Semantic Multiplicity : How Lexical Ambiguity Elicit Imperfect Organizational Discourse Sustaining Category Ambiguity In Case of NPD

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ABSTRACT

The present article focuses on the practice of discursivization of new product / category identity in producers (and consumers) narratives, by making references to the way of saying, beginning with the textual surfaces, the expectations, as well as the implicit values characterizing the social context that remain eligible to be amplified during a such practice. The perspective of discourse is then the scope in which this research ought to be appropriately positioned. It is only through prioritizing the observation - which enables focusing on the impacts of meaning that each manifestation / materialization of speech has on our understanding - that the analysis hopes to get at the provisions of truth (Foucault, 2001). These provisions govern actually not only what is said, but, more significantly, the manners in which it is uttered.

In fact, by examining formations inducing certain effects of meaning, discourse analysis, as mobilized in this research, is intended to tackle the truth dispositions which direct the circulation of utterances within institutionally constructed spaces, at particular turning points, like when a new product (and/or breakthrough technology) is put on the market. Since such observations are particularly significant to the scope of the present paper, the research work will be centered on an effort to identify traces in the textual materiality of the narratives (constituting a corpus) which can lead the interpretation of the positioning of each of various enunciating instances. The presumption

that the positioning of an identity is only possible in view of an alterity becomes latent, not only in subject-to-subject interactions, but also in discursive processes.

For a given enunciating instance, constructing such a subjective position involves mobilizing certain regularities, which, when negotiated with the constitutive heterogeneity characterizing the discourse (whether by sticking to it or protecting itself against it), also makes it possible to achieve an effect of transparency (as if what is to say / have been said could not be materialized in any other way). Negotiation with alterity can involve, implicitly and/or explicitly, deploying strategies that advocate an illusionary referential while exploiting particular lexical choices (leading maybe to ambiguous new product and/or category identity). A such presumption adopted in this research resonates with Saussure's (1916) conception of General Linguistics. Thus, transparency and literality would be the output of stabilization effects, while being both considered as means by which the subject develops a positioning in its negotiation with the constitutive outside (presence of other subjects, time, place and event).

Consequently, this research is notably oriented by theoretical references that look at language in view of its own functioning consisting of inscribing the individual within a symbolic order and leading his positioning as a subject. In light of a such symbolic order, language would fundamentally bring the world into existence, rather than representing it. The paper addresses, in the introduction, the initial questions that motivated the study and gave rise to the research. In the context of these questions, several conceptions related to categorization emerge as one of the thematic motivations of this work, while alluding to the discursive reading of corresponding strategies. Still tangent to these formulations, questions regarding the order of language as constitutive of the human are structured. In a second moment, we thus introduce, in this perspective, a presentation of the theoretical choices mobilized in this research and inherent to: language sciences, theories of enunciation and discourse analysis with a French orientation.

Keywords: (Discursive) categorization, Sensemaking, Category ambiguity, Enunciation, Language, Lexical ambiguity, Discourse analysis, New product development (NPD).

INTRODUCTION

Ambiguities have traditionally intrigued NPD (New Product Development) scholars and executives (Brun et al., 2009). In such case, ambiguity arises from several «sources» where it may manifest in the novelty, multiplicity, or validity and reliability of interpretations (Burn et al., 2009). Ambiguity is also supposed to correspond to diverse parts of the practice of NPD, where «subjects» of ambiguity may concern product, market, process, or organizational resource ambiguity. On the other hand, the study of how new markets come into being have particularly remained a lively field of academic debate. These nascent markets are conventionally characterized by the lack of shared meanings (Rosa et al., 1999 ; Santos et al., 2009 ; Zietsma et al., 2010 ; Ozcan et al., 2009 ; Mair et al., 2012).

In order to enhance their comprehension (or make sense) of the market and increase their competitiveness, organizations express an obligation to rely on groups, or an obligation of categorization (Porac et al., 1989). In addition, audiences use market categories in an attempt to alleviate ambiguity regarding a product / producer (Durand et al., 2017). In this case, the determinant of categorization remains similarity associating the product to be categorized and the category prototype (Zuckerman, 1999 ; Vergne et al., 2014). The latter refers to the set of average characteristics possessed by most members of a category. In such similarity-based categorization, the degree of similarity to this comparison reference point determines category membership.

Authors such as Rosa et al. (2005), Rao et al. (2005), Weber et al. (2008), Khaire et al. (2010) and Navis et al. (2010) indicate that meanings and boundaries of market categories are consequently negotiated and defined collectively. An ambiguous category does not demonstrate yet a precisely-determined boundary, broadly approved social meaning, nor does it imply demanding expectations of what members should do or not (Pontikes, 2012). Members of ambiguous categories run the risk of decrease of their offerings' appeal to audience (Ruef et al., 2009 ; Kovács et al., 2010). If categorization can be generally considered to be a social process of communication according to Cornelissen et al. (2015) where categories are constructed through communicative exchanges (Grodal et al., 2017), little research has namely addressed the impact of lexical ambiguities

challenging the perfection of categorization narratives and inducing, therefore, category ambiguity to persist.

In this perspective, some of the foundational formulations of what are now known as the Language Sciences are recommended as a starting point, in view of Saussure (1916)'s General Linguistics. By granting language a systemic characterization, he asserts autonomy for the linguistic sign's synchronous approach, related to its internal (structural) rules of operation. The sign, which is the most fundamental building block of language, can be inferred from its own internal relations with the whole. This unit encapsulates an evaluative concept which functions along dual dimensions. Firstly, it can be traded for other components, and secondly, its power of exchange is governed by stable relationships that apply not only to it, but also, to other objects of identical sort. Therefore, if it were not for its connection to the larger picture, the sign's very existence would be in jeopardy.

Practically, lexical (or word-sense) ambiguity vehemently disturbs scholars in linguistics, especially in case of presence of an external interference (legislative, scientific, industrial…) in a domain's lexicon defining its terminology (e.g. accounting terminology). Linguistic phenomena such as homonymy and polysemy particularly cause lexical ambiguity (Ullmann, 1964). If polysemy occurs in case where «[...] two or more related meanings are associated with the same linguistic form» (Taylor, 2003, p. 103), homonymy characterizes different words with distinct meanings and origins presenting the same form of spelling or pronunciation (Lyons, 1968).

As individuals' degree of understanding is affected by the occurrence of similar phenomena, it seems legitimate to portray how lexical ambiguity emerges while analyzing its impact over category ambiguity in early moments of market formation. Thus, we ask : ***How do audiences handle lexical ambiguity in narratives inherent to the categorization of new products in nascent markets?***

To legitimize such a move, we build on insights detected in prior studies of categorization (Zuckerman, 1999 ; Santos et al., 2009 ; Pontikes, 2012 ; Vergne et al., 2014), sensemaking and discursive approach of categorization (Weick, 1995 ; Cornelissen et al., 2015 ; Grodal et al., 2017)

and lexical ambiguity (Ullmann, 1964 ; Taylor, 2003). A literature review reveals that although several voices adopting a strategic categorization angle have grounded categorization into an institutional context where meaning is co-created (Vergne et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2016), scholars have only started to get interested in studying linguistic aspects conditioning a such process (Mervis et al., 1981, Loewenstein et al., 2012). Nevertheless, a linguistic approach has not been mobilized yet in an attempt to analyze situations of category ambiguity in general, and those taking place in case of NPD and nascent markets in particular.

Consequently, we suggest to compound two distinct streams of literature – discursive categorization and linguistics – to (1) detect the occurrence of the phenomenon of lexical ambiguity (mainly because of polysemy and homonymy) in the constitution of organizational discourses in case of new product launching, (2) investigate the linguistic effects that this phenomenon can cause among audiences in terms of category ambiguity through sensemaking process and/or contest over meaning of official narratives, and (3) define the appropriate meaning(s) to attribute to lexical applications (words, expressions, etc.) in alignment with the context in which lexical items occur, in order to alleviate category ambiguity.

From a theoretical standpoint, a study addressing similar research objectives will contribute to the categorization literature by presenting an original in-depth understanding of the linkages associating discursive approach of categorization and linguistics, assuming that the core essence of categorization concerns the emergence (and fading away) of lexical ambiguity. From an organizational narrative perspective, related insights will open up categorization by creating a space for action for concerned actors to counteract the reality of ambiguity making categorization an imperfect organizational process.

By taking over product categorization, managers will be capable of influencing the inferences made about the new product and, ultimately, impacting consumer evaluations regarding it. In a such discursive perspective, we finally offer, in conclusion, a brief reflection aspiring to induce how/what complementary discursive practices to implement in this space aiming concretely at

organizational narratives disambiguation in the early moments of markets, in order to dilute the pernicious impacts of these lexical phenomena on categorization.

ASSUMPTIONS & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Categorization & category ambiguity in nascent markets

NPD has been acknowledged as riddled with ambiguity. While Brun et al. (2009) have classified «sources» and «subjects» of ambiguity, Weick (1995) discussed it as occasioning sensemaking. On the other hand, nascent markets can be defined, according to Santos et al. (2009, p. 644), as «business environments in an early stage of formation». Similarly, several authors have pointed to lack of clarity of various elements as a characteristic inherent to these markets: product definitions (Rosa et al., 1999), field boundaries (Santos et al., 2009 ; Zietsma et al., 2010), social structures (Ozcan et al., 2009) and recently institutional environments (Mair et al., 2012). Besides, ambiguity persisting in the early moments of market formation has been admitted by a number of scholars (e.g.: Beckert, 1996 ; Hajek et al., 2011 ; Sgourev, 2013).

Consisting a rather recent stream of research in management studies, categorization refers to the obligation of organizations (or consumers) to rely on groups to enhance their comprehension of the market and increase their competitiveness (Porac et al., 1989). The literature presenting categorization studies underlines the persistence of two dominant streams of categorization strategies: those relating to a psychological perspective, the others being designed from a sociological perspective (Vergne et al., 2014). A dual logic of emergence of new market categories arises from such a distinction.

In strategies of psychological aspect, categorization comes from internal users : the organization self-categorizes itself (self-categorization theory). In alternative words, organizations determine which categories to enter by comparing themselves to existing members and measuring degrees of similarity. A new category emerges from organizations engaging in self-categorization. Consumer

agreement and support for the self-categorization of organizations remain critical to the achievement of similar categorization. Otherwise, a stigma could appear.

From a sociological perspective, categorization is dictated by external audiences (consumers, media, competitors, etc.) to which organizations are constrained to conform, where these audiences reserve preferential treatment towards organizations that exemplify the category. The success of an organization in a category is function of its compliance with the standards characterizing the category (categorical imperative theory, Zuckerman, 1999). In such a prototypical view, categories are used by audiences as a means to alleviate ambiguity regarding a product / producer (Durand et al., 2017) [1]. Thus, actions adopted by organizations in reaction to opinions formed by external audiences have a role in the emergence of new categories.

Categorization process can also be a combination of both perspectives, i.e. a strategic categorization. This recent stream of research stipulates that, when applying categories, all actors (organizations / external audiences) get involved in an interaction where their respective comprehensions concerning the category system are shared with others, leading then to shaping it. Authors such as Rosa et al. (2005), Rao et al. (2005), Weber et al. (2008), Khaire et al. (2010) and Navis et al. (2010) indicate that meanings and boundaries of market categories are consequently negotiated and defined collectively where various perceptions, knowledge backgrounds or interests intersect (Durand et al., 2013 ; Granqvist et al., 2016).

Categorization process arises then as a social dynamism requiring the interpretations and actions of concerned actors. Organizations may signal their membership in a market category whereas audiences shape category driven by their goals and/or causal mental models. Alternatively, organizations may opt to create a new market category. Some recent researches, instead of studying the process of categorization into existing categories, have tackled the emergence of a new

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[1] Goal-based and causal-based theories were advanced by Durand et al. (2013) and Durand et al. (2017) as other varieties of externally driven categorization process. However, being divergent from an ambiguity-alleviation perspective, these theories will not be adopted in this paper.

category. According to Durand et al. (2016) category emergence[2] refers to «the formation of categories that emerge from elements extraneous to an existing market» while pointing that «categories emerge when the existing classification system and categorical structure of markets do not sufficiently account for material novelties sponsored by innovators».

Whether an organization claims a particular category membership or is labeled by audiences, market categories are conventionally assigned via labels (e.g. «biotechnology», «3D printing», etc.) (Hannan et al., 2007). Once a category structure is founded, it impacts member identity evaluation by audiences (Osherson et al., 1982). Authors such as Hsu et al. (2005), Hannan et al. (2007) consider expectations deriving from categorization as a repertoire of codes organizations are expected to adopt. In a strategic perspective, categorization operations are anchored in the incumbent institutional context, where practices, experiences, shared meanings, assumptions and identities, norms and regulations possess a prominent impact in evaluations and where actors' cognitive mechanisms are conditioned to be in action (Vergne et al., 2014 ; Wang et al., 2016).

Nonetheless, an ambiguous category does not manifest a well-defined boundary, broadly approved social meaning, nor does it induce considerable expectations of what members should do or not (Pontikes, 2012). According to the author, an ambiguous category may be yet recognized and adopted to a large extent. While an unambiguous category is excessively constraining, reveals clearer boundaries, and implies solid expectations about what a member will be, an ambiguous category is not particularly constraining, while allowing organizational members a margin of flexibility. Evaluations-wise, as part of an organization's identity is derived from its category affiliation, member organizations are not able to establish a clear and focused categorical identity in case of raising ambiguous category labels. The appeal of their offerings to audience is doomed, in this case, to regress (Ruef et al., 2009 ; Kovács et al., 2010).

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[2] The authors advanced also «category creation», a concept they define as a situation where a new category consists in «redesigning cognitive boundaries around a subset of elements within a preexisting category system», giving the example of functional food, a category created from within food industry.

Discursive approach of categorization strategies, narration & sensemaking

The narrative model constitutes a facet of implementing the discursive approach of strategic practice (Seidl et al., 2006). Viewing strategy as narration implies adopting a narrative frame of reference, applying a narrative perspective and studying the history of organizations (Giroux 2000). Having presented a definition that brings narration closer to strategy, this author specifies that: «[…] Narration suggests a meaning (an orientation and a direction). It promotes the emergence, transformation and maintenance of the identity of the actors involved in history. It can be a means of dissemination, of mobilization. It is also a linguistic process of interpretation, of reappropriation of the official narrative program by those who will have to make it effective [...]».

Having addressed unknown or unpredictable crisis and disaster phenomena, Weick (1995) identified various concepts while explaining the creation of meaning by individuals referring to these particular contexts. Without being conclusive in his definitions of ambiguity, equivocality, and uncertainty, his focus concentrated on the implications of the differences in meaning for sensemaking : «Ambiguity understood as confusion created by multiple meanings calls for social construction and invention. Ambiguity understood as ignorance created by insufficient information calls for more careful scanning and discovery» (Weick, 1995, p. 95). In other words, it is not what engenders sensemaking that is focal, but rather the genre of sensemaking such situations evoke.

In a strategic categorization perspective, observers resort to categories in an attempt to make sense of the organizational world (Pontikes, 2012). Having addressed phases in market development, Navis et al. (2010) revealed that a considerable part of dynamism afferent to meaning and/or boundary shared set-up happens at a time when market categories are emerging. While extant literature does not address situations where distinct audiences would have contradicting reactions (meanings) to the same categorical claims, theories of categorization (Zuckerman, 1999 ; Hannan et al., 2007) underline the significance of establishing an adequate correspondence assembling audience and a certain set of categories. Implementation of category codes may be explicitly reinforced anyway through the intervention of Critics keen to rate and classify organizational

members, or gatekeepers executing a constant actualization of consideration obligations (Pontikes, 2012).

According to Cornelissen et al. (2015), categorization can be generally considered to be a social process of communication through which institutional foundations and value systems distinguishing a specific market category are sustained, reshaped or even crumbled. Selected labels are assigned to organizations and/or products by resorting to particular supportive vocabulary terms in actions of communication (Loewenstein et al., 2012 ; Granqvist et al., 2013). In an attempt to signal their category membership, claimants may besides exploit linguistic frames that can express claimant's gradient of membership via qualifying terms. For Mervis et al. (1981), adjectives such as «true», or adverbs such as «technically» are able to establish a differentiation among members of a particular category.

While discourse and communication are extremely linked, strategic discourse is currently gaining exponential importance in management sciences, but as Chauzal (2002) indicates, the upcoming phase which consists in attempting to provide managers with means to enhance both the content and the form of their discourse has not yet been a research object. Vaara (2006) also points out that there are few empirical analyzes that apply a narrative perspective on strategy. Such emerging research dimension turns out to be of utmost significance given that strategic discourse remains a part of ideology (Jacquot et al., 1997), which is a fundamental logic of strategic thinking emphasizing mental, cognitive and language processes.

Sciences of language & theories of enunciation

Classically overwhelmed by an historicist standpoint, the paradigm of «General Linguistics» witnessed a profound upheaval in the late 1800s when it transformed into an independent discipline and granted the credentials of object of study to language (Saussure, 1916). Echoing with the concept of structure, language is effectively recognized like an object of particular knowledge and study that is addressed namely through its formation as kind of a system, that detains its

specific conditions which dictate the operation of language. This understanding is in keeping with the notion that structure is an organizing principle.

As per a such Saussurean approach, by identifying the linguistic sign as just a core elementary unit, the conception of language as a system equally envisages its characterization as a value: its potential of exchange (evocation of one element for another) would enable to denote a linguistic reality that is, contrarily, unfamiliar to it. According to Ducrot and Todorov (1979), such reality effectively isn't meaning, yet it is practically attained via the meaning. «The meaning, we will claim tautologically, does not emerge beyond its relationship with the signifier – neither before, nor after, nor elsewhere; the same sign generates the signifier and the signified, notions which cannot be envisioned in separation» says Saussure (Ducrot and Todorov, 1979, p. 102). That it is to say that the sign also conveys its constituting instances.

Despite the possible dissociation of language from its realization in speech/discourse, a similar epistemological standpoint relies on the presumption of a prominence regarding the object of study. Nevertheless, in spite the fact that this perspective is predicated on the definition of the objects of study with regard to one another (and of them relatively to the systemic whole), the phenomenon of language in all of its contextual variations related to the sequence of the event (i.e., launching a new product for instance) is (still) not taken into account. On the other hand, language and social dimension continue to be interrelated in a such discursive optic. In fact, words (or linguistic signs) remain indispensable to the process of enunciation characterizing intersubjective relationships, while embodying the particular function which Saussure (1916) attributes to language, i.e. communicating.

In an attempt to examine the role and value of language in the (discursive) formation of identities, the current research abides by Émile Benveniste's conception of enunciation. Benveniste (1980) initiates an ideology about the formation of subjectivity in language by operationalizing language via an individual act of use. Such standpoint was relatively supported by Anscombre and Ducrot (1976), considering enunciation as «the language activity performed by the one who speaks, at the moment and in the place where he speaks» (op. cit., p. 18). As the speaking subject is henceforth

inscribed in the language system, establishing a relation of actorality anchored in spatial-temporal dimensions is then possible by adopting Benveniste's (1980) conceptions of enunciation.

Given his concern with characterizing and interpreting the means through which the subject can incorporate the formal apparatus of the language to affirm his standpoint, Benveniste (1980) confers an advantaged function to the speaking subject in the dynamics of enunciation. In comparison, time/space referentialization processes can be ascertained when the process investigation considers the particular situation of utterance as a starting landmark. Besides, the Benvenistian approach paves the way for a paradigm by positioning the subject-other relationship in the origin of the enunciative process.

In his elucidation of what he refers to as «some contradictions in linguistics», within a critical interpretation of structuralist studies, Culioli (1973) deliberates that given the particular conditions of enunciation, it must be acknowledged as being an intersubjective arrangement. Given the substantial interaction of the speaker-addressee pair, in the light of a specific context and a common knowledge, it is then relevant to speak in a co-enunciation, in terms of construction of meaning in the texts. In this paradigm, the author insists that «language is a system» and yet «it is an open system» (op. cit., p. 87).

Enunciation's contents can be comprehended throughout the materiality generated by the utterance (the latter being implanted in the enunciation itself), while taking into view these critical elements of the enunciative process (actant, time, and location). Benveniste (1980) suggests that accessory procedures, most significantly lexical choices, can be mobilized as techniques to tackle speaker's (and addressee) inscription in the discursive materiality.

The speaker's lexical choices can also be seen to enable an evaluative meaning in what they are saying. Even more concretely, they are indicators of truths that have been ideologically produced as they designate one specific discursive formation, rather than another. In this regard, it is possible to assert that the power of what is said becomes explicitly manifest, first and foremost, in light of what is not. Being essential for the research into the impacts of meaning from the point of view of

discourse analysis, this ascertainment will be expanded further in the following subtitle, while highlighting ambiguity which may affect such lexical choices.

However, an optic of enunciation relying exclusively on the materialities of the process (by a thorough examination of the references used, notably lexical choices) may indicate a risk of deploying a perspective whose procedure, in a formalist measure, separates the analysis from the event's bias. Besides, a similar approach would overlook one of the core characteristics of discursive enunciation: that, relying on the self-other relationship (not just in terms of personality, but either in the conflict between identity and alterity within discourse processes), the apparent transparency of linguistic materiality, executed in the interest of a stabilizing impact, is actually of the order of opacity (according to Jacqueline Authier-Revuz, 1995, addressing meta-enunciation[3]).

Therefore, in order to tackle issues inherent to alterity of the materiality, the impact of transparency in regard to a constituent opacification, and the pivotal notion of heterogeneity (discourse that is basically formed in heterogeneity), it proves consistent to refer to the contributions of French-oriented Discourse Analysis as a theoretical angle highlighting approaches concerning the studies of language activities. These proposals would allow for the analysis of coherent processes of meanings construction in the language, not only from the standpoint of its functioning, but either from the angle of how the above-alluded issues/principles impact and form the subjects and utterances in new product / category identity communication.

Lexical ambiguity and its distinct types of linguistic manifestation

The lexicon of a language is mainly constituted of words which entirely form the vocabulary proprer to that particular language. Its elaboration is often characterized by the occurrence of several complex linguistic phenomena which can be even part of day-to-day use of the language. In fact, the use of the same word to refer to diverse matters arise to be more frequent in languages

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[3] For her, meta-enunciation is a process where, simultaneously to its occurring, the utterance analyzes itself, makes auto-corrections, and anticipates flaws in its interpretation, in order to reconfirm the accord with the instance of co-enunciation.

than imaginable. A similar situation stimulates some phenomena able to impact individuals' degree of understanding.

In fact, particular linguistic phenomena of homonymy and polysemy have been identified as causes for lexical ambiguity (Ullmann, 1964). Ambiguity can be in words, expressions, phrases or even entire sentences. We assume that ambiguity is identified in case of disposing of a series of linguistic applications with diverse meanings. Occurences of homonymy and polysemy, in particular, are then suggested to be selected as focus of study of category ambiguity in a semantic multiplicity perspective, refferring to the existence of more than one sense (meaning) and/or use combined with a same phonological entity.

Lexical ambiguity constitutes one among a trilogy of ambiguity identified by Ullmann (1964) in a linguistic perspective : phonetic, grammatical and lexical. While the first type is due to the phonetic structure of the sentence induced by homonym words, grammatical ambiguity can be a consequence to either the ambiguity of sentence structure or that of exploited grammatical forms (e.g. prefixes/suffixes). Lexical ambiguity remains yet a substantial source of ambiguity witnessed in a given language. Actually, this «polyvalence of words» (Ullmann, 1964), takes shape though a duality of forms : polysemy and homonymy.

As definition, Taylor (2003, p. 103) advances that cases of polysemy arise when «[...] two or more related meanings are associated with the same linguistic form», and suggests as tangible example the lexical item «head» in English language, bearing the dual meanings «upper body» / «leader», which, inspite being oubviously divergent meanings, are connected through a metonymic association. On the other hand, Lyons (1968) states that the phenomenon of homonymy embodies the existence of different words with distinct meanings and origins presenting the same form of spelling or pronunciation.

Considering polysemy as a fundamental feature of human speech which can appear in multiple ways (Ullmann, 1964), the author identified five explanatory sources of the occurrence of this phenomenon characterizing a given language : Application (or usage) changes (a given lexical

item acquiring an increased number of meanings), specialization in a social environment (a word acquiring diverse / specific meanings in function of their field of action), figurative language (a word accumulating at least one figurative meaning in addition to its original meaning), reinterpreted homonyms (tendency to consider two words which sound identical with no significative difference in meaning as a single word possessing two meanings) and foreign influence (changing for a word its already existing meaning in a given linguistic system by «borrowing» that of a foreign word).

Furthermore, polysemy can nurture ambiguity in three distinct occasions (Ullmann, 1964) : in contact associating languages, in scientific / technical exploitation, as well as in vulgar speech. In first situation, ambiguity is produced by the semantic borrowing from a foreign language leading to the polysemy of a certain word. In second case, the re-exploitation of initially strictly-identified terms activates new definitions of a same term leading it to develop multiple meanings. Besides, an ambiguous word in common usage, in case introduced in a scientific / technical environment, will also produce confusion and/or misunderstandings marking its usage. Also, in this latter situation, ambiguity occurs when a given word generates several meanings in a same contextual environment.

On the other hand, in spite of considering that homonymy is much less common and complex than polysemy, Ullmann (1964) advances that its effects can be as serious as or even more striking in comparison to those of the phenomenon of polysemy. Three processes can give occurrence to homonymy : phonetic convergence (at least two lexical items coinciding in spoken and written language), semantic divergence (separation of two or more meanings of a same word to an extent that there is no obvious connection associating them) and foreign influence (adaptation of foreign words introduced into a language, to its proper phonetic system, while coinciding with its existing lexical items).

While taking place in individual's daily life as well as in business era, the phenomenon of lexical ambiguity can be tackled through various aspects of language. In an attempt to analyze, within the scope of an interdisciplinary research, the occurrence of homonymy and polysemy involving

lexical ambiguity as characteristic of a natural language, traditional linguistic studies of some of the most renowned authors, namely Pottier et al. (1968), Baldinger (1970), Lyons (1963, 1977), Piattelli-Palmarini (1980), Chomsky (1988), Tuggy (1993), De Saussure (1995) and Huang et al. (2001) are to be adressed for an in-depth overview.

Discourse analysis

A reluctance to analyze the role of language and even the materialization of a subject (via the lens of uniqueness, of homogeneity) has led the theoretical underpinning of discourse analysis since the very beginning (Pêcheux, *in* Helsloot and Hak, 2000). Nonetheless, Michel Pêcheux's works, which reflect a concern to abstracting the discourse from the fabric of language, but either from the fabric of social relations, begin to highlight the discourse relationship to the context, as well as to the production situation (Helsloot and Hak, 2000).

By redefining the Foucault's (1969) concept of «discursive formation», Pêcheux advances the reflection that every social grouping is dominated by constructs which reinforce ideological stances. Therefore, discursive formations would justify ideological formations by constraining «what can and should be said [...], from a given position in a certain conjuncture» (Haroche, Henry and Pêcheux, 1971, p. 102), as previously stated. Consequently, the discursive formation would be the setting where the utterances would be recaptured and rearticulated in an ongoing quest for the closing of their limits in order to maintain an identity.

Within this framework, language emerges as the vehicle of ideology[4] that functions in the aim of providing proof, as if the communicational process that ensures the interaction among subjects was of the order of transparency (and not the result of social tensions). On the other hand, and as was mentioned earlier, general linguistics (Saussure, 1916), by mobilizing the concept of system, supplies the foundation from which it is feasible to conceive language as an order of its own. This responsiveness is one of the factors that discourse studies consider when analyzing the (linguistic) sign according to the characteristic of non-transparency. For Orlandi (2000), this latter notion

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[4] In a similar way, discourse analysis consists of tackling articulations associating language, discourse and ideology.

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receives more backing given the presumption that structural linguistics treats its object abstractly, i.e. beyond the space of realization.

Such flexibility in conceiving discursive formation (Pêcheux, *in* Helsloot and Hak, 2000) to embrace the inevitable existence of the other as a constituent element of the discursive identity itself gives the theory credence, in view of approaches that consider the inclusion of the discursive exteriority. Positions upholding the primary significance of inter-discourse derive from this principle. Considering the other as a key requirement for the formation and validity of discursive practice, a similar epistemological evolution renders the discipline of linguistic studies particularly rich, by enabling the opportunity to integrate Mikhail Bakhtin's conceptions regarding dialogism and polyphony[5]. Henceforth, the structuring of discourses would not be subjugated to a monovocalizer's filter. The creation of this formation would rather require the integration of intertwining voices as basis.

The conceptualization of discursive formation is inextricably associated with the questions that have just been presented. A conclusive exclusion of the notion of language transparency may imply that words would have altered their respective meanings in alignment to the positions of subjects using them (while these positions derive from ideological formations). As a result, the discursive formation emerges as a principle of stabilizations (thus «what can and should be said in a particular conjuncture»). The words themselves would be meaningless : according to Foucault (1971), meaning would derive from the discursive formations in which the subjects and discourses that constitute (them) are inscribed.

Being basically heterogeneous, the analyst can discern the regularities that grant the discourse a principle of identity by examining the discursive formations. Consequently, Archad (1995) considers that discursive formations would be instrumental in leveraging social space structuring

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[5] Polyphony is produced as a result of the several distinct vocalizations which cut across the discursive manifestation (as it is considered to be the materialization of conflictual forces in society, as per Bakhtine's viewpoint). Consequently, polyphony is connected to the level of the utterance. Dialogism, to the contrary, according to Brandao (2004) consists of a two-step process: the first step focuses on the relationship associating a discourse to its constitutive exterior, besides the relationship of that discourse to other discourses (which, in a broader sense, is synonymous with the concept of interdiscursivity). The second step relies on the anticipated relationship with the addressee's speech/discourse.

through discursive differentiations. Despite the attempts of homogenization, the limits are not fixed yet : the discursive formations are (re-)configured within the reciprocal relations occurring throughout the process of language functioning, as per the principle of interdiscursivity.

Furthermore, from a historical materialism perspective, language for discourse analysis can only be shaped in accordance with conformations generated by a symbolic, institutional process, and this requires it to be embedded in history. In fact, the existence of a prior, pre-established knowledge enables to conceptualize what Brandao (2010) calls a «discursive memory». Although this articulation is not structured at a tangible or conscious levels on occasion of expression, it forms a series of affiliations, of «already said» that are recalled.

Thus, the meanings are not evidently apparent but must be recalled in each formation. Determinations of discursive memory induce a historicization of language. In fact, each speech act practically implies an interpretive activity regarding the establishment of materialities while considering linguistic forms unique to each utterance besides (non-) linguistic contextual / co-textual associations. Despite this, the meaning emerges as an already existing evidence (and unity).

As previously stated, such meaning effects are heavily formed in the absence of a subject's consciousness, as being influenced, in a perspective of discourse analysis, by the real of language and history. In view of the formulations that have already been circulating and which are incorporated in the saying, the articulations of memory turn every discourse to be effectively an inter-discourse. As a result, only a part of the saying is accessible to the subjects: even what wasn't said takes on meaning in its words (Orlandi, 2000). The determinations of discursive memory intervene in a duality of complementary scopes : the institutionalized, relating to discourses having an archive role and constantly emphasizing the positions of social institutions, and the constitutive, which refers to inter-discourse.

When specifically viewed through the lens of the notion of the constitutive effect of memory, the extent to which transparency presents a challenge for discourse analysis becomes conceivable. This illusion becomes viable only in the order of the remittances of a word, a discourse, to certain

discursive formations. This is the process that enables the designation of a thing in a word, treating the two as though they were two separate orders that adhere to one another. To the contrary, ideology, in alignment with the principle of stabilizing discourses, leads words and things to «stick» to one another.

Such process is yet placed into perspective in view of a twofold forgetting-operation, as stated by Pêcheux (1975). On the one hand, this elimination heavily concerns the ideological schemes, in accordance with discourse analysis in its linkage to activities of the unconscious (Orlandi, 2000). This gives rise to illusions about the origin of the subject in connection to the discursive materials that s/he provides, as if these discursive elements were not dictated by the manner in which the subjects themselves, under effect of linguistic and historical features, express specific positions.

On the other hand, that literature points to a «localized forgetting» characterized by an enunciative aspect. Semi-conscious, it operates at the level of the illusion of referentiality rooted in discourses, as if what is being said could, in fact, only be stated in a specific manner. Nonetheless, languages, when viewed through the lens of meaning construction, are absolutely metaphorical (understood, here, the sense of the metaphor as a transfer). In other words, it is impossible to speak of literality, even in light of inter-discourse, but rather of a game of deviations, refractions, and considering one word for another. According to Orlandi (2000), the use of a particular syntactic form tells about what it means, through the way of expressing it.

In turn, discourse analysis devices seek to identify these relationships, while illuminating, in light of the impacts of referentiality and transparency, the strategic options that were mobilized. In this view, it is a question of recognizing within the text (considered an object of symbolic aspect) leading strands that have been interlocked by the discourse for the sake of a «will to truth», as advanced by Foucault (1971). Perceived as a constructed unit, a text's assembled whole reflects coherence and even some degree of consistency. By putting its structure under analysis, it expresses hidden evidence of the existence of non-coincidence, of dispersiveness (in the sense of non-permanence) and of constant submission to its exterior.

For the purpose of this research, the questions that address the advent of an alterity in the discourse, embodied by the diverse occurrences of heterogeneity, remain fundamental clues in an attempt to analyze how the «wills to truth», the demarcations of «suitable» and «unsuitable» relatively to the prevalent ideological stances characterizing local society, and the evaluative articulations (in terms of meaning effects), are practically operationalized to establish new product / category's discursive identity in producers and consumers narratives.

METHODOLOGY

At the initial phase of establishing the theoretical framework, was pondered the risk that the articulation of lines of thought could eventually lead, as epistemological constructs, to disparate (or even irreconcilable) approaches with each other. Consequently, we aimed at identifying, at the very moment where reference was made to these studies, the points of convergence / divergence, of intersection and surpassing, of the diverse theoretical positions that were highlighted above, while keeping in mind the overall scope of the present introduction to methodology. Besides, the objective was to demonstrate the corresponding postulations that ended up being pertinent to the study.

Given the nature of the questions which were advanced since the start of the paper, the recurrence of these theories enabled the elaboration of a fluid space, where basically dialogic problematizations[6] could be addressed in view of non-transparency, of the undeniable pluriform nature. In terms of a «corpus» approach, it remains yet of common knowledge, that the endeavor would not be feasible unless one constantly kept in mind the perspective of a cut-out, or even of a partial analysis. While realizing that exhaustivity is not reachable, what remained was the assumption of not going beyond the limits associated with the main research questions.

To launch our investigation into how the discourses in question construct new product / category identities on the basis of particular truthful positions, we will consider linguistic surfaces as a starting point. These surfaces are condensed in accordance with constructions that pursue the

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[6] As they regarded symbolic, and thus, human productions.

project of transparency and totality of the saying. After decomposing these structures, we reach the discursive objects, which are held up by the discursive formations which point to them. These objects are either reinforced in the imaginary places that are held by the subjects and by the discourses themselves. The subsequent phase will consist of tackling not only the object, but also the discursive process. In fact, will be highlighted the effects of language on ideology and the ways in which it is reflected in language in an endorsement of tense power rapports that drive relations in a social (market) setting. This will be executed in a continuous self-remittance among all these stages.

Therefore, the remittance associating (linguistic) structure and event (i.e., launching a new product in case of this research) presents a perspective to enunciative phenomena (which convey the constitution of subjectivity in language), whose parameter is effectively its realization as a discursive practice (Pêcheux, 2006). In other words, it is an occasion to address heterogeneity as a basic principle of the process, by remitting the discourse to the reverse-side. Consequently, it will be possible to comprehend the roles that the examined materialities (including «ambiguous» lexical choices) play in the configuration of meaning.

Drawing inspiration from an aphorism advanced by Maingueneau (1984), stating that «one does not engage in polemics except with oneself», while considering polemics to be «only one way among many to detach oneself, in an imaginary way, from the alterity that determines the discursive subject», this research is to be launched from a landmark of heterogeneity. If assuming a subjective position prior to begin communicating remains a condition that is absolutely necessary for conversation with others to take place, it is in the entwining of voices, knowledge, and memories that this «place» can be identified.

By selecting a material (corpus) of narratives concerning a (single / multiple) case(s) of new product(s) launching on market, the operationalization of the theoretical concepts that have been previously provided to the observation of objects, will allow an opportunity to identify similarities and differences among the involved parties (producers, consumers, etc.) and the different discourses that they convey for identity construction. In point of fact, it is going to be necessary to

give an overall interpretation in order to engage in thoughts regarding the provisions of truth that are generated through these discursive formations.

CONCLUSION

This paper presented a research proposal aiming at expanding current comprehension regarding the occurrence (and persistence) of ambiguity at market category level. By concisely reporting about key findings in literature concerning categorization, sensemaking and lexical ambiguity, the interest and originality of mobilizing a linguistic approach in an attempt to explain situations of category ambiguity were justified. In fact, if categorization remains anchored in an environing institutional context where meaning is collectively conceived and shared (Vergne et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2016), numerous aspects of linguistic order able to affect this process imply answerless questions. Such urgence of additional research is just amplified in case where category ambiguity is compounded to NPD and new market emergence.

In the light of discursive constructions arisen from a wide range of narrative manifestations, this article addresses a number of problematizations inherent to the theoretical-methodological approach mobilized at consecutive stages of research trajectory. In fact, the research aims to analyze how a new product's discourses are constructed as they appear in narratives released by instances including (but not limited to) producers and consumers. More specifically, the focus will be particularly placed on how these narratives are structured as linguistic constructions, while determining the extent to which the force of what wasn't expressed denounces an absolute signification. In other words, it is under the effect of linguistic phenomena / choices causing lexical ambiguity that discursive materialization of concepts and facts inherent to a new product may turn to become paradoxical, affecting then their categorization.

While admitting discourse heterogeneous specificity and realizing the impossibility of univocal meanings (and answers), analyzing such enunciative instances' strategies mobilized in establishing a new product's identity gains significance and takes shape. Therefore, while intending to deduce how these narratives carry certain meaning effects relying on a will to truth (as pointed to by

Michel Foucault, 2001), the mobilization of a theoretical perspective connected to the sciences of language, enunciation and French discourse analysis remains crucial to uncover the opposition which may dissociate that will to truth and such articulations of the new product's identity which organizes the market (in terms of categorization).

Relying on the reported methodological trajectory, the questions as well as some relationships that were raised, are to be addressed in light of the mobilized theoretical foundation while considering particular case(s) of NPD. Consequently, a major outcome of the research consists of generating a description established on enunciative formulations of the procedures that grant producers and consumers' discourses the aspect of emerging immediately from reality. In a second phase, we would attempt to concretely deduce how these discourses (and maybe others) produce certain meaning effects relatively to a will to truth, as identified by Foucault (2001). In this view, it's also worth addressing particular linguistic manifestations generating lexical ambiguity, yet exploited by the enunciating instances to embody a presence in the texts / narratives (despite eventual erasure strategies). The enunciative instances' strategies applied in constructing new product / category's identity are then to be analyzed in light of an heterogeneous characteristic of discourse.

Research limits

The study began with the introduction of formulations related to Saussure's (1916) General Linguistics. By granting language a systemic characterization, he asserts autonomy for the linguistic sign's synchronous approach, related to its internal rules of operation. Besides, have been made explicit studies by Oswald Ducrot (1976), who considers a polyphonic perspective to enunciation, and Jacqueline Authier-Revuz (1995), who, in assuming a comprehensive approach on heterogeneities, dialogues with the classical perspective of enunciative theories. Moreover, have been addressed some of discourse analysis' most significant achievements, in a continuous self-referentialization associating (linguistic) structure and event (Pêcheux, 2006).

In this continuity, several of the preliminary formulations inherent to the so-called language sciences are yet recommended as viable beginning points. Thus, it would be of significant value

to shed a light over the accomplishments made by structural anthropology (via the concept of symbolic order, which is derived from the studies of Mauss and Lévi-Strauss, 2013), as well as Lacan (1966) - Freudian (1930)'s psychoanalysis (by tackling respectively the concept of unconscious, besides that of a subject which is structured in accordance with a complicated topology).

Future research suggestions

In extension to Weick (1995)'s approach on meaning construction, Kennedy (2005, 2008) points to the role assumed by media, through news stories and media coverage, in defining a new market, i.e. in enabling market sensemaking. On one hand, Kennedy (2005) considers that organizations adopt media's vision in order to identify their incumbent competitive environment and anticipate actions of their rivals. On the other hand, Rosa et al. (1999) confirm that audiences rely on media coverage to screen available information in order to evaluate product similarity and realize the meaning of an emerging market category. In other words, as specified by Kennedy (2008), media's adoption of new category label in a nascent market will lead audience to earn a common interpretation of its meaning. Future research has consequently all interest in shedding the light over the effect of lexical ambiguity in media communication on the persistence of category ambiguity.

In other words, in addition to interpreting how producers / consumers narratives about such identities would be articulated from the angle of their fit within a comprehensive linguistic / symbolic framework, it is still crucial to examine these narratives into an additional complementary order related to a particular social institution, represented unexclusively by the media, for instance. It could thus be possible to estimate the extent of (in)-consistency / (dis)-continuity arising amongst discourses which may not necessarily be homogenous (or even harmonic) when it is an occasion of identifying a same new product and/or category. At this stage, skepticism regarding the possibility of attaining an absolute truth (as according to Foucault, 2001), or even a univocal meaning, may cause a significant shift to be imposed in the genesis of our

questionings. At a similar juncture, this advanced emphasis would direct our attention to the question of «How do you wish to tell?» instead of «What does that mean?».

Furthermore, after analyzing each of the subjects' narratives constituting a corpus, the research is expected to be elucidating how (and in which direction) the ideological configurations are operationalized to grant an aspect of truth to discourse. Nonetheless, the analyzed materials may include distinct narratives, not only in terms of enunciation sources but either in enunciation time. In light of the theoretical instrumental of enunciation and discourse analysis, it would be pertinent to evaluate, whether the inherent specificities to each of the narratives and/or the chronological displacement may induce a sort of reconfiguration to the referred new product / category's identity. In fact, significant changes concerning the lexical choices in which observed instances themselves anchor their beliefs and judgments about such identity, may be detected. On the other hand, considering that communication vehicles represent instituted spaces for symbolic exchanges, it would be appropriate to shed the light over the evolution of their interaction towards such «truth wills».

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