Which status for sensoric based discourses on digital social networks? Methodological reflections based on a corpus of wine descriptions in French and German

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Context

Digital humanities

= a new paradigm in social sciences created to theorize a broad spectrum of researches integrating digitalization and classical areas through an interdisciplinary perspective.

Following the evolution of human practices, the digitalization of speech practices has forced researchers to rethink classical paradigms and to invent new analytical tools in order to show linguistic constructions, that a human eye would not have found (e.g. Longhi 2018).

This imposes to reconsider the status of textual data by adapting methodological tools because textuality has become less textual and more visual (with an increasing integration of sound, see for instance chatbots-communication).
Context

Digital humanities

Two major consequences are the necessity to adapt actual theoretical positions and to rethink the concept of corpus (Bach 2019a).

A central aspect of digital humanities should have to get a LSP framework in order to open new researches for situated specialized digital speech praxis, and integrate influences from other disciplines in a global and plural approach, which would be productive and efficient for every discipline.
Context

Digital discourses

Definition of discourse based on Foucauldian and phenomenological frameworks:

Discourses can then be defined as dynamic cognitive molecules, composed of plurisemiotic atoms, conceptually linking an individual, a specific community and a social reality. Discourses are so the result as well as the foundation of a moving social interaction. (Bach 2019a)

Digital: Focus on multimodality, new definition of the concept of community (e.g. #fitfam) and of social relations.

This will be here analyzed through digital specialized discourses, which shuffle the cards of specialized social structures and communities and so of the transfer of specialized knowledge.
Context

Specialized Discourse

Petit (2010) defines "specialized" at three levels according to which communities and for which purposes the communication is intended to.

Méric (2019) builds then a strong case for linking specialized discourses to situated discourses through specialized situations.

Gautier et al. (2019) propose to associate the situated linguistics framework (Condamines & Narcy-Combes 2015) in order to analyze specialized situated discourses within a bottom-up, holistic and corpus-based approach.

The notion of specialized is dynamic on digital medium (cf. Bach 2018 for wine digital discourses): Experts are not the only one to own the specialized side of discourses (Bloggers, Vloggers, etc.) (cf. Gautier 2019).
Theoretical background

Koch & Oesterreicher (1985)

From Oral-Written-Opposition to the Proximity-Distance-Paradigm

K&O = medial and conceptual differences
⇒ better consideration of the pragma-situational configuration of the speech production (K&O 1985: 19-21).

Presidential speech: oral – distance
2 friends writing letters to each other: written-proximity
Theoretical background

Proximity-Distance-Paradigm must be seen as a continuum (Koch & Oesterreicher 2011).

Méric (2016: 326-327) goes further and shows that the continuum is not linear but rather a holistic concept, in discourse, represented by an open and dynamic system, which links different textual genres (through) their prototypes.

This is exemplified with oral recordings of visits assisted by a socio-technical device and visits guided by a touristic guide and it’s another example of multidiscursivity (cf. Bach 2017: 84-86).
Theoretical background

How digital is different?

Dürscheid (2016a) speaks about quasi-synchronicity for digital conversations (on Whatsapp or Messenger) (Dürscheid 2018a)? Speaking turns are moreover strictly respected (Spitzmüller 2005).

During group conversations, it is possible to see a digital copresence (Ling & Baron 2013: 195), which modifies the enunciative and pragmatics parameters of digital speaking situations.

If digitalization usually means multimodality (Siever 2015), it is also true in the textual production itself (Dürscheid 2018b) with e. g. the extensive use of emojis.

Furthermore the sound is taking over textuality in some part of WhatsApp conversation with the use of recorded messages (cf. Dürscheid 2016b: 450, 2018c).
Theoretical background

Consequences for the K&O’s framework:

The speech production is cognitive and embodied (Koch & Oesterreicher 2008, 2014; Oesterreicher & Koch 2016); the conceptualization of the proximity or the distance of a speech situation is experience and emotions (and therefore sensorimotor) based.

This may have consequences on communication structures and both conventional and conversational implicatures. If we think at Grice’s maxims (Grice 1975) about relevance and brevity, what refers to emotion and experience is difficult to (i) verbalize (cf. Dubois 2009), and (ii) receive because of discrepancies between previous experiences, basic knowledge, cultures, etc. of speech partners (cf. Fauconnier & Turner 2002), and could thus damage the conversation, if there is too much or not enough elements in the utterance.

Sperber & Wilson (2015: 2.2) show that it has to be a continuum from determinate to indeterminate ‘meaning’ in the producer conceptual system, which understates another continuum between what can and what cannot be said (think of the lack of lexical means to verbalize odors, Majid & Levinson 2015).
Research Questions

Does the K&O’s continuum work for online / digital specialized discourses?

How can it be represented?

Is there a mapping of the proximity-distance-continuum onto the low-highly specialization of the discours continuum?
Corpus presentation

The following discussion will be based on a synchronic multimodal comparable (sensu Teubert 1996) corpus made of

- oral interviews of winemakers and wine sellers in French and German (1h50) (Gautier & Bach 2017);
- labels of wine bottles produced and sold in France and Germany (500 labels) (tokens: 16887, types: 3184, Bach 2017);
- Instagram-publications compiled with the hashtags wein and vin (200 publications) (Bach i. p.).
Discussion

Instagram posts tend to be rather on the proximity pole of the continuum:

• #liebdochwenduwillst (DE_WE_043)
• “😍 Time to relax 😍
  Ich wünsche euch allen einen schönen Abend 😍” (DE_WE_044)
• “Des vacances qui se terminent pour beaucoup.. et oui demain c’est la reprise des cours ou du boulot.. alors je vous souhaite à tous bon courage pour demain mais également un bon dimanche 😍
  Et j’espère que vous avez passés de bonne fête de fin d’année en famille 😍😍😍 et amis 😍?” (FR_VI_002)

This conceptualization of the social community (sensu Foucault, cf. Gredel 2017), which is based on social network, is not surprising (cf. Zappavigna’s or Thimm’s work) and is a wish of some users to introduce more social contacts and human connections into services and devices which break per se the human interaction (screen-to-screen communication).
Discussion

At the same time, Instagram posts can also be relatively distant and close to what can be read on wine bottle labels, which is a one-to-many communication without possibility of answering, with a top-down (experts to people) information transfer (rather on the distance pole).

This can also be here appreciated: The writer seems to be an influencer: Plus, (s)he uses the same structure and terminology as professional reviewer.

In comparison to the previous examples: it seems to be a matching between specialization and distance continuums.

St. Urbans-Hof 2016 Nik Weis Goldtröpfchen Kabinett Grosse Lage Riesling from Mosel

New Year's Eve memorable dinner at Elements restaurant, in downtown Princeton, New Jersey @elementsprinceton.

We rang in the new 2019 together with the staff of our favorite restaurant, great people and great professionals of the modern cuisine, [...] Producer: St.-Urbans-Hof

Style: White wine

Grape Variety: 100% Riesling

Region: Mosel

91 POINTS BY WINEENTHUSIAST @wineenthusiast

"A Kabinett of exceptional structure and depth. The nose reveals tremendous minerality paired with the vineyard's characteristic markers, including grapefruit, black currant and gooseberry. The fantastic combination of sweetness and refined elegance makes the wine a true drinking pleasure."

(nikweis.com)

[...] (DE_WE_029)
Mix of distance and proximity + low and highly specialized continuums:

Aujourd’hui @XXXXXXXXX vont déguster le meilleur dessert de l’année. Amandes, pâte feuilletée, beurre… ça vous dit quelques chose? La #galettedesrois bien sur! Bon se [sic!] n’est pas le dessert le plus light! Pour ne pas plombez la fin du repas en servant un #vin trop lourd. Nous avons opté plutôt pour un effervescent, comme un bon #champagne. Leurs bulles rafraîchissent le palais, Il [sic!] partage avec lui sa fraîcheur et sa vivacité. Il se révèle parfait sur une galette à la frangipane. Une petite touche d'acidité permettant de casser l'aspect déjà très sucré de la galette. Une harmonie soigneusement équilibrée ou aucune note ne domine. Le Nez de ce #champagne😍 est élégant de fruits secs et d'agrumes (FR_VI_019)
Discussion

And this happens also multimodal:


It is rather a mapping than a mix of both continuums. This mapping may follow a certain linearisation of the information (Gautier 2009), which is itself linked to specific semantic polarisations (Bach 2019b) forced by the genre(s) mobilized by the production/reception of posts.
Closing thoughts

Summary

The K&O’s paradigm is accurate and effective for rather specialized online discourses.

The mapping of both specialized and proximity-distance continuums seems to be real and effective:

The dynamics of both continuums has been proved: A post can be rather on the proximity/- spe pole at some point and rather on the other later (needs of more analysis).
Closing thoughts

Perspectives

The linguistic training of professionals could be better oriented (see in this perspective the international EU funded Project Vinolingua, presented in Lavric 2015).

Specialized translation in wine domain requires besides terminology and traditional terminological databases specific skills and comprehension of the domain it-self (Gautier & Bach forthcoming).

Firms, especially start-ups, which develop new products and services based on textual “raw material” (cf. Bach 2018 for examples) could better process their data and enhanced the quality of their products and services.
Thank You!

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