
The use of quotation marks

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Quotation is a linguistic phenomenon that has its own specific symbol in written language: the quotation marks <“ ”> (resp. <„“, <«»>, or other formal variants). In this presentation, we will examine how these punctuation units are used in German and what quotational function they denote. According to Bredel (2008) and Klockow (1980), quotation marks are used to let other voices have their say. The most obvious variant of this is their use for direct speech or direct quotations. This is, at least from a graphematic point of view, certainly trivial.

What is interesting, however, is how exactly quotation marks are used in corpora. That is what we are doing here: We will study different German corpora with newspapers, school exams (*Abiturarbeiten*) and chat. By analyzing and contrasting the different varieties of quotation, we examine the specifics of their use and tie them back to the functional potential of quotation marks. In newspapers we found a prototype of ‘mixed quotation’, which is often combined with the conjunctive, i.e. it is completely mixed between direct and indirect speech. In school exams we found a prototype of inappropriate word use, and in chat language Busch (2021) found quotation as a ‘self-talk’ that is indicated by quotation marks. These are just the prototypes, we have found and will find much more interesting cases. Comparing the corpora is quite revealing: This concerns both the concrete use of quotation marks as a written phenomenon and their relationship to quotation as a whole that can be given a new perspective.

References. Busch, F (2021). *Digitale Schreibregister. Kontexte, Formen und metapragmatische Reflexionen*. Berlin/Boston. • Bredel, U. (2008). *Die Interpunktion des Deutschen. Ein kompositionelles System zur Online-Steuerung des Lesens*. Tübingen: Niemeyer. • Klockow, R. (1980): *Linguistik der Gänsefüßchen. Untersuchungen zum Gebrauch der Anführungszeichen im gegenwärtigen Deutsch*. Frankfurt am Main: Haag und Herchen.