

Discursive Urban Place Making

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In this lecture, I will present one area of my research portfolio: urban linguistics. I will show how spaces are turned into meaningful places through various social semiotic moves and stylistic practices. These discursive processes of urban “place-making” (cf. Busse and Warnke 2015, Busse 2019) create, construe and contest a specific – but also dynamic – identity of an urban place and therewith mark – due to its speakers’ active role in positioning themselves in the social landscape – a particular value of, for example, a neighbourhood and/or of an urban community of practice. These urban linguistic and semiotic patterns are conceptualised from an interdisciplinary perspective drawing on approaches from sociolinguistics, stylistics, digital humanities, corpus linguistic methodologies as well as semiotic landscape studies. With examples of multimodal discursive practices used in selected neighbourhoods of Brooklyn, New York, I will also illustrate my mixed-methods approach which combines, among others, a qualitative and a quantitative methodological framework and the use of multivariate big and small data. The paper closes with a presentation of the the heiURBAN database as well as the associated web-application which provides both a novel, VR-enabled, visualisation of linguistic and semiotic patterns of urban discursive place-making as well as tools to compile, retrieve, analyse these.

References:

- Busse, Beatrix, and Ingo H. Warnke. 2015. “Sprache im Urbanen Raum.” In *Handbuch Sprache Und Wissen*, edited by Ekkehard Felder and Andreas Gardt, 519–38. Handbücher Sprachwissen 1. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Busse, Beatrix. 2019. “Patterns of Discursive Urban Place-Making in Brooklyn, New York.” In *Corpus Linguistics, Context and Culture*, edited by Viola Wiegand and Michaela Mahlberg. Diskursmuster - Discourse Patterns 15. Berlin: De Gruyter.