

TOWARDS A TYPOGRAPHICAL LINGUISTICS:
THE SEMANTICS-PRAGMATICS OF TYPOGRAPHIC EMPHASIS IN DISCOURSE

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The standard view of the effects of typographic emphasis in English is that type styles (e.g., capitals, italics) enhance memory for emphasized information to the detriment of reading speed and without contributing semantically or pragmatically meaningful information to the text. Fewer emphasis studies that have concerned themselves with reference questions provided off-line evidence that typography interacts with linguistic variables and, more specifically, that it adds a modulatory or a contrastive layer of meaning to the interpretation of referential expressions. No study to date has investigated, however, whether typographic emphasis can bring a referent into discourse focus and consequently affect the processing of co-referential expressions (e.g., repeated names, pronouns). This study provides *on-line* evidence for the visual, emphatic, contrastive, and discourse focus effects of typographic emphasis during normal silent reading in English by means of two eye-tracking experiments manipulating capitals and italics in cohesive pieces of discourse. A data-driven case is made that typographic emphasis is a visible carrier of content that serves a linguistic function in the text.