Name-informing and ironic name mentioning –
A pragmatic account and its information-structural implications

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PDF: holden-haertl.weebly.com/-presentations.html

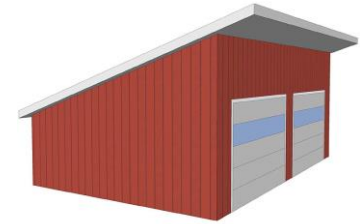Reading 1: Ironic *so-called y*

y has the name *judge*

y is not contained in the literal meaning of *judge*

y is evaluated negatively

Reading 2: Name-informing *so-called y*

(1) *The building has a* so-called shed roof.

→ Name is low-frequent lexical material.

→ Name is assumed not to be established enough in the addressee's lexicon.

Roadmap

- How can we explain the **interpretational difference**?

- What is the nature of the **contents** involved in the ironic reading?

- Are there **information-structural** reflectors of the ironic reading?

1	Compositional properties

2	Pragmatic account

Etablishedness and relevance

3	Content types involved

Not-at-issue content?

4	Irony as echoic mention

Givenness as reflector

Compositional properties

So-called y involves a form of (pure) quotation (Capellen & Lepore 1996).

(1)   *"Paris" has five letters.*

To quote a name is to mention it – and not use it denotationally (Quine 1960).

Quotation marks are a material realization of name-mentioning.

(2)   *a so-called "sepsis"*

They put a linguistic shape on display.

Semantics of *call*

(1) *Doctors call this disease sepsis.*

  x call *y z*

  ∃e [CALL(e) & AGENT(x, e) & THEME(y, e) & NAME(z, y, e)]

(2) *The doctor diagnosed a so-called sepsis.*

  ∃e [CALL(e) & AGENT(x, e) & THEME(y, e) & NAME(z, y, e)]

so

sepsis

Demonstrative *so* (see Umbach & Gust 2014):

[[*so*]] ... λx [SIM (x, x_{target}, F)] ...
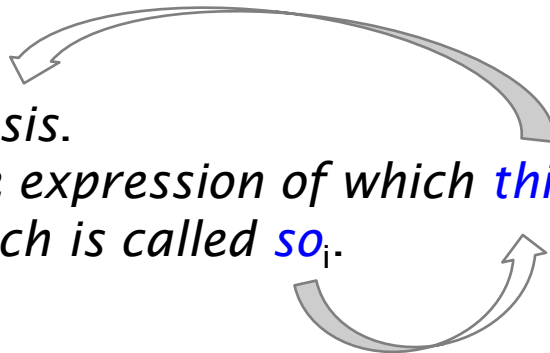
Davidson's (1979) Demonstrative Theory of quotation

Quotational means help to refer to a linguistic shape by pointing to a token that has this shape.

(1) *a so-called "sepsis"*

Sepsis.
The expression of which this$_i$ is a token is the name of the entity which is called so$_i$.

Pragmatic account

Pragmatic account

<u>Name-informing</u> *so-called y →*
y not established (enough) in the addressee's lexicon.

Be relevant!
Low establishedness makes the name-informing use of the predicate relevant.

so-called sepsis → NAME(z, y) **=** [[y]]   (GENx GENe …)

<u>Ironic</u> *so-called y* is no longer name-informing and gives rise to
a non-literal reading of the name.

 (1)   *The so-called "hotel" turned out to be a run-down dump.*

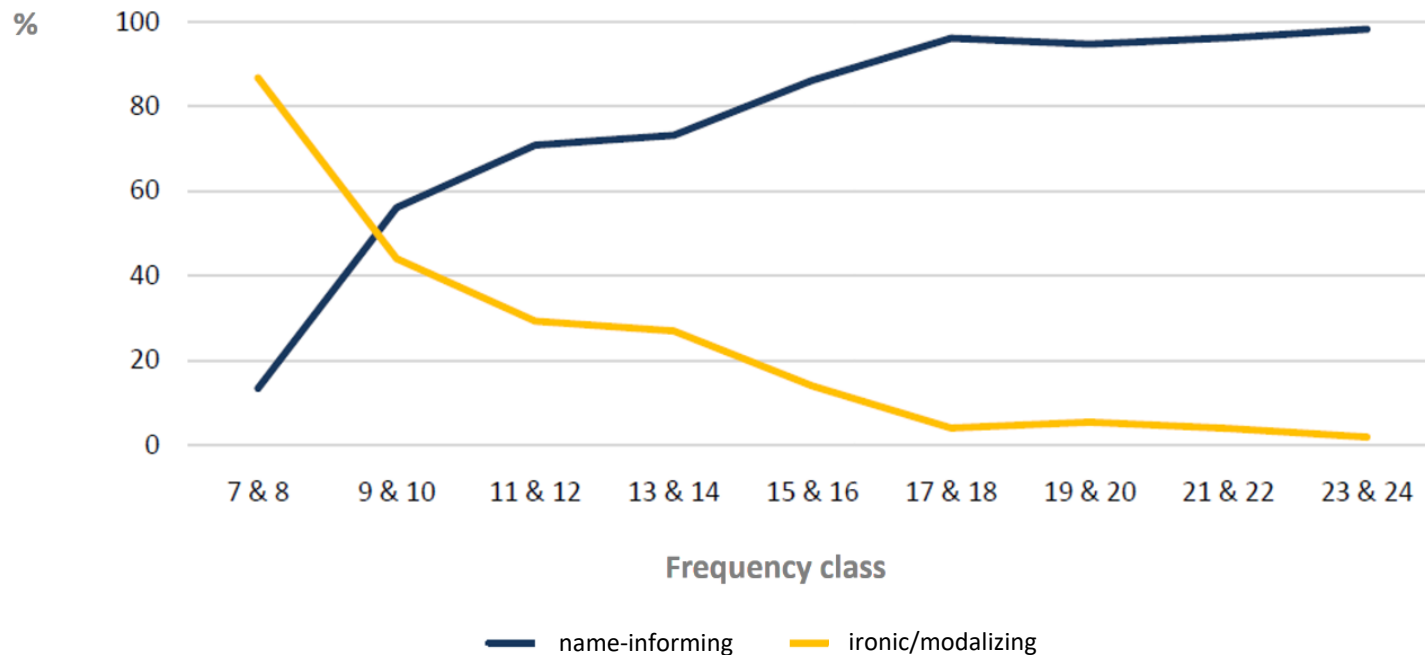*so-called hotel* → NAME(z, y) **≠** [[y]]

Say no more than you must!
With a highly established name, the principle is flouted, thus producing
the deviant interpretation of the name.

Pragmatic account: Corpus data

Corpus study (600 occurrences / DeReKo) (Schrader 2017)

Interaction FREQUENCY × INTERPRETATION (name-informing vs. ironic/modalizing)

Content types

(1)   *The so-called "hotel" turned out to be a run-down dump.*

Contents involved:

A: *previous use of the name*

B: *non-literal meaning of the name*

C: *negative evaluation of the referent*

What type of inference?

C: the speaker evaluates *y* negatively   ⇨ Implicature

(1) *We have been staying for a week in the so-called hotel – <u>I don't want to say I do not like it there</u>, it's just that it is a B&B rather than a hotel.*

B: the referent does not fit the literal meaning of *y*   ⇨ Implicature

(2) *We have been staying for a week in the so-called hotel – <u>I don't want to say it's not a real hotel</u>, I just find it terrible.*

A: the mentioned name has been previously used   ⇨ Presupposition

(3) *We have been staying for a week in the so-called hotel – #<u>I don't want to say someone has called it that</u>, I just find it terrible.*

Questionnaire study

Task: Assessment (5-point) of (3 × 3) inference-cancelling answers w.r.t.:

C Negative evaluation of y

> A: Mein Mann schenkte mir das erste Mal Schmuck zu Weihnachten. An Heiligabend saßen wir alle beim Kerzenlicht und ich packte die sogenannten Perlen aus.
>
> B: Moment, willst du etwa sagen, dass dir die Perlen nicht gefallen?
>
> A: Das habe ich doch gar nicht gesagt!

B Non-literal meaning of y

> B: Moment, willst du etwa sagen, dass das gar keine echten Perlen waren?
>
> A: Das habe ich doch gar nicht gesagt!

A Previous name use

> B: Moment, willst du etwa sagen, dass er den Schmuck als Perlen bezeichnet hat?
>
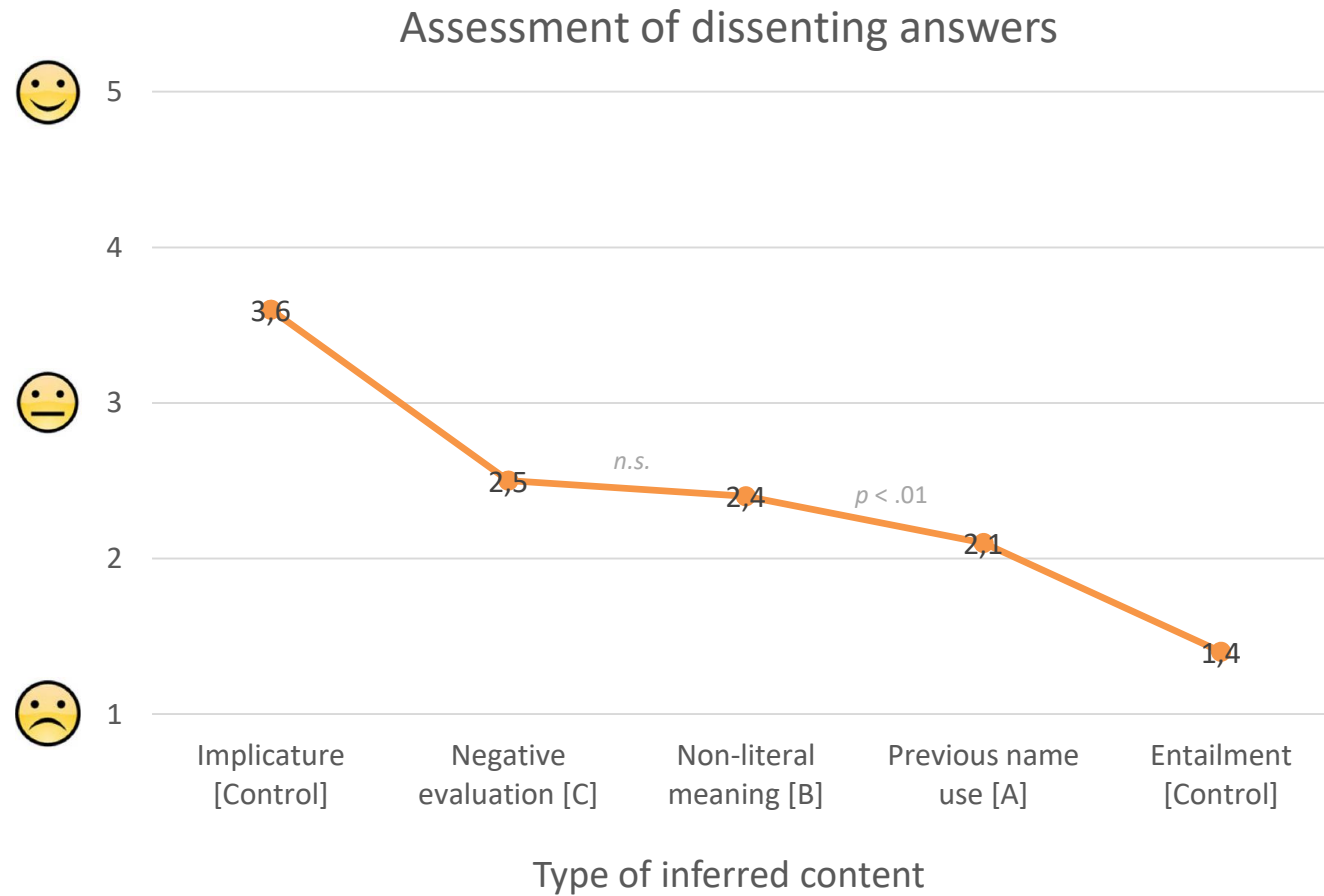> A: Das habe ich doch gar nicht gesagt!

Control: Implicature and entailment dissents; fillers

Online survey (N = 37)

Assessment of dissenting answers

- Implicature [Control]: 3,6
- Negative evaluation [C]: 2,5
- Non-literal meaning [B]: 2,4 — *n.s.*
- Previous name use [A]: 2,1 — *p < .01*
- Entailment [Control]: 1,4

Type of inferred content

We conclude:

- 'previous name use' tends to figure as presupposition,
- 'non-literal meaning' & 'negative evaluation' are implicatures.

Is one of them (more) at-issue?

Task: Scaled choice of rejection form (direct vs. indirect)

B Non-literal meaning of *y*

A: Erik hat Maria zum ersten Mal Schmuck zu Weihnachten geschenkt und sie hat die sogenannten Perlen auch gleich anprobiert.

○	○	○	○	○
Das stimmt nicht, das waren schon echte Perlen.	.	.	.	Wart mal, das waren schon echte Perlen.

A Previous name use

That's not true / Wait a sec, nobody had called them that.

C Negative evaluation

That's not true / Wait a sec, they were actually pretty nice.

Task: Scaled choice of rejection form (direct vs. indirect)

Control 1 AI content rejection (main clause)

A: Gestern ist unter uns jemand neues eingezogen und ich glaube, dass der neue Mieter Musiker ist.

     ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Das stimmt nicht, er ist Schauspieler.   .   .   .   Moment, er ist Schauspieler.

Control 2 NAI content rejection (appositive)

A: Gestern ist unter uns jemand neues eingezogen und ich vermute, dass der neue Mieter, ein Musiker, aus Hamburg kommt.
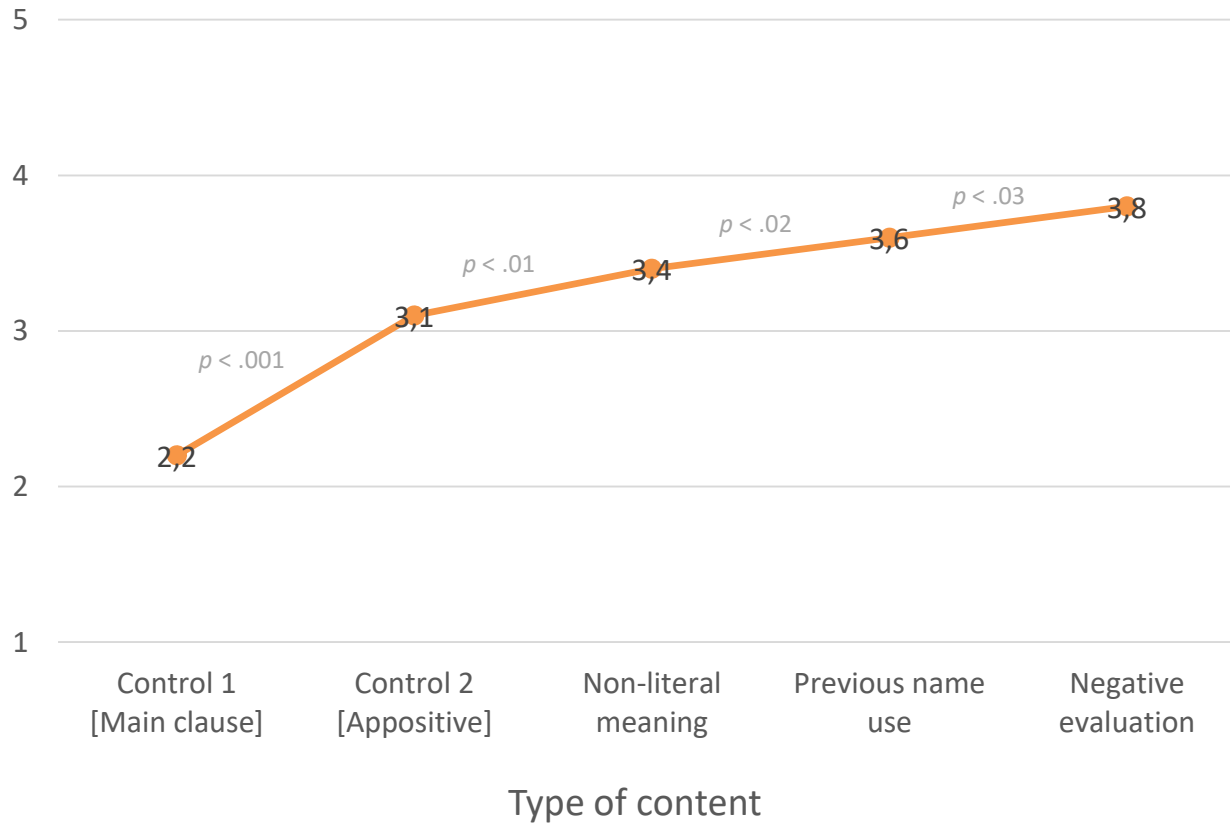
     ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Das ist nicht wahr, er ist Schauspieler.   .   .   .   Wart mal, er ist Schauspieler.

Online survey (N = 56)

Average choice of direct vs. indirect answers

Wait a sec

That's not true

- $p < .001$
- $p < .01$
- $p < .02$
- $p < .03$

2,2 — Control 1 [Main clause]
3,1 — Control 2 [Appositive]
3,4 — Non-literal meaning
3,6 — Previous name use
3,8 — Negative evaluation

Type of content

We conclude graded at-issueness for ironic *so-called y*:

'non-literal meaning' > 'previous name use' > 'negative evaluation'

Irony as echoic mention

Echo theories of irony:

Verbal irony results from an echoic mention of the quoted material.
(Attardo 2000; Jorgenson et al. 1984; Wilson & Sperber 1992; Wilson 2006)

$\exists e$ [CALL(e) & AGENT(x, e) & THEME(y, e) & NAME(z, y, e)], $t_u; t_u < t_s$

"Mockery" effect:

Speaker marks the utterance as an echo of the previous name use (**A**) and, thus, produces a comment indicating that he/she

⇨ says something contrary to what he/she means (**B**),

⇨ has a (negative) attitude towards the quoted content (**C**).

Information-structural implication:

Ironic *so-called y* is suited to occur in giveness- / topical positions.

> *Der Pfleger empfing ihn an der Rezeption und erklärte, seine Mutter sitze im **Garten**.*
> ***Der sogenannte Garten** bestand aus einem Stückchen Rasen mit ein paar Holzbänken sowie einem kleinen Steingarten mit Heidekraut.*
>
> [*Höllennacht*, Stephen Leather]

> *Isetta* […] *Ein **Auto** mit einer Lenkstange wie ein Motorroller! Wo gibt es denn so etwas. Und dann steigt man auch noch von oben ein in **das sogenannte Auto*** […]
>
> [*Bis der Tod uns scheidet*, Werner Krieger]

Qualitative corpus study / 200 occurrences (Weissbecker 2017):

Correlation: *sogenannt*'s interpretation & topicality (subject / definitness)

- *So-called y* has a unitary compositional format.

- The two interpretations emerge from an interplay between the establishedness of *y* and pragmatic factors (relevance).

- The contents in the ironic reading are (graded) NAI information. They differ in their status.

- Negative evaluation of *y* & *y*'s non-literal meaning are implicatures. Previous name use is presupposed.

- The latter links to an echoic mention of the name, which produces a speaker comment and the ironic effect.

Thank you.

References can be found in:

Härtl, H. (2017) Quotation and the lexicon-pragmatics interface: The case of *sogenannt* ('so-called'). Submitted.

Available here: www.uni-kassel.de/go/haertl