

**Cristina Varga, *Knowledge Transmission in Cyberspace - Discourse Analysis of Professional Web Forums as Internet Subgenre*  
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The work hereby represents, as a matter of fact, the publication of Cristina Varga's PhD thesis. It was coordinated by professor Clara Ubaldina Lorda, Ph (*Department of Translation and Language Sciences of Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona*) and professor Mircea Borcilă, PhD (*Department of English Language and Literature, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*), being defended in 2011.

The volume contains 7 chapters, divided into subchapters minutely entitled depending on the studied material, followed by the conclusions, the appendices (with examples of sub-corpora in English, Spanish, French, Romanian, Catalan), and a bibliography including the volumes, articles and web references reviewed by the author herself. Besides, at the beginning, the key-words of her volume are listed, among which we enumerate: linguistics, discourse analysis, web genres, knowledge communication, professional web forums, knowledge transmission, conversation analysis, genre description, explanatory sequence, text linguistics, corpus analysis, and comparable corpora.

By means of this paper, Cristina Varga presents to the readers the outcome of her daily experience, accumulated for more than twenty years now, period during which she has been studying the teaching-learning process in relation to the internet. Thus, she aims to provide the reader with

an answer to a series of questions related to the way in which the specialized knowledge is communicated through the Internet.

From the very beginning, in introduction, the author offers an overview of the internet, perceived as a virtual place conducive to more or less specialized communication of knowledge against a social background created by the virtual communities. After a description of the first testimonies provided by the internet pioneers on the way in which knowledge is transmitted within virtual communities and which constitutes the first argument supporting the concept of “Internet - a cognitive place”, we can notice that the present situation is very different.

The process of online learning is now surprisingly diversified. Thus, an entire family of words denominates nowadays what not long ago seemed to be a simple process of knowledge transfer. Hence, today we are used to talking about: *distance learning, e-learning, online learning, v-learning, virtual collaborative learning, computer-based training, Internet-based training, computer supported collaborative learning, social learning, and technology enhanced learning, mobile learning, ubiquitous learning, lifelong learning*, etc. These terms generally designate different learning processes in virtual space.

Facing the perspective of learning in virtual space we cannot help but ask a series of questions, to which Cristina Varga will try to answer all throughout her research. These questions are: Is the process of e-learning unfolded in virtual communities which are created around professional web forums different from the process of e-learning unfolded in schools? Do professional web forum members talk differently when they learn online than when they learn in class? If they speak and relate differently on the Internet in comparison with the real life, where do these differences come from? In what way is the communicational relation established on the Internet different from the face-to-face conversation? What language features do the interlocutors precisely use in order to communicate knowledge?

The motivation behind the research resides, above all, in the fact that professional web forums are the least studied form of computer mediated

communication. Among the main web genres (email, chat and web forum), the last one is the least studied. A second reason is given by the fact that the web forum represents a unique form of knowledge transfer in informal learning situations and has a public character, which makes it approachable without copyright infringement. The web forum offers a large thematic area related to knowledge transfer in various fields, as well as the benefit of being the most durable web genres. Additionally, the last reason is related to the main purpose of the Internet creation which was from its very beginning the interactive transfer and communication of knowledge for universities and academic fields as well as for ordinary users.

The author proposes four hypotheses: a) Web forum is a tool for knowledge transmission on the Internet starting with its first system implementations; b) The type of web forum exclusively dedicated to knowledge transmission in specialized domains is the professional web forum; c) in the light of the fact that all discursive web genres are viewed as hybrids between the written discourse and the oral one, we assume that, based on the bibliography, that the communicational interaction on the professional web forum is structured very similarly to a written conversation; d) due to the form of written conversation of the professional web forums, the transfer of knowledge is performed interactively through negotiation between two or more parties. Therefore, knowledge is transmitted collectively, collaboratively and interactively.

Cristina Varga considers that in the real professional web forums communication knowledge is transmitted especially throughout the explicative sequence and that the explanatory strategies have a fundamental role for the acquirement of knowledge in virtual space.

The present research is incorporated in the field of pragmatic discourse and is a descriptive work with three main related purposes. Those will be: a) Professional web forums description as a discursive subgenre of web forum; b) Description of mechanism of knowledge transmission into professional web forums; c) Seeing the variation from one language to another of the discursive subgenre constituted by the professional web forum.

The author structured the conclusions parallel to the objectives presented at the beginning of the research, conclusions which are meant to answer the questions and to confirm the hypotheses from the first chapter. They are: a) Mechanism description of the knowledge transfer in specialized web forums; b) Mechanism description of knowledge; c) Sighting of discursive variation in knowledge transmission in different languages.

***"Knowledge Transmission in Cyberspace - Discourse Analysis of Professional Web Forums as Internet Subgenre"*** represents only the beginning for the research of a wide domain and it remains an important work in specialized literature.