

'Glocalised' Media and Critical Thinking:

the Online Medium ☒ the Hotnews.ro site about Romania and the European Union

Abstract

Aurelia-Ana Vasile, Ph.D.St., Assist. Prof.,
Bucharest, University, School of Journalism and Communication Sciences

Our perspective with regard to assessing media products is that of critical thinking, including when we refer to Romania and the European Union in the press online, on hotnews.ro.

Our critical thinking analysis (of the newspaper articles that appeared online on hotnews.ro, a generalist news website, from May, 23rd to June 6th, 2006, as compared to the newspaper stories that appeared online on hotnews.ro from May, 23rd to June 6th, 2011) used the Ennis and the Moore-Parker paradigms, and the results provide an interpretive diagnosis on the very media products that were analysed critically. In fact, we hereby aim at showing that the E.U. issue is developing and is not about an un-natural construction that would be bound to die out, and that within one important and interactive cultural area, the “virtual community” on the internet as a mass medium, the E.U. is growing in every way.

We resort to three main theoretical sources to analyse comparatively what happens to a news website “virtual community” nowadays from the media viewpoint. The first theoretical source regards community as a “*social unit*”¹, as referred to by the sociologist *Dimitrie Gusti*. The other two sources are focused on key concepts with communication: first, it is *Manfred Lange*'s concept “*glocalisation*”², and second *Ferdinand Tönnies* concepts ‘*Gesellschaft*’/ ‘*society*’ and ‘*Gemeinschaft*’/ ‘*community*.’³

¹ A term used to describe a social entity which is part of and participates in a larger social group or society.

² is a portmanteau word of *globalization* and *localization*. By definition, the term “glocal” refers to the individual, group, division, unit, organisation, and community which is willing and able to “think globally and act locally.”

³ Tönnies distinguished between two types of social groupings. *Gemeinschaft* — often translated as *community* (or left untranslated)— refers to groupings based on feelings of togetherness and on mutual bonds, which are felt as a goal to be kept up, their members being means for this goal. *Gesellschaft* — often translated as *society* — on the other

Our conclusion is that *communication through the online medium* is undergoing a paradoxical process of “*glocalisation*”, of becoming easier to approach owing to the new media, but less authentic precisely because of these new media, and a new kind of “social unit” is emerging, i.e., a “*virtual community*” within the “glocalised society”. The English language version of the Romanian generalist news website *hotnews.ro*, shows the trend from “localisation” towards “glocalisation” within this media cultural area and subsequent to the E.U. processes that change the media culture from a *local social unit* span towards a *glocal* one.

According to Ennis (1996), critical thinking is a process whose main aim is for us to make reasonable decisions as to what to believe and how to act. Therefore, Ennis claims that critical thinking may be approached in terms of six elements that make up the acronym *FRISCO* (*focus, reasons, inferences, situation, clarity, overview*).

Critical thinking has been characterised by Brooke Noel Moore and Richard Parker (2003, pp.3-4), as "the careful and deliberate determination of whether to accept, reject, or suspend judgment about a claim". In other words, critical thinking is the process of evaluating what other people say or write in order to determine whether to believe them, and in order to act accordingly.

The authors emphasise the importance of several critical thinking skills when assessing views, and that we are going to use here in order to evaluate newspaper articles online:

- Distinguishing Fact from Opinion and Bias from Reason
- Distinguishing between Primary and Secondary Sources
- Evaluating Information Sources
- Recognising Deceptive Arguments
- Recognising Stereotypes (Moore, Parker, 2003, pp. 3-4).

Key words: media, critical thinking, glocalisation, argumentation, fallacies

Our perspective with regard to assessing the media products is that of critical thinking, including when we refer to Romania and the European Union in the press online, on *hotnews.ro*.

According to Ennis (1996), critical thinking is a process whose main aim is for us to make reasonable decisions as to what to believe and how to act. Therefore, Ennis claims that critical thinking may be approached in terms of six elements that make up the acronym *FRISCO* (*focus, reasons, inferences, situation, clarity, overview*).

Critical thinking is basically a field that is specific to informal logic, which studies argumentation within communication processes, as it appears in usual language, as compared to artificial language arguments, which are formal, technical, specific to formal, symbolic logic. Johnson și Blair (1994) stated about informal logic that “it is a

hand, refers to groups that are sustained by it being instrumental for their members' individual aims and goals.

branch of logic that mainly aims at developing, in a non-symbolic manner, standards, criteria, analysis procedures, interpretation, appraisal/evaluation, critique and construction of argumentation in everyday discourse.

Critical thinking has been characterised by Brooke Noel Moore and Richard Parker (2003, pp.3-4), as "the careful and deliberate determination of whether to accept, reject, or suspend judgment about a claim". In other words, critical thinking is the process of evaluating what other people say or write in order to determine whether to believe them, and in order to act accordingly. Douglas N. Walton (1989) includes opinion pieces (i.e., editorials) in the media within this area of everyday argumentation/discourse, and he characterizes these opinion pieces as being often times "short and *fallacious*" (i.e., *containing argumentation/material errors*).

At any rate, according to Johnson, people do not naturally possess well developed abilities for argumentation and it is mandatory for citizens in a democracy to possess such well developed argumentation skills, in order to be able to fully participate to democratic processes, and to make decisions. And democracy itself depends to a large extent on the citizens' abilities to weigh, to consider issues at stake for democracy, to examine contexts and to be able to provide sound argumentation/arguments. Therefore, we deem that critical thinking and analysis of media products are both crucially important within the setting of democracy. Within such a framework, the European Union issue for Romania and the way it is reflected in the online medium is, and has recently been a matter of special interest if we take into account the ongoing E.U. process that Romania has been aiming at being part of.

According to Robert H. Ennis (1996), *critical thinking* "is also important to the survival of a democratic way of life. If the people in a democracy do not make reasonable decisions in voting and in the conduct of their everyday public lives, then the democracy in which they live is threatened. Given current conditions, once democracy is lost, it will be very difficult to recover. This is because modern technology (TV, IT) makes available superbly efficient techniques for monitoring and controlling people's activities and thoughts."

Methodological Approach

A holistic both normative and interpretive methodological critical thinking approach, to 'E.U. Globalisation' in the Media:

the Online Medium – the *Hotnews.ro* site about *Romania and the European Union*
“

Within the methodological framework of the traditionally used discourse and content analysis, we particularly resorted to critical thinking, more specifically, the FRISCO analysis, as the main methodological paradigm that would best tailor to the purpose and subject matter of concern, that is, the tackling of our hypothesis that the more involved in the European Union, the more represented in the online medium (hotnews.ro being the sample we take) the E.U. issue. We used for that matter some previous research data we

analysed in 2006 (just before Romania's accession to the E.U.), and compared it to the same time span (on the same website, hotnews.ro) in 2011. In fact, we hereby aim at showing that the E.U. issue is developing and is not about an un-natural construction that would be bound to die out, and that within one important and interactive cultural area, the "virtual community" on the internet as a mass medium, the E.U. is growing in every way.

The *FRISCO* Critical Thinking Approach is actually about our interpretive approach to the issue we refer to, whereas the normatively assessed percentage of stories whose main topic is the E.U., stands for the other side of the matter, the quantitative one.

Robert H. Ennis (1996), coined the FRISCO acronym that stands for 6 basic elements of critical thinking, as an approach of his own to critical thinking.

These six basic elements refer to:

1. *Focus* (the conclusion to be reached);
2. *Reasons* (offered in support of a conclusion, decision made if they are acceptable);
3. *Inference* (as we assume that the premises are true, a question emerges about a plausible alternative to the given conclusion);
4. *Situation* (triggers the physical and the social environment, the one(s) who carry the burden of proof for the truthfulness of the premises and of the conclusion, and for the validity of the argument);
5. *Clarity* (stands for the expression "say what you mean and mean what you say" that refers to avoiding ambiguous communication);
6. *Overview* (is about the review and the general checking of the previous five elements in *FRISCO*).

The first three elements in the acronym FRISCO refer to formal aspects with argumentation, the last three (and mostly the ultimate and the penultimate elements) analyse argumentation from the material viewpoint (of content), that is, the logical critical analysis of fallacies.

A critical analysis of a corpus of 12 news online stories regarding European Union and the accession of Romania to the E.U., selected from the total number of stories issued by the hotnews.ro website in English from 23rd May to 6th June 2006, as compared to the same time interval in 2011, using the paradigm designed by Robert H. Ennis (1996), has shown several intriguing issues (within a qualitative, interpretive paradigm).

Research Findings/Results

Table 1a. Formal critical examination of research data made up of 12 news stories regarding the E.U. and Romania's accession to the E.U., out of the total number of stories issued by the *hotnews.ro* website from May, 23rd to June 6th, 2006, using the Ennis (1996) FRISCO paradigm.

Story/Headline	Date	Focus	Reasons	Inferences
1. Action plan for Romania's 2007 accession to EU	30.05	Necessary action plan regarding the judiciary system, and corruption, agriculture and taxing.	Red and yellow flags by the European Commission in the last monitoring report in order to become an EU member on January 1, 2007	Alternative conclusion: action is necessary, not only a plan
2. Bird flu hotbeds keep spreading across Romania	1.06	Romania's difficulties with E.U. about the report on bird flu hotbeds that keep spreading across Romania	The number of bird flu hotbeds in Romania rose to 121.	No available alternative conclusion.
3. Dutch against Romania and Bulgaria accession	29.05	Dutch against Romania and Bulgaria accession to U.E. at 1st Jan. 2007.	Dutch against Romania and Bulgaria accession	Alternative conclusion: Dutch against Romania and Bulgaria accession
4. EC fall report on Romania and Bulgaria might come out in September	23.05	EC fall report on Romania and Bulgaria might come out in September	The fall report is expected to contain the accession date of Romania and Bulgaria.	Alternative conclusion: All countries should ratify the Enlargement Treaty...
5. French Gov adopts draft law for Romania, Bulgaria's accession to EU	23.05	France's Council of ministers adopted the draft law regarding the endorsement of the Accession Treaty of Romania and Bulgaria's accession to the EU	Germany and Finland announced they would wait the October report before ratifying the Treaty.	Alternative conclusion: Not all of the countries ratify Romania's accession to EU before autumn report.

<p>6. New Fiscal Code provisions not requested by EU</p>	<p>1.06</p>	<p>New Fiscal Code provisions not requested by EU</p>	<p>The draft Fiscal Code the Romanian Government presented this week poses a series of issues related to Romania's obligations towards the EU. Many of the provisions in the document are typical Romanian innovations and may bring distortions to certain markets, in contradiction with European policies. (premise to be inferred from the enthymeme:⁵EU would not require provisions that would discard its own policies).</p>	<p>Alternative conclusion: Some of the New Fiscal Code provisions were not requested by EU</p>
<p>7. Interview with Renate Weber regarding EU accession of Romania R. Weber: "Fall report will impose conditions on courts' decision validation"</p>	<p>29.05</p>	<p>Romania has to adopt rapid and effective procedures in court decisions.</p>	<p>If the Justice system is not considered at the EU standards yet, the Romanian courts' decisions will be invalid for at least three years, as mentioned in the Accession Treaty.</p>	<p>Alternative conclusion: In the EU, a court's ruling issued in one state is valid throughout the Union. This is why it is important that all justice systems are compatible.</p>
<p>8. Romania may learn EU accession date in September</p>	<p>6.06</p>	<p>Romania may learn EU accession date in September 2006, as anticipated</p>	<p>European Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn has said the autumn report on the evolution of the two countries, set for October initially, may be published in September.</p>	<p>Alternative conclusion: Romania and Bulgaria may learn a month earlier the date of their accession to the European Union</p>

9. Romanian Foreign Ministry: Romanian thesaurus issue will not affect EU accession	29.05	Romanian Foreign Ministry: Romanian thesaurus issue will not affect EU accession	And the issue of Romania's WWI-old thesaurus, which remains in Russia and is a subject of decades-old disputes, will be treated as part of the framework talks established by the Foreign Ministers of the two countries in 2003 and not as part of a EU-oriented debate.	Alternative conclusion: not any
10. Romanian govt concerned with low spending of European money	25.05	Romanian PM Calin Popescu Tariceanu called for a meeting with members of parliamentary parties, civil society, mass media, academic environment and social partners to consult on Romania's absorption capacity of European funds in the perspective of the accession to EU.	Romanian govt concerned with low spending of European money European officials have requested valid projects to be financed by EC money.	Alternative conclusion: not any.
11. Romanians optimistic about joining EU on time	29.05	Two thirds of Romanians believe Romania will join the European Union on the set date of January 1, 2007	A CURS survey says some 60% of Romanians believe a postponement of the date would have negative effects on the country.	Alternative conclusion: not any.
12. SAPARD funding requests reached 334 mln euro in May	6.06	SAPARD funding requests in May this year, a record since the program was launched in Romania.	Funding requests related to the European SAPARD program amounted to 334 million euro in May this year, a record since the program was launched in Romania. (premise ellipsis: the biggest requests are deemed to be record-requests.)	Alternative conclusion: not any.

Table 1b. Material/Informal critical examination of research data made up of 12 news stories regarding the E.U. and Romania’s accession to the E.U., out of the total number of stories issued by the *hotnews.ro* website from May, 23rd to June 6th, 2006, using the Ennis (1996) FRISCO paradigm.

Story/Headline	Data	Situation	Clarity	Overview
1. Action plan for Romania's 2007 accession to EU	30.05	Argumentation responsibility is carried by hotnews.ro explicitly, and by the Romanian government implicitly.	There are no noticeable /obvious ambiguities that would tamper with the quality of the argument.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities.
2. Bird flu hotbeds keep spreading across Romania	1.06	Argumentation responsibility is carried by hotnews.ro explicitly, and by the Romanian government implicitly (Ministry of Agriculture).	There are no noticeable /obvious ambiguities that would tamper with the quality of the argument.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities.
3. Dutch against Romania and Bulgaria accession	29.05	Argumentation responsibility is carried by Euractiv explicitly, and by hotnews.ro and by the Dutch authorities implicitly.	There are no noticeable /obvious ambiguities that would tamper with the quality of the argument.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities.
4. EC fall report on Romania and Bulgaria might come out in September	23.05	Argumentation responsibility is carried by hotnews.ro explicitly, and by hotnews.ro and by the European Commission implicitly.	There are no noticeable /obvious ambiguities that would tamper with the quality of the argument.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities.
5. French Gov adopts draft law for Romania, Bulgaria’s	23.05	Argumentation responsibility is carried by hotnews.ro explicit explicitly, and by the	There are no noticeable /obvious ambiguities	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities.

accession to EU		French authorities implicitly.	that would tamper with the quality of the argument.	
6. New Fiscal Code provisions not requested by EU	1.06	Argumentation responsibility is carried by hotnews.ro explicitly, and by the Romanian government implicitly.	Elliptical/Entymematic argument, without any noticeable /obvious ambiguities, the absent premise may be inferred from the context.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities.
7. Interview with Renate Weber regarding EU accession of Romania R. Weber: "Fall report will impose conditions on courts' decision validation"	29.05	Argumentation responsibility is carried by hotnews.ro and Renate Weber, explicitly, and by hotnews.ro and by the Romanian government (secondary) implicitly.	There are no noticeable /obvious ambiguities that would tamper with the quality of the argument.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities.
8. Romania may learn EU accession date in September	6.06	Argumentation responsibility is carried by hotnews.ro explicitly, and by the Romanian government, the European Commission, and Olli Rehn, implicitly.	There are no noticeable /obvious ambiguities that would tamper with the quality of the argument.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities.
9. Romanian Foreign Ministry: Romanian thesaurus issue will not affect EU accession	29.05	Argumentation responsibility is carried by hotnews.ro explicitly, and by the Romanian government and by the Community of Independent States, implicitly.	There are no noticeable /obvious ambiguities that would tamper with the quality of the argument.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities.

10. Romanian govt concerned with low spending of European money	25.05	Argumentation responsibility is carried by hotnews.ro explicitly, and by the Romanian government, the European Commission, implicitly.	There are no noticeable /obvious ambiguities that would tamper with the quality of the argument.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities.
11. Romanians optimistic about joining EU on time	29.05	Argumentation responsibility is carried by hotnews.ro and CURS explicitly, and by and by the Romanian government implicitly.	There are no noticeable /obvious ambiguities that would tamper with the quality of the argument.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities.
12. SAPARD funding requests reached 334 mln euro in May	6.06	Argumentation responsibility is carried by hotnews.ro explicitly, and by hotnews.ro and by the Romanian government implicitly (Ministry of Agriculture).	Elliptical/Ent hymematic argument, without any noticeable /obvious ambiguities, the absent premise may be inferred from the context.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities.

Table 2a. Formal critical examination of research data made up of 6 news stories regarding the E.U. and Romania’s accession to the E.U., out of the total number of stories issued by the *hotnews.ro* website from May, 23rd to June 6th, 2011, using the Ennis (1996) FRISCO paradigm.

Story/Headline	Date	Focus	Reasons	Inferences
1. Joint statement Traian Basescu – David Cameron: EU expansion to West Balkans, Turkey, Republic of Moldova	6.06	Agreement on a programme of joint work between our two countries to promote economic growth in the European Union, to enlarge it to the Western Balkans, Turkey and the Republic of Moldova.	Acceptable reasons: to respond generously to democratic reform in the EU's neighbourhood	Alternative conclusion: E.U. to be enlarged.
2. Romanian cucumber producers will receive compensation of up to 247,200 euro	6.06	Romanian cucumber producers will receive compensation of up to 247,200 euro	Acceptable: The financial aid will represent 4.6% of the value of commercialized production of last year but not more than a third of the spending made in the period that losses are estimated.	Alternative conclusion: not any

3.Dutch Ambassador to the EU: I do not believe Romania has a rule of law	6.06	Dutch Ambassador to the EU: I do not believe Romania has a rule of law	Acceptable: Netherlands does not believe Romania is governed by the rule of law because there are still problem related to the reform of the judiciary in our country.	Alternative conclusions: Netherlands does not believe Romania is governed by the rule of law. Romania's rule of law was contested last week at Brussels during a meeting of Ambassadors to the EU.
4.Romanian cucumbers for export in the EU might be distributed, for free, on the internal market	6.06	Romanian cucumbers for export in the EU might be distributed, for free, on the internal market	Not stated	Alternative conclusion: not any
5. Spiegel: Romanians and Bulgarians become the problematic group in Germany	6.06	Spiegel: Romanians and Bulgarians become the problematic group in Germany	Apparently acceptable, rather circular: Poor, exploited, with illiterate children, they are EU citizens that do not fit any standard	Alternative conclusion: Roma are poor, illiterate, exploited and do not fit standards (according to Der Spiegel, Germany). <i>Circular argument: petitio principii.</i>
6.Protest rally at Helsinki against Roma beggars	6.06	Finnish protest at Helsinki against Roma beggars	Counter reason: Two Finnish citizens decided to live for 12 days in a trailer and beg each day.	Alternative conclusion: Roma beggars should be supported to change/integrate.

Table 2b. Material/Informal critical examination of research data made up of 6 news stories regarding the E.U. and Romania's accession to the E.U., out of the total number

of stories issued by the *hotnews.ro* website from May, 23rd to June 6th, 2011, using the Ennis (1996) FRISCO paradigm.

Story/Headline	Data	Situation	Story/Headline Clarity	Overview
1. Joint statement Traian Basescu – David Cameron: EU expansion to West Balkans, Turkey, Republic of Moldova	6.06	Argumentation responsibility is carried by the Romanian President Traian Basescu and British PM David Cameron, and the British Embassy to Bucharest explicitly, and by the HotNews.ro. implicitly.	There are no noticeable /obvious ambiguities that would tamper with the quality of the argument.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities .
2. Romanian cucumber producers will receive compensation of up to 247,200 euro	6.06	Argumentation responsibility is carried by Romanian Agriculture Minister Valeriu Tabara explicitly, and by hotnews.ro implicitly	There are no noticeable /obvious ambiguities that would tamper with the quality of the argument.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities .
3. Dutch Ambassador to the EU: I do not believe Romania has a rule of law	6.06	Argumentation responsibility is carried by Dutch Ambassador, RFI radio, EU sources hotnews.ro explicitly, and by hotnews.ro, implicitly	There are no noticeable /obvious ambiguities that would tamper with the quality of the argument.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities .
4. Romanian cucumbers for export in the EU might be distributed, for free, on the internal market	6.06	Argumentation responsibility is carried by Agriculture ministry state secretary Adrian Radulescu , and Agerpres news agency, explicitly, and by hotnews.ro,	There are no noticeable /obvious ambiguities that would tamper with the quality of the argument.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities .

		implicitly		
5. Spiegel: Romanians and Bulgarians become the problematic group in Germany	6.06	Argumentation responsibility is carried by Spiegel journalist Ozlem Gezer, explicitly, and by hotnews.ro, implicitly	There are no noticeable /obvious ambiguities that would tamper with the quality of the argument.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities . <i>Circular argument: petitio principii.</i>
6. Protest rally at Helsinki against Roma beggars	6.06	Argumentation responsibility is carried by hotnews.ro explicitly, and by the Romanian Embassy to Helsinki, implicitly	There are no noticeable /obvious ambiguities that would tamper with the quality of the argument.	Clear, concise argument, without any ambiguities .

We have noticed from the data in table 1a that in six out of the 2006 12 stories that we critically interpretively analysed formally, the conclusion in argumentation coincides with the story headline, and such an approach to story writing enhances the headline informative worthiness. Similarly, in table 2a, 4 out of 6 stories had coinciding headline and conclusion of the argument. Therefore, we deem that this is a quite effective manner to be used in headline writing for news stories mostly (one of the stories is an interview). The percentage (50%, in table 1a, and 67% in table 2a) that results from the analysis stands for the degree of awareness regarding effective newswriting.

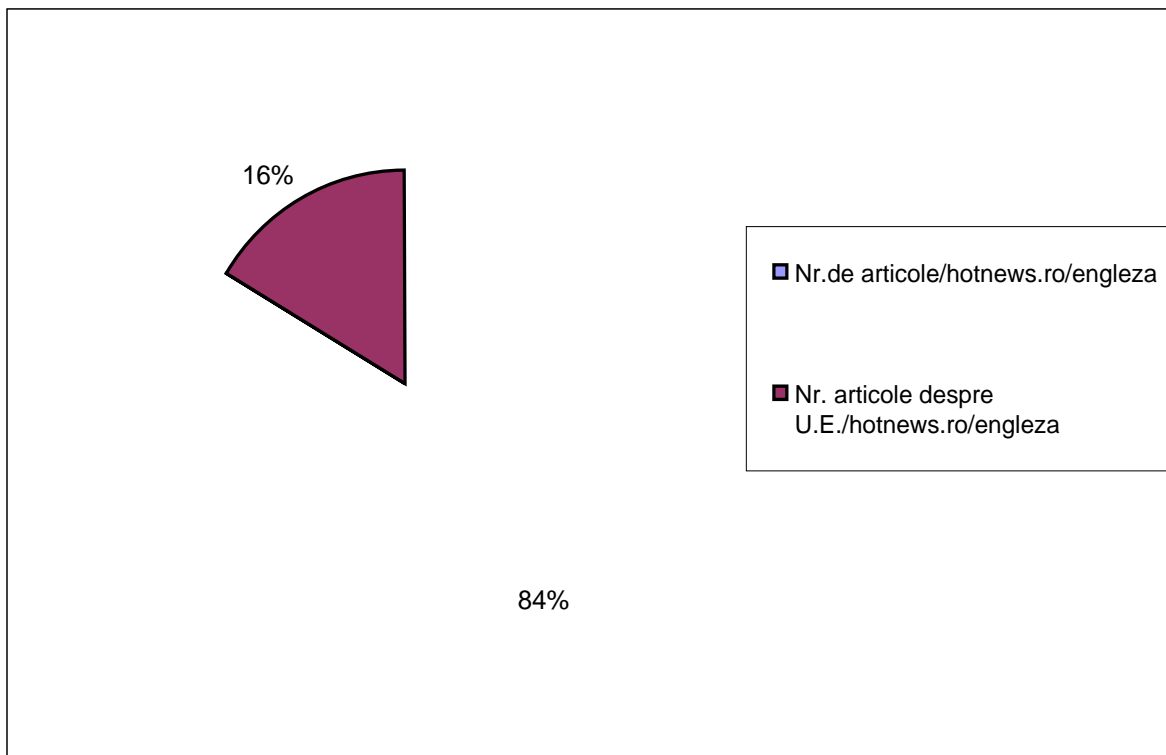
Interpreting the data in table 1b, we may notice that only two of the 12 analysed stories (i.e., almost 17%) are elliptical from the argumentation structure viewpoint (i.e., enthymemes). In table 2b, one of the six stories (i.e., also, almost 17%) are elliptical/enthymematic. However, the stories are clear enough, concise enough, and well organized. In other words, our critical thinking analysis shows that they are viable media products.

Table 3. Representation in percentages of the number of stories/articles on E.U. topics from the total number of articles in the hotnews.ro English language online archive from 23 rd May to 6 th June 2006

DATE	Nr.of articles/hotn ews.ro/Engli sh	Nr.of E.U./hotnews.ro/English	articles about Percentage E.U./hotnews.ro/English /
23.05.2006	10	3	30%

24.05.2006	11	2	18%
25.05.2006	11	2	18%
26.05.2006	8	0	0%
29.05.2006	13	5	38%
30.05.2006	9	1	11%
31.05.2006	11	1	9%
1.06.2006	9	3	33%
2.06.2006	7	2	29%
5.06.2006	10	0	0%
6.06.2006	9	2	22%
Total	108	21	19%

Figure 2. Representation in percentages of the number of stories/articles on E.U. topics from the total number of articles in the hotnews.ro English language online archive from 23 rd May to 6 th June 2006



Conclusions

Within the methodological framework of the traditionally used discourse and content analysis, we particularly resorted to critical thinking, more specifically, the FRISCO analysis, as the main methodological paradigm that would best tailor to the purpose and subject matter of concern, that is, the tackling of our hypothesis that the more involved in the European Union, the more represented in the online medium (hotnews.ro being the sample we take) the E.U. issue. We used for that matter some previous research data we analysed in 2006 (just before Romania's accession to the E.U.), and compared it to the same time span (on the same website, hotnews.ro) in 2011. In fact, we hereby succeeded in showing that the E.U. issue is developing and is not about an un-natural construction that would be bound to die out, and that within one important and interactive cultural area, the "virtual community" on the internet as a mass medium, the E.U. is growing in every way.

A critical analysis of a corpus of 12 news online stories regarding European Union and the accession of Romania to the E.U., selected from the total number of stories issued by the hotnews.ro website in English from 23rd May to 6th June 2006, as compared to the same time interval in 2011, using the paradigm designed by Robert H. Ennis (1996), has shown several intriguing issues (within a qualitative, interpretive paradigm).

One of these issues is that the E.U. has become a more and more important issue with the generalist news website (in its English language version) we tackled (hotnews.ro) in our research, as **the percentage of articles on E.U. topics increased from 16 % in 2006** (sample time interval 23rd May – 6th June) **to 60% in 2011** (same sample time interval), as Romania's accessed to E.U. in 2007. These findings show the fact that there is an obvious media cultural trend from preponderant "local" (Romanian) issues (84%) on this news website in 2006 before the accession to the E.U., towards preponderant E.U. issues (60%) in 2011, as Romania is a member of the E.U.. In terms of agenda setting, we may notice then a switch from rather local agenda towards rather E.U. glocal agenda on this website.

There are some other more specialised critical thinking findings, from among which it is worth mentioning that ambiguity and ellipsis are rather avoided from a generalist news website (as hotnews.ro is), and that fallacies are quite rare in such media products.

As E.U. issues have become more and more frequent in the Romanian (online/) news website medium, we may infer that we are witnessing a changing trend from local to glocal community values, within the framework of an interplay between social units that correlate society with community, the glocal with the local. Identity becomes an important issue within and throughout such a process, as people have to cope with a novel kind of relating to community, to society. We deem that this idea is worth being enlarged on in the future, in order to ease the gauging and the monitoring of changes from the inside out and from the outside in that E.U. needs to cope with.

The rather most general conclusion that emerges from our research is that, without a constant critical analysis of media products and processes, according to consistent paradigms of evaluation, the quality of media products that are at the core of democracy itself, according to Robert H. Ennis (1996), may be tampered with and this would bring about tarnished democracy key elements. Important decisions that an individual should make in a democracy, can be better made if the citizen gets accurate information within a well tailored agenda setting process, as part of the media cultural contribution to democracy.

REFERENCES

1. Bieltz, Petre și Gheorghiu, Dumitru, 1998, *Logica juridică*, București: Editura Pro Transilvania, pp.320-367.
 2. Da Costa, Newton, 2004, *Logici clasice și neclasice—Eseu asupra fundamentelor logicii (trad.)*, București: Editura Tehnică, pp. 67-72, 283-303.
 3. Ennis, Robert H., 1996, *Critical Thinking*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., pp. XVII, 2, 4-10, 12, 305-306, 399.
 4. <http://infotrac.thomsonlearning.com/infowrite/critical.html>.
 5. <http://english.hotnews.ro/>, arhiva revistei presei românești în limba engleză, pentru perioada 23 mai – 6 iunie 2006, ultima actualizare, 10 iulie 2006.
 6. Johnson, Ralph H. și Blair, Anthony J., 1994, *New Essays in Informal Logic*, Toronto: Vale Press (vezi și <http://www.valepress.com/Informal%20Logic.htm> și <http://www.uwindsor.ca/units/research/works>).
 7. *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 2004, Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd., pp. 937,1105.
 8. Noel Moore, Brooke & Parker, Richard, 2003, *Critical Thinking*, New York: McGraw Hill, pp.3-5.
 9. Pop, Doru (coord.), 2001, *Mass-media și democrația*, Polirom, Iași, pp. 35-47.
 10. Roventă-Frumușani, Daniela, 2000, *Argumentarea—Modele și strategii*, București: Editura BIC – ALL, pp. 135-145).
 11. Walton, Douglas N., 1989, *Informal Logic: A Handbook for Critical Argumentation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
-