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Лингвист остаётся лингвистом: немецкоязычные тиктоки как платформа для презентации нового лингвистического знания

Аннотация. В статье анализируются примеры научно-популярной лингвистической коммуникации в формате коротких видео. Отмечается, что общение посредством коротких видео в новых медиа по-прежнему получает недостаточное освещение в лингвистических исследованиях. В качестве материала контекстно-семантического и коммуникативно-дискурсивного анализа в статье выступают 100 видео. Научно-популярные видеоролики, объясняющие явления, характерные для современного немецкого языка, размещены на платформе TikTok немецкоязычным пользователем @fussballinguist. Вопреки ожиданиям преимущественно развлекательного содержания, установлено, что создатель популярного лингвистического контента позиционирует себя в контексте в первую очередь как исследователь языковых явлений. Об этом свидетельствует активное использование автором лингвистической терминологии и синтаксических конструкций, свойственных языку науки, а также эксплицитное обозначение автором видео своего статуса и соблюдение дискурсивно-значимых практик научного цитирования.

Ключевые слова: научно-популярная коммуникация, новое лингвистическое знание, новые медиа, мультимодальная коммуникация, TikTok, немецкоязычное короткое видео.

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Linguist will be linguist: German TikTok videos as a venue for presenting new linguistic knowledge

Abstract. The article examines cases of popular science linguistic communication in the form of short videos. It is noted that communication through short videos in new media still receives insufficient coverage in linguistic research. 100 videos are used as the material of contextual-semantic and communicative-discursive analysis in the article. The videos explaining developments in modern German are posted on TikTok by the German user @fussballinguist. Despite the expectations of a mainly entertaining content, it was revealed that the creator of the popular linguistic content positions himself primarily as a researcher of linguistic phenomena. The author uses linguistic terminology and syntax structures peculiar to the academic communication. The creator also appeals to his status explicitly and routinises proper citation practices.

It is beyond dispute that the Internet has become a defining feature of the development of communication in the 21st century. Contemporary communication is characterised by a high degree of computerisation, which enables rapid and multimodal communication. It enables the involvement of contemporary media technologies, incorporates user-generated content, integrates representational, productive and communicational functions across diverse platforms and devices, and presents information in multiple formats simultaneously [18, p. 22]. The researchers posit that individuals establish distinct online identities for themselves and for others while communicating on the Internet. This assertion appears to be well-founded, as digital communication platforms facilitate the reconstruction of social relations and the reimagining of self-perception [17, p. 5].

Furthermore, the topic of scientific communication on the Internet is a subject of considerable debate and discussion. Some researchers posit that the current moment is optimal for transitioning away from the conventional model of peer-reviewed publications, given the considerable time investment required [16, p. 2–3]. However, this article does not address the topic of scientific communication in general. Instead, it focuses on the specific phenomenon of popular scientific communication, which can be defined as the transfer of scientific knowledge from experts to the general public [23, s. 292]. This transfer of knowledge occurs through the use of social media platforms, such as TikTok.

The rationale behind my research decision is straightforward. TikTok, a prominent video-sharing platform, was first established in 2018, with its origins tracing back to 2014 as musical.ly. Initially, the videos on the platform were created with the primary objective of providing entertainment for users. The platform users created short videos in which they parodied popular songs. This has influenced not only the users' expectations of the platform but also the description of the platform in research. Some researchers have claimed that TikTok videos are characterised by their secondary nature or parody [2], online slang and English loanwords [14].

The history of TikTok research commences around 2020 and does not encompass the examination of the characteristics of popular science communication in video format. Furthermore, the pure linguistic view on TikTok is also underrepresented. The research landscape in this field is dominated by student conference papers, as evidenced by the following works [10; 11]. A select few of these papers appear to be highly prescriptive in nature, as observed here [13]. Such an approach is not entirely impartial when it comes to analysing the nature of short videos on TikTok, given the potential risks they pose to users, particularly adolescents.

In comparison to narrow linguistic considerations of TikTok communication, interdisciplinary works situated at the intersection of communication sciences, psychology, management, and marketing are more prevalent [1; 8; 9]. Furthermore, the platform is frequently examined in the context of museum pedagogy and didactics [3; 6; 20].

In the absence of substantial linguistic research on TikTok, it is nevertheless possible to assert that this video platform is worthy of further linguistic investigation. Firstly, it can be argued that the short video can be considered an autonomous genre of communication within the context of new media, due to the distinctive extralinguistic characteristics exhibited by this form of communication. These include the restriction of length, the use of multimodality, intertextuality and interdiscursivity, as well as a pronounced focus on the recipient. It is beyond doubt that short videos play an important role in the development of commu-

nication. I am in agreement with T. Wei and X. Wang that short video clips may assist in answering the pertinent question of what the future holds for the human mind, thoughts and communication [21, p. 273]. Secondly, extant research has demonstrated that videos on internet platforms such as TikTok can be conceptualised as sites of a complex interplay of various identities [22, p. 52]. It can be argued that the visual may convey information that is not expressed in the verbal, or vice versa [19, p. 451].

The interplay of identities in the context of popular science communication on TikTok is a topic that merits separate consideration. This research paper investigates the communicative features that align popular linguistic content with scientific communication within the field of linguistics. It is hypothesised that the author's identity as a linguist will be expressed at multiple linguistic levels. Furthermore, the fact that the author is a linguist will be discernible, despite the videos featuring typical blogger techniques.

In order to investigate the dissemination of newly acquired linguistic knowledge in the context of short video content, a random sample of 100 video clips from the TikTok channel @fussballinguist was transcribed. The channel's creator is Simon Meier-Vieracker, a professor and the holder of the chair of applied linguistics at the Technical University Dresden. The channel comprises four sections: Prof POV (74 videos), Unitipps (15 videos), Uni und Karriere (21 videos) and LinguisTikTok (166 videos). The video set created for the purposes of this research is based on the LinguisTikTok section, which contains the greatest number of videos. The typical video in this section addresses a salient linguistic issue that presents a significant challenge for the German-speaking society nowadays.

The average video created by Meier-Vieracker has a duration of approximately one minute. Some videos are two to three minutes long, as they contain longer explanations supported by examples drawn from electronic corpora. Only 17 clips in the set last for 30 seconds or less. They also differ from the other videos in terms of structure, content and effects used. Their primary function is to entertain, and thus they are mainly based (with only a few exceptions) on lip-sync, mime sketches and ironic references to other users' content.

The videos of the set serve as the basis for a qualitative contextual analysis, a communicative and discursive analysis, and an analysis of multimodal communication.

Before proceeding with the analysis, it is necessary to summarise the main characteristics of science communication. Undoubtedly, popular science communication is aimed at an audience that is not integrated in the process of acquiring new scientific knowledge with strict scientific instruments. Thus, popular science communication retains features of science communication per se: sufficiently high level of abstraction (achieved through the use of terms), consistent logic, accuracy and precision, address [5, c. 242–247]; intertextuality, high degree of innovation and reliability [4, c. 34–37]. In what follows, I will show that some of these features of science communication are evident in the TikTok videos under consideration.

First, the structure of the video content itself tells us that we are dealing with a linguistic argument. An average video in the LinguisTikTok section of the analysed channel consists of an introduction, a body and a conclusion. While the first and last parts epitomise the communicative practices of blogging, such as 'stitching' (a function that allows one to 'videocite' another tiktoker) or asking the platform's users to subscribe to a channel or answer a question in the comments section, the main body of the explanatory video is structured as usual linguistic work. In this part of the video, the theoretical concepts relevant to each case are presented, then the terms are explained practically, through the analysis of real speech acts, the use of corpora, dictionaries (e. g. DWDS), maps of regional varieties (e. g. Atlas zur deutschen Alltagssprache) and other resources that a professional linguist cannot do without nowadays (e. g. Google Books Ngram Viewer).

Professor Meier-Vieracker's research interests include conversation analysis and applied linguistics itself. These interests determine the range of topics discussed in the short videos on TikTok. The most common topics of the clips are the syntax of spoken German, regional language varieties, Austrian German and Swiss German, amateur language criticism, folk linguistics and language ideologies, the use of English loanwords, etc. The choice of topics determines the choice of lexical items to explain these topics. Despite the fact that the author is addressing a wide audience, he cannot dispense with terms in his descriptions, otherwise there will be a loss of precision.

For example, Meier-Vieracker uses the term *Referenzialität* (referentiality) and immediately explains it in the context of use, „*Relevant ist hier die sogenannte **Referenzialität**, also die Frage, wie konkret sich eine sprachliche Form auf identifizierbare Personen bezieht.*" The same strategy is used with the terms *Äquativ* (a kind of comparison in German), "*Es gibt aber noch eine andere Form des Vergleichs, die man **Äquativ** nennt, die man tatsächlich mit ‚wie' ausdrückt.*" and *Verbzweitstellung* (i. e. the main verb in a statement is always in the second position), „*Denn es ist ja so, im Deutschen verlangen die Aussagesätze eigentlich die **Verbzweitstellung**. Das heißt, das finite Verb steht an 2. Position und alles davor, das sogenannte Vorfeld, darf nur mit einer Phrase belegt sein.*" However, not all terms are explained in this manner. To illustrate, the term *Wortverlaufskurve* (word frequency rates on a diagram) is integrated into the explanation through the use of a visual device, as follows, "*Das können wir auch an dieser **Wortverlaufskurve** sehen, da sehen wir schon fürs 17. Jahrhundert und dann vor allem fürs 18. Jahrhundert sehr sehr viele Belege.*" Some terms are used without an explanation at all, for example *das alveolare Nasal* as a reference to a special consonant sound in this context, „*Nur weil du hier irgendwo vom Hochrhein kommst, wo der Einschub **des alveolaren Nasals** vor dem T unüblich ist, musst du nicht gleich so aus-*

rasten, wenn dir Menschen aus anderen Regionen begegnen." The most intriguing case is the elucidation of the term *Fugenelement* (linking element) which is illustrated through the description of tile laying during renovation, "*Das liegt daran, dass es sich bei dem ‚en' um **Fugenelement** handelt, das auch formgleich, aber funktionsverschieden zur Pluralform ist. Kurz erklärt: so wenn wir Fliesen aneinanderschieben und dann die Fuge zukippen, so fügen wir im Deutschen nicht immer, aber oft bei der Kombination von Wörtern ein Fugenelement dazwischen.*"

In addition to the use of terminology, the dissemination of new linguistic knowledge in Meier-Vieracker's tiktoks incorporates a few Latin phrases (e. g. *ad absurdum*) and lexical items that serve as fundamental components for enumerations and lists, see, "***Erstens** ist Zeit was Subjektives und **zweitens** ist ewig hier einfach nicht wörtlich zu nehmen.*" This observation prompts me to closely examine the syntax in popular linguistic short videos from the selected channel.

With regard to the grammar in these videos, it can be stated that the syntax of spoken German is combined with syntactic structures and morphologic units that are typical for scientific presentations. It is evident that the spoken German of the creator exhibits a range of features, including ellipses, anacoluths, self-correcting sequences, interjections, particles, and other dialogic elements [15, S. 898–899]. However, even in LinguisTikTok videos, complex linguistic structures are not uncommon. It is relatively simple to identify segments with:

1) subjunctive clauses, e. g., „*Mal abgesehen davon, **dass** eine solche Extremform des Genderns eigentlich niemand wirklich fordert, ist auch nicht klar, **ob** sie linguistisch betrachtet überhaupt Bestand hätte.*"; „*Die Bevorzugung von ergibt Sinn gegenüber macht Sinn nicht nur für sich selbst zu setzen, sondern auch von anderen zu erfordern, und zwar mit der Begründung, **dass** es sich dabei um die ursprünglichere, richtigere und wahrscheinlich auch deutschere Formulierung handelt*";

2) attributive groups, „*Es ist also eine digitalschriftliche Lösung **für ein sich nur im Digitalschriftlichen stellendes** Problem*“; „*Und kurzum **die im Ausgangsvideo beschriebenen** Regeln, dass vor allem die erste betonte Silbe oder die zweite betonte Silbe herausgegriffen wird, die gilt weitestgehend auch im Deutschen*“;

3) passive voice or *man*-periphrase, e. g., „*Dass dieses sogenannte Fugen-s seine Genitivfunktion eingebüßt hat, sieht **man** daran, dass es inzwischen auch bei Wörtchen vorkommt, deren Genitiv gar nicht mit ‚s‘ gebildet wird, wie z. B. Arbeitsamt oder Liebesbeweis*“.

However, it is not only the aforementioned structures that bring these short videos closer to scientific texts, which are known for their complexity and precision. Of equal importance are segments where the creator of the videos fulfils acts of self-positioning, explicitly presents his status as a linguist, professor, and expert in linguistic issues. The following examples illustrate typical self-positioning acts uttered in popular linguistic videos created by Meier-Vieracker: „*Ich bin Simon, **ich bin Sprachwissenschaftler** und ich erkläre euch in diesem Video, warum deutsche Übersetzungen typischerweise länger sind als das englische Original*“ or also „***Ich bin Professor für Linguistik** und nehme für mich in Anspruch, **mich mit der Syntax** der gesprochenen Sprache ziemlich **gut auszukennen.**“* Furthermore, the process of self-positioning can be conducted from the perspective of the other party, for example, "*Ich ... werde jetzt **von Dragon** darüber aufgeklärt, dass Creator ein englisches Wort ist und deshalb nicht gegendert werden sollte. **Ein Sprachwissenschaftler wie ich sollte** sowas lehren und auch durchsetzen.*“ This strategy provides a suitable foundation for further discussion with the other user whose perspective is referenced. Furthermore, there are acts that articulate a common linguistic perspective on these or those issues. Such acts necessarily include the pronoun "*wir*" (we), which may be understood to represent the community of linguists, for example, „*Daraus kann man den Schluss ziehen, dass bei Personenbe-*

*zeichnungen, wo es eine weibliche Form gibt, **wir** sprechen dann **in der Linguistik** von movierbar*“ or „*Denn schauen wir uns mal diese Karte aus dem Atlas der Aussprache des deutschen Gebrauchsstandards an, dann sehen wir, dass Quark in den allermeisten Gegenden von Deutschland eben als Kwark ausgesprochen wird, **wir** nennen das labio-dental, weil wir da Zähne und Lippen für das w-Laut verwenden.*“ In several videos from the LinguisTikTok section, professor Meier-Vieracker discusses the present circumstances and routines of his daily professional activities, including seminars and conferences: "*Heute mal ein kleines Update zu meiner eigenen Forschung. Ich bin nämlich grade in Zürich auf einer Tagung zum Thema ‚Tod und Trauer: analog und digital‘.*"

Finally, the kinship between analysed short videos and scientific texts is supported by salient communicative practices employed by members of the scientific community. Given that scientific communication constitutes a system of multilayered knowledge [7, c. 72–74], the importance of proper citation cannot be overstated. Interestingly, citation practices have migrated into popular scientific videos. Meier-Vieracker provides a comprehensive account of the authors he „cites“, „*Es ist also ein Fremdwort, und wie **der Linguist Peter Eisenberg** in seinem Standardwerk über Fremdwörter festhält, sind Fremdwörter Wörter der deutschen Sprache*“, „*Schon **in Ammons Variantenwörterbuch** können wir nachlesen, dass in Österreich und in Deutschland Süd-Ost der Paprika heißen, ansonsten in Deutschland die Paprika.*“ It is also notable that the short videos under discussion are cross- or multimodal (further insight into the concept of crossmodal lectures may be gained from the paper by N. S. Suponitskaya [12, c. 298–299]). This means that the practice of citing sources is not solely verbal; it is also visual in nature, with screenshots of webpages and digital books linked to the creator's words.

In conclusion, the analysis demonstrates that short videos can not only disseminate and convey new linguistic knowledge, but

also serve as a platform for individual and social group positioning as linguists. Lexical units employed in popular linguistic tiktoks are frequently of a terminological nature. It has been demonstrated that the syntax does not exhibit simplifications and includes subjunctive clauses, attributive groups, predicates in the passive voice and constructions with the indefinite pronoun "man" which are commonly used in science communication. The combination of different modes of information presentation gives rise to new communicative and discursive practices and genre frames, which facilitate the dissemination of new linguistic findings to a broad audience.

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