



School of Applied Linguistics
ILC Institute of
Language Competence

Representation and its dependencies

Discourse Patterns and Conditions of Speaking for/about young criminals

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Participation through Language, Winterthur, March 26th 2021





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- 3 Data
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Introduction

Speaking and acting for others

At the restaurant to the waiter

Wife: *I will have the salad.* vs. Husband: *My wife will have the salad.*

- Normative democratic idea: one person, one (own) vote > one person, one own voice
- Problem of speaking for others raised by Spivak, post-colonial studies, Alcoff, disability studies, gender studies: Who is authorized to speak for whom?
- Speaking-for-others due to socio-cultural reasons, e.g., tradition, gender, religion, age etc.
- Problems of speaking-for-others concern political questions: who acts for whom through language use?

Introduction

Linguistic Perspective on speaking-for-others

1. Categorization problems with *for*-sentences – ist there a main function?

No.	Example	Functional-grammar Type
1a	He cooks <u>for his parents</u> .	benefactive
1b	They build a prison <u>for the criminals</u> .	final?
2a	She speaks <u>for her client</u> .	representative
2b	He speaks <u>for his wife</u> .	representative?

2. Differentiation according to domains – is there authorized speaking-for-others?
Medicine, education, welfare, criminology etc.

Approach & Objective

Criminology as a specific domain and discursive topic

Imprisonment

intentional exclusion of delinquents from participation based on criminal law

Rehabilitation

Highly reflected use of verbal representation of delinquents are needed by the social workers, job attendants, psychologist etc.

Approach & Objective

- better understanding of discursive conditions of speaking about delinquents
- in reports from a Swiss correctional facility (corpus A)
- in journalistic mass media (corpus B)
- in what form do the delinquents themselves come to speak in the reports and in the media?
- analysis of direct quotes containing the personal pronoun in both corpora

Data

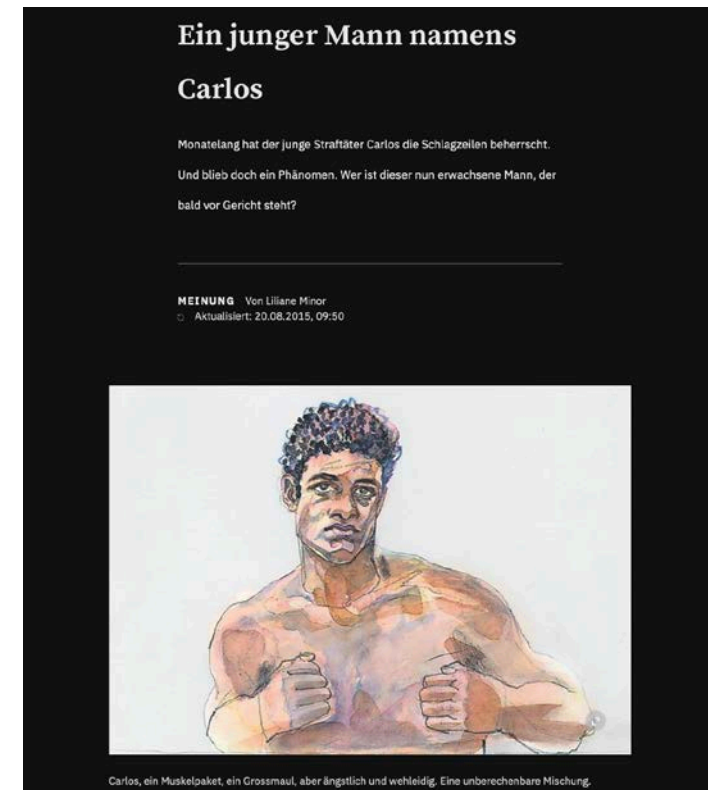
Corpus A: Reports from a Swiss correctional facility

- Project "Writing reports" with a Swiss correctional facility (led by Ursula Stadler-Gamsa & Felix Steiner, ZHAW)
- Correctional facility for delinquent young male adults (16 to 25 years old)
- During a delinquent's stay, focus on:
 - Development of personality
 - Vocational training
 - Offence work
- written by social workers, job attendants and psychologist (initial report, quartely reports, final reports)
- 230 reports, 1.9 million words
- Reports cover a variety of topics:
 - social development
 - behaviour in school and in vocational training
 - Psychological evaluation

Data

Corpus B: journalistic media

- journalistic media articles reporting about «the Carlos case»/»the Brian case»
- Initiated by an 2013 SRF documentary about a social worker and his work with a 17year old delinquent named «Carlos»
- the resocialization program in which Carlos participated was criticized for its extremely high costs
- Controversy over the resocialization of young offenders
- Ongoing topic since 2013; SRF interview with Carlos in December 2020





Entscheid im Fall Carlos

Brian bekommt Recht – aber keine 40'000-Fr-Entschädigung

🕒 25.03.2021, 10:47 Uhr

Das Zürcher Bezirksgericht hat die Klage des jungen Straftäters Brian K.* (25) gegen seine Haftbedingungen teilweise gutgeheissen. Geld bekommt er jedoch nicht.



Results Corpus A (reports)

(1) *Er vermied es Fragen zu beantworten, indem er auf diese mit Sätzen wie 'ich weiss es nicht' oder 'das muss ich mir erst überlegen' antwortete // He avoided answering questions by responding with phrases like "I don't know" or "I'll have to think about that".*

(2) *Dabei zeigte sich deutlich, dass Herr A. bereits seit früher Jugendzeit unter starken Insuffizienzgefühlen litt und die Einstellung "ich genüge sowieso nicht und mache es eigentlich immer falsch" tief verankert ist. // It became clear that Mr. A had been suffering from strong feelings of insufficiency since his early youth and that the attitude "I'm not enough anyway and I always do it wrong" is deeply rooted.*

(3) *Bei Aufträgen die er erledigen sollte reagierte er zu Beginn meistens ablehnend (warum immer ich?). // In the beginning, he usually reacted negatively to tasks he was supposed to execute (why always me?).*

Results Corpus A (reports)

Summary of results for the reports

- Usage of *ich* (engl. 'I') exclusively in quotes of delinquents
- function of quotes in the reports:
 - Provide evidence of an evaluation
 - Substitute an evaluation by letting the quote "speak for itself"
 - Unclear use of quotation marks
 - Exclusively referring to negative behaviour or negative self-attribution of the delinquent

Results: Corpus B

Über seinen Anwalt liess Carlos der NZZ jüngst ausrichten : «Eine Verwahrung wäre schlimmer als die Todesstrafe. Sie würden mich damit lebendig begraben und das mit 23 Jahren. Ich habe niemanden umgebracht. (...) Klar bin **ich** kein Engel, aber die machen mich zu einem Monster.» Die Wahrheit aber liegt wohl irgendwo dazwischen . (bz, 2020-12-20)

Carlos recently told the NZZ **through his lawyer**: "Imprisonment would be worse than the death penalty. They would bury **me** alive and that at the age of 23. **I** have not killed anyone. (...) Sure, **I'm** no angel, but they'd make **me** a monster." The truth, however, is probably somewhere in between.

Results: Corpus B

So **Brian K. kept silent**, but **his words were heard anyway**. The judge **quoted from a letter** written by K. to the prosecutor Ulrich Krättli. Not a friendly letter. On the contrary. **A mixture of gangsta rap and red wine scrawl, which you can still sometimes hear in Zurich today in the side streets of Chreis Cheib or in front of relevant Denner stores. A random stringing together of megalomaniac babble. So exuberant that one has to smile.**

If you think of a **singsong**, a **rhythm** and a **beat**, the suada would not be far away from the current loudmouth behavior in German rap.

[...] I'm the Baba, the antisocial boss, the chief dictator, the baddest man on planet, smart and big. Your prisons don't matter to me. I'm a killer, a contract killer, a hitman. You powerless dicks can't do anything to me. I'm dangerous because I'm so good looking. I want the fight, I am the most evil man on this planet, the most beautiful and the strongest. Fuck the justice, you can't do anything to me, I have always fucked you.

Attorney Häusermann, dark black suit, the high-pitched voice always at the tipping point, said in his four-hour monster plea appeasingly, this is just the language of law enforcement, there you don't learn to address someone with "dear" sir. For the bourgeoisie, this is not always understandable. One thinks to see the touch of a tortured smile in the face of judge Gmünder (FDP). (Watson.ch, 2019-10-31)

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Results: Corpus B

Bisher ist er der Öffentlichkeit bekannt als notorischer Straftäter. Als einer, der sein Leben nicht auf die Reihe kriegt und von den Behörden immer wieder weggesperrt wird. «Doch ich bin nicht das Opferlamm der Justiz», zitiert ihn die Republik bei einem Besuch im Gefängnis Pöschwies im Juli dieses Jahres. «Ich bin Brian the Lion.» Und so kämpft Brian wie ein Löwe. Nicht mehr mit seiner Muskelkraft, wie er es viele Jahre lang getan hat. Sondern mit rechtlichen Mitteln. Grenchnertagblatt, 24.08.2020

So far, he is known to the public as a notorious delinquent. As someone who can't get his life together and is repeatedly locked away by the authorities. **"But I'm not the sacrificial lamb of the justice system," Republic quotes him as saying during a visit to Pöschwies prison in July of this year. "I am Brian the Lion."** And so Brian fights like a lion. No longer with his muscle power, as he did for many years. But with legal means.

Conclusion

Representation and its dependencies

- delinquents' image depends highly on representation through speaking for others
- in mass media delinquents are shown as rather voiceless and need to be represented through lawyers
- in reports of correctional facility the delinquents' "own voice" depends on the report's functions

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