Perspective

Social Anomia against the Backdrop of Misinformation/ Disinformation: A Cognitive Approach to the Multivalent Data in Cyberspace

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Abstract
The present study is an attempt to problematize the multivalent data in the cyberspace through the lenses of Wittgenstein's analytic philosophy of language. Adopting this linguistic philosophy approach is aimed at exploring the dichotomous question of whether cyberspace is a possibility for social power or it is a contributory cause of communicative discontinuity and henceforth a possibility for social anomia. The central argument here is that within cyberspace there exist three languages at work each one with a degree of semiotic power: pictorial, verbal and mathematical. Since none of them is based on a one-to-one correspondence between the signifiers and the signifieds, the cyberspace users in practice are led to misinformation and disinformation instead of information. This situation creates an epistemic chasm in their real life. This is because their finite mind is not able to grasp the infinite reality of the cyberspace multivalent data. Accordingly, cyberspace with its abundance of misinformation and disinformation leads us to a mental disorder. This constitutes the real power of social media in creating a socio-political turmoil and anomia.

Keywords: anomic situation, disinformation, misinformation, multivalent data.

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Perspective

Within cyberspace there exist bivalent and multivalent data. Looked at from the vantage point of the Wittgensteinian linguistic philosophy approach (Ambrose & Lazerowtiz, 2014), it can be argued that cyberspace is a linguistic repertoire replete with multivalent and yet inconsistent propositional contents. Therefore, the propositions in the cyberspace linguistic logic focus on processes rather than outcomes and thus, the cyberspace users are never led to a specific result. In this multilayered sign system (Attoui, 2012), there are at least three languages at work at the same time. They include verbal, pictorial and mathematical languages each with a degree of semiotic power. In none of these languages, there is a one-to-one correspondence between the signifiers and the signifieds. The relations between the signifiers and signifieds are one-to-many and thus the infinite chain of signification never reaches a central core (Gödel, 1992). In such a situation, the cyberspace users are encountered with a chain of floating signifiers that refer to no signifieds. This endless semiotic power of the cyberspace language gives it the capability to produce countless clusters of misinformation and disinformation under the disguise of information (Stahl, 2006). To put it in a nutshell, the output of the cyberspace semiotic system is misinformation and disinformation rather than information.

The central argument in the present study is that these infinite clusters of misinformation and or disinformation constitute the real power of the social media. A multiplicity of propositional content with possible truth values (Avron, 2008) spread at tremendous speed within the virtual space, but the finite minds of the cyberspace users are not able to verify them. This situation of a radical indeterminacy (Avron, 2008) creates an epistemic chasm (Pinter, 1997) in their real life. Confusion and mental disorder would be an obvious outcome of this epistemic chasm from which there is no way out unless an emphasis is placed on integrating CQ (communication quotient) (Service, 2005) to media literacy together with IQ and EQ. This new component of intelligence can give the cyberspace users the competence and the capability to decode the mechanisms by which misinformation and disinformation masquerading as information.

With respect to the fact that the archives of the cyberspace information are beyond the country borders and access to them inside the country is possible only at the level of operators and that there is no possibility as for spamming them, the only choice ahead of us would be filtering ,which will entail other problems with socio-political implications. Accordingly, the dichotomous question of whether the virtual space is a contributory cause for social empowerment or mass dictatorship will arise here. This

question is based on the hypothesis that there seems to be a positive correlation between the production of misinformation/disinformation within the cyberspace text and the possible production of anarchist and schizoid subjects within the socio-political contexts. This hypothesis in turn draws on the linguistic logic of cyberspace. The linguistic logic of cyberspace is based on the relation between the signifier and the truth value in the representation of the signified (Gödel, 1992). As an example, when a picture is uploaded in the cyberspace, lots of propositions and information about it are framed or reframed in the social networks (Amstutz & Teubner, 2009). To put it simply, a single event in the real world will entail a variety of propositions within the virtual space including corresponding, inconsistent, opposing and contradictory relations (Avron, 2008) between the signifiers and what they signify. So, with this multiplicity and multivalency at hand, how is it possible to verify their truth value? It is the question of the non-correspondence between the natural language in the real world and the logarithmic language in the cyberspace (Gödel, 1992)- with an orientation to an anomic representation-that leads us to drawing the conclusion that not only isn't cyberspace a possible condition for social power, but it is a possible means for creating subaltern subjects and social anomia.

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Biography

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