

Highlighting in Written Language: How Spacing Makes Sense in an Epigram by Schiller

Prosody in Information Structure
A Workshop to Celebrate Caroline Féry
on her 60th Birthday
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A truism to start

Language is primarily *spoken* language (or *signed* language),
written language is a derivative,
it is much less expressive than spoken language,
among many other things,
it lacks *prosody*!

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How authors benefit by NOT marking prosody:

»Das ist doch der Wachmeister Jeschke«, sagte die Mutter und schüttelte erstaunt den Kopf.

»Er saust schon die ganze Zeit wie blödsinnig hinter mir her.«

»Na und?«

»Ich habe neulich dem Großherzog Karl mit der schiefen Backe auf dem Obermarkt eine rote Nase und einen Schnurrbart ins Gesicht gemalt.«.

»Ja, wo solltest du denn den Schnurrbart sonst hinmalen?« fragte Frau Augustin und prustete.

a) eine rote NASE ins Gesicht gemalt

b) eine rote Nase ins GESICHT gemalt



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And how Comics authors mark it anyway:



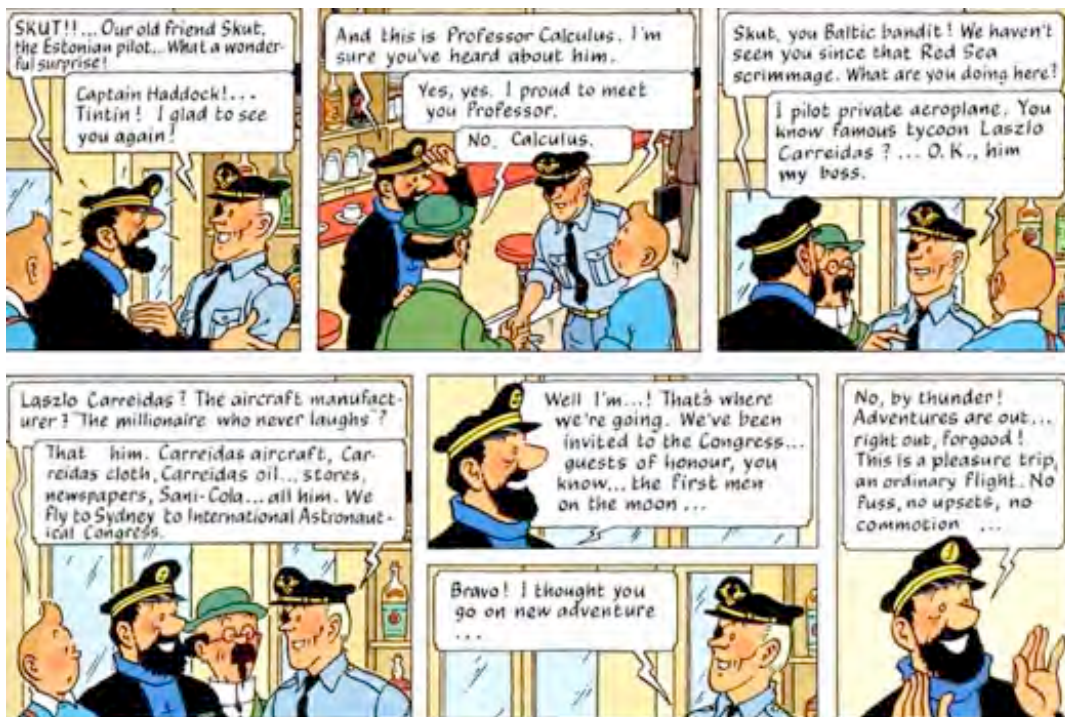
the young
Ludwig Wittgenstein



One of the authors of
Logicomix. An epic search
for truth.

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...if they speak an appropriate language!



Tintin, translated from French

...if they speak an appropriate language!



Asterix and Obelix, translated from French

But highlighting in writing is not a new thing!

We consider here: S p a c i n g, German S p e r r s a t z

- ▶ *sperren*: Sparren, cf. 'spear',
put additional lead between the letters to increase their spacing.
- ▶ typical for *fractured* types (no **boldface** or *italics*)

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Example of Spacing: Proper Names

Zeitalters, als für denselben zeugt. Als unter dem Perikles und Alexander das goldne Alter der Künste herbeykam, und die Herrschaft des Geschmacks sich allgemeiner verbreitete, findet man Griechenlands Kraft und Freyheit nicht mehr, die Beredsamkeit verfälschte die Wahrheit, die Weisheit beleidigte in dem Mund eines Sokrates, und die Tugend in dem Leben eines Phocion. Die Römer, wissen wir, mußten erst in den bürgerlichen Kriegen ihre Kraft erschöpfen, und durch morgenländische Ueppigkeit entmannt, unter das Joch eines glücklichen Dynasten sich beugen, ehe wir die griechische Kunst über die Rigidität des Charakters triumphiren sehen. Auch den Arabern gieng die Morgenröthe der



Friedrich Schiller,
Über die
ästhetische
Erziehung des
Menschen

Schiller

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Spacing used for Headlines – but not for contrast:

Die schwere Verbindung.
Warum will sich Geschmack und Genie so selten vereinen?
Jener fürchtet die Kraft, dieses verachtet den Zaum.

not: J e n e r f ü r c h t e t d i e K r a f t , d i e s e s v e r a c h t e t d e n Z a u m .

W i s s e n s c h a f t .

Einem ist sie die hohe, die himmlische Göttin, dem
andern
Eine tüchtige Kuh, die ihn mit Butter versorgt.

not: E i n e m i s t s i e d i e h o h e , d i e h i m m l i s c h e G ö t t i n , d e m a n d e r n

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An exception: Epigram #84

Friedrich Schiller's Epigram # 84,
in *Tabulae Votivae*; published in *Musenalmanach auf das Jahr 1797*,
cf. Goethe & Schiller's *Xenien* 'Gifts for Guests'
here reproduced from:
Sämmtliche Gedichte, Cotta'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1831

S - p r a c h e .
Warum kann der lebendige Geist dem Geist nicht er-
scheinen?
Spricht die Seele, so spricht ach! schon die Seele
nicht mehr.

A famous quote –
cf. e.g. Stephen Ullmann, *Semantics, An Introduction into the Science of Meaning*, 1962.

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A closer look at Epigram #84

The first line:

Warum kann der lebendige Geist dem Geist nicht erscheinen?

‘Why is telepathy impossible?’

‘Why on earth do we have to talk?’

‘Damn, we have to talk!’

What is this?

- ▶ A question?
- ▶ An exclamative!

But: It has been claimed that *warum* does not allow for an exclamative

(cf. Franz-Josef d’Avis 2013:)

Auf der anderen Seite finden wir w-Phrasen, die in w-Exklamativsätzen typischerweise nicht vorkommen. Betroffen sind zum einen kausale w-Phrasen (*warum, wieso*), zum anderen die komplexen w-Phrasen *inwieweit* und *inwiefern*.

(71) a. ??Warum/??Wieso der HEUTE abgesagt hat!

- ▶ An optative? But different from other optatives, which express a wish positively:
Oh, könnte doch der lebendige Geist dem Geist erscheinen!
- ▶ A new type of speech act?
A Regressive?

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A closer look at Epigram #84: The second line.

We consider a slightly simplified version:

S p r i c h t die Seele, so spricht, ach! schon die S e e l e nicht mehr.

Wenn die Seele s p r i c h t, dann spricht die S e e l e nicht.

‘If the soul t a l k s, then the s o u l doesn’t talk.’

Leaving out spacing results in a contradiction:

Wenn die Seele spricht, dann spricht die Seele nicht.

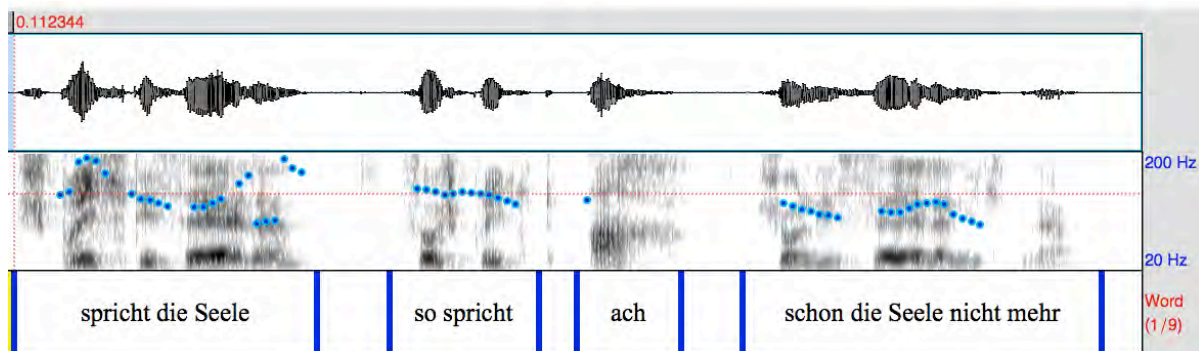
If p, then ¬p.

Hence spacing is crucial to achieve a non-contradictory reading.

But how on earth does spacing achieve that?

How does *nothing* turn a blatant contradiction to a piece of wisdom?

Realisation of epigram #84 by a competent speaker



Spacing represents focus accent!

But how does focus turn a blatant contradiction into a piece of wisdom?

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Spacing and focus, focus and alternatives

Spacing can be a substitute of focus marking:

- ▶ Spaced words are longer; focused words are longer.
- ▶ Alternative marking: boldface, greater letter size; focused words have a greater amplitude.
- ▶ In general: reflection of the effort code (Gussenhoven 2002)

Focus indicates alternatives:

- ▶ Focus on a constituent indicates that alternatives of the meaning of the constituent play a role in interpretation.
- ▶ Alternatives can be used in various ways:
 - Quantified over: e.g. *only*
 - Question-Answer congruence
 - Expressing contrast
- ▶ Representation of alternatives, e.g. Alternative Semantics (Rooth 1985).

But:

- ▶ How do focus alternatives turn a blatant contradiction to a piece of wisdom?

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Conditionals and Focus I

Meaning of conditional sentence (very roughly):

- ▶ *Wenn die Seele spricht, dann wird es still.*
 $\forall i[\text{the soul talks in } i \rightarrow \text{things get quiet at } i]$

Contradictory meaning:

- ▶ *Wenn die Seele spricht, dann spricht die Seele nicht.*
 $\forall i[\text{the soul talks in } i \rightarrow \neg \text{the soul talks in } i]$
(technically, not a contradiction – but the soul is not allowed to talk at all!)

Focus in protasis of conditionals:

- ▶ *Wenn [die Seele]_F spricht, dann wird es still.*
 $\forall i[\text{the soul talks at } i \rightarrow \text{things get quiet at } i]$
implicated: $\exists x[x \text{ an alternative to the soul} \wedge \neg \forall i[x \text{ talks at } i \rightarrow \text{things get quiet at } i]]$

This is because the protasis is a topic, resulting in a contrastive topic:

[Wenn [die Seele]_F spricht]_T, dann wird es still.

- ▶ Similar to: *[[die Seele]_F]_T hat geschwiegen.*
implicated: $\exists x[x \text{ an alternative to the soul} \wedge \neg [x \text{ remained silent}]]$
- ▶ Cf. Krifka 1992, Büring 1997, 2004 for explanations of this effect of contrastive topic

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Conditionals and Focus II

Adding focus to the apodosis:

- ▶ *[Wenn [die Seele]_F spricht]_T, dann wird es [s t i l l]_F.*
 $\forall i[\text{the soul talks at } i \rightarrow \text{things get quiet at } i]$
implicated: $\exists x[x \text{ is an alternative to the soul} \wedge$
 $\neg \forall i[x \text{ talks at } i \rightarrow \text{things get quiet at } i]$
implicated: $\exists P[P \text{ is an alternative to quiet} \wedge$
 $\forall i[x \text{ talks at } i \rightarrow x \text{ gets } P \text{ at } i]]$
- ▶ We get the latter step if we assume that the implicated negation acts like a focusing negation:
Schiller hat nicht [Sprachwissenschaft]_F studiert.
 $\neg[\text{Schiller studied linguistics}]$
implicated: $\exists x[x \text{ is an alternative to linguistics} \wedge \text{Schiller studied } x]$
- ▶ Cf. Beaver & Clark 2008 for arguments that nothing special has to be stipulated for negation to get this effect.

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Back to epigram #84

Recall:

- ▶ [Wenn die Seele [s p r i c h t]_{F,T}], dann spricht nicht [die S e e l e]_F.

Questions:

- ▶ What are the alternative to speaking?
- ▶ What are the alternatives to the soul?

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About souls and dogs

We turn to the original sentence:

- ▶ [Wenn die Seele [s p r i c h t]_{F,T}], dann spricht [die S e e l e]_F nicht.

Questions:

- ▶ What are the alternatives to speaking?
- ▶ What are the alternatives to the soul??

The alternatives of *Seele* 'soul'

- ▶ *Seele*₁: one's self
- ▶ *Seele*₂: the inner core of one's self, one's true self

Hence: *soul* is an auto-hyponym, like *dog*:

- ▶ *dog*₁: the species *Canis lupus familiaris*
- ▶ *dog*₂: the male members of the species, contrasted to *bitch*.

What are the alternatives of *sprechen* 'talk'?

- ▶ *sprechen*₁: to communicate
- ▶ *sprechen*₂: to communicate verbally

Making sense of Schiller's line:

- ▶ Wenn die Seele₁ spricht₂, dann spricht₁ die Seele₂ nicht.

'If one's self communicates verbally, then one's true self does not communicate

The role of focus

Focus and autohyponyms:

- ▶ *If John has a dog, he has a [b i t ch]_F.*
- ▶ *If John has a dog, he has a [d o g]_F.*
'If John has a dog, he has a male dog.'
- ▶ *Wenn Hans eine Katze hat, dann hat er eine [K a t z e]_F.*
'If John has a cat, he has a female cat.'
 $\forall i[\text{Hans has a cat at } i \rightarrow \text{Hans has a female cat at } i]$
implicated: $\forall i[\text{Hans has a cat at } i \rightarrow \neg \text{Hans has a male cat at } i]$

Notice:

- ▶ The more narrow interpretation is focused ('female cat')
- ▶ and contrasted with the complement to the hyperonym: ('male cat')

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Now roll up your sleeves for Epigram #84!

- ▶ [*Wenn die Seele₁ [s p r i c h t₂]_{F,T}, dann spricht₁ [die S e e l e₂]_F nicht.*

Assigned interpretation according to our analysis:

- ▶ $\forall i[\text{the soul}_1 \text{ talks}_2 \text{ in } i \rightarrow \neg[\text{the soul}_2 \text{ talks}_1 \text{ in } i]]$
- ▶ $\forall i[\text{one's self communicates verbally in } i \rightarrow \neg[\text{one's true self communicates in } i]]$

Taking focus into account:

- ▶ $\forall i[\text{the soul}_1 \text{ talks}_2 \text{ in } i \rightarrow \neg[\text{the soul}_2 \text{ talks}_1 \text{ in } i]]$
implicated: $\exists P[P \text{ is an alternative to talk}_2$
 $\wedge \neg \forall i[\text{the soul}_1 P\text{'s in } i \rightarrow \neg[\text{the soul}_2 \text{ talks}_1 \text{ in } i]]]$
implicated: $\exists x[x \text{ is an alternative to the soul}_2$
 $\wedge \forall i[\text{the soul}_1 P\text{'s in } i \rightarrow \neg[x \text{ talks}_1 \text{ at } i]]]$

If P = communicate non-verbally:

- ▶ $\neg \forall i[\text{one's self communicates non-verbally in } i \rightarrow \neg[\text{one's inner self communicates in } i]]$
 $\exists i[\text{one's self communicates non-verbally in } i \wedge \text{one's inner self communicates in } i]$
- ▶ There is a chance of true communication – if we do it non-verbally!

If x = one's superficial self:

- ▶ $\forall i[\text{one's self communicates non-verbally in } i \rightarrow \neg[\text{one's superficial self communicates in } i]]$
- ▶ When we communicate non-verbally, it's not our superficial self that communicates! 20 / 22

Some remaining words...

Recall the full epigram:

- ▶ [Wenn die Seele₁ [s p r i c h t₂]_FT], so spricht₁, **ach! schon** [die Seele₂]_F nicht **mehr**.

Particles *schon* (*nicht*) *mehr*, under a temporal interpretation:

- ▶ There was a time before the index of interpretation *i* for which it holds that one's true self is communicating.
- ▶ A natural model for this:
Before the time *i* at which one's self is communicating verbally, there is a time at which one's self is communicating non-verbally, and this is a time at which one's inner self is (trying to) communicate.
- ▶ So, there's Pim Levelt's model of speech production!

Expressive *ach!*

- ▶ Marks an optative (regretive?):
Schiller wants that what he says is not true.
- ▶ Schiller wants that one's inner self can express itself verbally.
- ▶ But even a Schiller thinks that this is a futile goal.

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Ach liebe Caroline!

Dann lass uns jetzt von ganzer Seele schweigen!

Dein Manfred.

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