



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

H. Hausendorf¹, J. Scharloth^{2/3}, N. Bubenhofer⁴

¹Department of German Studies, UZH, ²School of International Liberal Studies, Waseda University, Tokyo, ³Institute of German Studies, TU Dresden, ⁴Institute of Language Competence, ZHAW

Project members: K. Sugisaki¹, N. Wiedmer¹, D.-J. Obert³, M. Naef¹, M. Schnick³, D. Koch¹, M. Kellenberger¹, S. Calleri¹, J. Langenhorst³

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 Germanspeaking 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»:

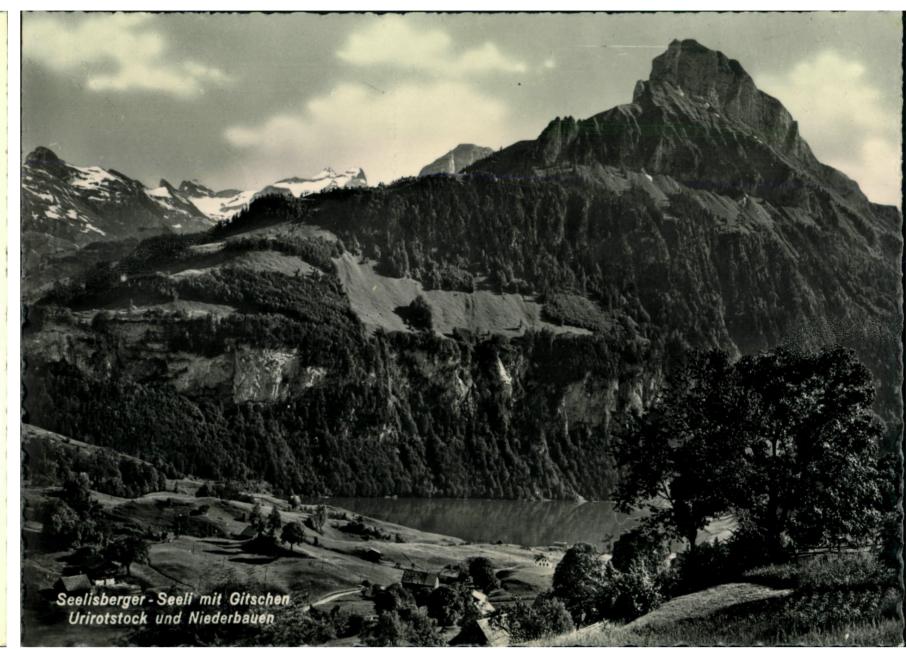
- During the 20th century, postcards have proved themselves as a perfect **medium for writing during holidays**, i.e. for giving accounts of *being on vacation*, including space and place (countries, landscapes, regions and cities), typical activities and the peculiarities of accommodation and lodging.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



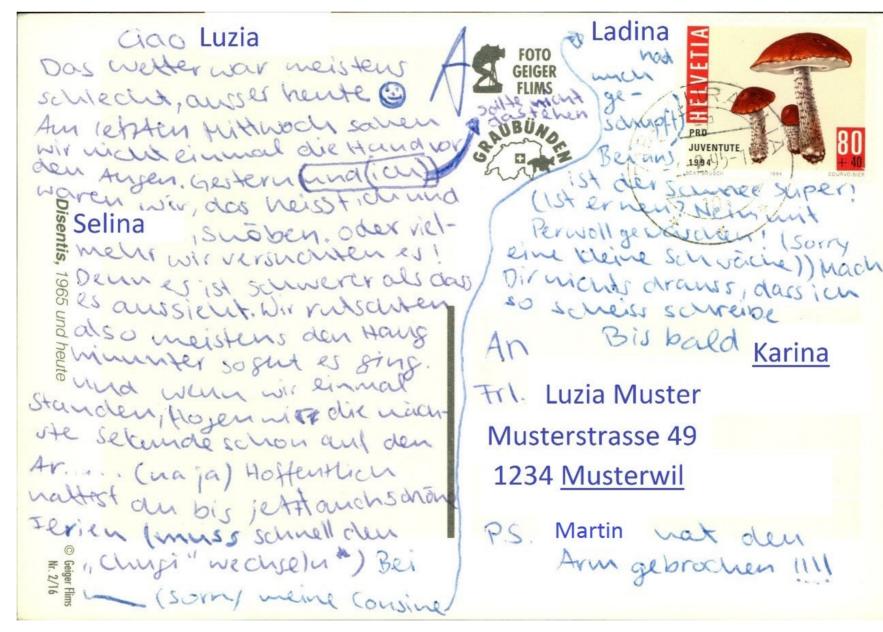


Postcard from 1977





Postcard from 1995





Postcard from 2012





Contact us

Prof. Dr. Heiko Hausendorf
Department of German Studies, UZH
heiko.hausendorf@ds.uzh.ch



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