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Néologie sémantique et analyse de corpus

Sous la direction de Jean-François Sablayrolles



Néologie sémantique et ambiguïté dans la communication et dans l'évolution des langues : défis méthodologiques et théoriques

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- **Abstract:** If we analyze different types of semantic neology, it is striking to observe that restrictions of meaning and metonymic changes are relatively frequently observed in borrowings, while other types of neology such as metaphor play a more marginal or even insignificant role (cf. Pulcini 2002: 162, Winter-Froemel 2011a: 22). In order to explain why exactly these two types of neology occur, I will argue that they share the basic characteristic of resulting from a semantic reanalysis (cf. Detges & Waltereit 2002), that is, we can assume ambiguous utterances where the traditional and the new meaning can coexist without any problem arising from this ambiguity for speaker and hearer. To illustrate this hypothesis, I will present the results from corpus studies of recent loanwords (*F. people, grappa, flipper, G. Testimonial / I. testimonial*). The studies show that ambiguous contexts play a fundamental role for explaining how the semantic neologies occur (cf. Evans & Wilkins 2000: 549-550, Heine 2002: 85-86, Marchello-Nizia 2006: 253-264). At the same time, methodological and theoretical challenges arising from the study of ambiguities have to be addressed. With respect to the theory of language change, it seems useful to introduce a distinction between two types of ambiguity: ambiguity in discourse and ambiguity in the language system (cf. Bauer, Knape, Koch & Winkler 2010). These two types of ambiguity, which can be linked to different stages of the changes, prove to be of fundamental importance for a detailed account of the phenomena studied. Moreover, I will discuss the semiotic implications of the phenomena analyzed and propose a model of communication which permits us to account for semantic reanalysis and other phenomena of semantic neology.
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