Introduction

Background: Wikipedia is not only a controversially discussed reference system that is used by many as a first source, but it is also one of the most successful projects in Web 2.0 environments.

Currently, Wikipedia contains 38,000,000 entries (Wikipedia 2016a) and it scores highly in the category “the top 500 sites on the web” (Alexa ranking #6 Alexea 2016).

Wikipedia is a complex data source that can be seen and studied in many ways: as a case of collaborative authorship (Emig/Herring 2005), as a news source (Bucher/Büffel 2008), as a hyper-textual space (Storzer 2008, 2013a), as a cultural reference (Rogers 2013) and as an (online-)encyclopedia (Hall 2016).

Scope of this project: Wikipedia should be analyzed as a vast multilingual corpus that sheds light on digital discourses. Not only article pages but also talk pages and revision histories should be considered in this approach.

Hypothesis: As Wikipedia is characterized by convergence of media and data, analyzing digital discourses on Wikipedia needs convergence of methods.

Analyzing Wikipedia needs convergence of methods: Whereas article pages can be discussed linguistically analyzed, the Wikipedia data requires enrichment by digital conversation analysis to consider talk pages.

Discourse analysis in the tradition of Foucault

Linguistic discourse studies in the tradition of Foucault put a strong focus on sketching the relationship of language use by reconstructing discourse-specific linguistic patterns that are relevant for a certain era, for epoch-making events or topics concerning society as a whole such as immigration. So far, discourse analysis in this tradition show limited interest to online discourses in digital media and a “newspaper bias” (Warnke 2013: 191) dominates the field.

A methodological framework that guides the discourse analytic investigation of digital data on Wikipedia is still a research gap. But, it seems fruitful to return to the outlined DIMEAN framework that was built up to analyze non-digital texts:

Method

Microanalysis of Online Data: Digital Conversation Analysis

The network “MOOD” (Microanalysis of Online Data) paved the way for a digital conversation analysis and elaborates on “five discourses like data”, it seems promising to analyze them along the lines of the MOOD framework arguing for the necessity of a digital conversation analysis.

Results: Issues & Phenomena

1. Narrative
2. Controlling
3. Social
4.一刻
5. Structure
6. Linguistic
7. Propositional
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Peculiarities of Wikipedia data: Edit warring as unauthorized practice in Wikipedia discourses

“An edit war occurs when editors who disagree about the content of a page repeatedly override each other’s contributions” (Wikipedia 2016b). Edit warring point at controversies (agonality) in digital discourses. The revision history reveals rival keywords in the discourse that take place on Wikipedia represents a new kind of online discourse” (Herring 2013: 15).