

Literal and ironic name mentioning – Theoretical and empirical investigations into the lexicon- pragmatic interface

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This paper contains joint work with Marcel Schlechtweg and Heiko Seeliger.

Mentioning names



Pure quotation

- (1) a. *Paris has a subway system.*
- b. *“Paris” has five letters.*

Reference to names of things

- (2) a. *The doctor diagnosed a sepsis.*
- b. *Doctors call this disease “sepsis”.*
- c. *The doctor diagnosed a so-called “sepsis”.*

Mentioning names



Ironic name mentioning

- (1) a. *The so-called “**hotel**” was really just a few rooms above a shop.*
- b. *And someone like that calls himself “**expert**”!*

Roadmap



- **Semantic** and **acoustic** properties of name mentioning
- How can we explain the **interpretational variation**?
- What is the nature of the **contents** involved in the ironic reading?

- 1 Semantics: Compositional properties
- 2 Acoustic properties: Production study
- 3 Ironic name mentioning
Pragmatic analysis: Corpus study
Contents: Rating studies

Semantics

Compositional properties



call

(1) *Doctors call this disease sepsis.*

x call y z

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

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

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

sepsis

so

Compositional properties



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

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

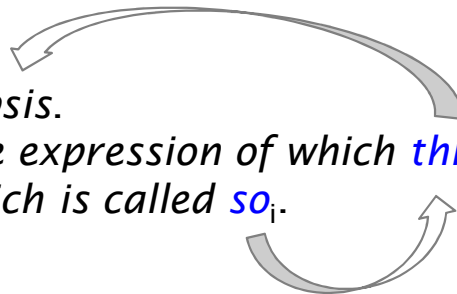
Davidson's (1979) Demonstrative Theory of quotation

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**.*



Open question



What is the semantic status of “mixed” quotations?

(1) *Das ist das, was man eine Sepsis nennt.*

Notice:

(2) *Anna ist das, was man *(eine) werdene Mutter nennt.*

(3) *Eine Blutvergiftung wird auch (?eine) “Sepsis” genannt.*

Recanati (2001)

Quotations can be singular terms (“closed” = (4)) or not (“open” = (5)):

(4) *“Fortnight” is a funny word.*

(5) *A “fortnight” is a period of fourteen days.*

I don’t think Recanati’s distinction helps us to explain (1). Rather, I suggest (1), but not (2), to involve an **identificational copula**.

Open question



Identificational copula (Higgins 1979)

- (1) a. *Das ist das, was man (eine) Sepsis nennt. = Das ist eine Sepsis.*
b. *Sowas nennt man eine Sepsis.*
c. *??Eine Blutvergiftung nennt man auch eine Sepsis.*

Stage-level predicates

- (2) a. *Anna ist das, was man ??(eine) werdene Mutter nennt.*
b. *??So jemanden nennt man eine werdende Mutter.*
c. *Eine Schwangere nennt man auch eine werdene Mutter.*

Acoustic properties

Production study: Objective



Schlechtweg & Härtl (2018):

- Are quotes realized acoustically?
- Is the articulator sensitive to name mentioning?

Material



Context sentence

In bestimmten Klöstern gehört eine braune Tunika zur Grundausrüstung.
'In specific monasteries a brown tunic is part of the basic equipment.'

Sentence 2:

Mentioned

Man nennt sie Kutte in Ordenskreisen.

'One calls it Kutte among monks.'

Man nennt sie „Kutte“ in Ordenskreisen.

Used
denotationally

Man kennt die Kutte in Ordenskreisen.

'One knows the Kutte among monks.'

Man kennt die „Kutte“ in Ordenskreisen.

Method



- Independent variables (within-subject and within-item)
 - QUOTATION MARKS (yes/no)
 - MENTIONED (yes/no)

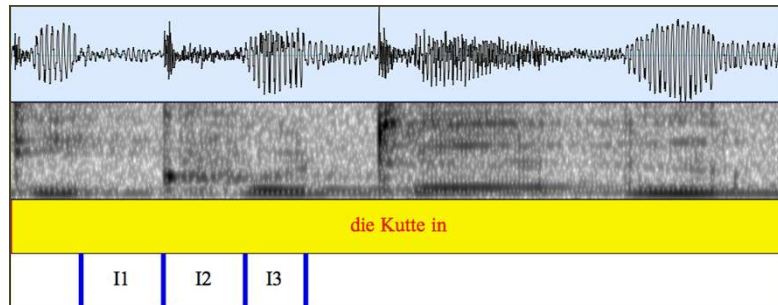
- 8 native speakers of German read out Sentence 2

- 8 target nouns x 4 conditions
Kapern, Pappel, Kutte, Kippa, Koppel, Kate, Kiepe, Puppe

Data analysis



- Data were segmented and annotated with Praat



- Five dependent variables
 - Interval 1 (I1): Distance from end of [i:] to release of constriction of first plosive (in ms)
 - Interval 2 (I2): VOT of first plosive (in ms)
 - Interval 3 (I3): First nominal vowel
 - Duration (in ms)
 - Intensity maximum (in dB)
 - F0 maximum (in Hz)

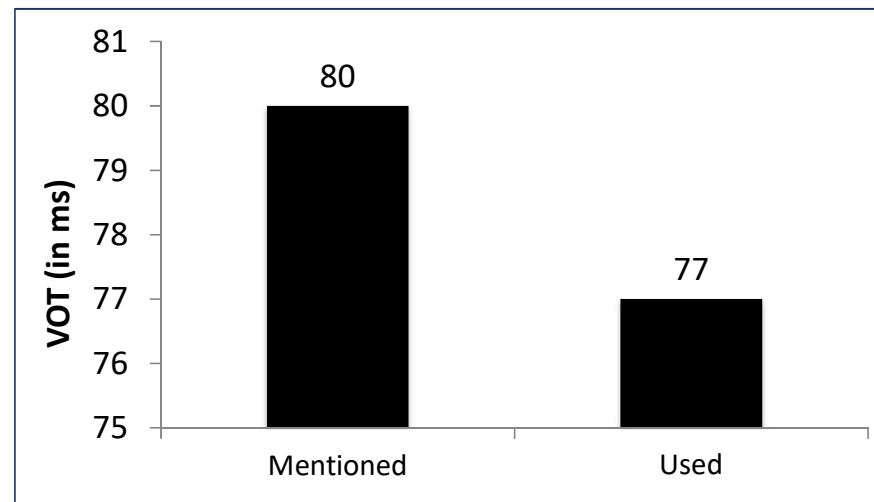
Results

Main effect of NAMING STATUS: **In name-mentioning contexts ...**

- Five dependent variables

- Interval 1: Distance from end of [i:] to release of constriction of first plosive
- Interval 2: **Greater** VOT of first plosive
- Interval 3: First nominal vowel

- Duration
- **Higher** Intensity
- **Higher** F0



Results



But:

Mentioned

nennt [sie] [Kutte]

Used
denotationally

kennt [die Kutte]

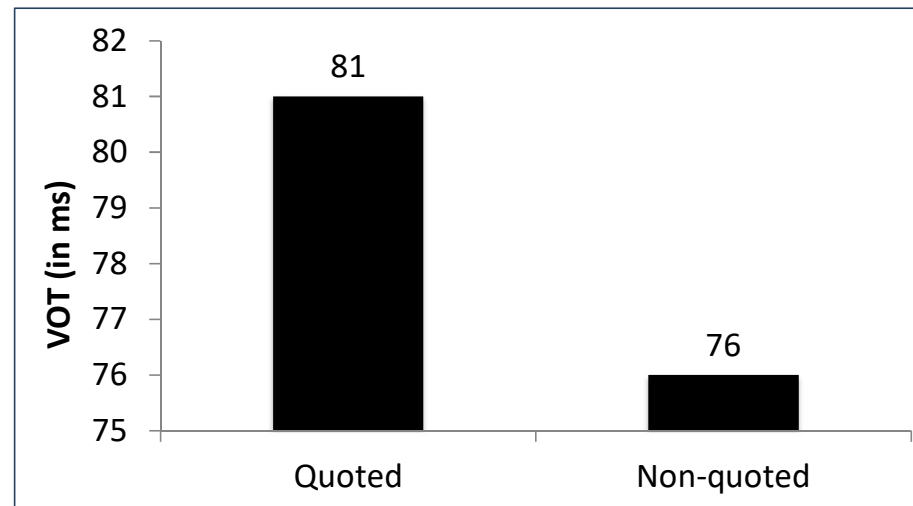
Results

Main effect of QUOTATION MARKS: **With quotation marks** ...

- Five dependent variables

- Interval 1: **Greater** distance from end of [i:] to release of constriction of first plosive
- Interval 2: **Greater** VOT of first plosive
- Interval 3: First nominal vowel

- Duration
- Intensity
- F0



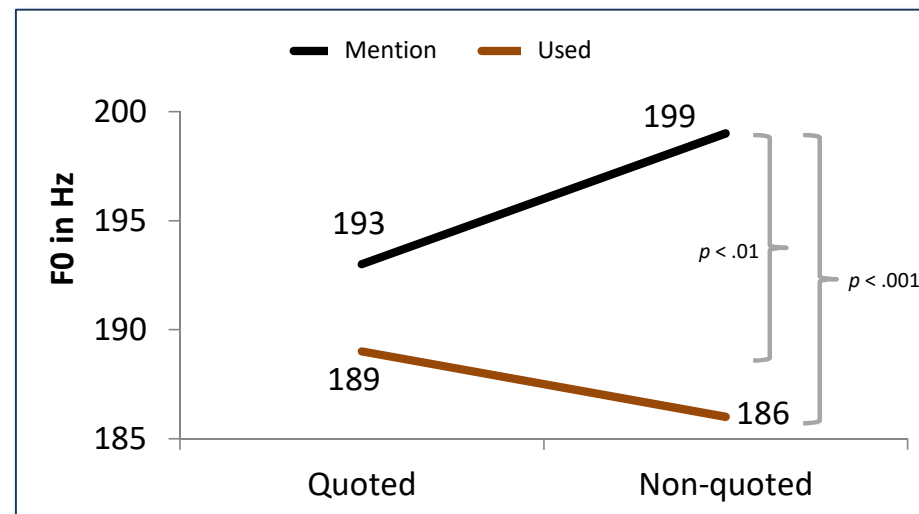
Results

Interaction of NAMING STATUS X QUOTATION MARKS

- Five dependent variables

- Interval 1: Distance from end of [i:] to release of constriction of first plosive
- Interval 2: VOT of first plosive
- Interval 3: First nominal vowel

- Duration
- Intensity
- F0



Results



- The data shows that
 - the onset of the syllable following quotation marks is **longer** than the onset of the same non-quoted item
 - in non-quoted contexts, mentioned nouns are **more prominent** than used nouns

- Quoted content is marked acoustically in a **systematic** fashion

- Name mentioning is reflected with **non-quoted** content but not with quoted content

Ironic name mentioning

Ironic name mentioning



Name-informing quotation

Doctors call this disease “sepsis”.

The doctor diagnosed a so-called “sepsis”.

Ironic name mentioning

The so-called “hotel” was really just a few rooms above a shop.

Ironic *so-called* y



Contents

Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

The opinion of this **so-called judge**, which essentially takes law-enforcement away from our country, is ridiculous and will be overturned!

RETWEETS 33.901 GEFÄLLT 161.198

05:12 - 4. Feb. 2017

72 Tsd. 34 Tsd. 161 Tsd.

y has the name *judge*

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

y is evaluated negatively

Pragmatic account

Relevance



Name-informing *so-called* $y \rightarrow$
 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" \rightarrow NAME(z, y) = [[y]] (GENx GENe ...)

Ironic *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" \rightarrow NAME(z, y) \neq [[y]]

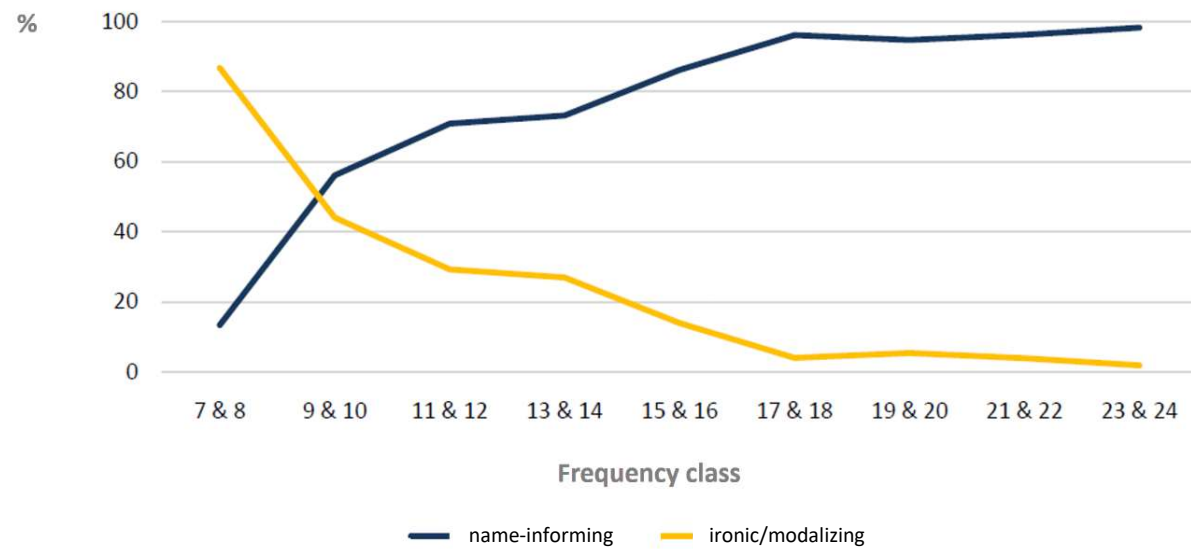
Say no more than you must!

With a highly established name, the principle is flouted, thus producing the deviant interpretation of the name.

Corpus data

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

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



Content types

Contents in ironic *so-called*



(1) *The so-called “hotel” was really just a few rooms above a shop.*

Contents involved:

A: *previous use of the name “hotel”*

B: *non-literal meaning of the name*

C: *negative evaluation of the referent*

Contents in ironic *so-called*



What type of inference?

C: the speaker evaluates *y* negatively ⇒ Implicature

(1) *We have been staying for a week in the so-called hotel – I don't want to say I do not like it there, 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 – I don't want to say it's not a real hotel, 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 – #I don't want to say someone has called it that, I just find it terrible.*

Study 1: Content types



Questionnaire study (Härtl & Seeliger 2018)

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?

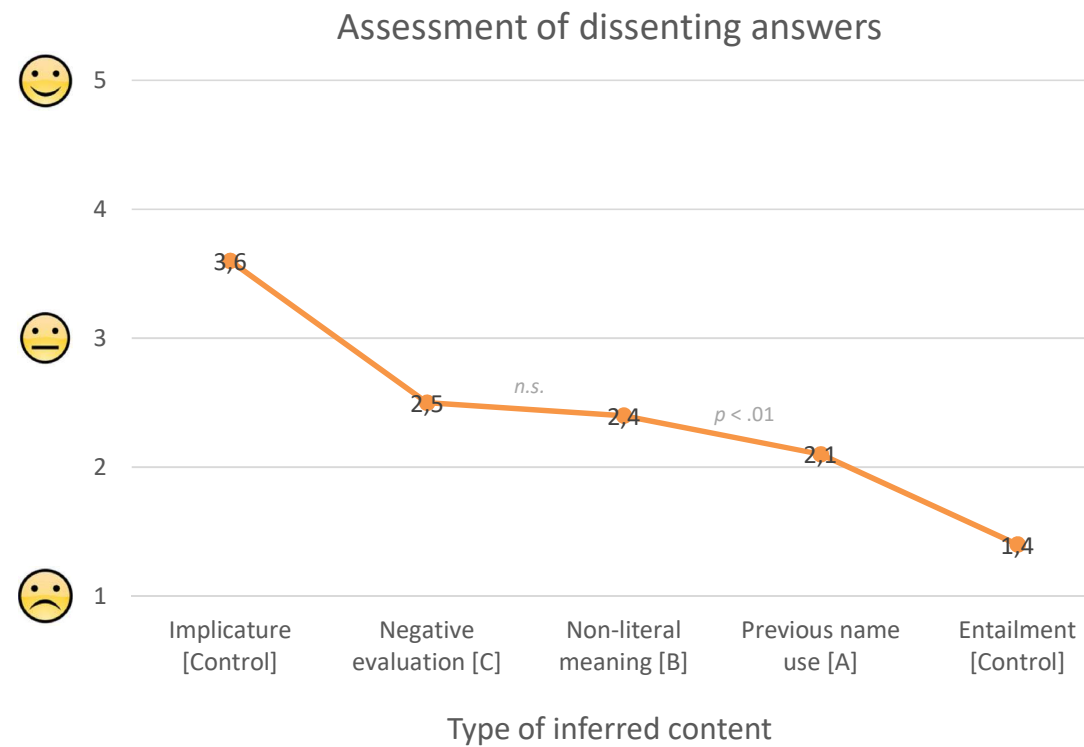
A: Das habe ich doch gar nicht gesagt!

Control: Implicature and entailment dissents; fillers

Study 1: Content types



Online survey (N = 37)



Study 1: Content types



We conclude:

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

Is one of them (more) at-issue?

Study 2: At-issueness



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.

Study 2: At-issueness



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.

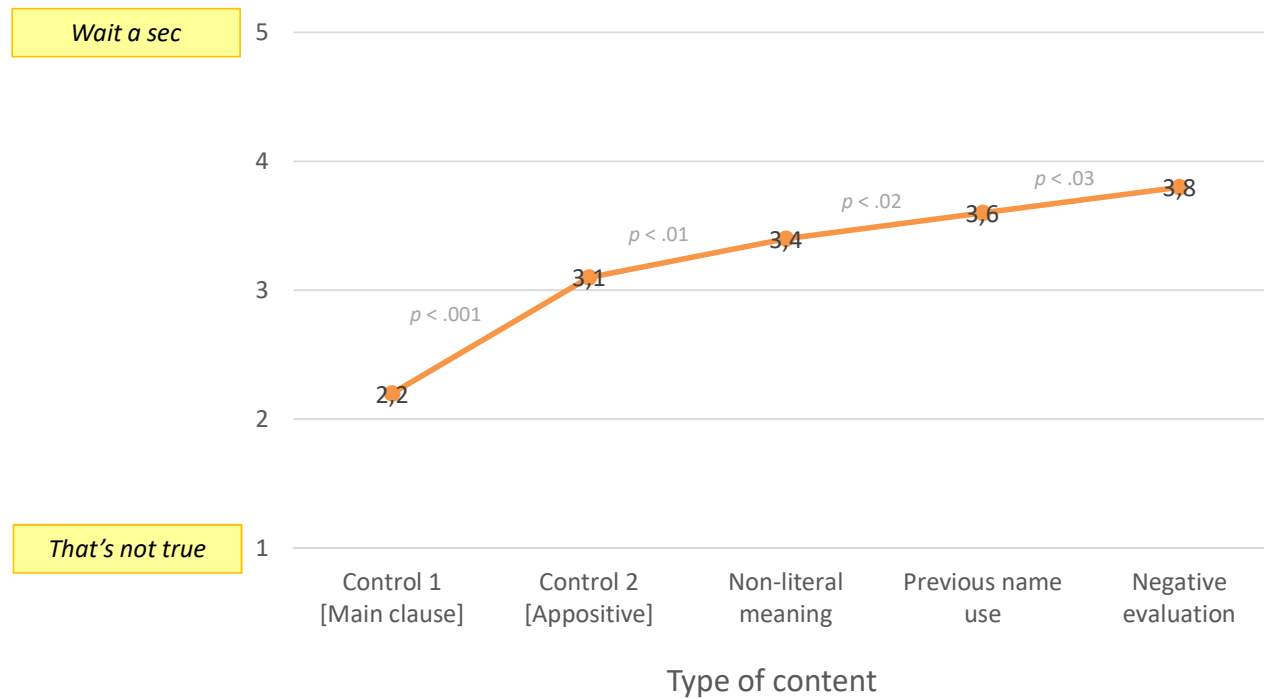
Das ist nicht wahr, er ist Schauspieler. . . . Wart mal, er ist Schauspieler.

Study 2: At-issueness



Online survey (N = 56)

Average choice of direct vs. indirect answers



Study 2: At-issueness



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

‘non-literal meaning’ > ‘previous name use’ > ‘negative evaluation’

Conclusion



- ▶ Name-mentioning quotation introduces a **similarity relation**.
- ▶ **Pragmatic factors** can be used to explain interpretational variations.
- ▶ Name mentioning / quotation is reflected **acoustically**.
- ▶ Contents in ironic readings are (graded) **NAI information**. They differ in their semantic status.

Thank you.

Literature



References can be found in:

Härtl, Holden (2018) Name-informing and distancing ‘sogenannt’ (‘so-called’): Name mentioning and the lexicon-pragmatics interface. To appear in *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft*.

Härtl, Holden & Heiko Seeliger (2018) Is a so-called “beach” a beach? An empirically based analysis of secondary content induced by ironic name use. To appear in the volume *Secondary Content: The Linguistics of Side Issues* (ed. by Daniel Gutzmann & Katarina Turgay) of the *Current Research in the Semantics / Pragmatics Interface* series.

Härtl, Holden (2016) Normality at the boundary between word-formation and syntax. *Linguistische Berichte* 22, 71-98.

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