Constructive and Creative Co-Creation Campaigns:

On linguistic co-creation in online health education

Applicants

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Project description (297 words)

In web-based health campaigns, co-creation is a new persuasive strategy, enabling audience members to become active contributors to the campaign (Zwass, 2010). Consider a recent campaign by the Dutch Cancer Foundation, which aimed to persuade its audience that non-smoking should be the social norm. It did so by asking audience members through social media to complete the slogan "*Smoking is sóóó…*" with something old-fashioned (e.g., *…Playstation 1*). While many audience members followed the campaign's directive, some deviated and wrote a positive message about smoking (e.g., …*nice*) or a negative reflection on the campaign (e.g., …*the 'smoking is sóóó campaign'*; van den Heerik et al., in press).

Such ambivalent responses are found for many co-creation campaigns (e.g., Gebauer et al., 2013; Heidenreich et al., 2015), leading to the question when and how co-creation campaigns are successful (or not). Our project takes on this question and breaks new ground in two important ways. First, we take an interdisciplinary perspective and explore the role of both cues of the online environment (*social sciences*) and linguistic cues (*linguistics*) in establishing the ways in which audience members co-create campaign slogans. Second, many co-creation studies are observations of cases of failed or successful co-creation. While these offer crucial insights, their set-up makes it difficult to establish which factors are causally responsible for audience contributions. Thus, we propose to supplement such studies with a production experiment in which audience members co-create slogans in a controlled research environment.

Specifically, participants will be randomly exposed to one of several (fictitious) co-creation campaigns that differ in cues offered by the online environment and in linguistic cues used to trigger co-creation. This enables us to establish how these cues work (together) in generating audience responses, and help us to further entangle which elements constitute successful web-based co-creation campaigns.

Project Organization (299 words)

The Academy Assistant (AA) from communication science (AA1) works on the elements related to the co-creation process. S/he will look at existing models of co-creation (e.g., Durugbo & Pawar, 2014; Zwass, 2010), at elements of success and failure of previous co-creation campaigns (e.g., Gebauer et al., 2013; van den Heerik et al., in press) and at features in the computer environment that trigger or hinder co-creation activity (e.g., Muntinga et al., 2011). AA1's primary goal is to model determinants of successful co-creation in online environments.

The AA from linguistics (AA2) focuses on the role of language in communication (Steen, 2008, 2011). More specifically, s/he will determine what sets language use in computer-mediated settings apart from other settings (e.g., Hancock, 2004), and study which linguistic elements lead to linguistic resonance (Du Bois, 2014) and/or linguistic creativity (e.g., Veale, 2012). AA2's primary goal is to model the role of language in online environments.

Both AAs combine their expertise in setting up and running a production experiment to determine when and how audience members linguistically co-create campaign slogans. We focus on the role of cues in the online environment (e.g., presence or absence of other co-created slogans) and linguistic cues (e.g., presenting participants with openings such as *Smoking is…, Smoking is sóóó…,* or *Smoking is old-fashioned, because…*) in co-creation. Participants will be asked to complete slogans in a tweet as if they send it to their friends. Subsequently, co-created slogans will be coded on different linguistic dimensions such as presence of metaphor, novelty of expression, in-group language, and degree of resonance (following van den Heerik et al., in press). This determines how cues in the online environment and linguistic cues drive online co-creation.

The project team (supervisors and AAs) collaborates on an empirical journal article and on making the data publicly available.

Collaboration (297 words)

One of the key questions of the interdisciplinary Network Institute is how digitization impacts the world around us. The use of co-creation in online health and marketing campaigns is one of these challenges. Classical campaigns were typically top-down, in that organizations were responsible for the entire campaign. In contrast, co-creation campaigns are a collaboration between organization and target audience, facilitated through Web 2.0 technologies. Such campaigns are relevant to many disciplines within the Network Institute. Our project brings together communication science (i.e., social science) and linguistics (i.e., humanities).

Communication scientists interested in co-creation focus on the ways in which Web 2.0 technologies impact and transform persuasive campaigns. Specifically, they are interested in how audience members perceive and use the online environment when engaging with online campaigns. Thus, the relationship between online cues, online culture and campaign effectiveness takes centre stage. In contrast, linguists are interested in how digitization impacts the way in which speakers use language, and how language use differs across online situations. Yet, to fully understand how and when co-creation campaigns based on creative language use are successful, both a communication and a linguistic perspective are needed.

This project brings together both a communication-scientific and a linguistic perspective on online co-creation within one study. The set-up of our production experiment to let participants talk freely about a topic in an experimentally controlled setting is based on McAdams et al. (2008). However, to the best of our knowledge, this project comprises the first production experiment into the effectiveness of co-creation

campaigns. Results will entangle the effects of cues related to the online environment and language in co-creation production. These insights do not only provide important theoretical insights for both disciplines, but can also be used to inform practitioners interested in setting up effective web-based co-creation campaigns.

Deliverables (156 words)

The project will have the following deliverables:

- a pre-registration report of the experiment, registered at the Open Science Framework (OSF), before the start of data collection.

- a paper explicating our experiment, which will be submitted to an academic journal in between the social sciences and the humanities that is interested in language use in computer-mediated communication (e.g., *Discourse Processes, Journal of Language and Social Psychology*).

- The project team will actively participate in a meeting of the Metaphor Lab, one of the sub-labs embedded within the Network Institute, and present the work.

- We strive to code the open-ended responses in such a way that we can make the data publicly available for other researchers through the Open Science Framework (OSF). Dr. Burgers, one of the applicants, has experience with making (experimental) data available through open access (see https://osf.io/rt2x4/). Data will be made publicly available upon acceptance of the paper in an academic journal.

Planning (147 words)

We propose the following planning and timetable:

October 2016:	Start of project, AAs familiarize themselves with core literature
November - January 2017:	AAs work together on the set-up of the production experiment (AA1: aspects of co-creation, e.g., from work on computer-mediated communication; AA2: work on linguistic probes)
November - January 2017:	Together with their supervisors, AAs fill out a pre-registration form (Van 't Veer & Giner-Sorolla, 2016) and pre-register the experiment at Open Science Framework (OSF)
January 2017:	Data collection
February - April 2017:	Data coding
April - July 2017:	Supervisors and AAs analyse and prepare data
July 2017:	Supervisors and AAs give a final presentation about the project in a meeting of the Metaphor Lab, an interdisciplinary sub-lab of the Network Institute.

While all collaborators will meet on a regular basis, Burgers will be AA1's daily supervisor and Van den Heerik will be AA2's daily supervisor.

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