

Dear colleagues,
we would like to invite you to a talk by

Thomas Hoffmann (Eichstätt-Ingolstatt)

On

Football Chants as Multimodal Constructions

Monday, 12.6., 16.15-17.45

Room IG 3.201

Abstract:

When Northern Ireland was beating Spain in a friendly match in 2009, the Irish fans sang 'Are you England, are you England, are you England in disguise, are you England in disguise'. Frequently, when winning, Arsenal fans sing 'Are you Tottenham,...' – although they are playing against another team. In fact, many English football clubs have similar versions of the same chant.

From a cognitive linguistic point of view, these various Are-you-X-in-disguise chants can be argued to give rise to a schematic constructional template such as (1):

- (1) FORM: [ɑ: ju: [FOOTBALL TEAM]1
 ɑ: ju: [FOOTBALL TEAM]1
 ɑ: ju: [FOOTBALL TEAM]1 in dɪsgaɪz,
 ɑ: ju: [FOOTBALL TEAM]1 in dɪsgaɪz]chant

MEANING: 'our current opponent play like X1 and X1 is a crap football team'

The form part has the fixed elements [ɑ: ju:] and [ɪn dɪsgaɪz] as well as a slot for the name of a football team that is repeated four times. Another property of the construction's form, not shown in (1), is that it has a fixed tune associated with it (the religious hymn 'Cwm Rhondda', or 'Bread of Heaven'; Shaw 2010: 7). Interestingly, as indexed on the meaning level of the construction, the football team that is inserted in the schematic slot is not the name of the current opponent.

Drawing on a large on-line collection of British football chants (www.footballchants.org) as well as YouTube clips, I will present a multi-modal construction grammar analysis (Steen and Turner 2013) that provides a cognitive analysis of the rhythmic, metric as well as situational-contextual, social factors (cf. Kopiez and Brink 31999) that constrain the use of these template-based chants. As I will argue, this constructionist analysis not only provides an adequate analysis of football chants, but also yields important sights into the general cognitive grammatical system of speakers (as summarized in Hoffmann and Trousdale 2013; Hoffmann 2015).

We are looking forward to seeing you.

Gert, Manfred & Frank

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