

Reference to names:
sogenannt ('so-called') and the lexicon-pragmatics interface

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Calling things by their names



Miranda Hart ... and her mother:



Mother: "Perhaps we should explain why we're here, in case you were thinking us a little, **what I call: odd.**"



Name reference is 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)

(2) a. *Max answered "cookies".*

b. *Max likes cookies.*

Quotation marks are a material realization of name-mentioning

(3) *a so-called "playback singer"*



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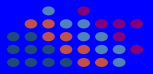
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(3) *a so-called "playback singer"*

They put a linguistic shape on display.



Sogenannt-constructions adopt two distinct meanings

- Name-informing
 - (1) *Der Doktor diagnostizierte eine sogenannte Sepsis.*
'the doctor diagnosed a so-called sepsis'

- Distanced / ironic
 - (2) *Das sogenannte "Hotel" erwies sich als üble Absteige.*
'the so-called hotel turned out to be a dirty fleabag'

- Ambiguous between name-informing and distancing reading
 - (3) *sogenannt- Reichsbürger / Alternative für Deutschland / Islamischer Staat*
'so-called Third-Reich citizens / Alternative for Germany / Islamic State'



In the distancing reading, the mentioned name is used non-literally

- Distanced / ironic

(1) *Das sogenannte "Hotel" erwies sich als üble Absteige.*
'the so-called hotel turned out to be a dirty fleabag'

[[*hotel*]] ≠ [[*fleabag*]]



- How can we explain non-literal name reference?
- How do the different readings arise?
- What is the compositional core of *sogenannt*?

1 Compositional properties of the name-mentioning predicate

2 Pragmatic analysis of the different interpretations

Relevance

Manner

Irony as echo

Ironic evaluation as non-at-issue content

3 Conclusion



The semantics of *to call* / *so-called*

(1) y z *nenn-* ('call y z ')

$\exists e$ [CALL(e) & AGENT(x , e) & THEME(y , e) & NAME(z , w , e): $w = y$]

(2) *One calls this thing "clicker".*

GEN x GEN e [CALL(e) & AGENT(*one*, e) & THEME(*this thing*, e)
& NAME(/'klikər/, w , e): $w = \textit{this thing}$]





So-called y – an argument gone missing??

- (1) *Der Arzt diagnostizierte eine sogenannte Sepsis.*
'the doctor diagnosed a so-called sepsis'

No. The NAME argument is bound by *so* in *sogenannt*.

- (2) *y z nenn-* ('call *y z*')
 $\exists e [\text{CALL}(e) \ \& \ \text{AGENT}(x, e) \ \& \ \text{THEME}(y, e) \ \& \ \text{NAME}(z, w, e): w = y]$
-
- sepsis*
- so*

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

$[[\text{so}]]$... $\lambda x [\text{SIM}(x, x_{\text{target}}, F)]$...

Quotation as demonstration




Davidson's (1979) Demonstrative Theory:

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

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

Davidson style prose:


Paris. The expression of which **this** is a **token** has five letters.



(2) *a so-called Sepsis*

Davidson style prose:

Sepsis. The expression of which **this** is a token is called **so**.





Observations w.r.t. *sogenannt* (default use = name-informing)

1. Simple names are more marked than complex names

ein sogenannter ??Stuhl / Lehnstuhl
'the so-called chair / armchair'

2. High-frequent names are more marked than low-frequent names

das sogenannte ??Auge / Oculus
'the so-called eye / oculus'



With **high-frequent** names, *sogenannt* signals a non-literal meaning

1. Ironic interpretation / no longer name-informing

Das sogenannte "Hotel" erwies sich als üble Absteige.
'the so-called hotel was in fact a dirty fleabag'

2. Name-informing / non-standard meaning

Der sogenannte "Stuhl" ist eine Übung zur Kräftigung von Po und Beinen.
'the so-called chair is an exercise to strengthen legs and butt'



More recent theories implement pragmatic factors in their approaches to quotation, see Gutzman & Stei (2011); Meibauer (2014); Recanati (2001)

Premises for default *so-called* and “*y*”

- Name-mentioning requires *y* to be “worth” enough to be mentioned as a name
- The speaker assumes *y* to be not established (enough) in addressee’s lexicon
- Quoted form (“*y*”) is the more marked form than the unquoted one



Name reference and relevance (Grice 1975; Horn 1984; Levinson 2000)

Be relevant!

- Low establishedness makes a name-informing predicate relevant:

sogenannte Sepsis $\rightarrow \text{NAME}(y) = [[y]]$

- With high establishedness, the maxim is flouted and a non-canonical interpretation emerges:

sogenanntes Hotel $\rightarrow \text{NAME}(y) \neq [[y]]$



Quotation marks and the M-principle (Gutzmann & Stei 2011; Klockow 1978)

Indicate non-canonical meanings by marked expressions.

- Expressions with quotes indicate non-canonical / non-literal meanings:

sogenanntes "Hotel" → "y" ≠ [[y]]

(cf. das angebliche "Hotel", die vermeintliche "Rechtschreibreform", ein regelrechter "Krieg")

- In name-informing contexts, too, quoted expressions adopt a non-canonical function!



The expression is mentioned – and not used denotationally.

sogenannte "Sepsis"
so-called "clicker"

Observation:

Non-literal *sogenannt*-DPs often represent topical information

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]

[[*Isetta*]] ≠ [[*auto*]]

How is the use licensed in these cases?





The non-literal use of the name is licensed with *sogenannt* because the name is used as an echo:

- (1) ... CALL(e) ... THEME(y, e) & NAME(*auto*, w, e) ... w / y = *Isetta* ... t_u
 $t_u < t_s$

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.

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*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]



Non-literal uses of *sogenannt- y* are a form of irony

- Irony has been described as **echoic mention** (Jorgenson et al. (1984); Sperber & Wilson 1981)
- What is echoed can be an immediately **preceding utterance**, but it also be an implicit utterance / thought (e.g. a belief, an intention, a norm-based expectation, see Wilson 2013)

Max wurde von einem sogenannten "Freund" beim Häuserkauf über's Ohr gehauen.
'Max was scammed by a so-called "friend" when he purchased a house'

- An ironic utterance is purposefully unfitting to the context (Attardo 2000)
- Echoic mention always expresses some (negative) **evaluative attitude**



In non-literal *sogenannt*-cases, the speaker opposes the **semantic appropriateness** of the name and **evaluates** the referent **negatively**

We hypothesize this to be a non-at-issue content (Potts 2015; Tonhauser 2012)

A: *Wir hatten im "Goslar" ein Zimmer gebucht. Als wir nach langer Reise endlich ankamen, erwies sich das sogenannte "Hotel" allerdings als üble Absteige.*

B: *Sekunde! Willst du mir sagen, ihr mochtet das "Goslar" nicht?*

B': *Sekunde! Willst du mir sagen, dass das "Goslar" kein richtiges Hotel ist?*

→ **Evaluation / name inappropriateness = non-at-issue content**

B: *??Sekunde! Willst du mir sagen, jemand hatte das "Goslar" als Hotel bezeichnet?*

→ **Preceding name use = primary content**



Mother: "Perhaps we should explain why we're here, in case you were thinking us a little, **what I call: *odd*.**"

- Non-generic, specific binding (*I*) of the Agent argument of CALL
- Highly conventionalized NAME (*odd*)
- NAME is used literally



- *Sogenannt*, as an instance of quotation, has a unitary compositional format.
- The different readings emerge from an interplay between lexical and pragmatic factors (qua Relevance).
- Quotation marks indicate non-standard uses of the quoted material (Manner).
- Non-literal uses are echos (Irony).
- The ironic-evaluative attitude is probably a non-at-issue content.

Thank you.



References can be found in:

Härtl, H. (2015) Semantic non-transparency in the mental lexicon: On the relation between word-formation and naming. In: Claudia Brinker-von der Heyde, Nina Kalwa, Nina-Maria Klug, Paul Reszke (eds.) *Eigentlichkeit – Zum Verhältnis von Sprache, Sprechern und Welt*. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 395-416.

Härtl, H. (2016a) Normality at the boundary between word-formation and syntax. *Linguistische Berichte*, 22, 141-169.

Härtl, H. (2016b) *sogenannt* ('so-called') and the lexicon-pragmatics interface (submitted).

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