

Outlook

In the next few years, the dictionary will continue to grow. It will be extended by new entries and by adding further details concerning variation and change, spoken communication as well as information on grammar or on technical language use.

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Cooperations

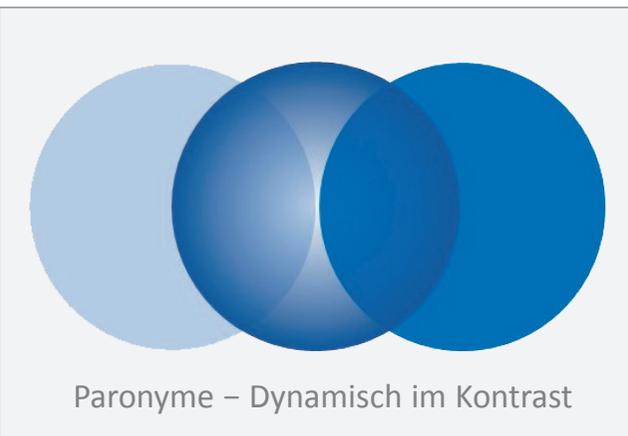
- Project Methoden der Korpusanalyse und -erschließung (Research Unit "Korpuslinguistik")
- Project OWID (Research Unit "Lexik empirisch und digital")

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Paronyme – Dynamisch im Kontrast

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Paronymwörterbuch

An Online-Dictionary of Easily Confused
Words in German

Stand 7/2018

PARONYME DYNAMISCH IM KONTRAST

AN ONLINE-DICTIONARY OF EASILY CONFUSED WORDS IN GERMAN

Linguistic Phenomenon

Paronyms are lexical items with related morphological roots and similarities in sound, spelling and/or meaning. These can cause difficulties for speakers in specific communicative situations. On the basis of linguistic strings and patterns, about 900 candidates of confusable pairs have so far been detected in DEREKO, the large German reference corpus.



Figure 1: Examples of paronyms (created with: www.worditout.com)

The aim of the project is twofold: Firstly, it will treat the phenomenon of paronymy theoretically and integrate it into new cognitively oriented semantic models. Secondly, the project documents linguistic insights lexicographically in a completely new electronic German reference guide. The focus is on usage-based descriptions which show how paronymy works in real contemporary communication.

Methods and Corpus

For our work we have compiled a purpose-built collection of data covering a range of linguistic material between 1995 and 2015 from all regions of Germany. In order to make our lexicographic descriptions transpar-

ent, this corpus can be accessed through the corpus system COSMAS II. Computational procedures performing collocation analyses and contrastive semantic investigations support systematic structuring of linguistic data with respect to patterns and contexts. These patterns are interpreted lexicographically; citations and examples are chosen editorially. Usage-based studies and corpus-linguistic tools assist our editorial processes.

Dynamic and contrastive entries

The new dictionary “Paronyme – Dynamisch im Kontrast” is a free online reference guide. It is accessible via OWID^{plus}, a linguistic platform: www.owid.de/parowb/ without registration. Looking up easily confused lexical terms requires contrastive entries where users can compare meaning, contexts and reference.

Depending on the user’s interest details can be studied on two different description levels. The purpose of the **entry overview** is to provide a meaning spectrum and to gain an immediate general overview. In clearly arranged comparative entries, users can instantly familiarise themselves with the number of single usages and with contextual similarities and differences (see figure 2).

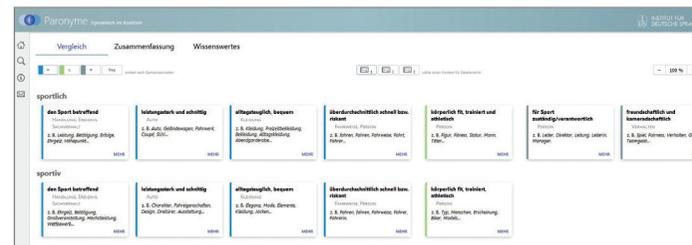


Figure 2: Contrastive overview (sorted by similarities)

Different types of context and degrees of similarity are visibly marked using a specific ordering system and a colour scheme. Contextual instances/uses are divided into categories based on semantic features. The information a user obtains at this point includes a minimum of lexical and encyclopaedic details, e.g. a short definition, a conceptual reference and prototypical examples. This concept-driven navigation structure offers a large amount of knowledge about contextual behaviour, parallels or differences, meanings and concepts.

As users have different concerns about typically confused words, the paronym dictionary took a crucial step back from a static reference book and moved towards a **dynamic** reference guide, generating specific information on demand. Particularly with polysemous items it is possible to present contexts according to various linguistic parameters, e.g. contextual uses sorted by differences or frequency.

Optionally, more data can be expanded for each contextual use. The **detail view** comprises more comprehensive and additional lexicographic details such as an explanatory definition, more typical lexical combinations (up to 10 illustrative collocations), corpus examples, synonyms/antonyms and typical constructions (see figure 3).

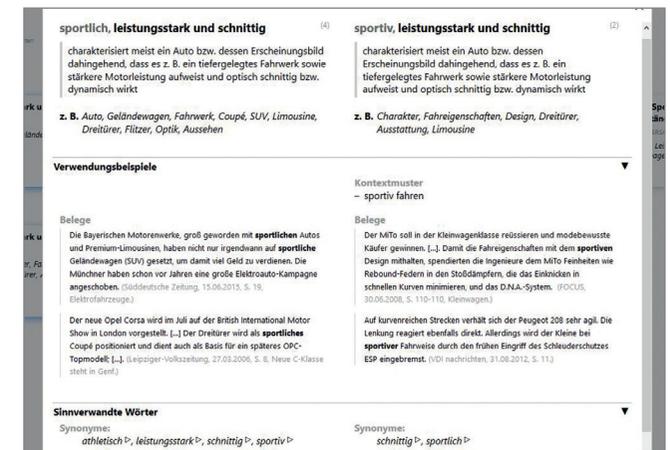


Figure 3: Contrastive detail view of two contextual usages

The objective of this detail presentation is not only to provide more information but also to combine lexical and encyclopaedic details which can then be consulted together and mentally stored together.

“Paronyme – Dynamisch im Kontrast” breaks with traditional rigid entry structures. In situations of linguistic doubt, native speakers and learners can learn about thematic domains and semantic environments in which confusable words are likely to occur, together with their natural lexical preferences. This reference guide includes alternative access routes to language in authentic usage events involving paronyms with flexible consultation options.