

Holden Härtl\*

# Name-informing and distancing *sogenannt* ‘so-called’: Name mentioning and the lexicon-pragmatics interface

<https://doi.org/10.1515/zfs-2018-0008>

**Abstract:** This paper aims at a unified analysis of the different interpretations which constructions involving the German name-mentioning modifier *sogenannt* ‘so-called’ can adopt. In contrast to nouns like *Sepsis* ‘sepsis’, a noun like *Hotel* ‘hotel’, as in *sogenanntes Hotel*, gives rise to a “distanced” interpretation of the construction rather than one informing about a concept’s name. After a thorough investigation of the lexical-semantic properties, we propose the reading of the construction to emerge from an interplay between lexical factors like the head nominal’s conventionalization, on the one hand, and pragmatic implicatures rooted in relevance- as well as manner-based principles, on the other. From a compositional perspective, the *so* in *sogenannt* will be reasoned to be identical in function to quotation marks as a means to refer to a linguistic shape through demonstration. The different interpretations of the construction will be coupled with the type of binding of the agent-argument variable as well as the event variable of the verbal root *nenn-* ‘call’ of *sogenannt*.

**Keywords:** name, mention, quotation, pragmatics, relevance

## 1 Introduction

The British sitcom *Miranda* has a running gag, which is thought-provoking from a lexical-semantic as well as from a pragmatic perspective. The gag is about Miranda’s mother Penny, who frequently uses the catch phrase *what I call* as a parenthesis in contexts where it does not seem appropriate:

- (1) a. *There was a little, what I call, incident, in which the police unnecessarily got involved.*  
(*Miranda*, Season 2, Episode 5)
- b. *The only thing missing is a, what I call, groom.*  
(*Miranda*, Season 3, Episode 8)

---

\*Corresponding author: Holden Härtl, Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Kassel, Kassel, Germany, E-mail: holden.haertl@uni-kassel.de

Every now and then in the show, Miranda delivers an explanation for the comical effect when she reprimands her mother by pointing out that words like *incident* or *groom* are common words used by everyone and by no means something that only Penny could possibly use in a somehow special way.

Miranda's comment suggests that *what I call* has a restriction to be compatible only with lexical material that is not commonly established. This intuition will be the starting point for our investigation. Specifically, we will discuss why constructions involving the name-mentioning modifier *sogenannt* 'so-called' in German receive non-canonical interpretations with certain words. In its default use, *sogenannt* informs the addressee about the status of the head nominal as a conventionalized term used in a certain speech community. In *sogeanante Sepsis* 'so-called sepsis', for example, *sogenannt* indicates the head noun's status as an established (medical) term for the corresponding denotatum, i.e., for blood poisoning. This, however, is different with high-frequent nouns like *Hotel* 'hotel' or *Garten* 'garden' as in *sogeananntes Hotel* and *sogeananter Garten*, that is, with nouns that we can assume to be generally conventionalized. With nouns like these, the construction is more likely to receive a "distanced" interpretation rather than a name-informing one, usually in combination with an ironic or sarcastic undertone.

The current paper aims to shed light on the linguistic factors relevant for an explanation of the interpretational differences in *sogenannt*-constructions. For an account, we will examine the interplay between the lexical-semantic properties of *sogenannt* as a derivative of the verbal root *nenn-* 'call', on the one hand, and pragmatic factors affecting the interpretation, on the other. As concerns the compositional properties of *sogenannt*, the function of the demonstrative *so* will be in focus. We will claim that *so* operates as a pointer to the linguistic shape of a name which is provided by the head nominal of the *sogenannt*-construction. This view is compatible with Davidsonian-style approaches towards quotation as a device used to "talk" about language which have argued for quotation marks to refer to a linguistic shape through demonstration. Accordingly, we will reason that quotation marks, which are often found around the head nominal in a *sogenannt*-construction, are a (graphemic) materialization of the *so* in *sogenannt*. In this context, we assume the *sogenannt*-construction to represent an instance of what has been described as pure quotation in the literature, i.e., as a device used to display linguistic shapes in a rule-like fashion.

As for the pragmatic factors, we will assume a relevance-based implicature to be effective with highly conventionalized head nominals. In *sogeananntes Hotel*, for example, a name-informing *sogenannt* is in fact irrelevant and, as a consequence, a non-canonical, distanced interpretation of the construction is

produced. Further, quotation marks will be analyzed as an indicator of a deviation of the expression in quotes from the linguistic norm on the basis of a manner-based principle. We will present evidence from a corpus study, which shows that phrasal (adjective-noun) names are used more often with quotes than compounds in a *sogenannt*-construction. The effect will be attributed to the more pronounced name status inherent in compounds as products of word formation. Our analysis allows a unitary treatment of *sogenannt* in the different readings it adopts under the assumption of an underspecified lexical-semantic representation that is adapted relative to the context as a result of an interplay between lexical and pragmatic factors.

The structure of the paper is as follows. Section 2 discusses argument-structural properties of *sogenannt* from a compositional perspective as well as the function of quotation marks in name-mentioning contexts. Section 3 examines the interplay between lexical and pragmatic factors in the composition of *sogenannt*-constructions. Here, the behavior of complex nominals will be in focus, which leads to an implementation of pragmatic implicatures to account for the different interpretations of *sogenannt*-constructions as well as for the proportion of the head nominals to be used with quotation marks. The summary in Section 4 concludes our investigation.

## 2 The semantics of *sogenannt*

Quotational constructions containing the modifier *sogenannt* point to the linguistic shape of a lexical concept. *Sogenannt*-constructions adopt two basic semantic interpretations. With the first variety – which we assume to be the semantic default – the modified material is a neologism or a low-frequent expression. Here, *sogenannt* indicates the expression's status as a conventionalized name. Consider the examples in (2), with quotation marks placed around the nominal head in (2a) and without quotation marks in (2b):

### (2) Type 1: name-informing

- a. *Der sogenannnte „Persilschein“ war ein Entlastungsschein,*  
 the so-called persilschein was a whitewashing certificate  
*der bestätigte, dass man kein Nationalsozialist war.*  
 that confirmed that one no national socialist was  
 ‘The so-called “Persilschein” was a whitewashing certificate that confirmed that one had not been a national socialist.’

- b. *In der Bundesrepublik gibt es mehr als 50 sogenannte in the federal republic gives it more than 50 so-called Umweltzonen.*<sup>1</sup>

environmental zones

‘More than fifty environmental zones exist in the Federal Republic.’

*Persilschein* and *Umweltzone* are nouns with a comparatively low lexical frequency. Their *Wortschatz* frequency class is 13 and 16, respectively.<sup>2</sup>

With the second construction type, a low degree of familiarity is not a necessary condition. Consider the following two examples, containing the highly familiar nouns *Hotel* and *Garten*, which are both of frequency class 9:<sup>3</sup>

(3) Type 2: distancing

- a. *Das sogenannte „Hotel“ entpuppte sich als schäbige the so-called hotel turned out REFL as shabby Gastwirtschaft.*

inn

‘The so-called “hotel” turned out to be a shabby inn.’

- b. *Der sogenannte Garten bestand aus einer ungepflegten the so-called garden consisted of an ill-kept Wiese mit einigen Bäumen.*<sup>4</sup>

lawn with a couple of trees

‘The so-called garden was an ill-kept lawn with a couple of trees.’

These examples represent a “modalizing”<sup>5</sup> use of the construction, which typically has a distancing function in contexts of this sort. In its distancing func-

<sup>1</sup> [www.financescout24.de/wissen/ratgeber/feinstaubplakette](http://www.financescout24.de/wissen/ratgeber/feinstaubplakette) (21. 02. 2018).

<sup>2</sup> The *Wortschatz* frequency class is computed in relation to the frequency of the article *der* ‘the’ in the corpus (Leipzig Corpora Collection 2011). For instance, frequency class 21 means that *der* is 2<sup>21</sup> times more frequent than the search word.

<sup>3</sup> Note that high token frequency is not a necessary condition for familiarity, considering that certain low-frequent expressions, e.g., taboo words, can be assumed to be highly familiar to the speech community despite their low frequency. For name-mentioning contexts, the combination of both low frequency and low familiarity is decisive. Results from a recent corpus study reported in Schrader (2017) corroborate our assumption that the interpretation of a *sogenannt*-construction as either name-informing or distancing interacts systematically with the lexical frequency of the head nominal.

<sup>4</sup> [www.fewo-direkt.de/ferienwohnung-ferienhaus/p435201](http://www.fewo-direkt.de/ferienwohnung-ferienhaus/p435201) (16. 02. 2018).

<sup>5</sup> The term *modalizing* as used in the current paper goes back to Klockow (1978), who termed the quotes instantiated in (3) as *modalisierende Anführungszeichen* ‘modalizing quotation marks’, see also Meibauer (2007).

tion, *sogenannt* is characteristically used to give rise to an ironic or sarcastic reading of the nominal expression.<sup>6</sup> Here, *sogenannt* is semantically related to the meaning of (intensional) privative adjectives like *angeblich* ‘pretended’ or *falsch* ‘fake’, which enforce a shift from the literal denotation of a noun they modify, see Schumacher et al. (2016).

Notice that high-frequent nouns can also figure in name-informing constructions. The examples in (4) illustrate this, where *sogenannt* is used to signal an atypical meaning of an otherwise established nominal expression:

(4) Type 1a: name-informing, non-standard meaning

- a. *Geschickt duckt sich das Mädchen, damit ihr beim*  
 agilely ducks REFL the girl so that her on  
*Wenden der horizontale Mast des Segels, der sogenannte*  
 turning the horizontal pole of the sail the so-called  
 „Baum“, *nicht an den Kopf schlägt.*<sup>7</sup>  
 boom not on the head hits  
 ‘The girl agilely ducks down so that the horizontal pole, the so-called  
 “boom”, does not hit her head when turning.’
- b. *Eine Übung für die Kräftigung von Beinen und Po ist*  
 an exercise for the strengthening of legs and butt is  
*der sogenannte Stuhl.*<sup>8</sup>  
 the so-called chair  
 ‘The so-called chair is an exercise to strengthen legs and butt.’

This is a name-informing use of *sogenannt*, coupled with the additional information, however, that the head noun’s meaning differs from the commonly understood meaning of the word. In (4a), for instance, *sogenannt* signals that *Baum* ‘boom’ has – as a nautical term – a meaning that departs from the predominant denotation of the German noun *Baum* ‘tree’. An analogous reasoning applies to (4b), where *Stuhl* ‘chair’ is the name for a yoga exercise.

The quotation marks used in distancing constructions of the type in (3) above have commonly been characterized as scare quotes in the literature, see,

<sup>6</sup> Low-frequent nouns can also receive distanced interpretations, cf. *The so-called “sepsis” turned out to be a harmless mosquito bite*. Note, however, that while the example is in fact ambiguous between the two readings, the examples in (3) are not.

<sup>7</sup> [www.volksfreund.de/region/trier/der-rote-fingernagel-zeigt-an-wo-backbord-ist\\_aid-5609429](http://www.volksfreund.de/region/trier/der-rote-fingernagel-zeigt-an-wo-backbord-ist_aid-5609429) (16. 02. 2018).

<sup>8</sup> [www.sat1.de/ratgeber/abnehmen/fettverbrennung-stoffwechsel/yoga-abnehmen-mit-dehn-und-atem-uebungen](http://www.sat1.de/ratgeber/abnehmen/fettverbrennung-stoffwechsel/yoga-abnehmen-mit-dehn-und-atem-uebungen) (16. 02. 2018).

among others, Meibauer (2007) and Predelli (2003). Quotes have an apologetic function here and express a specific speaker modality implying a certain reservation w.r.t. the semantic appropriateness of the expression in quotes. In this way, quotes as used in (3) indicate a non-literal meaning of the head nominal, i.e., a shift in its denotation. This is different with name-informing *sogenannt*-constructions. With them, quotes are used to point out the use of the respective expression as a name, see, e.g., Washington (1992) for analyses. The function of quotes traces back to the fact that an expression can, besides its denotational use, also be used to “mention” the name of an expression, see, for example, Cappelen and Lepore (2012), Quine (1981: 23–26), Saka (1998).<sup>9</sup> To mention an expression means to talk about the expression and refer to a linguistic dimension of it, e.g., to the linguistic shape of a name. The example in (5a) illustrates this use, where the shape of the noun *Kuchen* ‘cake’ is pointed to and not its canonical extension as is the case in (5b):<sup>10</sup>

- (5) a. *Max hat „Kuchen“ gesagt.*  
 Max has cake said  
 ‘Max has said “cake”.’
- b. *Max hat Kuchen gebacken.*  
 Max has cake baked  
 ‘Max has baked cake.’

The interpretational differences between the types of *sogenannt*-constructions introduced above lead to the question whether the corresponding occurrences of *sogenannt* are linked to one lexical root. Alternatively, the occurrences could be seen as coupled with distinct lexical roots, where the name-informing type in (2) and (4) is a realization of the predicate *nenn*- ‘name’ (*call*) and the distancing type in (3), in contrast, is a lexicalized synonym of *angeblich* ‘pretended’. Below, we will opt for the former and argue that the construction types should be described in a unitary semantic format, with pragmatic principles triggering the different interpretations.

---

<sup>9</sup> For further discussion, see Section 2.2 below.

<sup>10</sup> Thus, an expression in quotes can be assumed to refer to itself, i.e., the name. This is the essential idea of the so-called *Identity Theory* of quotation, see Washington (1992). See Brendel et al. (2011b) and Cappelen and Lepore (2007) for thorough explorations. For more recent analyses along these lines, see Ludwig and Ray (2017) as well as Davis (2017), who both employ the notion of “reflexive” reference for quoted expressions of the type in (5a).

## 2.1 The lexical-semantic format of *sogeannt*

In this section, we will examine the lexical-semantic properties of *sogeannt* as an instance of a name-mentioning predicate. A reference in the semantic literature dealing with expressions of this sort is Krifka et al. (1995). In their description of kind-referring NPs like *the liger*, the authors, building on Carlson (1977), make use of the *so-called*-construction to illustrate the proper name-like characteristics of kind-referring NPs, see (6):

- (6) *The liger is so called because it is the offspring of a lion and a tiger.*  
(Krifka et al. 1995: 65)

The lexical features of the name-mentioning predicate are not in the authors' focus. Note, however, the apparent double function of the subject NP in the example: *the liger* denotes (as the offspring of its parents) a kind of animal and, at the same time, delivers the concept's name, i.e., /'laigər/. Hybrid functioning of this type has led to the conclusion that, here, an expression is used denotationally and mentioned both at the same time, see Saka (1998: 115) in reference to Quine's famous example *Giorgione is so-called because of his size*, see Quine (1960: 152). Cappelen and Lepore (1999: 478), however, have made clear that in examples of this sort, the subject NP is only used, and not mentioned, and that it is in fact the demonstrative *so*, which refers to the name, i.e., *Giorgione*, required by *call*. Crucially, we will follow this reasoning below.

To better understand the two-faced appearance of nouns in name-mentioning contexts like in (6), let us, to begin with, consider the following sentence:

- (7) *Man nennt das Sepsis.*  
one calls this sepsis  
'One calls this sepsis.'

Predicates like *nenn-* require a quoted name as their complement. The sentence in (7) asserts that some occurrence of blood poisoning, denoted by the demonstrative *das* 'this' in the example, is commonly referred to as *Sepsis*. Thus, the verbal root involves three arguments: an agent *x*, a theme *y* as well as an argument representing the theme's name, cf. Härtl (2016):<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> In the following, we use a Neo-Davidsonian format that is intended to specify the argument linking of the predicates in question, in correspondence to lexical-semantic approaches like, for example, Bierwisch's (2006), which systematically consider those parts of meaning in their semantic form that are grammatically relevant.

- (8)  $x y z$  *nenn-* (' $x$  call  $y z$ ')  
 $\exists e$  [CALL( $e$ ) & AGENT( $x, e$ ) & THEME( $y, e$ ) & NAME( $z, y, e$ )]

In (8), the name is an argument of a relational function, which reads:  $z$  is the linguistic name of entity  $y$  (at the time of the event  $e$ ). Further, the theme argument  $y$  is semantically identified with the second argument of the name predicate to account for the fact that both terms have the same extension.<sup>12</sup> In the example in (7), the agent argument is represented by the generic pronoun *man* 'one', the demonstrative *das* 'this' functions as the theme argument and "Sepsis" represents the name of the expression used for sepsis:

- (9) GEN $x$  GEN $e$  [CALL( $e$ ) & AGENT( $x, e$ ) & THEME( $das_c, e$ ) & NAME("Sepsis",  $das_c, e$ )]

The event variable in (9) is also bound generically. We assume this to meet the intuition about name mentioning as illustrated in (7): Whenever it is the case that an occurrence of blood poisoning is referred to, the label *Sepsis* is commonly used in the relevant speech community. The generic nature of the event variable is illustrated also by the compatibility of the construction with VP-adverbials like *üblicherweise* 'usually':

- (10) *Man nennt das üblicherweise Sepsis.*  
 one calls this usually sepsis  
 'Usually, this is called sepsis.'

With our analysis of the name-mentioning predicate we stay agnostic w.r.t. the question whether its semantic form links to a ditransitive syntactic structure or rather to one containing a small clause. Matushansky (2008) argues for the latter in her analysis of naming constructions involving proper names as in *The king of all England was named Arthur*, based on the conclusion that the proper name figures as a predicate rather than an object argument, thus supporting a small clause analysis. Evidence for this assumption, Matushansky says, is based on the observation that the name in naming constructions does not combine with a determiner in languages like German, see Matushansky (2008: 579–580). In German, proper name NPs are possible in verb argument positions, cf. *Kim schenkte (dem) Max ein Buch* 'Kim gave (the) Max a book' but not in naming constructions: *Kim nannte ihren Sohn (\*den) Max* 'Kim named her son (\*the)

<sup>12</sup> As a reflector of this, we use the index  $c$  to coindex the second argument of the name predicate with the theme argument in the representation in (9).

Max'. According to Matushansky, the characteristic of the proper name to surface as bare noun in naming constructions hints at its status as a predicate contained in a small clause. Observe that with common nouns in name-mentioning constructions as they are discussed here, the mentioned name can be accompanied by a determiner, cf. *Man nennt das eine Sepsis* 'One calls this a sepsis'.<sup>13</sup> This observation gives reason to speculate that it may in fact also be the proper name's referential properties that restrict it to occur without determiner in a naming construction like *The king of all England was named Arthur*. We leave open whether a ditransitive analysis is preferable to a small clause analysis or whether two separate analyses for constructions involving proper names, on the one hand, and for common nouns, on the other, could also be reasonable. However, our analysis is in line with Matushansky's concerning the relational characteristics of the mentioned name.

As a participle form derived from *nenn-*, we expect the argument-structural setup of the verbal root to be preserved with *sogenannt*. Surprisingly, this does not seem to be the case. Consider the example in (11) and note that, apparently, only one internal argument, i.e., *Sepsis*, is overtly realized in a *sogenannt*-construction:<sup>14</sup>

- (11) [*Der Doktor diagnostizierte*] *eine sogenannte Sepsis*.  
 the doctor diagnosed a so-called sepsis  
 'The doctor diagnosed a so-called sepsis.'

The "missing" argument is still present, though. Its slot is saturated by *so*. With this assumption, we follow analyses like Cappelen and Lepore's (1999), who argue that is the *so* in a *so-called*-construction, which, with its demonstrative function, refers to the name required by the predicate. Thus, the authors reason, statements like *Giorgione is so-called because of this size* can be paraphrased as *Giorgione was called (by) that (name) because of his size*, see Cappelen and Lepore (1999: 748).<sup>15</sup> With this in mind, we can assume the *so* in a name-mentioning construction to point<sup>16</sup> to an occurrence of a (linguistic)

<sup>13</sup> See Section 2.2 below also.

<sup>14</sup> We ignore the external argument, i.e., the agent, for a moment. It is never overtly realized in a past participle form.

<sup>15</sup> Note that the antecedent of *so* can also be clause-external, cf. *They invited Giorgione. He is so-called because of his size*. For further discussion, see, among others, Crimmins (1992) and Montalbetti (2003).

<sup>16</sup> The notion of pointing used throughout this paper is immaterial because the pointing is metalinguistic. Thus, the pointing "gesture" involved in name mentioning is usually abstract but it can also be physical when the manual modality is accessible and, thus, a written word can be pointed to. We are grateful to Hans-Martin Gärtner for his input on this matter.

name, which is then identified with the name argument of the verbal root. The paraphrase in (12) illustrates the rationale behind this notion:

- ┌──────────────────────────┐  
▼
- (12) *Der Doktor diagnostizierte eine Sepsis<sub>i</sub>. Man nennt das so<sub>i</sub>.*  
 the doctor diagnosed a sepsis one calls this so  
 ‘The doctor diagnosed a sepsis. This is called so.’

In the second sentence in (12), just like in the sentence in (7) above, both internal arguments are realized: The theme argument of *nenn-* is denoted by *das* and the name argument is saturated by *so*, pointing to an external lexical item.<sup>17</sup> Crucially, the same rationale can be applied to the *so* in *sogenannt*:

- ┌──────────┐  
▼
- (13) *eine so<sub>i</sub>genannte Sepsis<sub>i</sub>*  
 ‘a so-called sepsis’

In this case, however, the theme argument of *nenn-* is realized by *Sepsis* itself and *so* points to the linguistic shape of this very theme. Hence, *eine sogenannte Sepsis* can be paraphrased as *eine “Sepsis” genannte Sepsis* ‘a sepsis called “sepsis”’.

The *so* in (13) as well as (11) refers cataphorically and within the domain of the embedding NP. This is different in (12), where the *so* points to an expression given in the preceding context.<sup>18</sup> Consider the following example, which also involves co-reference with a given expression:

- (14) *Der Doktor diagnostizierte eine Sepsis. Die so genannte*  
 the doctor diagnosed a sepsis the so called  
*Erkrankung kommt zustande, wenn eine Infektion im Körper*  
 condition arises when an infection in the body  
*außer Kontrolle gerät.*  
 out of control gets  
 ‘The doctor diagnosed a sepsis. This so called condition arises when an infection gets out of control.’

---

<sup>17</sup> We assume the *so* to be a case of anaphoric reference in the sense of Bühler (1934), who emphasizes a tight relationship between anaphora and deixis, and speaks of anaphoric pointing (‘anaphorisches Zeigen’), see Bühler (1934: 121). Thus, anaphoric reference is characterized as a special case of deixis, in which the target of the pointing is contained in the discourse set. We wish to thank Carla Umbach for her valuable input on this issue.

<sup>18</sup> We wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out the use in (14).

Although identical on the surface, observe that in name-informing constructions of the type in (14), the *so* is commonly written separately, reflecting the fact that it does not point to the theme argument of *nenn-*, i.e., the head noun *Erkrankung* ‘condition’ in (14). In cases like these, *nenn-* can be replaced with *bezeichn-* ‘refer to’. Although infrequently attested, a replacement with *bezeichnen* is marked in constructions like those in (13) or (11) involving a cataphoric *so*, cf. <sup>??</sup>*Der Doktor diagnostizierte eine so bezeichnete Sepsis* ‘the doctor diagnosed a *so* referred to as sepsis’ – arguably due to the fact that cataphoric *sogenannt* is lexicalized and non-phrasal.

The question remains of how to describe the compositional properties of *sogenannt*. According to Umbach and Gust (2014), adnominal *so*, as in *So ein Auto hat Anna auch* ‘such a car has Anna too’ (*Anna owns a car like this, too*), expresses similarity between the target of the pointing gesture and the referent of the demonstrative phrase. The demonstration target and the nominal referent – Anna’s car in this case – have certain traits in common, which Umbach and Gust analyze as a set of features of comparison. The authors’ reasoning can also be applied for *so* in name-mentioning contexts. The similarity relation under discussion here holds between two instantiations of signs.<sup>19</sup> *So* points to an individual occurrence of a linguistic form in an utterance, i.e., the word *Sepsis* in (11) and (12), which has the same shape as the conventionalized linguistic representation for the concept SEPSIS as stored in our mental lexicon. In other words, *so* implies a similarity relation to hold between the individual item *Sepsis* occurring in an utterance (a word token), on the one hand, and the conventionalized shape of the corresponding linguistic sign (a type), on the other.<sup>20</sup> In (15), we use a modified version of the semantic representation Umbach and Gust suggest in their analysis for *so*:

$$(15) \llbracket so \rrbracket = \text{SIM}(n, n_{\text{target}}, f)$$

<sup>19</sup> Ginzburg and Cooper (2014) propose a similar approach for direct quotation (e.g., *Greta Garbo said, “I want to be alone!”*) and employ a similarity measure in their compositional analysis as a reflector of a similarity holding here between two speech events.

<sup>20</sup> The assumption of a similarity relation to hold between a word token to which the *so* points and the corresponding conventionalized word type predicts a certain degree of token-to-token variation that needs to be generalized over in the demonstration. For example, the quoted material in *mittels des sogenannten „Muskeltests“* ‘by means of the so-called “muscle test”’ contains a genitive form which is not an inherent part of the noun *Muskeltest*. For *sogenannt*-constructions, token-to-token variation has to do with the fact that the head noun is mentioned (i.e., quoted) within the domain of *sogenannt*’s verbal root but used denotationally in the matrix clause. So, the quoted name is not an “island”, see Pafel (2011: 263), as the corresponding expression fulfills a syntactic function as a full-fledged NP. We wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for valuable input on this matter.

$n_{target}$  represents the target of the demonstration, which is the word token occurring in a specific utterance, in our case the word *Sepsis* as it occurs in sentences like in (11) and (12) above.  $n$  link to the name of the lexical concept SEPSIS and  $f$  represents the features of comparison, which is based on the linguistic shape of the word *Sepsis* in our case. In (16), the token character of *Sepsis* is symbolized through a phonemic transcription.

(16)  $SIM_{so}(z, /'zɛpsɪs/, f) \& NAME(z, sepsis, e)$

In contexts like (12), the *so* points to the occurrence of the name as a target used in the first sentence and identifies the demonstration target with the name argument of *nenn-* in the second sentence. Consider the representation in (17):

(17)  $x y so nenn-$  (' $x$  call  $y$  so')  
 $\exists e [CALL(e) \& AGENT(x, e) \& THEME(y, e) \& NAME(z, y, e)$   
 $\& SIM_{so}(z, n_{target}, f)]^{21}$

With the participle form in *sogeanante Sepsis* as it is used in the sentence in (11), repeated as (18) below, *so* points to the object NP of the clause, i.e., the direct object of the verb *diagnostizieren* 'diagnose':

(18) *Der Doktor diagnostizierte eine sogeanante Sepsis.*  
 'The doctor diagnosed a so-called sepsis.'

(19) *sogeanante Sepsis* 'so-called sepsis'  
 $GEN_x GENE [CALL(e) \& AGENT(x, e) \& THEME(y_i, e) \& NAME(z, y, e)$   
 $\& SIM_{so}(z, /'zɛpsɪs/, f)]$

Observe that the head noun of the object NP of the clause in (18) and the theme argument of *nenn-* are coreferential. To capture this, we use the index  $i$  for the theme argument  $y$  in (19) to indicate that the theme argument of *nenn-* (later) needs to be identified compositionally with the object argument of the clause.<sup>22</sup> This observation brings us back to the issue raised at the beginning of the section: The apparent double function of NPs in name-mentioning contexts of the type in (6) above is rooted in the fact that an expression is used denotation-

<sup>21</sup> A reviewer commented that, formally, the analyses in (17) and (19) need to allow for a type shift of the theme argument  $y$  from instance to concept: The similarity denoted by *so* holds between the name of a concept (and not the name of an instance of the concept) and the string uttered by the speaker.

<sup>22</sup> Thanks go to Sebastian Bücking for his valuable input on this matter.

ally here and, at the same time, provides the token to which the *so* points thus delivering the name argument required by *call*.

An interesting aspect of Umbach and Gust's (2014) study is their analysis of the similarity class produced by *so* as a(n) (ad-hoc) kind. In the example above, i.e., *So ein Auto hat Anna auch* 'such a car has Anna too' (*Anna owns a car like this, too*), this kind comprises the type of car similar to the one pointed to, say a lemon-yellow retro-style automobile. As we have suggested, the same can be assumed for *so* in *sogenannt*: *So* points to a token of a word, which demonstrates certain (phonemic) properties of a type of word, i.e., a kind. Crucially, similar views have been formulated for the function of quotation marks. With this background, we will argue in the next section that quotation marks are a graphemic materialization of the *so* in *sogenannt*.

## 2.2 Quotation in name-mentioning contexts

Quotation marks are a metalinguistic tool that is used to draw the addressee's attention to the linguistic side of an expression. Standardly, an expression is used to denote its extension but it can also be used to mention the corresponding linguistic sign and point to it explicitly. For instance, with an assertion like "*Paris*" has five letters, in contrast to *Paris has a subway system*, the graphemic setup of the word *Paris* is described and quotes around *Paris* indicate this use. Quotation marks in report constructions like *Greta Garbo said, "I want to be alone!"*, according to Recanati (2001), display a token of a sentence, which is used to depict a type as the target of the quotation, i.e., Greta Garbo's famous words, see Recanati (2001: 642). Below, we will adopt this view for name-mentioning contexts and argue that quotations marks and *so* fulfill the same function in that both display a linguistic form by means of demonstration.

Various views on quotation as a device for talking about language have been formulated from a language-philosophical perspective, see, among others, Brendel et al. (2011a) and Cappelen and Lepore (2012) for overviews. An influential, though debated,<sup>23</sup> theory of quotation is Davidson's Demonstrative Theory (Davidson 1979).<sup>24</sup> Its central claim is that quotation marks are used to refer to

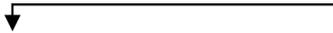
---

<sup>23</sup> For critical discussion, see, among others, Harth (2011), Saka (1998), Washington (1992). A recent implementation of Davidson's Demonstrative Theory we are aware of is García-Carpintero (2017).

<sup>24</sup> Here, the notion of demonstration is not understood in the sense of Clark and Gerrig's account of direct quotation. In their non-grammatical understanding, quotations are demonstrations because they enable "others to experience what it is like to perceive the things depicted", see Clark and Gerrig (1990: 765).

a linguistic shape by pointing to something that has this shape. Quotes, in Davidson's approach, have the meaning 'the expression of which this is a token', which, in the example above, reads as illustrated in (20b), cf. Davidson (1979: 38–39):<sup>25</sup>

(20) a. "Paris" has five letters.



b. Paris. The expression of which this is a token has five letters.

According to Davidson, quotation is a special case of demonstrative reference, which is what we also claimed for *so* in *sogenannt* ('so-called') in the previous section. *So* points to a word token, which is employed to display certain linguistic properties of an expression. Under this assumption, *so* and quotation marks can be assumed to fulfill an identical function in name-mentioning contexts, which is indicated by means of the index *j* in (21b):

(21) a. ein sogenannter „Geisterfahrer“  
 a so-called wrong-way driver  
 'a so-called "wrong-way driver"'



b. *Geisterfahrer*. The expression of which this<sub>*j*</sub> is a token is the name of the entity which is called so<sub>*j*</sub>.

Quotations that denote linguistic objects and display the shape of an expression have been characterized as pure quotation in the literature, see, among others, Maier (2014). In pure quotation, no specific utterance or speech event is designated, which Cappelen and Lepore (2007) claim to be a main difference between pure quotation, on the one hand, and direct, mixed, as well as indirect quotation, on the other. Ginzburg and Cooper (2014) state that instances of pure quotation are rule-like statements about types of expressions. In this way, a statement like *One calls this disease "sepsis"* fits the profile of a pure quotation<sup>26</sup> as it is used to point to a sign in a rule-like fashion, with the quoted material displaying the conventionalized linguistic shape of the corresponding lexical concept.

<sup>25</sup> Example (20) represents a default case of pure quotation as standardly defined in the literature – in contrast to *direct quotation* (*Greta Garbo said, "I want to be alone!"*), *mixed quotation* (*Max believes that the Pope "has God on speed dial"*), and *scare quotation* (*Flowers "know" when to bloom*), cf. Cappelen and Lepore (1997).

<sup>26</sup> I wish to thank Emar Meier for his valuable input on this topic.

We reason the name-informing use of *sogenannt* also to involve pure quotation. Consider again a statement like the following:

- (22) *Der Doktor diagnostizierte eine sogenannte „Sepsis“.*  
 ‘The doctor diagnosed a so-called “sepsis”.’

Here as well, the quotation is used to display the linguistic shape of a word. As was discussed in the previous section, however, the quoted material is apparently used denotationally and mentioned at the same time in a *sogenannt*-construction. This property puts the construction close to what is known as mixed quotation<sup>27</sup> in the literature, see Davidson (1979). In standard examples of mixed quotation like *The president said he has an “eclectic” reading list*, see Maier (2007), an expression, in this case an adjective, is used denotationally as the modifier of the direct object and simultaneously mentioned as the specific linguistic expression that was used by the president. Hence, direct and indirect speech is combined in one utterance in mixed quotation, see Cappelen and Lepore (1997), Maier (2007). Crucially, however, there is no combination of direct and indirect discourse involved in the construction under discussion. In the example in (22), the noun in quotes functions as the head of the verb’s object NP contained in an otherwise non-quotational sentence. The noun takes on a mentioning function *only* within the projection of the verbal root *nenn-*, with the *so*, as argued in the previous section, pointing to the noun’s linguistic shape (“*Sepsis*”). Hence, we claim that a name-informing *sogenannt*-construction taken by itself involves pure quotation only and, further, that the hybrid use-mention function results from the compositional merger with the matrix clause, in which the *sogenannt*-construction is contained.<sup>28</sup>

In Recanati’s (2001) account of pure quotation, the quoted material in statements like *A “fortnight” is a period of fourteen days* is characterized as what he

<sup>27</sup> We owe this suggestion to Hans-Martin Gärtner.

<sup>28</sup> A potential counterargument is that, in the construction under discussion, the quoted material cannot be modified by appositions like *the word* or *the expression*, as in *The word “Paris” has five letters*, which are commonly taken to be indications of pure quotation, cf. *die sogenannte (\*das Wort) „Sepsis“* ‘the so-called (\*the word) “sepsis”’. This fact, however, does not necessarily speak against a pure-quotation analysis of *sogenannt*-constructions as, arguably, the blocking has verb-specific, grammatical reasons: First, the apposition is blocked as well with *sogenannt*’s root *nenn-* ‘call’, cf. *Man nennt diese Krankheit (\*das Wort) Sepsis* ‘One calls this disease (\*the word) “sepsis”’. Note that the apposition is not blocked with synonymous verbs like *benennen* or *bezeichnen* ‘refer to’, cf. *Man bezeichnet diese Krankheit mit dem Wort „Sepsis“* ‘One refers to this disease with the word “sepsis”’. Second, as argued above, it is the *so* in *sogenannt*, which saturates *nenn-*’s name argument and not the head of the NP, thus, its head noun is not the appropriate target for a modification by an appositive.

calls “open” quotation, which is not recruited as a singular term, as opposed to a “closed” quotation like in “*Fortnight*” is an unfamiliar word, which involves a singular term, see Recanati (2001: 682–683). Note that the distinction has the (possibly undesirable) implication that name-informing statements with what appears to be an open quotation (e.g., *A seesaw is also called a “teeter-totter” in most of the United States*) should be treated differently than their closed quotation equivalents (*A see-saw is also called “teeter-totter” in most of the United States*). A plausible argument in favor of a unitary treatment could be based on the assumption that the indefinite article accompanying the mentioned name in the former example is in fact part of the quoted content. We leave this issue to future research.

The use of quotes is optional in name-mentioning contexts. Often, they are left out. Further, in addition to quotes, there are other graphemic means to signal the naming function of an expression such as capitalization as in *sogenannter Roter Zwerg* ‘so-called red dwarf’ or italics. In the next section we will argue that quotes occur more often with expressions whose naming function is less self-evident and, thus, needs to be promoted by extra-linguistic means. We will analyze this finding as a pragmatic effect, which is caused by the markedness produced by quotes.

### 3 Name mentioning at the interface between lexicon and pragmatics

In this section, we will relate lexical properties of the head noun in a *sogenannt*-construction to the different interpretations the construction can take on. To begin with, consider the contrast in acceptability between *Straße* and *Schnellstraße* in the following example:<sup>29</sup>

- (23) die sogenannte ??*Straße* / Schnellstraße  
 the so-called road express road  
 ‘the so-called road / expressway’

<sup>29</sup> There is a general tendency of high-frequent compounds to be less marked to a certain extent than high-frequent stems in the context of *sogenannt*, cf. *sogenannte* ??*Lampe*/?*Stehlampe* ‘lamp’/‘floor lamp’, *sogenanntes* ??*Ei*/?*Rührei* ‘egg’/‘scrambled eggs’. The contrast is possibly rooted in the semiotic motivatedness of compound expressions. A full explanation must also involve the name’s taxonomic status as names referring to basic-level objects like *tool* or *dog* seem to be generally more marked in name-informing contexts than corresponding hyponyms (*pincer*, *Dalmatian*). This issue must be left to further investigation.

It seems that, in a null context, *Straße*, in contrast to *Schnellstraße*, is less suited to be mentioned as a name: *Straße* is “too conventionalized”, its naming function is self-evident and, thus, reference to the naming function is superfluous. A name-mentioning predicate requires the corresponding name to be “worth” being identified explicitly as a name – otherwise the speaker would not use a name-mentioning construction.

In name-mentioning constructions a label is identified which a certain speech community has agreed on, but which the addressee is assumed to be unfamiliar with. If the expression is a highly familiar one, the construction is likely to convey a distanced interpretation, usually in combination with an ironic reading of the head nominal:

- (24) *Die sogenannte Straße erwies sich als ein schlammiger*  
 the so-called road turned out refl as a muddy  
*Sandweg.*  
 sand track  
 ‘The so-called road turned out to be a muddy sand track.’

In consequence, an interpretational condition for *sogenannt* must entail that the head nominal’s meaning is either unfamiliar to the addressee or that the head nominal supports a distanced interpretation to be construed contextually.

### 3.1 Complex expressions in name-mentioning constructions

The unsuitability of individual expressions to be mentioned as names can also be observed in the markedness of certain phrasal expressions when used in *sogenannt*-contexts. Consider the contrast in acceptability in (25) between the phrase *rotes Dach* ‘red roof’ and the compound *Rotdach* ‘redroof’:<sup>30</sup>

- (25) *Die Schule hat ein sogenanntes ??rotes Dach / Rotdach.*  
 the school has a so-called red roof redroof  
 ‘The school has a so-called red roof / redroof.’

The explanation for the contrast lies in the condition outlined above: *rotes Dach*, as a phrasal expression, is used to describe a referent compositionally and is, as such, not unfamiliar enough to be identified as a name. In contrast, a novel compound like *Rotdach*, as a non-conventionalized expression, is better

<sup>30</sup> To avoid circularity, novel, i.e., unestablished compounds are used in the examples.

suiting to be identified with a naming function. The example shows that, in languages like German, adjective-noun (A-N) compounds are predisposed to embody names for concepts in comparison to their phrasal counterparts.<sup>31</sup> Corresponding evidence also comes from the fact that a (novel) A-N compound is more prone to represent the name of a kind. Consider the following example, which involves the kind-sensitive particle *an sich* ‘on REFL’ (*per se*) and in which a contrast is again produced between phrase and compound, see Härtl (2016):

- (26) *Das <sup>?</sup>rote Dach / Rotdach an sich ist der Hit in allen*  
 the red roof redroof on refl is the hit in all  
*Neubausiedlungen.*  
 new housing estates  
 ‘The red roof / redroof *per se* is a big success in every new housing estate.’

The tendency of compounds in German to represent names for kinds does not imply that phrasal expressions cannot adopt a naming function – there are numerous phrasal names in German, like *Kleiner Tümmler* ‘common porpoise’, *rote Karte* ‘red card’, *grüner Tee* ‘green tea’, all clearly referring to kinds of things. Observe, however, that A-N phrases show a preference to be used with an additional marking when mentioned as a name, that is, with quotation marks, as in (27a), or with capitals (27b):

- (27) a. *Der Klassiker [...] ist das sogenannte „kleine Schwarze“ aus*  
 the classic is the so-called little black from  
*dem Hause Coco Chanel [...].*<sup>32</sup>  
 the house Coco Chanel  
 ‘A classic is the so-called “little black dress” from Coco Chanel.’
- b. *HATS-6 ist ein sogenannter Roter Zwerg.*<sup>33</sup>  
 HATS-6 is a so-called red dwarf  
 ‘HATS-6 is a so-called red dwarf.’

Quotes are used in name-mentioning constructions involving *sogenannt* to highlight the status of the expression as a name. In fact, name-mentioning constructions as in (27a) seem to involve a certain redundancy as they contain a doubled quotation, realized by the *so*, on the one hand, and by the quotes,

<sup>31</sup> See Härtl (2015, 2016) for further discussion and a theoretical implementation of this view.

<sup>32</sup> [www.volksfreund.de/das-kleine-schwarze-passt-immer\\_aid-6332860](http://www.volksfreund.de/das-kleine-schwarze-passt-immer_aid-6332860) (16. 02. 2018).

<sup>33</sup> [www.scinexx.de/wissen-aktuell-18833-2015-05-04.html](http://www.scinexx.de/wissen-aktuell-18833-2015-05-04.html) (16. 02. 2018).

on the other. However, double uses of quotation of this sort can be explained along the lines of the reasoning in Predelli (2003), who states (for scare quotation) that *so-called* “is less open to contextual variations” in contrast to quotes, whose meaning vary in different contexts, see Predelli (2003: 16–17). Furthermore, Finkbeiner (2015) argues for double markings as in *Peter’s so-called “theory”* to be a reflector of the producer’s strategy to “play it safe” and, thus, to ensure the intended reading, see Finkbeiner (2015: 164).

We propose to use the same reasoning for *sogenannt* in name-informing, non-modalizing contexts. Specifically, complex expressions which we assume to exhibit a less pronounced name status, like A-N phrases, are expected to be used with quotes more frequently than expressions with an intrinsic naming function, like A-N compounds. In Härtl (2016), this hypothesis was tested in a corpus study, in which we compared the following (lexicalized) A-N phrases and A-N compounds in their tendency to be used with quotes in contexts involving *sogenannt*:

(28) A-N phrases

<i>blauer Brief</i>	‘blue letter’, <i>pink slip</i>
<i>grüner Pfeil</i>	‘green arrow’, <i>turn-right sign</i>
<i>roter Faden</i>	‘red thread’, <i>golden thread</i>
<i>grüne Welle</i>	‘green wave’, <i>synchronized traffic</i>
<i>kleine Anfrage</i>	‘minor interpellation’, <i>minor interpellation</i>

A-N compounds

<i>Grauwasser</i>	‘graywater’, <i>gray-water</i>
<i>Weißfäule</i>	‘whiterot’, <i>white rot</i>
<i>Grünbrücke</i>	‘greenbridge’, <i>wildlife crossing</i>
<i>Schwarzlicht</i>	‘blacklight’, <i>black light</i>
<i>Langholz</i>	‘longwood’, <i>side grain</i>

Importantly, using the *Wortschatz* corpus,<sup>34</sup> all items were balanced for frequency so that neither item type in the material was more commonly used. *Sogenannt*-constructions were then extracted from the IDS corpus (W / *Deutsches Referenzkorpus DeReKo*, Institut für Deutsche Sprache 2014) via the COSMAS II web application, searching for *sogenannt* followed by the items listed in (28). The total number of returns showed that our phrases ( $n = 173$ ) occur more often in a *sogenannt*-context than the compounds ( $n = 58$ ). We take this as an indication of a higher pressure for phrasal items to signal their name

<sup>34</sup> See footnote 2.

status. Crucially, then, the phrasal items were indeed used significantly more often with quotes in comparison to compounds. The difference was still significant when only phrasal items written in capitals were included in the analysis. Taken the results together, we concluded that the lesser tendency of the compounds to highlight their name status when used in a name-mentioning context reflects a more prominent name status present in compounds in comparison to phrases.

The question remains why exactly quotes are used more often with A-N phrases than with A-N compounds in name-mentioning contexts. To explain this, below, we will pursue a pragmatic approach, which holds that quotes are used as a means to create markedness of the expression and, thus, to indicate a non-canonical use, as is the case when an expression is mentioned as a name.

## 3.2 A pragmatic account for *sogenannt*

In the classical studies, e.g., Davidson (1979), Washington (1992), Saka (1998), quotation is standardly approached from a hearer-centered, semantic viewpoint, where conversational aspects play only a minor role. Pragmatic aspects of this sort have been explicitly taken into consideration by only a few studies, among them Gutzmann and Stei (2011), Klockow (1980), Meibauer (2007), and Recanati (2001). In the following section, first, a relevance-based account will be used to explain the different readings the *sogenannt*-construction can take on.

### 3.2.1 *Sogenannt* and relevance

Our starting point is rooted in the assumption formulated above that a name-mentioning construction involving *sogenannt* informs the recipient about the specific lexical shape of a concept's name. Thus, in the canonical meaning of *sogenannt* as in *sogenannte Sepsis* 'so-called sepsis', the speaker assumes the corresponding nominal to be unfamiliar to the recipient. Above, we linked the unfamiliarity of an expression to its low lexical frequency. In (29), this notion is represented as a use condition on *sogenannt*-  $X$ . It holds that the frequency  $F$  of the head nominal  $X$  lies below a norm value  $N$  to some significant extent, where  $N$  is effective in a speech community  $s$ .

$$(29) \text{ *sogenannt*- } X \\ F(X) < N_s$$

Consequently, if *X* has a high lexical frequency and matches the norm value, the use of *sogenannt* is perceived as deviant in a neutral context. In (30), this is illustrated with the example of *Handtasche* ‘handbag’ and *Stuhl* ‘chair’:

(30) a. *Die* (??*sogenannte*) *Handtasche* *ist ein Accessoire der*  
 the so-called handbag is an accessory of the  
*Frau.*

women

‘The (so-called) handbag is a women’s accessory.’

b. *Der* (??*sogenannte*) *Stuhl* *ist als Möbelstück* *klar*  
 the so-called chair is as piece of furniture well  
*definiert.*

defined

‘The (so-called) chair as a piece of furniture is well defined.’

Deviance of this sort results from a flouting of a relevance-based maxim, see Grice (1975), Horn (1984), and Sperber and Wilson (1986). Along the lines of Horn, we can use the (speaker-based) R-principle (“Make your contribution necessary: Say no more than you must”, see Horn [1984: 13]) to characterize *sogenannt* as irrelevant with a high-frequent noun. Compliance with the principle in cases of high-frequent head nominals is only guaranteed if their interpretation is shifted away from their conventionalized meaning. This is illustrated in the following name-informing uses of the construction: In (31a) *Handtasche* ‘handbag’ refers to a carrier for six-packs of beer and in the example in (4b), repeated here as (31b), *Stuhl* ‘chair’ denotes a yoga exercise.

(31) a. *Die sogenannte Handtasche, der Sechser-Träger, ist für alle*  
 the so-called handbag the six-pack carrier is for all  
*Damen und Herren, auch außerhalb der Hansestadt, das*  
 ladies and gentlemen even outside of the hanseatic city the  
*Geschmackserlebnis.*<sup>35</sup>

taste experience

‘The so-called handbag, a six-pack carrier, is a taste experience for all ladies and gentlemen, even outside of the Hanseatic City.’

b. *Eine Übung für die Kräftigung von Beinen und Po ist der sogenannte Stuhl*

‘The so-called chair is an exercise to strengthen legs and butt.’

Observe that in these contexts a distanced reading of the construction is not supported. Thus, pragmatic reasoning entails for the hearer to deduce the nouns in question to be used literally but in a non-standard way, under the assumption that the speaker does not intend an R-principle violation. An R-principle violation would be produced with the standard interpretation of the nouns due to their high frequency, as shown in the examples in (30). Viewed from the speaker's perspective, the use of *sogenannt* in (31a) and (31b) indicates that with the intended interpretations, i.e., *Handtasche* denoting a six-pack carrier and *Stuhl* a yoga exercise, are assumed not to be established enough in the hearer's lexicon. Thus, the speaker assumes a lower frequency value to hold, see (29) above, and the name-informing interpretation of the constructions in (31) is adequate.

An alternative option for high-frequent nouns to conform with the R-principle in a name-mentioning construction is to adopt a distanced interpretation. Consider the following examples (example [3a] repeated here as [32a]):

- (32) a. *Das sogenannte „Hotel“ entpuppte sich als schäbige Gastwirtschaft.*  
 'The so-called "hotel" turned out to be a shabby inn.'
- b. *Der sogenannte Wald ist genau genommen nur ein  
 the so-called forest is strictly speaking just an  
 verwilderter Schlosspark.<sup>36</sup>  
 overgrown castle garden.  
 'The so-called forest is, strictly speaking, just an overgrown castle garden.'*

Observe that here, too, *sogenannt* signals a non-standard meaning of the head noun. The so-called forest in (32b), for instance, is actually not a forest but something else, namely something that would be better described as an overgrown castle garden. An analogous logic applies to (32a). In both cases, the actual denotatum of the head noun of the *sogenannt*-construction is asserted to be outside its standardly accepted extension. Importantly, the latter is not the case with constructions like those in (31), which are name-informing. Here, the extension of the head noun of the *sogenannt*-construction is asserted to include the corresponding denotatum, that is, a six-pack carrier and a yoga exercise, respectively. To conclude, *sogenannt* signals two types of non-standard meanings with high-frequent nominals: While a name-informing *sogenannt* signals a shift to a (metaphorically) related extension with them, a distancing

---

<sup>36</sup> [www.fluchdesfalken.de/node/1014](http://www.fluchdesfalken.de/node/1014) (15. 05. 2018).

*sogenannt* implicates an exclusion of the corresponding denotatum from the head noun's extension.

An open question concerns the binding of the agent argument of the verbal root of *sogenannt*, as it was represented in (8) above, repeated here for convenience:

- (33)  $x y z$  *nenn-*  
 (' $x$  call  $y z$ ')  
 $\exists e$  [CALL( $e$ ) & AGENT( $x, e$ ) & THEME( $y, e$ ) & NAME( $z, y, e$ )]

Recall that we argued the agent argument ( $x$ ) to be bound generically if the head nominal has a low lexical frequency as in *sogenannte Sepsis* 'so-called sepsis'. Crucially, the producer of a corresponding utterance can be assumed to be part of the set of individuals that is defined by the generic binding of  $x$ . This reflects the fact that, in such cases, the speaker complies with the appropriateness of the name identified by *sogenannt*.<sup>37</sup> This is different with distancing *sogenannt*, i.e., when *sogenannt* is interpreted as synonymous with *angeblich* 'pretended'. Here, the speaker asserts himself/herself to oppose the semantic appropriateness of the name and communicates it to be non-literal. It is implicated, in this case, that the speaker is in some way dissociated from the agent-argument set of the predicate. *Sogenanntes Hotel* in (32a), for example, entails that some agent entity  $x$ , at some point in time, (inappropriately) referred to  $y$ , i.e., the shabby inn in our example, as *Hotel*. In (34), we represent this meaning through an existential closure of the agent-argument variable as well as the event variable to reflect the fact that the corresponding entities need to be resolved contextually:

- (34) *sogenanntes Hotel*  
 'so-called hotel'  
 $\exists x \exists e$  [CALL( $e$ ) & AGENT( $x, e$ ) & THEME( $y_i, e$ ) & NAME( $z, y, e$ ) &  
 SIM<sub>so</sub>( $z, /ho'tel/, f$ )]

The semantic properties of a distancing *sogenannt*-construction put the construction close to what is standardly analyzed as direct quotation in the literature, cf., e.g., Recanati (2001): Quotational constructions like those in (32) are used to report a previous utterance of the corresponding name. At the same time, a non-literal meaning of the name is evoked. To give rise to non-literal meanings of expressions is a key function of verbal irony. A classic approach

---

37 We assume the same to hold for constructions like those in (31).

towards verbal irony, in turn, links it to the speaker's intention to produce a comment of some kind which can clearly be recognized by the addressee as an echo of another utterance. Thus, a (negative) evaluation of the mentioned expression is produced, see Kreuz and Glucksberg (1989), Wilson (2006). To conclude, distancing *sogenannt*-constructions can be viewed as instances of verbal irony, which yields a non-literal interpretation of the name as a result of the echoic mention of a previous utterance of the name.

As argued above, the different interpretations *sogenannt* adopts can be implemented as a result of the interplay of lexical-semantic features with pragmatic principles as they relate to the relevance of the utterance as well as the speaker modality. Our analysis implies that *sogenannt* is polysemous and its different realizations are linked to only one lexical root. We consider such an approach to also capture cases of semantic vagueness occurring with *sogenannt* that meander between a name-informing interpretation and a distanced reading:

- (35) a. *Die sogenannte Zwischenstufentheorie* sorgte für  
 the so-called theory of intermediate stages caused for  
*kontroverse Debatten in der Medizin.*  
 controversial debates in the medical science  
 'The so-called theory of intermediate stages caused controversial debates in medical science.'
- b. *Die sogenannte Alternative für Deutschland hat ihren*  
 the so-called alternative for Germany has its  
*Parteitag in Essen begonnen.*  
 party convention in Essen started  
 'The so-called Alternative for Germany has started its party convention in Essen.'

With utterances of this type, the speaker's intention to use *sogenannt* is in fact not clear-cut: The *sogenannt* in *sogenannte Zwischenstufentheorie* 'so-called theory of intermediate stages', for example, can either be interpreted as an indicator of a neologism or as an indicator of the speaker's doubts regarding the status of the referent as a proper theory. Note, though, that such utterances are usually not perceived as particularly striking due to their ambiguity (as is the case with, e.g., *Max saw an Alaskan bare/bear*) but rather as underspecified and the selected semantic specification as dependent on conversational aspects as well as the particular contextual embedding.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> One can speculate vagueness w.r.t. the interpretation of the construction to be its actual conversational purpose in utterances of the type in (35).

To sum up, we have proposed pragmatic factors to trigger the different interpretations *sogenannt* takes on, with the understanding that the latter is associated with only a single semantic format. First, the default case is realized with a name-informing interpretation of *sogenannt-X* as we can observe it with low-frequent head nouns like *Sepsis*:

(36) Type 1: *sogenannte Sepsis* ‘so-called sepsis’

Frequency of *X*: low

- R-principle: ✓
- name-informing: ✓

In contrast, a highly conventionalized noun like *Hotel* is likely to adopt a distanced, ironic interpretation, resulting from an ostensive flouting of the R-principle:

(37) Type 2: *sogenanntes Hotel* ‘so-called hotel’

Frequency of *X*: high

- R-principle: ✗
- name-informing: ✗
- distancing: ✓

Here, the construction communicates to the addressee that the head noun is in fact a misnomer. The situation is different with cases like *sogenannte Handtasche* ‘so-called handbag’, see the examples in (31a) and (31b), where a distanced interpretation is not promoted. Here, *sogenannt* does indeed inform the addressee about the name status of the expression; with the implication, however, that the head nominal is used with a non-standard meaning that deviates from the head noun’s predominant meaning:

(38) Type 1a: *sogenannte Handtasche* ‘so-called handbag’

Frequency of *X*: high

- R-principle: ✗
- distancing: ✗
- non-standard interpretation: ✓

The regularity in (37) does not imply that we cannot find distanced readings with low-frequent lexical material also. An example we discussed is *sogenannte Zwischenstufentheorie* ‘so-called theory of intermediate stages’, see the example in (35), which is semantically vague as it supports in fact both a name-informing as well as a distanced reading.

The question remains of what the conversational function of quotation marks is in name-mentioning contexts and how to account for the observation reported in Section 3.1 that phrasal names are accompanied by quotation marks more often than the corresponding compound counterparts. We will address these questions in the following section.

### 3.2.2 *Sogenannt* and the markedness produced by quotes

Recall that quotes in instances of pure quotation (e.g., “*Paris*” has five letters, see Section 2.2 above) have commonly been described as a means used to refer to a linguistic shape by pointing to something that has this shape. In name-mentioning contexts, we argued, quotes highlight the use of an expression to mention its name. In constructions like *The doctor diagnosed a so-called “sepsis”*, quotes are employed to signal the name-mentioning use of the expression, which – via *so* – is asserted to represent a conventionalized name for blood poisoning used in a certain speech community. In that regard, the *so* in *so-called* and quotation marks fulfill the same function as both point to the lexical shape of a concept’s name.

Crucially, the use of an expression to identify a concept’s name can be seen as a non-canonical use of an expression: The default function of an expression is to denote something and not to name its own name. We assume this deviation from the standard denotational use of an expression to require an additional marking of the expression, and we follow accounts that assume quotation marks to fulfill this requirement. Such an analysis is in line with Predelli’s (2003) notion to treat quotes as what he calls attachment triggers, i.e., as triggers of content that is generated in addition to the customary message, see Predelli (2003: 7). But while Predelli classifies the information generated by quotes as semantic in nature, we, together with Klockow (1978) and others, assume it to be rooted in pragmatic principles. Klockow utilizes the Gricean conversational maxims to account for the function of quotation marks as an indicator of a deviation from the linguistic norm. In a similar fashion, Meibauer (2007), Gutzmann and Stei (2011) as well as Finkbeiner (2015) implement quotes as pragmatic markers that give rise to a non-stereotypical interpretation of the expression in quotes. In other words, quotes are used as a means to create markedness of the expression and indicate its non-canonical use. Regarding its prosodic equivalent, markedness of this sort can also be signaled by a prominent pitch accent and by a noticeable prosodic gap placed before the name, cf. *The doctor diagnosed a so-called \_ SEPSIS.*

The key idea of accounts of this nature is that the additional marking of an expression when used as a name can be understood to trigger a manner-

based implicature along the lines of Levinson's (2000) M-principle. The principle holds that a non-stereotypical meaning is indicated by using a marked expression that contrasts with the expression used to describe a default meaning, see Levinson (2000: 136). In an analogous way, we assume that markedness is added to the expression by means of quotes and their prosodic equivalents to signal the expression's non-standard use as a name. This is also where the answer lies to the question of why phrasal A-N names like *blauer Brief* 'blue letter' (*pink slip*) have been found to be marked by quotes more often than A-N compounds like *Grauwasser* 'graywater' (*gray-water*), see Section 3.1 above. As was argued, A-N phrases are less prone than compounds to function as names for concepts in German and, thus, lexicalized phrasal names can be assumed to exhibit their name status only indirectly. Consequently, in a name-mentioning construction, which explicitly refers to the naming function of an expression, a higher tendency to signal the name status is expected for A-N phrases than for A-N compounds.

Our approach ties in with proposals that aim at a unitary pragmatic analysis for all varieties of quotes, covering pure quotation as well as scare quotation. A comprehensive account of this sort is also desirable for the data discussed in the current paper, where quotes appear in name-informing as well as in distancing *sogeannt*-constructions. In all cases, quotes are used to signal a deviation from the canonical use of the expression in quotes: In a name-informing construction quotes highlight the use of the expression as a name as well as the name status itself, and in a construction with a distanced interpretation quotes indicate a departure from the regular meaning of the expression. Our reasoning implies that the use of quotes correlates with the degree of the expression's deviation from its canonical function: The more an expression deviates from the linguistic standard, the higher is the expression's tendency to be used with quotes.

## 4 Conclusion

The present paper aimed at illuminating the semantic properties of name-mentioning constructions involving *sogeannt* as an instance of quotation. In particular, we focused on the question of how to explain the different interpretations *sogeannt*-constructions can adopt and whether these relate to a single semantic format of *sogeannt* or not. To clarify these matters, first, the compositional makeup of *sogeannt* was described on the basis of its verbal root *nenn-*, which entails three thematic arguments, an agent, a theme as well as an argument representing the theme's name. Crucially, with *sogeannt* we reasoned

the name argument of the verbal root to be bound by the demonstrative *so*. *So* was argued to be functionally identical to quotation marks in name-mentioning constructions as both refer to a linguistic shape by pointing to something that has this shape. It was argued that quotes are used to highlight the use of the expression as a name as well as the expression's status as an established name.

To explain the varying interpretations of *sogenannt*-constructions, we pursued a pragmatic reasoning in light of the initial observation that the name used in a name-informing construction requires the name to be worth to be identified as such. Against this background, we found (A-N) compounds to less frequently occur in a *sogenannt*-context than A-N phrases and to be less frequently accompanied by quotes. The corresponding results of a corpus study were concluded to reflect a less pronounced name status inherent in phrasal expressions as compared to compounds. Importantly, then, the worthiness of an expression to be explicitly identified as a name was correlated with the expression's degree of establishedness. Expressions with a low lexical frequency are compatible with a name-informing interpretation of a *sogenannt*-construction (e.g., *sogenannte Sepsis* 'so-called sepsis'), whereas with high-frequency head nouns (*sogenanntes Hotel* 'so-called hotel'), the construction is likely to adopt a distanced interpretation. If a distanced, ironic interpretation is not supported, a high-frequency noun (e.g., *sogenannte Handtasche* 'so-called handbag') receives a non-standard interpretation coupled with a broadening of the noun's default extension.

To explain the interpretational variation, a relevance-based implicature was assumed to be at work, which brings about non-standard interpretations of high-frequency nouns in name-mentioning contexts. Furthermore, a manner-based implicature was assumed to be effective for quotation marks. We implemented them as an indicator of a deviation from the linguistic norm, thus promoting non-canonical interpretations – which we argued to include the use of an expression to mention its name. From a compositional point of view, the different interpretations of *sogenannt*-constructions were associated with the type of binding of the agent-argument as well as the event variable of the verbal root of *sogenannt*. While the canonical, name-informing interpretation was assumed to be linked to a generic binding of the two variables, the distanced interpretation was linked to an existential closure.

Our unitary analysis treats *sogenannt* as polysemous and, thus, connected to a single underspecified semantic representation, with the named pragmatic factors determining the different interpretations. The proposed approach is compatible with a lexicalist understanding of the boundary between grammar and lexicon in light of the assumption that varying interpretations of complex expressions emerge as a result of the structural composition of lexical and semantic as well as contextual features.

**Acknowledgments:** I wish to thank the anonymous reviewers and Hans-Martin Gärtner for their constructive comments and helpful suggestions on the analysis. I am also grateful to Sebastian Bücking, Sophie Repp, Marcel Schlechtweg, Heiko Seeliger, and Carla Umbach for discussion and fruitful comments as well as to the audiences at the “Semantics and Philosophy” colloquium (Cambridge, 2015), the *International Morphology Meeting 17* (Vienna, 2016), and the workshop “Secondary Information and Linguistic Encoding” of the *39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the German Society of Linguistics* (Saarbrücken, 2017). In addition, I thank Melina Heinrichs and Laura Sievers for their technical support.

## References

- Bierwisch, Manfred. 2006. German reflexives as proper and improper arguments. In Patrick Brandt & Eric Fuß (eds.), *Form, structure, and grammar. A festschrift presented to Günther Grewendorf on occasion of his 60th birthday* (Studia Grammatica 63), 15–36. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.
- Brendel, Elke, Jörg Meibauer & Markus Steinbach. 2011a. Exploring the meaning of quotation. In Elke Brendel, Jörg Meibauer & Markus Steinbach (eds.), *Understanding quotation* (Mouton Series in Pragmatics 7), 1–34. Berlin & Boston: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Brendel, Elke, Jörg Meibauer & Markus Steinbach (eds.). 2011b. *Understanding quotation* (Mouton Series in Pragmatics 7). Berlin & Boston: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Bühler, Karl. 1934. *Sprachtheorie: Die Darstellungsfunktion der Sprache*. Jena: Gustav Fischer.
- Cappelen, Herman & Ernest Lepore. 1997. Varieties of quotation. *Mind* 106(423). 429–450.
- Cappelen, Herman & Ernest Lepore. 1999. Using, mentioning and quoting: A reply to Saka. *Mind* 108(423). 741–750.
- Cappelen, Herman & Ernest Lepore. 2007. *Language turned on itself: The semantics and pragmatics of metalinguistic discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cappelen, Herman & Ernest Lepore. 2012. Quotation. In Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2012 Edition) <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/quotation/> (15. 05. 2018).
- Carlson, Gregory N. 1977. *Reference to kinds in English*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts dissertation.
- Clark, Herbert H. & Richard J. Gerrig. 1990. Quotations as demonstrations. *Language* 66(4). 764–805.
- Crimmins, Mark. 1992. *Talk about beliefs*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Davidson, Donald. 1979. Quotation. *Theory and Decision* 11(1). 27–40.
- Davis, Wayne A. 2017. Ideo- and auto-reflexive quotation. In Paul Saka & Michael Johnson (eds.), *The semantics and pragmatics of quotation* (Perspectives in Pragmatics, Philosophy & Psychology 15), 303–333. Berlin: Springer.
- Finkbeiner, Rita. 2015. “Ich kenne da so einen Jungen ... kennen ist gut, wir waren halt mal zusammen weg.”: On the pragmatics and metapragmatics of “X ist gut” in German. In Jenny Arendholz, Wolfram Bublitz & Monika Kirner-Ludwig (eds.), *The pragmatics of*

- quoting now and then* (Topics in English Linguistics 89), 147–176. Berlin & Boston: Mouton de Gruyter.
- García-Carpintero, Manuel. 2017. Reference and reference-fixing in pure quotation. In Paul Saka & Michael Johnson (eds.), *The semantics and pragmatics of quotation* (Perspectives in Pragmatics, Philosophy & Psychology 15), 169–194. Berlin: Springer.
- Ginzburg, Jonathan & Robin Cooper. 2014. Quotation via dialogical interaction. *Journal of Logic, Language and Information* 23(3). 287–311.
- Grice, Herbert P. 1975. Logic and conversation. In Peter Cole & Jerry L. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts*, 41–58. New York: Academic Press.
- Gutzmann, Daniel & Erik Stei. 2011. How quotation marks what people do with words. *Journal of Pragmatics* 43(10). 2650–2663.
- Harth, Manfred. 2011. Quotation and pictoriality. In Elke Brendel, Jörg Meibauer & Markus Steinbach (eds.), *Understanding quotation* (Mouton Series in Pragmatics 7), 195–208. Berlin & Boston: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Härtl, Holden. 2015. Semantic non-transparency in the mental lexicon: On the relation between word formation and naming. In Claudia Brinker-von der Heyde, Nina Kalwa, Nina-Maria Klug & Paul Reszke (eds.), *Eigentlichkeit: Zum Verhältnis von Sprache, Sprechern und Welt*, 395–416. Berlin & Boston: de Gruyter.
- Härtl, Holden. 2016. Normality at the boundary between word-formation and syntax. In Franz d’Avis and Horst Lohnstein (eds.), *Normalität in der Sprache* (Linguistische Berichte, Sonderhefte 22), 71–98. Hamburg: Buske.
- Horn, Laurence R. 1984. Toward a new taxonomy for pragmatic inference: Q-based and R-based implicature. In Debra Schiffrin (ed.), *Meaning, form and use in context: Linguistic applications*, 11–42. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Institut für Deutsche Sprache. 2014. *Deutsches Referenzkorpus / Archiv der Korpora geschriebener Gegenwartssprache 2014-II* (Release vom 11. 09. 2014). Mannheim: Institut für Deutsche Sprache. <http://www.ids-mannheim.de/DeReKo> (15. 05. 2018).
- Klockow, Reinhard. 1978. „Kein kalter Kaffee“: Zur modalisierenden Verwendung von Anführungszeichen. *Linguistische Berichte* 55. 14–24.
- Klockow, Reinhard. 1980. *Linguistik der Gänsefüßchen. Untersuchungen zum Gebrauch der Anführungszeichen im gegenwärtigen Deutsch*. Frankfurt am Main: Haag und Herchen.
- Kreuz, Roger & Sam Glucksberg. 1989. How to be sarcastic: The echoic reminder theory of verbal irony. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 118(4). 364–386.
- Krifka, Manfred, Francis J. Pelletier, Gregory N. Carlson, Alice ter Meulen, Gennaro Chierchia & Godehard Link. 1995. Genericity: An introduction. In Greg N. Carlson & Francis J. Pelletier (eds.), *The generic book*, 1–124. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Levinson, Stephen C. 2000. *Presumptive meanings: The theory of generalized conversational implicature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Leipzig Corpora Collection. 2011. *German newspaper corpus based on material crawled in 2011*. Leipzig Corpora Collection. Dataset. [https://corpora.uni-leipzig.de?corpusId=deu\\_newsrawl\\_2011](https://corpora.uni-leipzig.de?corpusId=deu_newsrawl_2011) (15. 05. 2018).
- Ludwig, Kirk & Greg Ray. 2017. Unity in the variety of quotation. In Paul Saka & Michael Johnson (eds.), *The semantics and pragmatics of quotation* (Perspectives in Pragmatics, Philosophy & Psychology 15), 99–134. Berlin: Springer.
- Maier, Emar. 2007. Mixed quotation: Between use and mention. In *Proceedings of Logic and Engineering of Natural Language Semantics (LENLS) 2007*. Miyazaki, Japan.
- Maier, Emar. 2014. Pure quotation. *Philosophy Compass* 9(9). 615–630.

- Matushansky, Ora. 2008. On the linguistic complexity of proper names. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 31(5). 573–627.
- Meibauer, Jörg. 2007. Syngrapheme als pragmatische Indikatoren: Anführung und Auslassung. In Sandra Döring & Jochen Geilfuß-Wolfgang (eds.), *Von der Pragmatik zur Grammatik*, 21–37. Leipzig: Universitätsverlag.
- Montalbetti, Mario. 2003. Reference transfers and the Giorgione problem. In Andrew Barss (ed.), *Anaphora: A reference guide*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Pafel, Jürgen. 2011. Two dogmas on quotation. In Elke Brendel, Jörg Meibauer & Markus Steinbach (eds.), *Understanding quotation* (Mouton Series in Pragmatics 7), 249–276. Berlin & Boston: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Predelli, Stefano. 2003. Scare quotes and their relation to other semantic issues. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 26(1). 1–28.
- Quine, Willard O. 1960. *Word and object*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Quine, Willard O. 1981. *Mathematical logic*. Revised Edition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Recanati, Francois. 2001. Open quotation. *Mind* 110(439). 637–687.
- Saka, Paul. 1998. Quotation and the use-mention distinction. *Mind* 107(425). 113–135.
- Schrader, Sabine. 2017. Konventionelle Anführung vs. modalisierende Anführung: Das Zusammenspiel sprachlicher und pragmatischer Faktoren bei der Erzeugung von unterschiedlichen Anführungslesarten in Benennungskontexten. Kassel: Universität Kassel final thesis.
- Schumacher, Petra, Patrick Brandt & Hanna Weiland-Breckle. 2016. Online processing of “real” and “fake”: The cost of being too strong. In Elena Castroviejo, Louise McNally & Galit Weidman Sassoon (eds.), *The semantics of gradability, vagueness, and scale structure: Experimental perspectives* (Language, Cognition, and Mind 4), 93–111. Heidelberg: Springer.
- Sperber, Dan & Deirdre Wilson. 1986. *Relevance: Communication and cognition*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Umbach, Carla & Helmar Gust. 2014. Similarity demonstratives. *Lingua* 149. 74–93.
- Washington, Corey. 1992. The identity theory of quotation. *Journal of Philosophy* 89(11). 582–605.
- Wilson, Deirdre. 2006. The pragmatics of verbal irony: Echo or pretence? *Lingua* 116(10). 1722–1743.