



LUSOPHONE INTERFACES: THE LUSOPHONE NETWORK ON FACEBOOK

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Abstract

This article examines the new digital landscape postulated in the network society theory advocated by Castells (2000), as well as a contextual framework. Assuming the virtual exists and produces effects (Lévy, 2001), we consider that we are witnessing a change of paradigm in social communication. If from a Communication point of view we are facing individualisation, the social paradigm shift is evident. The new perspective inculcated by digital tools is the socialisation and the maximisation of the collective.

In this article, we assume that the relational ties in asymmetric social networks (which do not involve reciprocity between nodes) that take place in social media platforms is content. In this sense, and taking a multidisciplinary perspective, we consider that the technique of appropriation shows a mapping of structures that are technically mediated interactions and enhanced by technology. We present an empirical study based on the method of triangulation, crossing document analysis with netnography. Analysing groups and Facebook pages as supports, where communication is recontextualised through disaggregated distribution and different types of interaction, we aim to categorise and understand the social representations of the Lusophone. The main objective of this paper is to examine whether Facebook, as an area of digitally mediated interactions and disaggregate content sharing, can induce a reconstruction of the significance of social networks and representations of the Lusophone, promoting the creation of a single social group, or at least a grouping with some homogeneity.

Keywords

Lusophone, cyberspace, social networks, social representations, social interaction

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For an introduction: narratives of Lusophone and identities

Understanding the Lusophone as a fragmented space full of multiple meanings, it is clear that its discourses, practices and social relations circulate in different conceptual logics. In this sense, we interpret the Lusophone as being built through a shared social construction with elements of communication systems that enhance networks of meaning within its very own subjectivity, which is dependent on a multiplicity of culture meanings. Notwithstanding, political discourse, like the media, hides asymmetries and presents a homogeneous perspective of Lusophones as a single unity.

As written by Eduardo Lourenço,

"the Lusosphere is no kingdom, nor even folkloric. It is only – and it is not little, nor simple – that sphere of communication and understanding determined by the use of the Portuguese language with a genealogy that distinguishes it from other Romance languages and cultural memory that, consciously or unconsciously, binds itself" (1999: 81).

The essayist also stresses that

"If everyone came to the capital of our North called the Lusophone, it is because this lady must have other mysteries and other charms or perplexities, beyond the scientific. Or we attribute her to that object of mere historical-linguistic curiosity, or even historical-cultural, which has been turned into a theme where we invest passion and interests that have to do not only with what we are as language and culture in the past, but with the present and the destiny of this continent that is immaterial, or we want more clearly to become the Lusophone world. However, neither here nor anywhere else, we pretend, we Portuguese, that the content and,

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above all, the echo of the concept of appearing so innocent drags with it the same images, the same procession of ghosts, the same implicits or misunderstandings, in the different spaces that we attribute without an ounce of perplexity, the ideal and idealised Lusophone sphere" (1999: 81).

Martins argues that

"What is in play in this symbolic struggle between cosmopolitan and multicultural globalisation is the power to define reality, as well as the power to impose internationally this definition, I mean, this di/vision. In this understanding, the Lusophone figure is not a different thing from the social reality of the distinct national communities where this symbolic battle is processed. And it is because of the social representations of reality not being foreign to their own social reality of the countries that they shape that, in my view, they must be reevaluated formulations which tend to deny the Lusophone figure not only symbolic efficacy, but political effectiveness as well" (2004: 8).

The multiplicity of narratives and social representations, while resulting from the socialisation process and directly associated with the collective identity (Daniel Antunes and Amaral, 2015), are fragmented and occupy the minds of the Lusophone (one meaning remains to be seen, and with an intensity to be established). They derive from a social and cultural memory that emerges from a shared symbolic construction that is framed and interpreted unevenly by different generations. For an analysis of cyberspace as a Lusophone interface, it becomes imperative to examine whether digital discourse can metamorphose the social representations of the Lusophone (important considering that a percentage of Lusophone are not even aware of the representation of their collective identity), which can enhance the creation of new identities and induce change in social relations. The "interface" expression, in this work, refers to the point of intersection where Computer Mediated Communications (CMC) allows interaction and communication in an almost continuous state without time or geographical barriers.

The dynamics of contemporaneity, mobility and mutation are processes that build questions of citizenship on micro and macro scales, in a discourse where "I" and "other" are an alternating continuum. The assumption that the interaction between Lusophones in the digital environment stems from a shared social construction also implies rethinking the role of cyberspace in the (re)construction of the Lusophone identity, as stated Macedo, Martins and Macedo (2010). The authors stress that the Information Society

"seems to call on cyberspace as a new place of the Lusophone, which establishes virtual communication networks between people who think, feel and speak in Portuguese" (2010: 14).



The narrative of the Lusophone in contemporary times is described by Patrisia Ciano in a master's thesis on the "Digital Lusophone" as being in "coexistence from two phases:

- (1) the separatist anachronism of a colonial past that puts all countries and regions touched by the Discoveries under the same roof of the story, but divides their existential present;
- (2) in postmodernity from the urgency of its insertion in a global environment of information, which, if developed well (or developed for good), can contribute in education and the democratisation of media" (2008: 34).

The concept of identity is crucial to understand the relational processes within the framework of the controversial concept of the "Lusophone". Maria Paula Menezes stresses that

"Identities – while relational processes – are rarely reciprocal. Never being pyres, identities are, however, unique, ensuring the affirmation of difference. The act of identifying produces the difference, constructed as relations of power (Santos, 2001)" (2008: 78, 79).

Also, the issue of Lusophone references as a mirror of "Portuguese imperialisation" (Menezes, 2008) and the formulation of thought have been questionable elements in the production of the contemporary Lusophone in digital environments, in its broadest context: intercultural dialogue.

The official discourse of the Lusophone refers to concepts of memory leveraged in colonialism and an imaginary of empire. However, post-colonial identities are constructed based on geography and generational issues, expanding "hyphenated identities" (Khan, 2008) because

"They cannot be represented as a stable, fixed phenomenon, because to think of chronological boundaries between the colonial and the postcolonial leads us to erroneous epistemological abodes, inducing the mistake of thinking that, historically, the colonial is an already-past episode" (2008: 97).

As a result of postmodernity, which is expressed in current social reality and as an exponent of globalisation, the Internet implies a reconfiguration of the concept of territory; it arises as a result of the construction of shared systems of representation and social dynamics. What gives it meaning and identity is the symbolic elements adopted by each group. Digital spaces are immaterial and concretised in places and non-places (Augé, 2010), where networks of networks and networks of communities co-exist.

The Internet has come to position itself as a break with the past, leveraging reinvented pasts and the emerging present. Will we be faced with the emergence of abstract digital



spaces that enable representations of memory and the present in a reconfiguration of power relations as well as their materialisation in points of digital intersection? Can networks be a possible way of renewal and strengthening of ties in the Lusophone? And what role does Facebook play, now that it has replaced Orkut as the most important social network in the largest Lusophone States, that is Brazil?

Geographies of the Information Society

The introduction of technology in the public and private life of societies has promoted a change in behaviours. Effectively,

networking technologies are now an integral part of the daily lives of millions of people and foster collective intelligence (Lévy, 2001, 2004; Jenkins, 2006). There is an online social revolution in progress, regarding the use and appropriation of technology. People are changing their behaviour: they work, live and think in networks (Amaral, 2014).

However, it is imperative to emphasise that the introduction of technology and, particularly, the Internet in private and public life of society also has socio-economic dimensions, which inevitably leads us to specific geographical contexts.

The digitally divide must be referenced in the context of territorial socio-technological spaces. These territories have their own dynamics that depend on several variables and produce different potentials of information dissemination and communication through networking technologies. Access to the Internet can contextualise the geography of “info-included” and “info-excluded” societies.

According to statistics presented by the Internet site Live Stats², it is estimated that 46.1% of the world population has access to the Internet, with about 4 billion non-users. The trajectory of growth in the last fifteen years, according to the site Internet Usage Statistics³, is 826.9%. The statistics also reveal geographical digital inclusion/exclusion, with Europe, Australia and North America having the greatest network access while the African continent does not exceed 28%. Referring also to the question of Latin America and the Middle East, according to the statistics of 2015, penetration rates have exceeded 50%.

Castells (1996) see the Internet as a space of spaces and in this sense, the local and private change as the local and global live together. It follows that the digital territorial issue is defined by factors that envisage a global dimension. Information flows that inhabit the network translate into a set of nodes connected by different ties that make them non-places in places (Augé, 2010). In this sense, locations correspond to the social

² A site of the Real Time Statistics Project that provides Internet access statistics. Available at <http://www.internetlivestats.com/> (accessed on April 2016).

³ A site that provides Internet access statistics based on data from local providers, the International Telecommunications Union, GfK and Nielsen Online. Available on the site <http://www.internetworldstats.com> (accessed on December 2015).



use of technology. Ultimately, access to the Internet should also be solved in light of the concept of digital literacy.

Digital illiteracy refers to a process that culminates in the exclusion of individuals from computers and the Internet through the incompetency of their *modus operandi*. This excludes the phone

because although it is from the same group of IC (Information and Communication) products – up to sharing the same infrastructure – from a sociological perspective the phone has different characteristics from the others: it is part of the family of products 'inclusive for illiterates', which can be used by people with no technical education (Sorg & Guedes, 2005: 102).

As stated by Gomes (2003), Castells argues that illiteracy is the "new poverty" of contemporaneity, taken as a new type of "functional illiteracy" that translates into a lack of skills to exist and co-exist in a global information society. In this sense, it is understood that digital exclusion has a macro level and multiple micro levels, which result from different conditions. The dimensions of social exclusion – assuming that these are not synonymous with poverty – can then be applied to digital illiteracy, thus being multidimensional, dynamic, relational, contextual and active. In this perspective and in the context of digital illiteracy, "disadvantaged groups" can be defined as part of the gradient of a multidimensional scale that understands the lack of social rights indicators and micro levels of social exclusion, as well as defining groups left out of the society of digital information for these reasons. Mayer (2003) states that a disadvantaged group can be defined by a simple expression: "those denied access to the tools needed for self-sufficiency". A disadvantaged group is then one that describes itself as taking a pattern of a lack of access to resources imposed by different barriers. Assuming the network as the central feature in organisational terms in the informational society, the communication model has asserted a condition of *undercitizenship* of citizens who are digitally excluded.

Portraits of the info-inclusion and info-exclusion in Lusophone countries

Forming a profile of info-exclusion and info-inclusion in the eight countries of the CPLP is not an objective task. Reading Internet access numbers in Lusophone countries lacks a (much needed) broader framework to contextualise the difference between four geographic spheres of economic and technological development (and hence social and cultural): a) Portugal; b) Brazil; c) PALOP; d) East Timor. Inside the PALOP macro sphere (or "The Five", as they call themselves) one can equate significant differences between countries and also within countries.

The very formation of identities in different historical, social, political, cultural and economic contexts raises a permanent cycle of exclusion and inclusion that has nothing to do with technology. Martins states that



as a symbolic, mythological expression, the Lusophone is a particular category of words. It integrates the wide range of words with which we stage the relationship between it and the other, between us and others. We use them to express belonging and identity, and even to demarcate territories (2004: 5).

Table 1: Internet access statistics in 2015 in Lusophone countries

Country	Users with access to the Internet	Penetration rate (% of the population)
Angola	5,102,592	26%
Brazil	117,653,652	57.6 %
Cape Verde	219,817	40.3%
Guinea Bissau	70,000	4.1%
Mozambique	1,503,005	5.9%
Portugal	7,015,519	64.9%
Sao Tome and Principe	48,806	25.2%
East Timor	290,000	23.6%

Source: Internet Usage Statistics

On the continent of Africa, the Lusophone world is nothing but a world of sharing knowledge, information and affections in a multilingual dimension. In the area of the productions in the online environment, the processing occurs in the same way. It is clear that information and communication technologies have given a huge contribution in bringing Lusophones in Africa together, especially to assess the dispersion of the territories that make up the continent. Cultural variations in Africa are considerable, from region to region, and the economic density of these freshly decolonisation countries in the first half of the 1970s is not conducive to human traffic in the geographic circuits that mark the offline universe.

Travel between the different Portuguese-African countries is beyond the reach of most families of this community. Associated with this, we find on the continent thousands of families struggling to formulate answers to basic questions related to the survival of a human, such as food, drinking water, clothing, medication, education, hygiene and public health, among others. In these cases, they are not close to the possibilities of developing mutual understanding through contacts made possible by traffic in the offline world. In this regard, the mediation of the mass media can have a major role. Television, by force of its image and the ability to carry distant realities to the interior of planetary homes, could have a major role in this matter. However, there are some factors that do not contribute to this dimension of television communication in the Luso-African space:

- A) the vast majority of content produced by the television of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, and Mozambique do not reach other African-Luso countries;
- B) this television, especially public television – that has more responsibility in precipitating the symbolic values of their countries – is confined to the "common places" and their "places of comfort", and many of them cannot cover all of their national territories;



- c) there are few documentaries, which constitute valuable elements to anchor the knowledge of a society;
- d) Extended reports are not cultivated television genres in Luso-African countries. Through investigative journalism, extended reports redeem values entrenched in the experience of a people, bringing fruitful elements for the knowledge society;
- e) television lacks entertainment programmes of high cultural value, which would end up bringing added value to the symbolic tradition of these people.

Taking into account the lack of material resources, difficulties in geographical movement and the weak role of traditional media in the formation of bridges between different Lusophone communities in Africa, there is a space remaining (that is potentially strong) for the development of communication, systems of information and knowledge exchange. Here, the computer arrogates a major role.

Macedo, Martins and Macedo (2010) cite Wagner to illustrate the Brazilian situation that

has experienced undeniable progress in the population's access to the Internet, although the numbers still show strong disparities between regions of the country, social class and people's educational level.

Several authors report that the rate of Internet penetration in Brazil comes down to an urban phenomenon, centred on literacy. Although it is clear that regions with high population density, independent of socio-economic issues, have started using the network regularly. And here the centrality of professional media and the extension of the impact that this has on cyberspace is not indifferent.

The Portuguese case is invariably different because it centres on the support of the European Union, economic levels and has higher literacy than the other countries. The degree of development in access to information and knowledge is distinct from other Lusophone countries, a fact that the very proliferation of electronic devices supports.

East Timor is a country that experienced a long period of occupation and later conflict. In this sense, low Internet penetration rate seems an obvious fact at a time in which basic issues of infrastructure continue.

Another issue to consider is the number of Portuguese speakers originating in the eight countries around the world. According to the Observatório da Língua Portuguesa⁴, 244 million Portuguese speakers exist. However, only in Portugal and in Brazil do the entire population speak Portuguese. In other countries, the Observatório notes that not all the inhabitants speak Portuguese: Angola (70%), Cape Verde (87%), Guinea Bissau (57%), Mozambique (60%), Sao Tome and Principe (90%) and East Timor (20%). In relation to this Ciancio states that

⁴ Data from 2010 is available at <http://observatorio-lp.sapo.pt/pt/dados-estatisticos/falantes-de-portugues-literacia> (Retrieved December 2015).



the Portuguese language, which is the mother language, in some cases becomes the stepmother and an elitist mechanism. It also gains connotations of rejection and the suffocation of national languages, being naturally exclusive in the way it is used. The people are on the margins of an educational process of language teaching in accordance with their local realities (2008: 63).

Data from the study of the Observatório da Língua Portuguesa reveal that about 10 million Portuguese speakers are in diaspora. In this sense, according to Internet World Stats, Portuguese was the fifth most spoken language on the Internet in 2012 with 131.5 million users. The data show, then, that the idea that we are witnessing a shift from a mass communication model to network communication does not imply an annulment, but rather an articulation of and with the previous models,

producing new communication formats and also allowing new ways of facilitating empowerment and, thus, a communicative anatomy (Cardoso, 2009: 57).

The network, as an area of multiple fragments, gives societies the impetus of convergence of media, cultures, people and knowledge through interfaces. The Cape Verdean case illustrates this argument and cements the idea that the construction of narratives about the countries is directly related to the media, institutions and, essentially, language appropriation. Ciancio stresses that

the land of the Lusophone is fluctuating because it does not define a territory of continuity, and demarcates unconscious identities that are lost in the unknown and in the plurality of fragmentation (2008: 7).

The new ecosystem of communication that emerges with the Internet refers to the relationship between technology and the social dimension of its use. However, identities and cultural diversities that make up the vast universe of the Lusophone do not compete against a unified idea of a Lusophone network society. This approach would also be reducing the rich cultural diversity of 244 million Portuguese speakers throughout the world. Still, we risk thinking that the paradigm of the collective, network concepts and community are now central to the study of social spaces that proliferate the Internet and allow one to map mobilisations, representations and expressions of the Lusophone as a single universe that brings together citizens who share ties of identity, culture and language.

Cyberspace as a Lusophone interface: an attempt in "Lusophone connection" as the point of intersection

CMC can simulate presence and enhance the mediation of individualisation and the collective through processes of communication, cooperation and conflict that materialise



through the social use of technology. In this regard, consideration is given in the words of Jouët:

Communication practices are often analysed as being the product of changes in communication systems and equipment, which are though to define de facto the way in which individuals use them. Such technical determinism, however, should be avoided. The same can be said of the limiting model of social determinism which ignores the role of technical objects and rather sees social change as the principal factor determining usage (2009: 215, 216).

Looking to overcome the limitations of technological and social determinism, we try in this section to analyse groups formed through interaction mediated digitally. In this sense, we consider that CMC enhances communication among geographically dispersed individuals, but also generates digitally mediated cooperation and are potential instruments of mobilisation of info-included societies (Recuero, 2002). The social dynamics occurring in cyberspace refer to interactions that develop via CMC, generating exchange flows and social support structures (Recuero, 2009). The collective representation now focuses on new patterns of social interaction arising from individual and joint use of technology (Castells, 2003). Recuero argues that

the beginning of the global village is also the beginning of the deterritorialisation of social ties (2009: 135).

Recuero sees virtual communities as the setting for

human groups that emerge in cyberspace, through computer-mediated communication (2003a: s/p).

It follows that the geographical issue fades and shared social construction becomes an important element.

Among the different social media illustrating the landscape of the network, Facebook is the platform with the most Portuguese speakers. Data from the Social Bakers agency⁵ show that Portuguese was the third most spoken language on this social network in November 2012 with 58,539,940 users. This number is impressive compared with the data that the same agency made available for May 2010: 6,119,680 — showing an exponential increase.

⁵ Data available at <http://www.socialbakers.com/blog/1064-top-10-fastest-growing-facebook-languages> (Accessed on August 2014).



Table 2: statistics for users registered on Facebook in 2012 in Lusophone countries

Country	Registered users on Facebook	Penetration rate (%)
Angola	645,460	3.2%
Brazil	51,173,660	26.4%
Cape Verde	107,340	20.5%
Guinea Bissau	M=NA	NA
Mozambique	362,560	1.5%
Portugal	4,663,060	43.3%
Sao Tome and Principe	6,940	3.8%
East Timor	AT	AT

Source: Internet Usage Statistics

Using triangulation, which crossed document analysis with quantitative content analysis and netnography, we developed a case study to categorise and understand the social representations of the Lusophone through its mapping on Facebook. This takes the assumption that networks translates us (individuals and groups) into interconnections of many ties. The network communication model thus results from a fusion of different techno-social spheres that shape society. With this work we seek to answer two research questions:

- (1) Will we be faced with the emergence of abstract digital spaces that enable representations of memory and present a reconfiguration of power relations and their materialisation in digital intersections?
- (2) Can the network be assumed as a possible way to renew and strengthen Lusophone ties?

We outlined the following objectives:

- (1) examine whether Facebook can induce reconstruction of networks of significance and social Lusophone representations, through the categories of pages identified with the word "Lusophone" and from the descriptions given;
- (2) analyse if digital discourse can metamorphose the social Lusophone representations, trying to identify if there is a single social representation that derives from a shared social construction materialised in similar discourse in the conversations in the groups studied.

For a mapping of the Lusophone on the platform Facebook, we searched for the Portuguese keyword "Lusophone" on pages and groups. An interesting point to focus on are presented suggestions to the research for "Lusophone": "Lusophone games", "Lusophone games 2014", "Lusophone games mascot", "Lusophone games goa 2014" and "Lusophone games goa 2013".

We sought only to map groups with more than 60 members and pages with more than 100 fans. Based on these requirements, we inventoried 43 groups and 28 pages.



Table 3: Members of groups identified through the word "Lusophone"

Members	Groups
60 – 100	23.25%
101 – 300	32.56%
301 – 500	11.63%
501 – 700	4.65%
701 – 900	6.98%
901 – 1100	0%
More than 1101	20.93%

Source: Elaborated by the authors

The number of members of the groups identified and analysed is fragmented, and there is standard being set even by category. Still, it is possible to note that groups with fewer members are those with a closed access typology.

Table 4: Type of access to groups identified through the word "Lusophone"

Access Type	Groups
Open	55.81%
Closed	44.19%

Source: Elaborated by the authors

There was a balance between the typology of access to the group, having been observed that requests for access are positive and quickly answered.

Table 5: Categories of groups identified through the word "Lusophone"

Categories	Groups
Culture	23:26%
Community	18.60%
Trade	6.98%
Sport	2:33%
Diaspora	30.09%
Education / Studies	4.65%
History	30.09%
Information / Media	16:28%
Portuguese language	4.65%
No Description / No Access	4.65%

Source: Elaborated by the authors

The categorisation of groups is interesting to analyse with regards to its diversity. The groups classified as "Diaspora" are identified as a community of members of Lusophone countries out of context, particularly in northern Europe. In these cases, all groups are closed access and there is a substantially interesting detail: the members are often from more than four Lusophone countries.



The groups that were classified as "Community" are primarily targeted at young people and the sharing of experiences in different Lusophone countries, particularly with regard to musical interests.

The categories "Information/Media" and "Culture" are dominant and essentially deal with issues related to Brazil and Portugal, with it being rare to find the subjects in Lusophone Africa and non-existent in relation to East Timor.

Table 6: Fans of the identified pages with the word "Lusophone"

Fans	groups
100-400	28.57%
401-700	21.43%
701 - 1000	10.71%
1001 - 1300	7.14%
More than 1301	32.15%

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Groups that have the most users are those that are classified as "culture" and "Information/Media". The groups described as "open" have the most members. In addition "closed" groups with fewer users are those that correspond to categories such as "Diaspora", "Community" and those that have no classification.

Table 7: Categories of pages identified through the word "Lusophone"

Category	pages
Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)	1
College & University	2
Community	2
Community & Government	1
Sports League	2
Non-Profit Organisation	5
Arts & Entertainment	1
Interest	1
Library	1
News/Media Website	1
Magazine	1
Sports Venue	1
Radio Station	1
Media/News/Publishing	1
Arts & Entertainment · Bands & Musicians	1
Community Organisation	1
Government Organisation	1
Music Chart	1
University	1
Book	1
Local Business	1

Source: Elaborated by the authors



The pages marked with the word "Lusophone" belong to disparate categories and do not show a single standard. There is a trend related to groups and/or communities and non-profit organisations.

Table 8: Number of fans on pages identified through the word "Lusophone"

fans	Category
431	Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)
312	College & University
421	Community
349	Community & Government
2240	Sports League
1568	Non-Profit Organisation
2096	Arts & Entertainment
729	Interest
603	Library
179	Non-Profit Organisation
251	Community
288	News / Media Website
16098	Magazine
951	Sports Venue
6660	Sports League
951	Radio Station
3489	Non-Profit Organisation
4160	Media / News / Publishing
556	Arts & Entertainment · Bands & Musicians
1020	Community Organisation
119	Non-Profit Organisation
9417	Government Organisation
340	Music Chart
205	University
543	College & University
1284	Non-Profit Organisation
235	Book
1503	Local Business

Source: Elaborated by the authors

The pages do not have a pattern with respect to the number of fans. It is evident that in spite of being under the Lusophone "umbrella", there is no one narrative or aggregation patterns evident with regards to the social representation of a single group. In this sense, from a digital perspective the Lusophone is still merely an *in fieri* entity.

Empirical analysis shows that the social representations of the Lusophone in mediated social interaction spaces do not show a single social group that embodies a shared social construction that replaces the presence of belonging in places and non-places (Augé, 2010) on the network. The disaggregated distribution of Facebook spaces does not show that this is a digital tool of communication that reconstructs meanings, nor does it particularly assume itself as a vehicle of social representations that sees the Lusophone as a single social group. It is found that there is a multiplicity of narratives and fragmented social representations whose shared symbolic construction is only Portuguese.



Concluding remarks

The Internet as a social networking platform facilitates the opportunity for people to associate with others who share common interests, find new sources of information and publish content and opinion. The so-called social Web offers features that allow, to those who have access to technology, the ability to have a voice. Platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Flickr and Twitter are a "new place", which combines the power of human and social capital with the potential for global communication on the social Web. The possibilities exist, the network has become dynamic and speed is a reality.

Digital speech does not metamorphose the representational field of the Lusophone. In this sense, the creation of new Lusophone identities has not been seen, nor have relationships been seen to be inducing social practices of representational change.

The issue of common symbolic references and language potentiate and maximise online interactions between Lusophones. However, Lusophone ties do not materialise in the construction of a single narrative but rather in the spread of different narratives, based on a geographical determinism only surpassed by the convergence of typical network interaction that is enhanced by sharing the language.

The analysis of Lusophone cyberspace requires more study, particularly regarding the spaces of connection and samples of considerable dimensions for each of the countries as the social representation that the Lusophone creates on the network for themselves and others. A project to study interaction between Lusophones in the digital environment and an assessment of shared social construction based on content analysis and social network analysis is needed, which we believe would permit us to make a broader assessment, for the cyberspace allows us to rethink the (re)construction of Lusophone identity in a context outside of the media. A project to keep in mind.

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