

## „To me, punk is still also a counterculture“ – How can constructions and frames be used to analyse positioning practices in subcultural debates?

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This talk is concerned with the debate on sexism in the punk scene of Germany that began in early 2020 and is still ongoing. It presents a study that focuses on linguistic practices that are employed by speakers in order to specify (or “fixate”) the meaning of an expression. More specifically, the expressions *Punk* and *Feminismus* (‘feminism’) are investigated based on a custom corpus compiled from music magazines, fanzines, blogs, Facebook, and YouTube. It takes a construction grammar and frame-semantic approach to the study of socio-political language use and thus intends to establish a fruitful connection between discourse linguistics and Cognitive Linguistics in theoretical as well as methodological terms.

The following examples illustrate how specific constructions are used to “fixate” specific meanings:

- (1) Für mich ist Punk noch immer auch eine Gegenkultur (‘To me, punk is still also a counterculture’)
- (2) Feminismus bedeutet für mich in erster Linie das Streben nach Freiheit (‘To me, feminism chiefly means striving for freedom’)

As these two sentences already indicate, the corpus shows a vast variety of patterns or constructions that are used to accomplish this type of statements: besides verbs like *sein* (‘be’) and *bedeuten* (‘mean’) verbs like *gehören zu* (‘pertain to’), *stehen für* (‘stand for’) and *gehen um* (‘be about’) connect the predicated linguistic element (*Punk*, *Feminismus*) and the predicating linguistic element (e.g. *Gegenkultur*, *Streben nach Freiheit*). Supposedly, these statements can be seen as instances (or constructs) of semi-schematic constructions, with the latter being considered form-meaning-function-pairings (Östman 2015). For example, (1) is an instance of the construction *NP1\_Copula\_NP2*.

Meaning and function of the constructs can be described using lexical (semantic) frames (cf. Willich 2022) and pragmatic frames, respectively. Frames are considered conceptual structures defined by frame-specific semantic roles and motivating the understanding and usage of lexical units (Ziem 2008). By drawing on frames, this approach strives for a cognitively plausible account of language use. Reflecting one of the main operations in the conceptual system, some instances from the corpus evoke the *Categorization* frame, viz. if there is an element that is ascribed to (or linguistically constructed as belonging to) a category as in (1): Obviously, there is a set of different countercultures and ‘Punk’ is one of them. But there are a great many cases showing that constructs that are identical in formal terms (because they share the same construction-evoking element, e.g. *be*) do not necessarily evoke the same lexical (semantic) frame (for instance the *Categorization* frame). This issue and how constructions and lexical (semantic) frames can be mapped in general is one of the issues addressed in this talk.

Moreover, the communicative meaning of the constructs can only be sufficiently described if pragmatic aspects and thus the function of the instances is addressed as well. With recourse to positioning theory (Bamberg 1997, Harré & van Langenhove 1991, Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2004) and the concept of stance taking (Du Bois 2007), pragmatic frames are used to account for the fact that a high number of ‘fixations of meaning’ are employed by speakers to position themselves and other members of the punk scene in the debate. But how can positioning practices be modelled in terms of pragmatic frames and which part does the semantics of the predicating linguistic elements play in this regard? These questions represent further issues to be discussed.

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