

**BLOGGING A NEW LIFE:
AN ANALYSIS OF BLOGS WRITTEN BY RECENTLY ARRIVED
HUNGARIAN IMMIGRANTS LIVING IN AUSTRALIA**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment
of requirements for the degree of
Master of Education (Research)**

University of Technology, Sydney

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student:

Date:

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the ways in which recently arrived Hungarian migrants in Australia use diverse ICT and Web 2.0 technologies to overcome some of the challenges of migrant life, such as negotiating identity, maintaining the home language and recreating their social and cultural capital. Particular attention is given to the multimodal nature of blogs used by this group and the ways they are used to mediate experiences and represent the new lives of these migrants to an audience that includes members of the Hungarian language community in both Australia and their home country. The thesis highlights a framework for analysing blogs that takes account of the multimodal nature of blogs as well as the characteristics that make blogs 'discursive spaces'.

Web 2.0 technologies have presented new opportunities for developing online environments and enhancing interactivity, participation and feedback between diverse groups of readers and authors. As the use of blogs among these new migrants increases, it is important to gain a deeper understanding of the potential they offer for the maintenance of home language and culture, and for mediation and coming to terms with new experiences. Understanding and supporting home language is one of the most important issues in multilingual societies such as Australia, where almost one in four people live in a home where a language other than English is spoken.

This study exemplifies the main features of ethnographic case study methodology, such as real-life settings, in-depth investigation and multiple sources of evidence (questionnaire, interviews, and blogs). This approach has enabled an in-depth study, resulting in important insights into the dispositions of recently arrived Hungarian migrants towards the use of Web 2.0 technologies, the multimodal content they contain and their role as discursive spaces where quite complex language practices take place in the home language. The data for this project were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods, but to capture the complexity of the multimodal aspects of blogs, social semiotic multimodal analysis was also applied.

This research successfully captures aspects that serve the concept of blogs as 'discursive spaces', and the analytical framework that has been developed is shown as enabling a closer examination of the choices made by the bloggers in relation to text and image as well as the role played by these blogs as sites for language maintenance. The role of the blogs within processes such as the construction of new identities, the recreation of social capital, and the task of coming to terms with the new environment is also examined in detail. The results of this research highlight the interactive potential of blogs as well as their value as virtual spaces that assist individuals and families in overcome the effects of distance and dispersion.