

An insight into Travelblog

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Abstract. This paper reports a discourse analysis of Travelblog, a medium for reporting and sharing experiences and linking the traveller/s with friends and family back home. Results suggest that travel blogs are a special form of on-line diary in between the traditional diary Blog and professional travelling reports.

Introduction

Blogs are becoming a common medium to share and report travelling experiences also to be in contact with acquaintance and family.

Previous research discusses the importance of travel blogs and the impact of such blogs in influencing decision-making of potential travellers to a specific destination (Douglas and Mills 2006). However, little is yet known about the nature of travelling narratives and social interactions of bloggers and readers (Nardi, B. A., et al. 2004).

So, Travelblog medium was studied throughout this paper, reporting the analysis of 60 blogs and 300 messages within this environment.

Travelblog.org is a collection of travel journals covering a wide range of geographical regions, with comprehensive options such as flexible language selection and commenting structure. This discourse analysis addresses the following questions:

(a) Who the audience of Travelblog are and the dialogue occurring by writing and replying comments.

(b) How Travelblog differs from diary type blogs and professional reports?

Results

Addressing question (a), audience observation in Travelblog shows 80% of messages were made by friends and family, 7% by unknown visitors and 13% of blogs had no comments. 66% of comments indicate updates back home and 44% of the comments express point of view and discussion on blogs content.

To answer question (b), a discourse analysis was conducted on 120 blogs. In terms of structure of blogs, it was found that 77% of initial posts made by blogger

were an introduction to the trip and 13% of blogs clearly indicated completion of trip. From this set of analysis and observations, writing style similarities identified in travelling posts which then compared with that of diary-type and professional travelling report. This comparison was carried out using lexical analysis (Pennebaker and Francis 2003) for 20 normal/diary blogs in blog.co.uk and Weblog.com as well as 20 professional travelling reports in Asia and away and CNN.

The software counted and clustered frequency of words in blogs to measure different psychological and social dimensions such as self and emotions. Chart 1 presents selected results of LIWS analysis which suggests travelling blogs are more interactive in comparison with normal blogs which are mainly used to record everyday life events. Also, travelling blogs are found to be more informal in writing style in comparison with professional reports.

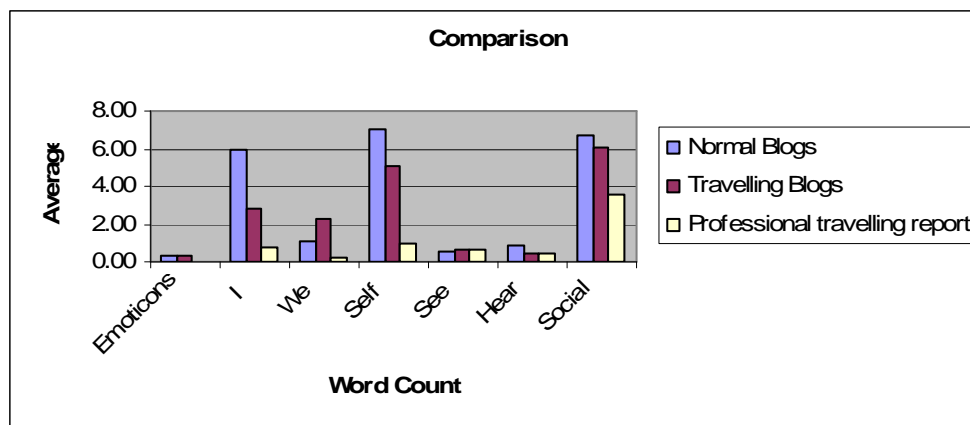


Chart 1. Word Comparison

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