



Z A S

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Letter of Support for the NFDI-Initiative Text+: Language- and Text-based Research Data Infrastructure +

Dear Prof. Hinrichs,
dear Colleagues,

the Leibniz-Zentrum Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft (ZAS) supports the NFD14Text+ initiative. We are eager to see that this very important initiative succeeds because it would support our work, and work in the language-related sciences in general, in crucial ways.

ZAS explores the human language faculty and its expression in individual languages, with the aim to better understand this central human ability and its biological, cognitive, cultural and social factors. Knowledge gained on how language is structured, acquired and processed can be applied elsewhere, e.g. in the field of speech diagnostics or speech technology. The four research areas of ZAS span the core subdisciplines of linguistics: Phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, semantics and pragmatics as well as child language acquisition. Currently, ZAS has more than fifty researchers and is extremely strong in the acquisition of research funds – among others, two ERC projects, management of and participation in one DFG Priority Programme, and participation in one DFG Collaborative Research Center (SFB).

The currently established research themes at ZAS that would profit most from Text+ are *Language Contact* and *Language Documentation and Archiving*. In the former, data concerning language acquisition and language use of speakers in a multilingual setting are collected, analyzed, and presented for future research. For example, the research instrument MAIN for the investigation of narratives has collaborators in over 80 languages. In the latter, ZAS has a number of documentary linguists working on diverse languages in Africa, South America, and Oceania that produce annotated audiovisual recordings. In particular, the DFG/ANR project DoReCo works with a network of documentary linguists in a project that will result in high-quality annotated audio corpora of 50 languages with a phoneme-by-phoneme segmentation that will become an invaluable tool for future research. ZAS also takes part in the project QUEST, funded by BMBF, with the goal to develop standards for the presentation of audiovisual corpora of small languages for different user scenarios. Most importantly, ZAS is planning for an institute extension on the area of Diversity of Languages and Speakers, which will have a strong component of developing research databases of different types. ZAS will also provide training for linguists, with the aim of improving the result of documentary work on languages.

For these reasons, ZAS is extremely interested in the Text+ initiative, which will be of crucial and permanent importance for its research agenda.

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