

Xploring txtuality & txtually transmitd dis-Ez: Exploring textuality & textually transmitted dis-ease

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Abstract

In studyn th sociolog of transl8n, ther is logic n atemptin 2 stay az tru 2 form az possibl n reportin on studies, 4 wat is known is n de performanc of reportin, furthr transl8ns ocur. + additionl & praps unesary distortns ocur wen d resrch is bEing disemN8d. Taking a performativ turn, research disein8n attnds 2 > than th aesthetic. N nvestig8ng how young ppl bcom positind n thR preferences 4 textn ther iz positnin dat trivializs, pathologizs & marginalizs. N only attendin 2 a sanitizd voice, 1 made 2 fit th acadimc audiens, transl8d in2 d discours of th0s situa8d n d mainstrem, proceses of colonz8n & opresn r perpetu8d. N givng academic credens 2 particla voices & not othrs, conventns of academia suport a domiNt discours: "to b takn serious dont stay az u r". This papr ther4 focuss on a partclr part of reserch, the collatral damge of reserch dissemn8n that restrcts & altrs voice. 2 redres violenc gainst such voices, a performativ turn is takn.

This papr xplors txtuality & txtual dis-ez az a dialogicly provocativ txted performnce. I present txt lnguag as non-trivial & non-pathologicl. In presntn this reserch my intentn is not 2 provid a spect8rs view on som priv8 world, nor entrtain, but 2 engage u/us in a prformanc runing intrferenc on conventns th@ wuld marginaliz & oppress. In doing so, a socioloG of transl8n prvokes ndrstandng not only of thngs techy & social, but politcal; of practis realizz th@ wuld 'other' & prhaps betr ndrstandin of how we 2 may b 'othering'.

Abstract (translated)

In studying the sociology of translation, there is logic in attempting to stay as true to form as possible in reporting on studies, for what is known is that in the performance of reporting, further translations occur. Furthermore, additional and perhaps unnecessary distortions occur when the research is disseminated. Taking a performative turn, research dissemination attends to more than the aesthetic. In investigating how young people become positioned in their preference for texting, what is shown is positioning that trivializes, pathologizes and marginalizes. In only attending to a sanitized voice, one made to fit the academic audience, translated into the discourse of those situated in the mainstream, processes of colonization and oppression are perpetuated. In giving academic credence to particular voices and not others, conventions of academia support a dominant discourse: "to be taken seriously do not stay as you are". This paper therefore focuses on a particular aspect of research, the collateral damage of research dissemination that restricts and alters voice. To redress violence against such voices, a performative turn is taken.

This paper explores textuality and textual dis-ease as a dialogically provocative texted performance. I present text language as non-trivial and non-pathological. In presenting this research my intention is not to provide a spectator's view on some private world, nor to entertain, but to engage with you in a performance that runs interference on conventions that would marginalize and oppress. In doing so, a sociology of translation provokes understanding not only of things both technical and social, but also political; of practice realities involving those "othered" and perhaps better understanding of how we too may be "othering".

Keywords

Sociology of translation, performative turn, textuality

Preamble

Text speak is an inconsistent language, nuanced differently by different writers, and even by the same writer at different times. The translated version in the split screen was provided with the assistance of trans8.com and is further nuanced by the author reflecting a NZ texting dialect.

This paper takes a performative turn on the processes of research dissemination. In writing a paper exploring textuality and textual dis-ease the intention is the production of a disruptive text. I do not pretend that writing in text speak will increase readability or access. The disruptive text is produced instead as a provocation to grapple with language in a deliberate way, to be estranged from what is comfortable, and to enter into a different space. The deliberate invocation of new ways of relating serves as a response to a call for research methods that are decolonizing (Lincoln & Gonzalez, 2008; L. T. Smith, 2012) and anti-oppressive (Kumashiro, 2000, 2001). For networked learning to be more than a mechanism of the imagined communities of western nationalities represented in academia, then as Fox (2005) argued, it needs to engage with issues of language. Through engaging with language, issues of inclusion, exclusion, and the power of defining what is valid or invalid is challenged.

Takin a performatv turn

Wot mite ocur wer a papr bout txtxn 2 b reportd n th lnuag it talks of? Wot f d litritur of resrch wz not a containr of wot wz lernd, bt treatd as an actor challengn how meanin is made? These questns pull 2ward knowledge being cre8d in rel8nship, & how, were we 2 rel8 difrently, difrnt knowledgs mite also cum 2 b known.

The shift is from epistemology (where what is known depends on perspective) to ontology (what is known is also being made differently). It's a shift that moves us from a single world to the idea that the world is multiply produced in diverse & contested social & material relations. The implication is that there is no single "world" (Law & Urry, 2004, p. 397)

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Taking a performative turn

What might occur were a paper about texting to be reported in the language that it talks of? What if the literature of research was not a receptacle of what was learned, but was included as an actor challenging how meaning is made? These questions pull toward knowledge being created in relationship, and how, were we to relate differently, different knowledges might also come to be known.

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Both SSK & SCOT [sociology of scientific knowledge & social construction of technology] proceed by assuming that they are able to offer pragmatically adequate descriptions of technological and scientific practice. They choose, often knowingly, to ignore the performative consequences of their own descriptions. By contrast, actor-network theory and, to a greater extent, feminist technoscience studies choose to wrestle with the fact that they (and therefore their own accounts) are socially located, noninnocent, and therefore political performances. This suggests they don't offer simple descriptions, but make a difference. (Law & Singleton 2000 p.767)

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This paper relates to the dissemination of networked learning research as a performance. In taking the dissemination of research as a performance in its own right, this paper takes seriously the proposition that "when one writes one also intervenes" & that "writing may either support / erode current technoscience agendas" (Law & Singleton, 2000, p.767). This then is the position taken; in telling of this particular technoscience story of young people who would text for counselling, I not only describe but choose to interrupt & disrupt thoughts about what it is "to text". In presenting this research, there is a parallel performance that intends to interrupt & disrupt: to engender dis-ease and to provoke consideration for the intertextuality of a text within a text.

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A disruptive text

Interrupting the discourse that would position texting for counselling as an impoverished choice involves leveraging multiplicity: pointing to differing realities and trialing new ways through which we might relate to these realities. Relating differently is to see our-selves as implicated rather than detached; purposing our involvement such that particular realities might be strengthened and others made less strong. I might have presented such findings as Suchman (2008) suggests by "mereing" the innovation, to loosen its grip on the substance talked of, however the grip is too tight.

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it is described as having found its niche with young people 10 years later.

It started as a message service, allowing operators to inform their customers about things such as problems with the network. When we created SMS (Short Messaging Service) it was not really meant to communicate from consumer to consumer and certainly not meant to become the main channel which the younger generation would use to communicate with each other (Wray, 2002, para. 3).

Twenty years later, and internationally, texting is still described as something that young people do (e.g. Esfandiari, 2005; Farber, Shafron, Hamadani, Wald, & Nitzburg, 2012; Ling, 2005; A. Smith, 2011; Thompson & Cupples, 2008). The reasons for this include young people finding it "quick, efficient, cheap and convenient" (Horstmanshof & Power, 2005) but also texting is seen as providing a sense of privacy (Davie, Panting, & Charlton, 2004) and control (Grinter & Eldridge, 2003; Thompson & Cupples, 2008). Unlike communal ownership with computers, mobile phone use tends to be personal; use by a single operator affording extra privacy. A related aspect is the ability to choose when and where to send a message, control over how much is disclosed in the message given the absence of non-verbal and paralinguistic cues and the ability to revise a message before it is sent. However, such attributions are also cast as allowing for avoidance (Davie et al., 2004; Turkle, 2006) and leads to speculations such as texting being associated with the absence of empathy (Oldham & Willen, 2011) and cast as the antithesis of interpersonal relating (Hart, 2010). The conflicted academic literature shows somewhat more balance than the media representations that nourish a moral panic situation alongside text bullying and sexting as well as associating texting with personal injury (repetitive strain injuries) and public risk (car, plane and train crashes). @ an extreme, media reports implicate texting with the ruination of language through to zombiism ("NoMo Phobia creating zombie kids," 2009).

This matters because it places texting as a language of the foolish, foolhardy, developmentally challenged or delayed, and the pathologically unsound, and as argued by Butler (1997) language is deeply constitutive: how we talk matters; how we are talked of matters. Ascribing agency to language, acknowledges the power of language to injure and, when experienced recursively, to oppress. While Butler points to the need to interrupt recurring patterns of linguistic injury, how this might be done prompts further consideration.

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A performativ turn

Informed by ANT re understanding of performanc & agency, wrds cn only hav impact wen xperiencd & internalizd; our thinkin bn shapd n interaction. Latour's introductn 2 Hutchin's (1995) book, *Cognitions in the Wild*, emphasiss ths point repeatin d xistentialist bon mot, "there is nothin n d mind dat wz not 1st n d senses". Our ways of thinkin thru, 2 our ways of bn, r produc'd n netwrks of assoc8n. How thn mite we actvly seek 2 establsch dfrnt associ8n wen wat iz talked of is repeatdly and -vely presntd n d media as well as n d resrch lit? Tkng a performativ turn, ths papr xperientially explors settin ^ a dfrnt relationship we may hav w txt.

If agency cn b ascribd 2 languag, thn a conundrum remains, 4 "we xRciS d force of languag evn az we seek 2 countr itz force" (Butler, 1997, p. 1). We bcum caught ^ n our own bindngs; implic8d n our explic8ns, layr upon layr, fold upon fold. n talkin bout languag, I must uz languag. How 2 wrte of a languag usin another languag? & how 2 manage ths undrtakn w/o slipping in2 d perpetu8n of oppresn? mite treatin d objct of study @ best az an exotc curiosy, & @ worst az a fetishism, continu 2 positn textn, & thOs hu wud text, -vly? Az Law asserts, "NE idea dat our descriptns r inocent iz a chemera" (Law, 2010). Wethr we like it o not, we t2 R implic8d n performin prticular realits both mor & less. & ths matters coz som peeps realitez r difficult nuf w/o bn mAd wors.

Tkng on bord ANT sensiblits dat we both shape & r shapd n assoc8n, & dat we mite also shape, & b shapd difrently, iz 2 accpt dat realits r bn made mor & less, az we do them, & ths mattrs 4 we mite also do things difrntly. Realits r made n academc practiss jst az much az dey r made n NE othr practis. N academia d stylstc xpect8ns, of a papr such az ths, prescrib guidanc az 2 the languag requird, d font, & d layout. 2 d formalty of d languag selectd. The prescribin wuld positn d languags usd by d participnts hu wud txt 4 counslng az relevnt wen prznT az data. d languag of thes ppl would not b d languag of resrch disemN8n. Evn n resrch processs dat mite purport 2 'giv voice' a distortn of voic becoms evidnt az d acadmy proscribng conformty. N only attendng 2 a sanitizd voice,

A performative turn

Informed by an actor-network understanding of performance and agency, words can only have impact when experienced and internalised; our thinking being shaped in interaction. Latour's introduction to Hutchin's (1995) book, *Cognitions in the Wild*, emphasises this point repeating the existentialist bon mot, "there is nothing in the mind that was not first in the senses". Our ways of thinking, through to our ways of being, are produced in networks of association. How then might we actively seek to establish a different association when what is talked is repeatedly and negatively presented in the media and research literature? Taking a performative turn, this paper experientially explores setting up a different relationship we may have with text.

If agency can be ascribed to language, then a conundrum remains, for "we exercise the force of language even as we seek to counter its force" (Butler, 1997, p. 1). We become caught up in our own bindings; implicated in our explications, layer upon layer, fold upon fold. In talking about language, I must use language, and so a condrum develops. How to write of a language (text also known as txtspk), using another language? And how to manage this undertaken without slipping into the perpetuation of oppression? Might treating the object of study at best as an exotic curiosity, and at worst as a fetishism, continue to position texting, and those who would text, negatively? As Law asserts, "any idea that our descriptions are innocent is a chemera" (Law, 2010). Whether we like it or not, we too are implicated in performing particular realities both more and less. And this matters because some people's realities are difficult enough without being made worse.

Taking on board ANT sensibilities that we both shape and are shaped in association, and that we might also shape, and be shaped differently, is to accept that realities are being made more and less, as we do them, and this matters for we might also do things differently. Realities are made in academic practices just as much as they are made in any other practice. In academia the stylistic expectations of a paper such as this provides guidance as to the language required, the font, the size of text, the layout on the page. There are expectations as to the formality of the language selected. The prescribing would position the language used by the participants who would text for counselling as relevant when present as data. The language of these people would not be the language of research dissemination. Even in research processes that might purport to 'give voice' a distortion of voice becomes evident as the academy proscribes conformity. In only attending to a sanitized voice, one that might be used as the example and not as the main event, there is

I might be used as an example, nor as a main event, there is collateral damage. Not being made to fit the academic audience; translated into the discourse of those situated in the mainstream; processes of colonization and oppression are perpetuated. The subtext becomes, “write and speak as we speak. While your language makes you an exotic subject of study, your language is not to be taken seriously”.

Given practices of academia are performative & might therefore be performed differently, might we attempt, at least on this occasion, to explore what happens when text language is positioned not so much as the object of study, but as the object of knowledge dissemination? Not destabilizing expectations, a “dis-ease” with the language is presented. I hope to have created an opportunity to reconsider a relationship with those who use them. Not taking guidance from Roland Barthes’ (1973/1975) *The Pleasure of the Text*, & the translated edition by Nik Davies (2011) *Roland Barthes’ Pleasure of the Text*, an argument is made for text to be engaged with playfully & actively, blissfully even. Not engaging actively with a language that is additional to the reader’s first; that takes > 4 times to comprehend; might a slower, & perhaps a more deliberate reading, provoke thoughtfulness? Not engaging with the text actively, might there be insights that being out of one’s comfort zone is also frustrating if not disabling?

Sounds of silence

In *Cartographies of Silence*, Adrienne Rich (1978) contends that silence should in no way be confused with absence:

The technology of silence
 The rituals, etiquette
 the blurring of terms
 silence not absence
 of words or music or even
 raw sounds
 Silence can be a plan
 rigorously executed
 the blueprint to a life
 It is a presence
 it has a history a form
 Do not confuse it
 with any kind of absence

Within this textual play of words, there is also admonishment not to confuse silence for absence. That young people might be heard, even when they opt to speak through a silent medium, is one aspect of this paper. Such voices have attention drawn to them. Silent such voices may be,

collateral damage. In being made to fit the academic audience; translated into the discourse of those situated in the mainstream; processes of colonization and oppression are perpetuated. The subtext becomes, “write and speak as we speak. While your language makes you an exotic subject of study, your language is not to be taken seriously”.

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NZ yung ppl, wen @ a distNc, choos 2 txt az thr preferd mode of comunic8ng (Broadcasting Standards Authority, 2008). Dat dey mite thN choos ths medium wen contactin a ph helpline shud not thN caus surprize. @ Youthline NZ, 385,000 txt msgs r bn respndd 2 per yr compar w 48,000 helpline calz (Youthline, 2013). CurNtly, ther's 0 evidnc bAs 4 a txt counselling srvc. Ths producs 10sn 4 reflective practitionrs az weL az 4 fundin bodies, & iz particulrly importnt givn Youthline's Charitable Trust status: no 1 wants 2 b involvd w a srvc perceivd az risky o potentially hrmlful. On d othrhand, d rsk of not providn a relatnshp 2 thOs hu mite rEch out iz also risky. Ths organiz8n decidd 2 "listn" 2 thOs txtN d srvc (c Table 1) & grew thR srvc n respnse.

In New Zealand, most young people, when at a distance, choose to text as their preferred mode of communications (Broadcasting Standards Authority, 2008). That they might then choose this medium when contacting a telephone helpline should not then surprize. At Youthline New Zealand, 385,000 text messages are being responded to annually compared with 48,000 helpline calls (Youthline, 2013). Currently, there is no evidence base for a text counselling service. This produces tensions for reflective practitioners as well as for funding bodies, and is particularly important given Youthline's Charitable Trust status: no one wants to be involved with a service perceived as risky or potentially harmful. On the otherhand, the risk of not providing a relationship to those who might reach out is also risky. This organization decided to "listen" to those texting the service (for examples see Table 1) and grew their service in response. (For a detailed account of these enactments of change refer to Haxell, 2012)

Table 1: Examples of text messages received by Youthline (NZ)

Im sori i dnt thnk i cn cal. i jst feel 2 stupid. I'm too shy to talk I dnt hav a fone so cnt call Im not alowd 2 talk on the fone after 9, Im at bording sch. They confisc8 fones if heard Do u txt? I cant tlk otherwise ill cry I tried calling but this guy sounded unusually happy. He scared me Im bit shamed askn 4 help, I don't wanna talk I w0d luv 2 cal u guys but im deaf im not realy in a talkative mood Ppl ar0und s0 cant call I dnt lik to tlk on phnes At the momNt I in sick bay. N would prefeR txtn I cnt ring u coz im stil on the bus I cant talk about it.its difficult.please try to understand I cnt talk i l0st my v0ice and i cnt talk can i jst please txt u it instead I cant do it. Shit ringing u guys is scary I cn only txt.I cnt gt 2 a fone withOut sum1 hearing. I wana tel u awfl thngs Its easier to sae things by txt im uncomfortable talking bout.can u please help? Can I jus txt pretty plz.I don't like talking. Ive tried but I hang upcause im shy Omg fuk sakez.s0 much 4 being a supp0rt line txt survis geez.0h wel guse ll kep cutn then.

Th@ yung pple wuld talk of non-trivial things, of things difcult, or awfl, & th@ they r distresd, shy, or scared, should be grounds enuf 4 meetin with yung pple n the spaces of their choosin. 2 deny the validity of ths choice, doz furthr harm 2 realitz already experiencd as svere.

That young people would talk of non-trivial things, of things difficult, or awful, and that they are distressed, shy, or scared, should be grounds enough for meeting with young people in the spaces of their choosing. To deny the validity of this choice, does further harm to realities already experienced as severe.

Youthline found th@ negoti8ng d sensvtvz of counsling in a mdium th@ alows only 160 charactrs/message is but 1 aspect of d netwrkd lerning reqird. Just as NE 1 sentens is unlikly 2 make 4 sucesful counsling n NE medium, d counslors learnd 2 keep a convo going, 2 ask

Youthline found that negotiating the sensitivities of counselling within a medium that allows only 160 charactiers per message is only one aspect of the networked learning required. Just as any one sentence is unlikely to make for successful counselling in any medium, the counsellors learned to sustain conversations,

4 > info as & wen needd, & 2 avoid d 'ez' response of givng advice rathr than encouragin furthr reflctn where a young person mite be assistd 2 find their own solutins 2 their own probs. Lernng from, & with, young people has democratised d roles involvd. Howevr networked lernng does not stop with d obvious actors of counselr & counslee & the technologies that would medi8 such contact. A continu8n of d work invlves netwrking with othrs: wit stakeholders who hav d capacity & influens 2 deny funding, & wit those whose voice does or does not lend credibility 2 practices th2 r novel. 2 this end this papr has made use of d performatv turn 2 c how we 2 mite b implic8d in voicing novel practiss both > & <

Conclusion

DissMN8ng resrch findins iz 1 mov 2 wrd establshin an evidenc bAs 4 practiss. DissMN8in d resrch n a way dat focuss on wot it iz like 2 b challngd az 2 th languag 1 wrks with, is anotha. N dis papr txt languag hz bEn turnd 2 th xploratn of things non-trivial. I hav rgud 4 academia 2 b a10tve 2 voice.

Coda

N not providn a spect8or's vu on som priv8 world, but takin a performatve stance I h0pe 2 have done diffrens differently; runN intrferenc on conventns dat marginaliz & oppres. N doin so, it iz hOpD dat a sociology of transl8n provoks undrstndng not only of thngs both techy & social, bt also politcal; of practiss realizt involvin thOs "othered" & prhaps 2 questn our own "othering".

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to ask for more information as and when needed, and to avoid the 'easy' responses of giving advice rather than encouraging further reflection whereby a young person might be assisted to find their own solutions to their own problems. Learning from, and with, young people has democratised the roles involved. However networked learning does not stop with the obvious actors of counsellor and counsellee and the technologies that would mediate such contact. A continuation of the work involves networking with others: with stakeholders who have the capacity to deny funding, and with those whose voice does or does not lend credibility to practices that are novel. To this end this paper has made use of the performative turn to see how we too might be implicated in voicing novel practices both more and less.

Conclusion

Disseminating research findings is one move toward establishing an evidence base for practice. Disseminating the research in a way that focuses on what it is like to be challenged as to the language one wishes to work in, is another. In this paper text language has been turned to the exploration of things non-trivial. I have argued for academia to be attentive to voice.

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