

Visible grammatical structures in handwritten texts in German

Niklas Reinken | Leipzig University, Germany

The German writing system reflects a lot of grammatical structures, such as morphological structures or syllables. Writing shows grammar (cf. Meletis 2020: 20 f.). This is already true in printed texts, but even more so in handwritten texts, because the potential for variation is greater in those texts. Writers can more easily deviate from the usual shape of a character and use these deviations to mark grammatical patterns.

In this presentation, I will use two phenomena to show that grammatical structures in handwritten texts go far beyond those in printed texts. To this end, I use data from a handwritten corpus of 100 school-leaving exams (Reinken 2023).

I will argue, first, that gaps in the written product correlate with syllable and morpheme boundaries and, second, that inflectional reduction syllables look different from full syllables. This allows us to draw conclusions about the relationship between grammar and writing in the German writing system that cannot be drawn from a pure examination of printed scripts.

Meletis, Dimitrios (2020): *The Nature of Writing. A Theory of Grapholinguistics*. Brest: Fluxus.

Reinken, Niklas (2023): *Die Grammatik der Handschriften*. Heidelberg: Winter.