

Typographie: Gewand und Körper des Textes – Linguistische Überlegungen zu typographischer Gestaltung

The present article sketches out a semiotic and functional-grammatic theory of language's typographic and text-graphic forms. Departing from the two metaphors in the title, body and dress, the author finds the basis of typography's functional flexibility in the semiotic properties of graphic signs, which can serve both as a means to encode spoken language as well as to communicate a welter of additional connotative and pictorially based meanings. In its main part the article outlines the structural and functional resources of typography as a separate signing mode, which interacts and cooperates with language, image, sound etc. in the multimodal text. Based on the subdivision of four typographic levels, the study illustrates with the help of examples drawn from advertising and book design how various typographic means interlock to build formal and semantic links to numerous linguistic text levels. Finally, the contribution examines the ways in which typography achieves its communicative effects, four of which are classified as crucial: 1) structuring visual space, 2) creating pictorial effects, 3) highlighting linguistic and pragmatic text structures, 4) reproducing and shaping cultural and media conventions.

Georg Weidacher

Der gefrorene Text. Zur Rolle der Textoberfläche als Grenze der Interpretation.

The following article is based on a model of communication which ascribes an active, meaning construing role to the recipient of written discourse to the degree that we regard texts as not existing "on paper", but as showing an only fleeting existence in the form of a connection between a "texture" (the material side of a text or "textual artefact") and a cognitive textual representation in the mind of a reader. However, it will be argued that a recipient cannot simply interpret a text at will because the uncontrollable potential of contingency would jeopardize the functioning of communication. Therefore, necessarily, every case of textual communication imposes certain restrictions on the recipient's activities and their outcome. We will call these restrictions the "5 limits of interpretation": 1.) language with its socially co-ordinated immanent perspectivity; 2.) textual perspectivization as it is frozen in the texture; 3.) coherence as an equilibrated, meaningful "gestalt"; 4.) co-operative strategies of reception; 5.) social discourse in the form of "para-talk" (Heinz Schlaffer). In spite of these powerful and indispensable restrictions, however, the range of possible interpretations is considered to be paradoxically at the same time limited and infinite.

Stella Neumann, Silvia Hansen-Schirra

Der Konjunktiv als Verständnisproblem in Rechtstexten

The present paper looks into the comprehensibility of the German "Konjunktiv" as an example of syntactic features blocking the understanding of legal texts. Three corpora are controlled for the registers supreme court decisions, press releases on these decisions and newspaper texts as well as a reference corpus including 15 German registers. This allows the identification of the use of "Konjunktiv" as a typical register feature in the court decisions. The comprehensibility is then examined in a psycholinguistic test including 13 legal experts and 26 persons not trained in the legal field. The results show that the "Konjunktiv" is less comprehensible than the indicative. The results for the legal experts suggest that this group has more difficulties in understanding sentences in "Konjunktiv". This may be explained by their specific linguistic training. Law professionals are very sensitive to linguistic peculiarities. The lay group, on the other hand, does not seem to be aware of the specific function the feature under investigation serves in the court decisions. Finally, suggestions for an automatic inter- and intralingual translation system are formulated on the basis of the results gained through the combination of product-based research in the corpus study and process-based research in the psycholinguistic experiment.

Matthias Vogel

Bedeutungserklärungen religiöser Begriffe – Annäherung an eine enzyklopädische Darstellungsform in Begriffswörterbüchern

This paper aims at presenting a model of description for religious terms. To achieve this objective, criteria of hermeneutical translation studies have been applied to religious texts – more specifically to pietistic sermons. The terminological analyses aim at developing a dictionary of religious terms, including subject-specific as well as linguistic information.

The study is based on an extensive corpus of sermons. The information relevant to each concept is structured in a terminological record. Suggested fields of terminological records of religious terms include: concept entry, definition or explanation that serves as an interpretation of the subject-specific meaning, co-text of each term referring to the linguistic environment, pragmatic aspects (syntactic representation and major kinds of semantic relationships), and graphic representations showing the various concepts and their frequency in the selected sermons. The core element of lexicographic databases being the definition of terms, several types of definitions have been proposed.

After providing general information about religious language as a language for specific purposes, the contribution ends by presenting two examples concerning the description model proposed. These examples show the terminological information of the religious term ‘Bekehrung’ in pietistic sermons both in the past and in the present.