

Communicative Memory in Online Communities: Mediated and Collaborative Knowledge

Selver Dikkol

Mersin University Faculty of Communication

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1918-6795>

selverdikkol@mersin.edu.tr

Hakan Erkiř

Mersin University Faculty of Communication

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0828-3848>

ehakan@mersin.edu.tr

Abstract

Online social networks enable the creation of groups within a wide variety of topics. Social network sites, like Facebook, offer options for users to create groups or to join existing groups for any topic they are interested in. The aim of this study is to investigate the function of the communicative memory, accepted in the literature as a notion providing continuity of communication, in online groups. In-depth interviews are conducted with seven participants who are members of the same Facebook group in the study in order to investigate and discuss the parameters of communicative memory, its role in-group communication and its effect on group solidarity in the online groups. The data obtained from the interviews are analyzed in the context of communicative memory. In the light of data and evaluations, it is concluded that each of the posts shared in Facebook groups is cumulatively generating their own collective knowledge; it can be said that communicative memory supports this commonness and provides the transmission of fragmented information.

Keywords: Online community, Facebook, communicative memory, social memory, collaborative knowledge.

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Received: 10.12.2018 ■ Accepted: 14.6.2019

<http://ilefdergisi.org>

ilef dergisi ■ © 2019 ■ 6(2) ■ sonbahar/autumn: 251-274

Arařtırma Makalesi ■ DOI: 10.24955/ilef.654015

Online Gruplarda İletişimsel Bellek: Aracılı ve Müşterek Bilgi

Selver Dikkol

Mersin Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1918-6795>

selverdikkol@mersin.edu.tr

Hakan Erkılıç

Mersin Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0828-3848>

ehakan@mersin.edu.tr

Öz

Çevrimiçi sosyal ağlar, çok çeşitli konular çerçevesinde gruplar kurmaya olanak sağlamaktadır. Özellikle Facebook gibi sosyal ağ siteleri, ilgilendikleri herhangi bir konu ile ilgili kullanıcılarına grup kurma veya var olan gruplara katılma seçeneklerini sunar. Bu çalışmanın amacı, literatürde iletişimin sürekliliğini sağlayan bir nosyon olarak kabul edilen iletişimsel belleğin, online gruplardaki işlevinin araştırılmasıdır. İletişimsel belleği tanımlayan parametrelerin online grup içerisindeki varlığını, grup içi iletişimdeki rolünü ve grubun birliği üzerindeki etkisini araştırmaya ve tartışmaya yönelik olan bu çalışmada, aynı Facebook grubuna üye olan yedi katılımcıyla derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Görüşmelerden elde edilen veriler iletişimsel bellek ekseninde analiz edilerek tartışılmıştır. Veriler ve değerlendirmeler ışığında sonuç olarak, Facebook gruplarında paylaşılan her bir gönderinin kendi müşterek bilgisini birikimli olarak ürettiği; iletişimsel belleğin bu müşterekliği desteklediği ve parçalı olan bilgilerin aktarılmasını sağladığı söylenebilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Online gruplar, Facebook, iletişimsel bellek, toplumsal bellek, müşterek bilgi.

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Makale geliş tarihi: 10.12.2018 • Makale kabul tarihi: 14.6.2019

<http://ilefdergisi.org>

ilef dergisi • © 2019 • 6(2) • sonbahar/autumn: 251-274

Research Article • DOI: 10.24955/ilef.654015

Memory studies on computer-mediated communication are generally focused on common interests. These broad interests find their reflection in online communities, especially around the concept of sociability (Matzat 2010, Preece 2000, Gowricharn 2015); supporting health, grief, trauma, and education (Gibbs Kim and Ki 2016, Hartig and Viola 2015, Shrivastava 1999, Arthur 2009). However, there have been few studies investigating how these communities come and stay together from the very beginning. In addition to studying the results of online groups, it is also necessary to get to the root of the issue. Within this purpose, the trilogy of concepts of communication, connectivity and memory are employed leading to the following questions: Which parameters of communicative memory could be employed for an online community? How do the members of an online community stay in touch with the help of communicative memory? What is the effect of communicative memory on the unity of an online community?

In light of all these questions, we examine the changes occurring in memory in an age of computer-mediated communication. Individuals living in their cultural environments turn into users in online community groups experiencing a different kind of communication. Together with their life experiences and memory accumulation, users take part in these communities which

are founded for many different purposes by one or more than one administrator and have a large and inconstant user scale. Therefore, the main purpose of the study is to understand how members of an online community keep up with their communication and whether this communication creates a memory that belongs only to the community or not. The study focuses on the dynamics of comprising a connective memory in online communities.*

Literature

Online communication has emerged and developed with computer technology. Communication via a technological tool (telephone, fax, telegraph, and suchlike) is not new for humans. What is new is a multi-dimensional interaction with many people at the same time. One of the pioneers of computer-mediated communication, the ARPA (Advanced Research Projects Agency), was introduced in 1969 by computer programmers and electronic engineers. "They called their crusade interactive computing. They discovered that they also wanted to use their computers as communication devices" (Rheingold 1993, 67). This new way of communication spread and one of the first computer-mediated communities, the WELL (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link') was introduced by Stewart Brand and Larry Brilliant in 1985. WELL was based on a computer conferencing system and its members had participated in conversations that were of interest to them. Howard Rheingold, one of the early members of the WELL, has defined the virtual community as "A group of people who may or may not meet one another face to face, and who exchange words and ideas through the mediation of computer bulletin boards and networks" (Rheingold 1998). Similar to Rheingold, early studies have mostly approached computer-mediated communities in the context of real community. The features of a real community have been reconstructed in computer-mediated communication studies (Rheingold 1993, Wellman and Gulia 1999, Anita and Horan 1998). This may be because the notion of community is a difficult focus for study and, in the case of Internet-mediated communication, it becomes more complex (Wilson and Peterson 2002, 455-456). However, in recent years, as online communication practice has created its own concepts and research approaches independent of the notion of a real community with the emergence of social network sites, the terms digital and online have also been employed in studies of computer-mediated communication.

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* We would like to thank Prof. Senem Duruel Erkiş for her constructive and precious comments.

Beginning with the text-based displays of 1970s, user-driven communities have been built by online communication over the years (Downey 2014, 57) and today, online communities are at the core of everyday life with motives such as support, commerce, charity, knowledge or entertainment. It seems that within only a short period of time, users of the net needed to collectivize the online environment and wanted to feel like a community. When we extend McMillan & Chavis' four criteria of sense of community (membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs and shared emotional connection), there seems to be a similarity between a sense of community and online community (1986, 9). Individuals in computer-mediated communication are volunteer members of an interest group. They could find any group while surfing on the web and participate with the group as a member. By posting or commenting, they can interact with other members. As newcomers, they can even browse earlier conversations which were saved online. Influence is followed by interaction and members can interact with other members. As a result of this bi-directional attraction, common values are constructed in harmony with the interests of the group. The online survey of Blight, Ruppel and Schoenbauer on Twitter and Instagram adopting this approach with a virtual community shows that interaction and information sharing motives are positively associated with a sense of community for users of both sites (2017, 317-318).

An online community is "any virtual social space where people come together to get and give information or support, learn, or to find company. The community can be local, national, international, small or large" (Preece 2001, 347). Virtuality is an affordance of the online sphere since computer and network technologies have organically produced an environment of mediated communication. Social network sites, for instance, are one of the organic results of this affordance: "Social network sites are public both because of the ways in which they connect people en masse and because of the space they provide for interactions and information. They are networked public because of the ways in which networked technologies shape and configure them" (boyd 2011, 45). Social network sites providing the most suitable communication environment for computer-mediated communication are also the most frequently-used public in new media studies. The social network sites carry expectations of sociability, meaningful connection to others, conviviality, empathy and support (Parks 2011, 116). This moves us closer to identifying social network sites as online communities which have common interests and social practices. So many different people come together online around a common

interest, such as health, sport, music, human beings, animal rights, games, and so on. Therefore, as van Dijk observes, “members of a virtual community usually have only one thing in common; the interest that brought them together. They are heterogeneous in everything else” (van Dijk 2006, 167). Members of online communities are involved in collective and interactive practices around this interest.

Because of the heterogenic members, there is constant discussion, commentary and sharing about the common issues. This kind of collective practice brings members closer to each other and forms a powerful sense of community. Wellman and Gulia argue that even an online group is not built to be supportive; they gain this feature over time. As social beings, we use the Internet to look, not only for information, but also for companionship, social support and a sense of belonging (Wellman and Gulia 1999, 172). This supportive information is accumulated around the common interest and in this process, collective practices occur. Through communication, the members of an online community simultaneously construct their own communal history. The knowledge has been accumulated and the history of the community has been archived by a computer and the community memory preserves key moments in the community (Rheingold 1993, 42). Therefore, computer-based memory allows online groups to have a history as a community, and it strengthens community ties. Since online groups can also be approached as a social group, the memory discussed here will be collective memory. A social framework is essential for the formation and protection of collective memory.

For Halbwachs, memory is bound to social conditions. Apart from social frameworks, there is no other memory that can be recalled. Memory occurs in the process of human socialization. It always belongs to the individual, but is determined socially (Assmann 2001, 39-40). As individual memories are framed by society, the memory notion is characterized by Halbwachs as collective. He states that memory always belongs to the individual, but is socially determined. Even the most personal memories are based solely on the communication and interaction of social groups. The subject of memory and recollection is always individual, but they are dependent on the frame that fills the memories (Halbwachs 2016, 17). When it is considered along with the individual patterns, collective memory “is actually a fabricated version of that same personal memory adjusted to what the individual mind considers as suitable in a social environment” (Gedi and Elam 1996, 47). Because social conditions are embedded in individually constructed memory, it is possible

to trace footprints of social affairs even in the most individualistic memory practices. Nora defines individual memory as a true one which has taken refuge in gestures and habits, in skills passed down by unspoken traditions, in the body's inherent self-knowledge, in unstudied reflexes and ingrained memories. He also draws attention to the notion of history being accepted as almost opposite to the true memory (Nora 1989, 13). The blurring concept of collective memory is employed in the context of history by Nora. Moreover, Assmann also reconceptualises the term collective memory in the context of group culture and communication.

Critically evaluating Halbwachs' framing of collective memory, Assmann discusses that, although memory is constructed collectively, even a small group of people could build a memory of their own independent from society. Referring to the bond between culture and collective, Assmann redefines collective memory as cultural memory. Furthermore, he introduces the term communicative memory in order to delineate the difference between Halbwachs' concept of collective memory and his own understanding of cultural memory (2011, 110). Communicative memory does not contain any institutive learning, transfer, or interpretation. There are no specialists who manage perception. It does not have special ceremonies or celebrations. It also does not have official symbols. On the contrary, it occurs through "everyday communication and interaction" (Assmann 2011, 111). Jones summarizes that "in the Assmanian model, communicative memory is based on oral communication between individuals or within intimate remembering groups" (Jones 2013, 392). Olick, in his work on collective memory, mentions group membership and memory practices: "Group memberships provide the materials for memory and prod the individual into recalling particular events and into forgetting others. Groups can even produce memories in individuals of events that they never experienced in any direct sense" (Olick 1999, 335).

Assmann defines communicative memory in five categories; content, forms, media, time structure, and participation structure. The content of communicative memory is a history in the frame of autobiographical memory and this history belongs to the recent past. Informal traditions and genres of everyday communication form communicative memory. The embodied memory, communication in vernacular language, is the medium of communicative memory. Since memory is based on communication, Assmann structures the time of communicative memory as three generations. It lives in everyday interaction and communication and, for this reason, has only a limited

time depth. Therefore, participation in communicative memory is diffuse and changeable (Assmann 2011, 117). It is clear that communication and interaction are the most important factors in this theory. As long as communication continues, relationships among participants continue. It can be said that there is a common memory for everyone involved in communication. Assmann determines three levels for communicative memory. They are the parameters of communicative memory. Communicative memory occurs in a social level; it has a social time, and the identity in it involves aspects of social self as a carrier of social roles (Assmann 2011, 109).

Heinrich and Weyland inspirationally interpret Assmann's notion of communicative memory as "the collective product of communication and negotiation of historical interpretations. It should be understood as a dialogue during which the participating parties try to evaluate the truth of an argument and the legitimacy of social norms" (Heinrich and Weyland 2016, 13). When combined with van Dijk's culture of connectivity, it is possible to see communicative memory more clearly. Certain social needs, such as connection and communication, can be considered together with the formation of communicative memory. Even in a small group, such as family, basketball team or a class, participants want to establish a mutual relationship. Communicative memory can also be employed as a result of such desires and practices. Assmann states that communicative memory involves recent memories, which are shared by one's contemporaries, and this memory occurs and disappears over time (2001, 54).

One of the strongest ties between the online community and communicative memory can be seen in Jose van Dijk's study. She contributes to discussions on computer-mediated communication and community with the notion of mediated memory. Since connectivity is our cultural habit, memory, even in digital, "is always entirely mediated, whether by writing or any other tool" (van Dijk 2004, 271). We can only discuss the form and context of memory in online communities. The new element may be the development of new media technology and the changing memory storage formation from photography, film, television, camera to new electronic media.

Communication, interaction, identity and time can be regarded as the main characteristics of communicative memory. As a result, one of the most important questions is how communicative memory has changed in the face of developments in communication technologies or how it operates in the age of the Internet in which the definition of being a group is changing rapidly.

While initial technological systems, such as telephones and the telegraph were thought to have revolutionized communication practices, the computer and Internet technologies have created a specific communication environment in which no contact is lost. These technological collections are employed as acts of memories by van Dijk, and they define personal remembrance in the face of cultural frameworks (2006, 275). However, in computer-based communication, as we have discussed earlier, it is possible to create groups or communities of interest. By referring again to van Dijk, we could discuss that creating an online community can be related with our culture of connectivity which is “a post-broadcast, networked culture where social interactions and culture products are inseparably enmeshed in technological systems” (2006, 404).

Such a cultural approach to connectivity opens to us a way of reconceptualising the notion of memory in an online environment, which is not an unusual concept in studies of online communities: Online archives; encyclopaedias on disasters (Recuber 2012, Gustafsson 2017); online mourning as a collective practice (Bhattacharya 2010, McEwen and Scheaffer 2013, Wagner 2018); and online reflections of migration, ethnicity, and identity (Davis 2010, Di Renzo 2017, Marino 2015). This reconceptualisation is already accepted as a presupposition for online communities. WELL, mentioned above, is a computer/communication-based community and, as Rheingold suggests, it has a community memory formed by communication and affordances of technology. Following WELL, numerous computer-mediated communication has emerged after social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Youtube, LinkedIn, Myspace and suchlike. Since these communities are based on constant communication, they form collective memory. To enter an online debate, all participants in a discussion must agree and implement a common interpretation scheme and a formation of common values. The sharing of individual memories in the Social Web provides access to forums where individuals exchange ideas and, in this forum, the individual shares memories of others with his/her own historical interpretation. Here, each individual does not reproduce his or her own notion, but the members construct a group opinion within the exchange process (Heinrich and Weyland 2016, 17-18).

Among social media sites, Facebook is a widely-used social network site in which members easily enter into a group discussion. According to Donnelly, Facebook enjoys 2.01 billion monthly active users (2018). The popularity of Facebook has played an important role in choosing it as a field of study for this paper. On Facebook, users can create personal profile pages

after an obligatory registration. After the registration, users search for their friends; old and new. Users ultimately reach the first necessities of communication; profile page and audience. After completing this task, users start using the platform with activities, such as posting, sharing, liking others' activities, commenting, and tagging. Although Facebook is an application that allows an open profile, it is mostly-based on conditional friendship. This means that adding or accepting someone as a friend on Facebook depends on the condition of acceptance.

The platform also allows users to create interest groups for free. The opportunity to create or join a group is one of the most important driving forces of the platform. Learning, sharing, supporting or belonging may be considered as driving forces. For these reasons, "more than 100 million Facebook users belong to meaningful communities" (Donnelly 2018), and Zuckerberg reveals the social network's new mission: "Bringing the world closer together" (Cohen 2017). What is the function of creating a post on Facebook in this context? Creating a post is merely one way to of expressing ourselves. We create a post and begin to wait for reactions such as liked, commented or shared by others. We review our content production according to the reactions. We evaluate why our post is ignored or noticed, and then try to produce affirmative content. The imagined audience is our online friends to whom we unconsciously choose to speak. It is not surprising that notions like *bias* or *confirmation bias* and *echo-chambers* (Colleoni, Rozza, and Arvidsson 2014, Karlsen et al. 2017) are used in studies on computer-based communication.

Data Collection and Methodology

Data was collected from a closed Facebook group. The group is based on child and mother care. The group has been a part of the platform for three years. Although its members are mostly women, there are also male members in the group. Administers of the group are highly educated (mostly doctors) women and they emphasize that all information shared in the group should be scientific and any advice for childcare should be scientifically approved. In addition, certain other issues, such as women's health, marriage or political economy are also discussed in the group, in addition to child and baby care. The group accommodated four thousand members during the survey period. Most of the members are educated and having professional occupations. In-depth interviews were conducted with seven members of the group. The members had been in the group at different time periods. The participants

were informed about the study. As a result, informed consent which is the most important feature of in-depth interviews was practiced. Moreover, the privacy of the participants was carefully considered and the data collected was interpreted by omitting personal data. By this method, paraphrasing was also used to protect the privacy of the participants. Since the group was a closed one, its name was not mentioned throughout the analysis process. The content of the in-depth interview involved questions concerning the demographic features of the participants, duration of membership in the group, the reason for being a member of the group, events in the group, posting in the group, following the posts of others, saving posts, storage of information via screenshot or copy, and using information learned within the group.

Since ethical issues are extremely important in social media-based studies, the data collection process of this study used two methods. First, one of the researchers reflexively joins the closed group and participant observation was conducted. Therefore, content, forms, media, time and the participation structure of the groups' page are observed through a qualitative lens. Moreover, interaction among the members could be obtained through observation. This interaction is shown by the figures below. Second, an in-depth interview method was employed with volunteer members of the same group. This small field research allows us to discover participation structures with greater insight in observing communication and interaction practices. Following the view of Burles & Bally, we also consider that ethical guidelines for online researches "are sometimes irrelevant, overly rigid, or lack recognition of the contingent nature of ethical decision-making in qualitative research" (2018, 1). Consent and confidentiality issues are not clearly defined. "The question of whether informed consent is necessary for public forums is inconsistently answered and, as yet, there is no clear advice on how to approach participants" (Sugiura, Wiles, and Pope 2017, 191). Therefore, ethical issues in online research are left to the responsibility of the researchers themselves. Researchers should provide anonymity in online unobtrusive qualitative research by deciding whether the data they collect is public or private. Burles & Bally suggest that researchers may find a creative way in the presentation of data by minimizing the level of personal details. As the data is easily traced on the Internet, the researchers may capture commonalities and produce composite cases from thematic categories. Instead of using quotes directly, paraphrasing of the posts or comments is one way to make data untraceable (Burles and Bally 2017, 6-7).

Findings and Discussion

From the data obtained by in-depth interviews and participant observation, it can be seen that the four principles of the communicative memory are operationalized: these are diffusive and changeable participation and interaction; content-based knowledge in online communities; online written language as a memory tool; and informal traditions and genres of everyday life. Each of these categories is discussed below related to the participants' own words.

Participation and interaction are diffuse and changeable. Online interaction is a part of everyday life, but it also generates knowledge of the interaction. As a result, everyday communication and interaction, which are necessary for the formation of communicative memory, are also established online. Each post on the group page creates its own community. This is a kind of fragmented process. In online groups especially, which have thousands of members, it is not possible for all members participate in the conversation. Since online groups are based on interest, members can be selective about whether they join in the communication under a post. Such fragmented participation shows us that communicative memory is established among ever-changing participants. Moreover, like a family album, each post of an online group could hold a memory of itself. When members want to access the content, they can easily find all the communication related to the post. In this case, it is not wrong to state that an online group is faced with a challenge to create its own memory with the help of technological affordance of social network sites. This is a fragmented communicative memory shared by interchangeable members. Walther claims that in previous theories fixed relational qualities were imputed to computer-mediated communication. However, in recent years, communication models have predicted normal, but temporally retarded, interpersonal development (Walther 1996, 10). The fragmented communication is predicted as contextual. In her study on friending online, boyd states that since the context is egocentric and networked in social network sites, the speaker always sets the relevant context (2006, 9).

Interaction among the members of the relevant Facebook group is shown by the four figures below. A Social Network Analysis programme named Cytoscape is used to obtain the relationality among the owner of the post and the reaction of other members to the post. The node of the social network is the owner and the edges are other members. The owner of the post is symbolized with the node -1- located in the center of the network. Other members, symbolized with numbers on edges, react to the post. Each member participating

in the discussion is shown by a number. Samples are chosen according to the number of comments that each post has received and they are intentionally chosen from the post which has gradually increased from a minimum to a maximum interaction. The issues discussed in these four postings are as follows: a car seat for children; infant sleep safety; openly gay marriage; and family reaction in the case of a child being gay.

In Figure 1, ten members participate in the discussion. Since the post is related to a subjective matter (a car seat for children), it can be seen that there is a direct interaction between the post owner and other members experiencing the matter. The post owner is also at the center of the discussion and forms a single cluster.

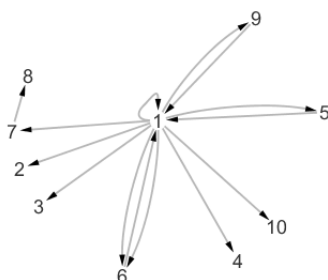


Figure 1: Direct interaction

However, in Figure 2, two clusters are observed. The first belongs to the post owner and the second belongs to Member 2. The comment of Member 2 creates another small discussion group. Unlike the owner of the post, who opened the discussion on infant sleep safety, Member 2 may be said to open another discussion and attract the attention of a number of members. Since the members interacting with Member 2 do not interact with the post owner, two clusters occur.

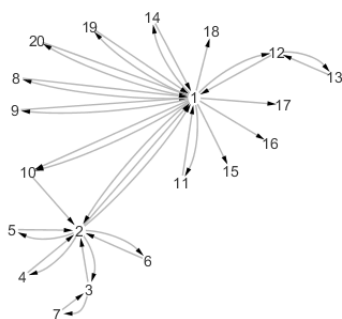


Figure 2: Clusters

There is more reciprocal interaction in Figure 3. Members have mostly commented on the post and rarely discussed it with each other. This indicates that discussion here is moderated by the post owner who has responded instantly to the comments.

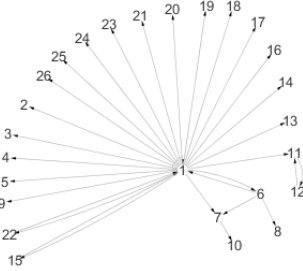


Figure 3: Reciprocal interaction

Unlike the previous three, in Figure 4 the members have intensely argued on the subject, especially independent of the post owner. More than three small discussion groups are observed. The post owner may not have responded instantly to the comments, since the flow is too rapid. Those members who could catch the instant comment, and who have time for discussion, seem to respond to the post instead of the post owner.

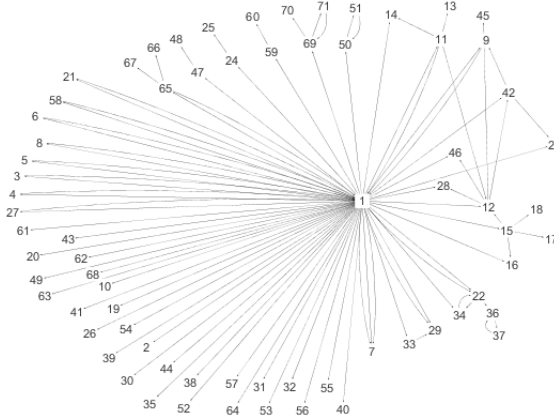


Figure 4: Small discussion groups

In all four figures, participation to a post is quite different and also different members gather around each post. Such a separated discussion may prove the existence of fragmented communication. Since it is fragmented, communicative memory can only be examined in this fragmentation. In other words, each post creates its own memory and, with the collection of these memories,

a group memory is formed. This collectivity is made possible by the fact that all members could reach any discussion by searching for it in-group. Knowledge created through discussion is stored in the group affordance and it is discussed below in detail.

Knowledge operates as content in online communities. Participants spend different periods of time in the group, but they have been group members for an average of four years. The way members enter the group is also quite different, but it seems that the reasons for staying in the group are the same; getting information and learning. Achieving scientific knowledge regarding infant and child care is the only reason for participants staying within the group. Nevertheless, participants who criticize the operation of the group may ignore it for the sake of information.

The information arising from interactions, such as post-opening, commenting, and responding to posts has filled the content capacity of the communicative memory. Participants who were occasionally active and sometimes passive appear as agents who could access information in all cases. In this sense, the content that each one has was unique to itself. Following Assmann's history notion, within the framework of autobiographical memory, communicative memory in an online group may also be regarded as unique to the group members' autobiographical memory. Members create their own memories by choosing certain information among the intense flow and they hide the most valuable information for themselves. This practice of knowing, which supports the hypothesis of fragment above, is possible with information stored by the participants and accessed when it is desired, just as with a family album, shoebox memories or a diary. This instant accessibility prevents participants from generating alternatives to the loss of content. The feature of searching for posts in Facebook groups is also another reason for this lack of productivity. For instance, one of the participants states that since the information is stored there digitally, it could be accessed at any time with a simple search. The knowledge was embodied on a social network platform and it was accessible any time. It shows the nonreciprocal relationship between the members and the tool in the context of time. Access to the knowledge does not depend on a certain time, since it is shared in everyday communication, consumed in a day, and then put aside. Therefore, its lifetime is limited to the members who reproduce and reuse it.

Only one participant states that she had her own archive against the possibility of not accessing the knowledge. Another participant states that she

trusts the members whom she met in a group event to obtain knowledge. Therefore, the question of the value of the information emerges. If the main purpose of being a member of a Facebook group is to obtain information, then why do members do nothing in order not to lose the information? This question is answered by the members' practical knowledge gained in the group. The information, which is easily possessed and easily lost, can be transformed into practical knowledge of the participants. In other words, certain information that has become a behaviour may not be stored by the participants. During the interviews, all participants stated that they used the information they had in the group in their daily lives and even suggested it to their friends. This means that knowledge is transferred to everyday life and recommended to others as a reference. Trusting the information gained in the group and taking responsibility for sharing the information in different environments are both related to the collective ability of the group. For a member not excluding herself from the group, this information is a product of a group in which she is actively involved and is therefore trustworthy.

As the sources of information, group administrators who are child care specialists and a number of educated members seem to provide a safe environment for the content of information. Administrators and members do not recommend medication, but instead offer natural treatment methods and support their ideas with scientific articles. All the participants who did not know each other showed similar negative reactions to medical care and they gave similar examples of natural methods they had learned in the group. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that the group has a collective memory based on communication. In the group which was based on written communication, each of the posts, especially those written by the administrators for the purpose of giving information, was noticed by the members each time. The answers to the question whether there was somebody followed shows distinctly the special interest towards the administrators' posts. Most of the participants expressed that they read administrators' posts and followed new ones.

After the members make comment, question, discuss, and exchange ideas for any length of time, the administrators' posts fade away and become knowledge. This knowledge is stored in the memory of the group and the members. As long as communication with the group continues, it is possible to access updates of the knowledge. Since there is a constant flow of comments in the group, the reanimation of a faded post is possible with new comments. A faded post can be reactivated with a new question, comment or an update.

Online written language as a memory tool is a medium for communication. Jones states that the relationship between communicative memory and communication is based on in-group or interpersonal verbal communication; he therefore puts vernacular language in the ascent (2013, 392). On social network sites, such as Facebook, this communication takes place with a small difference, not in vernacular language, but in written language. However, this written language is as common and daily as the vernacular. Features that Facebook provides affordably, such as posting, commenting or liking, are practices that members can engage in besides the vernacular language. In addition, the smileys used on the platform are reminiscent of vernacular language and this helps to establish daily communication. Since the groups established on Facebook are based on constant communication, the ground for communicative memory also occurs. This ground is again fragment-based as outlined above because there is slight variation within the group. Each of these groups discusses a subject in its entirety and each stores information that they can remember later. Besides the communicative memory of the group, such as a list of rules, there are also collected memories formed by the constantly changing minor communities. The members of these minor communities discuss a post and, in the end, they make a decision.

These posts often ask questions about a particular subject, but there are also members who share an experience, a movie, a book, or a recipe that can be useful for everyone. The subjects in the post are also very broad. Participants have also stated that they mostly posted to ask questions or to comment on a post that they thought offered knowledge. Moreover, all of the participants declared that they waited for other members to respond, comment, or like their posts, and that they constantly followed posts they were there faded. This strong desire to achieve a response shows that in-group communication is considered important. It may also indicate that getting access to information is more important than storing it. Most participants are aware that everything written is stored by the application and they could access it whenever they want, using the in-group search feature for immediate needs. They also use the save feature to look back over saved posts in their free time. Two of the participants stated that they did not know about the save feature, but most of them expressed that they kept the information on the screen or used copy-paste. This information, which is saved online or stored digitally with copy-paste, arises in a communication environment and turns into a group memory. Any discussion in the online group becomes a tool for memory and each user creates his/her own archive. As a result, hypotheses based on the

notions of fragmented and collected memory become more visible and this also shows the existence of individually generated, but collective memories, based on communication.

Forms of communication involve informal traditions and genres of everyday life. The administrators of the observed Facebook group have set a number of rules for members. Members who did not obey these rules were either warned or dismissed. When asked about the participants' ideas regarding the rules, many of them stated that these rules were necessary for providing organization within the group. The reason for this necessity is due to the high rate of group membership and the need for order. The participants stated that there were a number of rules that they could not follow blindly, but that they had tried to obey each of them. Furthermore, without exception, all of the participants require that newcomers obey these rules. There were also participants who warned members to obey the rules, as well as those who left it to the administration or other members. One of the participants expressed a distinctive opinion concerning the rules. She considered that the rules had hegemonic effects and that if members wanted to stay in the group, they had no choice other than to obey them. When asked about the rules they remembered, the participants stated around three rules on average. The rules remembered were all quite different from each other, proving that each participant formed his/her own group memory individually. Moreover, since all the participants were still members of the group, it was considered that they knew more rules than they assumed. This supports the practical learning process discussed above. Since there were a considerable number of reminders about the rules in the group, the participants may have unconsciously learned the rules while communicating. Therefore, during the interviews, the participants remembered certain rules contextually. For example, a participant noted that deleting a shared post is forbidden after being asked, "Have you ever deleted a post you shared?"

While defining communicative memory, Assmann mentions the category of the form containing informal traditions and genres of everyday life. Based on the interviews, the group rules seem to be accepted as informal traditions and as verbal agreement providing mutual peace and security. The participants seemed to obey all the rules, although they did not remember all of them. These written rules, constantly reminded and regularly read, have become established behaviour within the group. Moreover, it can be seen that there is group affiliation and a desire to maintain group traditions when it is

taken into consideration that, not only the administration, but also the members, warn those who do not obey the rules. Administrators (first generation) who desire to form in-group traditions are followed by other members (second generation) warning members about the rules. Therefore, the continuity of group tradition is provided collectively.

Conclusion

Olick refers to the collected memory approach, notions of collective memory, as objective symbols or deep structures that transcend the individual risk-slipping into a metaphysics of group mind. Social frameworks shape what individuals remember, but ultimately, it is only individuals who do the remembering. In addition, shared symbols and deep structures are only real insofar as individuals treat them as such or instantiate them in practice. It does not make sense from an individualist's point of view to treat commemorative objects, symbols, or structures as having lives of their own; only people have lives (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy 2011, 226).

Through interaction among online members of a community, collected memories are saved under each post. Members who have come together around a post begin to shape their social frame about it. They affect each other. They ask, answer, read, comment, like or ignore. However, each of these reactions opens a path towards deeper meanings of the post's topic. The more members join the conversation, the greater the depth of the subject will be. As a result, member's memories are collected around a post of interest.

The knowledge accumulates over time, with different participants, and is then turned into a group memory. Since the participants are changing, it is difficult to identify the source of the knowledge and it is also difficult to follow its context. Communication in an online group is extremely intense and too fluid to catch. A two-year-old post could be easily reanimated by a new comment and knowledge embedded in the post is therefore renewed. Therefore, group memory is constantly refreshed by new comments.

In the context of communicative memory, the Facebook group analysed above offers the dynamics of communicative memory and can enlighten intense communication in the online community. Knowledge is produced through the intense communication of group members and it is performed in their daily lives. The members learn how to act in a group with the guidance of the rules introduced by the administrators. Within the framework of these

rules, members discuss any topic they may need help with and each discussion creates its own community and sub-communities, as shown in Figures 1-4. The knowledge connected to these communities or sub-communities is fragmented. The more sub-communities occur the more knowledge becomes fragmented. Moreover, this knowledge is also mediated. Facebook as an application mediates knowledge and it connects members to the knowledge as a medium.

Mediated knowledge is formed by the members' discussions. The intense interaction among them produces information based on subject matter and this information occurs through a collaboration of the members. Each member has a contribution to knowledge production. By commenting, liking, editing or sharing, each of them affects the knowledge in different ways. Such a collectiveness is special to the online group, since the members do not act intentionally in this way. Knowledge accumulates and presents itself to the usage of online group members. The mediated and collaborated knowledge occurs in communication and is turned into a group memory stored digitally. This memory is communicated and reflects the dynamics of communicative memory.

The results of this paper, which tries to reveal the relationship between online group and communicative memory, may be summarized as follows:

- Participation and interaction are diffuse and changeable.
- Knowledge operates as content in online communities.
- Online written language as a memory tool is a medium for communication.
- Forms of communication involve informal traditions and genres of everyday life.

Since this study is limited to only one Facebook group, a more comprehensive study could be conducted by extending the data set. In addition, in future studies, it is possible to employ communicative memory in different social media platforms, not just Facebook. As a result, with a more comprehensive analysis, it will be possible to reach a number of general conclusions.

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