

Linguistic Diversity in a Dictionary of German Confusables

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German has pairs of competing words which are easily confused among native speakers and language learners alike. These words often share a root, are similar in form and their designated concept. They also show semantic or discursive differences, such as *effektiv/effizient*, *praktisch/praktikabel/praktizierbar*. Variation and resulting uncertainties arise from lexical similarities including phonemic, morphological and semantic features. Confusables are more freely exposed to semantic variation and negotiation, as their meanings are partially conceptually associated. Such variation occurs in general and in technical contexts, e.g. when *Methodologie* or *Methodik* are being used instead of *Methode* to create a specific stylistic register and causing lexical rivalry. Consequently, language forums are full of questions such as: Is there a difference between German *effektiv* and *effizient* or are they used synonymously? Why are *Parodontose* and *Parodontitis* used similar in public discourse but differently as technical terms in dentistry?

The new corpus-guided dictionary *Paronyme – Dynamisch im Kontrast* is descriptive in nature, documenting conventionalised patterns and use. It provides information on preferences and tendencies as observed in authentic communication. Corpus-assisted descriptions of confusables allow for empirical studies of meaning within different discourses or domains and registers on the one hand and diachronically on the other hand. Both have revealed new insights into the dynamics of contextual use and meaning change. Semantic diversity and differences in meaning with regard to context or discourse is fully explored and unfolded in the new online reference guide. Lexicographic information on domains and reference reflect meaning in variable public discourses, sections on technical language use open up discrepancies to everyday public communication and to speakers' intuitions. In *Paronyme – Dynamisch im Kontrast* a broader picture of commonly confused terms is being sketched. This helps users to distinguish meaning according to conceptual-referential aspects and to discursive criteria and it enables them to allocate meaning to use, lexical patterns to topics, varieties or registers.

In this talk, I will explore the rivalry between easily confused words, stylistic variation in corpora and cognitive-oriented lexicographic solutions to help users to understand typical and authentic usage in different situations. I will introduce the new dictionary that covers confusables from a usage-based perspective where linguistic details as linked with nonlinguistic information. At the same time, change in meaning between rival terms is sketched, and differences in usage between linguistic varieties are documented. I will also show how linguistic diversity is the impetus of language change and how this is recorded in the new resource. Adaptive access and variable search options allow different foci and perspectives on paronymy. All these will be explained with the help of examples.

AG 11