

Discourse In and Through the Media

Discourse In and Through the Media:

Recontextualizing and Reconceptualizing Expert Discourse

Edited by

Marina Bondi, Silvia Cacchiani
and Davide Mazzi

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



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This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-8254-2

ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-8254-5

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PREFACE

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There are always many people behind a book, many more than are listed in the table of contents or the references. This book is no exception. It is indeed one of the results of collaboration with a network of universities in Italy and abroad working on corpus approaches to language variation in a discourse perspective: the CLAVIER (Corpus and Language Variation in English research) centre. The centre and all its members have provided stimuli and encouragement for new explorations. The present volume is an interesting addition to previous investigations of specialized discourse, and academic discourse in particular. The focus this time is on the processes of reconceptualizing and recontextualizing expert discourse in and through the media.

If it is true that there are now a very large number of books devoted to media discourse, yet there are still relatively few projects on the role of the media in the dissemination of expert knowledge: What processes are at play in the communication of knowledge? How is expert knowledge presented to the non-expert audience? How far do the media actually “mediate” between different worlds of knowledge? How is the relevance of expert knowledge made clear to a wider audience? These are some of the questions that the volume tackles.

The nature of the media, inevitably addressing an audience that goes well beyond the limits of the closed community of experts, suggests that we pay attention to the different social practices originating from different settings of knowledge circulation and ultimately to the process of recontextualization that the media operate on the discourse of knowledge by illuminating its social meaning. As I have argued elsewhere, the process can be seen as one of bridging across discourse communities with different background knowledge and different purposes. The process creates a “third space” requiring specific communication strategies, whether in forms of mediated or unmediated communication of expert knowledge. Reconceptualization will first of all involve replacing a

conceptual representation with one that is more suited to the intended addressee: simplification, explicitation, reformulation, comparison, metaphor and simile may all be involved. The process of recontextualization, on the other hand, is aimed not only at making specialist knowledge available to the wider public as such, but also at making it relevant or interesting for the non-specialist reader, by highlighting the novelty and value of the area investigated, its relevance to the everyday life of readers/listeners, or to their communities and identities.

It is almost inevitable, when addressing media discourse, to consider the role of technology. In discourse studies, the notion of literacy has long been extended to the new media, drawing attention not only to the inevitable semiotic complexities of multimodal communication, but also to the impact of new technologies on written communication in terms of interactivity and hypertextuality. Early studies on web discourse focused on the impact of the medium on the text. It is now the time to look more closely into how the extended participatory framework of the web increases the range of interactive patterns and discursive identities construed in each text, thus influencing both language choice and communicative practices.

The complexity of the object requires a multiplicity of perspectives. The dominant methodological standpoints in the volume combine corpus and discourse analysis, usually favouring integrated approaches. The fields of application are also multiple, ranging from scholarly communication, to corporate and institutional discourse. A great many of the papers explore specific genres or communicative situations: attention is drawn to different types of interaction. The readers may thus not be able to find a unitary approach to the topic, but what they will find is a clear representation of the range of problems and issues that characterize the field of enquiry. For this clarity and this variety the editors are most grateful to all the contributors.

DISCOURSE IN AND THROUGH THE MEDIA: RECONTEXTUALIZING AND RECONCEPTUALIZING EXPERT DISCOURSE

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1. Introduction

This book stems from the 2013 CLAVIER Conference held in Modena in November 2013 and includes a selection of the papers presented on that occasion. As the title suggests, the aim of the conference was to stimulate the debate on a variety of aspects related to the representation of specialized discourse in and through the media, e.g. voice and point of view, argumentative practices, knowledge construction, multimodality, re-contextualization and re-conceptualization of knowledge, and peer-to-peer communication within genres aimed at knowledge dissemination and popularization. The conference was therefore intended to encourage cross-generic and cross-disciplinary investigations, in an attempt to advocate integrated approaches to the study of media discourse with a view to both theoretical background and practical applications.

Recontextualizing and reconceptualizing expert discourse has become increasingly important in modern society. Yet although *Knowledge Dissemination (KD)* is now receiving increasing attention, the discursive strategies and the pragmatics of KD in and through the media have yet to receive serious consideration. Knowledge dissemination can be seen as a form of ‘asymmetric’ communication between experts and lay-people, or ‘mediation’ of knowledge and intercultural and ‘inter-discourse communication’ (Scollon & Scollon 1995) between members of different cultures, discourse communities and communities of practice. This amounts to re-contextualization (Calsamiglia & Van Dijk 2004) and inclusion of types of ‘intralinguistic’ translations, whereby simplification, explication, reformulation (Mauranen 2006), reconceptualization of

terms in the subject field ‘translate’ exclusive expertise into ‘comprehensible’ knowledge, suitable to the background of the addressee. In this connection, knowledge dissemination (Engberg 2014: *knowledge mediation*) is seen as a three-fold intra-linguistic and cross-cultural process that combines *representation*, *construction* and *communication* of knowledge intended for specific addressees (Kastberg 2010; Ditlevsen 2011).

This chapter is structured as follows. Section 2 concentrates on recontextualization and popularization across genres and knowledge domains. Section 3 gives an overview of the chapters included in this volume, thus addressing the tensions embedded in internal and external scholarly communication, KD in corporate communication and from institutions to lay audience, and audience empowerment in traditional and new media.

2. Recontextualizing expert discourse

In the field of language studies, *recontextualization* broadly denotes a process by which some part of discourse is extracted from one communicative context and conveyed into another. In comparison with the notion of *contextualization* inherent in dynamic interactions within situated language use (Gumperz 1992), recontextualization involves changes in meaning as parts of discourses or genres shift from one context to another. Linell (1998:155) notes that recontextualization “involves transformations of meanings or meaning potentials in ways that are usually quite complex”. In particular, in the context of recontextualization processes, elements of discourse tend to undergo transformation through simplification or condensation, but also by refocusing, expansion, and elaboration. A prime example is the corporate annual report that typically unfolds from the original financial statement to the financial press release issued to media sources, and eventually the final product published on the Internet. Throughout such a genre chain, meaning is alternately condensed (in the numerical data contained in the financial statement), elaborated (in the integrated verbal message of the press release) and expanded (in the management narrative and images incorporated into the complete report).

Recontextualization may be observed to emerge at various discourse levels. It is intratextual when it occurs in the same text; intertextual, when it links up with other texts in specific contexts; or interdiscursive, when it entails the combination and cross-fertilization among different genres, discourses or activity types. Furthermore, various aspects of discourse can be recontextualized to take on new meanings, including both linguistic

expressions and knowledge or values in a broader sense. A classic instance of the recontextualization of knowledge can be noted in the relocation from the scholarly genres used by specialized disciplinary discourse communities, to popularized forms of discourse envisaging the lay world as their intended audience. In that regard, Gotti (2014) defines popularized discourse as the transformation of expert knowledge for consumption by non-specialists, in terms of both information-giving and argumentative as well as promotional reasons. Health discourse is thus referred to as a case in point, in which factual information about novel treatments and therapies from the scientific research community is adapted and disseminated to the lay public. Interestingly, this may take the form of news reports, documentaries and promotional campaigns that aim to inform the public no less than they intend to affect beliefs, behaviors, policy and decision-making. The pivotal role of the media in the recontextualization process has been highlighted by Calsamiglia and Van Dijk (2004), who deal with the semantic devices used in the Spanish daily press to report scientific findings on the sequencing of the human genome. Such items as definition, description and metaphor are discussed as widespread tools through which the press stresses the social dimension of knowledge – e.g. by expatiating on the scientists involved and the conflicts, along with the real-world applications of findings – instead of delving into the specific scientific content of the news. As Calsamiglia and Van Dijk (2004) themselves argue, rather than acting as second-hand, passive mediators of scientific knowledge, the media occupy a prominent role in the creation of common knowledge and perceptions about science. It is noteworthy that this may overlap with the inclusion of views and information that do not necessarily stem from scientifically accredited sources.

This fundamental aspect has been associated with a number of implications in the study of the argumentative practices of epidemiological investigations. In her works on forms of fallacious reasoning in both the AIDS and the BSE inquiries, Cummings (2004, 2005, 2009) focuses on the consequences of the extensive deployment of analogical reasoning and argument from ignorance in media accounts to the general public. In positive terms, the parallel between hepatitis B and AIDS in early perceptions and thinking about AIDS is shown by Cummings (2004) to have brought about far-reaching effects, in that it led to epidemic effective guidelines for the prevention of HIV infection – e.g. the recommendation to avoid sharing body fluids. In more critical terms, on the other hand, the use of argument from ignorance as the mainstay of ministerial pronouncements about the alleged lack of risk of BSE to human health is considered by Cummings (2005, 2009) to be symptomatic of the vested

interests at stake in the crisis management. Thus, the oft-repeated standpoint that there was no evidence that BSE in cattle would cause Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease is investigated by Cummings (2005:123) as a strategy of politicians and commercial parties “to distort the interpretation of science [...] for the purpose of justifying policy decisions and informing the public of the risk, respectively”. In that light, the study of fallacious reasoning becomes a significant contribution to the public understanding of science.

As was pointed out above, recontextualization has served as an eclectic analytical framework in the study of discourse processes in the most diverse domains of specialized communication. As far as political discourse is concerned, recent research illustrates how naturally-occurring discourse from daily politics collected by means of ethnographic research was recontextualized in a markedly heterogeneous communicative context, i.e. the fictionalized politics of a popular television series (Wodak 2011). In that regard, the complex mundane rituals of politics as they appear in official discourse are the object of an interesting process of simplification for lay viewers, along the lines of a well-known polarization between the good and the bad, as it were. Without going to such extremes, however, the different facets of good and bad and, more generally, the various dimensions of evaluation, play a significant role in scholarly dissemination in the news, knowledge dissemination from institutions and corporate websites, and audience empowerment in and through traditional, new and social media.

Recontextualization has been investigated in the broad area of business discourse. In Thomas (2003), for instance, the framework of recontextualization is implemented to illustrate the way management discourse changes as it moves through different spheres of activity, whether it be the academia, consultancy or practice. With specific reference to the notions of *competitive advantage* and *competitive strategy*, discourse is thus analyzed in its shifts from theoretical models among academics, to promotional instruments among consultants, and finally to strategic objectives among practitioners. In corporate communication, Catenaccio (2006a) focuses on the specificity of the information in press releases issued by Enron as of the accounting scandal of 2001, in comparison to that from the subsequent coverage of the issue in the financial press. As a result of a process of recontextualization, information contained in the press releases was carefully filtered into financial news sources, so that the original meanings were rendered in more distinctively evaluative terms.

Moreover, current research emphasises the importance of communicating expert knowledge to the general public, especially in the medico-scientific field. Rather than viewing this as a simple act of simplification, recontextualization is all the more used in these contexts to unveil the strategies through which knowledge is transformed as it moves from the expert context to the lay one. A common line of research has been to question how scientific discoveries with the potential to affect everyday life are reported in the media (e.g. Catenaccio 2006b; Taylor 2010).

The reporting and representation of scientific research in the popular and non-specialist media are currently seen as raising serious issues.¹ For example, in studying the reporting of research into inherited breast cancer, Henderson and Kitzinger (1999) show that the process of translating knowledge from one media format or outlet to another has strong implications for both the quantity and the nature of representation. They highlight the dilemma faced by both media and researcher: ‘soft’ reporting, e.g. focusing on individual human-interest stories, has the advantage of engaging public interest and increasing the accessibility of the information more than fact-based ‘hard’ reporting; on the other hand, the ‘soft’ reports run the risk of masking scientific information behind an emotive story. Similarly, Allan et al. (2010) throw light on the consequences of the competition between different claims-makers during the crucial pre-market phase of nanotechnology development. They stress the need for accuracy, and for avoidance of both over-positive and over-negative representation, which might raise unjustified expectations or incite public resistance to desirable developments.

One implication of this kind of study is that research into expert-lay discourse has a value beyond simply identifying how information transmission takes place. Becoming aware of communication strategies can be seen as a complex process that may contribute to an aware and informed citizenship: Horning (2011), for example, argues that sensitizing people to how language is used to produce and reproduce knowledge across contexts may ultimately assist them with the development of meta-cognitive awareness of text structure, context and language as well as skills in analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application in line with the standards of a trained readership.

There is growing interest in the use of new technologies and the role of new and social media, such as the Internet (Cline & Haynes 2010; Murphy 2010; Garzone 2012), blogs (Luzón 2013; Riboni 2014), wikis (Kuteeva

¹ Source: *Novel neurotechnologies: intervening in the brain*. Report issued by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, June 2013 (<http://www.nuffieldbioethics.org/neurotechnology>).

2011; Leuf & Cunningham 2001) and phone apps (Pandey et al. 2013), for building and sharing information and opinions between heterogeneous discourse communities, some but not all of it relating to health matters. Some researchers have focused specifically on the discourse of medical self-help websites, considering issues such as degree of empathy or the role of Affect (Cline 2002; Hojat et al. 2002; Scott 2011; Pounds 2012) for trust generation and health consumer empowerment.

In terms of comparisons between languages, the issue of the non-equivalence of knowledge in the translation process has been studied and discussed. In the law, for instance, Engberg (2010) shows that legal drafters from different countries often work with concepts that are not fully stable entities. Instead, concepts are subject to ‘tuning’ by relevant legal experts, and are an issue of debate within the parent discourse community. This insight is relevant to conceptualizing the task of translators or legal drafters, because it highlights their role in creating rather than transmitting concepts.

A growing body of research exists that is relevant to such diverse issues. Some of it, however, focuses on accuracy and comprehensiveness of content, rather than on the linguistic analysis of communication strategies. Where language is the focus, studies tend to be small-scale. Given that communication and social interactions are increasingly taking place through Information and Communication Technology, careful investigation is needed into the dynamics of knowledge transmission and opinion formation in emergent and planned groups and social networks. While this is first and foremost the job of (computational) social science, a strong motivation for this volume is the scarcity of research into the fine-grained linguistic, textual and argumentative mechanisms behind the reformulation of knowledge within lay settings in and through the media.

3. Overview of Chapters

The volume concentrates on the need for providing new insights into the multiple facets of recontextualization. For ease of exposition, the chapters are organized around four points along the cline from scholarly communication through expert-to-lay communication to knowledge transmission from knowledgeable non-experts to lay audience or other knowledgeable non-experts. Section I (Chapters 1 and 2) addresses scholarly communication in digital media and multimodal environments. Section II (Chapters 3 to 5) lays emphasis on the dissemination of scholarly knowledge. Third, knowledge transmission and opinion formation in institutional and corporate interactions with lay audience are

the object of Sections III and IV (Chapters 6 to 10). Section V (Chapters 11 to 13) then concludes the discussion on recontextualization by focusing on audience empowerment via the active participation to the process of knowledge construction.

Since recontextualization is ubiquitous in knowledge transmission and opinion formation, the volume offers insights into a vast array of genres, knowledge domains, environments, media and discourse configurations. The analyses presented in the individual chapters address the motivations and mechanisms behind the recontextualization and reconceptualization of expert discourse.

Section I opens with a chapter by CORNELIUS PUSCHMANN – *A digital mob in the ivory tower? Context collapse in scholarly communication online*. The chapter concentrates on the effects of digital media on important dimensions of scholarly communication, both internal (scholarly discourse) and external (science communication). Importantly, formal scholarly communication comprises a number of well-established, peer-reviewed formats (monographs, publications in high-impact journals, proceedings in the sciences, etc.) that legitimize and certify scholarly value. On the other hand, digitization (Borgman 2007) has impacted on the dissemination, curation and preservation of publications, whose promotion can combine traditional and novel means (e.g. circulating copies and tweeting about one's research).

Turning to external communication, professional communicators (i.e. science journalists) have traditionally been in charge of mediating scholarly knowledge and simplifying scientific facts for a passive recipient, the lay audience. Scholarly blogs, however, are now creating new reader-writer interactions; they present scientists to both scholars (for relationship management) and broader publics, and they may engage the latter and enlist their support for the specific scientific endeavor (Bucchi 1996; Colson 2011). Engaging the interested public via digital and social media also reflects a push towards the democratization of science (Wilkins 2008), from open access (circulation of information on results) to more participatory or open science.

Context collapse is inherent to social media: internal communication among peers gives way to external, often informal, online communication, with larger publics that might put scholarly research under scrutiny. This overlay blurs the line between science on the one hand, and the general public on the other. One consequence of this trend is that reconceptualization shifts from a traditional view of popularization as 'educating the public' to dissemination in informal communication as well as new regimes of evaluation with a part in legitimating scientific research

(e.g. next to citation indexes and journal impact, downloads, Facebook likes, Mendeley saves, Twitter re-tweets, or other indicators championed by the altmetrics movement).

But informal and external communication do not in fact substitute for well-established forms of internal communication. In general, as we have seen, peer-reviewing is the key to scholarly legitimation. Given the current transition to digital publishing, however, preservation and permanence of paper formats in online platforms is no less important. Another crucial issue is how the capabilities and affordances of the digital media change communication dynamics and information flows for traditional genres that undergo remediation (Bolter & Gruniz 2002) and resemiotization (Iedema 2003) from print to screen pages. In this connection, the chapter by JAN ENGBERG and CARMEN DANIELA MAIER – *Exploring the hypermodal communication of academic knowledge beyond generic structures* – concentrates on Elsevier’s *Article of the Future* project (Zudilova-Seinstra 2013). The project suggests possible avenues for revolutionizing the dissemination/communication of academic knowledge by devising prototypes for research articles in online formats that integrate standard generic structure with hypermodal resources (Lemke 2002). Specifically, prototype pages would comprise: (i) in the middle pane, the equivalent of a pdf, with Research Highlights for promotional purposes and the established generic structure of traditional RA; (ii) in the left pane, clickable headlines and visuals from the main content area; (iii) in the right pane, task or content-specific additional features and information (from keywords through interactive versions of the figures to information about the author(s)).

While opening to new communication dynamics, multiple information flows and individualized trajectories, the *Article of the Future* prototypical format poses new challenges to the scholarly community. Even if not accepted in full, the format requires a specific *multiliteracy* on the part of writers and readers. Based on the publisher’s template, it invites *multilevel knowledge building processes* such as elaboration, extension and enhancement through multimodal interaction, and knowledge expansion and enhancement based on dynamic hypertextual interaction enabling inclusion of core or peripheral knowledge. Hypermodality is thus expected to create a special type of knowledge dissemination asymmetry, between scholars that master the new knowledge building processes and scholars that might lag behind and refrain from embracing hypermodal communication beyond the traditional research article structure.

Section II in the volume reflects on more traditional formats based on more standard conceptualizations of scholarly dissemination,

reconceptualization and popularization. In Chapter 3 – *Talking Science: Science in the news on BBC Radio* – SUSAN HUNSTON presents a pilot study based on 18 interviews with scientists on the BBC radio programme *Today*, covering a range of scientific issues (e.g. health, the environment, and space exploration). In line with the organizational structure of scientific journalism, in real time interviews interviewee-interviewer interactions instantiate the traditional role configuration of expert and layperson, while in prepared stories the informed science correspondent interprets and mediates knowledge for the lay-audience, including competing voices in the broadcasts (e.g. ‘mainstream’ and ‘maverick’ science).

In this connection, the chapter explores the interpersonal strategies used by scientists ‘selling’ themselves and their work to the general public. Successful strategies enlist the listener (tax-payer) to the research being presented. They comprise recourse to: evidentials and status markers; the downplaying of uncertainty of results and emphasis on features such as novelty of results or value of the research (in terms of reliability of the methodology adopted, ability to achieve goals, usefulness, and practical applications), positive evaluation of procedure or results, departure from the type of depersonalization that characterizes professional writing, and expression of Affect. These strategies are also used to balance confidence and caution when discussing hypothetical results or making unwarranted claims.

Besides interpersonal strategies, recontextualization involves intra-linguistic translation, or *reconceptualization* of exclusive expertise into comprehensible knowledge that is suitable to the specific background of the intended addressees (cf. Section 1). In Knowledge Dissemination and popularization, a conceptual representation (R1) – and its linguistic expression – is thus replaced with another one (R2) that is felt by the expert (scholar or professional mediator) to be more in line with the world of his/her intended addressees – semi-experts or the lay-audience. Reformulation (Mauranen 2006) might serve this purpose in that it signals an equivalence between two terms or two propositions (R2 is thus regarded as another way of naming R1). Other options here are comparison, metaphor and simile, which involve non-equivalent experiences: metaphors “create similarities rather than reflecting them”; literal comparisons are ‘intra-domain’ and assess “what two entities share”; similes, or figurative comparisons are ‘inter-domain’ in that they “compare things that are normally felt to be incomparable” (Israel et al. 2004:124). In Chapter 4 – *Comparison as a mode of re-conceptualization in popularization: Focus on expressions of similarity* – ELSA PIC and

GRÉGORY FURMANIAK further add into the equation inclusion of homogeneous comparands (either ‘expert’ or ‘non-expert’) in intra-domain literal comparison, and the comparison of comparands that belong to different speech communities (‘expert’ and ‘non-expert’) in heterogeneous literal comparison as well as in figurative inter-domain figurative comparison. Based on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of research articles (RAs) from peer-reviewed journals and a comparable corpus of relatively high-brow popularized articles (PAs), the authors thus investigate expressions of similarity and comparison (*similar* and equivalents; *like* in its uses as preposition, conjunction and adjectives) in expert discourse and expert mediation. Interestingly, the data shows that expressions of comparison are frequent across RAs and PAs. However, they show different distributions: adjectives are mostly found in intra-domain comparison within RAs, where they are used for metadiscursive and descriptive purposes, and as cohesive devices; inversely, *like* is used in heterogeneous comparisons and inter-domain figurative comparison within PAs for the type of reconceptualization that is distinctive of knowledge mediation.

STEFANIA MACI’s chapter – “*The data supports the provocative view that...*”: *Evaluation in medical academic posters* – concludes the section on scholarly dissemination with an exploration into the types, uses and distribution of evaluative *that*-clauses across the IMRD structure of academic posters from epidemiology conferences and journals. Though little studied in EAP and somewhat neglected in the soft sciences, posters have rapidly become a major knowledge dissemination genre in the hard sciences and in medicine in particular: posters effectively show research and research outcomes at conferences, and can further contribute to follow-up discussion when uploaded to the conference website or published in journals. While *that*-clauses are not found in the Methods section and authorial (self-)reference is a feature of the Introduction – which aims at establishing scientific credibility – Results and Discussion move steadily towards data reference for laboratory work and experimental practice, where visuals that are a fundamental part of the context efficiently summarize facts and findings. It is therefore easy to see how posters give voice to data that speaks for themselves, Drawing on Hyland and Tse’s (2005) categorization of evaluative *that*-clauses in academic genres, the chapter thus demonstrates how expressions of epistemic stance that denote maximum certainty and objectivity are a key to constructing scientific reliability in relation to facts. Also fundamental are verbal evaluative expressions that describe research acts like

demonstrate, show, indicate, or mental processes like *suppose, assume* or *hypothesis*.

Sections III and IV of the volume are devoted to varied types of interdiscursive recontextualization (Linell 1998), where the media (and the digital media in particular) involve communication of knowledge (Ditlevsen 2011) to the lay audience, from institutions and corporate websites. In Chapter 6, ALISON DUGUID concentrates on *Public apologies and media evaluations* using selected search words to investigate uptakes of public apologies (complete apologies, partial apologies and refusals to apologize) in a corpus of UK broadsheet newspaper texts, a corpus of White House briefings and data gathered from a TV news corpus. The data shows that press representation of politicians' media apologies proceeds through the expression of the journalist's explicit opinion: the journalist expresses evaluation (mainly negative evaluation) along parameters such as quantity, timeliness, sincerity and spontaneity, and the 'humiliation factor', whereby apologies are seen as cues to the politician's inability to achieve a goal rather than as a beneficial attempt to redress a wrong. Rather than simply reporting events, recontextualizing meaning in press uptakes of public apologies is therefore a matter of providing an authoritative interpretation of events and thus shaping the reader's opinions.

ILARIA MOSCHINI's chapter – *Facebook.com/WhiteHouse: A multimodal analysis of the social media recontextualization of the institutional encoder* – concentrates on another type of recontextualization of institutional communication. One of the central ideas of this contribution is that the White House's facebook profile illustrates the case of recontextualization of top-down institutional discourse into a peer-to-peer social network semiotically mapped onto a combination of the yearbook model onto diary blogs. Importantly, the chapter combines insights from Lakoff's (2002) Conceptual Metaphor Theory on moral politics and society with work on multimodal metaphor (Forceville 2006) and hypertextual narratives (Thibault 2012), to show how visual and written information interact on the page to conceptualize Obama as a Nurturant Parent.

The sequencing of Chapters 6 to 8 reflects a gradual shift from traditional media and traditional genres to generification, multimodality and hypertextuality in the Web 2.0. In Chapter 8 – *Digital vividness: Reporting aviation disasters online* – CARMEN SANCHO GUINDA addresses the place of vividness in the online aircraft-accident dockets issued by the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board. The contribution argues for seeing NTSB dockets as currently evolving into 'catastropops' - in her

words, a popularized blend of visual journalism, technical detail and storytelling. Evidence for this comes from the quantitative and qualitative analysis of an electronic corpus of fatal probable-cause accident dockets published online between 2005 and 2012. Since prevention is the overall purpose of this lay-genre, popularization and instruction come with the disclosure of information about accident circumstances and actors' behaviours that is at the same time intelligible and transparent, accessible and memorable, so as to be retained at the personal, cognitive and habit-based levels. We therefore see effective recourse, among others, to verbal and audiovisual vividness in multiple representations: whereas abstracts and short technical reports with term description come with testimonies characterized by 'cinematic' style, audiovisuals such as weather animations, flight paths and 3-D reconstructions further transduce (Kress 2010) information for immediacy and intimacy.

While also laying emphasis on interdiscursive recontextualization, the chapters in Section IV share a common interest in corporate communication, corporate identity and corporate image in Web 2.0 environments. In the first chapter – *Social media in corporate communication: Focus on text and discourse* – GIULIANA ELENA GARZONE provides an extensive discussion of the linguistic make-up and patterns of corporate communication in social media by corroborating a linguistic analysis of data from the PepsiCo website (<http://pepsico.com/>) with insights from experts based at one of the most important Italian social communication agencies.

A comparison of topic-centric image blogs, collaboration-oriented Facebook pages and affordances, and tweets/re-tweets in the relatively more dialogically-oriented Twitter environment, shows increasing degrees of fragmentation and shortening of the text contributed by the posts of, in a row, blogs, Facebook and Twitter. As a consequence, the classical view of textuality is seen to apply to blogs, and, although shorter, Facebook posts are still cohesive to some extent. Conversely, tweets constitute an extremely fragmented and deconstructed pattern of communication, where speech acts and units of conceptual meaning occur in isolation, and cohesion as connectedness at the level of signantia gives way to cohesion as achieved by means of hyperlinks and hashtags. In line with an overall tendency in the development of Computer-Mediated-Communication and social media, deconstruction, fragmentation and reduction of the (meta-)discursive resources traditionally available to the text proceed on a par with dialogization and engagement.

As regards the contents presented, the aim of corporate communication in the social media is threefold: the company engages with customers for

promotional purposes, to build a sense of community, and, importantly, to leverage on values, interests and activities. When, however, social media only achieve limited interaction with the customer, what is then needed for effective communication is a general rethinking of the major dimensions involved: from content selection, discursive strategies and language choices, through the use of visuals and other semiotic resources, to an appropriate timing of updates.

Another study with implications for marketing and brand management is *From corporate communication to consumer blogs: Analyzing recontextualization of brand identity in fashion*. Here, BELINDA CRAWFORD CAMICIOTTOLI concentrates on the shift from expert professional communication in the webpages of three international fashion houses based in Italy to social communication among lay fashion bloggers that construct themselves as highly informative and opinionated commentators within the fashion discourse community. More particularly, the qualitative and quantitative analysis of adjectives in corporate websites shows that they are used to encode and promote the desired brand personality along the lines of dimensions such as sincerity, excitement, sophistication, competence and ruggedness (cf. Aaker 1997). The purpose, of course, is to establish brand associations and create unique brand images in the mind of consumers. This is where evaluative adjectives in topic-centred consumer blogs come in handy as evidence for the interdiscursive recontextualization of brand identity from the expert producer's to the lay consumer's perspective: whereas the comparison of adjectives in the website datasets and in the corresponding blogs dataset suggests a high degree of alignment between company-defined and consumer-perceived brand identity, recontextualization in fashion blogs proceeds through the expansion and elaboration of company-defined meanings into new meanings with different or added facets.

Clearly, this constructs bloggers as 'empowered' knowledgeable commentators. Chapter 10 thus provides a transition to Section V, which concludes the volume with three case studies on audience empowerment and active participation to the process of knowledge construction on the part of knowledgeable non-experts. Construction and communication of lay theories are the object of Chapter 11 – *"I'm not an expert": Lay knowledge, its construction and dissemination in personal weblogs*. Here, PETER SCHILDHAUER focuses on home-page and posts of personal blogs that are used either to share knowledge and experience with peers or give advice based on the blogger's everyday personal experience.

The author thus brings home the following points. Intended lay-audience and fellow authors are clearly selected by relying on topical

headings and other topical signals, meta-comments on the relevance of the contents to the readership and speech act indicators such as *A warning*. The purpose of communication is twofold – to explain simple and complex theories and also instruct, in line with the basic human need to understand the world and share knowledge with one's peers. Knowledge construction proceeds through two subsequent steps: an initial narrative is followed by concluding reflections drawn on an individual or general level, with underlying IF-THEN relations, a shift across moves from past to present tenses, and markers of evidentiality such as *find* and *realize* in the conclusions.

The next chapter, by JUDITH TURNBULL, takes a patient-centered approach to health communication and health information (Balint 1969) to concentrate on *Knowledge dissemination online: The case of health information*. As is clear, Web 2.0 has significantly changed the health communication environment. While the varied linguistic and cultural background of lay patients is still an open issue, the increasing accessibility to health information is now leading towards peer-to-peer healthcare and more participatory medicine, with patients increasingly conceptualized as unique and active health consumers and, importantly, as having a right – and a social responsibility – to empowerment, that is, to make informed decisions about their health and health care.

In this context, the paper concentrates on diabetes, a life-long condition, and compares and contrasts knowledge dissemination in the webpages of three websites: *Patient.co.uk*, managed by doctors, *diabetes.org.uk*, run by a registered charity with healthcare professionals, volunteers and diabetics among its members; *diabetes.co.uk*, a community website with information provided by expert professionals, volunteers, diabetics, their relatives and friends. Given the successful integration into a hypermodal environment of styles and genres, and of multiple voices and perspectives on the varied facets of the condition, *diabetes.co.uk* qualifies as the most situationally adequate of all three sites. Where expert knowledge is mediated to lay-diabetics, we can expect extensive recourse to omission of biomedical detail, simplification and explication/explanation of specialized terminology, e.g. via specific visual and/or written metaphors and analogy across domains. But there are other points to be made: first, the voices and perspectives of professionals and of individual patients are juxtaposed in a hypermodal environment, e.g. static information on the webpage is complemented by popularizing videos starring professionals, and by videos where patients recount their own success stories. Second, it is worth pointing out that among the genres and modes in the site, the online discussion forum run by diabetics clearly

shifts the focus from factual knowledge to experientially-derived knowledge: asking for advice, giving advice and sharing experiences are all key to foster learning and promote health literacy.

What this means for a reflection on Knowledge Dissemination is that one is no longer certain about who the expert exactly is: along with professionals, long-time diabetics are at the core of the community emerging around this life-long condition. In this respect, Wikipedia might illustrate an even more vexed case, as demonstrated by MORANA LUKAČ and ROBERT GUTOUNIG – *From Usage Guides to Wikipedia: Re-contextualising the discourse on language use*. Starting from the assumption that since the eighteenth century usage guides have been the traditional sources on language use for the ‘linguistically insecure’, the authors compare the entries on selected usage items on Wikipedia and in the *HUGE database* (<http://huge.ullet.net/>), a database of usage guides and usage problems developed at Leiden University Centre for Linguistics. The data suggests that Wikipedia entries on usage items are more visited and more heavily and collaboratively edited than the average Wikipedia article. But surely this is all the more so when the editors are language experts or have more real-life expertise in language-related fields. Wikipedia entries include significantly more references to other sources and linguistic terminology than usage guides; they refrain from adopting the more narrative and personalized style of usage guides, and provide objective descriptions rather than prescriptive or proscriptive rules. The qualitative analysis of the Talk pages gives us the right interpretation of these findings: crowd sourcing and collaboration of many contributors and compliance with Wikipedia principles (e.g. the principle of Verifiability), balanced discussions on Talk pages and regular edits, enable Wikipedia entries on language use to largely reflect critical, up-to-date information that relies on actual usage and linguistics rather than on single authorities.

4. Conclusions

The main point of this chapter has been to consider and discuss research on the recontextualization and reconceptualization of knowledge in and through the media. The volume is intended to encourage cross-generic and cross-disciplinary investigations, in an attempt to advocate integrated approaches to the study of media discourse with a view to both theoretical background and practical applications. Secondly, it aims to foster debate on a variety of aspects related to the representation of specialized discourse in and through the media, e.g. voice and point of view, argumentative practices, knowledge construction, multimodality, re-

contextualization and re-conceptualization of knowledge (hence, knowledge transmission), opinion formation and peer-to-peer communication within web genres aimed at knowledge dissemination and popularization in and through traditional, digital and social media.

Taken together, the contributions to the volume provide extensive exemplification of the type of research that is currently conducted on these issues. The variety of the questions posed and the wide array of methods used in the chapters are therefore intended to make a substantial contribution to sharpen existing knowledge and further the ongoing debate among scholars in the field.

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SECTION I:

NEW MEDIA AND NEW MULTIMODAL ENVIRONMENTS FOR KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION

A DIGITAL MOB IN THE IVORY TOWER? CONTEXT COLLAPSE IN SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION ONLINE

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Abstract: What are the effects of digital media on scholarly communication, both internal and external, and how do scholars react to the problem of context collapse, the situation that arises when internal communication among peers is suddenly put under public scrutiny? We approach this question by reviewing and contrasting the different functions of scholarly publishing and science communication for the academic community through a series of cases, and then discussing the relative reluctance of scholars to engage with new social media channels, such as blogs and Twitter, before this background. We close by describing different definitions of scholarly impact, and the role of novel approaches to evaluation that involve not just the academic community, but a wide variety of stakeholders.

1. Introduction

Around the 30th of June 2014 an intense debate erupted on the Internet about a psychological experiment conducted by three researchers at Facebook, the University of California, and Cornell University. The scientists aimed to test the hypothesis that emotions are contagious, that is, that happiness and sadness can spread from one person to the next by exposure. This phenomenon was previously known from laboratory settings, but it had never been studied in a computer-mediated setting and on a large sample of subjects before. In the experiment, conducted in early 2012, close to 700,000 Facebook users were randomly selected and their News Feed was adjusted to filter out specific posts with positive and negative emotion words, posts that the users would normally have been exposed to. Subsequently the emotional content of the subjects' posts in the following period was studied. The study found that users exposed to less negative emotive content would also post fewer negative status updates, and that those exposed to fewer positive emotions would in turn post fewer negative status updates, though the observed effect size was