How Do Speakers Define the Meaning of Expressions? The Case of German $x$ heißt $y$ (“$x$ means $y$”)

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Abstract: To secure mutual understanding in interaction, speakers sometimes explain or negotiate expressions. Adopting a conversation analytic and interaction linguistic approach, I examine how participants explain which kinds of expressions in different sequential environments, using the format $x$ heißt $y$ (“$x$ means $y$”). When speakers use it to clarify technical terms or foreign words that are unfamiliar to co-participants, they often provide a situationally anchored definition that however is rather context-free and therefore transferable to future situations. When they explain common (but indexical, ambiguous, polysemous, or problematic) expressions instead, speakers always design their explanation strongly connected to the local context, building on situational circumstances. I argue that $x$ heißt $y$ definitions in interaction do not meet the requirements of scientific or philosophical definitions but that this is irrelevant for the situational exigencies speakers face.

Speakers in interaction usually assume that recipients understand them correctly and take the intersubjective understanding of the meaning of expressions for granted. If this is not the case, they secure mutual understanding through grounding (see Clark & Brennan, 1991, “next turn proof procedure”; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974, p. 728). This can mean that speakers demonstrate understanding (see Sacks, 1992) of a prior turn (in the first sequential position), for example, by formulating candidate understandings (Antaki, 2012) in a second position. In a third position, the prior speakers react to it to secure mutual understanding (or correct the other, see Deppermann, 2015a). If we cannot observe such an overt grounding process (e.g., when speakers just produce a fitted next turn), we cannot decide from an analyst perspective whether speakers and their recipients actually achieve intersubjectivity. For many occasions in human interaction, however, an overt grounding process is not relevant; not facing non- or misunderstanding is often sufficient for the interactional task at hand. As Clark and Wilkes-Gibbs put it, interaction is based on “the mutual belief that the listeners have understood what the speaker meant in the last utterance to a criterion sufficient for current purposes” (Clark & Wilkes-Gibb, 1986, p. 33). This principle is not only relevant for actions that participants need to understand to react in a relevant way (Levinson, 2013) but it applies to meanings of lexical units too.

The interactive constitution of the meaning of expressions has recently come into sharper focus in linguistic research. Interactional approaches like Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics show that the meaning of expressions in interaction is not categorical or fixed but situated and negotiable (Interactional Semantics’). Sometimes participants treat expressions as unknown or problematic and display that a clarification of their meaning is relevant. An explicit way to negotiate meanings of expressions metacommunicatively is to define or explain them self-initiatedly or to
display that an explanation by another participant is relevant. In German interactions, speakers frequently define an expression $x$ by an explanation or expression $y$ using the format $x$ heißt $y$ (“$x$ means $y$”). Extract 1 from an interview about HF’s work in a library shows an example.

**Extract 1: FOLK_E_00148_SE_01_T_01_DF_01_c685**

01 HF aber dat is noch n bereich,  
but that still is a sector
02 der (.) zuf sagen ma in der ausleihe zufriedenstellend is.  
that, let’s say, regarding borrowing, is still satisfactory
03 => zufriedenstellend heißt, .h
satisfactory means
04 (0.2)
05 => dass jedet medium mindestens einmal im jahr umgesetzt wird.
that each medium is borrowed at least once a year

In this extract $x$ is instantiated with the adjective *zufriedenstellend* (“satisfactory,” lines 2 and 3), $y$ with the subordinate clause *dass jedet medium mindestens einmal im jahr umgesetzt wird* (“that each medium is borrowed at least once a year,” line 05). Typically, the expression $x$ is used beforehand and then explained either self-initiatedly, like in this extract, or after a repair initiation. The extract also illustrates that speakers often do not explain or negotiate the actual meaning of an expression but explain criteria for using them in a specific situation.

In this article I contribute to the current research on definitional practices in interaction. I examine the German format $x$ heißt $y$ (“$x$ means $y$”) as a semantic practice of defining or explaining the meaning of expressions. Preliminary to my analysis, I present studies on interactional semantics that deal with how speakers constitute meaning interactively, I outline research on definitions in interaction, and I shortly sketch prior research on constructions with German *heissen* (“to mean”). After presenting my method and data, I analyze several sequential environments and interactional tasks in which speakers make use of this format and illustrate for which kinds of expressions explanations are (made) relevant at all. Finally, I discuss my findings and conclude with an outlook on their relevance for the field of interactional semantics.

**Interactional semantics**

Prior research on interactional semantics has already pointed out the main differences between interactional approaches and the structuralist view of semantics (see Deppermann, 2019; Deppermann & Spranz-Fogasy, 2006). Structuralism analyzes linguistic signs as part of a more or less static and abstract linguistic system with paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. The association between an expression and its idea is taken as a distinct combination that implies the possibility of definite distinctions between different linguistic signs (de Saussure, 1966). This idea forms the basis of concepts like lexical decomposition by semantics features and word field theory, which are compositional, definition-based models working with necessary and sufficient conditions (see Engelberg, 2011; Staffeldt, 2017). Those models assume clear-cut boundaries between categories and imply that all members of a category are equally appropriate representatives. Studies in the field of cognitive science challenged this assumption (Berlin & Kay, 1969; Rosch, 1973; Rosch & Mervis, 1975) and show that boundaries between categories are fuzzy instead, that members are related to one another through family resemblance (Wittgenstein, 1953), and that human perception as well as representation of semantic categories show prototype effects. Some members of a category are perceived as more representative for that category than others: They are the default values that, however, can be
invalidated in specific contexts (cf. Barsalou, 1987). Moreover, in his frame-semantic approach, Fillmore (1985) outlines the strong relation between linguistic meaning and encyclopedic knowledge.

After the pragmatic turn, researchers payed more attention to the use of language instead of the internal linguistic system and questioned the idea of context-free meaning of expressions, both in written texts and spoken discourse. Corpus linguistic approaches deal with the syntagmatic environment of linguistic expressions and focus on usage patterns in the form of collocations and show that the combination of expressions is not arbitrary but depend on systematic rules and constraints (e.g. Hoey, 2005; Sinclair, 1991). Other textlinguistic approaches like Discourse Analysis analyze the variability and change of meaning of expressions over time when users try to shape them differently in dissent, like in political or professional discourse (so-called semantic fights; see Liedtke, Wengeler, & Böle, 1991; see also Deppermann, 2015b; Felder, 2006).

In prior studies conversation analysts and interactional linguists touch on the topic of meaning in interaction in studies of definitions (Harren, 2009; Koole, 2010; Spreckels & Trojahn, 2009; Temmerman, 2009), securing understanding (Deppermann, 2015a), repair-initiations and repairs (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977; Selting, 1987), candidate understandings (Antaki, 2012), formulations (Deppermann, 2011; Heritage & Watson, 1979), generalization and specification (Bilmes, 2011), categorization (Bilmes, 2015), interpretations (Helmer & Zinken, 2019), and constructions such as and .

Studies of the interactive constitution of meaning show that sometimes expressions are treated as unknown, and clarification about their denotations or situational uses are made relevant (Deppermann, 2006, 2019; Deppermann & Spranz-Fogasy, 2006). Speakers may explain, correct, or negotiate the meaning of the expressions. Sometimes they take the initiative in doing this to secure (mutual) understanding or avoid misunderstanding.

Deppermann (2019) analyzes occasions and practices of negotiating the meaning of expressions. He points out that meaning is bound to local situations and contexts and constituted interactively to guarantee understanding (and prevent misunderstanding), convey knowledge (didactically), or support a certain position in a conflict. He identifies several practices of the interactive constitution of meaning, such as definitions and contrasting expressions with antonyms (see also Deppermann & De Stefani, 2019), naming synonyms or naming properties of a category. The explicated meaning that becomes publicly available sometimes may approximate to what is called the “conceptual meaning” (e.g., Leech, 1981), the core sense of an expression we might find in dictionaries, but often speakers display that they use an expression with a different, local meaning that is situation- and context-adapted (see Deppermann, 2019, p. 173).

Definitions and the specific definitional practices described above are one way to meta-communicatively deal with the meaning of expressions. Next, I present studies that deal with the notion of definition.

Definitions

The vernacular notion of “definition,” seen through how people “define” concepts or expressions in practice, differs from the philosophical concept of “definition,” which often relates to epistemological questions and problems. Philosophers from antiquity to modern eras have thought about the nature of definitions. According to Aristotle, thinking is bound to concepts, which in turn are bound to definitions (Aristotle, 1938): A formal definition of a concept contains necessary properties or conditions, which combined are sufficient for the categorization as that concept and for the differentiation from others. Related to that are the notions of genus proximum and differencia(e) specifica(e): The first defines a concept by subordinating it to a superordinate category, whereas the latter make(s) it clearly distinguishable from other representatives of that category (Aquinas, 1947 [1265], based on Aristotle, 1938). This idea is still reflected in the modern concept of lexical decomposition and word field theory and often in dictionary entries as well. One aspect that definitions in dictionaries all have in common is that they provide for nominal definitions, not what has been called “real definitions” in
philosophy. In Locke’s terms: They deal with the meaning of expressions or concepts, not with the constitution of objects in the real world (Locke, 1975 [1689]).

Definitions in interaction often turn out to be less overarching or general in outlining the meaning of expressions or concepts. In addition, speakers do not clearly provide for either a nominal or a real definition of expressions or concepts. A decision from an analyst perspective between both types of definitions would rest on an improper differentiation between linguistic and encyclopedic knowledge. As Langacker (1987, p. 154) put it: “the distinction […] between linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge is largely artefactual, and the only viable conception of linguistic semantics is one that avoids such false dichotomies and is consequently encyclopaedic in nature.” Participants in interaction usually do not make such differences themselves (explicit). Instead, empirical data of spoken interaction make us see definitions from a different perspective and let us focus on the exigencies as well as affordances of verbal communication, depending on interaction type, participation framework, interactional tasks, and sequential environment.

Prior research on definitions and explanations of expressions in interaction has mostly focused on didactical settings. Defining in expert–novice interaction is closely connected to explaining, naming, showing, and demonstrating—all of them share features in terms of a family resemblance (see Stukenbrock, 2009). Quasthoff and Hartmann (1982) have outlined four practices of providing for an explanation of the meaning of an expression: giving examples, naming synonyms, naming genus proximum and differencia specifica, and naming essential properties and features (see also Deppermann, 2019). Not all of them meet the requirements of a definition in Aristotle’s sense, but some of them hint at the importance of situational exigencies and practical purposes. Later research even more strongly points to the fact that practical purposes are the main motivation for defining expressions or concepts (see Birkner, 2006). Researchers hint at the shortcomings of lessons, in which teachers work with abstract definitions of or synonyms for expressions, instead of explaining the expressions in a proper way to qualify children to understand and learn the functions of the underlying concepts (see Koole, 2009; Spreckels & Trojahn, 2009). Adapting explanations of expressions closely to the specific situation and orienting to recipients, for example, by using multimodal means like gestures, helps students memorizing the meaning of an expression and connect it to the learning matter (Belhiah, 2013; Harren, 2009). Deppermann (2016) illustrates that specific interactional settings (like practical driving school lessons) require a close connection between definitions, instructions, and embodiment. Recently, context-sensitive linguistic formats of defining have come into the center of attention. For example, integrating a negative definitional component (e.g. “expression” is not x but is y) orients to expectations connected to an expression and allows speakers to regulate participants’ understanding of a stretch of talk (Deppermann & De Stefani, 2019).

In summary, in some situations definitions that describe the “conceptual meaning,” that is, the core sense of an expression may be required (i.e., in case of non-understanding of unfamiliar expressions or in case of school lessons or exams in which experts test the knowledge of novices). Yet, prior research illustrates that participants in interaction mostly do not deal with the meaning of expressions by giving semantic features and clear-cut definitions. Instead, they orient to practical purposes and provide for relevant situational meaning instead of all-encompassing definitions. Depending on interaction type and specific interactional tasks, dealing with the meaning of expressions is accomplished by different practices, serves different purposes, and has different functions.

**German heißen in interaction**

German heißen has several meanings like “to have the name,” “to have the meaning” (E-Valbu: https://grammis.ids-mannheim.de/verbs/view/400556), and “to correspond to an expression, a word in another language, to mean/express the same” (Duden: https://www.
Research on German heißen in interactional data has dealt with mainly two constructions, das heißt (“that is”) and was heißt x (“what does x mean”). Das heißt has been described as a marker for self-repairs and self-reformulations (Bührig, 1996; Güllich & Kotschi, 1987; Kaiser, 2017) and for other-reformulations or other-interpretations (Bührig, 1996; Deppermann & Schmidt, 2014; Helmer & Zinken, 2019). Researchers have described das heißt as an initial marker prefacing complex conclusions that elaborate or elucidate further talk (Bührig, 1996; Deppermann & Schmidt, 2014; Helmer & Zinken, 2019; Rost-Roth, 2006; Vargas, 2002). Das heißt is used as a connector that indicates that the subsequent formulation is an alternative to the previous one (see Breindl, Volodina, & Waßner, 2014, p. 1144). Günthner (2015) analyzes how was heißt x (“what does x mean?”) is deployed for other-initiated repairs and self-oriented talk. Speakers use the format to problematize stretches of talk that are not situationally appropriate or to clarify expressions when their situational meaning remains unclear. There is no research yet on German x heißt y. This article contributes to current research on definitional practices with specific formats (as shown above) and to research on formats and functions of constructions with German heißen.

**Methods**

All audio and video data come from the corpus FOLK (Forschungs- und Lehrkorpus Gesprochenes Deutsch, “Research and Teaching Corpus of Spoken German”), a corpus that contains talk-in-interaction from diverse informal, institutional, and public settings, like interaction between friends and family, school and driving school lessons, and public mediations. At the time I gathered my collection (in the course of 2018), it comprised about 230 hours of audio and video recordings. All data are available to the scientific public via dgd.ids-mannheim.de, a database that allows for a systematic form-based search through the corpus.

I searched for all instances of the format x heißt y (“x means y”), x being the definiendum, y being the definiens that defines or explains x. Both x and y are instantiated by either (nominal/verbal/adjective/prepositional) phrases, subordinate clauses, main clauses, or adverbs. My final collection consists of 80 cases.

I excluded cases of x heißt y if they did not deal with the meaning of an expression, if (1) speakers state a person’s name (ein dichter heißt jakob von hoddis (“one of the poets is called jakob von hoddis,” FOLK_E_00127_SE_01_T_01)) or (2) heißen means “to have as a consequence” or “to imply” (dass sie des kognitiv wissen heißt noch lange nich dass sie_s auch wirklich nit machen (“that you know that cognitively does not imply at all that you don’t do it for sure,” FOLK_E_00007_SE_01_T_01)).

To contribute to the further differentiation of interactional functions and semantic facets of the German metacommunicative verb heißen, I adopt a conversation analytic and interactional linguistic approach, examining the relation of linguistic form and interactional function (see Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2018). To explore systematic relations between sequential, formal, and functional aspects of my data, I categorized several aspects of each single case in a coding scheme, including interactional setting (informal, institutional, public, experimental), sequential position of x heißt y (first position, second position, third position), grammatical features of x and y (clausal, phrasal), type of expression of x (technical term, common expression, foreign word, abbreviation), and type of definition (general definition, situational explanation).

All presented data are transcribed using FOLKER¹ according to the conventions developed by Jefferson (2004). Where necessary, I provide multimodal transcriptions in addition, according to the conventions in Mondada (2018).
Concerning the format \( x \) heißt \( y \), I am especially interested in the practices, sequential environment, and interactional tasks in which speakers make use of this format, that is, for which purposes speakers use the format in, for instance, other-initiated repairs and other-repairs. Table 1 illustrates the sequential environments and already anticipates the structure of my analyses.

In my analyses I take into account which sorts of expressions (technical terms, foreign words, and abbreviations vs. common expressions) speakers negotiate or clarify. I examine in what ways they clarify or negotiate them (by general, context-free definitions that are applicable to other situations vs. situational explanations that display a specific partial meaning that is valid for that situation). I am especially interested in how the (phrasal or clausal) definition or explanation \( y \) “transforms” the expression \( x \) in question and at the same time builds on already existing and shared knowledge.

**Self-initiated explanations**

By explaining and negotiating the meaning of expressions, speakers avoid mis- or non-understanding. This is typically the case in expert–novice interaction like in didactical settings, but it applies to informal talk or public interaction, too. Intersubjectivity is typically established through a grounding process (Clark, 1996; Clark & Brennan, 1991). Sequentially, speakers achieve and secure mutual understanding in a sequence with three positions (Schegloff, 1992). In interactions with asymmetrical epistemic status (at school, in interviews with specific topics, and so on), speakers sometimes anticipate possible problems due to lack of intersubjectivity and explain expressions self-initiatedly (n = 35). In 75% of these cases, they explain either technical terms or foreign words, or resolve abbreviations, assuming them to be unknown or unclear to other participants (see Extract 1 above).

Lack of verbal response is another reason for defining an expression in question. Extract 2 shows an example of a teacher (SM) using the format \( x \) heißt \( y \) to explain the technical term *sprachstil* (“style of speech”):

**Extract 2: FOLK_E_00121_SE_01_T_01_c754**

01 SM: *wie is der sprachstil in der (. ) kurzgeschichte.*

02 *what is the style of speech in the short story*

03 (3.2)

04 SM: *egal welche ma nimmt?*

05 *no matter which one you consider*

06 (0.5)

07 SM: *ob hemingway- (. )

08 *whether hemingway*

09 SM: *ob borchert- (. )

10 *whether borchert*
During a lesson about short stories, the teacher asks his students to describe the typical style of speech (i.e., the writing style) in short stories. After his first question (line 1), there is a considerable pause of over 3 seconds, in which none of the students reacts verbally. The teacher generalizes and subsequently exemplifies his question by implying that all short stories have that writing style in common (line 3) and then naming some of the authors the class had examined during the lessons (lines 05–07). After another pause of almost 2 seconds, he defines the technical term: also sprachstil heißt jetzt eben lange sätze kurze sätze (“well style of speech means long sentences short sentences now,” line 09). This is clearly not a definition that meets the requirements of a “conceptual meaning.” The teacher explains the possibly unknown term x by exemplifying it with the two nominal phrases “long sentences short sentences,” the type of sentence structure being one characteristic realization (among others) that constitutes only parts of an all-encompassing notion of style of speech. He makes clear that his definition is not an exhaustive dictionary-like definition but that he only gives an example (beispielsweise, line 11). The exemplification, however, is valid and applicable in future situations too. The elliptical, phrasal turn design (“long sentences, short sentences”) hints at the fact that an examination of the length of sentences in prose (and the functions of varying the style of sentences) has already been a topic in previous lessons: The teacher thus establishes intersubjectivity about “style of speech” based on already existing and shared knowledge. In this concrete situation, the definition or exemplification gives the students the opportunity to orient to the teacher’s expectations of an answer but does not provide for a proper answer yet itself (see Ehlich & Rehbein, 1986, pp. 92–93). He merely refers to two extreme, contrasting “values” on a scale (see Deppermann & De Stefani, 2019), between which the students still have to choose to give a correct answer. The student who answers orients indirectly to this presetting, characterizing the writing style as “uncomplicated” (line 15) and with “simple sentences” (line 16), and in addition mentioning alltagsprache (“everyday speech,” line 17). By establishing a mutual understanding both of the meaning of the technical term and his expectations of an answer with the format x heißt y, the teacher enables and maybe also entices the student to provide a sufficient answer.

Sometimes speakers self-initiatedly “explain” abbreviations by substituting them with the underlying term: Building on common ground, usually they just resolve them by naming the original expression, given the fact that recipients are able to understand the longer expression without further explanation (e.g., er E heißt regioNALexpress [“RE means regional express”]; FOLK_E_00068_SE_01_T_04_DF_01_c879). In this way they neither provide the denotation of an expression nor do they give an appropriate definition in Aristotle’s understanding. Instead, they assume that the original words are self-explanatory and suffice for establishing the intersubjectivity needed in the specific situation.
Sequences of other-initiated repair

Speakers use the format *x heißt y* in sequences of other-initiated repairs (see Levinson, 1983, pp. 340–341). Either *x heißt y* serves as a repair-initiation or -pursuit in the function of a candidate understanding or confirmation check (see section 'Request for clarification with candidate understandings') or the format is used in responses to repair-initiations—speakers provide a sufficient definition of *x* then (see section 'Providing a correct definition'). In more than two-thirds of the cases, the expressions in question are technical terms and foreign words.

Request for clarification with candidate understandings

One example of a negotiation about the meaning of a foreign word illustrates that speakers may orient both to the denotation of an expression and to its practical relevancies in a specific situation. In Extract 3 a daughter (CA) and her mother (RA) are about to bake together.

01 CA: das rezept (.) is in cups.
   the recipe is in cups
02 AP: (1.2)
03 RA: in cups  
04 CA: [mit cups] kann ich nichts anfangen. (.)
   cups are not useful to me
05 ich brauche gramm.
   I need gram
06 (0.2)
07 => RA: cup heißt eine tasse oder,
   cup means one cup doesn’t it
08 (0.3)
09 CA: schon klar. =
   (that’s) obvious
10 aber jede tasse is unterschiedlich groß bei uns.
   but every cup has a different size at our house
11 (3.8)

Extract 3: FOLK_E_00331_SE_01_T_01_DF_01_c767

The daughter (CA) complains that the recipe operates with cups instead of grams (lines 01 and 04–05), not reacting to her mother’s first repair initiation (line 03). The mother (RA) obviously does not know that “cup” is a measuring unit (thus used as a technical term in the recipe), so she does not understand her daughter’s problem with the expression. Yet she does know the German equivalent of the foreign word and formulates the candidate understanding *cup heißt eine tasse oder* (“cup means one cup doesn’t it,” line 07). She substitutes the English term *x* with the possibly correct German expression *y*. With her turn-final question tag *oder* (“doesn’t it,” line 07), she makes relevant that she wants to establish intersubjectivity about the meaning and situational relevance of the English term and treats her daughter as an expert (see Drake, 2016). When responding, however, CA orients to her mother’s turn as a (superfluous) translation of the foreign word instead of a repair pursuit. She displays that she is well aware of the German equivalent of the English word (line 09) and points out her actual problem: She does not know which size of cup is requested: *aber jede tasse is unterschiedlich groß bei uns* (“but every cup has a different size at our house,” line 10). The underlying problem of course is that the daughter does not know the weight equivalent of one cup as a measuring unit and that the recipe does not provide a more specific micro sense (Croft & Cruse, 2004) either (like “tea cup” or “mug”). She makes very clear that an “explanation” of the expression in the form of a substituting translation does not suffice to solve this problem.

Providing a correct definition

To follow an ongoing interaction, participants sometimes feel the need to ask for the meaning of expressions, typically technical terms or foreign words. As they may use the format *x heißt y* only if
they are able to provide a candidate understanding, the usual format for asking for completely unknown expressions is *was heißt x* (“what does y mean?”; see Günthner, 2015). The format *x heißt y* provides the subsequent speaker with an opportunity to present a definition that builds on existing knowledge. Extract 4 stems from a lesson in a professional school in which the students, who will be supervisors, learn about how to deal with their own apprentices in the future and discuss the goals of an apprenticeship. At the end of the lesson, the teacher hands out a worksheet for homework on which the students ought to assign several notions to three key skills: personal, social, and cognitive. The expression in question (*kognitiv*) is a loan word that stems from Latin “cōgnitio.”

**Extract 4: FOLK_E_00004_SE_01_T_02_DF_01_c1386**

01 GS: und sie sollen jetzt zuordnen,=
02 =was davon sind personelle,
03 (0.3)
04 GS: was sind soziale fähigkeiten,=
05 =was sind kognitive fähigkeiten.
06 (0.4)
07 AB: was heißt n kognitiv,
08 (0.2)
09 GS: genau- (.)
10 danke? (.)
11 was heißt kognitiv?
12 (2.1)
13 GS: weiß der jemand von ihnen,
14 ja bitte,
15 US: irgende was mit m kopf,
16 (0.2)
17 US: oder so,
18 (0.4)
19 GS: ja:,
20 (0.9)
21 => GS: hier °kognitive heißt (.). intelligent da oben drin (.). ja,
22 (0.5)
23 GS: kognitive,
24 (1.2)
25 GS: intelligent.
26 (4.8)

After the teacher (GS) uses the technical term *kognitive fähigkeiten* (“cognitive abilities,” line 05), one of her students (AB) initiates repair, asking for the meaning of the adjective “cognitive” (line 07). His usage of *deem* (here only seen in the elision _n) indicates the teacher’s accountability (see Deppermann, 2009, p. 33). By *genau* (“exactly,” line 09) the teacher shows that she is aware of the fact that the expression requires an explanation or that she wanted to explain it anyway (see Oloff, 2017; Willkop, 1988) and thanks the student for reminding her (line 10). She first checks her
students’ knowledge by repeating and then reformulating the question and inviting a student to answer (lines 11–14). US gives a vague and underspecified explanation (irgendwas mit m kopf (0.24) oder so, “something with the head (0.24) or the like,” line 15–17) that however meets the teacher’s requirements in that situation. She confirms (line 19) and then formulates her own explanation stating kognitive heißt (.) intelligenz da oben drin (‘cognitive means intelligence up in there’), prosodically emphasizing both expressions in focus, “cognitive” and “intelligence.” She repeats both expressions and gives her students the possibility to make a note (line 26) before proceeding with the general topic, however not elaborating further on “cognitive.”

The teacher’s explanation is a context-free explanation in the sense that it is more or less applicable to other situations, even if not suited as an all-encompassing description of the conceptual meaning of the expression. The teacher does not actually substitute the adjective kognitive^4 with the nominal phrase intelligenz da oben drin but replaces the loan word with another Latin (but clearly Germanized) loan word, intelligenz, which however is completely Germanized and can be assumed to be part of both passive and active vocabulary. The term “intelligence” thus is apt for giving the students a hint of the meaning of “cognitive,” even if they are not the same and not substitutable, because both terms are related to another in a world field. Both refer to (cognitive) abilities and competences. The teacher uses “intelligence” as an approximation to push the recipients’ thoughts in a certain direction, which gives them a clue of what the term (and thus their homework) is about. With the adverbial phrase da oben drin (“up in there”) she refers to the localization in the real world, the head, where “cognitive” abilities are situated as well—she also aligns with her student’s previous explanation, referring to the head as the location of “cognitive.” This obviously suffices as a “general explanation,” which is not a clear-cut definition but (1) with which students may be able to at least roughly understand future uses of “cognitive” and (2) with which the students can deal with the worksheet at home. A definition suited as a dictionary entry (e.g., by naming necessary and sufficient properties) could not achieve the same effect, an embodied link between the word and the world.

The following example shows that the same expression can be explained by several definitions, which (even for technical terms) may be aspectual and may build on already shared knowledge about the general denotation. Those situational explanations “promote one specific understanding which is relevant for the interaction at hand” (Deppermann & De Stefani, 2019, p. 153). Instead of clarifying a context-free (partial) intension of an expression in question, speakers aim at making its specific relevancies transparent. Extract 5 illustrates how the same teacher (GS) explains the same technical term, kognitiv (“cognitive”), but gives a very different explication in a subsequent lesson, 1 week after the lesson of Extract 4.

Extract 5: FOLK_E_00007_SE_01_T_01_DF_01_583

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>GS:</th>
<th>TE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>wiederum jetzt drei begriffe,</td>
<td>again three terms now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>das letzte mal kam schon die frage auf,</td>
<td>the question came up already Last time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>was heißt eigentlich kognitiv.</td>
<td>what does cognitive mean actually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>°ne°,</td>
<td>right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>ich hatte dann gesagt=</td>
<td>I said then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>=es hat hier irgendwas mit köpfchen zu tun.=</td>
<td>it has something to do with the head/the wits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>=hier obbe.</td>
<td>up here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>ne;=</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The class is about to discuss the work sheet the teacher had given as a homework. Preliminarily she refers to the three skills again that apprentices should learn during the apprenticeship: cognitive, psychomotor, and affective or personal skills (data not shown here). She starts to explain the technical terms again, beginning with “cognitive.” After she refers to the previous lesson, in which a student had asked for the intension of “cognitive” (lines 03–05), she repeats her “general definition,” stating again that “cognitive” applies to the head and intelligence (lines 09–13). The prepositional phrase with the diminutive form mit köpfchen (literally ’with a little head’) idiomatically can also mean ’wits’—the teacher indicates that it is not (only) about cognitive processes but (also) about normative values. After this actualization of the expression’s meaning, she does something different from her definition 1 week before, when she points out the following: kognitiv heißt | (1.9) | was muss der hinterher an kenntnisse haben | an wissen haben (cognitive means what (1.9) kind of information does he have to have afterwards, what kind of knowledge’, lines 15–18). With this explanation, she moves from what touches the domain of a nominal definition (an explanation of the [at least partial] intension of “cognitive,” as in Extract 4) to another level: the practical relevancies of the term for the lesson and the students’ instructing and supervising of their apprentices in the future. Especially by using a w question format and hinting at a future point in time at the end of the apprenticeship (hinterher [’afterwards’]) the teacher focuses a deontic, normative understanding: The students themselves have to identify criteria their apprentices need to learn. The explanation in lines 15 to 18 considers both, explicitly the apprentice’s perspective and implicitly the students’ perspective as well, who have to make sure that their apprentices are going to obtain those proficiencies. Instead of just stating the more or less abstract, context-free intension of the loan word to make its meaning comprehensible, here the teacher emphasizes a more specific, deontic, and normative aspect of the expression, anchoring it in the here and now of the students’ situation and projecting its relevance to their future. The teacher does not only enable her students to follow her class, but by indicating a personal motivation she also accounts for why they have to learn those technical terms.

Like in Extracts 4 and 5, teachers in didactical settings often explain technical terms to establish intersubjectivity. This is different when definitions are deployed by participants with lower epistemic status to an ongoing topic and/or who are on a lower hierarchical level: They deploy definitions to check or express their knowledge or understanding (see Temmerman, 2009). This is the case in Extract 6, which stems from a university viva on separable verbs. The student (AP) talks to her professor (JG) about the verbal bracket in German.

Extract 6: FOLK_E_00056_SE_01_T_01_DF_01_c799

01 AP: außerdem-
   furthermore
02 AP: (1.2)
03 AP: isses ei äh is es is es ei is es is die markierte struktur
   it is eh it is it is eh it is the marked structure
04 im deutschen. (.) die satzklammer.
   in German, the verbal Bracket
As in Extract 4, a repair-initiation precedes the explanation with x heißt y (line 08 and 15–17, using the was heißt y format). However, the motivation here is a different one: As an expert in linguistics, the professor of course knows the intension of markiert (“marked,” line 08) in a linguistic context. The reason for initiating a first repair is that the student uses the wrong technical term (markierte struktur [“marked structure,” line 03] instead of unmarkiert) when she refers to the German verbal bracket in relation to separable verbs. The professor prompts the student to correct herself when he checks her knowledge of the meaning of markiert, using the format was meinen sie (“what do you mean,” line 08). The student realizes her mistake and repairs the term (lines 10–14). The professor insists on an answer, however expanding his question to an explanation of both terms markiert and unmarkiert, now an even more explicit knowledge check with the format was heißt x (“what does y mean,” lines 15–17, in comparison with the prior prompt to rethink the word choice). The student offers the definitions die unmarkierte struktur heißt es ist der normalfall | der rede und die markierte struktur ist das was auffällig is (“the unmarked structure means it is the normal case of speech and the marked structure is that which is striking,” lines 22–25), prosodically stressing the opposing key expressions (unmarkiert/normalfall and markierte/auffällig). Propositionally, the student does not elaborate further on what “normal case” or “striking” means.
(i.e., she does not give examples or expanded explanations), but her definition is sufficient enough for her professor to close the sequence (lines 27–28).

In the given context, the technical terms unmarkiert/markiert and the common expressions normalfall/auffällig are not synonyms but, like in Extract 4, the key expressions may be related to each other in a word field. Her definition of the technical terms is more or less applicable to several situations, in which (grammatical) structures are in focus. Concerning the specific situation yet, the student formulates what in philosophy is called a “context definition”: In this type of definition, it is possible to substitute the proposition that includes the definiendum by a proposition that does not include it but has the same meaning (Prechtl & Burkard, 2008, p. 99). In terms of Extract 6 and taking into account the current topic, the proposition “some grammatical structures (e.g., verbal brackets) are unmarked” in that specific context has the same meaning as “some grammatical structures (e.g., verbal brackets) are the normal case,” the substitute “normal case” explaining “unmarked.”

As hinted at above, it is not determinable whether the student formulates a nominal definition (aiming at the meaning of the expression “unmarked”) or a real definition (aiming at the essence of “being unmarked”). The distinction is not only impossible (as the distinction between linguistic and encyclopedic knowledge), but it is also irrelevant for the student. The clausal turn design of her explanation as an orientation to a higher style of speech (in comparison with the teacher in Extract 4) might indicate her main goal: to position herself as a competent student and demonstrate her knowledge. In addition, she builds her explanation on shared knowledge: She presumes that the professor as the expert knows when, how, and what kind of linguistic structures may be striking or the normal case and how this relates to the ongoing discussion about verbal brackets.

**Other-repairs**

In 10 cases other speakers perform repairs (see Levinson, 1983, pp. 340–341) with $x$ heißt $y$. They correct either the first speakers’ definitions of expressions or a performance that demonstrates mis- or non-understanding. The first case contains only technical terms and foreign words that are used or explained in a wrong way (see section ‘Correcting a wrong definition/candidate understanding’) and three other unusual, but interesting, cases stem from driving school lessons (see section ‘Correcting performance’).

**Correcting a wrong definition/candidate understanding**

Sometimes speakers correct definitions or candidate understandings by other participants with $x$ heißt $y$. In these cases $x$ has been defined beforehand with $x$ heißt $y$ or similar formats like $x$ ist $y$ (“$x$ is $y$”) by another participant. Extract 7 shows an example from a public mediation. The participants argue about the budgeting of a railway and urban development in a German city. The opponents of the project assume that the German Railways intentionally calculate with costs that are far too low. During the mediation session, three accountants (one of them HS) explain their mostly positive report on the financial planning.

**Extract 7: FOLK_E_00070_SE_01_T_06_DF_01_c283**

01 HS: er hat äh (0.4) für uns nachvollziehbar ausgeführt dass er in our opinion he explicated reasonably that he 
02 sagt, .h wir müssen (. ) in unsern baumaßnahmen optimieren. says we have to optimize in our construction measures 
03 dafür werden wir bezahlt. that’s what we get paid for 
04 (1.0) 
05 HS: das is richtig. that is correct 
06 (0.5) 
07 HS: ((smacks)) keine frage.
HS claims that the project leader has explained reasonably that it is his job to “optimize” with regards to construction measures of the project (implying that he cannot assume an exceedingly high price, line 01–07). The mediator (HG) reacts with a repair initiation in the form of the candidate understanding optimieren heißt knapp kalkulieren (“to optimize means to calculate tightly,” line 09), which at the same time is a definition of optimieren. He substitutes x with a verbal phrase y that can be interpreted as a provocative near-synonym, demonstrating that he does not treat the expression as a technical term. The accountant HS repeats the expression in question (line 10) and repairs the mediator’s definition with the same format x heißt y (see Du Bois, 2014, on dialogic syntax) but with a clausal turn completion instead of a phrasal substitution. By claiming to define the term in dem () technischen sinne- (“in the technical sense,” line 10) he treats optimieren as a technical term and subsequently delivers a far more elaborate structure y (lines 11–14). In his complex clause he provides a technical definition of what constructors and planners mean by “optimize.” In contrast to just “translating” or substituting a technical term with a phrase that builds on prior knowledge, HS takes the advantage to demonstrate his epistemic authority, support his (neutral) position as an accountant, and refute the opponents’ negative understanding in an elaborate and factual manner. En passant he orients to the reproach implied by knapp kalkulieren, “calculate tightly,” reformulating it with the positively connotated kostenschonend (“cost-effectively,” line 13).

As in this extract, correcting a prior definition with x heißt y may give speakers the opportunity to position themselves in a specific way, orienting to and refuting meanings that other participants might have implied in the previous definitions. In my collection this is mostly the case in the public mediation, in which positioning and argumentation is relevant due to the conflictual interaction. Participants often negotiate (or “fight over,” cf. Felder, 2006) the meaning of technical terms that are polysemous. These terms have a common meaning in everyday life, sometimes conveying a negative connotation, but in the professional discourse and in connection with typical collocations they are used with a technical (e.g., economic) meaning (e.g., optimistisch/konservativ berechnen/schätzen (“to calculate/estimate optimistically/conservatively”).

**Correcting performance**

The three cases in which a driving instructor corrects the performance of his students after an instruction all contain common expressions: lenken (“to steer”), schalten (“to change gears”), stehenbleiben (“to stop”). On closer examination those “common expressions” build on very detailed and procedural background knowledge. Students have to know and adapt those instructions to the very specific situation, coordinating the monitoring of the traffic and other road users with knowledge about the car’s behavior and gaze/hand coordination.

Consider Extract 8, taken from a driving school lesson. The student (TD) is practicing the reverse parking of the car (parallel to the street), following his driving instructor’s (RK) instructions. The common expression in question is lenken (“to steer”), which RK explains with embodied so (“like this”).
01 RK: so=un jetzt zurück.
so and now backward

[14s left out, student moves car backwards, instructor comments]
18 (2.0)
19 RK: >lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenken lenlen

20 #lenken lenken lenken.<
steer steer steer

#Fig1

und nach hinten gucken.=
and look backward.

21 td: +turns head, looks backward–

22 +=hier hast du alles klar.
Here everything is clear

23 RK: #<L:ENken.>>
steer

———>+looks forward—>

#Fig2

24 (1.0)+(1.7)

td: —+looks backward—>

25 => RK: .hhh+ (.)*lenken heißt (.)*so#.
steer means (like) this

td: —+

rk: *turns the steering wheel*holds wheel—>

#Fig3. driving instructor steers to the left
During the parking process the student needs to turn the steering wheel harshly to the left to achieve the correct position of the car parallel to the street. The instructor continuously repeats lenken (“steer”, see Figure 1) with high volume and high speed (lines 19–20), indicating that the student needs to continue the action (see Mondada, 2017) and that the student does not perform well in the task. After the instructor asks the student to look backward to monitor the distance to other parking cars (lines 21–22), in line 23 he gives the last of many instructions to steer (lines 19–23). He pronounces it with even more increased volume and a stretched vowel that indicate his irritation about the student: Although it is already the eighth trial in that lesson, the student has not activated the correct steering and moving the car by hearing the key term lenken. Instead, he has turned the wheel in the wrong direction and with the wrong intensity (slightly to the right instead of turning it hard to the left, see Figure 2). After a long audible inbreath, with increased volume and a short smile the instructor states lenken heißt so (“steer means (like, see Figure 3) this,” line 25) turning the wheel into the correct direction. The modal deictic expression so requires an embodied enacting to make the recipient understand its situational meaning (see Stukenbrock, 2010). Simultaneously to so, the driving instructor performs the correct bodily behavior that the student should have performed himself. The student claims to understand (line 28) and the instruction sequence ends shortly afterward.

The clarification of the common expression lenken does not aim at a clarification of its intension. Instead, it is about the practical realization of an instruction in a very specific situation. This implies that the student had already learned how to perform correctly: So would probably not work in the first instruction sequence, which in general tends to be more explicit (see Deppermann, 2018). In the first instruction (not shown here), the instructor indeed explains the steering process in a more elaborate way. Thus, in Extract 8 the instructor builds his explanation on shared knowledge: He reminds the student of the formerly learned process that they established during previous trials. Yet, the instructor also relies on shared knowledge regarding another important aspect: Lenken heißt so is valid only for that exact situation and for the specific goal of reverse parking parallel to the street.
a counter-example, to achieve the previous 45-degree angle in relation to the street, the student would need to steer to the right, not to the left. To correctly understand an aspectual meaning of a common expression and apply it to future situations, recipients need to infer several parameters. In this case, these parameters, primed by the instructor’s so-bodily performance, are as follows:

1. The task of reverse parking at the side of the road (not, e.g., to pull into a parking space)
2. The position of the car (already in an angle + its position in relation to the curbstone)
3. The timing (ideally moving the car while steering, not steering while standing still)
4. The intensity (turning the wheel hard and continuously until the right angle is reached)

In theoretical didactical settings, like in Extracts 2, 4, 5, and 6, participants negotiate the meaning of expressions to accomplish more or less theoretical tasks (answering a question, filling out a worksheet with questions, following the topic of a lesson). The affordances and requirements of establishing intersubjectivity and demonstrating knowledge in practical settings like driving school lessons or dancing lessons (Keevallik, 2013) are very different. Students need to be able to bodily perform, coordinate theoretical knowledge and practical skills, and do all this in a very short time slot.

Discussion
Speakers use specific definitional practices to orient to their recipients and deal with specific interactional tasks and situational circumstances. Adopting a conversation analytic and interactional linguistic approach, this article examined how speakers use the format \( x \text{ heißt } y \) for different goals when they constitute and negotiate the meaning of expressions. Results indicate that with the format, speakers connect an unknown or problematic expression with already existing or previously established knowledge. In case of foreign words and abbreviations, they often adopt a phrasal format and typically just substitute the expression \( x \) in question with the (presumably) known expression \( y \) (see Extract 3). In the case of technical terms, \( x \text{ heißt } y \) is used for both phrasal substitutions with known terms and clausal explanations (see Extracts 1, 2, and 4–7). In both cases speakers build on assumed or established background knowledge like familiar expressions and preliminary established concepts, adapting the explanation to the specific situation. Although anchored in the situation, parts of the definition of technical terms often are formulated in a rather general, context-free manner (see Extracts 4 and 6 in particular): As they are not part of participants’ active or passive semantic lexicon, speakers provide the expressions’ denotations in a way that is transferable to other situations. In some situations speakers display that adopting a clausal turn design with a more elaborate and general explanation is also a practice that aims at displaying an expert status (see Extracts 6 and 8).

Speakers negotiate the meaning of common expressions in other contexts. Since participants are familiar with the denotation of common expressions, the reasons for “explaining” them is connected closely to the situation and its local or practical relevance. Expressions in question may be indexical (e.g., “hier,” “hier,” FOLK_E_00178_SE_01_T_01_DF_01_c39), polysemous (e.g., “offen,” “open” in common understanding vs. a technical term in the context of short stories, i.e., the collocationally restricted meaning of “open beginning”), and subjective or evaluative (e.g., “ordentlich sprechen,” “speak properly,” FOLK_E_00177_SE_01_T_01_DF_01_c76, “eigentlich schon gut,” “actually quite good,” FOLK_E_00074_SE_01_T_01__DF_01_c164). Consequently, speakers focus on the practical relevance that is connected to the affordances and exigencies of the specific situation, when they explain or negotiate common expressions (see Extract 8). Table 2 that is based on codes of the coding scheme presented above supports the difference between the quality of definitions and explanations of common expressions versus potentially unknown expressions like technical terms:

Especially driving school lessons illustrate that “common expressions” often are more than that: They (should) activate distinct theoretical, procedural, and bodily knowledge that needs to be
adapted to a very specific situation. This points to the fact that speakers do not only establish intersubjectivity with definitions but always presuppose detailed lexical and pragmatic knowledge about situational parameters and the adaptability to new situations too. Speakers who learn a new or reactivate an already learned expression must be able to evaluate in which situations they may apply the given definition or explanation. This illustrates that interactional histories influence and shape (the type of) definitions.

Practically, there is not a single case in my data in which speakers provide an abstract, all-encompassing definition suited as a dictionary entry, describing the conceptual meaning of an expression, for instance, by stating necessary and sufficient properties, not even in school lessons in which such definitions might be relevant for exams. This is in line with prior research, which points out that definitions in interaction do not need to meet the requirement of an abstract scientific or philosophical definition or, when they are required, are introduced in other types of sequences and with other types of formats.

In contrast, depending on interactional settings and goals, sequential environment, and situation, defining expressions needs to be tightly situated and context-sensitively adapted according to specific exigencies and relevancies. Considering this, definitions in interaction reveal which kinds of (partial) meanings and connotations speakers and recipients have in mind, when they use or hear an expression in an interaction: not an all-encompassing dictionary-like definition but typically locally situated aspects that are evoked by or connected to the ongoing interaction. Sometimes definitions even reveal personal stances toward (using) potentially problematic expressions.

Examining a format that has not yet been in focus of prior research, this article contributes to research on pragmatic and semantic features of constructions with German *heißen* and is in line with current research on Interactional Semantics that shows how the constitution of meaning is bound to local situations and contexts. Next to *heißen*, also other metacommunicative verbs (that can be translated as "to mean") might be used with a similar format, for example, *x meint y* or *x bedeutet y*. While focusing on systematically searchable practices is an eligible way of examining how speakers negotiate the meaning of expressions, other approaches like focusing on actions of defining and explaining (e.g., introducing concepts that are not bound to specific linguistic formats but need to be learned in driving school lessons like “driving carefully,” Helmer) are still to be pursued. The findings of this and previous studies (e.g., Deppermann, 2019; Deppermann & De Stefani, 2019) may advance the prospective research on the interactive constitution of meaning.

**Notes**

1. FOLKER is an annotation tool developed for the transcription of natural, multipart interaction (see Schmidt & Schütte, 2010).
2. By exemplifying *sprachstil* with this simple dichotomy, he also characterizes the task as a simple one, thus maybe enticing somebody to volunteer.
3. There are no video recordings of that lesson, but we can assume the teacher disambiguates the deictic expression *da* (“there”) by some sort of pointing gesture to the head.
4. *Kognitive* is not the basic form (which would be *kognitiv*) but a conjugated one, either apt for a feminine singular noun (e.g., *intelligenz*, lines 21 and 25) or apt for a plural noun (e.g., *fähigkeiten*, “abilities,” line 05).
5. In only one single case in my collection a foreign word is explained in a clausal formulation; in all other cases the \( x \) and the \( y \) correlate grammatically (i.e., a noun is substituted with a noun, e.g., in the native language), an adjective with an adjective, and so on.

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