

**Correlating connectives in spoken German at the interface
between topology, prosody and information structure:
the case of *deshalb ... weil* and *deswegen ... weil***

This paper presents the results of a case study concerning the usage of the causal adverbial connectives *deshalb* and *deswegen* as correlates to the subordinating conjunction *weil* in spoken German. Both structures have already been syntactically and semantically described, but the description of the pragmatic constraints which influence their use is still lacking. Moving from their categorization in traditional German grammar, this paper investigates how these structures are used with different functions in spoken German according to the position of the adverbial connective in the utterance. Evidence for this is provided by a sample of corpus data which comprises several genres of everyday and institutional communication.

The theoretical framework on which this paper is based embraces two domains of linguistics: the grammar-driven research on connectives in the German language (*Konnektorenforschung*) on the one hand and the pragmatic-driven studies of talk-in-interaction (*Gesprächsforschung*) based on the American Conversation Analysis on the other hand.

For the former domain, I extracted the terminology for the syntactic description and classification of connectives. My main reference work in this respect was the *Handbuch der deutschen Konnektoren* (HDK 1: Pasch et al. 2003; HDK 2: Breindl/Volodina/Waßner 2014).

Concerning the latter domain, I focused on one particular speech phenomenon, i. e. on syntactic projection. What is meant by this term, coined by Peter Auer (2002), is “the fact that an individual action or part of it foreshadows another one” (ibid., p. 1). Auer assumes that spoken language is a temporal process which speech participants perform collaboratively and on a cognitive base. In the unfolding of such processes, syntactic projections play a significant role, since they allow the hearer to predict potential turn completion points and thus optimize the production and reception of utterances in real time (Auer 2007, p. 96 f.). The occurrence of such phenomena in spoken German has been investigated by scholars of interactional linguistics (for instance by Günthner 2008; König 2012; Imo 2013). Although a case study on the correlation structures *deshalb ... weil* and *deswegen ... weil* is still missing in the literature, they can be assumed to be examples of syntactic projection as well, since the adverbial connectives *deshalb* und *deswegen* are used cataphorically to anticipate the causal subordinated clause introduced by *weil*. Moving from this assumption, the paper aims to determine the function of such structures in talk-in-interaction. In doing so, the syntactic features of the involved connectives have to be taken into account. The adverbial connectives *deshalb* and *deswegen* have no fixed position in the sentence. According to the grammar, when they are used as correlates to *weil* they can be placed in the forefield, in the midfield and in the postfield (Eisenberg 2013, p. 325). According to their position, they may have different prosodic features, which in turn are related to the information structure of the sentence they are embedded in (Blühdorn 2001, p. 284).

The usage of *deshalb ... weil* and *deswegen ... weil* has been observed within a sample of spoken language corpus data from the *Forschung- und Lehrkorpus Gesprochenes Deutsch* (FOLK). The corpus analysis provides evidence for the three mentioned syntactic positions and, in addition, for a fourth syntactic form: a matrix phrase consisting of a noun phrase followed by the adverbial connective. The recurrent prosodic features of such syntactic forms have been considered as well, which leads to a double basic distinction: on the one hand, according to whether the connected adverbial is stressed or unstressed, on the other hand, according to whether it is prosodically integrated or not integrated in its left argument. In the latter case, the adverbial connective is embedded in an autonomous intonational phrase.

By observing how such syntactic and prosodic features can be combined with each other, it was possible to establish the four most frequently recurring patterns:

- 1) Prosodically integrated, stressed adverbial connective in the midfield;
- 2) Prosodically not integrated, stressed adverbial connective in the postfield;
- 3) Prosodically integrated, stressed adverbial connective in matrix phrase;
- 4) Prosodically integrated, unstressed adverbial connective in the forefield.

These four patterns are illustrated through the analysis of single examples from the corpus. The presented excerpts were transcribed according to the GAT conventions (Selting et al. 2009) and prosodically annotated with Praat (Boersma/Weenink 2014). This operation allowed identification of intonational features which provide further evidence for the projectivity of *deshalb ... weil* and *deswegen ... weil*.

The final result of the analysis confirms that syntactic and prosodic features of adverbial connectives relate to the information structure of the utterance they are embedded in. Moreover, it shows how patterns with different information structures perform different interactional functions and are context-sensitive.

In the closing section, some possible future research perspectives are discussed: the quantitative corpus analysis indicated a number of other tendencies in the usage of the investigated structures which could not be taken into account, since attempting to explain them would far exceed the language domains this paper is concerned with.

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