

“PEOPLE INCORRECTLY CORRECTING OTHER PEOPLE”

(Re-)Correcting comments as a means of
stancetaking in digital communication

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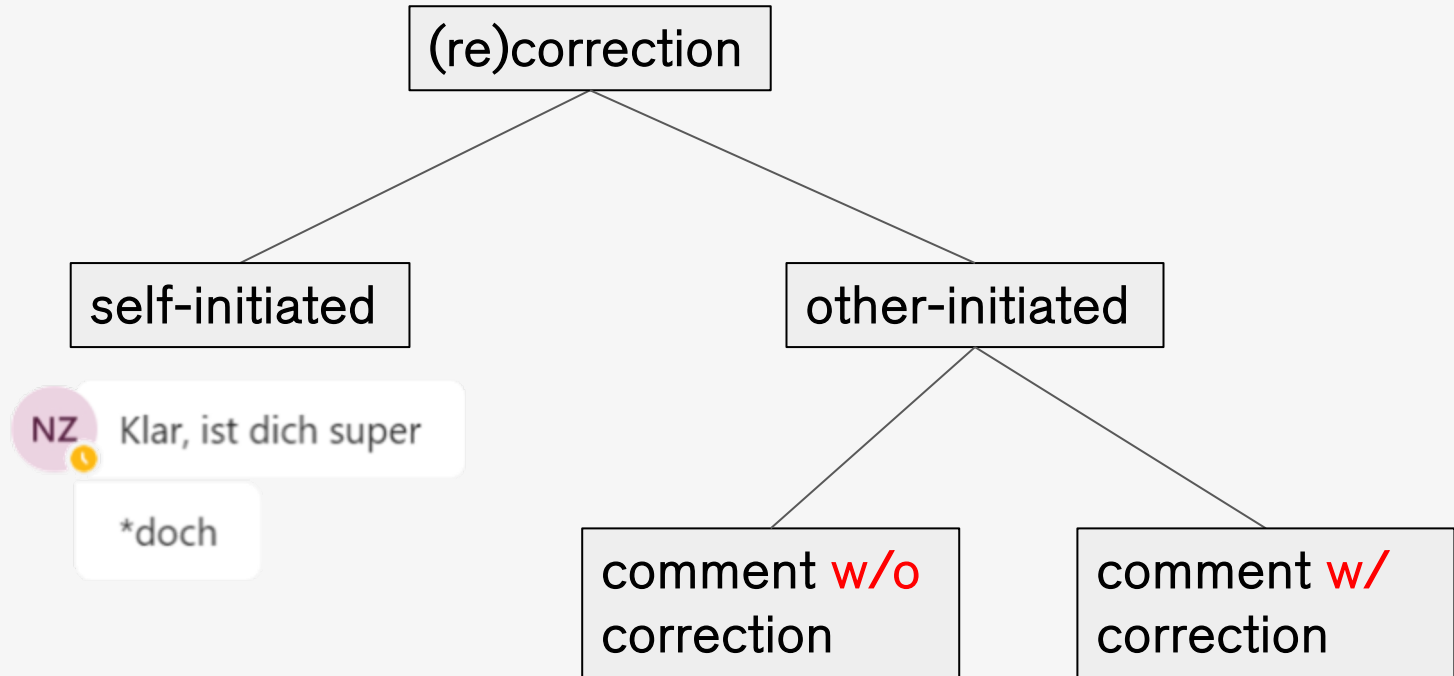
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18TH INTERNATIONAL PRAGMATICS CONFERENCE

Panel *The speech action of commenting across discourse types*

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*Would be great if you knew how to spell
You are so stupid*

„während des Sprechens“, das dass klar ist!

OVERVIEW

1. Theoretical Contextualisation
2. Case study: (In)Correct (Re)Correcting
3. Discussion: (Re)Correcting as a Means of Positioning
4. Outlook

PRESCRIPTIVE PRACTICES

- how are linguistic (esp. orthographic) mistakes or generally deviance from the norm **perceived** and **negotiated**?
 - “Rather than being seen simply as mistakes, incorrect spellings are often viewed as a reflection of a person’s intelligence, social class, and even morality.” (Horobin 2013: 250)
 - has been treated mostly in **psychological research** – with contradictory findings
 - distinction between mistakes and variation (Scott et al. 2014) as well as between typos (= errors/performance) and actual mistakes (= competence) (Boland/Queen 2016)
 - deviance perceived as being associated with cognitive abilities (Figueredo/Varnhagen 2005) or not (Kreiner et al. 2002), ascription depends on personality of the reader (Boland/Queen 2016)
- **prescriptivism** as a (socio-)linguistic subject (Chapman/Rawlins 2020)
 - “Laiensprachkritik” as umbrella term for prescriptive practices enacted by linguistic ‘laypersons’ (Arendt/Kiesendahl 2014, 2015)
 - Does informal digital writing foster such practices? – Focus on (self-)ascriptions and practices: *orthography police* (Frick 2023), *grammar nazis*, *orthographic shaming* (Meletis 2022)

DATA AND METHODOLOGY





- stancetaking (Spitzmüller et al. 2017: 8) through (re)corrections and comments in informal digital writing contexts
 - linguistic norms and mistake are only one (special) case
- **data sources**
 - Facebook group *People Incorrectly Correcting Other People*, Reddit sub *r/IncorrectlyCorrecting*
 - guerilla ethnography: „By 'guerilla ethnography', I refer to an alternative to the highly systematic type of ethnography [...]. It is based on the basic principle of 'observation', making the familiar strange and the strange familiar, synthesizing different types of sources, reports, self-reflections as a guide for interpretation and a critical reading of contemporary reality” (Giaxoglou 2020: 65)

CASE STUDY: EXAMPLE 1



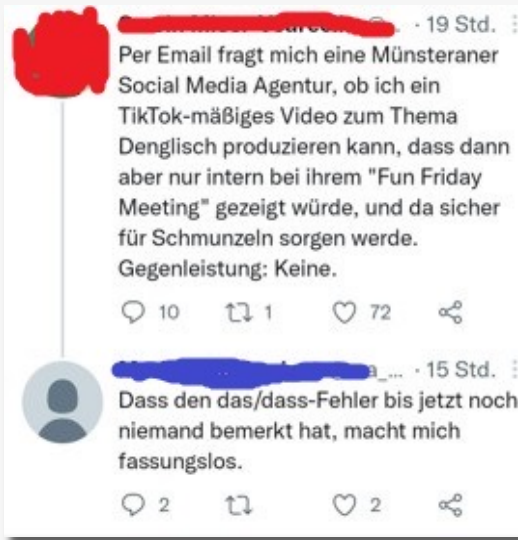
- metapragmatic negotiation of (re-)correcting practices and chains as entertainment (e.g., in Facebook groups)
 - "Lol...internet gold!"
 - meta-metalevel: incorrect corrections on posts within the group
- explicit mention of **correction chains** (and their absurdity/complexity?)
- public context allows for a **free participation** of interactants (and the involvement of third parties)
 - in this case four commenters (indicated by colors)
- **stancetaking functions** of (different kinds of) likes and emojis

CASE STUDY: EXAMPLE 2

 <small>Reputation: 2013-03-15 Beiträge: 2,108</small>	<p>Re: Kreative Rechtschreibung (Der Grammar Nazi Thread)</p> <p>gibt ja auch ein paar spezialisten, die "en" und "nen" vertauschen. ausgeschrieben ist es dann wieder korrekt, aber wenn ich "ein" und "einen" schon abkürzen muss, dann doch bitte richtig.</p> <p><i>There are also some specialists who mix up "en" und "nen". Written out it is correct again but if you really feel the need to abbreviate "en" und "nen" then please do it correctly.</i></p>
 <small>Reputation: 2019-12-21 Beiträge: 31,825</small>	<p>Ich HASSE das, wenn Leute das beim Sprechen(!!!!!) falsch benutzen. Das ist nen Fehler, hmokay?</p> <p><i>I HATE it when people use that incorrectly when speaking. That is a mistake, hmokay?</i></p>
 <small>Beiträge: n/a</small>	<p>"während des Sprechens", das dass klar ist!</p> <p><i>"While speaking", that this is clear!</i></p>
 <small>Reputation: 2019-08-04 Beiträge: 2,108</small>	<p>*dass das</p> <p><i>*that this</i></p>

- self-ascription "Grammar Nazi Thread"
- explicit marking as **mockery**
 - meta-mockery (*nen Fehler, hmokay?*)
- chain advancing from extended comment to simple (patterned) recorection (*)
 - selective recorections: lower case and ellipses in posting one stand uncorrected
- stancetaking functions of punctuation and quotation marks, capital letters

CASE STUDY: EXAMPLE 3



via e-mail a social media agency from Münster asked me to produce a TikTok-like video on the topic Denglisch. They want to show it on their „Fun Friday meeting“ where it will ensure amusement. Reward: None.

that nobody noticed the das/dass mistake leaves me stunned.



the minor typo (probably auto correction) can be corrected automatically in the reception process.

that was not a criticism of the sender.

huh, maybe everyone noticed but just found it completely unnecessary to correct it, because it does not help at all in terms of content?

not understood what I was getting at

CASE STUDY: EXAMPLE 4

👍👍👍 1.8k >

Sorry but as soon as I read "conversate" I was out. The word you were looking for is "converse" (not the athletic shoe!) Honestly, I instantly lost respect for IFLS as your "writers" can't even use correct language in their "articles." 😊

17 h Haha Reply 62 🗨️

... you shall be my first ever post on **People Incorrectly Correcting Other People** 🤡

Just now Like Reply

Conversate is a word that means to take part in a conversation. You can delete comments though!

17 h Like Reply 31 🗨️

... According to Merriam Webster - a greater authority on the English language than you, I suspect - it is a word that has been in use for more than 200 years.

Incorrect or not, if you say "conversate", I don't want to talk to you.

19 Std. Gefällt mir Antworten 12 🗨️

...
...
<https://youtube.com/shorts/oqXBGT8q4PM?feature=share>

YOUTUBE.COM
Yes, T-Pain, "Conversate" Is A Real Word

8 Std. Gefällt mir Antworten

The fact they said converse was an athletic shoe..

2 Tg. Gefällt mir Antworten 17 🗨️

... It initia...
... I know!

6 weitere Antworten ansehen

...
In Linguistics we'd call the formation of "conversate" the result of back-formation from "conversation."

This happens all the time.

And if you think this is just "bad grammar," you don't want to read the list I'm linking here, because your head will explode:...

Mehr anzeigen

EN.M.WIKIPEDIA.ORG
List of English back-formations - Wikipedia

2 Tg. Gefällt mir Antworten 10 🗨️

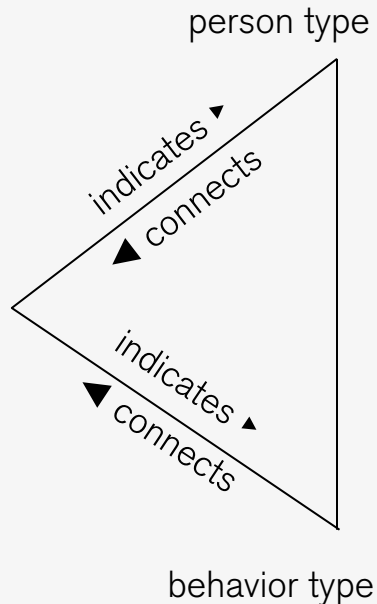
...
The word is actually supposed to be "converse"

DISCUSSION

- types of **speech actions**
 - self- and other-initiated corrections
 - criticism/appraisal of mistake vs. criticism/appraisal of (incorrect) correction
- distinction between **comment** vs. **correction** is fluid
 - difference: comments more often require and/or invite an answer, corrections do not (?)
 - implicit criticism within comments may not be perceived readers (incl. those who made the mistakes)
- resources and strategies of **stancetaking**
 - **primary stancetaking** through correcting or commenting
 - **secondary stancetaking** through liking posts or comments
 - **tertiary stancetaking** by commenting at a metalevel (e.g., posting a screenshot of a mistake or its [incorrect] correction in a dedicated Facebook group)
- overlapping of **positioning strategies** (Frick 2023)
 - (1) mockery, (2) doing being an expert, (3) invalidation, (4) registration (of linguistic features, of communication spaces, reversed)

OUTLOOK

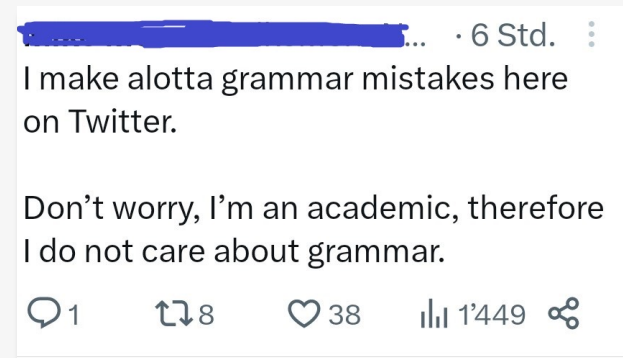
prescriptivist practices
(re)correcting &
commenting



*„I am a German
teacher but I am on
holidays, therefore
nothing can trigger
me.“*

*The machine
display:*

*the kiosk does not
do give change*



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