

At (y)our service? A call for interdisciplinary research between applied linguistics and service researchers

Service research has focused extensively on the dyadic interaction between customers and service providers. Apart from probing into the needs of customers, i.e. the core business of the overarching marketing research paradigm, the explicitation of such needs through communicative procedures has not received ample attention within this research paradigm. In this keynote address, I will try to illustrate ways in which the merger of marketing research and applied linguistic studies can prove to be a fertile matrimony in the interdisciplinary study of service encounters. First, I will provide a short overview of the literature to date, which will mainly focus on 1) preferences in terms of actual language choice and reasons why customers are (not) willing to communicate in a second language (e.g. Holmqvist and Grönroos, 2012), 2) understanding how language influences customer outcomes (e.g. Van Vaerenbergh and Holmqvist, 2014), and 3) text mining procedures in customer feedback analysis (e.g. Villaroel-Ordenes et al., 2014).

Needless to say, the area is in need for more research. Given the paucity of research on this topic, I will try to illustrate how service researchers might benefit from collaborating with applied linguistics researchers, and vice versa, through several examples complementing current approaches.

References

- Holmqvist, J., & Grönroos, C. (2012). How does language matter for services? Challenges and propositions for service research. *Journal of Service Research, 15*, 430-442.
- Van Vaerenbergh, Y. & Holmqvist, J. (2014). Examining the relationship between language divergence and word-of-mouth intentions. *Journal of Business Research, 67*, 1601-1608.
- Villaroel-Ordenes, F., Theodoulidis, B., Burton, J., Gruber, T., & Zaki, M. (2014). Analyzing Customer Experience Feedback Using Text Mining: A Linguistics-Based Approach. *Journal of Service Research, 17*, 278-295.