

Abstract

This thesis examines how it is possible to study linguistic meaning-creation on an empirical basis. An empirical study of linguistic meaning-creation presupposes a theoretical framework founded in a dynamic view of language like the one proposed by integrational linguistics, because it is a dynamic phenomenon. However this approach involves significant empirical consequences particular related to the data problem, because it perceives linguistic signs as being unique and unavoidably bound to the temporal dimension. Furthermore the founder of this theoretical approach does not account for how meaning-creation is conducted. Consequently in order to examine the linguistic meaning-creation on an integrational foundation, it is necessary to develop a methodological basis, which takes into account the empirical consequences of integrationism, and to provide a theoretical framework of how the linguistic meaning-creation takes place. I solve both of these problems based on an empirical case where I collect empirical ‘data’ through focus group interviews with four different groups of men who have sex with men, for the purpose of examining how they create meanings regarding the word *barebacking*.

Based on this ‘data’ I develop the methodological basis for the study, where I argue that to overcome the empirical consequences of integrationism it is necessary to *retro-contextualize* the data as well as exposing all the interpretive levels that are an inevitable part of all analytical processes. This is crucial for the validity of the study!

To solve the theoretical issue propose a hypothesis and argue that linguistic meaning-creation basically takes place at an *intuitive* and a *reflective* level. However only the reflective level can be studied empirically as it is linguistically explicit. On the reflective level I distinguish between *primary* and *secondary* integration strategies.

Finally, I demonstrate how the empirical case can be examined based on the developed theoretical and methodological framework, and this analysis thus answers how it is possible to study linguistic meaning-creation on an empirical basis.