



Spatial references in vacational picture postcards: Language and space from a text and corpus linguistic point of view

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1. Corpus

- The postcards were collected at the University of Zurich (Department of German Studies) from 2009 to present day for the purpose of text-linguistic studies in the genre of vacational picture postcards.
- The postcards included in our corpus were sent by post from people on **holiday**, mainly from **Switzerland** but also from Italy, Germany and other **European countries** to their family, friends, colleagues and neighbors living in the German-speaking area of Switzerland.
- The corpus comprised ca. **14'000 cards**. They are dated **from 1898 to 2016**. About 95% of the cards were written mainly in **Standard German** and the remaining part in **Swiss German**.

2. Research Question / Method

- Which are the **typical communicative patterns** on vacational picture postcards?
- From a text-linguistic point of view, communicative patterns are reconstructed with regard to the **characteristics of textuality** (i.e. intratextual / intertextual boundaries and relations, thematic coherence, and pragmatic function of text).
- From a corpus linguistic point of view, the patterns are elicited quantitatively from the corpus using **collocations** and **n-grams**. The extracted patterns are compared with those in other corpora to discover genre-specific features.

3. Spatial Reference and beyond

Standardization and Variation within «lingua turistica»:

- During the 20th century, postcards have proved themselves as a perfect **medium for writing during holidays**, i.e. for giving accounts of *being on vacation*, including space and place (countries, landscapes, regions and cities), typical activities and the peculiarities of accommodation and lodging.
- We look for patterns of holiday accounts on postcards from both a **synchronic** and **diachronic** point of view.

Link(s) between Text and Picture, Reading and Viewing

- Consisting of **two equally relevant sides**, picture postcards make an **unique** genre of multimodal reception between reading (the text on the writing side) and viewing (the sight on the picture side).
- Picture postcards illustrate a **very special case for studying spatial reference**: establishing the world as a place to be on vacation through writing and imaging.

Postcard from 1954



Postcard from 1977



Postcard from 1995



Postcard from 2012

