the present paper tries to establish the benefits and value of applying the method of Genre Analysis to teaching English for Art Purposes, with a focus on a more recent Internet genre, that of the artist's blog (weblog). The artist's blog is seen as part of the greater genre of the weblog, which has already been classified into a number of subgenres. The paper proposes yet another dimension to be added to those already considered when classifying the weblogs: the dimension of "occupational-oriented content" as a descriptive for further classifications; it also tries to uncover the generic features of this type of discourse. The ultimate aim of this study is, on the one hand, that of providing art students with the necessary know-how of using the weblog genre for their current and future professional purposes, as part of the complex system of genres devised by the artistic discourse community in order to communicate both within and without itself, and, on the other hand, to help students use their knowledge of the English language to create such a discourse type in order to obtain maximum benefits.

Keywords: Genre Analysis; weblog (blog); occupational-oriented content; English for Art Purposes; language for professional communication

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Introduction

The notion of genre has been given numerous definitions and acceptations, both literary and non-literary. From the applied linguist's point of view, Ken Hyland (2002)[1] speaks about three main schools of genre analysts: a first one is that of the North American New Rhetoric group, represented by Miller, Bazerman, Coe, who see genre as a functional relationship between text type and rhetorical situation, rather ethnographic than pedagogic; a second orientation, based on the theoretical work of Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL; also known as the 'Sydney School'), focusing on the social purposes genres serve and on the rhetorical schemes (stages/moves and linguistic pattern choices—lexical, grammatical, cohesive) employed for achieving those purposes. This second school is interested in developing a language and literacy pedagogy to help the historically and culturally disadvantaged (migrant) adults get access to the valuable tools offered by genres for social and cultural integration. A third perspective, more pedagogically driven, that of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) situates itself in between the two and considers communicative purpose as the fundamental feature a genre is constructed around.

The method of Genre Analysis established by John Swales[2] and Vijay Bhatia[3] has known a wide recognition among applied linguists and ESP teachers. Numerous studies and extensive research have been undertaken since the early days of this branch, dealing with a long range of aspects of the generic features of different types of discourse. No matter how diverse, they all seem to converge to ascertaining the real value of the method for the very practical aspects of academic training, professional communication, teaching a second language, creating new pedagogies. Starting from Swales's classic definition of the genre as "[…] a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes […] recognized by the expert members"[4] , and from Bhatia's description of language-in-use that combines socio-cultural and psycholinguistic aspects of text construction and interpretation, researchers have analyzed an impressive number of genres, for an equally impressive number of purposes. They belong in a wide variety of settings, not just academic or scientific, or professional.

Research of genres has revealed the complexity of this type of discourse organization, such as: the necessity of viewing genre as the rhetorical organization of the discourse in direct relationship with the social/societal context (in spite of some other opinions maintaining the autonomy of rhetoric); the relationship of genre with knowledge production (that is disseminated as typified through a number of genres; Berkenkotter and Huckin note: "Genres

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[1] pp. 113-135
[2] In his 1990 work *Genre Analysis. English in academic and research settings*
[3] In his 1993 work *Analysing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings*
[4] Swales, 1990, p. 58

are the intellectual scaffolds on which community-based knowledge is constructed" [5]); the existence of mixed genres (or blurred)[6]; the interdiscursivity aspects[7]; the cross-cultural variation in understanding and creating genres; the danger of oversimplifying the nature of genres by ignoring the different social functions one genre may have, or by ignoring the writer's more complex and/or private intentions, which add to the largely recognized communicative purpose(s) of a genre; the way move-shifts occur and how they are signaled by lexical and grammatical patterns; interaction between verbal and nonverbal features of genres; genre variation, triggered by the changing contexts of their production, cultural, historical, or situational (intended audiences, special relations between writers and readers); the practical aspect of putting genre analysis to work for educational purposes to prompt students better reflect, write, and create[8] and even to better prepare teachers of foreign languages and ESP[9]. These were only some aspects present day Genre Analysis (Bhatia [2012] proposes the term Critical Genre Analysis'[10]) seems to deal with, but the study of different genres is still a focus for every genre analyst.

Internet/Web Genres

More recent studies have been focusing on such new realities as Internet (or Web) genres, which seem to combine classic generic features with the newer medium offered by the Web platforms.

As Kevin Crowston notices, "the increased functionality of the Internet has been paralleled by an explosion in Internet genres".[11] While using the term 'document' instead of any type of 'texts', he stresses upon the importance of functionality as a criterion of defining the Web genres, correlated to the type of information provided in a certain document; he also accounts for the generic freedom of the Internet documents as derived from the lack of a central management of the Web. He quotes Yates and Sumner, who speak about a "democratization of genre production": different communities develop different genres in order to fulfil their

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[5] *Genre Knowledge in Disciplinary Communication: Cognition/Culture/Power.* Hillsdale, p. 24

[6] Bhatia (1997) speaks about the increasing intrusion of promotional elements into information-giving genres (news editorials, academic book introductions, legal documents, and bureaucratic reports). He also notices the mixture of communicative purposes and private intentions in some genres, determined by specific contexts.

[7] Bhatia (2004, 2010) defines intertextuality as text-internal relations, while interdiscursivity is acoounted for by text-external factors establishing relations both within and across genres: "Interdiscursivity thus accounts for a variety of discursive processes and professional practices, often resulting in mixing, embedding, and bending of generic norms in professional contexts" p. 3

[8] See Johns (ed) (2002) and Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998)

[9] Genre Analysis as a Linguistic Research Tool and Its Pedagogical Applications for EAP/ESP is a teacher education course offered by Universitat de Jaume, in Spain, according to Posteguillo et al. (2003)

[10] " CGA, on the other hand, is a way of 'demystifying' professional practice through the medium of genres. An interesting aspect of this analysis is that it focuses as much on generic artefacts, as on professional practices, as much on what is explicitly or implicitly said in genres, as on what is not said, as much on socially recognized communicative purposes, as on "private intentions" (Bhatia, 1995) that professional writers tend to express in order to understand professional practices or actions of the members of corporations, institutions and professional organizations."

[11] in a chapter of *Encyclopaedia of Library and Information Sciences*, p. 10 in the available source

specific goals and needs, and to perform specific work practices. However, it is due to the genres' 'fixity' that people can communicate in this variegate context of the Internet. Meanwhile, although different communities make use of the Internet in certain ways for certain purposes, there is a high degree of unpredictability in the audiences of the different documents. Sometimes a genre may unite different communities, while other times genre mixing may bring about confusion in certain communities. However, "[…] the set of genres in use (i.e., the genre repertoire) is both a product of and a shaper of the communicative practices of a community."[12]

While there are cases in which some classic (paper) genres have moved almost unchanged into the virtual space, as, for instance, the academic journal articles, other paper genres have been modified to better fit the new medium (the journal, the working/conference papers), allowing for new genres to make their appearance (electronically distributed journal article). Crowston mentions other new genres, occurring in the new virtual medium: the hotlist, the home page, the FAQ (frequently asked questions) document, the email message (with such subtypes as business, and academic), the Weblog (or, blog), the mailing list, the unsolicited commercial email (or spam), the Web resumé, the online encyclopaedia, the Internet advertising (or, 'netvertising'), non-textual documents (multimedia), mixed media documents (PowerPoint presentations).

Researches in the field have proposed a great number of classifications of the Internet genres, applying different criteria, top-down, or bottom-up; there are also some hierarchies, such as that proposed by Crowston and Williams, who advocate for a multi-facetted approach to these hierarchies: 'declaratory documents' as the head of the list is followed by advertisements, announcements, custom 404 page (saying that the Web page could not be found), new bulletins, press releases, etc. The table offered at the end of Crowston's chapter throws some light into the vast domain of the Web genres and their possible classifications: depending on the chosen corpus, on the techniques applied, on the features under observation, different authors have devised different classifications whose results range from distinguishing from 4 Web genres to as many as 115, with a median number of 10.

The findings of Crowston's research were aimed at applying to the complex activity of system designing. None the less, one should always refer to such parameters as purpose, form, function, target audience when defining a Web genre, while keeping in mind the extreme dynamism of this new medium, therefore the possibility of some new genres to appear, or of other to die, according to the ever changing realities (or rather,' virtualities').

A number of Internet genres have been dedicated careful analysis. For example, Amy Suen (2009)[13] pays attention to the generic characteristics of hotel homepages, trying to

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[12] Idem, p. 12

[13] From The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, in her "Self-Representation of Five Star Hotels: A Digital Genre Analysis of Hotel Homepages"

identify the textual and image features that make a genre out of this digital reality. Building on Bhatia's (2004) framework, this study also adopts Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) multimodal analysis framework for analysing images on hotel websites, as visual images also create meaning in communication. The 'representational', 'interpersonal' and 'compositional' meaning of the images used on hotel homepages are investigated. "**Representational meanings** are about the representation of the world. They are revealed through narrative and conceptual images […]**. Interpersonal meanings** refer to the social relationship between the participants. Contact, distance, point of view and modality contribute to the realization of interpersonal meanings […]**. Compositional meanings** are the relations of the representational and interactive meanings of an image to each other. They are realized through the interrelated systems of information value, framing and salience." Her corpus consists of 12 hotel homepages; the features she analyses are the moves of the text, the lexical-grammatical features, the hyperlinks, and the use of the images. The seven moves she identifies in the texts of the hotel homepages are M1: Identifying the Brand (through a logo)→ M2: Introducing the Contents List of the Hotel Website (through a navigation menu) → M3: Establishing Contact (by providing potential customers with contact details) → M4: (optional) Greeting → M5: Establishing Credentials (through the "long history and international fame") → M6: (optional) Introducing Location and Views → M 7: Introducing Accommodations (describing rooms and facilities). The analysis of the lexical-grammatical features reveals   the frequent use of content-specific nouns (such as "spa"), the frequent use of such qualifiers as "top", "best", consistent with the rank of the five-star hotels, the use of the personal pronouns "we"/"our"- "you", to establish relationship with potential customers and to engage them in a sort of conversation. Hyperlinks are also examined with an aim to find out the common embedded information shown on the twelve hotel homepages. Images offer a kind of virtual tour of the hotels and their facilities. Suen's genre analysis of the hotel homepage ends by distinguishing the communicative purposes of this genre: "four communicative purposes of hotel homepages have been identified, namely to introduce the hotel, to inform readers of the facilities of the hotel, to establish the image of the hotel, and to promote the hotel. The analyses show that hotel homepages are partly informational and partly promotional."[14]

Another Internet genre that has known extensive research is the email. One such interest is shown by Barberio, Mastrogiorgio, and Lomi (2011),[15] in their study of the email genre as a means of communication within a specific open source software developers' community; these authors apply the method of "network text analysis", to semantically analyse the shared meanings extracted from the texts.' Their method is similar to content analysis in that it can extract mental models from texts. Their corpus comprises a number of 155 individual emails, clustered within two "threads". The intricate network of semantic

[14] Suen, op cit, p. 125

[15] In their article " Individuals' Use of E-Mail Communication Genres in Open Source Software Community Building", pp. 30-43

structures they make reveal the fact that in the discourse community they observed, the email genre was in fact enacted through a number of other communication genres (viewed as "shared templates for collective sense-making") such as "vote", "bug","cvs", "proposal", etc. The email voting systems were used to create collective decision and entailed two main steps: consensus creation and voting. The results of this research could be of interest in the more general research of "coordination practices".

The Weblog (The Blog)

Dictionary Definitions

Much interest has been aroused by the Internet genre of the Weblog, more commonly known as "blog".

A great number of definitions have been given to this much appreciated Internet tool of communication:

- "a Web site containing the writer's or group of writers' own experiences, observations, opinions, etc., and often having images and links to other Web sites." [16]

- "A **blog** (a portmanteau of the term *web log*) is a discussion or informational site published on the World Wide Web and consisting of discrete entries ("posts") typically displayed in reverse chronological order (the most recent post appears first)"[17]

- "A weblog, or simply a blog, is a website which contains periodic, reverse chronologically ordered posts on a common webpage. Such a web site would typically be accessible to any Internet user. Part of the reason 'blog' was coined and commonly accepted into use is the fact that in saying "blog", confusion with server log is avoided. Individual posts (which taken together are the blog or weblog) either share a particular theme, or a single or small group of authors." *(source..... **wordIq**)[18]*

- "A weblog is a hierarchy of text, images, media objects and data, arranged chronologically, that can be viewed in an HTML browser."*(source ... **Harvard**)[19]*

- "Blog is short for weblog. A weblog is a journal that is frequently updated and intended for general public consumption. Blogs generally represent the personality of the author or the Web site. Blogs have common elements: updated frequently (usually daily); informal; grouped by date with links to archives of older posts; informative and/or inspiring (the good ones); frequently linked to other sites that inspired the blog; and addictive for those who blog. The author of a blog is often referred to as a blogger. When we add an entry to our blogs, we may often say we blogged today." *(source ... **BloggerForum**)[20]*

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[16] According to **http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/blog**
[17] According to Wikipedia
[18] According to **http://www.blog-connection.com/blog-definition.htm**
[19] ibidem
[20] idem

• "Short for weblog. A meandering, blatantly uninteresting online diary that gives the author the illusion that people are interested in their stupid, pathetic life." *(source ... UrbanDictionary)*[21]

Of course, more searches on the Internet would reveal even more dictionary definitions of this term, ranging from scholarly ones, to more popular, and even to such deprecatory and pessimistic as the last one in the previous list. However, they all seem to agree on some generic features of this type of computer mediated communication: it consist of some periodic, chronologically reversed order entries/posts on a number of (more or less) personal experiences, and making use of the Internet.

Previous Research

Beside these dictionary definitions, especially in the last few years, a great number of scientific studies referred to the generic aspects of the blog. A well-known researcher of the genres of the Internet communication is Susan Herring, from Indiana University (Bloomington, IN). In the 2004, (reprinted 2005) study she co-authored[22], she offers a very pertinent genre analysis of the weblog. This study is based on an analysis of a random sample of 203 blogs collected from March through May of 2003 using the randomizing feature of the blog-tracking website *blo.gs*.

In the Introduction, the authors explain that their analysis "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 forms 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." The early days of this genre appear to harken back to 1996 (as a format) and to 1997 (as "weblog"; however some sources date it 1991); since those early days, the number of blogs increased exponentially[23]; the development of free-blogging software (of which Blogger, Wordpress are the most widely used) made it possible for virtually everybody to have a blog; blogs can be looked at as alternative sources of news and public opinion, as environments for knowledge sharing (in education), as vehicles for self-expression and self-empowerment (for individuals), as tools for personal development (the blogger becomes more thoughtful and more articulate about the surrounding world).

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[21]idem

[22] Susan C. Herring, Lois Ann Scheidt, Sabrina Bonus, Elijah Wright : "Bridging the Gap: A Genre Analysis of Weblogs" (2004); "Weblogs as a bridging genre" (2005)

[23] At the time the article was written, 2,1 million blogs had been counted; other more recent figures are 181 millions by the end of 2011; *wordpress* live counter shows 61,419,838 blogs in February 2013, for own platform only

Once placed in the context of the Web genres, near personal home pages (a genre which has been devoted serious research), the study suggests that the weblog is rather a hybrid genre, drawing from multiple sources. A short survey of the previous research on the blog reveals that authors of blogs have defined them as characteristic entries posted-in-reverse-chronological order format (derived from the software used), characterized by frequent updates and sharing the same pattern of linking to other relevant sites, accompanied by the blogger's commentary. Early classifications speak about three main types of blogs: filters, personal journals, notebooks, the blogs being described as socially active, community oriented with a high degree of interconnectedness.

In choosing the corpus for study, a number of criteria were applied: the blogs had to be written in English; they had to be actively kept; they had to be text-based; the blogs self-identified as 'diaries' and 'live journals' were excluded. The method applied was content analysis, to identify and quantify structural and functional properties of the blogs in the corpus. The results of this research came in contradiction to previous general beliefs: considering their purpose, the great majority of the blogs (70%) were of the journal type, and not of the filter type (favoured by the previous research, but scoring only 12%), the rest were 'k-logs' (offering information on certain subjects), and mixed; the frequency of posting was around five days between posts (and not daily); the general structure of the studied corpus revealed some more generic features than the previously established ones; the homepage of the blogs displayed such features as: archives, badges (mainly used as hypertext links and revealing the author's affiliation or/and interest), presence of images, comments allowed, link to the author's email, ads, search function, calendar, guest book (in this order of occurrence); the most common blog software was Blogger; most of the links were to non-blog websites (unlike what had previously been thought); the heart of the blog consists of its entries (the frequently updated content), which have headings (showing the date, the time, the name of the author) and footers (showing time, author's name, internal links, comments, date); the average amount of comments per entry was 0.3 (which also came in contradiction to previous beliefs); the entry body contained an average number of 210 words, 16 sentences (or parts), 3.5 paragraphs.

The final part of the article establishes a number of similarities and differences between the weblog and other types of on-line and off-line genres, concluding that "blogs, rather than having a single source, are in fact a hybrid of existing genres, rendered unique by the particular features of the source genres they adapt, and by their particular technological affordances". Their median position "in the genre ecology of the Internet", between standard Web pages (HTML documents)[24], which are single authored, static and rarely updated, and

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[24] according to Wikipedia, "Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML) is the main markup language for creating web pages and other information that can be displayed in a web browser".

CMC pages[25], which are constantly updated and symmetrically exchanging information, while bridging the gap between the two, make them attractive to users. Blogs allow authors to interact socially while maintaining their control on what and how they want to communicate. The extraordinary opportunity they offer ordinary people to express themselves, the vast range of purposes they may serve, the easily accessible software, their interactive aspect make them a very compelling tool which predicts their growing popularity among the Internet users. Moreover, due to the flexible hybrid format, the weblog can give birth to a wide range of genres to meet the communicative needs and purposes of their users.

The social function of this newer Internet mediated genre is studied by Miller and Shepherd[26], who notice that the generic features of blogs lie less in the need for information, than they do in the need of establishing relations between selves: "we must characterize the generic exigency of the blog as some widely shared, recurrent need for cultivation and validation of the self; furthermore, in these particular times, we must locate that need at the intersection of the private and public realms, where questions about identity are most troubled."

A later study of the weblogs (2006)[27] reveals the fact that, although some variation may have occurred as, for example, a tendency to use longer text-writing, and less images, and also with regard to the age, gender, occupation of the authors, this genre proves to have become a stable one; one more feature is added, though: the response of the bloggers to exterior events, without turning themselves into 'citizen journalists' (as some research claims). Gender (and age) studies[28] reveal the fact that although women and young people (teenagers) are key actors in the history and present use of blogs, and that although the journal-type of blog is the most frequent (not the filter-type, or the k-log), little regard is shown to them, both by the press and by research in the field.

The genre of the weblog and the terminology related to it still stir debates, both within its practicing community and among researchers of this newer discourse type. Laurie McNeill (2005)[29] analyses the journey of the written diary towards the new medium of online communication and the ways in which both writers and readers of such text-types relate to the generic expectancies, constraints, and innovative potential of this "genre under construction".

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[25] According toWikipedia, "Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is defined as any communicative transaction that occurs through the use of two or more networked computers.[1] While the term has traditionally referred to those communications that occur via computer-mediated formats (e.g., instant messaging, email, chat rooms), it has also been applied to other forms of text-based interaction such as text messaging"
[26] Carolyn R. Miller and Dawn Shepherd, North Carolina State University: "Blogging as Social Action: A Genre Analysis of the Weblog"
[27] "A Longitudinal Content Analysis of Weblogs: 2003-2004" by Susan C. Herring, Lois Ann Scheidt, Inna Kouper, and Elijah Wright
[28] Susan C. Herring, Inna Kouper, Lois Ann Scheidt, and Elijah L. Wright : " Women and Children Last: The Discursive Construction of Weblogs", 2004
[29] From University of Michigan, in her " Genre Under Construction: The Diary on the Internet"

Worthwhile noticing is the paradoxical nature of the combination between the old written diary, which is supposed to be a highly intimate, strictly private type of text and the new medium of online communication, open to everybody. The birth year of the web diaries is considered to be 1995, as a form derived from home pages; then, in 1997, the filter-type weblog made its appearance, consisting mainly of links to web pages of interest; in 1999, the free software made it possible for many to create their own blogs, whose number increased exponentially over the last decade: "Collapsing these related forms [blogs and diaries] into one, the latest generation of writers marry personal narratives (like a diary) with critical commentary about the Web and its content (like a blog), drawing on the Internet culture to speak to and for other 'Netizens.'" A new reality made its appearance, as well: the meta-genre of the blog. Practitioners of the weblog felt the need to give some guidelines as to what blogs should look like in order to serve and establish a certain group with shared communicative purposes and practices. Attracting and keeping readers, that is, building a faithful audience was central to these guidelines. Readers themselves helped mapping the newer genre through their responses (commentaries) to the entries.

There have been voices against overlapping blogs and diaries (or, journals), arguing that the two are different genres, with different practices and different audiences (usually the diary type has been underrated as not so serious, feminine writing). However, in reality, few practitioners separate the two; the mixed type of weblogs seems to be a growing preference among such online writers.

An intriguing difference between the classic written genre of the diary and its descendant, the newer online diary (blog) consists in the monologic vs. dialogic nature of the two. While the written diary entries were meant to remain private, and had no rules to comply with, online entries engage actual conversations between writers and their readers; the participation of the audiences in the real practices of the genre goes as far as cooperating with the authors in the settling of the rules and the standards of the genre; as Laurie McNeill with inspiration notices, "Carrying over to the Internet such expected features as dated, distinct entries, a confiding if not confessional tone, and a concern with the everyday details of one's own life, Web-diarists reassure readers of the print diary [in which blogs are rooted] that their narrative expectations will be met online. But these diarists also expand the form to fit new uses and users, adding counters, e-mail addresses, links, and discussion boards, addressing the range of possibilities the technology of the Internet opens up for the diary genre."[30]

A study on the blogging practices made by Jan Schmidt (2007)[31] proposes a general model to analyse and compare different uses of the blog format. Blogging, which in the most

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[30] Ibidem, p. 10
[31] From Research Center "New Communication Media" Bamberg University in his article "Blogging Practices: An Analytical Framework"

general sense consists of individual episodes in which a blogger uses specific software to attain specific communicative goals, is framed (but not solely determined) by three structural elements: rules, relations, and code. **The rules** governing this activity are of two types: *adequacy rules* (concerning the "shared expectations about the appropriateness of given media to obtain certain gratifications"; they depend on the medium format), *procedural rules* (of three types: *selection rules*—which concern the blogger as a reader, influenced by thematic, professional interests, social ties; *publishing rules*—referring to the blogger as an author who has to decide upon a certain content, how to present it, in what general design; *networking rules*—through which the blogger connects to the blogosphere and which can take the shape of hyperlinks inserted in posts, blogrolls which may indicate interest or/and affiliation, and comments on other posts). Such a perspective focuses more on the blogger and less on the blog, that is, it reveals the social relations, the power relations established in the blogosphere. It looks at the blogger as reader, writer, networker, who has to deal with such aspects of blogging as information management, identity management, and relationship management, that is, it looks at the blogger as socially involved in the computer-mediated-communication (CMC).

The relations established within the blogging activity are of two types: hypertextual relations made possible through such mechanisms as 'permalinks'—"a fixed URL for each single blog entry—which makes it possible to point directly to microcontent rather than linking whole blogs", 'trackbacks' sent back from the cited post to the source post, and the use of comments and aggregating links (of the type 'blogroll', or those offered by some platforms to establish relations among their users).

The code refers to the blogging software and architecture and consists of blog services easy to use, but with limited control from the blogger (e.g. blogger.com) and blog script packages, requiring some technical expertise, but offering the blogger more freedom (e.g. Wordpress).

The three aspects of the blogging practices are interdependent and they shape specific routines and expectations regarding blogging for certain communicative purposes and leading to the establishment and development of "communities of blogging practices" (from the CEO network to the smaller ones, sharing some common, specific/focused interests). Schmidt's analysis may prove of help in understanding what exactly shapes the blogging practices and why some blogs are successful, while other are not, depending on how their authors have appropriated the knowledge and management of the three parameters: rules, relations, and code.

There are also other, more focused, studies of the weblogs, limited to a certain domain. Cornelius Puschmann[32], for instance, analyses corporate blogs. He proposes a classification of

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[32] "Lies at Wal-Mart. Style and the subversion of genre in the Life at Wal-Mart blog" (2009)

these blogs by taking into considerations such criteria as authorship, intended audience, and function. Therefore,

- *product blogs* are authored by the marketing or customer service departments, to address consumers in order to: a) promote a product directly; b) generate a discussion centred on the product; c) address issues closely related to the company's products; d) provide customer support;

- *the image/lobbying blogs* are authored by the departments of public relations/communications and are addressed to both customers and focal groups, and serve such functions as: a) to create a positive public perception of a company; b) to actively shape the public discussion of a company and its products; c) to advance company interests in regards to policy (lobbying); d) to pre-empt or react to criticism (crisis management);

- *recruitment blogs* are made by human resources and address to potential employees to a) capture the interest of potential employees; b) communicate directly with potential employees; c) respond to their questions;

- *strategy blogs* are created by the management departments to address potential consumers, investors, and partners, in order to perform such functions as a) to discuss the position of the corporation and its products in the market; b) evaluate competitors and their products; c) legitimate management decisions such as layoffs, restructuring, expansion etc.; d) outline future strategic goals

- *knowledge blogs*, created by subject-matter experts, addressing other subject-matter experts, in order to a) to share specialized knowledge in a subject matter; b) to seek information and advice from other experts about certain issues; c) as a mnemonic instrument for the author

- *multipurpose blogs*, with variable authors, addressees, and functions.

An important point Puschmann makes is that blogs are "neither written by or for homogeneous discourse communities, nor do they serve a limited supply of observable communicative functions"; thus, when defining a blog as a genre/subgenre, the criterion of the communicative purpose might not be enough to single out such a discourse product; more than just one communicative purpose is served by one and the same blog, and even by one and the same post/entry; therefore, an extra criterion to consider when distinguishing such a genre is form. As compared to pre-digital genres, blogs have no physical form, nor do they address well defined discourse communities, shaped by professional interests; few bloggers are professionals (that is, paid for their blogging); the only certain and tangible reality about blogs seems to be "attribution" (or, authorship, even when the author is not recognized by his/her real name). As a relatively new writing practice, the blog is not yet seen as a profession, but rather as a hobby, an extremely democratic publishing opportunity, which makes this discourse type "the genre of the people", or of the "digital mob".

Actually we should rather speak about the "supergenre of the personal blog" and about such descendants as the "subgenres of campaign blogs, health blogs, law blogs, news blogs and countless others"; this supergenre has already developed a high stability as to its technical means of publication (open-source software and hosted services) and as to some formal characteristics, such as visual presentation (standard structure comprising titled and dated entries, reverse chronological order of entries on the main page and an archive function); while there is large variation in their instantiating, blogs show linguistic similarities, grouped around the semantics of the "author"; "it is (ironically) function which differs among subgenres and remains unspecified in the supergenre, as a result of the dual nature of blogs as a means of producing content and a storing recipient of that content.

Puschmann goes further and proposes the term "**blog prototype**", in order to manage the floats to the genre theory:

At the core of this prototype is the process of interpersonal communication in which a voice – that of the blogger – speaks to a community of readers, who may in turn themselves be bloggers. The readers are invited to respond and can usually do so via comments on the blog itself, or by linking responses from their own blogs to the original post (so- called trackbacks). To someone visiting the blog website, what is presented is very often not the expression of a single author, but a mosaic of contributions by different individuals citing, quoting and linking to each other. In contrast to traditional means of publishing there is almost a symmetry of power between the different parties, with everyone being able to equally contribute to the discussion in a typical scenario. [33]

The blog prototype is characterized, in Puschmann's view, by a number of three formal aspects (parameters) with a hard, medium, or soft degree of variation. The presentational/technical aspect meets hard variation as to the blog's defining features as: a) segmentation of text into entries (posts); b)reverse chronological order of entries; c)title, date, and author information associated with entries; d) archive; e) blogroll; f) comments; g) use of hyperlinks; h) use of a standard blogging software. Medium variability characterizes the second aspect, that of the linguistic choices: a)first person pronoun in subject position and as agent or experiencer; b) It and other dummy pronouns in subject position; c) high frequency of deictic constructions, especially person deixis; d) high frequency of stative verbs; e)high frequency of modals; f) present tense over past tense; g) active over passive voice; h) relatively short sentences; i) use of meta-language that describes or refers to blogging. The contextual aspect presents soft variability, concerning features like: a) the self-referenced 'voice' of the blog is at once its writer and publisher (='blogger'); b) the blogger is identified by name or pseudonym; if he uses his real name he is in fact the person he claims

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[33] Ibidem, pp 11-12

to be; c)   the events and experiences retold in the blog are either non-fictional or overtly characterized as fictional; d)   opinions and thoughts voiced by the blogger are truly his.

Corporate blogs are very similar to personal blogs, whose characteristics they approximately replicate in form, but flout in function; what the researched corporate blog does is in fact "subverse" the prototype, seeking to achieve the goal of persuading customers and building a trust-based relationship; corporate blogs somehow resemble advertising, but unlike advertising, which speaks to the audience with the "company's voice", blogs use "personal voice", which may or may not be lent to the company by the blog's author; while other, non-fictional, genres simulate conversation, blogs seek to it, they really facilitate it through certain means as comments and links.). In contrast to other representatives of the corporate blog genre, Life at Wal-Mart is a fake blog (or flog) that imitates some of the formal aspects of the prototype but functionally deviates from a 'real' blog (e.g. it has no unity of writer and publisher, no comments, no use of hyperlinks, no egocentricity).

In his 2010 published PhD dissertation[34], Puschmann further distinguishes a number of differences between the personal and the corporate blogs. The writers of corporate blogs are company employees and have certain ranks within the company; they are experts in certain fields, or communicators; the communicative purposes are organizationally mandated (unlike the personal blog's); the topics are those relevant for a company; an overall relative lack of specialized language (unlike expected); the audience is targeted.

There have been numerous attempts of classifying the supergenre of the weblog, most of them taking the content as a the most important criterion (the domains are so different and so numerous, including: art blogs, theatre, literature, health, science, music, gardening, child care, etc.); another criterion is the number of authors, which distinguishes between individual and collaborative blogs (kept by a number of authors, some of them invited guests, and usually built around one theme, or point of interest); political blogs seem to have earned a special position in the blogosphere (personal blogs of this kind enjoy the freedom the Internet offers to express their authors' own political ideas; there are also official/governmental blogs and blogs of politicians, kept in order to reach their voters and in which they more or less overtly express their views on the different policies); the entertainment industry has created the so-called character blogs, supposedly kept by such popular heroes as Superman, or characters from movies and TV series. Blogs can be used to post any types of comments about any topic of your interest. In fact, these are used by Internet users to air their views about disparate topics such as current events, political dissent, information about products and services and so on. Moreover, blogging or the practice of posting blogs is becoming increasingly popular among Internet users for earning fat revenues with the help of pay per click programs; there follows that depending on how famous the author is, and on how much

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[34] *The corporate blog as an emerging genre of computer-mediated communication: features, constraints, discourse situation*

interest the regular posts arouse, the profits may increase; blogging has become a business, as well.

Art Blogs

There is a great variety of weblogs in the field of the arts. We should firstly note here that we use the term "art" for visual art, and not for other such arts like music, theatre, cinema, dance, etc. Art is blogged by a number of persons and agencies: from the creators of art themselves (artists), their critics, art historians, collectors, or anyone interested in art, to museums, galleries, universities, specialized magazines. There are also more specialized, medium-specific blogs, kept and written for those interested in such media as: painting, pastel, graphics, photography, ceramics/clay, jewellery, textile, fashion, installation, performance, interior design, object design, digital art, etc. Other blogs refer to the art created in a certain region, or a certain place (e.g. Orange County, London, Calgary, Australia). And there are also miscellaneous blogs related to art (art therapy, arts and crafts, technological art).

The Artist's Blog

As the above survey of the research of the genre/supergenre/prototype of the blog (or, weblog) has revealed, there are different opinions as to how the blogs may or should be classified. One content-focused classification spoke about journal-type blogs, filter-type blogs, k-blogs, and mixed blogs. Other classification, both content and audience focused, referred to specific interest blogs, such as wealth, political, knitting, etc. blogs. Some voices called these "professional" blogs. While, on the one hand, they may be seen as belonging in the context of some professions' practices, it is nonetheless true that they may also be placed in the context of the different hobbies, or as related to some specific occupations. On the other hand, if one speaks about "professional blogs", that may lead to the conclusion that all the others are not professional, or may be unprofessionally written; since there is not yet a well-established profession of blogging (in spite of some self-entitled "bloggers" as experts in the field), and since this appears to be the most democratic genre ever (a genre of the people), the term "professional" ought to be replaced by **"occupational";** a profession entails one or more "occupations"; occupations may be of the types "job", "profession", "vocation", "hobby", "focused activity", "service', "trade", "craft", etc. In this respect one can speak about motherhood as an occupation, while not a profession. And mothers are very active bloggers, too. Dentistry may be both, and dentists keep blogs, as well.

If one asks a number of artists whether art is a profession and/or an occupation, the answers may somehow differ. Some would say it is their profession, some would admit it is one of their occupations, some would go beyond these and claim art is their purpose of living, their everything. For the purpose of the present study we shall consider art as one type of human occupation, and the artist's blog, as one subgenre of the supergenre of the weblog.

CORPUS

In order to distinguish the particularities of the artist's blog, a number of 30 blogs have here been studied, between January and April 2013. The criteria employed for the selection of these blogs were as follows:

- the blogs had to be kept by practicing artists;
- the blogs were both randomly chosen and suggested by other authors of blogs and specialized sites (e.g. lists, classifications);
- the art media had to be various (not just painting, or textile, etc.);
- the artists had to belong to different locations on Earth;
- the language used to write the posts had to be English;
- both active and extinct blogs were taken into consideration (in order to study their life expanse and possible causes for their disappearance; however, the disappearance had to be relatively recent);
- both more recent posts and older posts were taken into consideration (to obtain a clearer picture of the whole);
- the frequency of posting was not a decisive factor for this selection, but was taken into consideration.

METHOD

Each blog has been carefully and extensively analysed from the points of   view of the authorship (which branch of artist), purpose (what most of the posts were meant for), content (the type of information in the posts: ego blogging, topic blogging), structure, and discourse strategies. The information gathered for the present study has either been overtly shared by the authors (mainly on the first page), or retrieved (by multiple clicks, by reading many posts, by following suggested links).[35] The structural elements taken into consideration have been: the macrostructure (the first page, usually determined by the software of the blog), comprising such elements as title, logo, images, badges, "about author", "about blog", archives, sharing tools, blogroll, most recent posts, most popular posts, categories, tags/labels, statistics, favourite sites/books, links to own websites/shops; the microstructure referred to the individual posts, and comprised : title of the post, date, authorship, time, (headers and footers), layout of the text/paragraphs, length of posts/word count, use of images, inner and hyperlinks, tags, comments, backlinks, sharing tools. Each blog has been checked out as to what register, what modes of discourse, what discourse strategies were employed to achieve some rhetorical-communicative purposes; they included the use of the 1st and 2nd person personal pronouns, the tenses; the degree of formality; the re-creation of a conversational-type of discourse and of elements of speech situations; the intended audience and its feedback.

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[35] For the exact titles of the considered blogs, please see addendum

STATISTICS

Parameter 1: Blog title

The titles of the blogs have been compared to the URL address, in order to see if they differ or not from the latter; this could indicate a preoccupation of the author for being original enough in order to attract readers; out of the 30 blogs, 6 did not keep the URL address in the title; 8 had the name of the artist included both in the URL and the title of the blog; 17 of them displayed a certain degree of originality from the very URL; 6 also showed subtitles, in order to explain either the blog's purpose, or the artist's preoccupations.

Parameter 2: Degree of independence

Out of the 30 blogs, 5 were part of the artists' home pages (or, websites), as a distinctive column pertaining to the other Internet genre.

Parameter 3: Displaying basic information about artist

Out of the 30 blogs, 22 displayed more or less information about the artist (place, type of art), either on the front page, or by clicking on the "About" link; for other 8 artists, information had to be retrieved in different ways (successive clicks, reading through posts). In 29 cases, the name of the artist had been made public, more or less overtly; in one case, there is no indication about the name ("someone")

Parameter 4: Basic information about the blog

Out of the 30 blogs, 16 of them provide some clues as to what the reader might find in the posted materials; for the rest, that information can only be retrieved after a short survey.

Parameter 5: Duration of life and frequency of posting; chronology

Out of the 30 blogs, one was eliminated, three had not been active since more than a year back (they had lived three to five years), two were nine years old, three had been active for eight years, one had just appeared, 6 were younger (1-3 years); 20 posted on regular basis, from almost daily to once a month; the other posted irregularly, or were impossible to determine. Out of the 30 blogs, 29 presented the typical reversed chronology of posting; for one of them it was impossible to determine, since it showed no time references.

Parameter 6: Displaying credentials

Out of the 30 blogs, 11 displayed credentials, either overtly, or disguised under different forms.

Parameter 7: Blog macro-structure features

a)   archives: 24 standard archives, 4 less standard, 2 lacking.

b)   badges and logos: 17 presented the feature

c)   statistics: 18 presented one or more types of statistics concerning their readers/visitors/page access numbers

d)   blogroll (and sites of interest): 23 presented their list of blogs on the first page, 5 showed them somewhere else; 2 had none

e)   sharing tools for the blog: 27 of them had different types of such tools, either provided by the soft of the blog, or added by the authors (as widgets); these were: RSS, Facebook, Bookmark, Linkedin, Digg, Stumblers, Tumblr, Twitter, Flickr, Pinterest, Instagram, newsletter/subscription, e-mail

f)   tags/labels/categories (usually in the right column): 24 displayed the feature

g)   use of images +/- other media on the first page: 26 of them displayed permanent images

Parameter 8: Blog micro-structure features

a)   headers: 24 of them presented standardized title + date/date+ title information; the other showed variations from the standard

b)   footers: 22 displayed authorship, 20 showed the exact time of the posts; 26 allowed for comments; 18 had labels/tags/categories; 15 provided different sharing tools for the posts; 6 had backlinks; 4 links to own or other bloggers' posts as "you might also like"; 1 had some more features: recent/related posts, adverts

c)   intra- and hyper-links: 20 had intra-links; 26 had hyperlinks

d)   tags/labels/categories (18, see above)

e)   number of comments and replies: 13 of them had no or extremely few regular comments (median 1,5); 8 had median 6 comments; 6 had median 7 comments; 1 a median 10, 1 a median 20; 1 irregular (from 0 to 88); 6 authors regularly replied to comments.

f)   Use of images: all 30 blogs

Parameter 9: Types of blogs, based on the content analysis of the posts

Journal-type: 11
Mixed type: 14 (combinations of journal; +/- reviewing exhibitions; +/- tutorials; +/- self-advertorials; +/- store; +/- art news)

News type: 1

Reviewing exhibitions: 3

"Blogazine" (as defined by the authors) 1 (blog+magazine+forum; structure: the "Labs" section mines (!) the Internet; "TV" section shows videos on art, exhibitions, trends, issues, blogosphere; a Newsletter and a weekend edition are also provided)

Parameter 10: Discourse features

a)   Relationship between title and title of work(s) of art: 24 blogs establish direct (or, at least partial) relationships

b)   Register: formal = 0; neutral = 12; neutral-informal (familiarity) = 13; informal (very familiar) = 5; critique; journalese, fashionese

c)   Modes of discourse: narrative in 25 (narratives of personal experience, descriptive narrative of work-in-progress, reporting events) ; descriptions, including recipe-giving (mainly in tutorials, also in demonstrating how a work has been done): in 13; expository –in news: 1; argumentative – in critique: 3

d)   Discourse strategies: analysing artworks (describing + interpreting +/- evaluating); reviewing; narrating (personal experience; story-telling); commenting; reporting; recipe-giving; conversing; interviewing; confessing; monologuing; conversing; quoting; paraphrasing; labelling; acknowledging to sources (footnotes); use of rhetorical devices (metaphors, comparisons, hyperboles, rhetorical questions ("Is that indigo blue linen gorgeous or what?"), repetitions, colloquial features ("say", "or what?"); humour; self/irony; imprecation);

e)   Text structure: number of paragraphs: irregular (from zero to 16; however, they tend to be less—around 3-4); size of paragraphs: irregular(from 1-2 lines to 40 lines; however, they tend to be rather short—5-6 lines); number of words (from 0 –except for the title to 4500, in one case; however, there appears to be a tendency towards 450 words per entry)

f)   Subjectivity = use of the 1st person personal pronoun: in 27 blogs

g)   Relationship with audience = use of the 2nd person personal pronoun: in 14 of them; use of imperatives: in 5; overt direct implication of audience: in 5

h)   Objectivity = use of the 3rd person personal pronouns: in 6; in 2 of them the 3rd person was used for self-reference

i)   Time reference: preference for the past tense: in 5; combinations of past and present: in 14; present: in 3; combination of past, present, and future: in 7

j)   Qualifiers: in all 30; some less formal superlatives ("way, way, way down on the list"; "ugly! ugly!"; "so very very crazy"; "reallyreallyreally familiar"

k)   Interjections: "Ugh!", "Yikes!","Yay!"," Wow!", "Whuuuu!", "Whew!", "Eek!", "Nope!"

l)   Special typing and spelling: unusual spelling ("Little Birdy in da House"; "Nope, don't go there, no, thanks, y'all, wow!"); use of upper case letters for singular words in a sentence, connected repeated words (see above); (Internet) acronyms/slang (XOXO = hugs and kisses; X= kiss; O = hug , variations: XX = two kisses; LOL = laughing out loud : "my wife literally LOL-ed", OMG = Oh, my God!, The EGE = Ever Gorgeous Earl = the husband; DIY = do it yourself), repetition of letters ("Yiiiii!"); use of emoticons ☺ = smiley face; :-D (lough);

Parameter 11: Use of images and other media

All the 30 blogs made **intensive** use of images in **all** their posts (photographs, drawings, videos); audio pods were also present in some of them.

Parameter 12: Intended audience

Almost all of the 30 blogs had a double audience: there was the specialized audience (consisting of artists, critics, collectors, art connoisseurs) on the one hand, while on the other, there was the general public (in 28), and, more importantly, potential buyers of works of art (in 23), and potential students (in 4). While 6 of them overtly invited people to buy displayed works, 2 of them suggested donations (to cover expenses for reviewing exhibitions); those authors who did not use the blog as a store had links to their web stores.

DATA INTERPRETATION

The communicative (and not only) purposes of blogging

Why do artists blog? Beside the common purposes of all bloggers concerning sharing opinions and keeping in touch with interested audiences, artists blog for some well-defined purposes. These reflect the double quality of the bogging artist: that of a reader of other art blogs, and that of a creator/author of art blogs. Mainly, artists blog (that is, read blogs, and write blogs) to:
-        keep themselves, their (artist) peers, and the interested public up-to-date with the so diverse and so rapidly changing art world; there are so many exhibitions on display, so many other artistic events going on all over the world, that one could barely be aware of merely a tiny slice of this huge artistic reality;
-        keep themselves up-to-date with the latest successful practices in own creative branch;
-        establish themselves as experts in the field; once a certain degree of expertise is recognized by the artistic community(and, why not, by the general public), the value of the

blog and, by consequence, the value of the artist as a creator and as a tutor increase; ultimately, commercial value increases as well;

- market themselves; the blog posts are a very cheap way of showing an artist's portfolio and of gaining audiences and prospective buyers;

- advertise themselves; effective advertorials can be created through the use of the blog software and through good post contents; coming exhibitions can be advertised at no costs, and the interest of the public can be aroused with some skill; prize winning can be easily made known to the public;

- advertise for the website and/or store through which artists really sell their works;

- sell works of art directly; by adding a "buy now" button anyone may easily buy a work of their choice as seen in a photograph;

- realize a successful artistic practice: create, show, tell, and interact; many artists really feel that blogging their art is part of their practice;

- maintain people's interest in their art through frequent posts displaying and explaining their works;

- increase visibility in the art world; the complicated networking of art blogs, the blogrolls, the sharing tools provided by the software, make it easier for unknown or less known artists to become visible to their peers and to the public;

- share own experience and techniques;

- know themselves better; blogging allows for more in depth writing and thinking;

- record their thoughts, experiences, practices in time, allowing for a kind of a personal history, useful both for artists themselves and for the public;

- communicate with the audiences through "comments" and building new audiences by replying to them;

- get feedback from the public either to maintain, or bring changes, or just better market own art;

- fill in the lack of, or to add to the diminishing, art writing in the mainstream press and other media as a journalistic contribution that counts.

The macrostructure of the artist's blog

Beside the communicative purpose, any genre is characterized by a standard move pattern. Since computer mediated communication presupposes a different type of data (text) structuring than the printed media, the moves and steps described by Genre Analysis will be replaced by revealing the macrostructure features of blogs. These features are generally dictated by the blog software, but sometimes, some more computer skilled artists may alter the software, or even create their own software (especially in the domain of graphic design

applied to web design). Obviously, the macrostructure of the artist's blog is similar to any other type of blogs and show the already established characteristics of the genre.

The titles of the blogs, which are not always the same as the URL addresses, tend to contain the name of the artist himself/herself and sometimes even give basic information about the artists and/or about the blog's purpose (e.g. "Belinda Joynes: Artist, imaginarian and daydream believer"; " Kelly Kilmer. Artist and Instructor"; "Joanne Mattera Art Blog"). In other cases, the titles try to be as catchy as possible, to attract visitors (e.g. "the haunted hollow tree"; "adripndrop.blogspot.ro: Artsy fartsy life"; "Notes from The Voodoo Café").

In some cases, blogs are part of the artist's home page (or, website); while the home page displays permanent information about the artist and his/her works, the blog offers recent, updated details about artists and works, events, helping those interested, and, of course, prospective buyers, to have the whole picture, better decide, and act accordingly. Most of the blogs, however, are independent (about 80%), but still offering links to the websites and/or to the webstores. Information about the artist was provided in the great majority of the blogs (three quarters), although, some provided it more overtly, on the front page or by clicking the "About" button, while in the other blogs, it was more remote, necessitating some research; in one case the name of the blogger was impossible to determine. These lead to the conclusion that the blogging artists tend to be as sincere and authentic as possible in relation with their audiences (whether specialized or belonging to the general public). In two thirds of the blogs, their authors presented some credentials, either overtly, or more discretely, assuming a certain degree of expertise in the field of art. More than a half of the authors also offered some information about the blogged content, on the front page, making it easier for readers to figure out whether they want to read through the posts, or not. Some of the authors were more skilful than others at arousing the readers' curiosity and interest about the blog by providing that information; in one case the audience was reassuringly told what was NOT to be found in the blog: "no shop, no badges, no ads, no awards, no asking for money, just relax and enjoy!".

The life expanse of the studied blogs ranged from three to five years in the case of the inactive ones, while in the case of the active blogs, five had an impressive 8-9 year activity; taking into consideration that two thirds of them posted on regular basis, we may conclude that the great majority of the blogging artists consider this activity as part of their creative life, or, part of the job.

The typical macrofeatures of the blog were present to a great extent in almost all the blogs: reverse chronology, presence of archives, blogrolls, tags/labels, some had badges, almost all offered sharing tools, and some showed statistics of visitors and/or page views. What is definitely different from what previous research had found, is that artists' blogs make intensive use of images and other visuals; most of them display photographs of their works, some place videos about their work-in-progress, some even use audio materials; the dominant

feature is, then, the heavy use of images, both on the front page and in every post, which is very consistent with the kind of activity artists perform.

<u>The microstructure of the artist's blog</u>

The typical microstructure features were present in almost all of the 30 blogs. While their presence is dictated by the software provided by the host platform, the way they are used may offer some clues as to how artists make use of these tools to communicate with their audiences. The titles of the entries, appearing as headings, tend to be consistent with the latest artistic creations wherever the entry is of the journal type and also in most of the mixed types; in the case of art review and art news type entries, the title reflects the event written about in the post. Headings also provide information about the entry date and typically have reversed chronological order (except one, which revealed no chronology at all). The majority of the entries provided information (as footers) about authorship, exact time of posting, while also offering some tools under the form of tags/labels and sharing tools. Also present in almost all of the entries was the feature of "comments", although the number of comments differed quite a lot, indicating the success, or lack of success of the entry, and providing a kind of feedback for the artist, as to what was really interesting for their public. The use of this tool by the artists may be an indicator about their desire to communicate with present and potential audiences in order to adapt the kind of art they are making to the taste and demands of the public. On the other hand, especially in the review and news types of entries, comments allowed for some feedback as to how the taste and interest of the public may be educated through the subsequent entries. The presence of comments also helps re-creating a conversational type of a speech situation which artists and their audiences are supposed to be engaged in through each entry.

Also typical is the use of intra- and hyperlinks (in the great majority of the posts), showing the artists' interest to stay in touch with what happens in the art world and to share with their audiences this interest. The intralinks provide some help for the reader to connect previous information to the newest one, while maintain interest in the works of art displayed.

The artist's blog entries differ from their blog entries in that they make intensive use of images. Each entry displays lots of images (mainly photographs of the works just created, or in-progress, or exhibited, but also videos); some entries even consist exclusively of images immediately after the title; in some cases these images have some labels (containing the title of the work and a minimum of information about medium, dimensions, etc.) instead of a text describing and interpreting them, or offering information about how they were created (inspiration, process of creation, techniques). This aspect of the intense use of images is consistent with the visual character of art: artists mainly communicate through images; the use of words comes to complement their communication with the public.

While previous research spoke about a prevalence of the journal type of blog entries, the present survey has found that only a third of them were exclusively of this type; the mixed type of blogs (the greatest number), however, also displayed journal entries, beside tutorials, advertorials, reviews, news, or filter-entries. Lesser in number were the reviewing entries and the news-type. There is also a new type of blog, self-called a "blogazine" (blog + magazine + forum, whose structure consists of the "Labs" section mining the Internet, TV section showing videos on art, exhibitions, trends, issues, blogosphere, a Newsletter and a weekend edition), which reveals an attempt at finding new ways of communicating both within the artistic discourse community and with the general public; the future artist's blogging will probably reveal more such new (sub) genre creations.

Discourse particularities

None of the 30 blogs used a formal register; a third of them used a neutral register, while the rest of two thirds made use of different degrees of informality and familiarity. This aspect is consistent with one of the purposes of blogging, that is, establishing a close relationship with the audience, making the readers feel that they are part of the artist's experiences and creations. Some of the entries could be characterized as pertaining to some more specific registers as "journalese", "critique", "fashionese", as they presented more specialized vocabulary and certain syntactic preferences.

All modes of discourse were to be found in the blog entries, with a prevalence of the narrative mode (in 25) under the form of narratives of personal experience, descriptive narrative of work-in-progress, reporting events. There were also numerous descriptions of the works of art and of some processes (recipe-giving); the expository and argumentative modes were used especially in the reviewing type of entries. These features are also consistent with the blogging practices: journal entries mainly speak about personal experiences and about processes of creation; all works of art require some description to support their possible interpretations (intended by the artist, or not); the critical discourse is typically built on exposition and argumentation.

There is a wide span of discourse strategies employed by artists in their blog entries, from the ones usually associated with the art domain (analyzing artworks: describing + interpreting +/- evaluating; reviewing, recipe-giving, labeling), the ones associated with the blog practice (narrating personal experience; story-telling; commenting; confessing conversing); to the journalistic genres (reporting; interviewing), and scientific writing (quoting, paraphrasing; acknowledging sources – footnotes); there is even one instance of an exclusive use of monologue.

The rhetorical devices include metaphors, similes, hyperboles, rhetorical questions ("Is that indigo blue linen gorgeous or what?"), interior monologue ("Do I believe in inspiration? Hell yes! I've felt it. I know it exists"; "Yes! Yes! That was extremely satisfying :-) Now, I'm

going to print that all around the bottom hem of one of my linen skirts! Screen printing...where have you been all my life??"), repetitions ("Making rubbish is how you learn. Making rubbish is how you improve. Making rubbish is how you exercise your creative muscles."), colloquialism ("say", "or what?"; "Nope, don't go there, no", "thanks, y'all, wow!"; "Wah, wah, wah. Cry me a river, newbie"; "So yes, you do bloody have to show up and make your work every day"; "yay, new art project, yay"), humor ("A blog. Oh my god, I have a blog? Actually I have two and they're both languishing in sad and dusty state. Poor blogs. Hey Kirsty, what the hell happened to you? Oh you know, nothing much? My world fell apart & then I fell apart"), self/irony ("Wow, the whole internet to choose from and you visited me. I'm flattered. If you enjoy my particular brand of crazy…"), imprecation ("this idea ... is a load of bollocking crap"). Combined with the discourse strategies mentioned above, these rhetorical devices are meant to build a close relationship with the readers, to gain and maintain their interest, arouse sympathy, curiosity, to give the impression of authenticity, which is in direct relationship with creativity.

Other features that help building the relation with the audience refer to the use of the first person personal pronoun "I", which is also a typical blogging practice expressing deep subjectivity and suggesting authenticity; the use of the second person pronoun "you", or as implied by the imperative mood, to convey a conversational type of discourse, suggesting that the reader is taking part in the artist's blogging, therefore in the whole process of creation. There are also a few cases where the third person pronoun is used by the author to refer to himself/herself, trying to suggest a sort of objectivity and detachment to inspire confidence in the truthfulness of the message.

The tenses used in the blog entries are consistent with the content of the entries: past for narratives of personal experiences, for reports, for explaining the process of creation; present for describing the works, the exhibitions, for the reviewing type of entries; future for revealing the artist's plans to deal with a theme, to exploit a subject-matter, to use a certain technique. Qualifiers tend to be numerous, as expected for the art-related discourse; sometimes they are unusual (superlatives created by repetitions and connected spelling: "reallyreallyreally familiar").

As for the texts of the entries, they are usually, divided in a relatively small number of paragraphs, coherently sequenced and accompanied by images to illustrate what is being written. The texts tend to be rather short, although there are exceptions ranging from no text at all to very large texts. In some cases authors make use of special typing and unusual spelling of words, Internet slang, acronyms, and emoticons as signalled before. All these aspects are consistent with the blogging practices in general, maybe with the exception of the intensive use of images to accompany the text.

Classroom Applications

The findings of this study are meant to support classroom activity of teaching English for art purposes. The (sub)genre of the artist's blog should add to the other genres of the artistic discourse community, usually associated with the paper support: the artist's statement, the art review, museum and gallery labels, exhibition leaflets and to the genres used in academic writing.

Blogging is perceived by artists as "part of the job", included in the studio practice; part journalism (both reportage and diaristic) and part artist statement, it provides a valuable context to an artist's work; it also provides "a much needed structure to stay constantly inspired and taking creative action on the daily basis", an amazing creative community, great visibility; it allows self-promotion, easy archiving, instant gratification (through the reader's comments), virtual contact, which are just as many tools artists-to-be need to master in order to be prepared for their future professional life.

It may all begin with reading many types of blogs and understanding the authors' communicative purposes and the way these are reflected in the types of posting. Awareness of the blog structure may help organizing thoughts about own art, while using the tools offered by the software of a blog may help developing an ability to communicate with audiences of different types. A first step may be commenting on other artists' blogs and following one or two English-using blogs for a certain period. Students may choose blogs about their own artistic field, or they may add other fields as well. This would presumably lead to the enrichment of their English vocabulary of art and the specific vocabulary they are going to use throughout their professional life. Then students may be encouraged to make their own blogs, in English, to post regularly, trying to improve their blogging practice every day. Writing regularly about their own experiences as artists and about the way they perceive the art world would make them more self-conscious about who they are and where they are as future artists and would probably trigger some creative impulses, too.

A structured methodology of teaching the subject of art blogging is yet to be developed in the near future, as further research on the relationship of this Internet genre and other Internet genres used by artists is to be conducted.

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Addendum (List Of Blogs)

1.   *http://.kirstyhall.co.uk/blog/*
2.   http://trishishere.blogspot.ro
3.   http://thehauntedhollowtree.blogspot.ro/
4.   http://adripndrop.blogspot.ro/
5.   http://www.share-my- art.blogspot.ro/
6.   http://belindajoynes.blogspot.ro/
7.   http://www.elegantjourney.blogspot.ro
8.   http://www.artistswhoblog.blogspot.ro
9.   http://kellykilmer.blogspot.ro/
10.   http://www.createmixedmedia.com/blogs/the-creative-life
11.   http://voodoonotes.blogspot.ro/
12.   http://www.artnewsblog.com/
13.   http://joannemattera.blogspot.ro
14.   http://markandremark.blogspot.ro
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