
“Temporarily closed for 2 WEEKS!!” – Intensification on a typographical and textual level in coronavirus notices during the first lockdown.

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In the initial phase of the Corona pandemic, numerous commercial establishments displayed improvised closure notices, often handwritten or hastily printed at home (Androutsopoulos 2021: 298). This talk examines strategies of intensification in 261 such notices, focusing on which parts of the texts were intensified and what strategies of intensification were used under these special circumstances.

Drawing on Simonton’s (2018) model of creativity, the analysis reveals that intensifiers were used in largely uncreative ways: lexical particles appeared rarely, while exclamation marks and conventional text-design strategies such as bold type, underlining, and larger fonts predominated. Within the specific conditions of the Coronavirus pandemic, new norms have emerged. These amateurish, temporary designs reflect the shopkeepers’ lack of expertise in text design; this contrasts sharply with the “stylish signs of the commercial domain” (Androutsopoulos 2020: 297).

Expanding the perspective to the ensembles of signs (Auer 2010: 286) in the entrance areas reveals additional intensification strategies, such as typographical highlighting of entire texts or the repetition of posters when rules were ignored. The analysis thus extends Cotgrove’s (2025) list of means of intensification by showing that intensification can also arise from the relationship between multiple texts.

References: • Androutsopoulos, J. (2020). Die Sprachlandschaft im Dispositiv der Pandemie. *Aptum, Zeitschrift für Sprachkritik und Sprachkultur* 16/02–03, 290–299. • Auer, P. (2010). Sprachliche Landschaften. Die Strukturierung des öffentlichen Raums durch die geschriebene Sprache. In A. Deppermann & A. Linke (eds.): *Sprache intermedial: Stimme und Schrift, Bild und Ton*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 271–300. • Cotgrove, L. (2025). Novel methods of intensification in young people’s digitally-mediated communication. In L. Cotgrove, L. Herzberg & H. Lüngen (eds.): *Exploring digitally-mediated communication with corpora: Methods, analyses, and corpus construction*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 137–162. • Simonton, D. K. (2018). Defining creativity: Don’t we also need to define what is not creative? *The Journal of Creative Behavior* 52(1), 80–90.