Social Networks as a Framework for Interaction within the Romanian Diaspora: An Analysis of Ritual Forms

Lavinia Suciu
Politehnica University Timisoara, Romania
Alina Elena Romașcu
University of Corsica Pasquale Paoli, France

Abstract

This study aims to analyse how Romanian diaspora groups on Facebook use online communication to reconstruct, reinforce, and transmit their cultural identity. Social networks have become a space where interactional rituals – inclusion/exclusion, engagement, education, valorisation, and institutionalization – manifest themselves, structuring exchanges and consolidating community cohesion. From a socio-anthropological perspective (including ethnography, interactional sociology, and Goffmanian theory), on the one hand, and contemporary approaches to ritual, on the other, our research method relies on examining the ways language is used and the contextual cues that reflect the linguistic and social practices of members of diasporic groups. Functioning as rituals, these social and linguistic practices express the tension between the need for integration into the host society and the attachment to cultural and national heritage.

Interpretation of diaspora group posts shows that members reaffirm their cultural belonging, combat negative stereotypes, transmit language and traditions to younger generations, and celebrate religious or national events, thus imbuing these practices with a ritualistic dimension. These interactions reveal dual dynamics: maintaining ties with the culture of origin and, progressively, adapting to the host society. Thus, Facebook appears as a symbolic and performative space, where the diaspora constantly negotiates its dual identity and transforms virtual communication into an essential instrument of cohesion, recognition, and cultural resilience.

Keywords: *diaspora, cultural identity, ritual, social networks, diasporic groups.*

1. Introduction

The traditional concept of "diaspora" referred to geographical dispersion, designating "any phenomenon of dispersion from a place; the organization of an ethnic, national, or religious community in one or more countries; a population spread over more than one territory; the places of dispersion; any non-territorial space of exchange, etc." (Dufoix 2003: 3). Currently, the conceptualization of the diaspora revolves around the preservation of common identity and shared heritage; it emphasizes communication, the creation of traditions, and the construction of a collective narrative to ensure the group's continuity (Bolat, Cakın & Sirer 2024).

Members of diaspora have always sought to maintain a symbolic and emotional connection with their country of origin while integrating into the host society. Social networks have become a privileged space for interaction, solidarity, and identity construction for dispersed communities.

In recent years, they have established themselves as the preferred framework for interaction for a large number of individuals. This preference can be explained by various factors, including the ease of communication offered by these platforms, as well as the existence of norms and constraints, whether explicit or institutionalized. By fostering communication and creativity and by contributing to the removal of cultural barriers, social networks illustrate the emergence of a participatory culture that transcends traditional boundaries, offering a space where individuals can express themselves, challenge prejudices, and interact freely with others.

Nevertheless, cultural differences exert a decisive influence on observable behaviours in these digital environments, on the forms of content expression, and on interaction patterns (Huang 2024). In any communication situation, the link between the verbal and the social remains obvious; thus, online intercultural interaction highlights, in its very structure, cultural differences related to communication norms,

254

values, and taboos. Interactional analysis, therefore, unfolds on both linguistic and social levels.

This work aims to examine the nature of discourse in online interaction within Romanian diaspora groups on the Facebook platform, with the goal of understanding the construction of the virtual social reality of these communities. To this end, the following objectives were set:

1. Identifying the presence of latent cultural stereotypes influencing the criteria of acceptance or rejection, both at group level and at individual level;

2. Highlighting the forms of rituals present in intra-group interactions;

3. Identifying the social roles that emerge from these interactions and the behaviours that reflect them.

Although it has lost its original sacred connotation, the concept of "ritual" remains central to sociological and anthropological theories, where it is defined as behaviour aimed at affirming and strengthening social relations. In one form or another, rites are intrinsic elements of any interaction, regardless of its nature. They revolve around symbols, thus generating a plurality of interpretations and meanings, which vary according to the social groups that practice them. It is precisely for this reason that ritual retains its full relevance in the analysis of communicative acts, particularly in the context of contemporary society.

In a modern approach, rituals represent a way of reconstituting social bonds and reappropriating values, both old and new. They are not definitive, but are transformed according to how social groups integrate and imbue them with renewed vitality and meaning. The importance of rituals in modern society, as highlighted by sociologists, lies in their role in guiding collective actions, their capacity to foster participant engagement, as well as in the almost sacred value attributed to individuality (Segré 2000).

Placed in a situation of "moral abandonment of overall meaning" (Bouvier 2000) and of (re)affirmation of certain practices and values, postmodern society finds, in social networks, a privileged space for individual and collective expression, where ritual compensates for the loss of bearings and the weakening of norms. In the current context, marked by a constant effort – individual or collective – to restore meaning to social practices, individuals and communities tend to turn to forms of identification where symbolism takes precedence over rationality: "Individuals and communities are turning to modes of identification in which the symbolic is stronger than all the arguments of rationality" (Bouvier in Segré: 11).

The socio-anthropological perspective thus rehabilitates ritual, against the backdrop of the need to reconsider explanatory systems and modes of legitimation. As Douglas (1967) emphasizes: "Man is a social animal, a ritual animal. Remove one form of ritual, and it will reappear in another, with all the more vigour the more intense the social interaction. […] There is no friendship without rituals of friendship. Social rituals create a reality that, without them, would have no meaning. It is no exaggeration to say that ritual is more important to society than words are to thought [...]. Social relations do not exist without symbolic acts."

The power of ritual in contemporary society, as demonstrated by numerous sociological analyses, lies in its capacity for adaptation and transformation: ritual "possesses a life of its own, with its potential for disorder or improvisation; it can transform or disappear according to the creative power of the social collective" (Neveu in Segré 2000: 12).

2. Methodology

Contemporary research on communication, focused on its conceptualization as a process of creating and recreating meaning, defines the communicative act within a framework of perceptual and conceptual interferences where data relating to the individual and

society play an essential role in understanding the message. Language is perceived as a social activity, inseparable from situational factors. Researchers' interest in the intra-social and intra-cultural analysis of language phenomena has, thus, established and developed an anthropo-sociological orientation, understood as an interdisciplinary approach to ethnographic communication.

From this perspective, Hymes laid the foundations of ethnographic research – or the *ethnography of communication* – that takes into account all the rules, rituals, and social norms to decipher the meaning of exchanges. While language use falls under the domain of linguistic pragmatics, its role concerns the field of anthropology, and the concept around which this approach is built is that of the communicative act, considered as a frame of reference for defining the function of language in culture and society. Verbal interaction, considered from the perspective of its general functioning, is elaborated and interpreted based on rules applied within a given contextual framework, through heterogeneous semiotic material (verbal, paraverbal, and nonverbal units) (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1990).

Interactional discourse analysis, based on the concepts of *discourse* and *interaction*, focuses both on the conditions of discourse production – through the study of interaction – and on examining the shared and ideologically framed modes of language use (Heller 2001). Heller (2001) distinguishes two main approaches in interaction research: ethnomethodology and the interactionist perspective, while emphasizing the influence of the former on the latter.

Ethnomethodologists prioritize the observation of concrete examples: they analyse interactional data as texts, whereas interactionists draw on other sources of interpretation to enrich the analysis of exchanges.

By focusing on observable routines, ethnomethodologists study conversational structure, including phenomena such as turn-taking (Sacks *et al.*, 1974), sequentiality and adjacency, as well as repair,

which reveals the normative order through the analysis of its disruption and reconstruction. These methods allow:

1. Highlighting how interaction – understood as a modality of knowledge and presence of individuals – contributes to the construction of a social order that transcends each particular interaction;

2. Examining the relationship between social action and social structure, and how the latter limits or guides individuals' modes of action and understanding;

3. Identifying the interactional manifestations of social problems, with interaction becoming both a potential source of these problems, a site for detecting signs of their emergence, and a possible space for intervention.

Goffman shares with ethnomethodologists the concern to understand interactional processes as the foundations of social order construction. However, his work emphasizes the importance of situating interactions within the living fabric of everyday life, understood as an integral part of a dynamic model of socially constituted frameworks, rather than within an abstract, underlying schema.

For Gumperz, a representative of interactional sociology, interacting means engaging in a continuous process of negotiation: it involves both inferring the other's intention and assessing how one's own contributions are received. The dynamic nature of the theory stems from this interdependence between interlocutors, who can modify and (re)create the constitutive features of the social context of communication (Shiffrin et al. 2001).

The importance of contextual cues[1] in the production and interpretation of meaning thus directs interactional sociolinguistics towards their systematic identification.

---

[1] Contextual cues represent any verbal sign which, when treated in conjunction with symbolic grammatical and lexical signs, serves to construct the contextual basis for the interpretation of the message, any linguistic

Foucault's conception of discourse demonstrates a conceptual convergence with Bourdieu and Anglo-American ethno-sociological theorists, while also incorporating elements of the philosophy of language. Foucault draws inspiration from the Greek poets of the 6th century BC, for whom *true discourse*[2] emanated from a legitimate speaker, in accordance with certain rituals, and possessed a performative force.

Centred on the notion of ritual, his theory posits the necessity of ritual constraints within discourse, the only guarantees of its truth value: "It is always possible to speak the truth within the space of a wild exteriority; but one is only in the realm of truth by submitting to the rules of a discursive policing that should be reactivated in each of our discourses." (Foucault 1998: 32).

From this perspective, language acquires coherence and meaning when the empty forms that constitute it are "filled" by the subject's intentionality. This intentional dimension of language refers to its concrete use in the act of communication and is embodied in the notion of the founding subject. Two other concepts, "original experience" and "universal mediation", complete Foucault's conception of discourse as truth. "Original experience" consists of reading the world and the meanings that pre-exist discourse, while "universal mediation" expresses the predictive character of discourse: by reflecting pre-existing reality or truth, discourse simultaneously produces and legitimizes it (Foucault 1998). Here one notes a conceptual kinship between Foucault's philosophy and the philosophy

---

feature which marks the presence of contextual presuppositions (Gumperz in Shiffrin et al. 2001: 218-219).

[2] "Among the Greek poets of the 6th century, the true discourse...for which there was respect and terror, the one to which one had to submit, because it reigned, was the discourse pronounced by those entitled and according to the required ritual; it was the adherence of men and was thus plotted with destiny" (Foucault 1971: 17).

of language, particularly around three key notions: intentionality, speech act (as an action that transforms reality), and discourse (understood as an act).

In the ethnographic approach, ritual represents a connection between actors, analogous to a linguistic message structured by the interrelation of signs according to the meaning one wishes to convey. De Salins (1988) evokes, in this regard, the dialogic value of ritual, emphasizing its phatic function in interaction: it establishes and maintains contact between members of a linguistic community. A marker of social interaction, present in every exchange – verbal or non-verbal – ritual acts as a constraint, compounded, at the level of the message, by the linguistic constraint.

Ritual has acquired particular prominence through Goffman's theatrical conception of communication. Starting from the idea that *the world is a stage*, Goffman defines rituals as forms of interaction between individuals governed by an implicit grammar of identification and recognition (Goffman, 1974). From this perspective, social life is likened to a performance where actors interpret roles according to the given situation (Baylon & Mignot 1994). There would thus exist a repertoire of typical situations in which individuals assume a role determined by the interactional context. Consequently, the construction of messages and communication as a whole are linked to the roles established by the type of situation experienced. E.g., a sales interaction illustrates a ritual where the roles of seller and buyer are predefined: greetings, the seller's smile, the welcoming formula ("Can I help you?"), the customer's response and request, etc. Some of the ritual elements are the responsibility of the sender, others of the receiver, which shows that ritual is actualized through the repertoire of social roles.

Goffman takes up the concept of ritual from Durkheim, who distinguishes two main categories:
- Positive rituals, expressing interest in others (greetings, invitations, compliments, services rendered);

260

- Negative rituals, marking respect for the privacy of others (withdrawal, distancing).

These two categories constitute the set of social obligations imposed on the individual by the expectations of their peers (de Salins, 1988). In Goffman's theory, positive rituals are called "rites of presentation" or "prescriptive rituals", while "negative rituals" correspond to "rites of avoidance" or "prospective rituals". Other distinctions appear:

1. Depending on the behaviour of the participants, between symmetrical rituals (status equality) and asymmetrical rituals (status inequality);

2. Depending on the interactional role, between rituals of expectation and rituals of obligation.

Rituals thus allow individuals to cooperate in organizing social exchanges, in accordance with a higher system that Goffman calls social order, designed to guide social behaviour both internally and externally. Life in society implies a set of obligations toward oneself and others. Their transgression leads to emotions such as shame or embarrassment — manifestations of internal social control. When nonconformity is observed by others, it constitutes external social control.

Baylon & Mignot (1994) identify several fundamental types of rituals:

- Access rituals, marking the initial contact (greetings), influenced by the status and relationship between participants;
- Confirmation rituals, intended to validate the image each person wishes to project and to demonstrate consideration for others;
- Repair rituals, used to restore relational balance in the event of an incident;
- Daily rituals, constituting a normative code that facilitates communication and structures social relationships.

The implementation of these rituals relies on strategies, or *figurations* according to Goffman, classified into three categories:

a) Preventive strategies, aimed at avoiding incidents;

b) Protective strategies, intended to preserve the interlocutor's "face";

c) Repair strategies, seeking to compensate for an act perceived as threatening to the other.

These strategies support the representation and transmission of a valued image of the individual within society. The concern of the social actor to construct and maintain a positive image in all communicative exchanges constitutes one of the major challenges of interaction.

Thus, from a Goffmanian perspective, ritual derives its full meaning from this interactional dimension, as an expression and regulation of social relations.

3. Results and Analysis

The specificity of social life in real space, "made up of infinite variations on the same theme, that of obligatory rituals and networks of mutual acquaintance" specific to the members of a group (Pinçon & Pinçon-Charlot 2000), is fully reflected in the virtual reality of social networks. The themes addressed within the studied Facebook groups reproduce the daily practices of the members, behaviours characteristic of everyday life, where there is ritualization, carrying both social and collective representations, but also individual symbolism.

According to De Gail (2013), the Facebook platform has an amplifying effect on both the functioning of stereotypes (e.g., through perception shaped by self-presentation) and on user behaviour (particularly in the way they assume the role of "active user").

Identifying recurring themes in diasporic groups leads to considering these groups as complex cultural systems, whose structure, composed of the cultural proper, the symbolic, and the

262

imaginary (Enriquez 1992), can be broken down according to the categories proposed by Schein (in Vlăsceanu 2003) – behavioural regularities in interactions between individuals: languages, habits, traditions, rituals applied in specific relationships and situations:

1. Group norms, i.e. implicit standards and activated values (e.g., "equal pay for equal work");

2. Displayed values, principles and ideals explicitly formulated for group members;

3. Formal philosophy – policies and ideological principles guiding members' actions in their interactions with the outside world;

4. Group rules, formal or informal, that define membership and regulate internal relations;

5. The socio-moral climate and spatial architecture of the group: states of mind, shared emotions, organization of communication space;

6. Personal skills, i.e. specific know-how and abilities mobilized in activities or interactions with the outside world;

7. Modes of thought, mental models, and linguistic paradigms, i.e., the cognitive frameworks that guide perceptions, judgments, and forms of communication;

8. Activated meanings, i.e. ways of interpreting everyday events;

9. Metaphors and symbols, configured through ideas, emotions, experiences, or images of self and group, that manifest in daily life.

As a mediator of shared meaning, the social symbol is inherent in any action of one social actor on another and, therefore, in any act of communication considered in its relational dimension.

Since all social action is embedded in a set of beliefs, motivations, and emotions that constitute a symbolic context, the interpretation of a statement should necessarily take into account social representations, whose coercive influence on individual expression is widely attested (Segré 2000).

Thus, the speaker's presence in the utterance – in other words, the subjectivity of language – is understood as a nuanced reiteration of collective representations, based on a social symbol that may be motivated or arbitrary. However, the strength and relative stability of a shared representation depend on how each individual experiences and invests it, i.e. on the active role played by the personal imagination in the construction of the social representation. There is, therefore, a constant interaction between the individual and the collective, an association inherent to the imagination involved in the social symbolism of collective representations.

From this premise, Dâncu (2001: 27) evokes the concept of "social symbolism", "born of social interaction" – a mechanism by which individuals represent themselves, codify others in order to understand them, and through which society represents itself.

However, this image of a unitary organism, of a community, can only be maintained through its expression, through communication: "The (mental) representation that the group makes of itself can only be perpetuated by the continuous effort of (theatrical) representation by means of which the agents produce and reproduce – even if through fiction – at least the appearance of their ideal truth, their ideal of truth" (Bourdieu 1999 :177). The presence of ritual within the groups analysed manifests itself through a variety of forms.

The interaction between members of the analysed diasporic groups reveals social and linguistic practices functioning as rituals linked to a shared culture (rites of reconnection) and practices corresponding to members' desire to integrate into the host society, associated with daily rituals (expressions of interest in administrative procedures or legal information, e.g.).

Rites of reconnection to the culture of origin are present:
• At the explicit verbal level, through familiar words and expressions, slang, greetings, and formulas specific to the language of origin;

• At the non-verbal level, through practices such as preparing and sharing traditional recipes, expressing *dor* (nostalgia for the homeland), or promoting Romanian cultural events that reinforce national identity;

• At the implicit level, through references to a shared historical and social past.

These ritualized forms ensure group cohesion founded on a set of shared knowledge and experiences stemming from the culture of origin and possessing a transindividual character.

This analysis highlights the following typologies of rituals:

a) Rituals of protection and opposition – inclusion and exclusion

The ritual of exclusion, where "the other" is present in its absence, and the rites of inclusion/exclusion (or *rites of aggregation*) define the symbolic boundaries of the group: everyone should know their place. Rituality is also manifested through the existence of norms that regulate and organize intragroup life. Groups exhibit rules of membership common to most virtual communities (respect for personal space, prohibition of offensive language, harassment, or promotional messages), but also rules specific to certain groups: e.g., access may be a long and selective process, involving entry tests, while, in others, it is immediate.

The functioning of this regulatory system generates a sense of belonging and fosters specific behaviours such as expressions of appreciation (positive reactions, encouraging comments). While these rules impose constraints on individual freedom of expression, they offer, in return, integration into a familiar cultural space, where members find a form of symbolic gratification: the opportunity to express, share, and perpetuate common values, a language, and beliefs.

In some cases, the group administrator periodically reposts welcome messages and reminders of the internal rules. This gesture lends online interaction a ritualistic character, analogous to that of

face-to-face communication. As Romaşcu & Suciu (2025) point out, the act of reposting, as an act of communication, constitutes an affirmation of presence within the group in question, a mark of participation in the life of the digital community.

The way in which inclusion and exclusion criteria are established, whether at individual or collective level, can reveal the presence of latent stereotypes specific to the culture of belonging. As De Gail (2013) points out, the manifestation of these stereotypes is reconfigured on social media platforms: they become not only more visible but also institutionalized as collective norms.

b) Rituals that foster participant engagement

Belonging to or integration into a group is not limited to respecting internal rules: it presupposes a continuous effort to mark one's presence in the community space. The time spent interacting with other members – an indicator of the degree of symbolic coexistence – reflects the individual's level of involvement in the life of the group. Observation of exchanges shows that regular participation in online communication takes the form of ritualization: some members frequently post messages, sometimes several times a day, demonstrating a particularly active presence.

This ritualistic nature is also expressed through the dialogic and conversational character of electronic communication. As Anis (2006) states, online communication is defined as "collective communication in principle but essentially interindividual in its actual functioning".

c) Ritual of initiation and instruction

Within the diasporic groups observed on Facebook, a particular form of initiation or instruction ritual is manifested. Traditionally, this type of ritual falls under the family's responsibility to ensure the child's education, particularly with regard to the development of appropriate social behaviour.

However, in the diasporic groups studied, the function of this family framework is expanded: it now encompasses the concern to

266

transmit to the child the heritage of their cultural identity, to initiate them into the knowledge, practice, and preservation of the Romanian language, customs, values, and beliefs associated with this identity.

Openness to national culture and the integration of cultural elements into the educational process give this ritual an explicit cultural dimension, the main effect of which lies in a symbolic gain for the diaspora community. Thus, the ritual of instruction materializes in publications that reflect social practices such as learning traditional Romanian dances, teaching the Romanian language, or the intergenerational transmission of shared cultural references – all concrete forms of preserving identity within the diaspora.

Educational and cultural valorisation as a response to stereotypes

Another aspect related to education, an observation made during the analysis of publications from diaspora groups, concerns the existence of behavioural practices aimed at affirming the educational and cultural values of the Romanian people. These practices often appear as a discursive response to the persistence of negative stereotypes about Romanians, which can damage their image and social perception.

Fuelled, in part, by Romania's economic situation and, in part, by certain identity-related confusions, these stereotypes and prejudices lead to the emergence of compensatory discursive strategies. These strategies consist of highlighting academic achievements, promoting professional excellence, and demonstrating individual skills in competitive international contexts.

Such an attitude testifies to the existence of a specific adaptive mechanism, the objective of which is to combat stigmatization and reaffirm the individual and collective value of the community.

Publications that valorise the cultural richness and spiritual values of the Romanian people reflect a sense of national pride, a noble sentiment intended to rekindle, among members of the group, a legitimate confidence in their own abilities.

The repetitive nature of these behaviours gives them the status of ritual, endowed with an educational function for children and younger generations. By observing and participating in these practices, they overcome identity complexes and learn to value their qualities while integrating socially.

Furthermore, these publications reflect the dignity and desire for recognition of the diasporic community: they express the will to be perceived accurately by the host society, in accordance with the cultural heritage of the people to whom they belong, and to be accepted and integrated into their new social environment.

The rites of institution

Rites of institution, which affirm the group's social position and reflect its desire for recognition within the society in which its members live, are clearly manifested in publications relating to cultural events, music festivals, ceremonies, commemorations, or religious services. These symbolic manifestations serve a dual function: they reinforce the group's internal cohesion while establishing symbolic boundaries between its members and those who are not part of it. In the case of diasporic communities, these boundaries are primarily cultural in nature, defining a distinct identity space within the host society.

Publications highlighting these cultural events illustrate social practices of self-celebration within the group. Repeated periodically, these practices acquire a ritualistic dimension and contribute to consolidating members' sense of belonging to the community. Thus, the public display of the culture of origin – whether in the form of a concert, a national holiday, or a religious ceremony – becomes a performative act through which the diaspora affirms both its collective identity and its desire for respectful integration into the host society.

The integrative and symbolic function of rites of institution

These rites of institution constitute privileged opportunities for moral reassurance, both regarding the integration and recognition of

268

the group by the host society (outward orientation), and regarding the members' belonging to a shared cultural identity (inward orientation).

By reaffirming the cultural identity of members of the diasporic community, the role of the rite of passage is twofold: it guarantees the integration of individuals within the group and produces an effect of intra-group recognition, generating a sense of belonging, cultural solidarity, and collective cohesion. Through the rite of institution, a culturally grounded interrelationship is established that transcends the family framework and ensures not only the individual's social integration into the group, but also the transmission of the shared cultural heritage.

At the same time, the rite of institution draws the attention of the host society to the existence and specific cultural identity of the diasporic group. Through this ritual, the diasporic community highlights and promotes its cultural identity, aspiring to its recognition and symbolic integration within the social fabric of the host country.

The publications analysed illustrate social practices disseminated in the public sphere of the host society, becoming veritable instruments for the preservation and transmission of Romanian cultural identity. Through these events, the diasporic group does not simply keep its traditions, customs, and language alive: while traditional costumes and folk songs are part of the culture, Romanian communities actively share their cultural values with the surrounding community.

The periodic repetition of these events – whether annual (such as the celebration of *Mărţişor*, symbolizing the return of spring, the Romanian Cultural Festival in Nice, the Patron Saint's Day of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Nice, or the third annual Moldavian Festival in Quebec City) or regular (religious services) – gives them a fully established ritual dimension.

Some of these events are supported from local Romanian consular and diplomatic authorities (Honorary Consulate of Romania in Nice, Consulate General of Romania in Marseille, Embassy of

Romania in Italy). This institutional recognition reflects the dual effort undertaken by diaspora communities: a social effort, aimed at strengthening their participation in the collective life of their host country, and a political effort, affirming their cultural legitimacy and their contribution to social pluralism.

This process helps strengthen the national identity of the diaspora group and consolidate its desire to be recognized as an integral and respected part of the society in which it lives.

Religious symbolism and cultural continuity

Analysis of the collected content highlights the perpetuation of traditions through the celebration of religious and national holidays, resulting in the consistent presence of cultural and spiritual symbols in the online communication of members of diaspora groups.

Religious symbols – icons, crosses, biblical quotations, or written prayers – frequently appear in published images and texts, fulfilling a dual function:

- A spiritual role, providing moral and emotional support;
- An identity-related role, reaffirming inherited values and national belonging.

Religious traditions are particularly visible during key times of the year, notably Easter and Christmas, periods during which posts abound with greetings, photographs of lit candles, festive meals, and traditional songs. These practices contribute to the consolidation of collective memory and the recreation of a sacred space within the virtual environment.

Thus, the rite of institution implicitly refers to a shared social effort, involving both the individual's adherence to the diasporic community – on a cultural level – and the group's adherence, as a whole, to the host society. The combination of cultural and social capital produces an effect of symbolic valorisation of the group (Pinçon & Pinçon-Charlot 2000).

Conclusions

For diasporic groups, Facebook becomes a veritable social stage on which individuals play roles, assert their presence, reveal or conceal their identity, and position themselves in relation to collective norms or personal values. Their behaviour reflects the often latent expression of values, taboos, and cultural models inherited from their society of origin.

The active or passive role adopted by each member – depending on their position in intragroup interactions – reflects the individual's level of symbolic coexistence within the diasporic group.

Communication thus becomes the primary vehicle for affirming and reaffirming community status: that of a unified group operating according to its own norms (inclusion/exclusion, rules of expression, codes of interaction) and defining its symbolic boundaries in relation to other virtual communities.

Communicative interaction within Romanian diaspora groups on Facebook reveals practices through which culture and national identity are symbolically reinvested in a collective narrative whose scope extends beyond the virtual realm. In social reality, culture becomes both an instrument of legitimation—serving to negotiate the group's social position in the host society—and a source of internal cohesion.

As an expressed reality, culture and identity are "embodied" in online communication, taking on multiple meanings that can only be fully understood in light of the groups' daily lives. As the *Dictionary of Qualitative Methods in the Human and Social Sciences* (2002: 242-255) points out, "The original reality is transformed into a signifier: it rises to the rank of a symbol. Myth tends to become an image of reality, offered in an ambiguity where the expression of reality and fiction containing its own truth are intertwined [...]. It remains relevant only insofar as allusion triumphs over narrative."

The meanings identified in the cultural symbolism conveyed through verbal exchanges are organized around two dominant tendencies within the diasporic group:

- One, oriented towards belonging to the community of origin;
- The other, oriented towards adaptation and integration into the host society.

These two dynamics, transposed into concrete social practices, manifest themselves in virtual interaction through rituals. The identified interactional rituals play a dual role:

- Catalysing community bonds;
- Serving as identity markers that ensure the symbolic continuity of the group.

The tension between the need for practical integration (employment, services, business) and attachment to cultural and national heritage constitutes one of the distinctive features of interaction within Romanian diaspora groups on Facebook. This tension gives the social network the configuration of a ritualized space, where identity reconstruction is constantly negotiated, reaffirmed, and performed.

Ultimately, Facebook appears not only as a space for communication, but as a symbolic laboratory in which the diaspora reinvents, transmits, and legitimizes its identity – between memory and adaptation, between heritage and modernity.

Bibliography

Anis, J. (2006): *Communication électronique scripturale et formes langagières*, http://rhrt.edel.univ-poitiers.fr/documentef73.html?id=547 [accessed August 2025].

Baylon, C., Mignot, X. (1994): *La Communication*, Paris: Nathan.

Bolat, N., Cakın, O., Sirer, E. (2024): "A Study on Understanding the Changing Diaspora and Virtual Communities through Digitalization", in *Quaestio Rossica*. Vol. 12, N° 1, pp. 110–128. DOI 10.15826/qr.2024.1.868.

Bourdieu, P., (1999): *Rațiuni practice. O teorie a acțiunii*, Bucureşti: Editura Meridiane.

Bouvier, P. (2000): „Lectură socio-antropologică a epocii contemporane", in M. Segré (coord.), *Mituri, rituri, simboluri în societatea contemporană*, Timişoara: Amarcord, pp. 20-30.

Dâncu, V. S. (2001): *Comunicarea simbolică. Arhitectura discursului publicitar*, Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia.

De Gail, M.-A. (2013): „La ritualisation des interaction sur Facebook" in *Les Cahiers du numérique*, 2013/3, Vol. 9 https://shs.cairn.info/revue-les-cahiers-du-numerique-2013-3-page-111?lang=fr

De Salins, G.-D. (1988): *Une approche ethnographique de la communication. Rencontre en milieu parisien*, Paris: Hatier-Credif.

Dufoix, S. (2003): *Les diasporas*, Paris: PUF , Collection *Que sais-je*?

Enriquez, E. (1992): L'entreprise comme lien social. «Un colosse aux pieds d'argile», in Sainsaulieu, R. (coord.), *L'entreprise, une affaire de société*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences politiques, pp. 202-228.

Foucault M. (1998): *Ordinea discursului. Un discurs despre discurs*, Bucureşti: Eurosong & Book.

Foucault, M. (1971): *L'ordre du discours*, Paris: Gallimard.

Goffman, E. (1974): *La mise en scène de la vie quotidienne*, Paris: Minuit.

Gumperz , J. (2001): "Interactional Sociolinguistics: A Personal Perspective", in D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, H. E. Hamilton (editors), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. Available from: http://www googlero/books?hl=ro&lr=&id=6RfarwereacC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=schiffrin+d+approaches+to+discourse&ots=wDIW0eUI7n&sig=KXQR5K05_DEUc7AQxAJGf8XP3yg&redir_ esc=y#v=onepage&q=schiffrin%20d%20approaches%20to%20discourse&f=false, pp. 215-229.

Heller, M. (2001): "Discourse and Interaction", in D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, H. E. Hamilton (editors), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. Available from: http://www googlero/books?hl=ro&lr=&id=6RfarwereacC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=schiffrin+d+approaches+to+discourse&ots=wDIW0eUI7n&sig=KXQR5K05_DEUc7AQxAJGf8XP3yg&redir_

esc=y#v=onepage&q=schiffrin%20d%20approaches%20to%20discours e&f=false, p. 250-265

Huang, M. (2024): "Cross-Cultural Communication" in the Digital Era: Insights from Social Media Interactions, *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Education Innovation and Philosophical Inquiries* DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/54/2024156624 Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381154755_CrossCultural_ Communication_in_the_Digital_Era_Insights_from_Social_Media_Inter actions [accessed Jul 31 2025]

Kerbrat-Orecchioni, C. (1990): *Les intéractions verbales* vol. I, Paris: Armand Colin.

Kerbrat-Orecchioni, C. (1992): *Les intéractions verbales* vol. II, Paris: Armand Colin.

Mucchielli, A. (coord.). (2002): *Dicționar al metodelor calitative în ştiințele umane şi sociale*, Iaşi: Polirom.

Pinçon, M., Pinçon-Charlot, M. (2000): "Ritualuri familiale si sociale din marea burghezie", in M. Segré (coord.), (2000): *Mituri, rituri, simboluri în societatea contemporană*, Traducere de Beatrice Stanciu, Timişoara: Editura Amarcord, pp. 99-119.

Romascu, A.E.; Micle, M. (2021): "Representations of online and offline communication practices of a diasporic community: the case of the Romanian Diaspora", in *Romanian Journal of Sociological Studies*. No. 1, pp. 31–43. Available at la: https://journalofsociology.ro/category/rjs/

Romaşcu, A.; Suciu, L. (2025): "Pratiques identitaires de la diaspora roumaine en ligne. Analyse de groupes Facebook", in Cernicova-Bucă, M. & Dejica, D. (eds.), *Professional Communication and Translation Studies*, vol. 18/2025, ISSN 2065-099X, https://www.sc.upt.ro/attachments/article/943/00_Contents_2025.p df

Sacks, H., Schegloff, E., & Jefferson, G. (1974): "A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn Taking in Conversation", in *Language*, 50, 696-735. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/412243

Segré, M. (coord.), (2000): *Mituri, rituri, simboluri în societatea contemporană*, Traducere de Beatrice Stanciu, Timişoara: Editura Amarcord, pp. 203-206.

Shiffrin, D., Tannen D, Hamilton H.E. (eds.), (2001): *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. Available from:

Cultural Perspectives 30/2025

http://www   google
ro/books?hl=ro&lr=&id=6RfarwereacC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=schiffri
n+d+approaches+to+discourse&ots=wDIW0eUI7n&sig=KXQR5K05_D
EUc7AQxAJGf8XP3yg&redir_
esc=y#v=onepage&q=schiffrin%20d%20approaches%20to%20discours
e&f=false

Vlăsceanu, M. (2003): *Organizaţii şi comportament organizaţional*, Iaşi: Polirom.

Lavinia Suciu

affiliation: Politehnica University Timisoara, Department of Communication
and Foreign Languages, Romania
position: Associate Professor
e-mail: lavinia.suciu@e-upt.ro
research interests: the study of discourse and verbal interaction in
different contexts, the study of culture and identity using an interdisciplinary
methodology

Selected publications:
(2025) : "Pratiques identitaires de la diaspora roumaine en ligne. Analyse de
groupes Facebook" (Romascu, A.,E.; Suciu, L.), in Cernicova-Bucă, M. &
Dejica, D. (eds.), *Professional Communication and Translation Studies*, vol.
18/2025,   ISSN   2065-
099X, https://www.sc.upt.ro/attachments/article/943/00_Contents_2
025.pdf
(2023): "Qualitative research approaches and designs: discourse analysis"
(Suciu, L.), in J., Tienrney, Fazal Rizvi and Kadriye Erkican (eds.),
International Encyclopedia of Education, Fourth Edition, volume 12,
Elsevier   Science,   pp.   141-149,   ISBN   978-0-12-818629-9,
https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-818630-5.11016-4,
https://www.elsevier.com/books/international-encyclopedia-
of education/tierney/978-0-12-818629-9
(2022) : "Mise en récit des textes du domaine automobile" (Suciu, L.), in
Mirela-Cristina Pop, Mounia Touiaq (coord.) *La dimension métaphorique
des langages de spécialité. Études sur les métaphores de l'automobile*, Editura

Politehnica, Editura Universităţii de Vest, 2022, chapitre IV, pp. 113-134. ISBN 978-606-35-0483-9. ISBN 978-973-125-922- 2.

(2018): "Corporate identity, from allegorical discourse to storytelling. An Approach in terms of Discursive Models" (Suciu, L.), in *Journal of Progressive Research in Social Sciences*, Vol. 7, Issue 1, pp. 466-476, http://www.scitecresearch.com

Alina Romaşcu

affiliation: Laboratory Lieux, Identités, eSpaces et Activités (*UMR* CNRS 6240 *LISA*) University of Corsica `Pasquale Paoli`, France
position: Associate Professor
e-mail: romascu_a@univ-corse.fr
research interests: Organizational communication; Study of culture and Identity, Interculturalism; Romanian diaspora

Selected publications:

(2025) : "Pratiques identitaires de la diaspora roumaine en ligne. Analyse de groupes Facebook" (Romascu, A.,E.; Suciu, L.), in Cernicova-Bucă, M. & Dejica, D. (eds.), *Professional Communication and Translation Studies*, vol. 18/2025, ISSN 2065-099X, https://www.sc.upt.ro/attachments/article/943/00_Contents_2025.pdf

(2021): "Representations of online and offline communication practices of a diasporic community: the case of the Romanian Diaspora" (Romaşcu, E.A.; Micle, M.), in *Romanian Journal of Sociological Studies*. No. 1, pp. 31–43. Available at: https://journalofsociology.ro/category/rjs/ .

(2021): "Mobilization of the Romanian Diaspora: An Overview of a Transnational Community Connected During the 2014 Presidential Elections in Romania" (Romaşcu, E.A.; Micle, M.), in *Innovative instruments for community development in communication and education,* pp. 23-34. Budapest: Trivent. DOI: 10.22618/TP.PCMS.20216.360002.