

PICGL3



University of Patras
Department of Philology
Linguistics Section

Theoretical and Applied Linguistics

*Proceedings of the
3rd Patras International Conference of
Graduate students in Linguistics (PICGL3)
Patras, 23-25 May 2014*

Edited by:

*K. Fragkopoulou, F. Kalamida, T. Kardamas,
K. Kordouli, M. Marinis, Ch. Panagiotou,
N. Vassalou*

Patras 2015

Theoretical and Applied Linguistics

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Kardamas, Konstantina Kordouli, Michalis Marinis,
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University of Patras, Greece
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UNIVERSITY OF PATRAS
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOLOGY
SECTION OF LINGUISTICS
Editors: *K. Fragkopoulou, F. Kalamida, T. Kardamas, K. Kordouli, M. Marinis,*
Ch. Panagiotou, N. Vassalou.

ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΠΑΤΡΩΝ
ΤΜΗΜΑ ΦΙΛΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ
ΚΑΤΕΥΘΥΝΣΗ ΓΛΩΣΣΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ
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FOREWORD

It is with deep satisfaction that we write this Foreword to the Proceedings of the *3rd International Conference for Graduate Students in Linguistics* (PICGL3) held in Patras, May 23-25, 2014.

PICGL3 continues a tradition by the students of graduate program in section of Linguistics of the Department of Philology of the University of Patras, which is organized once every other year under the scientific contribution and guidance of the Section's distinguished faculty.

The conference particularly encouraged the interaction of young research students from all over the world to present and to discuss their new and current work in all fields of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics. Their presentations helped to make the Conference as outstanding as it has been.

In addition to the papers, the *3rd PICGL* was honored by the presence of the following invited speakers:

Prof. Dr. Pavel Štekauer (Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice)

Prof. Anna Anastassiadi-Symeonidi (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)

Asst. Prof. Francesco Gardani (Vienna University of Economics and Business)

Dr. Nikos Koutsoukos (University of Patras)

We thank all authors and participants for their contributions.

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“Is THAT your PROFESSIONAL opinion?”: Constructing and advancing knowledge on Facebook¹

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Abstract

Apart from an active conduit for relationships, communication and information, Facebook can also function as a significant basis for public expressions of individual and collective professional identity (cf. Gilpin, 2010:247). Seeing professional identity as being constituted by three core facets, namely actions, knowledge, and relations, the objective of this paper is to explore the ways in which individuals utilise Facebook with a view to sharing their expertise, seeking professional advice, and buttressing solidarity among colleagues. I draw on findings from a larger discourse-centred online ethnographic study in which I combined the systematic and longitudinal observation of Facebook profiles with online interviews with the owners of these profiles. In my analysis I consider such features as pronouns, questions, directives, and evaluation. I argue that Facebook can serve as an arena for fruitful exchange of expert opinions framed in informal, interpersonal discourse styles that enhance and smooth out collaboration.

Keywords: discourse-centred online ethnography, professional identity, knowledge, expertise, social media, Facebook

1. Introduction

For most people, work amounts to a pervasive life domain and a fundamental source of meaning which gives them focus and allows them to form, transform, and modify how they define themselves and others within the framework of work-based situations and activities (Dutton et al., 2010:265; Gini, 1998:708). It is by now a truism that new technologies, including social media, have “become vital to almost any and every kind of work” (Miller, 2011:195). The overall purpose of the present paper is to show how the popular social network of Facebook, apart from a conduit for relationships and communication, can also function as a significant basis for public expressions of individual and collective professional identity (cf. Gilpin, 2010:247). More specifically, the emphasis will be on the ways in which participants utilise Facebook to share their expertise, seek professional advice, and bolster solidarity among colleagues.

The paper proceeds as follows: It starts by defining the concept of professional identity. After presenting the methods and data used, it provides a brief overview of Facebook

¹ I am grateful to Greg Myers and Sirpa Leppänen for their insightful comments and suggestions; Carla and Helen for participating in the study.

touching on its relation to the domain of work. It then moves on to the empirical torso of the study, which addresses professional identity on Facebook from two perspectives of knowledge construction and advancement: 1) claiming expertise, and 2) joint production of expertise. It closes by reflecting upon the key findings.

2. Professional identity

Professional identity refers to the constellation of activities, tasks, roles, groups, memberships, interactions, motives, goals, orientations, attributes, beliefs, values and experiences in terms of which individuals define themselves in a professional role (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Dutton et al., 2010; Schein, 1978). As Achugar (2009:65) has elegantly phrased it, “[b]ecoming a professional means positioning oneself in relation to others by differentiating, affiliating, challenging, or accepting certain ways of constructing knowledge, being, and doing in the world.” It follows from this that the quintessence of professional identity lies in exhibiting a command of specific information and knowledge as well as in performing accordingly in specific work settings, conveying qualities such as judgement, acumen, competence, creativity, and trustworthiness (Ibarra, 1999:765). Professional identity is thus formed gradually on the basis of varied experiences and constructive feedback that enable people to gain insight about their potential, preferences, talents, and values (Schein, 1978). For Ashcraft (2007:13), professional identity, or occupational identity as she prefers to term it, implies a dynamic relation between the abstract image and the actual role performance of a job. By image (i.e. occupational identity discourse), she means the public discourses on the essence of a job and the people who perform it, while with role (i.e. occupational identity communication) she describes the micro-practices of enacting a job and gaining insight into the work people do.²

Having outlined the fundamentals of professional identity, my own understanding and usage of the concept embraces three core aspects: 1) actions, 2) knowledge, and 3) relations.

3. Methods and data

The data for this paper come from a larger discourse-centred online ethnographic study on the construction of identities on Facebook, conducted during May 2010 – April 2013 (Georgalou, forthcoming). Discourse-centred online ethnography (Androutsopoulos, 2008) combines the systematic, longitudinal and repeated observation of online discourse (Facebook profiles here) with direct engagement (face-to-face and/or mediated) with the producers of this online discourse (Facebook profile owners here) and is complementary to the textual analysis of online data.

My participants, five in total (two female and three male Greek users; mean age = 28), were recruited via convenience sampling (i.e. they were friends of friends). Initially, they were sent a message in which I explained the purposes of my study, asking them to fill in an online questionnaire. Those interested were invited to participate in a series of semi-structured online interviews via email, instant messaging and/or Facebook messages. From the time my informants and I became “friends” on Facebook, I conducted bi-weekly

² For an extensive and assiduous literature review of discourse in the workplace, see Holmes (2009) as well as the ground breaking Language in the Workplace Project she led at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand (www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/lwp/). For thorough linguistic analyses of authentic data within different work environments, see Gunnarsson (2009) and Schnurr (2012).

observation of their profiles. The hours spent browsing their Facebook Timelines varied according to their frequency of posting and the wealth of interactions unfolded. My dataset consisted of Facebook profile information, status updates, comments, video and article links, photos my informants had taken themselves or had found elsewhere in the internet, interview excerpts, survey and field notes as well my informants' comments on drafts of my analyses. Interviewees were asked to sign a consent form in which they were assured that their material would remain confidential and would be used for academic purposes only. Consent was also sought for comments written by third parties. Throughout my data I have preserved pseudonymity for my informants and anonymity for other Facebook users.

The data I have selected to present and discuss here are comprised of Facebook posts from two of my informants, Helen and Carla. Helen was born in 1979 and lives in Athens, Greece, while she visits the UK for two months every year working as an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) tutor in various British universities. She has a BA in English Language and Literature, an MA in English Language and Literary Studies and a PhD in Linguistics. She works as a lecturer in Academic English in Athens. She speaks Greek, English, and Spanish. Carla was born in 1975 and lives in Athens, Greece. She has a BA in Translation and Interpreting. She has been working as a translator, principally of Latin American literature. She speaks Greek, English, Spanish, Portuguese and French. She has been monitoring two Facebook profiles: a personal and a professional one.

4. Facebook and professional identity

As of its launch in 2004, Facebook has become an immensely popular social network site worldwide, namely a networked communication platform in which participants

- (1) have uniquely identifiable profiles that consist of user-supplied content, content provided by other users, and/or system-provided data; (2) can publicly articulate connections that can be viewed and traversed by others; and (3) can consume, produce, and/or interact with streams of user-generated content provided by their connections on the site (Ellison & boyd, 2013:158).

Facebook participants can post status updates, that is to say, short messages in which they report what they are doing, thinking or feeling, share photos, photo albums and links as well as comment on the material they or other users, the so-called "friends", post. In juxtaposition to other social network sites, Facebook deals in the main with physical friendships and acquaintances that are initiated offline and then transferred to the virtual scenario.

Figure 1. Work information entries in the "About" section of a Facebook profile

The screenshot shows the 'About' section of a Facebook profile. On the left, there's a sidebar with links like Overview, Work and Education, Places You've Lived, Contact and Basic Info, Family and Relationships, Details About You, Life Events, and a 'Public' dropdown. The main area is titled 'WORK'. It contains fields for Company (with a placeholder 'Where have you worked?'), Position, City/Town, and Description. Below these is a 'Time Period' section with a checkbox for 'I currently work here' and options to 'Add year to' or 'Add year'. At the bottom are 'Save Changes' and 'Cancel' buttons.

The social identity of profession is given prominence by Facebook's architecture as users are setting up their profiles. A substantial, though optional, part of completing the "About" (Figure 1) section in one's profile pertains to work (current and previous employers). Enlightening as these pieces of information may be, professional identity on Facebook cannot be compacted in mere lists and frozen CV versions, but is in effect unfolded in individual posts and/or in subsequent comments. The subsections that follow will shed ample light on this.

4.1. Claiming expertise on Facebook

A hallmark in the public construction of professional identities is the choices that participants make to demonstrate their depth and breadth of knowledge on a topic as well as their entitlement to speak on this topic in particular contexts, namely their expertise (Myers, 2004:177). Social media, in general, and Facebook, in particular, can function as ideal instruments for displaying knowledgeability, disseminating links and information, and suggesting tools that agents believe to be valuable and relevant to work mates and fellow students (cf. Gilpin, 2010:243). Example 1 gives us a taste of how showing expertise might work.

Example 1

24 February 2012

η λέξη της ημέρας: serendipity

Like · Comment 3 people like this. 10

meaning:

- *The faculty of making fortunate discoveries by accident.

24 February 2012 at 21:40 · Like · 3

πάτει μου ότι την ξέρατε τη λέξη να με στείλετε βροδιάκια...

24 February 2012 at 21:42 · Like · 1

but of course...

24 February 2012 at 21:43 · Like

to eixa dei se mia tainia kai to eixa psaksei

24 February 2012 at 21:43 · Like · 1

εύχε!

24 February 2012 at 21:44 · Like

τώρα είδα ότι δεν δημοσιεύτηκε η επιμολογία -που έχει την τιο πολλή τιάρα...

WORD HISTORY We are indebted to the English author Horace Walpole for the word serendipity, which he coined in one of the 3,000 or more letters on which his literary reputation primarily rests. In a letter of January 28, 1754, Walpole says that "this discovery, indeed, is almost of that kind which I call Serendipity, a very expressive word." Walpole formed the word on an old name for Sri Lanka, Serendip. He explained that this name was part of the title of "a silly fairy tale, called The Three Princes of Serendip: as their highnesses traveled, they were always making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things which they were not in quest of

Read more: <http://www.answers.com/topic/serendipity#ixzz1nKWlZ1pR>

serendipity n. , pl. , -ties . The faculty of making fortunate discoveries by accident. The fact or occurrence of such discoveries

24 February 2012 at 21:50 · Like

Example 2

18 January 2012

shared a link.

Dear students,

Please find attached this week's pp presentation, which includes interactive activities based on a youtube video, photos from flickr, journal articles uploaded by my colleagues on their personal websites (since I am based outside the academic centre and I don't necessarily have access to every single journal paper) and finally created on my Linux operated pc. It has been inspired by presentations posted on academic earth and forum discussions. **Imagine** how this presentation would look like without the above and **read** more about SOPA here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stop_Online_Piracy_Act

Stop Online Piracy Act - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
en.wikipedia.org

Like · Comment · Share 4

Carla in Example 1 offers a piece of knowledge she has discovered and thinks it would worth distributing (translation: *word of the day: serendipity*). In the subsequent comments, she

gives the dictionary meaning of the word followed by the directive³ *tell me* (comment 2; translation: *tell me you knew this word cause there you've got me this time late at night...*) which is intended to enact conversational interaction (Myers, 2010:84) with those who are also in the know. Indeed, a friend responds to Carla's call by providing the context of how she became familiar with the word serendipity. In comment 6, Carla realises that the etymology of serendipity was not posted so she copies and pastes it again. For her, it is not only the meaning but the history of the word that will arouse her audience's interest. Notice also the professional practice of including the source where she copies from.

Example 2 introduces a creative and catchy way of feeding the audience with new information. Helen, imitating the structure of an email sent to her students, as if addressing someone other than her Facebook friends (*Dear students, Please find attached...*), lists some pinnacles of contemporary digital education (interactive activities, YouTube video, photos from Flickr, journal articles, colleagues' personal websites, Linux operated pc, academic earth, forum discussions) only to conclude that these are at stake because of SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act bill). As you can see, she does not explain what SOPA exactly is; she employs the directives *imagine* to alert her recipients and *read* to invite them to take action and follow the relevant Wikipedia link in order to be fully informed.

In Example 3 [translation: *Are you wondering how the name Quetzalcoatl may be pronounced? Here's the answer:*], the audience's attention is attracted first by the device of the question (*Are you wondering*), which opens the status update, and second by Carla's choice of the rather weird name *Quetzalcoatl* (a deity in the Mesoamerican civilisation). Anchored in the presupposition (i.e. assumption based on background knowledge) that readers are unaware of its pronunciation, Carla comes to offer the solution (*here's the answer*) by attaching a link to *forvo*, a website which includes a wealth of pronunciation sound clips in almost 300 different languages.

Example 3



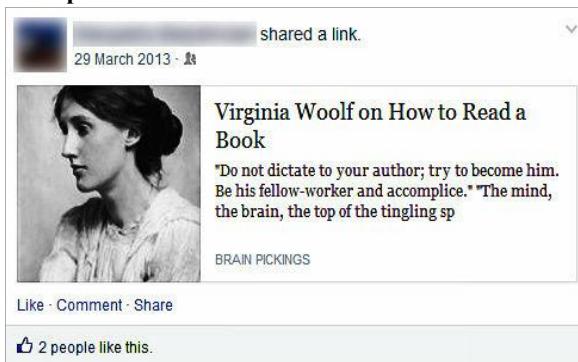
So far, we have seen that expertise is offered by directly addressing the audience through second person plural references, directives and questions. Another – subtler yet equally engaging – way of advising on sources of knowledge is to evaluate the information that you introduce to your recipients.

³ Directives are speech acts that invite the hearer/reader to take a particular action (e.g. requests, commands and advice) (Searle, 1976).

Example 4

As shown in Example 4, Helen attaches to the video, entitled *Killing us softly 4: Advertising's image of women*, the labels *well known* and *excellent*, having watched it herself, and perhaps already incorporated it successfully in one of her lectures. Apart from academic expertise, she also conveys a broader sense of knowing things (Jacoby & Gonzales, 1991:152) and feeling sensitised, seeing she chose to share the particular post on 8 March, the International Women's Day.

Propagating knowledge on Facebook is not always attained directly. Example 5 is an instance of a link shared by Carla and related to her field of expertise (publishing, translation). As it can be observed, the post is stripped of any expert or authoritarian voice, in the form of comments or pieces of advice on what to do with it. So, readers can get the gist from the text that appears in the thumbnail and then decide whether to follow the link up and get the benefit of the recommended source (Myers, 2010:28).

Example 5

4.2. Joint production of expertise on Facebook

Becoming an expert can involve drawing on other experts, which in turn leads to collaborative creation of knowledge. I will use an extended example below to illustrate this point.

Carla starts with Example 6 posted on her professional profile.⁴

⁴ Original data are in Greek. Grey is used to indicate English translations. When there is only English, and no grey, this means that the original was in English.

Example 6

Περί μεταγραφής κύριων ονομάτων
Abu Simbel.
Εμείς παραδοσιακά το λέμε Αμπού
Σιμπέλ. Είναι το "σωστό" ή φταίει η
"εξ Αιγύπτου γαλλική μας παιδεία";
Το βρίσκω και ως Άμπου Σίμπελ.
Εσείς, τι λέτε;

On transliterating proper names
Abu Simbel.
We traditionally say Ambú Simbel. Is it "correct" or is "our French education from Egypt" to blame?
I have also found it as Ámbu Símbel.
What do you reckon?

Carla's status update is built upon the interacting questions *is it "correct" or is "our French education from Egypt" to blame?* and *What do you reckon?*, which aim at eliciting expert opinions on which is the correct way to stress the proper name *Abu Simbel*⁵ while transliterating it into Greek. The starting point in my discussion concerns the usage of pronouns. With *we* and *our* Carla expresses generic reference to Greek speakers who, being heavily influenced by French, have the tendency to stress all Arabic words on the final syllable. In contrast, *you* is used to refer to the professionals who are in the know and therefore are in a position to provide a responsible and respectable answer. What is striking in the original Greek status update is that *Εμείς* (*We*) and *Εσείς* (*you*) are given special prominence by being placed in initial thematic position. On account of a highly developed inflectional system, word order in Greek is relatively more flexible than in English. This means that the use of the pronoun as a theme is largely unnecessary since it is signaled by the inflection of the verb (Sifianou, 2001:193). That is, if Carla had written *παραδοσιακά το λέμε Αμπού Σιμπέλ. ... τι λέτε;*, the meaning would still be the same. By thematising the two pronouns, she marks a stark contrast between the common belief held amongst speakers regarding pronunciation, including herself and recognising its falseness (accentuated by the double quotation marks in "*correct*" and "*our ... Egypt*"), and the professional expertise. Notably, before she formulates her question to her expert audience, she records her own discovery (*I have also found it as Ámbu Símbel*), manifesting that she has done some relevant research beforehand and does not demand an answer handed to her on a plate.

Example 7 displays the comments that followed Carla's status update.

Example 7

- 1. FBU1:** Δεδομένου ότι δεν πρόκειται για εξελληνισμένη λέξη (όπως το "Λονδίνο") και βάσει της φωνητικής γραφής του, το σωστό είναι Άμπου Σίμπελ, μη χέσω τη γαλλική μας παιδεία.
Given that it is not a word incorporated into the Modern Greek declension system (like "Λονδίνο")⁶ and on the basis of its phonetic transcription, the correct is Ámbu Símbel, fuck our French education.
3 February 2013 at 20:31 · Like · 1
- 2. FBU1:** Για την ακρίβεια, Άμπου Σίμ-μπελ!
More precisely, Ámbu Sím-mbel!
3 February 2013 at 20:33 · Like · 1

⁵ The Abu Simbel temples are two massive rock temples in southern Egypt carved in the 13th century BC.

⁶ Throughout this thread I have employed IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) symbols that represent the actual pronunciation. For more information, consult the International Phonetic Association website (<http://www.langsci.ucl.ac.uk/ipa/index.html>).

3. Carla:	Ναι ρε συ, αλλά και τον Γράχαμ Γκρην δεν τολμάω να τον γράψω Γκρέιαμ Γκρην... Yes, but I don't dare to write Graham Greene as Greiem Greene...
4. FBU1:	Κακώς! Ευτυχώς, πολλοί τον λένε πλέον σωστά. Οπως έγινε σταδιακά και η αλλαγή του Σιν σε Σον Κόνερι... Wrongly! Fortunately, many people now pronounce his name correctly. As was the gradual change from Sin to Son Connery...
	3 February 2013 at 20:34
5. FBU1:	Δυστυχώς, τον Τσάρλτον Χέστον, λίγοι τολμούν να τον πουν σωστά (που του αρμόζει και καλύτερα, λόγω της οπλοφιλίας του)... Unfortunately, few people dare to pronounce Charlton Heston ⁷ correctly (it suits him better, because of his love for guns)...
	3 February 2013 at 20:35 · Like · 2
6. FBU1:	Επίσης, οι καφροαθλητικογράφοι ποτέ δεν είπαν λάθος τον Γκρέιαμ Σούνες... In addition, the lout sportscasters have never pronounced wrongly Graham [transliterates Greiem] Souness...
	3 February 2013 at 20:36
7. FBU1:	Αλλά, θα μου πεις, είμαστε στη χώρα που μιλάει ακόμη για τον Χένρι ΚίσινΓκερ! But, we are in the country that is still talking about Henry Kissinger!
	3 February 2013 at 20:38
8. Carla:	Point taken (into consideration)
	3 February 2013 at 20:39
9. FBU2:	ΑΜΠΟΥ ΣΙΜΠΕΛ AMBU SIMBEL
	3 February 2013 at 20:44
10. FBU3:	Μακάρι να μπορούσαμε να γράψουμε Άμπου Σίμπελ (2μ) για να αποδοθεί τελείως, αλλά σίγουρα Αμπού Σιμπέλ είναι λάθος... Αχ Γαλλία, πόσο <u>μας</u> επηρεάζεις :) Wish we could write Ámbu Símmbel (2m) to render it entirely, but surely Ambú Simbel is wrong... Oh France, how much you influence <u>us</u> :)
	3 February 2013 at 20:45
11. Carla:	lol ;) Is THAT your PROFESSIONAL opinion?
	3 February 2013 at 20:45 · Like · 2
12. FBU2:	Αν είναι σε κείμενο όχι, αν είναι σε έγγραφο του ΑΜΠΟΥ, ναι! If it's in a text no, if it's in one of AMBU'S documents, yes!
	3 February 2013 at 20:47
13. FBU2:	:)
	3 February 2013 at 20:49 · Like · 1
14. FBU3:	Μίλησα με ομιλητές της Αραβικής και με διαβεβαίωσαν πως η σωστή προφορά είναι Αμπου Σίμπελ. Ξέρεις, νομίζω, πόσο αξιόπιστες είναι οι πηγές μου! ;) I talked to speakers of Arabic and they assured me that the correct pronunciation is Ámbu Símbel. You know, I think, how reliable my sources are! ;)
	3 February 2013 at 20:50
15. Carla:	ευχαριστώ τις εξ Αιγύπτου πηγές σου που παραμέρισαν τη γαλλική τους παιδεία για να σε/με διαφωτίσουν. Ο Μεγάλος Ραμσής Β να σας έχει όλους καλά! Thanks to your sources from Egypt who ignored their French education to enlighten you/me. May Ramesses II the Great bless all of you!
	3 February 2013 at 20:52 · Like · 1

To her request, Carla receives five opinions from three translators. First, the correct stress is Ámbu Símbel following its phonetic transcription and because the name has not acquired

⁷ The surname 'Heston' is false friends with the Greek phrase 'χέσ' τον' (literally 'shit him') meaning 'ignore him'. Many Greeks prefer to pronounce Heston as i:stən.

Greek morphology (comment 1). FBU1⁸ draws on logic and professional experience to provide the answer listing some additional examples of proper names. Carla understands and accepts the explanation (comment 8). Second, the capitalised form ABU SIMBEL is presented as the correct one (comment 9). FBU2 is joking as in writing in capitals you do not have to stress words in Greek so you do not have to worry about such issues. Carla replies in the same humorous tone capitalising the word *PROFESSIONAL* insinuating that capitalisation is not a proper answer. Third, both FBU1 and FBU3 are in favour of *Simmbel* (comments 2, 10), yet such a choice would be unacceptable in Greek orthography. Fourth, both FBU1 and FBU3 recognise the bad influence from French including themselves into Carla’s generic *us* (comment 1: *our French education*, comment 10: *Oh France, how much you influence us*). Fifth, the right choice is *Ábu Símbel* (comment 14). FBU3 invokes expertise, that is, speakers of Arabic, boasting for its reliability.

Eventually, and within 25 minutes, Carla has got the answer she wanted. She thanks FBU3’s sources for enlightening him and concomitantly her (comment 15) and closes playfully with a humorous wish to those who contributed to her query appealing to Ramesses II, the Egyptian pharaoh who erected Abu Sibel temples.

The above thread shows vividly how Facebook can function as a fruitful medium for the synergetic construction and organisation of expertise via commentary. The most conspicuous feature in the interaction was the careful balance of display of expertise with jokey undercutting of that display. Such expertise no longer builds on rational argumentation exclusively (Leppänen, 2013), but vitally, is framed in informal, interpersonal discourse styles (e.g. swearing and humour) that enhance and smooth out collaboration.

5. Concluding remarks

Professional identity is cemented around specific areas of knowledge — it hinges upon showing and acquiring learning and expertise. In public, especially, constructions of this type of identity, as those occurring on Facebook, we witnessed that three interacting dimensions were at play: the individual, the domain (or domains) of knowledge, and the audience. The present paper documented and interpreted a multitude of different modes in which individuals can utilise Facebook to gain, construct and advance knowledge. These modes included copying and pasting information, attaching links, suggesting tools and employing questions, directives, evaluation, and collective pronouns. Depending on contexts and audiences, users appeared as advisers, experts, learners, supporters, involved, committed, knowledgeable, and co-operative.

As evidenced, Facebook is not only identified with light-hearted endorsement and affirmation but it can also function – by virtue of its architecture – as a crucial forum to display, monitor, co-construct, gain, and mediate expertise. By exploring its affordances (e.g. article and video links), users create new and versatile possibilities for collaborative knowledge creation and learning in a “friendly, supportive, and relatively safe environment” (Barton & Lee, 2013:130-131, 162). The kind of learning that takes place on Facebook is informal and unfettered. As such, it enables and invites participants’ socialisation in the learning process and the acquisition of new identities. The current study,

⁸ The acronym FBU is used for my informants’ Facebook friends and stands for Facebook User. Different Facebook participants are enumerated for ease of reference (e.g. FBU1, FBU2, FBU3...).

however, was limited to data abstracted from individual users' profiles. Future work should target at more systematic exploration of how the Group function of Facebook can facilitate both knowledge dissemination and learning, which especially within the context of education could potentially lead to the development of new pedagogies.

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