

The Phatic Function and the Socializing Element of Personal Blogs

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Abstract : The phatic function of communication is a vital element of any conversation. This research paper looks into this function with respect to personal blogs maintained by Indian bloggers. This paper is a study into the phenomenon of phatic communication maintained by bloggers through their blogs. Based on a linguistic analysis of the posts of twenty eight Indian bloggers, writing in English, studied over a period of three years, the study indicates that though the blogging phenomenon is not conversational in the same manner as face-to-face communication, it does make ample provision for feedback that is conversational in nature. Ordinary day to day offline conversations use conventionalized phatic utterances; those on the social media are in a perpetual mode of innovation and experimentation in order to sustain contact with its readers. These innovative methods and means are the focus of this study. Though the personal blogger aims to chronicle his/her personal life through the blog, the socializing function is crucial to these bloggers. In comparison to the western personal blogs which focus on the presentation of the 'bounded individual self', we find Indian personal bloggers engage in the presentation of their 'social selves'. These bloggers yearn to reach out to the readers on the internet and the phatic function serves to initiate, sustain and renew social ties on the blogosphere thereby consolidating the social network of readers and bloggers.

Keywords : personal blogs, phatic, social-selves, blog readers

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