The analysis of social representations through semantic frames. A linguistic approach to discourse analysis in order to explore the perception of the Neustadt (Strasbourg) by the local population.

In our thesis, we analyse the social representations of the Neustadt, former German imperial district in Strasbourg, by the local population. Since 2010, the 'German district' is an object of increasing media coverage, provoked by the candidature of the city of Strasbourg, which aims at the inscription of the Neustadt on the UNESCO's World Heritage List. The valorisation of this urban space, however, seems to disagree with the perception of the Neustadt by the inhabitants of the city. We propose an interdisciplinary and discursive approach to the analysis of the social representations of the Neustadt on the basis of questionnaires and interviews. We use and exploit the potential of two psychosocial concepts – the 'theory of the central core' and the 'hypothesis of the silent zone' – in the context of a linguistic discourse analysis and a cognitive semantics approach. We apply lexicometric methods and semantic frames (as cognitive categories for analysis) in order to analyse the content, the structure, the distribution, the dynamics and the interconnections of social representations inside the discourse.