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## **VP-Hypostasis in the Russian Green Man (ихтамнет)-Discourse**

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## **VP-Hypostasis in the Russian Green Man (ихтамнет)-Discourse**

### **ABSTRACT**

Abstract: This article analyzes the linguistic phenomenon of VP-hypostasis within the context of the Russian discourse surrounding *ixtamnet* (“they are not there”)—a phrase that emerged during the Ukraine conflict as a discursive tool to obscure the presence of Russian troops. VP-hypostases are syntactic constructions that morphologically resemble phrases but function discursively as self-contained units of meaning. The author demonstrates how *ixtamnet* serves as a discourse trigger, generating collective knowledge and legitimizing political narratives. Using corpus linguistic methods, particularly word and phrase embeddings, semantic networks are revealed that show the term’s discursive linkage to concepts such as “Donbass,” “Wagner Group,” and “mercenary.” The study highlights the performative and ironic character of such hypostases in political language and contrasts them with similar constructions in other languages. VP-hypostases are interpreted as discourse-focusing markers that encode complex social meanings within minimal linguistic form. Keywords: VP-hypostasis, discourse linguistics, corpus linguistics, word embeddings, discourse trigger, language ideology, phrase formation.

**Keywords:** *Concept, Stereotypes, National character, Multicultural aspects, Conceptual worldview*

### **Introduction**

The term “VP-Hypostasis” is used in this research project to describe certain forms of phrasal formations - phrasal composites - whose actual syntactic status does not correspond to their morphological structure. The sentence hypostases represent something different externally than their internal structure. In the present research project, “VP-Hypostasis” is understood as both an object and a process. As an object (result of a process), “VP-Hypostasis” can be defined as a finite phrase (i.e. contains V+fin obligatory) that can syntactically assume two of two possible positions in the NP: the position of the head noun (1) and the position of the subordinate member of the head noun (e.g. attribute) (2). As a process, “VP-Hypostasis” represents a process in which the syntactic status of a sentence is set aside and morphologically re-equipped in order to occupy the stated positions in the NP in a grammatically well-formed way.

The corresponding question clusters on the discuss functions of the VP-Hypostasis can be drawn up as follows:

- In what functional way do the sentence hypostases and discourses interlock?
- What requirements must the VP-Hypostasis fulfil in the role of a "discourse trigger"?
- How can you recognize the "discourse ability" of a VP-Hypostasis?
- What is the relationship between the sentence hypostases with and without the "discourse function"?

The methodological approach of this work is based on the conviction that the explanation of the functions of linguistic phenomena can only succeed if its manifestations are presented as fully as possible within the framework of an empirical description. Such a presentation of manifestations would make the second methodological step - comparison - possible in the first place. The *tertium comparationis* of the present study is formed by the phrasal composites, which necessarily indicate a finite coinage (verb tense) (VP-Hypostasis). The purpose of projecting the tertium onto different languages is not to find and describe corresponding (adequate) syntactic structures, but rather equivalent functional structures. When comparing the hands on the wrists of one and the same person, one does not compare the color, formal characteristics or number and position of the fingers, but the function of "catching" and/or "grasping", to which the hands owe their formal characteristics. Since the functions of the sentence hypostases are in the foreground, the description of them does not aim for abstract generalizations, but tries to include the specific interactional frameworks. When comparing sentence hypostases in different languages, attention is paid to the possible common communicative functions with a view to their socio-cultural backgrounds.

The methods for data acquisition form the foreground of the battery of methods. In the context of the "corpus linguistic turn" in linguistics, electronic language databases and the corresponding corpus linguistic methods of data search and analysis represent the main methodological tools of the work. These include the automated and algorithm-based possibilities of creating electronic language resources (e.g. web crawlers) and using existing databases (corpus tools in general). An essential corpus linguistic method in this work focuses on finding a possible connection between the discourse structures and the keyword capability of sentence hypostases. Since this goal requires reference to the semantics and the communicative meaning of the sentence hypostases, the word embedding method is the most suitable method for examination in the present study. The fact that the technical tools used do not cover all the languages relevant to this work means that their use must be limited accordingly, although efforts are made to ensure uniformity. Word embedding of the term *kudze ḱaci* as uni-gram [*kudze\_ḱaci*] in the vector-based Georgian-language web corpus reveals the several semantic similarities with the terms (Figure (1)):

საპროტესტოდ /saprotestod/ "to protest"

ბარიკადებზე /barikadebze/ "on the barricades"

განგაშის ზარები /gangašis zarebi/ "Alarm bells"

ერთიანი ფრონტი /ertiani pront'i/ "with the united front"



Figure (1). Word embedding /kudze\_kaci/ as WordCloud

The VP-Hypostasis *kudze kaci* *zaxili* "Everyone stand up! - Rufe" belongs to the discourse cluster "Mobilization" and "Counting the mobilized". The semantically and communicatively adequate interpretation of the phrase *kudze kaci!* only appears possible in connection with the cultural practice of its use. The consolidation and significance of this practice allows the lexical reduction and interpretation of the communicative meaning.

The structural analysis of VP hypostasis in Georgian is facilitated by the morphological feature of suffixal attachment of the case marker to the end of the whole phrase. The data set shows a tendency in the use of VP hypostases that corresponds to the underlying discursive status of the constructions: VP hypostases represent more or less established discourse in a language, and only this allows their use.

### VP-Hypostasis in the Russian Green Men (ихтамнет) discourse

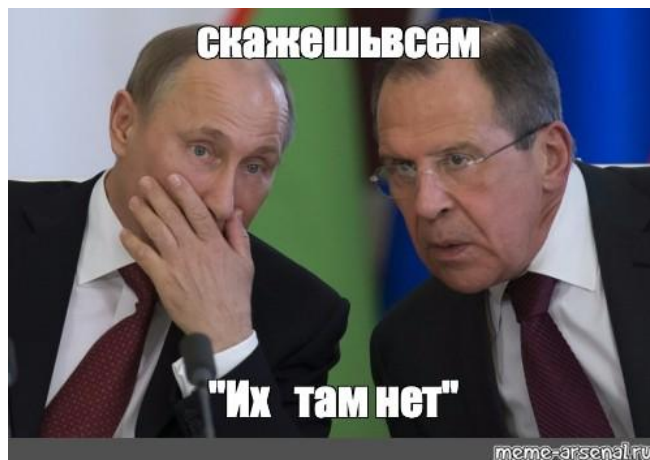
The VP-Hypostasis from Russian shows a current example for the development of the corresponding linguistic discourse. The adequate interpretation of the meaning of the collapsed VP-Hypostasis in Russian needs to be clarified:

(1) (Russ)

*uxmamhem* /ixte'mnjet/ < *ux+mam+hem* /ix+/tam/+/njet/ they+(are)+there+not

*ихтамнет* /ixtamnjet/ is considered a neologism in Russian resulting from the constant rejection of Russia's military presence in the so-called hybrid wars against individual countries and especially during the intervention in Crimea and the war in the Donets Basin<sup>1</sup>. In the media, the term gained popularity and became the common name for Russian military personnel with no signs of recognition involved in an undeclared war against Ukraine.

For the first time, the concept of *ихтамнет* /ixtamnjet/ was formulated on March 5, 2014 by Russian President Vladimir Putin (Figure 2) at a press conference in response to questions



**Figure (2).** "You tell everyone "you're not there"".

Source: meme-arsenal.

about the affiliation of the military that annexed Crimea. He stated that there were no Russian soldiers there. One of many ways of expressing this meaning in Russian is *их там нет* "they+(are)+there+not". The explosive nature of this statement lay in the political events that later became known as the "Crimean crisis" and the "annexation of Crimea". As the Russian leadership was generally suspected of being behind the events, the first public opportunity was taken to ask them about the involvement of members of the Russian military units in the Crimean annexation. The involvement was publicly denied by the highest authorities. The various official and unofficial investigations exposed the statement as false information and provided counter-evidence online (Figure (3)).



**Figure (3):** Ихтамнет: волонтеры розсекретили кадровых российских военных на Донбасі<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The information is taken from the Ukaini-language Wikipedia.

<sup>2</sup> UNIAN. (2017, February 3). *Ихтамнет: Волонтеры розсекретили кадровых российских военных на Донбасі*.

(Ichtamnet: Volunteers have exposed members of the Russian military in Donbass)

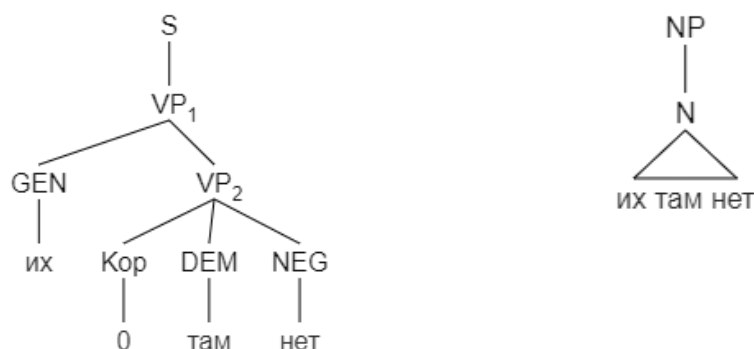
The VP-Hypostasis *их там нет* /ix tam njet/ "they+(are)+there+not" became part of the news language as a contracted construction, especially on the Ukrainian- and Russian-language Internet.

(2) *Убитые американцами в Сирии ихтамнеты принесли Российской Федерации ощутимую пользу.*

ub'i'itʲə ɐm'ɪrɪk'ant̪ səm'ɪ f<sub>—</sub> sirɪn **ixtamnjet**i prɪm'ɪsl'i rɐs'i'jskəj fɪd'ɪr'at̪ sɪ  
ɐɕ'utɪ'imoʲɐ p'olɪzɔ.

The **ixtamnet**<sub>i(Nom.Pl)</sub> killed by the Americans in Syria gave the Russian Federation a tangible advantage.

The structural analysis of the VP-Hypostasis shows that we are dealing here with internal word formation, in which the verb phrase is reified into a noun:



**Figure (4).**

The VP-Hypostasis *ихтамнет* /ixtamnjet/ "they are not there" contains zero copulas typical for Russian and can thus be described as a finite construction. In (2), however, it behaves like a noun with a nominal marker for plural *ихтамнет-ы*<sub>PL</sub> /ixtamnjet-i/<sub>PL</sub> and thus justifies the designation VP-Hypostasis.

		KWIC	
1.	<i>конечному потребителю, это</i>	ихтамнет,	<i>мамой клянусь.</i>
	for the end user it is a piece of paper	<i>they-are-there-not</i>	I swear on my mother.
2.	<i>Асад и Иран поучаствуют своими</i>	ихтамнетами.	
	<i>Al-Assad and Iran will continue with their</i>	<i>they-are-there-not</i>	<i>participate</i>
3.	<i>десантники на Донбассе, которые сначала</i>	ихтамнет	<i>а потом их закапывают</i>

Retrieved 03.04 2020, from <https://www.unian.ua/war/1709676-ichtamnet-volontieri-rozsekretili-kadrovih-rosijskih-viyskovih-na-donbasi-foto.html>.



	<i>Paratroopers in Donbass, who first</i>	<i>there-are-not</i>	<i>and then bury them.</i>
4.	<i>почему наши власти до упора будут твердить про</i>	ихтамнет	<i>а зеленых человечков</i>
	<i>why our authorities everywhere</i>	<i>they-are-there-not</i>	<i>and "green men" will talk</i>
5.	<i>Неужто достали</i>		<i>кого-то из бывших соседей?</i>
	<i>Have you read the Russian</i>	<i>they-are-there-not- s</i>	<i>from one of your former neighbors?</i>
6.	<i>Вот и вся солдатская правда.</i>		<i>утверждает, что Россия воюет в Украине</i>
	<i>This is the soldier's truth. The most important member of</i>	<i>they-are-there-not</i>	<i>claims that Russia is at war in Ukraine.</i>
7.	<i>известно,</i>		<i>работали в сирийском Курдистане с начала</i>
	<i>It is known that</i>	<i>they-are-there-not- s</i>	<i>have worked in Syrian Kurdistan from the very beginning</i>
8.	<i>карлики отправили</i>	ихтамнетиков	<i>полным снаряжением</i>
	<i>The dwarves sent their</i>	<i>they-are-there-not- s</i>	<i>in full gear</i>
9.	<i>И вида,</i>	"ихтамнет"	<i>не подашь.</i>
	<i>as</i>	<i>they-wouldn't-be- there</i>	<i>you don't look like that,</i>
10.	<i>в Сирии появилось заметное количество</i>	ихтамнетов	<i>виде наемников</i>
	<i>There are a considerable number of</i>	<i>they-are-there-not- s</i>	<i>in Syria in the form of mercenaries.</i>

**Table 1.** examples of concordances<sup>3</sup> with the search term <"ихтамнет.\*">

The Corpus Araneum Russicum III Maximum documents the VP-Hypostasis *ихтамнет*

<sup>3</sup> Vít Benko, *Aranea: Yet another family of (warez) web corpora*, 2014. Retrieved from <http://unesco.uniba.sk/aranea/>

/ixtamnjet/ in a rare variety of forms and with a certain tendency towards wordplay. The examples show that this finite construction first becomes a noun and is coined as a noun part of speech, and in some rare cases appears again in the role of a predicate as a verb.


 leotank, 14.02.2018 14:28 (#)  
Доихтамнетились.  
Окончательное решение ихтамнетного вопроса.  
Многие из тех, кто окончательно ихтамнетнулся в мухафазе,  
начинали свой славный боевой ихтамнетный путь в Украине.  
Ихтамнет преобразился в Ихтамнебудет. Никогда.

Figure (5): From the forum on [grani-ru-org.appspot.com/Politics/World/Mideast].

(2) (Russ)

Доихтамнетились<sub>V[1]</sub>. Окончательное решение ихтамнетного<sub>ADJ[2]</sub> вопроса. Многие из тех, кто окончательно ихтамнетнулся<sub>V[3]</sub> в мухафазе, начинали свой славный боевой ихтамнетный<sub>ADJ[4]</sub> путь в Украине. Ихтамнет<sub>N[5]</sub> преобразился в Ихтамнебудет<sub>N[6]</sub>.

**Arrived**<sub>[1]</sub>. Final solution to the "**they-are-there-not**"<sub>[2]</sub> question. Many of those who finally became "**they-are-there-not**"<sub>[3]</sub> in Mukhafaza<sup>4</sup> began their glorious warpath of the "**they-are-there-not**"<sub>[4]</sub>-type in Ukraine. The "**they-are-not-there**"<sub>[5]</sub> became the "**they-will-not-give-there**"<sub>[6]</sub>.

Shapes	Analysis
[1]	Negating-final action type (финально-отрицательный СД)
	Formal indicators: Prefix / postfix до- + -ся
До-ихтамнетились	Intentional meaning: To carry out an action until negative consequences occur for the subject.
	до- /do-/ preverb with lexial-qualitative function for perfective / involuntary

<sup>4</sup> muḥāfazāh (in Arabic: محافظة [mu'ħa:faðʕa]) is the name of the first level of administrative division in many Arab countries. Comparable to "province".



до- /do-/: to pursue the "ixtamnet" (also in the figurative sense) until unpleasant consequences occur (e.g. harvesting). The basic lexical meaning is retained, but До- /do-/ introduces a qualitative external limit and thus a different focus to the action.<sup>5</sup>

"getting the finishing touches as ain "ixtamnet"" / the final stage of being an "ixtamnet" /

до-эксперимент-ировались << -experiment-

Similar word до-фантаз-ировались << -fantasie-

formations in Russian до-митинг-овались << -meeting-

до-полит-коррект-нич-ались << -be politically correct-

- |     |                  |   |
|-----|------------------|---|
| [2] | ихтамнетного     | ADJ / Masculine - Singular - Genitive   |
| [3] | ихтамнет(н)-улся | V / Indicative, perfect, 3Sg.           |
| [4] | ихтамнетный      | ADJ / Masculine - Singular - Nominative |
| [5] | ихтамнет         | N / Masculine - Singular - Nominative   |
| [6] | ихтамнебудет     | N / Masculine - Singular - Nominative   |

In the following example **ихтамнет** serves as a basic pattern for the further addition in the form of a complex hypostasis (a kind of asyndeton - *asyndetic VP-Hypostasis*):

(3) (Russ)

как тогда реагировать мировому сообществу на вечно русское  
**ихтамнетавыдокажите?**

How else is the international community supposed to react to the eternal Russian "**they-are-there-not-proving-it**"?

- |      |                          |  |
|------|--------------------------|--|
| i.   | ихтамнетавыдокажите      | ["Asyndeton" [Sentence hypo1[VP[Gen их]][Кор "0"]] |
| ii.  | их-там-нет-а-вы-докажите | [Dem там] [NEG нет]]] [Sentence hypo2[VP[(Part) а] |
| iii. | их там нет а вы докажите | [Nom вы] [V докажите]]                             |

<sup>5</sup> Hans Schlegel, *Formation, meaning and use of the Russian verbal aspect. Part 1: Theoretical foundations* (Munich: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2002), p. 67.

iv. *их там нет. а вы докажете.*

v. They are not there.

Prove it (after all).

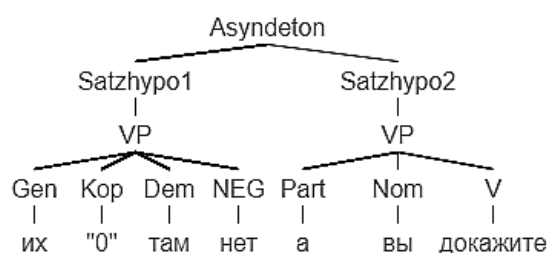


Figure (6)

The grammatical forms in which the VP-Hypostasis occurs are presented in the following list:

#### Derivation with "ихтамнет" nouns

<i>ихтамнет</i>	N.Nom.Sg.Masc	<i>ихтамнет-овск-ий</i>	N.Gen.Sg
<i>ихтамнет-а</i>	N.Gen.Sg	<i>ихтамнет-овск-ой</i>	N.Prep.Sp
<i>ихтамнет-ы</i>	N.Nom.Pl	<i>ихтамнет-овск-ого</i>	N.Gen.Sg
<i>ихтамнет-ов</i>	N.Gen.Pl	<i>ихтамнет-ски-е</i>	N.prep. sg. masc
	N.Inst.Sg	<i>ихтамнет-ск-ому</i>	N. Dat.Sg
<i>ихтамнет-ами</i>	N.Inst.Pl	<i>ихтамнет-ск-ая</i>	N.Nom.Sg.Fem
<i>ихтамнет-ах</i>	N.prep.pl	<i>ихтамнет-ов-ост</i>	N.Gen.Pl.Masc
		<i>ихтамнет-ов-ец</i>	
		<i>ихтамнет-ик-ов</i>	N.Gen.Pl
		<i>ихтамнет-ов-ича</i>	N.Gen.Sg

#### Adjectivization with "ихтамнет"

<i>ихтамнет-(н)ых</i>	Adj. prep. pl
<i>ихтамнет-ских</i>	Adj. prep. pl
<i>ихтамнет-ной</i>	Adj. prep. sp

#### Composition with "ихтамнет"

<i>ихтамнет-политика</i>	The policy of the "ixtamnet"
<i>ихтамнет-нормативы</i>	The "ixtamnet" standards
<i>ихтамнетов-узбеков</i>	The Uzbek "ixtamnet's"
<i>ихтамнетов-матросов</i>	The navy "ixtamnet's"
<i>ихтамнето-террористов</i>	The "ixtamnet" terrorists

Predicative formations with "ихтамнет"

<i>ixтамнетить</i>	To do, behave like "ixтамнет"
<i>доixтамнетились</i>	Becoming the "ixтамнет" for good
<i>ixтамнетнулся</i>	Transform into an "ixтамнет"

The total of approx. 900 corpus examples are distributed across the frequency list as follows

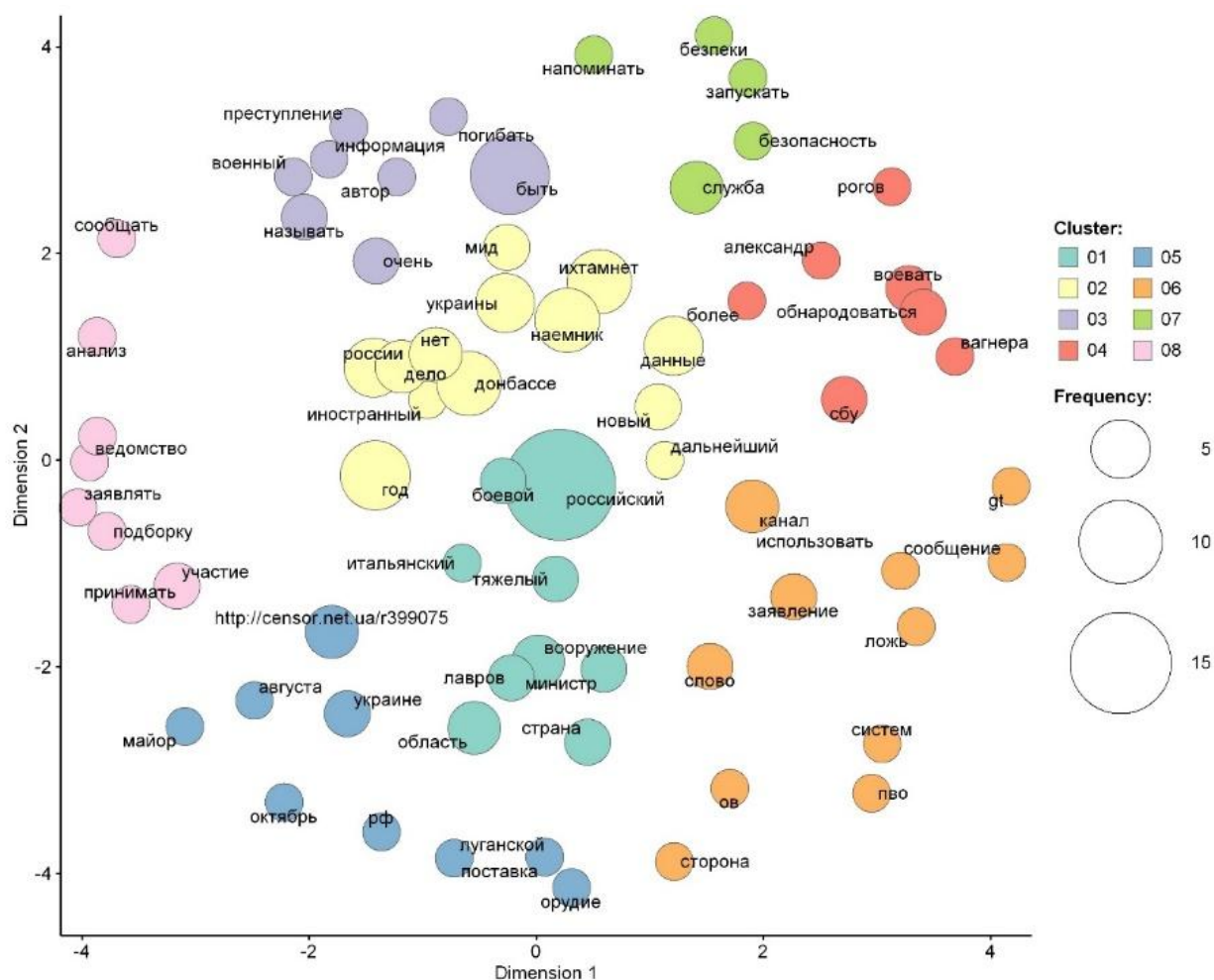
# Query: "ixтамнет.\*" 872

word	Freq	word	Freq
ixтамнетов	315	ixтамнетовича	1
ixтамнет	226	ixтамнетов	1
ixтамнеты	172	ixтамнетов-узбеков	1
ixтамнетами	51	ixтамнетов-матросов	1
ixтамнета	30	ixтамнетов-котолюбов	1
ixтамнетам	22	ixтамнето-террористов	1
ixтамнетах	10	ixтамнетных	1
ixтамнету	6	ixтамнетный	1
ixтамнетом	4	ixтамнетнулся	1
ixтамнетовской	2	ixтамнетной	1
ixтамнетовец	2	ixтамнетного	1
ixтамнетства	1	ixтамнетки	1
ixтамнетскому	1	ixтамнетия	1
ixтамнетской	1	ixтамнетить	1
ixтамнетских	1	ixтамнетиков	1
ixтамнетские	1	ixтамнетией	1
ixтамнетская	1	ixтамнетавыдокажите	1
ixтамнетовском	1	ixтамнетов	1
ixтамнетовского	1	ixтамнет-работал	1
ixтамнетовских	1	ixтамнет-политику	1
ixтамнетовости	1	ixтамнет-нормативы	1

Using the example of ixтамнет /ixтамnjet/ << /ix/+/tam/+/njet/ sie+(sind)+dort+nicht from Russian, I proceeded in exactly the opposite way to the "Zigarettenholen" section: The relevant discourse was pre-researched. To reduce it to a few Labels, the "ixтамнет" discourse is about so-called "hybrid warfare" in the context of the current Russian-Ukrainian conflict. The corpus linguistic tolls

are therefore used to verify the discourse already described.

The following multidimensional scaling of words results from a somewhat small "ixtamnet" web corpus with around 30T tokens: (Figure (7)).



**Figure (7).** Scaling

Among the 8 discourse-specific clusters, the keyword "ixtamnet" appears in the 2nd cluster together with the following cohorts:

Cluster 2.	Cohort	
"ixtamnet"	"украины"	Ukraine
	"россии"	Russia
	"донбассе"	Donbas
	"мид"	The Russian Foreign Ministry
	"наемник"	Soldner

"иностранный" foreign

The discursive connection between the VP-Hypostasis "ixtamnet" and the context "Foreign soldiers in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas" is confirmed.

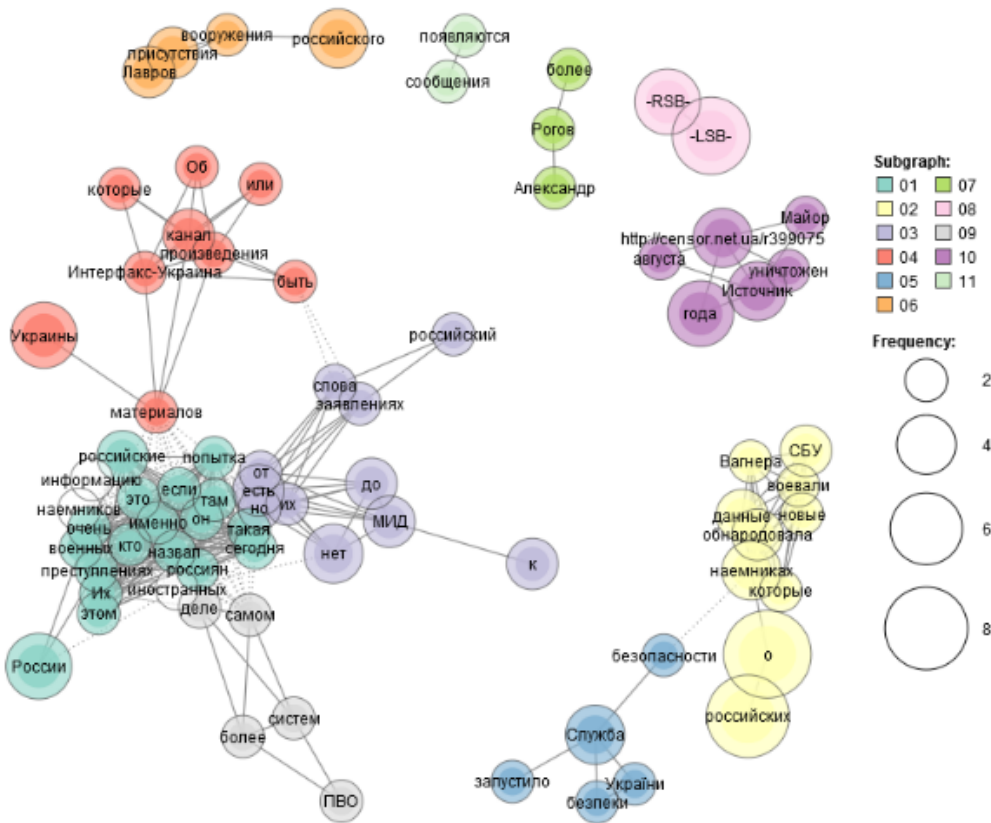


Figure (8). Co-occurrence map

Cohort	Cluster 5	Cluster 2.	Cohort
Служба України Ukrainian secret service	"СБУ"		Служба безпеки України Ukrainian secret service
Soldner	"наемник"		Soldner
Security(s)	"безпеки"		
		"Вагнер"	Wagner Group. Russian private security and military company.
		"росийских"	russian
Service	"служба"		

The co-occurrence map (Figure (8)) shows the connection between clusters 2 and 5 with corresponding boundary keywords {"СБУ" / "наемник" / "безопасности"}. In the discourse-specific cluster 2, the keyword *Вагнер* /vagner/ appears, which is probably the best lexical candidate for replacing the pronoun *их* /ix/ "they" in *ихтамнет* /ixtamnet/ "they are not there". According to media reports, members of the Wagner group were active in Crimea during the Russian takeover and later in eastern Ukraine, Syria and Central Africa<sup>6</sup>. Its units operate covertly. However, sources consistently report close links in strategy and operations with the Russian military intelligence service GRU<sup>7</sup>. It seems appropriate to paraphrase "they are not there" as "The fighters (soldiers) of the Wagner unit are not in Crimea / Eastern Ukraine / Syria / Central Africa". All the more so because the keywords *Вагнер* and *ихтамнет* as well as *наемник* "Soldner" form a common field in the Self-Organized Map (Figure (9)):



Figure (9). Self-Organized Map of Words

<sup>6</sup> Andreas Rüesch, "Russia's private armies operate in a legal vacuum," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, January 18, 2018, p. 5

<sup>7</sup> Willi Neumann and Steffen Dobbert, "Russia: Putin's mercenaries," *Die Zeit*, February 6, 2017.



A larger WebCorpus with around 1M tokens was generated for the word embedding process. The generated vertex data from Toke clusters together the concepts that appear semantically similar. (Figure (9)).

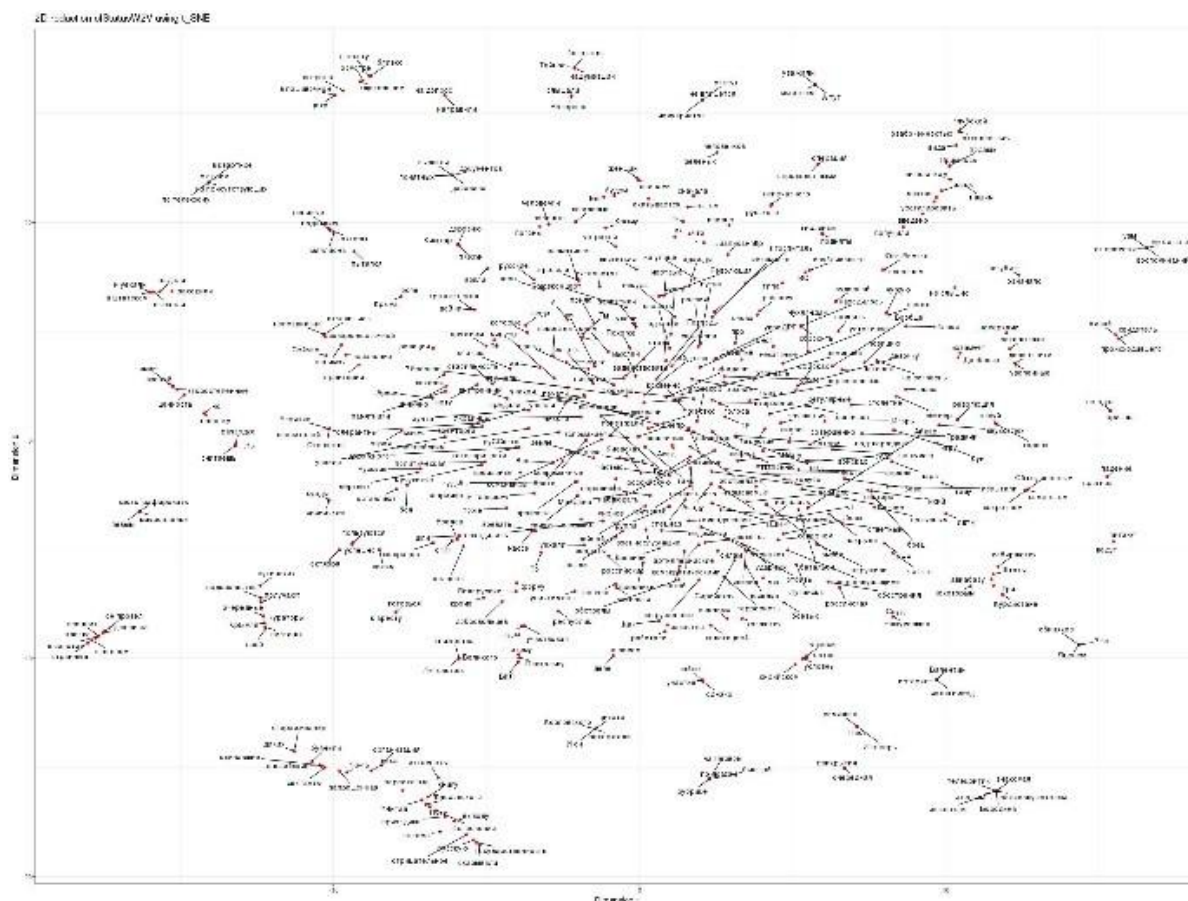


Figure (10).

The vector for *ихтамнет* lies in the significant proximity of the concepts "Donbass" (war zone in eastern Ukraine) / "desantniki" (special forces command of the Russian army) (Figure (10)).

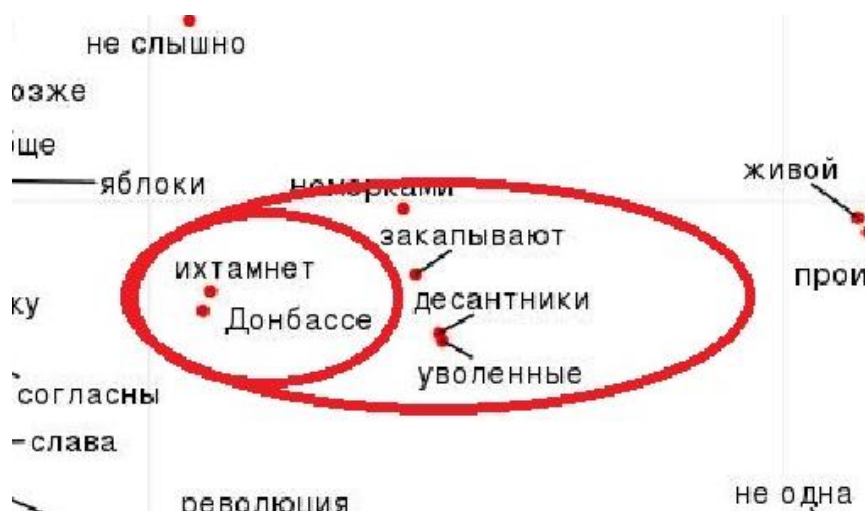


Figure (11).

The VP-Hypostasis from Russian *ихтамнет* is a genuine neologism that generates the appropriate communicative sense in thematically specific discourse. The type of formation can be described as a contraction and serves as an analogy for such formations as (*ихтамнет*) *авыдокажите* "(they-are-there-not) prove-you-it (however)". The formal brevity of the Russian VP-Hypostasis facilitates its perception as one unit, one word. In the contexts, despite the variety of forms, the original usage situation is activated and knowledge of Putin's answer to the question from the press conference in 2014 is assumed.

Once again, in comparison to "I'm going to get a quick cigarette" discourse, *ихтамнет* discourse is a thematically specific area that generates a correspondingly smaller communicative surface of meaning. The analyses in the corpus-linguistic method have above all made it possible to interpret the pronouns that occur in the VP-Hypostasis *ихтамнет* ("they" and "there"):

<i>их</i>	<i>там</i>	<i>нет</i>
ix	tam	net
them	there	NEG
<i>наемник</i> "Soldner"	Donbas	
<i>Вагнер</i> - Russian private security and military company.	Crimea	
Special Forces Command of the Russian Army	Ukraine	

Through this lexical equivalence, the meaning of the VP-Hypostasis *ихтамнет* becomes clear and the corresponding discourse is restricted. The word *нипричёмши* /nepričjomiš/ << *Ни при чём* "to have nothing to do with it", which is directly linked to the name of the current Russian president Putin, has a somewhat larger communicative area. As a hyperonym for *ихтамнет россиянин* "The Russian" is noted.<sup>8</sup>



Figure (12). Source:

<https://ok.ru/niodnogoko/>

### A discourse-linguistic approach to the phenomenon described

The scientific analysis of linguistic phenomena, and of language in general, requires an

<sup>8</sup> Wiktionary contributors, "*ихтамнет*," Wiktionary, n.d., <https://ru.wiktionary.org/wiki/ихтамнет>

empirically exhaustive description based on significant and representative data. Such a description can then be used for generalization of various kinds, including the formation of theories of varying degrees of abstractness. Although the transition between empiricism and theory is not a methodological necessity for either of them, the direction of the relation plays a decisive role: using necessary empirical data to justify a theory (from theory to data) or using appropriate theoretical concepts to classify or explain empirical data (from data to theory). This certainly oversimplified "yin and yang" of scientific.

### ***Metadiscourse - discourse within discourse***

Just like the founder of knowledge-theoretical discourse analysis, Paul-Michel Foucault, as well as all the researchers who have developed their own rigid research methodology and concepts, are committed to the current discourse of their own specialist tradition and/or the social challenges of the given time. In this context, the thematic breadth of the research spectrum leads to frequently mentioned conceptual confusion and methodological inconsistency. The impression arises that what actually constitutes a "discourse" depends on the observer and his or her research objective. This situation is characteristic of all interdisciplinary borderline topics in the humanities. Meanwhile, scholarly discourse on "discourse" counts a list of references with almost 500 introductions and reference works, specialized lexicons and handbooks, theoretical foundations, methods as well as individual studies and anthologies.

The aim of the present section is to take up VP-Hypostasis as the pattern of language use in the discourse analytical sense and also to argue in favour of the corpus linguistic method as a complementary method. The selection of the academic texts under consideration is subordinated to this aim. A detailed reference to Foucault and his works is avoided insofar as the individual authors have already included the critical discussion of Foucault that is relevant to this study. It is intended to outline the methodology used in the study to explain the function of sentence hypostases and to clarify the conceptual position in the discourse on "discourse".

The other five authors discussed (Tereick, Spitzmüller, Warnke, Ulrich Bibenhofer) and their research serve to illustrate the explanatory power of discourse theory using concrete examples. In addition, the methodological flexibility of the discursive approach is emphasized.

### ***Tereick***

In her empirically characterized multimodal study of the climate change discourse, Tereick provides a terminological groundwork in which she derives her own working definition of the concept of discourse based on the Foucauldian tradition. According to Tereick, "discourse theory [...] enables

a new approach to philosophical, sociological and also linguistic investigations by reconstructing the constitution of facticity in language, but also in other sign systems." The author speaks of the distinction in the use of the term discourse: L-discourse (language in use, also known as lower-case discourse (little-d discourse)); F-discourse (discourse in Foucault's sense, also known as capitalized discourse (big-D discourse)) as well as discourse position (individual statement); discourse strand (set of related statements). Tereick regards the ambiguity of the use of the term as meaningful and as a mutually complementary continuum.

With language in use, the present work is clearly classified under L-discourse, which in no way means that the results of the investigation of the functions of individual linguistic forms (here VP-Hypostasis) cannot be used for an extensive F-discourse analysis without the overall social background. As positive evidence of such a process, Tereick gives the example of Halliday and Fairclough: using Halliday's description of the function of nominalization, Fairclough shows the impersonalization of discourse: The government raises taxes vs. (nominalization) raising taxes, which leads to the diminution of the agentive role of the government in the perception of the discourse community. The case-related definition of the term discourse is possible and necessary due to the increasing frequency and expansion of thematic coverage areas. Tereick demonstrates this with reference back to the Foucauldian tradition:

Discourse is "a set of statements and practices that determines what is true, correct, sayable and doable within a formation system. Different discourses compete with each other and contradictory discourses can coexist. In order to protect hegemonic discourses, a discourse community develops exclusion mechanisms and institutions that strengthen and maintain them. The discourse develops an independent power and thereby constitutes and consolidates certain power and domination relations. Resistance and subversive discourses emerge against these. Discourses can be analyzed according to the purpose for which they can be delimited by time, topic, medium, etc." The definition of the term discourse relevant to the present work is also based on the basic idea that a discourse is "a set of statements that belong to the same formation system". The "truth" is produced in the "discursive practice" of knowledge formation by the discourse community and the practice itself produces the discourse. Discourses are "to be treated as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Although these discourses consist of signs, they use these signs for more than just designating things." The dimension meant here includes the added value of discourse research for critical science.

With regard to sentence hypostases, this description can be applied insofar as a VP-Hypostasis forms the object of a discourse and represents it in the most focused way. The linguistic constructions used for this express the relations that go beyond the sign relation - they stand for

different communicative senses and evoke the characteristic properties of communicative practices of a discourse. The results of Tereick's study include the description of re-contextualization and parallelization of characteristics that lead to discourse-specific metaphorization and metonymization in climate change discourse and serve to "reduce distance to climate change and bring it from "far" to "near". Metaphors can also be used to focus on certain aspects of the discourse". They can be used to illustrate complex causalities (The Earth's atmosphere is a greenhouse), but also to make statements about responsibility (Humans receive the bill, footprint) and convey deontic meanings (Climate change is a disease)". A certain degree of metaphorization or the use of metaphors to construct the sentence hypostases also plays a role in the present study, although here it is not a question of a particular thematically defined discourse, but primarily of the sentence hypostases assuming a certain function in relation to the discourses. Tereick's reference to Foucault, which is largely adopted in this work, lies in the assumption of discursive knowledge formation. The sentence hypostases are formed and used in their function of arguing the "truthfulness" or "validity" of a certain position in the discourse.

### ***Spitzmüller and Warnke***

In Spitzmüller and Warnke's comprehensive introductory work on discourse linguistics, discourse linguistics is precisely positioned within the accompanying set of disciplines. The basic perspective adopted remains within the framework of classical descriptive linguistics. First of all, however, it must be justified and argued that a possible sub-discipline of language description - discourse linguistics - can make a unique contribution to the study of the phenomenon of discourse that is distinct from the contributions of philosophy, sociology, history and literary studies. The same applies to the positioning of discourse linguistics in relation to the sub-disciplines of linguistics (e.g. lexicology, semantics, text and sociolinguistics). One of the main strands of problem-solving runs along the challenge of the rigid linguistic definition of the term discourse. In their proposed definition of the linguistic concept of discourse, Spitzmüller and Warnke put forward a bottom-up construction in which they view discourse linguistics as an extension of text linguistics. Starting with the smallest meaning-bearing unit of language, the morpheme, continuing with the word and sentence and ending with the text and concluding with the discourse. The descriptive level above the text provides the free slot for the discourse and completes the continuum. The definitional added value of this building block-like construction lies in the establishment of a logical relationship between the concept of discourse and the remaining linguistically uncontroversial levels of linguistics such as text linguistics, syntax and morphology.

The schematic representation is also presented as an inclusion relationship in which the constituent



position of the discourse is clarified:

[discourse [ text [ sentence [ word [ morpheme [ phoneme/grapheme ] ] ] ] ]

Following Wichter, the construction is justified as follows: "[ ] the derivation of discourse from small linguistic units (ascendency) as well as the modelling of discourse as a structure of smaller elements or constituents (descendency) enables integration into the system of linguistics."

Apart from linguistically imprecise boundaries between morphs and words, the phenomenon of VP-Hypostasis intensifies the discussion about the demarcation between the word and the sentence. The levels of construction may be clear for the topic of "global warming", but in numerous cases, e.g. the so-called hashtag keyword sentences, which generate discourses in the "new media" (e.g. Twitter) on a daily basis in numbers that can no longer be surveyed, or act as a hook for them, it seems difficult to keep the levels of the discourse-specific morpheme, word and/or sentence apart. The authors themselves consider the concept of discourse to be highly ambiguous and "often vaguely used with different (and sometimes contradictory) conceptions and theories". The reason given for this is the "refusal" of discourse analysis to commit itself terminologically and categorically, which in turn is quite intentional and even programmatic in structure-oriented linguistics. In this context, the focus on the definition of the concept of discourse from the perspective of linguistic discourse analysis, at the center of which are largely culturally anchored and action-guiding linguistic patterns, seems particularly important: "the action-guiding and socially stratifying collective knowledge of certain cultures and collectives." The special feature of Spitzmüller/Warneke's introduction is the "methodological origo" to text: "We understand discourse linguistics [...] as an extension of the systematic interest in language and different languages beyond the boundaries of the sentence and text. This is why we speak of "transtextual language analysis"" and why the linguistic concept of discourse remains related to the linguistic concept of text. Another point to be emphasized in Spitzmüller/Warneke's introduction is the clarification of the discourse/corpus relation. If discourse is defined by transtextuality, then corpus, as a cross-textual collection, can be considered on the same level as discourse. The two terms are thought to be at least partially identical.

### ***Ulrich***

In a brief introduction and overview of discourse research, Ulrich gets to the heart of the connection between linguistic and social/power-political aspects of discourse theory: (The) "communication/language, i.e. the discourse (determines) people's definitions of reality and thus also power structures in society; the linguistically mediated approach is decisive." He emphasizes that discourse research is not focused on the content of texts. It is not possible to conduct discourse research



within a single text or individual statements. Rather, it is about the interlocking of the texts within a discourse, which are embedded in the communicative practices, and also about the relationship between the discourses, which cannot be assumed to be sharply demarcated. Ulrich's account establishes the idea that all discourse is a product of reconstruction, which is achieved through the qualitative and hermeneutic process. Ulrich's basic understanding of the phenomenon of discourse also goes back to Foucault and tends strongly towards a social-theoretical or critical approach: "Discourses are not simply speeches and discussions, but power-determined social processes that are understood as materially effective". Ulrich emphasizes the fact that a discourse cannot be related exclusively to the linguistically manifested content by claiming that the concept of discourse can also cover the non-thematized, the undesirable, the unthinkable and the unspeakable. With regard to the specific sentence hypostases that label the corresponding discourses, this point appears relevant insofar as the sentence hypostases mentioned once in the discourses, and even only partially (ellipsis), are avoided in further discourse or only indirectly referred to. The characteristic property of sentence hypostases - to function as "catchwords" in the discourse - is reflected in their frequency of use: the presupposed VP-Hypostasis is often regarded as the unspeakable in a discourse, which is latently referred to in the communicative practice of a particular discourse.

Ulrich visualizes the overlapping of different terms and different methods in a figure (2) and emphasizes that they are not mutually exclusive, but complement each other on a case-by-case basis. In the jungle of discourse research, the author establishes a helpful criterion: professional culture. It plays the primary role in the subordination of concepts and procedures. The illustration, which is intended to provide orientation, is divided into three partly overlapping parts: (left) research models based on linguistics and literary studies; (middle) concepts based on social science approaches in the Foucault tradition and so-called "framing theory"; (right) "pragmatic" approaches in discourse research.

A further perspective on the concepts depicted can be achieved by citing the micro-macro axis: "the macro level can therefore mean, for example, both a collective actor such as a social movement and society as a whole. Nevertheless, the claim of discourse theory according to Foucault generally aims at "higher", the production of socially legitimate knowledge (see above). So, for example: How does a society/discourse define madness and thereby exclude large groups of people, thoughts, ideas from the realm of the "normal" and "right"?"

Both the positioning of the VP-Hypostasis in the left "column" of the figure and the specific location at the point of overlap between metaphors, catch phrase/topuk marker and keywords: flag words/stigma words remain conditionally accurate, as the consideration of the sentence hypostases

under the labels argumentation pattern/story line and idea element appears no less justified. The problem of exact subordination does not arise in the present work insofar as it is close to the empirical data and uses the corpus-based discourse analysis method.

The basic idea put forward in this paper is based on the conviction that discourse can be calculated using the corpus linguistic method or corpus tools. The subtitle of Bubenhofer's 2008 article "Calculating discourse?" can currently be formulated without the question mark or the question can be answered with a clear yes. The algorithm-based operationalization of big data leaves virtually no other way than to automatically calculate discourse-related linguistic patterns ("patterned language use" or "language use patterns"). This means that the corpus linguistic method is used not only for the purpose of obtaining representative empirical data in a significant size, but also to analyse it with the help of algorithms due to its complexity. The results of such an analysis are then available for scientific conclusions or summaries. Bubenhofer's logical addition to a corpus-based perspective is the "corpus-driven" concept: "This approach is characterized [...] by the attempt to understand the corpus as a body of data in which structures are made visible using suitable methods, which are only classified afterwards".

### ***Bubenhofer***

The exponential growth of storage capacities in the last decade (and the end is far from in sight) puts Bubenhofer's comment from 2008 into a new, relative perspective: "for example, it is relatively easy to take a random sample of several thousand articles from ten years of a daily newspaper and process them corpus linguistically". From the current perspective of data storage technology, literally all articles of a newspaper or all articles of all newspapers that have ever appeared and are empirically accessible in any form can be used and processed corpus linguistically. In 1999, Wichter wrote the following: "[...] Discourses can neither be documented nor empirically analysed due to their sheer volume." This consideration is based on the following, admittedly facetious, calculation: "In computer discourse - according to my rough calculation based solely on orders of magnitude - around two or more dozen million texts are produced per day in the Federal Republic of Germany, including conversations and monologues. That's around 1000 encyclopaedias the size of the Meyer or two hundred bookshelves or five rooms or a third of a floor. One year fills a 100-storey tower block, although we could spread the volumes gently over two smaller tower blocks out of consideration for those who don't cheat. 10 years fills a campus." I defer the question of the meaning of such data collection at this point. The dominant perspective is based on the technical facilitation of data collection and not on the scientific or otherwise motivated process. The culmination of this perspective

manifests itself in the so-called paradigm shift in language research: linguists currently only have to formulate the "right" questions, namely about the answers that are already mapped in the corpora.

"1. it becomes possible to supplement the more content-based description of discourse with an analysis of discursive practice, i.e. to pose the question "of ways of using terms, the formations of texts and the routines of linguistic action". 2) The identification of formally determined patterns of language use is a task that is easier to operationalize algorithmically than the identification of concepts such as topos or metaphor, which can be formalized in very different ways on the surface of the text. This paves the way for discourse analysis with the help of corpus linguistics and large amounts of data".

In the present study, the corpus is not only the focus of data collection, but also the basis for the first creation of a social media corpus (within the framework of the word embedding tool for Georgian "sitqvamnergi") for the Georgian language with over 550 million tokens, as a representation of discourse with a peculiar dynamic and logic that differs from classical text corpora. The characteristic communicative timing of semi-spontaneous (largely unplanned) language in social media poses many questions to traditional linguistic research. The "Internet language" is increasingly becoming the focus of linguistics as a reason to revise traditional assumptions about the structure and rules of language. With regard to sentence hypostases, the corpus linguistic method is applied with reference to discourse analysis. The samples are understood as discourse indicators and made qualitatively and quantitatively accessible. In the corpus linguistic method used here, the unit "text" plays a subordinate role. In this context, Bubenhofer writes that "the unit of the text [in corpus-oriented discourse analyses] can be broken up and statements can be used as the smallest unit". Language corpora are increasingly becoming the basis for neural modelling of languages and allow the use of various analysis tools with "reading" or "induction" capabilities, such as word embeddings, which are based, among other things, on a vector representation for each word contained in the text corpus. In the present study, phrase embeddings are also used.

An extremely important point from Bubenhofer 2009, which examines discourse and cultural analysis from a corpus linguistic point of view, is also discussed here. According to the author, "it should be possible to draw some conclusions about the social organization of the world from observations of typical language use". In this context, "idiomatic expressions can be a particularly clear reflection of social institutions". The ethnomethodological routines of everyday life, which facilitate problem solving through recurring patterns, are part of the social organization of the world. Such behavioural patterns take up in particular the linguistic means to implement the social actions of everyday life. Idioms are characterized by a high frequency of form and cumulative indexing of

content, which makes them most suitable for mapping social institutions. Certain types of sentence hypostases with their structure and grammar can be considered on the same level as idioms from the perspective of discourse and cultural analysis. In a certain way, they function as culturemes, which are defined as "behaviours in the act of communication, realized through verbal, para-linguistic, non-verbal and extra-verbal behaviourmes". The types of VP-Hypostasis analyzed in this section serve as an orientation aid for the identification of the current discourse and communicative integration into it. This results in the basis for adequate social behaviour, which can be underpinned verbally.

Two of Bubenhofer's three hypotheses appear to be extremely relevant for the present work: "(1) Patterns of language use are indicators of discourse and (2) Methodologically, this offers the opportunity to analyse language data for their patterned nature and to derive inductive discourse descriptions from them". The following section of the paper serves to exemplify the derivation of discourse descriptions by identifying and making accessible the patterned use of sentence hypostases. Three empirical examples of sentence hypostases from three languages - German, Russian, Georgian - are taken up and the corresponding discourses are calculated within the framework of the corpus linguistic procedure. Prior to this analysis, the element relevant to the concept of discourse - communicative surface of meaning - is discussed.

Bubenhofer's most important question "Calculating discourse?" has so far had no influence on the question of the definition of "discourse" itself. On the one hand, this may be due to the fact that the current linguistic definition also copes with the aspect of computability within the framework of a corpus linguistic procedure, or that adaptation is not necessary, or that the empirical basis for calculating discourse does not currently have the necessary significance.

### **Functions of VP-Hypostasis**

In the conclusion to the current chapter, I discuss the linguistic functions of VP-Hypostasis. A distinction is made between discourse and non-discourse functions. The main distinguishing criterion is the empirical measurability (/calculability) of a discourse behind the use of VP-Hypostasis. At this point, the composite term "discourse function" refers to the discourse-triggering or communicative meaning-bearing function of a VP-Hypostasis. Discourse functions of sentence hypostases understood in this way require additional non-linguistic knowledge about the interaction (micro-dimension of communication) and the existence of shared presuppositions with regard to the socio-cultural circumstances (macro-dimension of communication). In the non-discourse functions of VP-

Hypostasis, the above-mentioned dimensions remain untouched and the use of sentence hypostases takes place on the basis of lexical knowledge.

Based on the examples in the previous section, the discourse functions are described and then non-discourse functions, which refer to the semantic and grammatical properties of the usage. It has been shown that the diverse and often freely interpreted definition of the concept of discourse requires an appropriate adaptation to the methodological approach of corpus linguistics in that discourse is fundamentally calculable (Bubenhofers). The main characteristic of the approach is the frequentist approach, which is a prerequisite for the qualitative analysis based on it. The methodological apparatus of the corpus linguistic procedure with regard to the calculation of discourse was largely adopted in the current chapter and used for a research-specific goal: the elicitation of a discourse corresponding to a specific VP-Hypostasis.

The connection between the VP-Hypostasis and the discourse shifts to two different linguistic and meta-linguistic levels. On the linguistic level, the sentence hypostases form semantic focus positions in the discourse. In the semantic network of meaning of a discourse, the VP-Hypostasis assumes the role of the discourse trigger and semantically summing indicator of the content. On the meta-linguistic level, the sentence hypostases function as simple solutions for naming or attributing concepts that can be derived from the linguistic surfaces of the interaction. The meta-linguistic level lays the foundation for the determination and realization of the discourse function of the sentence hypostases. This function initially lies in the more or less ad hoc solution to the naming problem. A person who constantly complains with the sentence "I'm bored" can be described as a "nagging person" or as an "I'm-bored-person". This is a relief in that, depending on the type and nature of the nagging, a selection of "grumbling", "complaining" and "grumbling" to "grumbling", "howling" and "grumbling" "person" is available. A direct takeover (quoting) appears to be more precise and therefore more effective in communication. In addition, there is the focusing function and the speaker's modality of expressing the focus of their own perception of the conversation.

In the linguistic analysis of the *ухтамнет* discourse, the negation of a fact plays the overriding role. This semantic operation denies the official participation of Russian Federation soldiers in the regional wars in Ukraine. The meta-linguistic function is based on this linguistic characteristic of the VP-Hypostasis: the negation is always ironized by positive verification. The mere fact that the name replacement *ухтамнет* refers to the specific persons proves the non-literal use of the sentence "They are not there". The irony implies the communicative genre of reproach towards all those who use the

sentence literally. In some contexts, ironization becomes a kind of hyperbole, as in "they are not there, but they will be killed and buried". Here the paradox of the expression reaches the absurd. Ukrainian and Russian-language content dominates the *ихтамнет* discourse. The VP-Hypostasis hardly ever used in German-language discourse. The following excerpt is one of the rare examples:

Here, the description formulated by the Russian president is equated with derbomic improvisation - burlesque. The resulting discourses take over the main functional strand and treat the *ихтамнет* context as a macabre joke in which the terrible is joked about.

## Conclusion

The text examines the role of VP hypostases as discourse triggers, especially in the Russian discourse around *Ихтамнет* (literally "they are not there"). VP hypostases are syntactic constructions that function morphologically like phrases but discursively as independent markers of meaning and communication. They can function as discourse triggers and generate specific communicative meanings in socio-cultural contexts. The focus is on the discursive function of VP hypostases in political and social debates. One example is the Russian hypostasis *ихтамнет*, which was used as a euphemism for "not officially present" Russian soldiers during the Ukraine conflict. The linguistic construction obscures the military presence and ironically creates a paradox, since the non-existence of the soldiers is discursively emphasized, while their presence is factually proven.

The analysis uses corpus linguistic methods such as word embedding to identify semantic networks and discourse clusters. For example, the occurrence of *ихтамнет* in connection with terms such as "Donbass", "mercenary" and "Wagner Group" shows the discursive link with the context of "hybrid war". The use of this VP hypostasis creates collective knowledge and legitimizes political narratives. The text also sheds light on the communicative practice of VP hypostases in comparison to other languages, such as the German construction "Ich gehe mal Zigaretten holen", which also serves as a discursive means of concealment. VP hypostases function here as keywords that encode complex social and cultural meanings in a minimal linguistic framework.



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