Luisa Gödeke (Universität Göttingen), Sonja Zeman (LMU München)

AG5: Linguistic Aspects of Fictionality

> "It is hard to think of any actual human culture that has not in some way engaged in fictional discourse, and it is a cliché that our cognitive and social lives are permeated by fiction."
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> (Maier & Stokke 2021: 1)

Human language not only serves the purpose of speaking about facts in the real world, but is also widely used to talk about hypothetical and fictional scenarios. Fictional discourse has always posed pressing questions about the reference status of fictive entities and proper names, the speech act involved in fictional storytelling, and the relation between fiction, imagination and other forms of hypothetical discourse. Recently, new interest in discourse and register studies has put fictionality in the spotlight, as it has been shown that fictional discourse is affecting core grammatical entities like temporal and local deictics, tense, personal pronouns and modality (see Maier & Altshuler 2021). In this sense, fictionality has more than one dimension: It can reflect upon (i) the ontological status of its referent (e.g. the status of a referent like a unicorn in the real world), (ii) the fictional discourse within a (fictional or non-fictional) text (in tradition of Hamburger 1957), and (iii) the idea of a certain fictional speech act (Searle 1975).

As such, fictional language use takes center stage in many different areas of linguistics: Philosophy of language, (formal) semantics, pragmatics, grammar, register and discourse studies, text linguistics, corpus linguistics, etc. In our workshop, we want to bring together researchers working from different perspectives and backgrounds in order to stake out the relationship between fictional discourse and linguistics and calibrate this new emerging field. We are particularly interested in, but not restricted to the following questions:

-   How can we define fictionality in linguistic terms? What are the margins to other forms of hypothetical discourse (e.g. dreams, counterfactuals,...)?
-   What is the relationship between fictionality and grammar?
-   How can we annotate fictional passages in corpora?
-   What are the cognitive prerequisites for fictionality (displacement / decoupling)?
-   What can linguists learn from concepts of fictionality in narratology and literary studies?

Our AG is situated in the main topic of the DGfS annual meeting "Kreativität und Routine" in a double sense: On the one hand, fictionality is concerned with the question about how mental concepts and scenarios are "created". On the other hand, the interdisciplinary approach of the AG itself is creative by building a bridge between linguistics, philosophy, narratology and recent DH projects in literary studies.

References

Hamburger, K. 1957. *Die Logik der Dichtung.* Stuttgart: Klett. ● Maier, E. & Stokke, A. (eds.). 2021. *The Language of Fiction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. ● Searle, J. R. 1975. The logical status of fictional discourse. *New Literary History* 6/2, 319-332.