Trendslation – an experiential method for semantic translation in service design

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Abstract

This paper explores the theme of the service designer as a cultural intermediary and presents a service design method, termed *Trendslation,* that assists in the translation of cultural phenomena into new service offerings and details. Taking a research through design approach, the method uses a *triple-staged semantic transformation* to support service designers in the design of more culturally sensitive services. The method is described and exemplified using the author's explorative design work with major Norwegian service providers within the food and fashion sectors. The method's utility is discussed, and shows that the method has relevance and can be a useful approach for service designers in utilizing cultural material as part of the design process. Further, the paper introduces the idea that cultural trends can be a source material for designing meaningful services. This supports the emerging view that service design can take a stronger cultural role in the future, that of a cultural intermediary.

KEYWORDS: service innovation, cultural intermediary, semantic transformation, Trendslation method

Introduction

As the field of Service Design matures, a perspective of Service Design as a cultural intermediary is currently being explored from within the areas of service innovation and meaningful service experiences (Matthews, 2017; Dennington, 2017). Simon Clatworthy (2011) argues that "Service Design represents the application of design as a creative and culturally informed approach to services" and a research direction has been established exploring how service design could be developed in a more culturally sensitive direction (Dennington, 2017). In turn, this could contribute to the rise of more meaningful, cultural and trend sensitive services coming from service design.

To date there is some discussion in research that casts Service Design as more culturally determined, within such fields as social innovation (Mortati & Villari, 2014), social entrepreneurship (Balis, 2014), and strategic design and innovation (Meroni, 2006; Manzini, 2008). Yet, little originates from a Service Design point of view. From a cultural perspective, however, the discourse regarding the cyclical interplay between design and culture is well

developed and discussed (du Gay, 1997; Julier, 2000), as is literature regarding both design and brands as cultural influencers (Cooper & Press, 2003; Holt, 2004). As services become increasingly intertwined with our everyday lives, there is a need to more fully consider cultural approaches in Service Design. As consumer attitudes undergo a shift from owning products towards using services (Millburn & Nicodemus, 2014), the design of meaningful and desirable services could lead to competitive advantage, specifically in culturally determined areas such as fashion, in its relation to consumption, experience and brand value.

With its focus on experience through time and touch-points (Clatworthy, 2013), Service Design offers valuable tools and methods for businesses to design for enhanced customer experience. However, a cultural approach to service design transforms Service Design towards being a culturally sensitive field. This would position the Service Designer as a cultural intermediary, in which cultural meaning is transferred through the design of new services, and where the services themselves may influence culture. This calls for a new approach in Service Design to orient the field within culture, and to explore new methods to assist in the development of new culturally relevant service offerings.

The work presented in this paper is part of a larger project in which the view of Service Design as a cultural intermediary is being explored, and builds on core areas identified as central (Dennington, 2017). To outline a basis for the description of the suggested method, three main areas are described:

- Triple semantic transformation for service innovation
- Meaning-driven concept innovation
- Cultural phenomena, aesthetics and service style

Service design as a cultural intermediary

Triple semantic transformation for service innovation

The semantic transformation is described by Karjalainen (2004) as the process of the designer's translation of brand values into the aesthetic characteristics of products. Through this a product not only operates at a functional level, but also acquires intrinsic meaning. Throughout the design of innovative service concepts, a similar transformation process occurs (Dennington, 2017), thus a triple-staged process of meaning creation operates. The initial stage is the translation of an identified cultural phenomenon into meaning, secondly this meaning is translated into the service concept, and finally there is a translation of the meaning-driven concept into details of the service, such as touch-points and experiential evidencing (Figure 01). This could be termed a *triple semantic transformation for service innovation* (Karjalainen, 2004; Clatworthy, 2013; Dennington, 2017). This view creates a foundation for the *Trendslation* method further discussed in this paper. The triple-staged semantic translation is used as a framework for meaning-driven service innovation, one that is in line with current socio-cultural movements and a brand's core values.

Experiential touch-points

Trend into meaning >> Meaning into service concept >> Service concept

Experiential evidencing

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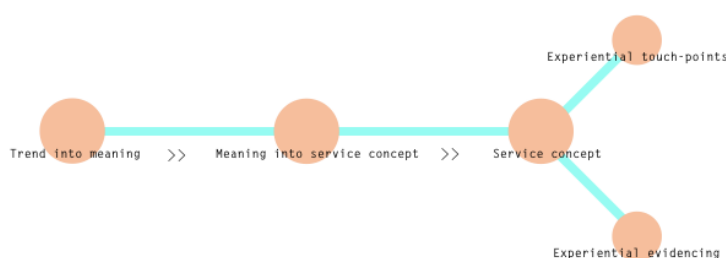Linköping University Electronic Press

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Figure 01 – Early illustration of the triple semantic transformation. Dennington, 2017.

Meaning-driven concept innovation

Designed artifacts convey meaning through the designer's interpretation and translation of cultural influences into objects through design (Cooper & Press, 2003). Julier (2000) discusses how meaning is constructed and represented in an on-going interaction between design and culture, and writes how the iconic example of Alessi's three-legged Juicy Salif citrus squeezer has meaning embedded through its form and aesthetics, and how the experience of using the product surpasses its functionality. In this, the product moves from one of function, into one of contemplation, admiration and desire (Julier, 2000). Thus, meaning can be a driver for innovation through design (Verganti, 2009), and the term "meaning innovation" has been introduced as a design-driven view on innovation that potentially could lead to meaningful experiences through the addition of cultural, symbolic and emotional value (Verganti & Öberg, 2013). The same, it could be argued, happens when designing services, but at present Service Design does not take an active cultural role through its design (Dennington, 2017). Some work has been carried out regarding Service Design and cultural influence and meaning creation, through the bridging of service design and brand experience (da Motta-Filho, 2017), and through the marriage of sacred theory and Service Design (Matthews, 2017), However, there is as yet little research regarding the service designers use of culture and the conveyance of meaning through service offerings.

Meaning-driven concept innovation (Dennington, 2017), has been introduced to service design, and describes how a service designer acts as a cultural intermediary by translating cultural phenomena into meaning, and the further translation of this meaning into new service concepts through design. This is seen as an addition to designing new services based on customers' expressed needs or functional improvements. As this is still an emerging research area, there is a need to more systematically explore this translation process. One way forward could be the investigation of how meaning is created through the translation of cultural phenomena into style and aesthetics. In this research I do so by accessing major domains of design, namely fashion, sustainability and trends. These areas are not yet widely taken up in Service Design despite their extensive reach and dynamic character in the culture industries, particularly in relation to branding, and on the part of consumers.

Cultural phenomena, aesthetics and service style

The meaning of style has been elaborately discussed in different design domains: in relation to product style (Vickers, 1992), fashion style (Hebdige, 1979; Crane, 2012) and brand style (Holt, 2004; Tungate, 2005). Aesthetics play an important role in conveying style, and thus in meaning creation (Postrel, 2004). In sub-cultural fashion practices, style is seen to carry significant meaning through semantic and stylistic codes that denote insider knowledge, shared beliefs and values (Hebdige, 1979; Haenfler, 2013). At present, there is little discussion of style in service, and the term could conceivably be used to denote the style of an offering, or the way in which the offering is translated into touch-points over time.

Meaning creation through brand style may be viewed as an outcome of the formally introduced semantic transformation in design (Karjalainen, 2004). Brand style refers to how the aesthetic characteristics of a product bear intrinsic meaning through the physical attributes of the design based on brand values, creating a series of recognizable products carrying the same style, such as successfully seen with e.g. Apple's product range. However, Apple also succeed in expanding their style into their service experience, where style is no longer just connected to physical and visual aesthetic attributes, but also to the marking out

of *service specific details*, such as behaviour, tone-of-voice and touch-points (Clatworthy, 2009). Could this point towards the need to define service semantics, and the way in which the intrinsic meaning of services manifests through aesthetic characteristics and service style? And how can service designers translate cultural phenomena into certain service styles? This has been explored through translating brands into experience (da Motta-Filho, 2017), although presenting a model for translating brand into service experience, this work does not reference the cultural aspects of an offering. The cultural influence is still missing.

On a consumer goods level, a successful product style is due to the designer's ability to identify and translate cultural *trends* into new products (Muir Wood et al., 2008). Trends are explained as shifting directions that impact and influence areas of society, culture or business (Martin, 2009), or as "a direction of changes in values and needs" (Dragt, 2017). In the consumer market, identifying and translating trends is an important part of designing and delivering desirable products at the right time (Pettinger, 2014). Trends, as shifting entities that may shape and influence design can be viewed as cultural phenomena, in the way they are shaped by, and may shape culture over a longer period of time. Trends can greatly influence the society and culture through which they move. Within service design, there is no discourse regarding the translation of trends into service offerings, yet service designers could be expected to be relevant trend transformers.

Method/methodology

The research presented in this paper sits within a recent and expanding area of culturally sensitive and meaning driven service innovation, including areas of designing for brand experience (da Motta-Filho, 2017), the sacred and rituals in service design (Matthews, 2017) and service design as a cultural intermediary (Dennington, 2017). The themes are part of on-going research at the Norwegian Center for Service Innovation (csi.nhh.no), jointly funded by the Norwegian Research Council and business- and educational partners. The findings presented are extracted from the author's explorative design-driven and practice-based PhD study, where I have participated as a service designer in an overall research by design methodology (Sevaldson, 2010). This research also draws on the author's expertise and experience as a design professional, mainly within the fashion industry, providing input to the development of this research through design approach to generate new contextual and conceptual knowledge.

The initial discussion and findings presented in this paper are based upon the author's professional design work with two major Norwegian business partners: a young women's fashion brand with 200 retail stores across Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Austria, and a grocery chain with approx. 1800 grocery stores across Norway. The work also draws upon results from a six-week course for six MA-level students in Service Design engaged in the project with the girls fashion brand, and a one-day workshop with 30 BA- level students in Design, with no partner involved. The student work centered on further exploration of the triple semantic transformation for service innovation. The work was conducted at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design, and was jointly supervised by the author.

To analyze the translation processes occurring throughout the trend driven activity of designing new service concepts, mixed methods were used to gather and extract qualitative data from several sources, with the purpose of integrating the findings to synthesise further conclusions (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007).

Research diaries were used by both the author and the six MA students to "aid reflexivity in the research process" (Nadin & Cassell, 2006), and to capture key insights and moments in reflexive feedback loops of observation, ideation and reflection. The diaries were used for visual and textual explorations through concept ideation, sketching, note taking, illustration and collages. By combining different visual techniques new insights or ideas were triggered

and further used to inform design decisions. Throughout the projects, visualizations were used to both communicate and articulate insights (Segelström, 2009).

Participatory observation was conducted by the author through meetings and workshops with the related business partners, and through tutoring students, to gain a clearer understanding of their viewed experience around challenges during the translation process in order to better inform new decisions around further data collection (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015).

Written material, consisting of personal field notes, correspondence with business partners, students' reflective texts, and feedback from external practitioners and business partners gave further insight into the process.

The service design projects used to discuss the *Trendslation* method are based upon the cultural phenomenon of social awareness centered on sustainability, identified through my previous design work with developing a service for fashion re-use (Dennington, 2017). The students' design work has been used to gather insight into the process, and to help develop the method. Some of the student work is also used as examples in the following section. The design projects were conducted in 2016-2017.

Outlining the Trendslation method

At present, the integration and application of trends as a material for service innovation is not commonly used within Service Design, perhaps because there is a lack of any practical tool or method to assist in this. Yet, the notion of trends as drivers for innovation is regularly both used, and discussed in other design fields (Muir Wood et al., 2008; Pettinger, 2014). In order to further explore the possibility of adapting a trend-driven approach to a service specific view, and integrate it into existing processes as a means to assist in the triple-semantic transformation, I developed what I term the *Trendslation* process (Figure 02).
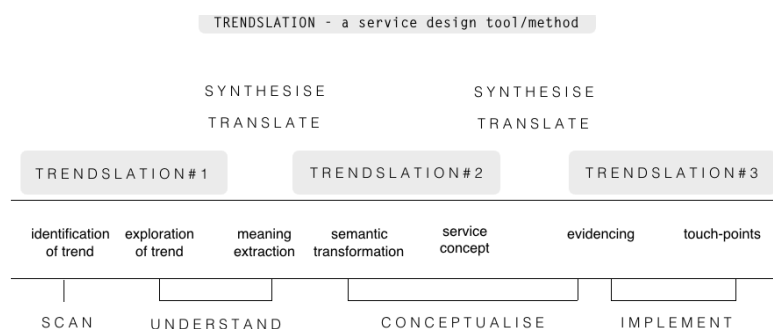

Figure 02 – First conceptual sketch of the Trendslation process. Dennington, 2017.

As a first attempt to construct a structured approach, analyzing the service designers' on-going process loops of identifying, translating and synthesizing trends through interpretation, meaning making, and the transition into service concepts through design and communication, became central. The initial approach and results are presented through reference to three acts of translation in keeping with the triple semantic transformation model; Scan & Understand, Conceptualize and Implement.

1. First translation: Scan & Understand - from trend to meaning

To use trends as a material for innovation, there is a need to both identify trends, and then translate these into meaning, as it is the meaning that lies beyond a trend that can be utilized as a driver for innovation (Verganti, 2009; Matthews, 2017), not the actual trend itself. To first identify trends, the active scanning and synthesizing of trends is a common approach to the early stages of the innovation process in areas of design, such as product and fashion design (Mason et al., 2015). This can be done in several ways, such as using existing trend resources, which can range from paying for costly trend reports, to using free online resources, going on inspirational travels before major projects or new seasons, and in general being open to "newness".

As creative practitioners, service designers are open and sensitive to cultural expressions and impressions, just as designers in other fields are. However, the use of structured forecasting or trend resources is not common in Service Design, nor is it an accepted part of today's process. In developing an approach for a Service Design context, I have tested existing approaches to scanning and synthesizing from other fields (Martin, 2009). These have been adapted and applied in a service context as a first approach to developing a starting point. These steps are described in more detail below:

1.1 Identify

Forecasting is a way of predicting future patterns and trends, through the way it "looks at how hidden currents in the present signal possible changes in direction" (Saffo, 2007). Different forecasting methods are used in major areas such as politics, economics and in relation to identifying societal changes (Newbold & Bos, 1990; Armstrong, 1985). Keeping within the realms of culture, the technique of Cultural Brailing, as termed by acknowledged forecaster Faith Popcorn (Martin, 2009), refers to being hypersensitive and observant of *newness*, such as new products, new genres, new styles, in addition to being open in every day life, to societal, political, technological, environmental and cultural shifts.

Els Dragt (2017) suggests scanning as the first phase of trend research to detect signs of change, which I adopted to begin the identification process in my own study. Through scanning and exploring socio-cultural expressions such as music, literature, commerce, art, social media, magazines and newspapers, food and drink, and available online trend resources (Figure 03), trends were actively "hunted". Alongside scanning, physical items were gathered, creating a collection of photographs, pieces of graphic work (flyers, labels, packaging etc.), print- and cut-out's and products.

In parallel with the use of scanning, the "5-Whys" technique, as suggested in *The Trend Forecaster's Handbook* (2009), was tested as a way to dig deeper into observations made. Through sorting, ordering and clustering the visual findings, patterns emerged, and consideration of which trends were relevant in relation to the brand values led to new findings. As trend forecasting for consumer products seems to focus on the semantic characteristics and physical attributes when identifying newness, perhaps service designers additionally need to be more aware of intangible newness, such as new rhetoric, new business models or new experiences?

Figure 03 – Visual scanning and exploration of socio-cultural expressions. Dennington, 2017.

1.2. Explore & expand

The identified trend of social awareness was further expanded by the author as a design professional, through visual interpretations of the trend in relation to the partnering brand. This was done through the format of a mood board, by conveying the aesthetic and stylistic experience, as an orientation step for further use by other designers. The mood board, as a service design tool, is "a visual composition of pictures and materials that propose an atmosphere by giving the generic perception of it. The mood board helps in the elicitation of some values the service has that are difficult to be described by words." (servicedesigntools.org, 2017). By grouping similar or contrasting visual expressions, clustering by certain characteristics - colour, theme, form, style or shape - patterns emerged through forced or free association, which triggered new associative streams, and the designer could start to build a personal interpretation of the trend in relation to the brand. In this way the mood board proposed an atmosphere, but also extended into a more expressive, experientially oriented and brand relevant "experience board". By translating the semantic qualities of the trend and brand, the visual interpretation triggered a more immediate and emotional response in the designer – and acted as the first move towards developing a certain service style (Figure 04).

Figure 04 – Exploring a stylistic and experiential expansion of the mood board to convey service style. Dennington, 2017.

1.3. Synthesize - Meaning making

The translation from trend to meaning was especially challenging owing to the nature of this process being highly intuitive through the designers' iterative loops of synthesizing and meaning creation. This became apparent through my own work, and was also the step most frequently identified as the most challenging by the students. Zooming in to parts of the visual interpretation, and combining these images with sketches, notes and key words, as well as discussing and describing the meaning in personal terminology, through word clouds, short descriptive texts or labeling with titles, were all useful ways of generating keywords describing the intended meaning. One example of meaning making was discovered through the framing of social awareness, where the trend of a new wave of feminism was identified in relation to the partnering young girls fashion brands values (Love, Listen, Inspire and Surprise), and led to the new meaning of "female empowerment through friendship and education." Reflecting on what the trend actually means, to whom and how, why the trend is happening, and if/how/why the trend is relevant to the brand, assisted in the meaning extraction. A more structured approach to this process could be a valuable step forward in meaning creation.

2. Second translation: Conceptualize - from meaning to concept

Throughout the first translation, a cognitive ideation process was initiated. With the defined meaning as a framing, more thorough ideation through sketching was used to start developing service concepts. However, the use of hand sketching only, in many cases - resulted in the concepts getting stuck at idea level, with the difficulty of moving away from the brands' existing core offering or domain, and into more innovative service concepts. Two steps were explored to assist in the move forward from ideation to conceptualization: communicative concept sketches and concept communication.

2.1. Communicative concept sketches

To begin with, the use of multiple design techniques such as collages, mapping, illustrations, short storyboards and simplified customer journeys, in quick sessions, helped to develop the concepts. Next, by adding a concept title, a short descriptive text in the brand's tone-of-voice, and by selecting grouping of images that conveyed the intended experience and communicated key offering, led to the formation of "concept-sketches" (Figure 05) that had such precise communicative features that these could serve as starting points for discussion to extend the concept even further. Developing mock-ups and simple prototypes of certain touch-points made the concepts more tangible, making discussion easier, with the result that feedback led to concepts being pushed in more innovative directions.

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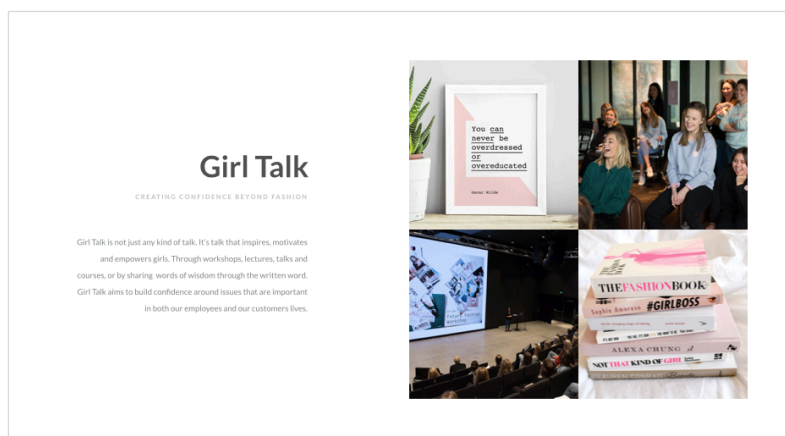Linköping University Electronic Press

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Figure 05 – Concept sketch with title, tone-of-voice and curated images for precise concept communication. Dennington, 2017.

2.2. Concept communication

As the concepts became more developed, communicating the core offering and experience in a precise, clear and engaging way made the concepts accessible for outside actors. When presenting the final concepts to the business partners, they were able to quickly understand the concept and how it related to their brand. Conveying the key features of the concept in a style that was attuned to their brand image, through choice of images, concept name and tone-of-voice, triggered immediate emotional response. This also functioned as a starting point for conversations and discussion around concepts that were far from partners' core offerings, yet still in line with their brand.

In one case the precise level of concept communication led to one of the partnering brand's VP of Marketing, Purchase & Assortment commenting that several of the students' concepts could almost directly be implemented into their current strategy, while selected service concepts designed by the author are in the process of being further developed by the partnering brand. One example was the student-designed concept of a summer camp (Figure 06), with education and friendship in focus, which successfully conveyed both the trend and brand values. Although the concept moved far beyond the young womens' fashion brand's core offering of selling clothing, it was still perceived by the partnering brand to be highly relevant as a new culturally located service offering.

Figure 06 – Concept communication for summer camp concept through mock-up flyer, mood board and simplified journey. Miryam Pippich, MA-student, 2017.

3. Third translation: Implement - from concept to experiential details

Experiential touch-points to enhance the meaning were designed and prototyped to strengthen the concept. One example was the prototype of a poster for a workshop at the summer camp, designed by a student. In addition to the graphic elements and tone-of-voice being in line with the trend and brand, the content of the workshop also enhanced the meaning. This was achieved through the theme of the workshop, carefully curated workshop facilitators, the venue of the workshop and down to details, such as what kind of lunch the participants would be served (Figure 07). All these parts added up to create the meaningful experience intended. Due to lack of time, the potential of designing experiential touch-points, or other experiential details was not fully looked into. For further inquiry, this step could be introduced earlier in the innovation process, and also be further explored in relation to how the design of such experiential details can shape and model the service experience.
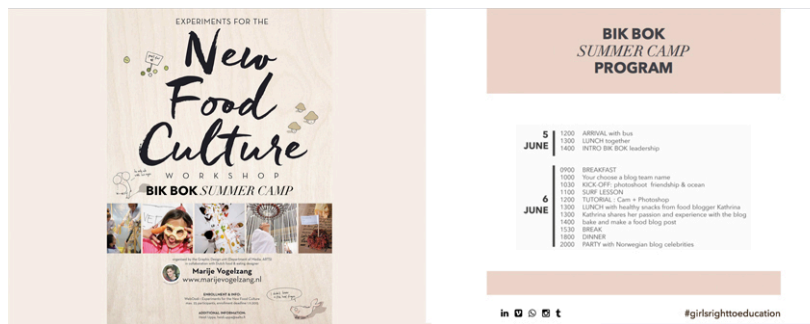
Figure 07 – Experiential evidencing of program for summer camp concept. Miryam Pippich, MA-student, 2017.

To Trendslate or not to Trendslate

Through these first attempts at operationalizing the *Trendslation* method, three overarching findings arose. They support the claim for a richer, more elaborated cultural perspective on framing, enacting and analyzing trends and Service Design, and are discussed below.

An overall finding is that the method of *Trendslation* shows promise for assisting service designers in the semantic translation process from trend to meaning, and from meaning to service concept and details, in the early innovation phase. However, the method may show most potential for the design of highly experiential and meaningful consumer specific services (e.g. within retail and travel), where the user is more prone to act affectively. In other less culturally located areas of Service Design, e.g. within public healthcare, the method may seem to be redundant or to offer little assistance. For some services, it may be that only certain parts of the service are affected by cultural influence, and could benefit from using the method. Still, the use of the method for designing service concepts in a highly visual, stylistic and communicative way as triggers for conversations or to enact change within an organization could be more widely used within several areas of Service Design.

A second finding is that service design may benefit from a cultural orientation, in the way this opens for the design of more meaningful service concepts in line with current cultural conversations, through the service designer's ability to translate cultural trends into meaning and further into service concepts and experiential details. This supports my initial notion of the service designer acting as a cultural intermediary, through designing new services influenced by culture, but also having influence upon culture.

The final finding is that cultural phenomena can be used to shape and model service concepts in the innovation phase, and to design experiential service details, through the extraction and translation of meaning. These three findings, it could be argued, might allow service designers to design more culturally informed and culturally inflected services.

Discussion: Service Design and the service designer as cultural intermediaries

In the light of Service Design as a culturally sensitive domain, there lies potential in regarding cultural, and thereby meaningful material as an influential factor in shaping and modeling service concepts in the innovation phase, through a semantic transformation process. The following reflections upon the approach and its implications are discussed below.

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In the process of the triple semantic transformation, it became evident that the service designer, when designing new services based on meaning, translated from trends – also acts as a cultural intermediary; as an individual transferring meaning (Venkatesh & Meamber, 2006), and by this, acting as a taste maker (Maguire & Matthews, 2014). The view of the service designer as a cultural intermediary could initiate further reflection around what this might mean for practitioners, and the influence they may have upon contemporary culture, through the services they design.

In this view of the service designer as a cultural intermediary, and a designer of meaning-driven concepts, there is a need for a more experiential and expressive method for conveying the semantic qualities of the trend in relation to the brand through the designer's own interpretation, so as to assist in the identification and meaning creation. This is due to a key ability of the designer in gaining a clear cognitive interpretation of the cultural phenomenon, in relation to the brand values, as this understanding forms the basis for meaning creation.

In acting as a cultural intermediary, the service designer's ability to synthesize and create meaning from identified trends in relation to brand values is due to the service designer gaining a clear understanding of this trend through their own interpretation. Existing service design tools, such as the mood board, may be expanded in a more stylistic and experiential direction to assist in this step.

Aesthetics and style also play an important role in meaning creation (Postrel, 2003), and through the *Trendslation* process highly visual, experiential and stylistic interpretations resulted in stronger, more innovative and more elaborate service concepts, that both communicate the extracted meaning, and the partnering brands values. Expanding the format of a visual tool, such as the mood board, into a more stylistic and experiential visual representation, could build on what Ted Matthews (2016) introduces as Graphic experiential evidencing, as a method for "expressive communication of meaningful service encounters." If developed further, a more stylistic approach to experiential evidencing, communicating meaningful service concepts in relation to trends and brand values, could contribute to the service designers' toolbox in the innovation phase of designing meaningful service concepts.

In the view of Service Design as a cultural intermediary, there is interesting potential that lies in viewing cultural trends as a service design material, throughout the innovation phase. When designing products, materials can be modeled to convey different semantic characteristics in the object, and thus convey different meanings. In Service Design, however, "the object to be modeled is the whole system and its individual parts"(Clatworthy, 2011). In the concept development phase, it became a challenge to distinguish the translation of trends into the whole system (e.g. customer journey), or into its individual parts (e.g. touch-points), which suggests the need for a more systematic tool for service designers to use in the application of trend as a material, primarily to shape service concepts, but also to assist in translation into the service details.

Current approaches for translation into products does not take into account this need for translation into both the whole and into certain parts, and calls for a *service specific* tool. This could be achieved by exploring how the service concept can be modeled according to where, when and how the semantic translation occurs throughout the service experience.

An additional reflection is that in viewing Service Design and the service designer as cultural intermediaries there is a need to explore, identify and define the semantics of services. Due to the intangible nature of services, service semantics may be related to codes and symbols, signals and attitudes, interactions or transactions, amongst many other possibilities. How can we identify service semantics? And through this, how can we define the aesthetic qualities of services? Expanding this knowledge base could help in the development of the area of Service Design as a cultural intermediary.

Some conclusions

The aim of this paper has been to initiate the development of a systemized method for the semantic translation of cultural trends into service concepts, and into experiential service details. This is currently missing as a part of service design practice, yet is widely used in the innovation phase of other design fields. An explorative design approach was adopted to investigate how such translation of trends may be adopted to Service Design through the development of a process termed *Trendslation*. The *Trendslation* process was devised through service design projects with established Norwegian service providers within fashion and food sectors. The findings show that *Trendslation* has promise and could be a useful contribution to service design methods. Furthermore, it helps Service Design enact its semantic turn towards the service designer also acting as a cultural intermediary.

For service design practitioners, investing time in an early project phase to hunt, explore and expand trends could be a way forward to initiate the uptake of cultural influence. Here trend forecasting may be taken up as a resource. For service design practitioners in companies with internal trend forecasting units, some steps of the *Trendslation* may be redundant; nevertheless, the process could help the service designer in the translation of the identified trends into meaning, and further into service concepts and details. In Service Design education, simple trend forecasting techniques could be introduced to encourage and stimulate the cultural approach to service design.

Further research is needed to develop a more systematic method or tool for the translation and application of trends into service details, such as experiential touch-points and experiential details. This could include the investigation of how different trends may shape service concepts, according to where, when and how trends are applied along a customer journey. The components and structure of the suggested stylistic experiential evidencing tool needs further research with the aim of developing it as a contribution to the service designers' toolbox.

In my on-going research, I will work with new international business partners to further develop and test the method. A number of particular directions, arising out of the research reported here, will be explored. Possible new research areas could explore the translation of trends into service details, how the service concept changes in relation to how, where and which trends are applied, in what way stylistic experiential evidencing could be developed as a tool for practitioners and how service style can be conveyed and communicated in an early innovation phase.

The *Trendslation* method provides an initial framework through which service designers can consider the influence of cultural trends as drivers for innovation, in coherence with brand values. However, the view of Service Design and the service designer as cultural intermediaries implies the need to further discuss the possibilities, implications and new roles of Service Design in a fuller cultural view and framing. In what ways might new methods, such as the suggested *Trendslation* model, provide new cultural roles to the service designer in shaping and impacting culture through the translation process and meaning making, and through this the design of new services? The *Trendslation* method offers one early, flexible and dynamic model of the uptake of cultural practices, expertise and insights into the on-going semantic translation of service design into meaningful experiences.

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