

ZEFIS

EINLADUNG ZUM KOLLOQUIUM

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Moved to tears and deeply stirred: On the semantics of 'melting' emotions

Speaking about being moved or touched involves special vocabulary, basically derived from verbs denoting stimulus-experiencer relations. We used the linguistic properties of participles as a window into the conceptual structure of 'being moved' in German. Eight verbs were investigated in a free association task with 610 participants. The results suggest that present and past participles provide access to different perspectives on the mental representation of moving situations and to distinctive key knowledge types in the conceptual structure of the investigated emotion. Independent ratings of the associated items as well as an MDS analysis based on the overlap-coefficients between the target concepts revealed regularities in the internal differentiation of the semantic field with respect to psychologically pertinent factors such as valence and arousal.

Dr. Milena Kühnast received her doctoral degree (2010) in cognitive sciences from Potsdam University/Germany. She is postdoctoral research fellow in a multidisciplinary project at the Excellence cluster 'Languages of Emotion' of the Freie Universität Berlin. She explores the interdependencies between the linguistic representation and the conceptualisation of 'being moved', an affective state with a long research tradition in aesthetics and philosophy but barely noticed in psychology. As a psycholinguist, Milena Kühnast has provided her expertise to several language acquisition projects at the Centre for general linguistics (ZAS), Berlin (2005-11), where she investigated the acquisition of discourse coherence markers from cross-linguistic perspective collaborating with researchers from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, New Bulgarian University and Utrecht University.

Mi., 23. Mai 2012, 18:15 Uhr, Raum O.08.29

Prof. Dr. Monika Rathert & Prof. Dr. Jarek Krajewski

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